

The logo for Arthritis ACT features the word "Arthritis" in a large, blue, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a cluster of blue dots of varying sizes, arranged in a roughly circular pattern. Below the word "Arthritis" is a thin horizontal line, followed by the text "AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the logo is the website address "www.arthritisact.org.au" in a blue, sans-serif font.

Arthritis
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
www.arthritisact.org.au

Annual Report 2017/18

We exist to improve the quality of life of people who have, or are at risk of developing, musculoskeletal and pain conditions

The logo for Build a Better Me features a stylized graphic of three human figures in red, orange, and yellow, arranged in a curve. Below the graphic is the text "build a better me" in a black, sans-serif font. Underneath this is a thin horizontal line, followed by the text "2 PROGRAMS, 1 OUTCOME - A BETTER YOU." in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the logo is the website address "www.buildabetterme.com.au" in a red, sans-serif font.

build a better me
2 PROGRAMS, 1 OUTCOME - A BETTER YOU.
www.buildabetterme.com.au

Vision

A community where there is fair and equitable access to support for all living with musculoskeletal and pain conditions.

Mission

To provide dynamic services, contribute to the evidence base, promote disease prevention and management, advocate for and improve the health and wellbeing of people with musculoskeletal and pain conditions in the ACT and surrounding regions.

Our Values

These guiding values govern how Arthritis ACT pursues its mission.

Caring - in how we deal with others

Empowering – in assisting people to self-manage their condition

Inclusive – in providing members with the opportunity to be involved and influence

Relevant – in providing services and activities that people want and need

Realistic – in what we can accomplish

Professional – in how we operate

2017/18 in a Snapshot

- ✓ 5,188 hrs of warm water exercise have been undertaken
- ✓ 321 hrs of strength and balance exercise have occurred
 - ✓ 1,969 hrs of volunteer support were provided
- ✓ 6,358 people gained individual support and advice via our helpline
 - ✓ 13,816 newsletters were distributed throughout the community
 - ✓ 126 general practices were engaged with to improve community understanding of musculoskeletal health.
 - ✓ 25hrs of community talks were delivered to improve community understanding of musculoskeletal health.
 - ✓ 408 hrs of one on one support provided

Message from the President

Over the last 12 months, the Board has actively moved from planning a better future to supporting the Foundation to be a viable and vital organisation. Over the years the needs of the members change as new digital technologies become available and we have found that Arthritis ACT is not needed as a repository of written information for our service users as it once was. We have a global repository of digital information which now fills that role which enables Arthritis ACT needs to be a practical organisation that supports individuals, groups and communities to improve their health status.

There is a risk for all Boards to spend time focussing inwards on their own performance and to forget the purpose of the organisation for which they work. To this end the Board has revisited the Strategic Plan for the organisation this year and the guiding principles were 'how can we make peoples and communities lives better'. We have reviewed the fundamental statements of our organisation and have ensured that it is our service users who are prioritised. It is for our community that we exist, and our key guiding documents now reflect our purpose.

This year has seen practical change occur within the Foundation. Our move to the University of Canberra was a strategic move for a number of reasons. We needed to be aligned with centres of research and academic excellence in the areas that we most work. It was also important for the Board to have our organisation housed in a more professional location. Our previous location at Grant Cameron Building in Holder had an infrastructure only worked part time, including the lift system, which was extremely problematic for our clients for access. The building resembled the school of the 1980's that the building was without any money allocated to refurbishment or improving the structure and elements to make it appropriate for our use. Our clients are worthy of a professional suite of offices to attend, to participate in our programs and to seek assistance and professional services.

To our Board I thank you for your commitment and expertise throughout the year. Through your input and direction I believe that Arthritis ACT has grown this year and is now fulfilling its important role in the community.

To Rebecca Davey – CEO, thank you for your drive, focus and amazing foresight and vision, especially with the work as an NDIS provider. Your work is appreciated not only by the Board and staff, but by the clients and community at large.

And finally, I certainly want to thank our many volunteers and staff, for all that you do to improve the lives of those living with Arthritis, Musculoskeletal conditions and pain conditions. Our community depends on the vital services that Arthritis ACT delivers, and our health system is well served by the pain support activities that we deliver, keeping people out of the hospital system.

Carol Mead
Chair

Message from the CEO

2017/18 has been a very busy year at Arthritis ACT. It is the year that we have really transitioned from a health information organisation to a practical, allied health services and intervention organisation which provides meaningful and practical support to our community. The move to the University of Canberra has enabled us to be more mobile within the community. It has created a greater profile for Arthritis ACT, and has allowed us to be involved in many levels of conversation about the impact of musculoskeletal conditions and pain on our community.

The inclusion of our various allied health specialities have provided opportunities for so many more members of our community to access quality support for their pain and musculoskeletal conditions. This year started with limited dietetic and physiotherapy lead classes, and has ended with a full suite of allied health including counselling, exercise physiology and occupation therapy on top of the physiotherapy and dietetic services which have become more developed to the needs of our particular community. We have also been able to incorporate allied health students in all areas of our disciplines which is important for the community. This not only educates our next generations of allied health workers as to the particular needs of our community, it also allows our members to gain top quality support for a low cost. This is important for people living on reduced incomes as we know most living with musculoskeletal and pain conditions do. It is important that we keep working to breach the inequity between the haves and the have-nots in our health system.

Financial stability is essential for our organization. This year we have been able to operate our extremely popular Strength and Balance classes to the extent that we have because of donations from our community. We especially thank Victoria Shakespeare Trust for their generous donation which made such a difference in allowing us to extend Strength and Balance as well as to be able support those in our community who cannot contribute to the exercise and allied health support that they so desperately need. We also received a couple of bequests that allowed us to further stretch the Government funding that we receive, and for which we are very grateful.

I would like to thank all the members of our staff team who have worked so hard this year as we have focused on improving the services we offer to the Canberra community as a whole, and especially our own members. **Michael Farr**, our office manager, has many years of service with the organisation and remains our essential barer of both corporate knowledge but also with lived experience, provides credible and understanding advice to everyone who calls or walks in the door. **Erica Roughton, Linda Smilie and Tina McGrath** made dietetic support practical and attainable for so many in our community.

Jacqui Couldrick and Gwen Estigoy have become a formidable force in land based exercise, further enhancing and spreading themselves beyond belief in order to provide as much support to our community through strength and balance as they possibly could. No one ever sees Jacqui sit down! **Jan Jolly** has lead our community through dedicated counselling support as well as running our NDIS supported carers and self-carers programs which allowed people the time to work together to improve their connections in the community as well as improving their own lives. **Sophie Bullock** came to work with us following a successful student placement with us and has allowed for so many more people to gain support both in the pool as well as on land through exercise. **Jacqui Luff** joined us as the year was drawing to an end to provide support for probably our last great area of need – occupational therapy. We have been well supported by our keen office volunteers **Jane Young** who undertakes much of our membership renewal work, and the wonderful **Anna Earnshaw** who puts her hand up to do anything from compiling mail outs to sorting out 40th anniversary celebrations!

The final, but greatest, thanks from me this year goes to our pool supervisors and the 'TCH Pool Users Gang'. With the opening of the UCH hospital and pool in July, we had been informed that all hydrotherapy services would be moved out of the TCH pool. The TCH pool is a vital piece of infrastructure in Canberra's South, and the community needed it to stay. The fight is not over, and I know the 'gang' will keep working on keeping this infrastructure in place. It is a facility that by the end of the financial year was almost fully subscribed for all its sessions, but it is not only the numbers of people using the pool, it is the community they have created, reducing social isolation, improving their mental health and just simply being there for each other, that is to be applauded. Arthritis ACT would not be able to do what it does for the community without people such as you. Thank you.

Rebecca Davey
CEO

Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are essential to our programs. Our WWX program is growing into more than just self-lead exercise sessions, but for many who utilise the program, this is what they need. The volunteer supervisors not only ensure the safety of our participants, they create the community around the pool session that extends into the community.

Our support groups

Our support groups are an essential link in the feedback loop between the Canberra region

community and the organisation. As we move into the new financial year we have started working on creating a peer mentor program which will enhance the support group network and provide supports to those who cannot for many reasons access the existing groups.

Our Board

Our association is led 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 Board members during 2017/18 were:

Chair: Ms Carol Mead

Deputy Chair: Ms Jenni Gough

Secretary: Ms Linda Spurrier

Treasurer: Mr Andrew Fleming

Members: Dr Vicki Evans, Mr Bjarne Kragh, Ms Sarah McKenzie-McHarg, Ms. Pam Rosser and Ms Biljana Zeljkovic.

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.

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.

The programme continues to grow in popularity with more than 353 members participating in 913 sessions during the last financial year. Sessions continue to be held at The Canberra Hospital in Garran, John James Hospital in Deakin, Black Mountain School in O'Connor, University of Canberra Hospital in Bruce, and we are grateful to have secured extra

sessions at the very popular Club MMM! in Belconnen.

This program would not be possible without the expert volunteer team that support our program participants. Our volunteer supervisors including: **Heather Warfield, Aurelio Frammartino, Linda Klintworth, Sheena Ashwell, Purnima Haria, Alan Mackay, Vladimir Gubas, Yen Minh Maclean, Rebecca Davey, Pauline McDonough, Sue Haviv, Janice Rudd, Robyn Martin, Jennifer Martiniello, Angela Saari, Anita Eastwell, Amornrat (Amanda) Chanatrutipphan, Barbara Blake, Christine Freudenstein, Tadeusz Matuszkiewicz & Roy Pinas.** Session supervisors continue to receive Pool Rescue Certification and CPR training from Australian Royal Life Saving to maintain adequate pool safety at all sessions.

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. Over this year major reviews of the data collated over the past 2 years of Strength and Balance have been undertaken with results due in the next financial year expected to show significant improvement in falls prevention amongst participants.

Tai Chi

Tai Chi for falls prevention is practiced across Canberra during the school term. Tai Chi has been proven to have a beneficial effect on arthritic joints, and gentle nature of the exercise assists the participant who may be at risk of falls and fractures with their stability.

Dietetic Clinic

This year we have commenced offering dedicated dietetic services to our member base. These one on one consultations with our resident Accredited Practicing Dietitian have helped our members not only improve their nutritional status, but have also helped them to achieve their own goals for improving weight management, and through referral into exercise programs, becoming more active through structured exercise, and improve their pain management.

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.

Exercise Physiology

This year we have been delighted to invite Sophie Bullock to work with us to provide extended offerings to our members assisting them to improve their ability to exercise. This has had an added value to new clients who have not had to seek out a private provider to prescribe an exercise regime to participate in WWX, but instead have been able to utilize our own service.

In addition, Sophie worked with many of our clients as she worked towards her Honours study on hydrotherapy and falls prevention.

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 organisation which allows us to directly impact on people's lives and wellbeing. This was also our second year of funding through Health Promotions to support Strength and Balance.

Treasurer's Report

The Foundation recorded a Net Profit of \$49,388 for the year ended 30 June 2018 after recording a Net Profit of \$939 in the previous year and remains in a strong financial position with Funds available for future use totaling \$569,085 including Cash and short-term interest-bearing deposits of \$348,359 and Investments totaling \$294,508 as at 30 June 2018.

Included in the financial result for the year was the receipt of bequests totaling \$40,445 and the Foundation is extremely grateful to the individuals concerned.

In addition to the bequests, Arthritis ACT received \$498,349 in Revenue which represented an 11% increase over the previous year. As in past years the main source of revenue was the base funding grant from the ACT Health Directorate worth \$305,507 and as noted last year the 3-year base funding grant from the Territory government extends through until 30 June 2019.

Fee for Service, which commenced in the prior year, recorded revenue of \$27,376 which represented an increase of 82% over the prior year. This covers services including Dietetic clinics, Physiotherapy clinics, Yoga and Strength and Balance courses which have proved very popular with our members. In addition, we received Donations of \$27,108 which also showed a significant increase on the previous year.

Revenue from Warm Water Exercises remained in line with prior years at \$35,926 as was Membership Subscriptions at \$18,621 while Fund raising, Other Grants and Sponsorship showed reductions from the previous year and other revenue captions showed minor changes in comparison with the prior year.

Income from investment and Other income increased this year. Investments and cash not required in the short term was again managed by the professional financial management firm appointed in mid-2015 to manage the investment of the Foundation's surplus funds in accordance with our Investment policy and risk appetite. This ensures that the funds are being well protected while also producing good returns.

All expenditure was again very carefully managed this year and Total Expenditure in the year of \$504,174 was restricted to a 6% increase on the previous year of \$475,282 with the main increase being employment expense which rose by 16% to \$359,817 mainly to ensure the necessary resources were in place to perform the services required for the Fee for Service activities. Reductions in Professional Fees and Marketing Expenses partially offset the increase in Employment Expenses to

ensure the overall increase in Expenditure was minimized. All other costs were in line with the previous year or showed minor increases.

As in previous years, the Revenue generated in the year has enabled the organisation to;

- deliver information services about arthritis, osteoporosis and related conditions to the ACT and region community;
- provide educational and training opportunities for health professionals and peer educators to enhance their capacity to prevent and reduce the impact of arthritis, osteoporosis and related conditions;
- deliver a range of self-management and support services designed to improve the health and quality of life for people affected by arthritis, osteoporosis and related conditions;
- raise community awareness about arthritis, osteoporosis and related conditions through health promotion programs; and
- encourage and contribute to research and promote the role of Arthritis ACT to the community.

Over the past year we have further improved the efficiency and effectiveness of financial controls and reporting by contracting an outsourced financial company to provide a full suite of financial services including monthly and annual financial reporting, forecasting and budgeting, provision of relevant information to the tax authorities, and providing advice on the Board Finance Committee.

As in prior years the Financial Statements for the year were fully audited by an authorised audit company. While the Foundation is not required to have an audit performed on the annual financial results, the Board believes that this is imperative to ensure good governance and provide evidence that the financial resources of the Foundation are being properly and prudently managed. The auditors again this year issued an unqualified audit report on the financial position and results of the Foundation which you will find later in this Annual Report.

The organisation cannot achieve its goals without significant financial assistance from fund raising contributions and gifts and the Foundation sincerely thanks all who donated so generously during the year.

Importantly, from a financial perspective, there is an enormous contribution made by the personnel and volunteers whose efforts are not reflected in the financial statements but who warrant special mention. Without their generous giving of time, achievement of the goals described above would not have been possible. We wish to acknowledge the significant benefit to Arthritis ACT of these unpaid efforts.

In summary, the Foundation has further developed and matured over the last year and continues to be well placed to build on its existing delivery of programs and services in 2018/19.

Andrew Fleming

Treasurer

