

SUPPORTING PEOPLE LIVING WITH

# MINID

TAKE-A-BREAK

PROGRAM



# THE STORY OF THE TAKE-A-BREAK PROGRAM

**W**hen Vitality Brands came to us in 2010 saying they'd like to help us help people with motor neurone disease, we talked about what it is that people with MND need, that we couldn't give. We came up with the concept that people need a rest from it. They need a rest from the relentlessness of MND. They need a rest from the ongoing losses, and they need a positive, even a small one, that could make a difference, even for a short period of time, in their day-to-day life.

It was then that we created the label "Take-A-Break" and began to pioneer this very successful and necessary program.

## **The program empowers people with MND and it also empowers our MND Advisors.**

We also needed to be able to give something to our expert staff who have frontline contact with people living with MND to empower them to make a difference in a person's life. In this way the program is two-fold. It makes a difference for people with MND as they get a break from the relentless progression of the disease; and it makes a difference for the MND Advisors because they are in control of making a decision that will positively impact their client's life.

Vitality Brands take pride in making a difference, keeping people safe and providing products that support healthy lifestyles. The Take-A-Break program epitomises the Vitality Brands philosophy of helping people feel happier and influencing their lives in a positive way.

## **The Take-A-Break program changes people's lives.**

**What I love about Take-A-Break is it changes people's lives.**

**It gives them that break from the impact of MND.**

The structuring of Take-A-Break is such that the MND Advisor who is working and advising the person with MND and their family notices the opportunity arise where a person could really benefit from the Take-A-Break program funds. The MND advisor makes the offering and makes the decision. No one in the organisation can override that decision. No one can say no.

*"What I love about Take-A-Break is it changes people's lives. Even if it only changes their lives for a small period of time. It gives them that break from the impact of MND."*

As CEO all I do is happily and gratefully approve the request.

We approve everyone automatically. The aim is, within 24 hours of receiving the request, the money is in their bank account. There is no uncertainty. It is instant gratification for us and it is instant impact for the family. They know that they have up to \$500 to invest straight away in that product, service or experience that will make a difference for them.



*Rod Harris.  
CEO, Motor Neurone  
Disease, Victoria*



## For 9 years now, people with MND have had their lives enhanced because of the Take-A-Break program

There are many heartwarming stories of the Take-A-Break program making a difference.



A lady with MND living in an aged care facility was feeling trapped and isolated and becoming increasingly depressed. The Take-A-Break program assisted her to get access to be away from the facility for short periods while being supported. These outings of time made a big impact on her life.

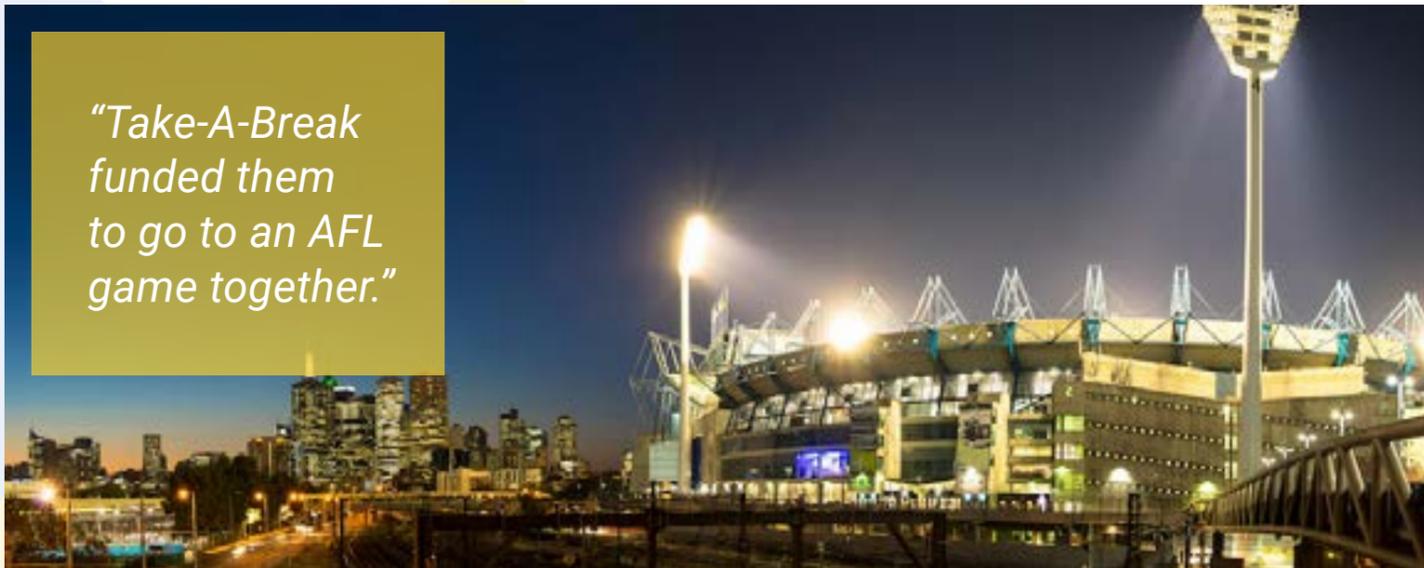
A client of Eric Kelly, Team Leader MND Advisor - Support Coordinator, lived in Ballarat and had a 15 year old son, who lived with his mother, as they were separated. Eric shared: "His son would visit him most days after school. They were very close and loved the footy."

Take-A-Break funded them to go together to an AFL game. They loved the Bulldogs. Steve, in his electric wheelchair, and his son, went together to the footy on the train and Steve spoke about this with a very wide grin as being 'just a wonderful time.' This was such a powerful gesture, and a memorable experience for them both. The Bulldogs won that game as well!"



In a small country town, a man could no longer access his hairdresser for a haircut, due to a step at the entrance. MND Victoria was able to fund a mobile hairdresser to come to his home every 6 weeks. This had wonderful social benefits as well. He loved the social contact as well as the really great haircuts.

*"Take-A-Break funded them to go to an AFL game together."*



*"As an MND Advisor, I love and respect this Take-A-Break program."*

*Eric Kelly, Team Leader MND Advisor - Support Coordinator*

## MND Advisors highly respect the Take-A-Break program

For most people living with motor neurone disease, the focus is always on issues and appointments around their disability and declining health. For Eric Kelly, Team Leader MND Advisor and Support Coordinator, the Take-A-Break program gives him a chance to change this, even if only briefly. Eric believes the program is another 'vital tool in our kit' of things to offer as support to our clients. Eric shares: "we can discuss things outside the usual and assist and encourage people to take some time to focus on life and living rather than the disease and the doom and gloom. The disease is always there, but we can change

the focus, even if only temporarily." All our MND Advisors agree that the wonderful thing about the Take-A-Break program is they can access the funds quickly with no wait time. For the most part, in funding and services in disability and healthcare, there are wait times and these can be very lengthy and frustrating. People with MND have rapid progression of symptoms and their needs increase very quickly. The Take-a-Break program is one thing they don't have to wait for. Eric continues: "The fact that the Take-A-Break funds are always used to capacity is a clear indication of its use and value."

## Our key alliance

Without this key alliance with Vitality Brands through the Take-A-Break program, MND Victoria couldn't fund these personal items, services and experiences that make a significant difference to people living with MND.

A client purchased an electric bicycle with the funds from the Take-A-Break program. He has a young family and very much wanted to continue riding together, as a family, which brings him so much joy.

Services for a client such as car repairs were paid for because of this program. There had been no private funds for the repairs due to loss of income as a result of the disease. The Take-A-Break funds paid for the car repairs enabling the family to attend appointments as well as social and family activities while accessing their community. This support enhanced the client's quality of life.

Take-A-Break funds the purchase of necessary items people need that they just don't have the funds for, such as a battery backup for a ventilator where there was a \$150 gap.



*"Take-A-Break enabled the purchase of an electric bicycle. Our client continued riding with his young family and enjoying taking them to school." Liz Crask, Team Leader MND Advisor - Support Coordinator.*

For someone with MND who is ventilator dependent, battery backup is required so they can use the ventilator in the car and away from a reliable power source.

This helps prevent social isolation for people with MND by enabling them to have uninterrupted access to their community and freedom to travel.

## On average 45 people living with MND access the Take-A-Break program every year

As of February 2019, 37 of our clients with MND have utilised the program this financial year. We look forward to many more years of success in making a difference and creating happy moments where we can, together.

## 2019 and Beyond

Motor Neurone Disease Victoria sincerely thank the team at Vitality Brands for their generosity and equally acknowledge and extend congratulations on the success of the Take-A-Break program. The program truly fulfils the cultural values of our organisations alike, and simply put, it achieves the objective: to make a difference in people's lives.

We look forward to continued success through this strong alliance, long into the future.

## MND Victoria

MND Victoria was established in 1981 to provide care and support for people living with MND. We are the only organisation in Victoria providing this service and at no cost to the person with the disease.

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## MND Fast Facts

- MND Victoria supported 609 people living with MND in 2018.
- MND Advisors had 8,134 individual contacts with people living with MND
- 2,582 items of equipment was provided to people living with MND
- 9 Information nights and 9 health professional information sessions were held
- 131 volunteers provided support to people with MND
- Raised \$3,130,309 or 70% of funds required to underwrite our services

*MND Victoria Cares .... Always has, Always will*

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