Australian POTS Foundation

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026

In this Issue

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

Spring has arrived, bringing a little more light, warmer days and, hopefully, a few more opportunities to get outside and enjoy the things that make us feel good.

For those living with POTS and dysautonomia, spring can bring its own challenges as temperatures start to rise, so we've also included some practical tips and resources to help you navigate the change of season.

Whether you're newly diagnosed, supporting someone with POTS, a long-time member of our community or a health professional wanting to learn more, we're so glad you're here.

Take care, and enjoy the sunshine when you can.

CC's Recommended Reads

Five is a great choice if you're looking for something that will keep you turning the pages.

Art Cure by Daisy Fancourt is a must-read for anyone interested in the science behind art as therapy. Fascinating, accessible and full of research exploring how creative activities can support our health and wellbeing.

From the Desk of the CEO

CONVERGE 2026: A MILESTONE MOMENT FOR THE POTS COMMUNITY

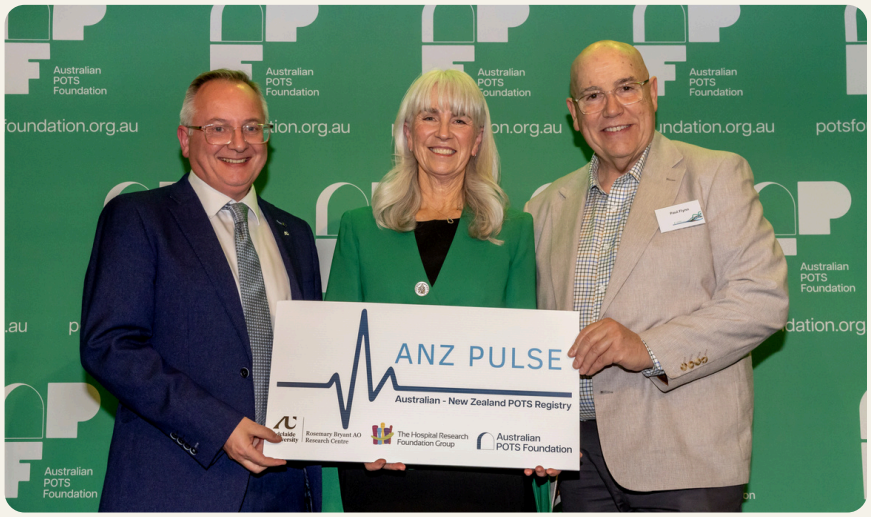
Converge 2026, the Australian POTS Foundation's third annual clinician and community conference, brought together more than 400 individuals in Adelaide in June, with hundreds more attending virtually from across the country. The energy across both days was extraordinary, and the depth of clinical and scientific exchange reflected just how far this field has come in a remarkably short time. We were thrilled with the truly interdisciplinary and inter-condition nature of the program – spanning POTS, pelvic pain, female hormones, Sjögren's disease, eating disorders, neurodivergence, and much more. This breadth is a deliberate reflection of how our community actually live: rarely with one condition, rarely seen by one clinician, and rarely well served by siloed care.

We were deeply honoured to welcome Her Excellency Frances Adamson, the Governor of South Australia to our conference dinner, which served as a celebration of five years of the Australian POTS Foundation. The Governor's presence was a meaningful recognition of that journey, and of the extraordinary community we have built together.

ANZ-PULSE: A NATIONAL REGISTRY BEGINS

One of the most significant announcements at Converge 2026 was the confirmation of funding for the ANZ-PULSE Registry – a national patient registry that will ultimately extend across Australia and New Zealand. We were delighted to welcome Paul Flynn from the Hospital Research Foundation Group and Professor David Waugh from Adelaide University to the stage to jointly announce $300,000 in funding over three years from The Hospital Research Foundation Group.

This investment marks the formal commencement of a registry that will be essential to understanding POTS and related autonomic conditions at a population level. There is a great deal of work ahead, but this is a landmark start, and I am genuinely grateful to our funding partners for their confidence and commitment.



From the Desk of the CEO

APF CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Converge 2026 also saw the presentation of our APF Clinical Excellence Awards, recognising exceptional clinicians and teams who have demonstrated outstanding dedication to people living with POTS and autonomic dysfunction.

All nominations were assessed by a blinded external judging panel. The calibre of nominees was exceptional, and by all accounts our judges faced an extraordinarily difficult task. I thank them sincerely for their care and rigour.

The 2026 winners are:

Physician of the Year

Winner: Dr Louise Smart, GP, Chandlers Hill Surgery, SA
Finalists: Dr Carley Francis, GP, Holland Park Family Medical, QLD; Dr Mary Wong, GP, Mount St Specialists, Heidelberg, VIC

Allied Health & Nursing Champion

Winner: Jennifer Smallridge, Exercise Physiologist, Invisibly Brilliant, VIC/ACT
Finalists: Jacqui Main, Exercise Physiologist, Dizzy Heds, VIC; Caelum Schild, Exercise Physiologist, Lofty Health, SA

Multidisciplinary Team Excellence

Winner: Integral Healthcare, Specialist POTS Clinic, SA
Finalists: Biio, Telehealth-First MDT, WA (national); Zebras Australia, Allied Health, VIC

My sincere congratulations to Dr Louise Smart, Jennifer Smallridge, and the Integral Healthcare team.

And my heartfelt thanks to every single person nominated – your dedication to this community does not go unnoticed.

Dr Phoebe Chieng, Integral Healthcare
Dr Louise Smart & Jennifer Smallridge

From the Desk of the CEO

FREE COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

I am delighted to share that, thanks to the generous support of Sodii, APF membership is now free for all patients, family members, and carers. This has long been something we wanted to offer, and we are so grateful to Sodii for making it possible. If you are not yet a member, please do sign up – we would love to have you as part of our community.

Sign up here: MEMBERSHIP LINK

RACGP-ACCREDITED CPD WEBINAR

Our RACGP-accredited webinar is now available through our education hub and is designed for GPs and health professionals seeking quality CPD in this area. The webinar features Professor Dennis Lau presenting on pharmacotherapy for POTS, alongside my own overview of the aetiology and diagnosis of the condition. Whether you are new to POTS or looking to consolidate your clinical knowledge, I hope you find it a useful resource
to share with your broader clinical network.

Access the webinar HERE

Thank you, as always, for being part of this community and this mission.

Dr Marie-Claire Seeley
Founder and CEO, Australian POTS Foundation

CONVERGE PHOTOS

MERCH new SHOP

As shown off by our Ambassador Emma-Louise Wilson!

Head to the merch store to see what's new

5 tips for managing POTS in warmer weather

1. **Stay ahead of the heat**
Don't wait until you feel overheated to start cooling down. Keep fluids and electrolytes within reach, seek shade and air conditioning, and plan outings for the cooler parts of the day.

2. **Make cooling part of your toolkit**
A cooling towel, fan, ice pack or cooling vest can make a surprising difference. Even simple strategies like carrying a frozen water bottle or sitting near a fan can help your body cope with heat.

3. **Dress for your nervous system**
Choose lightweight, breathable clothing and consider what works best with your compression garments. If compression becomes harder to tolerate in the heat, talk with your healthcare professional about alternative options rather than simply going without.

4. **Change your expectations**
Hot weather can significantly reduce your energy envelope. You may need more rest, shorter outings or slower pacing than you would on a cooler day. That's not failure – it's adapting to what your body needs.

5. **Have a heat plan**
Before heading out, think about where you can cool down, how you'll stay hydrated and what you'll do if symptoms escalate. Knowing your exit plan can reduce the stress of wondering, "What if I get sick?" and make it easier to enjoy the day within your limits.

Spreading Understanding

"I was talking to a colleague the other day, and mentioned POTS and the broader issue of dysautonomia. She had never heard of those terms. I explained the facts, stats and lived experience, and she was horrified. What this taught me is that every conversation is an opportunity to spread understanding!"
- Tracey Spicer

POTS Advocate

Olivia Powrie

Accredited Exercise Physiologist and PhD student

My name is Olivia Powrie, and I am an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. My passion for working clinically with POTS was sparked in 2023 when I met my first patient with POTS.

Walking alongside this patient on her rehabilitation journey, allowed me to see the many hurdles people with POTS face in getting a diagnosis and accessing care in the public health system. It was clear that there was a need for change in the public health system to provide better support for people living with POTS. Addressing this problem has become the focus of my PhD, which I began last year.

My research involves integrating a tailored POTS program into existing services in the public health system in Queensland, in an effort to create opportunities for people living with POTS to access publicly funded care. So far, I have been trialling this approach at one site in Queensland. We are approaching the end of the trial, and the results so far are positive.

Over the coming months, we plan to trial the program at other sites across Queensland. If these results are also positive, I am hopeful that this will be a step towards ongoing implementation of the program that will improve access to publicly funded care for people with POTS.

I would like to thank the Australian POTS Foundation for supporting me to complete my PhD studies through the PhD Top-up Scholarship.

When I'm not working on my PhD or working clinically, I can often be found running. As a keen long-distance runner, I recently completed the Brisbane Marathon on the 7th of June 2026 and fundraised $1500 for the Australian POTS Foundation. I've run a few marathons now, and running to raise funds for a foundation, such as the Australian POTS Foundation, always makes crossing the finish line more meaningful.

Olivia Powrie,
Accredited Exercise Physiologist and PhD Student

Why Feeling Like You Matter Matters

Hi, it's your friend Soph.

How often do you feel like you matter?

Do you have a deep sense you are valued and you bring value to the world around you?

In my own life, when I was regularly reporting health news on TV news, I would frequently receive letters, emails and phone calls from viewers, thanking me for the work I was doing.

I felt a deep sense of purpose and that the work I was doing was of value to the world.

Do you feel that way too? I hope so.

Feeling like you matter is a deep human need where you feel valued for who you are and that you add value to the world.

Your sense of purpose might come from your role as a parent or partner or through the work that you do.

But feeling valued isn't something that's fixed.

The feelings can diminish once your children grow up or if your work circumstances change.

No matter how secure we might feel right now, change always comes, and when it does, the roles and relationships that defined our mattering can disappear, according to author Jennifer Wallace.

“We matter to someone, in something, through a role," she says.

"We are valued at work, by our friends, as a parent, a partner, or a contributor.

"So when one of those roles falls away, it’s no wonder we start to doubt our worth and our place," she says.

And if no-one else has told you today, you matter to me.

I would love to know how valued you feel in the different domains of your life. **Take care, Soph x**

How To Feel like You Matter Again

Tips from Sophie Scott

Here are 3 science-backed ways to feel like you matter.

#Recognise the positive impact you have on others.

Often, we underestimate how much others will benefit even from small moments and conversations with us. Research backs this up.

Psychologist Nicholas Epley found people who sent short gratitude notes underestimated the positive emotional impact it would have on the receiver.

#Focus on your strengths.

What is unique about you as a person? What makes you stand out from other people? These are your unique strengths.

#Invest in fulfilling friendships and relationships.

Be intentional with your time and energy. Spend it with people who really value you and lift you up. Feeling supported in your relationships and friendships is one of the most important ways to feel like you matter.

By making these 3 small shifts, you can add a sense of deep connection and purpose to your life.

Support for Challenging Days

Sophie has created the **How to Feel Happier app**, featuring uplifting affirmations specially designed to support people living with chronic illness on difficult days.

You can also access Sophie's **guided meditation** on the free Insight Timer app, whenever you need a moment of relaxation.

Sophie Scott is an ambassador for the Australian POTS Foundation and writes and speaks on wellbeing and communication. You can sign up for her free blog here https://www.sophiescott.com.au

You feel what you eat:

Why diet matters in POTS

What you eat – and how you eat - can play a major role in how your feel with POTS. Food can affect your blood flow, energy, brain fog and heart rate. Following a few simple principles could help you support your body rather than overwhelm it.

Why Food Matters

Large portions and long gaps between eating can worsen symptoms.

When you eat a big meal, your body will divert blood to your digestive system. This means there is less blood available for your brain and muscles, which can lead to dizziness, tachycardia and brain fog.

Pay attention to what's on your plate

It's not just about how much you eat, but also what you eat.

To prevent a post-meal slump, it is important to have a balance of:

- slow-digesting carbs
- protein
- healthy fats

Portion size: Smaller and more often

Instead of eating the standard three large meals, many people with POTS feel better by eating 4-6 smaller, evenly-sized meals a day.

This might look like:

Breakfast
Morning tea
Lunch
Afternoon tea
Dinner
Dessert/evening snack.

Another option is splitting a main meal into two smaller meals. For example, eating half your lunch at 11am and then the rest at 1pm.

Heavier meals can make your digestive system work harder, which pulls more blood away from the rest of your body. High carbohydrate meals can also trigger a slump for some people, so keep an eye on what affects your symptoms. Working with a dietician can help determine what works best for you and your needs, especially if you have nausea or other GI symptoms.

There are more great tips on POTS management in our Living with POTS Q&A webinar and specific nutrition presentations in our webinar & conference recordings in the Resource Hub.

Meet two islands

OUR NEW PARTNER

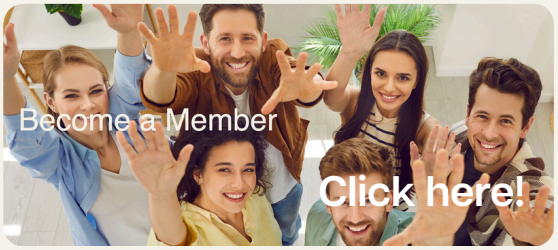
‘Two Islands started from a belief that people deserve access to supplements that are well-made and transparently sourced. Eight years in, that hasn't changed.

Supporting the Australian POTS Foundation feels like a natural fit. So much of what we make, particularly our electrolytes and protein products, exists because people with complex, often invisible health needs aren't always well served by mainstream options. The POTS community understands that better than most. Managing a dysautonomia condition day to day requires real knowledge, real community, and products that actually do what they say they will.

What drew me to this partnership was the quality of the community itself. There's a lot of noise in the wellness industry, and the POTS Foundation cuts through it. I want Two Islands to be a brand that shows up for communities like this one in a meaningful way, not just as a sponsor, but as a long-term supporter’.

Julia | Director and Founder

Members will receive 15% off all purchases ... not a member? Click below to join!



Community Membership

‘I recently received a suspected POTS diagnosis and am currently waiting to see a cardiac and autonomic specialist. I've been unemployed for a number of years due to changes in my capacity – which means I spend a lot of time carefully budgeting my very limited income across health care costs and other basic needs. Every $20 purchase is scrutinised and prioritised. It takes a lot of effort to live this way.

So I wanted to say thanks for all your hard work in setting up this community and now offering free memberships for patients/consumers. Your decision has real-world benefits to people living with POTS. It also shows a level of care and consideration for the 'human' within the development of a membership model – a rare thing indeed! Aside from the tangible benefit to my hip pocket, it signals the Foundation's values and illustrates your commitment toward supporting the people who need it.

Thanks again’! Brianna

COMMUNITY QUESTION: What time of day do you have your sodium?

Check out our socials and let us know!

sodii

‘I just wanted to send a big thank you to all the people behind the Australian POTS Foundation. The terrific website that is really informative and the clinician directory to help direct where to go for assistance, have been extremely helpful for us. Thank you for all that you do’. Jayne

‘I have recently been diagnosed with POTS and I have found your website so incredibly useful, it was the first thing my doctor showed me’. Ella

We love hearing your feedback - drop us a line admin@potsfoundation.org.au

Thanks for sharing Brianna, Jayne & Ella. A Sodii giftpack is heading your way.

Join here: https://potsfoundation.org.au/become-a-member/

Brands supporting people with POTS

Community Benefits Program

Become a member to access exclusive discounts

Our Brand Partners

sodii · two islands · ZEBRAS australia · Vitassium by SaltStick

Compression & the APF Community Benefits Program

Compression garments can be an important part of managing POTS for many people, but we know they can also be expensive. That's why we established the Community Benefits Program: to make compression wear and other useful products more accessible through a range of member discounts.

We know one product or brand won't suit everyone. People have different symptoms, budgets, body shapes, preferences and levels of compression they can tolerate. Our aim is to offer a range of options and discounts, rather than suggest there is one "best" product for everyone.

APF does not endorse or recommend any particular brand or product. Participating organisations simply offer benefits to our community, and we encourage you to consider your own needs and choose what's right for you.

We're also committed to maintaining our independence. APF does not receive affiliate payments from businesses participating in the Program. We'll continue looking for organisations offering meaningful discounts and useful products across a range of price points, giving our community more choice and options for different budgets.

If there's a brand you love and think would be a great fit for our community, let us know. We'd love to hear your recommendations and can send them an invitation to join the Program.

Our goal is simple: to make it easier for people living with POTS to access products that may help, while providing the information and choice you need to decide what works best for you.

October is Dysautonomia Awareness Month

October is our opportunity to make dysautonomia and POTS more visible – and we want you to be part of it.

Whether you're living with POTS, supporting someone who is, or simply want to help spread the word, there are so many ways to get involved. You could host a morning tea, organise a workplace fundraiser, take on a personal challenge, share your story, or come up with something completely different.

Your idea doesn't have to be big. Every conversation, post, fundraiser and act of support helps more people understand that POTS is real, often invisible, and can have a profound impact on everyday life.

Have an idea for October? Planning a fundraiser or awareness activity? We'd love to hear from you!

Share your ideas and plans with us – and if you're fundraising for the Australian POTS Foundation, make sure you let us know so we can help spread the word and celebrate your efforts with our wider community.

Let's make October count and show just how much our community can achieve together.

To support our work, you can donate via the QR code, or by direct deposit using the bank details provided.

THE AUSTRALIAN POTS FOUNDATION
BSB: 015 208
Account Number: 153 059 214

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