

Arthritis

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Incorporating  
Osteoporosis  
ACT

# NEWSLETTER December 2010

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 4

## Make It a Date in 2011

### Highlights

From the CEO .....	p2
Newsflash ..	p2
Arthritis Expo .....	p3
Sponsor discounts .....	p4
WWX report .....	p5
Healthy Life course .....	p6
On-line services .....	p6
Consumers beware .....	p7
Falls prevention program .....	p8
Fund raising .....	p10
Ho ho ho?.....	p10



## Saturday, 21st May Elvis Extravaganza & Charity Auction at

### Queanbeyan Kangaroos Club

Tickets: \$25.00 each

Bookings: From March 2011 at [www.artkritisact.org.au/events/index.html](http://www.artkritisact.org.au/events/index.html)

or call 6288 4244

*We wish all our Members & Friends a very enjoyable  
Christmas and a healthy and happy 2011*



## From the CEO

### Arthritis ACT

Level 2B  
Cameron Community Centre  
27 Mulley Street  
HOLDER ACT 2611  
02 6288 4244  
[www.arthritisact.org.au](http://www.arthritisact.org.au)

### Arthritis ACT Board 2010-11

Mr Bill Wood (President & Alt.  
Director Arthritis Australia)  
Ms Anna Hackett (Vice President)  
Ms Kristine Riethmiller (Secretary  
& Director Arthritis Australia)  
Mr Andrew Fleming (Treasurer)  
Mrs Helen Davies  
Dr David Graham  
Ms Helen Tyrell  
Ms Wendy Prowse

### News Flash

Australian Rheumatologists Association statement concerning Thelin worldwide withdrawal.

Thelin, also known as sitaxentan, has been recalled worldwide as it has been linked to potentially life-threatening liver damage in a very small number of cases. It is used to treat pulmonary hypertension, an incurable condition. All trials of the medicine have been halted. If you are taking Thelin or participating in studies of the drug, please continue to use it until you consult your prescribing specialist so you can be transferred to another therapy. Do not stop the medicine suddenly. If you have any questions please contact your specialist.

*"An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves."*

Bill Vaughan

As the eternal optimist I will certainly be looking forward to new adventures in 2011 and in preparation for this reflecting on the achievements and lessons from this year. I would like to start by wishing all of our members and friends a blessed and happy Christmas and all the very best for a great 2011.

I am especially keen to encourage everyone to make the most of opportunities that come their way to improve their wellness. We are here primarily to provide information and services to assist people living with chronic conditions improve their quality of life. My hope for you is that your quality of life will improve as you become the driver in your wellness.

This has again been a very busy and challenging year. We have welcomed and said farewell to quite a few staff members and volunteers. The welcoming is easy but saying goodbye is never easy. I wish all of our staff who have moved on this year - Wen, Monte, Sally, Linda and all our volunteers who are no longer able to be involved - a very prosperous future in the next stage of their life journey.

I also need to advise that our Educator Laura will be finishing up with us at the end of the year to spend more time with her lovely little girl. The move to 4 days a week was taking Laura away from her little one for a little longer than she would like and her role as Mother rightly has taken priority. We look forward to maintaining contact with Laura, who will be helping us from time to time on a casual basis with some projects in the future. We will miss Laura and wish her all the very best for the future. We hope to have a new person on board when the office re-opens on January 17.

I would now like to give you some feedback from our members and friends survey which has been running over the past couple of months. A few of the statistical matters reported are shown in the table on page 3.

These results are very pleasing to us, although we have been made aware of a number of areas, especially around communication, that we need to work on. We very much appreciate the time that you have taken to complete this questionnaire and we will do our very best to implement as many of your suggestions as possible

Now to 2011. Look forward to more events, more seminars, even better newsletters and a re-start to our strength and balance exercise program around midyear. We have a jam-packed year of opportunities for you to become involved in activities that will improve your wellness so please do take the chance to register when things are advertised. Could I also ask that you tell your friends, relatives, neighbours and work colleagues about our work so that they may also benefit from what we have to offer.

Finally, I would like to again give praise to our amazing band of volunteers. To our Board, WWX supervisors, community speakers, office support staff, fundraisers, self-management course leaders, grant writers, encouragers and all sorts of other helpers, THANK YOU. We are so reliant on you and we so deeply appreciate the time, energy and expertise that all of you freely give. Please be assured of your value to us and the difference that your time makes in a positive way to so many in the ACT community.

I will be on leave to attend our son's wedding in South Africa from mid January until mid February and during my absence could you please forward any questions or comments to Michael Farr at [volcord@arthritisact.org.au](mailto:volcord@arthritisact.org.au) or on the phone 6288 4244.

I hope you again find this newsletter worthwhile, and as always I look forward to your comments, questions, suggestions and also any concerns.

Many thanks,

**Tony Holland**  
**0417 575 537,**  
**[tony.holland@arthritisact.org.au](mailto:tony.holland@arthritisact.org.au)**

### Results of Members & Friends' Survey

Usefulness of Services	Very useful/ Useful	Not useful
Website	94%	6%
Newsletter	98%	2%
Library	63%	36%
Fact Sheets	98%	2%
Information helpline	75%	25%
WWX	92%	8%
Self management courses	87%	13%
Support groups	85%	15%
Social activities	84%	16%
Seminars	94%	6%

### Help Wanted!

Do you have four (4) hours to spare on a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday morning or afternoon? If you have, Arthritis ACT needs your help!



Arthritis ACT is keen to raise its presence in the community. To do this we are looking at having displays at major shopping centres throughout Canberra and region in 2011. Attendants for these displays are urgently needed.

If you are able to help please contact Michael Farr, Volunteer Coordinator at Arthritis ACT on 6288 4244 or email [volcord@arthritisact.org.au](mailto:volcord@arthritisact.org.au).

## Arthritis Expos

You will have noted in our last newsletter that we were planning a number of events in regional centres in the ACT and environs, with the first two of these conducted very recently in Lyneham and Queanbeyan. We are pleased to report that these events were very well received by those who attended and although the numbers were relatively small, the value to the individual appears to have been very significant. We had over 50 people attend both events and 22 new members joined with the offer of 12 months free membership on the night.

Detailed below is a brief summary of some of the relevant information discovered as a result of the evaluation conducted. We hope that these nights will become regular with a number of follow up events planned for Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden during 2011. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank Dr Chandi Perera, Rhyan Stanley from the Australian Pharmaceutical Group and the representatives from Independent Living Centre, ACT Health, Centrelink, NSW Health and Carers ACT. The depth and breadth of information was impressive and people really enjoyed the opportunity to raise lots of questions to all of the panel members.

Attendees with at least one arthritis/osteoporosis condition	80%
"Very Satisfied" with the speakers	72.5%
"Satisfied" or above with the speakers	92.5%
"Very Satisfied" with the panel discussion & question time	65%
"Satisfied" or above with the panel & question time	85%
Intend making changes due to what they have learnt	65%
Very Satisfied" with the advice & information given	57.5%
"Satisfied" or above with the advice & information given	90%
Would recommend the expo to others	87.5%

We are hoping to establish an arthritis advocacy group in the new year. Please keep an eye out in the March newsletter for more information.

## In Partnership with our Sponsors

Over the years our sponsors have provided financial and moral support to Arthritis ACT which has greatly assisted with the cost of providing services to members. To enhance our partnership with sponsors and increase the benefits of being a member of Arthritis ACT our sponsors are offering discounts to members upon production of their Arthritis ACT membership card. If you don't have a membership card you can login at <https://www.arthritisact.org.au/member/member/login> and print a card or visit/call the office and we'll print a card for you.

These discounts include:



**Curves** 20% off joining fee!  
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LAWYERS

**Southside Physiotherapy & Sports Injury Centre** \$5.00 donation to Arthritis ACT for each visit!!

**VITALITY** 10% Discount for all services!!  
HEALTH CENTRE \$5.00 donation to Arthritis ACT for each visit!!

**Richard Luton** Property Management Fee  
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Another incentive for members of Arthritis ACT is a great deal from Greyhound Australia. Go to [www.greyhound.com.au](http://www.greyhound.com.au) and enter a promo code or phone **1300 473 946** to get cheap travel for members and their families. See details below.



- \$25.00 Canberra - Sydney one way (guaranteed with promo code AF A01).
- \$45.00 Canberra - Sydney return (guaranteed with promo code AF A01R).
- 10% off all express travel on the Greyhound Australia Network (with promo code AFA).
- 25% off (depot to depot) freight (guaranteed with promo coded AFAF).
- 5% commission to Arthritis ACT for all Sydney travel.

# WWX Report



It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of another year. 2010 has been a very busy one for the Warm Water Exercise (WWX) program.

Fortunately **The Canberra Hospital** pool was re-opened in late May and except for a few recent hiccups it has been a much welcome return. The first 4 floors of the new parking site are now open with the remainder hopefully open to the public early 2011. Staff at the hospital have asked that we advise our members of an OH&S concern regarding the toilets within the pool complex. Because these toilets are not on pedestals on the floor but are attached from the wall, they are regarded as possibly unsafe if used by persons weighing 140kg or above.

## Christmas/New Year Pool Closures

### The Canberra Hospital

Last session – Wednesday 22 December 2010

First session – Monday 17 January 2011

### John James Calvary Hospital

Last session – Monday 20 December 2010

First session – Monday 31 January 2011

### Black Mountain School

Last session – Thursday 16 December 2010

First session – Monday 7 February 2011

### Club MMM! Day Spa

Last session – Wednesday 22 December 2010

First session – Wednesday 2 February 2011

**NOTE:** Prior to resuming with the normal program at **Club MMM!**, the Saturday 2:00pm session will commence early, with Arthritis ACT sessions on Saturday 15, 22 and 29 January. These sessions are available to all Arthritis ACT WWX members.

**Club MMM!** has advised us that they will only be closed on public holidays during the December and January period. They are offering you, our members, to attend their pool at the times when our sessions would normally be held, but are not covered by the above dates for the same fee of \$5 per session. These are on Wednesdays at 1pm and Saturdays at 2pm. I advise you to contact Club MMM! directly on 6257 6020 to book in for the use of the pool at these times. The fee for these sessions is to be paid directly to Club MMM!

I also suggest that you take along your Arthritis ACT ticket as proof of membership to take advantage of the low fee. Please be aware that these times will not be covered by an Arthritis ACT Volunteer supervisor.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank two long time volunteers of the WWX program who have retired this year. They are Bev Batger and Edna Edsor. Thank you both so much for all of your support and I look forward to still catching up with you in the pool from time to time.

A big thanks also goes to all members of the team of volunteer supervisors for their efforts throughout the year. Congratulations to you all on again passing your Pool Rescue and CPR training. Without your support the program would not be able to run.

We currently have 17 sessions a week over the 4 pools and would like to expand the program to extra sessions to be able to give members more choices during 2011. To be able to do this we would need new supervisors. If you are a WWX member and are interested in being a supervisor please contact me on 6288 0964.

I would like to also take this opportunity to thank the staff at the facilities for the assistance in the use of their pools.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe break, and I look forward to seeing you all in 2011 in a pool somewhere.

**Shirley Syme**

**WWX Coordinator**



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<p><b>Lanyon</b></p> <p>Shop 17, Lanyon Market Place, Conder Phone : 6284 8555 <b>Opening Hours:</b> Mon - Fri 8.30am to 7pm Saturday: 9am - 6pm, Sunday: 9am - 5pm</p>	<p><b>Cooleman Court</b></p> <p>Shop 5015 Cooleman Court Brierly Street, Weston Phone : 6288 1867 <b>Opening Hours:</b> Mon - Fri 8.30am to 7pm Saturday: 9am - 6pm, Sunday: 9am - 5pm</p>

## Role Of Physiotherapy

The treatment of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions is a core function of physiotherapy practice.

Patients with arthritis may benefit from joint mobilisation, electrotherapy, hydrotherapy, and muscle strengthening exercises.

Physiotherapy can reduce arthritic pain and reliance on drug therapy. Unlike pharmaceuticals, physiotherapy has no side effects and no contraindications. Physiotherapists treat back and neck pain, muscle strains, spasms and contusions (bruising), joint injuries, tendonitis and bursitis, and muscle imbalance or weakness.

Physiotherapy modalities are critical to the treatment and management of people with disabilities that have musculoskeletal elements. Quality of life is improved by therapy, education and prescription of aids (e.g. walking stick) etc.

Physiotherapists teach people with disabilities and their families how to improve mobility and teach carers how to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury

For further details about what can physiotherapy do for your Arthritis go to :-

<http://www.southsidephysio.com.au/images/stories/exercises/arthritismusculoskeletalconditions.pdf>



## 2011 Living a Healthy Life With Long Term Conditions Course

Would you like to learn ways to –

- manage pain and fatigue;
- deal with emotions such as anger, fear and frustration;
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals;
- plan for the future in a caring, sharing supportive environment?

Enrol in our first Living a Healthy Life with Long Term Conditions Course for 2011 and become more actively involved in taking care of your health problems, managing emotion changes and be able to carry out normal daily activities more effectively. As one course participant comments “learn ways and means to improve one’s quality of life and develop a greater feeling of control over one’s state of health”.

The course runs for 6 weeks on Friday for 2½ hours from 12 noon to 2.30 pm. Dates are March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 1 and 8 at the SHOUT offices large conference room, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce (opposite the Pearce shops).

For bookings and further information please contact Arthritis ACT on 6288 4244 or book online at <https://www.arthritisact.org.au/member/member/misc/events/>.

**Joanne Stewart**

**Self Management Coordinator**

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## Members accessing on line services

We have been made aware of some possible confusion with access to our on line system and we thought it was worthwhile just reminding everyone about the steps involved.

Members have access to our system via secure login to the site. Once logged in you are able to renew membership, register for events, purchase WWX tickets if relevant, purchase raffle tickets and make donations. You can also view your payment history and print off your membership card at any time.

The simple steps are as follows:

To login please either go to our website [www.arthritisact.org.au](http://www.arthritisact.org.au) and click **MEMBER LOGIN** on the left hand side bar on the front page OR enter <https://www.arthritisact.org.au/member> in

your browser. Both of these options take you to the same login location. Once you have used this option for the first time perhaps you might like to save the location as a bookmark in your browser.

Once you have reached this page you need your user name and password to access the site. If you no longer have these details please give Michael or Tony a call on 6288 4244 and they will give this information to you. Once logged on there are instructions on each page to assist you, although if you get stuck at any point, please give us a call.

Also as a reminder, please feel free to call us to register for events make payments over the phone, send a cheque (please no cash in the mail) or drop in and make your payment over the counter.

## Consumers Beware!

A consumer is a buyer of goods or services. With Christmas and January sales now around most people will be a consumer in one way or another whether giving or receiving. A scam is a scheme for making money by dishonest means. The NSW Government Office of Fair Trading states- **'Every year 1:20 Aussies fall victim to scams'** ([www.fairtrading.nsw.org.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.org.au)). No doubt this statistic increases at this time of year.

At times it can be difficult to get reliable and knowledgeable information about particular brands of goods and services from companies. The information made available may depend on whether the product is new or an old favorite. The World Wide Web may be a great tool for shopping on but it is also fraught with risk. Many people will ask "What can I do to protect myself?"

Most importantly, as a consumer always be wary of who is providing services and products in the market place. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (also known as the ACCC) produces a publication called the **"The Little Black Book of Scams-Your guide to scams, swindles, rorts and rip-offs"** (2008) which can be downloaded at <http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/tag/TheLittleBlackBookOfScams08>.

One important myth is *Scams are always about money*. This is not always true. Some scams are aimed at stealing personal information from you. One important golden rule is *do not rely on glowing testimonials: find solid evidence of a company's success*.

These two facts are particularly pertinent to people living with musculoskeletal conditions. When living with debilitating physical conditions a sufferer will always look to a product or service to assist them to overcome or improve their well-being. When purchasing health care products, only purchase from a reputable licensed vendor and never send money to someone you don't know or trust. Always ensure you fully research the health care product you are about to purchase as well as the company trying to sell you the product.

Another useful site from the ACCC is SCAMwatch - a site to help you recognise, report and protect yourself from scams. Web address- [www.scamwatch.gov.au](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au).

**Enjoy your shopping this festive season but be vigilant.**



A recent incident at Arthritis ACT can be used to highlight how a bit of research and a quick phone call may save you money and your well being. A member rang the office to ask about a company who was trying to sell them a product which the company claimed would provide relief from pain associated with his arthritis. Arthritis ACT had no knowledge of the product or the company but decided to email all of the other Arthritis state bodies in Australia to see if they had knowledge of this company. The feedback from all the state offices was not encouraging. The company involved was known as a high pressure selling company without proven data on the product being promoted. The ACCC strongly encourages consumers of health products to be extremely careful.

For further helpful information regarding this topic contact your local Office of Fair Trading or visit the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) website – [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au).

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*10% discount for Arthritis ACT Members on presentation of this advertisement.*

# Falls Prevention

## Where to from now?

The Australian and New Zealand Falls Prevention Society writes that 'falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalisation in persons aged 65 years and over. Falls can also result in restriction of activity and fear of falling, reduced quality of life and independence. Even falls that do not result in physical injuries can result in the "post-fall syndrome" – a loss of confidence, hesitance, and tentativeness with resultant loss of mobility and independence'.

At the national and local community levels there are many falls prevention exercise programs available to the community. In Canberra information concerning Falls Prevention can be obtained from

- Community Health intake line – Phone No- 6207 9977
- The Canberra Hospital Falls and Balance Clinic - Phone No- 6244 2385
- Community Outreach Assessment Program-Falls Prevention- Phone No- 6205 5161.

In the last few years, Arthritis ACT, with the support of the ACT Health Promotion Program, has been running a falls prevention exercise program targeting people with known musculoskeletal conditions, including all types of arthritis and osteoporosis, for both land-based and water-based exercise programs. Thanks must be given to the volunteer exercise leaders; without their dedication and generous giving of their own time we would not be able to offer these programs.

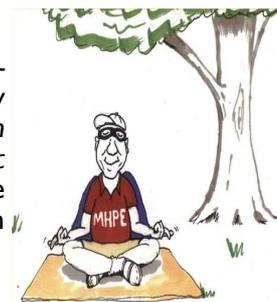
In the latter part of 2010, our current programs were reviewed by a professional physiotherapist and we decided to research, plan and implement an enhanced falls prevention exercise program in 2011. The programs will continue to be offered to members of Arthritis ACT but we will also aim to offer the programs to a greater community audience with musculoskeletal conditions.

In a review of literature supporting the importance of exercise in the management of musculoskeletal conditions, various sources note

*"General exercise is also recommended for people with OA, since such intervention shows positive effects in terms of reduced pain and improved function. The muscles contribute considerably to stabilizing the joints and, therefore, training targeting the specific needs related to the joint injury/disease has an important role in the treatment" (Ageberg et al, 2010, p5).*

*"Patients with rheumatoid arthritis have an increased risk of falls due to impairments in lower-extremity joints, which may result in either mobility, or postural stability problems. There is evidence in the literature suggesting balance, agility and coordination training techniques can induce*

*changes in lower-extremity muscle activity patterns that results in improvement in dynamic joint stability" (The Cochrane Collection 2010, p1).*



## So where to from now with the Falls Prevention Exercise program for Arthritis ACT.

In the last two weeks a meeting was held with the Faculty of Health at the University of Canberra with a view to commencing a relationship between the Faculty and Arthritis ACT for the academic year commencing March 2011.

Students undertaking postgraduate studies including physiotherapy and pharmacy will work with us as part of their academic learning and assessments requirements. We will review, assess, plan and implement land-based and water-based exercise programs aimed at falls prevention in people with musculoskeletal conditions, starting in mid April 2011.

## So how can the members of Arthritis ACT help?

The work to get these programs up and running is only half the battle of being successful. The other half of a successful plan is the inclusion of volunteers who would like to be involved in facilitation and,



Cnr Scollay St & Reed St North Tuggeranong ACT 2901,  
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Opening hours: Appointments Monday to Friday between 7am and 6pm

What can physiotherapy do for your Arthritis :-

<http://www.southsidephysio.com.au/images/stories/exercises/arthritismusculoskeletalconditions.pdf>

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most importantly, members of Arthritis ACT who would actively participate in the 2011 program.

This is my hope in this article asking members if they would be interested in supporting an expanded program. We would love to see the program reach out to the greater community in the future to target more people with musculoskeletal conditions .

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care provides comprehensive information to the community on facts about falls.

They say that **“multiple interventions tested in Australia that are effective in reducing the rate of falls include the following components: exercise, participant education and home safety. Multiple interventions as a population-based approach to preventing falls related injury are effective and can form the basis of public health practice.”**

**So we ask you to provide your suggestions and feedback to Arthritis ACT as we work together towards an enhanced and improved Falls Prevention Exercise Program for 2011.**

**Tony Holland, Chief Executive Officer, Arthritis ACT.**

REFERENCE LIST

Ageberg, E., Link, A., & Roos, E.M. (2010). Feasibility of neuromuscular training in patients with severe hip or knee OA: The individualized goal-based NEMEX-TJR training program. *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders* 2010, 11:126, p1-7.

The Cochrane Collection (2010, Issue 5). Balance training (proprioceptive training) for patients with rheumatoid arthritis (Review).

## WODEN Integrated Physiotherapy



**Liz Abbott**  
**Martin Pogson**  
**Maureen Bailey**  
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# Fundraising and Social Events Committee

Sadly the fund raising committee has been disbanded with the CEO now responsible for fund raising. Meetings will be held as needed. Please contact John Martin on 6251 5132 or Tony in the office if you are interested in helping with fund raising.

Our **Wine Tasting** was held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November and all who attended enjoyed a relaxed evening in convivial surroundings, tasting wines and enjoying the delicious nibbles. Our grateful thanks go to our Patron, Annette Ellis who did a wonderful job of presenting the wines and also to John Fitzgerald for his notes on the wines. We raised \$1031

The **Members Christmas Lunch** was held on 8th December 2010 with a very small number attending.

Thank you to all who supported our **Annual Raffle**.

**1st Prize: Giant Hamper** - Margaret Teece

**2nd Prize:** Ellen Venables

**3rd Prize:** Anna Camarotto

**4th Prize:** Julie Cochran

**Coming up in 2011**

The ever popular **Entertainment book** will again be available from late March.

After all this great rain, take the opportunity get your gardens looking wonderful for spring, we are having a **Bulb Drive again in early 2011**.

More details in the next newsletter on these and other events coming up during the year.

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## Ho Ho Ho—or not so?

For many people December is a whirlwind of activity in preparing for their Christmas festivities and summer holiday break.

Often it is a time for people to reflect on what the year has been like for them, with the good and the bad and everything else life throws at us at the crazy pace we seem to aspire to in this modern day. However for some people in the community this upcoming calendar of events signals a time of heartache and difficulties. Hence the title of this article signifies that for some people, and an ever growing number, Christmas and the summer holidays are not so HO HO HO.

On the Beyond Blue website Leonie Young, CEO of Beyond Blue, writes about the festive season

*“Many people build up to this time of year with great expectations only to face an anticlimax if their hopes aren’t fulfilled. Separation or divorce, or just being a long way from home, can bring back painful memories or create strong emotions”.*

As you are reading this article you may be thinking what has this to do with arthritis and osteoporosis?

Arthritis ACT supports people living with musculoskeletal conditions and assists people in their activities of daily living. Most people achieve this balance. It is well documented that unfortunately for some people living with chronic conditions like arthritis and osteoporosis, there is also a daily battle with depression, anxiety and stress. The Australian Department of Veterans’ Affairs writes

*“Living with a chronic condition can be a challenge- but you are still in control of your life. Being able to ‘self-manage’ a chronic condition, in partnership with health professionals, family, friends and carers, can minimize the severity of your symptoms and improve your quality of life”*

Unfortunately for some people with musculoskeletal conditions they do not have the support or relationship network to assist them. For these people Christmas and the holiday period can be the loneliest time of the year. Their activities of daily living are altered over the holiday period as organizations, exercise programs, support and social groups and carers take a well earned rest. A person in this position may feel very vulnerable.

So what can you do?

The Beyond Blue website provides a great deal of information to help people be aware of what emotions they may feel, strategies to help them and vital contact details for organizations that can assist.

Some practical tips include-

- Eat well, it is always easy at this time of year to indulge in the quality and quantity of foods that may not always be good for you. Enjoy your celebrations but don’t forget to get back to wholesome nutritious meals. This will benefit you financially as well.
- Remain active, the benefits of exercise in musculoskeletal conditions are well known by most people with these conditions. Enjoying some daily exercise that you like doing will help with motivation and emotions.
- Drink plenty of water. The Beyond Blue Fact Sheet 30 explains ‘Drinking plenty of water also helps prevent dehydration. Even mild dehydration can affect mood, causing irritability and restlessness’. Add a slice of lemon to make it more palatable.
- If possible maintain contact with family and friends. Even though distance may be a factor, if you can have communication contact regularly over the holiday period you may not feel so lonely and vulnerable.
- Be wise with alcohol. Having a drink may seem the easy way to hide from negative feelings but this false pretense is short term and may only make the situation seem worse.



- The Lifeline Tool Kit for Beating the Blues includes some other ideas like do something you enjoy. Over the festive break when a person's normal activities will be taking a break pick up a hobby or interest you have been putting off doing. If you achieve something you have wanted to do, give yourself a pat on the back for having a go.

There are many more practical tips and strategies available than we have space to print; however at the end of this article are the contact phone numbers and web addresses of local and national organizations that can assist you if required. The main point to remember is that you are not alone.

There is another point of view to focus on in this article. For the majority of us, Christmas and the summer holiday period will be a happy and exciting time shared with family and friends. The old saying that 'Christmas is a time of caring and sharing regardless of nationality, religion or conviction' may inspire us to assist a person we know who may be vulnerable and lonely at this time.

So what can we do?

Some points that I found when researching for this article include-

- Be the friend who regularly calls to see how the person is going.
- Perhaps organize an 'orphan's' Christmas get together for people who are away from their families at this time of year.
- Involve the person in some pre Christmas festivities i.e. visit a local Carols by Candlelight event or go for a walk together in some of Canberra's lovely open spaces.
- Simply drop in for a cup of tea and a chat.
- If it is a young mum you know perhaps offer to babysit so she can have some time to organise herself.
- Provide some inexpensive but healthy meals that the person can use over the Christmas break.
- Share knowledge about living with musculoskeletal conditions and your experiences that have helped you survive the Christmas period.

- Perhaps one of the most poignant ideas comes from the Lifeline Information Site website: "Be there for them: Spend time with the person and express your care and concern. Ask them how they are feeling, hear their pain and listen to what's on their mind. Let them do most of the talking"

The thought behind writing this article was not to bring a negative reading into the Newsletter but instead to highlight that Christmas and the summer break for the majority of people with musculoskeletal conditions is eagerly anticipated, celebrated and enjoyed. However for some people it is the most lonely and arduous days to finish the year with. If you know someone in this position and you can assist them in any way then please do so. It will not only make their Christmas brighter and more fulfilled, it will also make your Christmas seem more special too.

A thought I found on the internet

*'Christmas is forever, not just for one day  
for loving, sharing giving are not to put away  
like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf  
The good you do for others is good you do yourself*

(Norman Wesley Brooks "Let Every Day Be Christmas" 1976).

To all the members of Arthritis ACT have a Merry Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Break and a special thank you to all the volunteers and members I have met in the last three months during my time with Arthritis ACT.

**Laura Calligaro, Educator.**

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#### Reference list of local and national organizations that may be of further assistance.

1. Lifeline is a 24 hour service that offers support services and resources. Tel: 131114, Web: [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
2. MensLine Australia is a unique telephone support information and referral service, helping men to deal with relationship problems, the service is available 24 hours. Tel: 1300 789 978, Web: [www.menslineaus.org.au](http://www.menslineaus.org.au)
3. Beyond Blue Information line provides access to information and referrals to relevant services for depression and anxiety related matters. Tel: 1300 22 46 36, Web: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
4. Kids Helpline is a free 24 hour counseling service for Australian kids and young people aged 5-25 years. Tel: 1800 55 1800, Web: [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)
5. The Salvation Army - Salvo Care Line is a 24 hour telephone counseling service staffed by trained Christian telephone counselors. Tel: 1300 36 3622, Web: [www.salvos.org.au/salvocareline/](http://www.salvos.org.au/salvocareline/)
6. Healthdirect Australia is a free 24 hour telephone health advice line Tel: 1800 022 222, Web: [www.healthdirect.org.au](http://www.healthdirect.org.au)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## December

**Office Closure - Christmas & New Year**  
Closes: Friday, 24th December 2010

### **WWX Pools**

**Canberra Hospital Closes: 22 December**

**Calvary John James Closes: 20 December**

**Club MMM! Closes: 22 December**

**Black Mountain School Closes: 16 December**

## January 2011

**Monday 17 Office reopens**

### **WWX Pools**

**Canberra Hospital Opens: 17 January**

**Calvary John James Opens: 31 January**

**Club MMM! Opens: 2nd February**

**Black Mountain School Opens: 7th February**

## February

**Monday 7 Arthritis Support Group**  
Time: 10.30am – 12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

**Thursday 10 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**  
Time: 10.30am – 12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

**Saturday 12 Young Adults Group**  
Time:  
Venue:  
Contact: Steve 0431 107 543

**Wednesday 16 – Friday 18**  
Display at Westfield Shopping Centre Woden

**Thursday 17 Chronic Conditions Alliance Pain Management**  
Venue: SHOUT, Pearce Centre, Collett Place Pearce  
Time: 7.00pm – 8.30pm  
Guest Speaker: Randolph Sparks, Psychologist – Capital Rehabilitation & Pain Management Centre

## March

**Friday 4 Living a Healthy Life Course**  
(over six weeks)  
Venue: SHOUT, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place Pearce  
Time: 7.00 to 8.30 pm

**Monday 7 Arthritis Support Group**  
Time: 10.30am – 12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

**Wednesday 9 Arthritis Expo at Gungahlin**

**Thursday 10 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**  
Time: 10.30am – 12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

**Saturday 12 Young Adults Group**  
Time/ Venue: TBA  
Contact: Steve 0431 107 543

**Wednesday 16 Arthritis Expo at Tuggeranong**

**Thursday 17 Chronic Conditions Alliance Dealing with Depression**  
Venue: SHOUT, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place Pearce  
Time: 7.00pm – 8.30pm  
Guest Speaker: Kathy Griffiths – Centre for Mental Health Research, ANU

**Friday 18 Challenging Pain Workshop**  
Time: 9.30am – 12noon  
Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street Holder



'The girls having fun at the Rheumatoid and Sjogrens Support Group Christmas Party'.