

President's report

2014/15 has seen the Arthritis ACT Board review the strategic direction of the organization, ensuring we remain relevant and proactive within the ACT region, improving the wellbeing of the 1:5 people in the region living with arthritis. We are resolute in our vision, and our guiding principles ensure we deliver on this vision.

We have worked in the ACT region community for almost 40 years, delivering evidenced based, people focused programs and services. In the ACT there are some 70,000 people affected by Arthritis and 12,000 by Osteoporosis. Our trusted information and education services, quality programs and support networks are there specifically to help those living with, and those at risk of, musculoskeletal disease. We are also instrumental in educating the medical and allied health providers of the region to gain a better understanding of the issues that affect our consumers, providing up to date, evidenced based information and education sessions to again improve the wellbeing of the end service user. Arthritis ACT is an organization that is here to help the ACT Region Community.

Anna Hackett, President

Message from the CEO

At Arthritis ACT our community is our purpose for being. We offer a range of services to help improve your musculoskeletal health, and in doing so, we aim to create relationships which will nurture and support you in your journey with your chronic pain condition.

People are the central focus of our work at Arthritis ACT, and we are continuously striving to both improve your quality of life, and improve the relationship you have with Arthritis ACT as an organization. This year we have commenced a number of new initiatives to help improve the lives of those from the Canberra region. Strength and Balance classes offer a land based gentle exercise program designed especially for persons with reduced mobility and range of movement due to the effects of musculoskeletal disease. Take Charge of Pain, a 2 session course which helps you learn to adapt your lifestyle around living with chronic pain to ensure you can gain the best possible outcomes in life, is offered regularly and on demand.

Arthritis ACT is an organization that responds to its community, and we encourage you to keep connected with us.

Rebecca Davey, CEO

Improving the wellbeing of our community

Warm Water Exercise (WWX)

Thousands of hours of warm water exercise is undertaken through the Arthritis ACT WWX program annually, both relieving pain and discomfort in aching joints and muscles, and improving joint mobility, leading to increased mobility and stability of participants. Regular WWX is beneficial in the rehabilitation of joints after joint surgery, and for many, prolongs the life of joints, reducing the need for surgery, and in doing so, reducing the cost of joint replacement surgery on the health budget. Most importantly for many, is the friendships that occur as a result of the time in the pool with other people. For many of our participants, the friendships and networks formed in during WWX become the friendship and support networks they continue outside of the pool.

Strength and Balance

Strength and balance exercise classes were a new initiative at Arthritis ACT during this year. These popular classes were initially aimed at those members who could no longer attend WWX, or for whom WWX was not an option, but have quickly become an adjunct to WWX for many. Classes involve a circuit of exercises overseen by a fitness instructor who can assist in modifying exercises to suit the mobility of the participant.

Tai Chi

The gentle, stabilizing art of Tai Chi is practiced at the Holder offices of Arthritis ACT each school term. Tai Chi has been proven to have a beneficial affect on arthritic joints, and gentle nature of the exercise assists the participant who may be at risk of falls and fractures with their stability.

Take Charge of Pain

Devised by Arthritis SA in conjunction for Flinders University, 'Take Charge of Pain' is a 2 session course that assists the participant to regain and retain their control over their chronic pain. Focusing on pacing, diversion techniques, mental and physical wellbeing, 'Take Charge of Pain' participants go on a journey where they get to set their own goals for their lives and truly regain control over their own destiny.

Dietetic Clinic

Our accredited dietitian is available for one on one consultations to those needing further support with weight and nutritional issues.

Partnering with our community



Our partners in the community are essential to ensuring our work can continue. In particular we acknowledge:

Our major funder, ACT Health Directorate, provides the base funding to our organization which allows us to directly impact on people's lives and wellbeing.



Mobility Matters not only provide Arthritis ACT with valuable sponsorship, but also assist us at many of our community functions and provide valued goods and services to our community.



The Australian Pharmacy Group not only support Arthritis ACT but also provide an essential referral point to our community when seeking a pharmacist's support in medication management.



Moray & Agnew Lawyers provide the association with legal assistance as needed allowing us to channel our funds into community programs.



Lollipops Playland & Café have provided our JIA playgroup a home, bringing children, parents and other supports together to assist those affected by JIA.

Our People

Our members are the people that craft our association, continuously moulding our being to be responsive to the needs of the ACT community. Our members are our most credible reflection of our work, when our members are connected to us as an organisation, we flourish. We seek constant feedback from our members in order to better meet their needs, and we aim to provide services which are not only responsive to the needs of our membership, but also pre-emptive of future issues that affect the lives and wellbeing of not just our members but also the extended Canberra region community.

Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are essential to our programs. Our WWX program is lead entirely by volunteer pool supervisors. The supervisors not only ensure the safety of our participants, they create the community around the pool session that extends into the community. Our Strength and Balance classes are volunteer lead. We have volunteers assisting us with administration, community talks and raising the profile of the association.

Our support groups

Our support groups are an essential link in the feedback loop between the Canberra region community and the organisation.

Our fundraisers

Raising funds to ensure the ongoing growth of the organisation is essential. Arthritis ACT in particularly thank the Victoria Shakespeare Trust for their generous donation, and the Austrian Choir Canberra for their ongoing commitment through their annual fundraising concert.

Our Board

Our association is lead by a volunteer Board according to the *Associations Incorporation Act*. Board members are elected for 2 year terms by the membership, and maintain fiduciary oversight, ensuring we are an organisation that can continue to serve the community into the future.

Our Staff

Our paid staff are small in number but large in both life experience and professional expertise that they bring to the organisation and in turn, the Canberra region community.

Information Available to the Community

Arthritis ACT has an extensive range of information booklets and sheets available both online and in hard copy.



Awareness Raising



Arthritis Awareness week 2015 brought the awareness to the community that 'kids get arthritis too'. This message was picked up by local and national media and Arthritis ACT and members of the JIA support group helped share the work at Parliament House, Canberra, and through a twitter campaign with local and national members of Parliament.

Arthritis ACT launched it's first ever Bone Health Awareness Day campaign with an awareness raising walk around Lake Burley Griffin. Participants came dressed in their best Halloween costumes and the event was officially launched by Arthritis ACT Ambassador Jeremy Hanson MLA.



Annual Report 2014/15



**Improving the wellbeing of people with
Arthritis
Osteoporosis
and other musculoskeletal conditions**