

Message from the President

Over the last 12 months, the Board has focused on ensuring the Foundation is relevant to our member's needs. We have sought feedback from our members and the wider community as to what it is the community need from us, and we have invested our energies in providing this support to the community. Our Foundation can only be relevant when our Board focus' on the needs of our community. I thank the Board, our CEO, our staff and our volunteers for their commitment to ensuring we all remain focused on our mission—to improve the lives of those living with musculoskeletal ill-health and disability in our region.

The success of Arthritis ACT would not be possible without the contribution of volunteers. These generous and committed people donate their time to help deliver our programs and we could not operate without your generosity.

Carol Mead, President

Message from the CEO

Arthritis ACT has this year celebrated its 40th year of service to the ACT community. That is, 40 years of delivering evidenced based, people focused programs and services to the 90,000 people affected by Arthritis and 12,000 by Osteoporosis in the ACT. We focus our energies on the whole person, ensuring our customers are cared for socially, emotionally as well as physically.

We are grateful to our members and stakeholders who provide us with so much valuable feedback as to the needs of the community. We build our programs around the needs of the community, and your willingness to work with us has allowed us to build a suite of programs which are having meaningful impact across the community.

This year we have been fortunate to secure extra funding through Health Promotion to undertake extended Strength and Balance programs across Canberra. We also thank The Shakespeare Family Trust for their generous donation, which allows us to offer tailored sessions to those in need. We have also received additional assistance through student placements from the University of Canberra that have assisted us to spread our work further into the community. It is partnerships such as our clinical placement partnership with the University that help keep us relevant as well as enabling future health workers to understand the needs of the community.

Thank you to each and everyone of our members for all that you assist us to do in the community.

Rebecca Davey, CEO

Improving the well-being 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 during WWX become the friendship and support networks they continue outside of the pool.

Strength and Balance

Strength and balance exercise classes have become a major reason for people coming to Arthritis ACT. Our classes operate on a 10 week cycle, with the program devised by our physiotherapist, and all participants are screened before the program and at the end of the 10 weeks to assess their progress.

Tai Chi

Due to the support of the Shakespeare Family Trust and the generous donations of our members throughout the year, Tai Chi for falls prevention has practiced across Canberra over the year. 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.

Pain support services

We have initiated a suite of programs throughout the year to assist people dealing with long term, chronic pain and the life changes brought about through this. 'Take Charge of Pain', 'Meditation for Pain Relief', 'A Carers Road to Wellbeing' and 'Thinking and Feeling Good' have all been providing Canberrans with support to deal with their pain.

Yoga

Our accredited yoga practitioner Eli Haski undertakes both 'chair' and active yoga modes to both increase joint movement and to encourage relaxation as a form of pain control and distraction from pain.

Living with a life long disability

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The Foundation has commenced working as a registered provider of NDIS services. Additionally, we have been fortunate to win a small grant through the ILC grants process, allowing us to extend services to community members both caring for those living with, and/or living with disability, to work through the social and emotional impacts of the disability and to connect to a stronger support network to help them to achieve an ordinary life.

Dietetic Clinic

Our dietetic clinic has worked with GP services, disability communities as well as our own membership to improve individual's nutritional and health status. In addition, our Dietitian's have delivered many hours of community education to various community groups assisting our community to improve their gut health and knowledge of healthy eating patterns.

Allied Health Support

We have had many people utilize the services of our physiotherapist. This year we have added Occupational Therapy support through student placements from the University of Canberra as well as increased hydrotherapy and land based exercise support through our Exercise Physiology students.

Thank you for your donations

We thank the following for their considerable donations this year: The Victoria Shakespeare Trust, Pamela Ray, Virginia Brown, John Cooper, John Fitzgerald, Steven Norris, Nicholle Marks, Jennifer Rowland, Angela Brown, John Doherty, Lynette Irvine, Jessie Terry, Helen Cody, Aurelio Frammantino, Alleeta French, Jennifer Parmeshwar, Tom Tyrell, Margaret Smith, Jennifer Brooks, Yvonne Bullen, Julie Cochran, Phyll Dance, Justin Eckersley, Sandra Fenwick, Keith Gray, Christine Hennessy, Jane Hyden, Noel Karpinnen, Linda Klintworth, Sally Koodiaroff, Robyn Martin, Pauline McDonough, Belinda Moss, Barbara Petersen, Sumathi Ranjitkumar, Betty Robertson, Ian Ross, Paddy Sly, Linda Spurrier, Margaret Williams, Gemma Wilson, Beverly Wood, Derek Travers, Dixie Town, Hazel Taylor, Grace Sugden, Nea Storey, Erika Stokes, Denise Spratt, T&W Sicklen, Pam Rosser, Bogdanka Radovanovic, Mark Quinlivan, Janet O'Connell, Hella Mundy, June Mo, Diana Mildern, Dermid McGrath, Margaret McAuslin, Denise Manley, Carol MacKay, Ron Lees, Anne Kelly, Elpis Kostakos, Jeanne Khlovdhal, Jan Jolly, Vlad Gubas, Dawn Heinz, Tony Fearnside

Our People

The 2016/17 year has seen our membership grow by more than 20%! 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. We have volunteers assisting us with administration, land based exercise 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 particular thank the Victoria Shakespeare Trust for their generous donation, and the ACT Austrian Choir for performing for a record 20th year in 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.

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. This year we have also

been fortunate to win grants through the Health Promotions Branch which have allowed us to extend our Strength and Balance program and undertake an innovation project in conjunction with the University of Canberra to provide better information to those living with Arthritis on their exercise parameters.



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.



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

2016/17 in a snapshot

- 5800 hrs of warm water exercise have been undertaken
- 1180 hrs of strength and balance exercise have occurred
- 2000 hrs of volunteer support were provided
- 1213 people gained individual support and advice via our helpline
- 10,000 newsletters were distributed throughout the community
- 125 general practices were engaged with to improve community understanding of musculoskeletal health.
- 100 hrs of community talks were delivered to improve community understanding of musculoskeletal health.



Annual Report 2016/17



**Improving the wellbeing of people with
Arthritis
Osteoporosis
and other musculoskeletal conditions
across the ACT region.**