

Arthritis
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**Incorporating
Osteoporosis
ACT**

NEWSLETTER

September 2007

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*Something can be done ...
and we're
doing it !*

Arthritis ACT Board 2006-07

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From the CEO

Arthritis Australia launched its latest Access Economics report entitled *Painful Realities: the economic impact of arthritis in Australia in 2007* at Parliament House last month.

Some of the findings include that nearly one in five Australians has arthritis; in fact more Australians have arthritis than any other national health priority condition. The total cost of arthritis to the Australian economy in 2007 will be approximately \$23.9 billion. Almost half of this is due to the non-financial (burden of disease) costs.

As we all know the pain and suffering arthritis patients endure as a result of their condition decreases quality of life, and while mortality rates for arthritis are low, there is a cost in terms of quality years of life lost. Health system costs including hospitals, pharmaceuticals and aged care account for 20%. A further 17% of total costs are productivity costs, reflecting the impact of arthritis on employment and workforce participation.

I am representing Arthritis Australia as a member of a University of Melbourne Steering Committee looking at developing and testing an education and self-management program for workplaces, so that risk of arthritis onset can be minimised and arthritis-related absenteeism can be prevented or reduced. The project commenced in June 2007.

At our first meeting it was brought home to me again that those with a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis are rarely able to continue working at the

same level as they did before their diagnosis. Indeed, as a large number of our membership knows, most are forced to leave the workforce, or settle for part time employment at a lower level.

I was delighted that the ACT government through the Health Promotion grants program has given Arthritis ACT funding to pilot and evaluate two workplace programs over the next year. These programs are designed to help Canberrans with a musculoskeletal condition remain in the workforce.

Arthritis ACT has been working to introduce into Australia a course developed in the UK by Arthritis Care called *Challenging Pain*. This two day self management course looks very promising and discussions have been held with all our affiliate educators and CEO's, as well as those health professionals working with patients with chronic pain.

We hope to have our educators trained and ready to deliver the course in the first half of next year. Again the Health Promotion Fund has provided a small sum to trial the course here in the ACT, for which we are thankful.

We have had a busy, but productive quarter and I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of our hard working volunteers for their efforts over the past few months.

Mary Lindsay spent many months assembling information, interviewing past members and writing our first

history of the organisation for our 30th birthday celebrations. It was a magnificent effort and I am so grateful to Mary for all her work with us over many years.

Tom Berry co-ordinated our Healthy Bones Week activities again this August. As you can imagine this took a tremendous amount of time and energy to bring to fruition. Tom was recognised for his volunteering efforts with Arthritis ACT when he received an award from Annette

Ellis at Parliament House last month for his work with us.

Katrina Muir must be congratulated for organising another successful Osteoporosis and Vitamin D seminar in August. We are grateful for her continuing involvement with us.

I also want to say a special thank you to Roger Killeen and all the supervisors and assistant supervisors of our warm water exercise program. These unsung heroes

volunteer every week to keep this program running with 17 sessions a week across three different hydrotherapy pools. We could not provide this service without the dedication of these 25 volunteers. Thank you.

Warm regards,
Elizabeth Scrivener
Chief Executive Officer

Education News

Warm Water Exercise Program

Over 4,500 attendances in 17 weekly sessions were recorded across the three pools at TCH, Black Mountain School and Simply Wellness in Belconnen in 2006-2007. Thank you to all the volunteers who have contributed to the success of this worthwhile program and grateful thanks especially to Roger Killeen for so ably supervising the program across the three pools.

Almost all of the pool supervisors have completed their pool rescue assessments for the year. These assessments were instituted in order to assure the safety of our members in case of emergency and the responsibility we have as an organization to ensure that we comply with all the insurance and safety requirements the government expects us to have in place to continue their funding of the program.

The Canberra Hospital has a hoist system for pool rescue but the

Simply Wellness and Black Mountain school pools have a ramp for removing someone from the pool. To improve the rescue procedures for the pools with a ramp, Roger, with the assistance of TADACT, designed a trolley device to help remove people from the pool in case of emergency. The trolley will soon be tested along with the other available equipment at those pools and the development of a rescue procedure will follow.

Periodic pool supervisor meetings have been instituted to keep supervisors informed and as a forum for resolving procedural issues. Meetings were held on 29 May and 24 July.

Self Management Courses

Our various self management courses are very ably co-ordinated by another of our volunteers, Jo Stewart. My thanks to Jo for all the work she puts into organising these courses.

Jo and Helen Cody ran a successful modified Osteoporosis Self Management Course during August with 9 people attending. We will be offering our Arthritis Self Management Course at Holder on Wednesdays between 12 noon and 2.30pm on Oct 17, 24, 31, Nov 7, 14, 21.

Other 'Arthritis/ Living a Healthy Life with Long Term Conditions' courses commencing in October are as follows:

- Belconnen**
Thursdays 10am-12.30pm
Oct 25, Nov 1, 8, 15, 2, 29
- Erindale College**
Tuesdays 6.30pm-9.30pm
Oct 23, 30, Nov 6, 13, 20, 27.

Bookings essential. Phone Janice Stewart on 6287 8099 for the Belconnen course and Community Education on 6205 8107 for Erindale College course.

Community Talks

Our community education program continues to be very popular around Canberra. Our presenters have been talking to a wide range of community groups promoting arthritis and osteoporosis awareness. We have received many glowing evaluation reports on the top-notch quality of our presenters.

Thank you, presenters, and a special thank you to Carol McKay for co-ordinating the program.

Healthy Bones Week

Canberra's Big Healthy Bones Morning Tea launch was held on 6 August at Kaleen Primary School. Wendy Gray, a dietician with Nutrition Australia addressed the school assembly with this year's theme, "What's for Lunch?"

Two athletes from the AIS and one from the Canberra Capitols attended to sign autographs and Kids at Play led the children in a number of organised games.

Over 15,000 students participated and more than 13,000 servings of milk and 7,000 pieces of fruit were delivered to schools all over Canberra.

In conjunction with Dairy Australia, we have been participating in National Healthy Bones Week for the last 13 years, educating children in developing and maintaining healthy bones and the importance of calcium.

Tom Berry, almost single-handedly, organised all the schools, the donation of the fruit and milk and the morning tea events. A big round of applause for a job well done! Thanks Tom.

Vitamin D, Sun Exposure and Osteoporosis: The Risks and Benefits

This was the title of a seminar presented to over 100 participants on 22 August. The seminar took place at the CWA Hall in Civic and went from 9:30am to 3:00pm.

The morning seminar session included talks from leading researchers and clinicians about the function of Vitamin D in the development and maintenance of bone health, the necessary role that sunlight plays in the process, and the balance between protecting ourselves from the damaging effects of sunlight and the biological need to prevent osteoporosis.

Other topics included a report on recent research of women's perception of osteoporosis. A



forum of the speakers then responded to questions.

The afternoon sessions were more practically oriented, with addresses about the DEXA scan and what it means, the value of exercise for maintaining bone health, how to improve your bone density through diet, and falls prevention.

A huge thank you to Katrina Muir for the enormous contribution she made in organising the event. Katrina's thorough planning, persistence and attention to detail resulted in the resounding success of the seminar. We appreciated your efforts so much Katrina.

Monte Scharbow
Health Educator

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Please support us again this year
Our Christmas cards are available at the Charity Card shops in both Civic and Tuggeranong, as well as from our office in Holder.

Wine and Cheese Tasting

Our annual Wine and Cheese Tasting has been scheduled for

Friday evening 9th November

It will again be held at historic Mugga Mugga, 8 Narrabundah Lane in Symonston, which looks out over the landscape to Queanbeyan and the south side of Canberra.

Mr John Fitzgerald, the former President of the Canberra Wine Society, will be choosing the wines.

The cost is \$20. Please come along and support the Foundation and enjoy a relaxed evening in convivial surroundings.

Bookings on 6288 4244 by 2 November

Coming to Lunch!

THE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN
LUNCH

Is on Friday 26 October
12 for 12.30 pm

at the Royal Canberra Golf Club

Yarralumla

Cost \$60

Come along to support osteoporosis education
in the ACT.

For tickets and more information please phone
the office on 6288 4244.

Christmas Volunteers

Volunteers are needed again this
year to assist with the Card Shops
in both Civic and Tuggeranong.

Civic — 16 October, 11 December
Tuggeranong — 24 October, 13
and 27 November, 13 December

Please call the office on 6288 4244
if you can spare a couple of hours
on any of these dates.

ARTHRITISACT

30th Annual General Meeting

6.00pm Wednesday 24 October 2007

Grant Cameron Centre
27 Mulley Street, Holder

The Board of the Arthritis Foundation of Arthritis ACT Inc. manages the affairs of the Foundation and consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and not more than ten other members.

Nominations for election to the Board must be made in writing (forms are available from the office) and received by the Secretary not less than seven days before the date of the AGM.

Please consider whether you are able to make a contribution to the running of Arthritis ACT through its Board and come along to the AGM to support your Foundation.

For catering purposes please RSVP by 22 October.

The Australian Rheumatology Database (ARAD)

ARAD is a voluntary national registry established to collect health information from all Australian patients with inflammatory arthritis for the purpose of monitoring the long term benefits of the drugs used to treat inflammatory arthritis.

By collecting long-term information about people's arthritis management, and their health and quality of life, we aim to provide reliable and valid outcome data to Australian clinicians, consumers, policy makers, drug development companies and approval agencies.

The project will focus on the impact of living with arthritis, and on the long-term safety and efficacy of established treatments as well as the new generation 'biological' drugs. It is endorsed by the Australian Rheumatology Association and is being conducted on behalf of its members. The project is led by a scientific advisory committee comprising Associate Professor Lyn March at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney, Professor

Rachelle Buchbinder at Cabrini Medical Centre in Melbourne and Associate Professor Marissa Lassere at St George Hospital in Sydney. Doctors from the ACT are also involved. We have funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council of the Australian Government to develop the database.

THIS IS NOT A DRUG TRIAL. Participation involves completing questionnaires only. You, together with your rheumatologist and your general practitioner (GP), will continue to decide which treatment is best for you. You will receive questionnaires in the mail at 6-12 monthly intervals for as long as you choose to remain in the project. We may also contact you by telephone to confirm that you have received a questionnaire or to clarify your responses to a questionnaire.

The questionnaire will ask you to describe your arthritis and its treatment and how these have affected you. You will also be asked questions about your

general health status and your quality of life. Any information obtained in connection with this project will remain completely confidential.

If you have inflammatory arthritis, irrespective of your treatment, you would be very welcome to participate in the register. The more patients who take part the more useful the register will be for everyone.

If you would like us to send you a Patient Information Sheet or you would like to discuss it or participate, then please feel free to contact the register directly through:

Rosemarie Vandenhaak
ACT ARAD Co-ordinator
Department of Rheumatology
St George Hospital
Kogarah NSW 2217
telephone 02 9350 2892
Email: rosemarie.vandenhaak@
sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au

FYSHWICK MARKET STALL

Our next Fyshwick Market Stall will be held on Saturday 20 October. We need:-

- ◆ Donations of goods to sell—everything except clothing and electrical items
- ◆ People to volunteer for a couple of hours on the day
- ◆ Anyone with a trailer/van who can help transport goods to and from the stall

Please contact Elizabeth on 6288 4244 for more information.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 13 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group
 Time: 10.30am – 12noon
 Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

Friday 14 Charity Card Day Lunch
 Time: 11.00am - 3.00pm
 Venue: Canberra Bowling Club
 Hobart Avenue Forrest
 Cost: \$18 (Bookings close 7th Sept.)
 Contact: 6288 4244 or 6290 0092

OCTOBER

Monday 8 Arthritis Support Group
 Time: 10.30am – 12noon
 Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Thursday 11 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group
 Time: 10.30am – 12noon
 Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

Saturday 13 Young Adults Group
 Time: TBA
 Venue: Wests Rugby Club, Jamison
 Contact: Steve 0431 107 543

Wednesday 17 Arthritis Self Management Course (6 Weeks)
 Time: 12.00noon - 2.30pm
 Venue: 27 Mulley St. Holder

Saturday 20 Fyshwick Stall

Wednesday 24 AGM
 Time: 6.00pm - end
 Venue: 27 Mulley St. Holder

Friday 26 Generations of Women Lunch
 Time: 12.30pm
 Venue: Royal Canberra Golf Club
 Cost: \$60 *Bookings close 19 October*

NOVEMBER

Monday 5 Arthritis Support Group
 Time: 10.30am – 12noon
 Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Thursday 8 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group
 Time: 10.30am – 12noon
 Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

Friday 9 Wine & Cheese Evening
 Time: 6.00pm - 8.00pm
 Venue: Mugga Mugga
 Cost: TBA

Saturday 10 Young Adults Group Historical Train
 Time: TBA
 Venue: TBA
 Contact: Steve 0431 107 543

DECEMBER

Monday 3 Arthritis Support Group
 Time: 10.30am – 12noon
 Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Wednesday 5 Volunteers Morning Tea
 Time: 10.30 am -12 noon
 Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre

Saturday 8 Young Adults Group Christmas BBQ
 Time: TBA
 Venue: TBA
 Contact: Steve 0431 107 543

Wednesday 12 Annual Christmas Lunch
 Time: 12.30pm – 2.00pm
 Venue: Canberra Southern Cross Club
 Cost: \$28 *Bookings close 6 December*