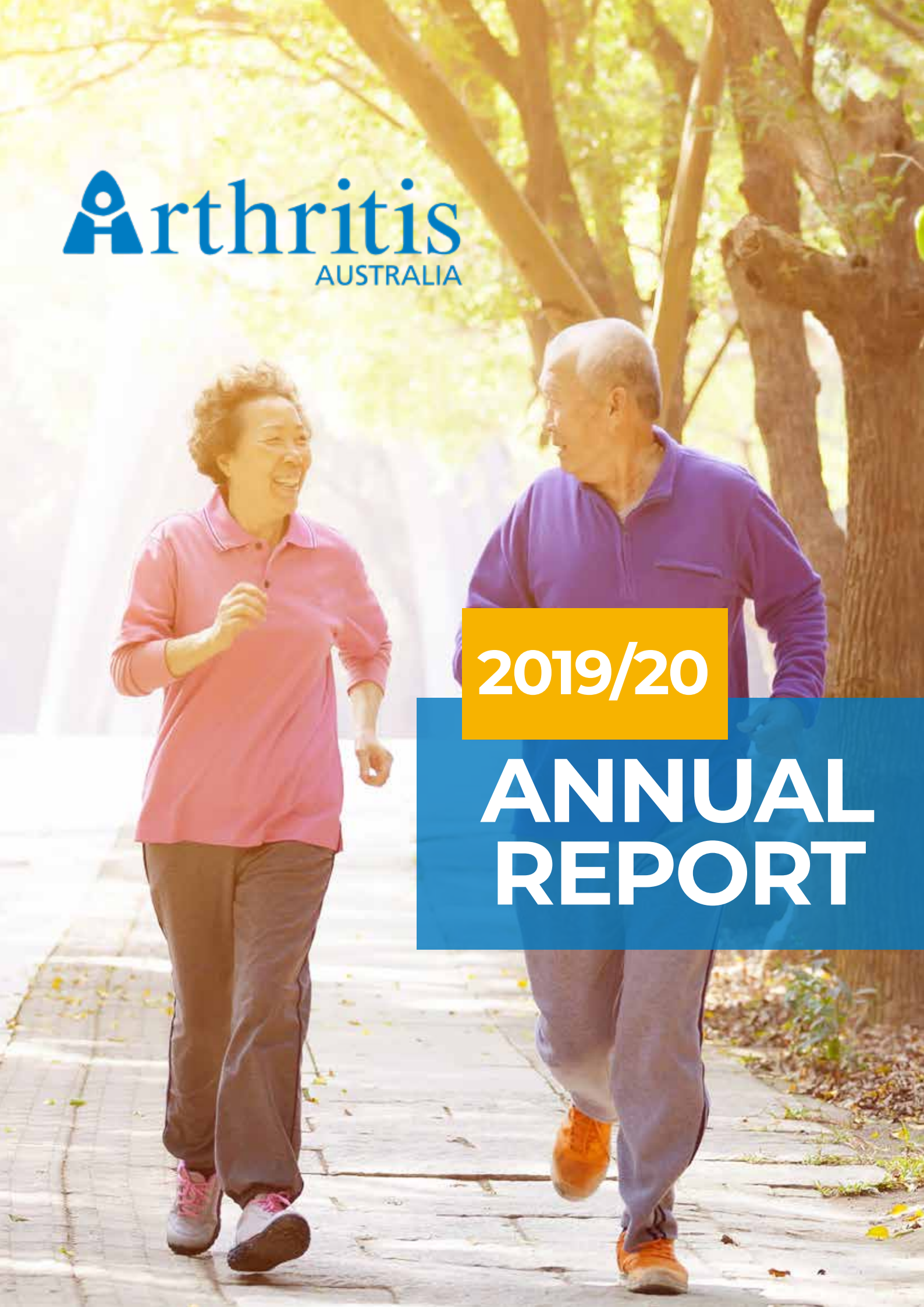
Arthritis AUSTRALIA



2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

Contents

01 A message from our Chair

02 A message from our CEO

04 About us

05 Highlights

06 Consumer support

10 Advocacy

13 Research

18 Partnerships

20 Sustainabilty

22 Board & Governance

25 Financial overview

29 Donors & Sponsors

31 Arthritis information & contacts

32 Future direction

32 Our team

1. A message from our Chair

Kristine Riethmiller
Arthritis Australia Chair

I am pleased to present this Annual Report outlining Arthritis Australia's activities in a year of achievements and progress towards our vision of freedom from arthritis. While there were many challenges for the whole community arising from natural disasters, bushfires, and the pandemic, we were pleased to be able to facilitate a greatly increased level of support to the arthritis community.

Together with Affiliate state and territory arthritis organisations, we delivered an innovative range of programs and services that allowed us to connect with many more people with arthritis to provide timely and reliable information and support during challenging times.

New initiatives that attracted strong interest and high levels of engagement included:

- Targeted information campaigns including a suite of arthritis-specific resources on COVID-19, and a national arthritis awareness radio campaign
- The roll-out of an evidence-based activity program, The Joint Movement, to help people with arthritis exercise safely
- Innovative new condition-specific websites for people with rheumatoid arthritis and low back pain, linking consumers with information, disease-specific resources and services available in their local area.

These outcomes were achieved by effective collaboration across the Affiliate arthritis organisations, and through the generous support of our sponsors as well as a project grant from the Commonwealth government.

In a major highlight, this year also saw the first steps towards implementing the *National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis*. Funding has been secured to deliver some activities over the next four years. It will be essential, however, to secure much more funding over the coming years to implement the next stages of the Action Plan.

Over the coming year we will focus on:

- Rolling out new online information resources
- Co-ordinating nationally funded Arthritis Action Plan projects
- Strengthening the role and impact of our consumer, scientific and Affiliate advisory groups.

I would like to thank the hard-working staff and volunteers of the Affiliates, as well as our own staff, who all worked tirelessly to produce new resources and co-ordinate additional programs and activities while keeping up with their existing work responsibilities.

I would also like to thank the many dedicated medical specialists, health professionals and national health organisations who partnered with us to advance our activities. We are enormously grateful for the contributions of all these individuals and organisations and their commitment to supporting the arthritis community.

2. A message from our CEO

Andrew Mills
Arthritis Australia CEO

Over the past twelve months the Arthritis Australia team achieved significant successes, as well as responding to the many and varied challenges brought about by severe bushfires, flooding, and COVID-19.

In July 2019 we began to roll out The Joint Movement physical activity program for seniors with funding from a Better Ageing grant from Sport Australia. This program is being delivered in collaboration with Affiliated state and territory arthritis organisations across Australia. The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions saw our partner organisations quickly pivot from face-to-face to online delivery of the activities. The program is a wonderful example of cross-border collaboration and we congratulate the participating Affiliates for their success in adapting the delivery of the program in response to the pandemic restrictions.

The office of Arthritis Australia, as well as most of the Affiliated arthritis organisations, was closed in response to the restrictions arising from COVID-19, with staff working remotely from home. The Arthritis Australia team responded without fuss to the challenges of the new working arrangements, maintaining all day-to-day operations as well as supporting the delivery and implementation of new programs and activities.

I am pleased to report that following the successful launch of the *National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis*, the Australian Government awarded Arthritis Australia three major grants, collectively valued at four million dollars. These grants will support a number of activities set out in the Action Plan, including enhanced arthritis support programs, information resources and education programs. We greatly appreciate this funding but it is only a start and significant additional funding will be required in future. We will continue to advocate for greater investment in appropriate services and supports for people living with the impact of arthritis, as well as research into cure and better care.

In a major achievement, and in line with our strategy of providing tailored information and support to people with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, we launched two innovative new condition-specific websites during the year:

- MyRA.org.au, for people with rheumatoid arthritis, is designed to provide reliable evidence-based content tailored to an individual's needs, and was developed in partnership with the Australian Rheumatology Association.

- MyBackPain.org.au provides detailed, trustworthy and up-to-date information on managing low back pain and was developed with extensive input from experts and individuals living with low back pain.

We are grateful to all those people, organisations and sponsors who supported the development of these ground-breaking websites. With the success of these sites, we are working to develop similar sites to support people with other types of arthritis in future.

In closing, I want to express my sincere thanks to the Board and team at Arthritis Australia, and the arthritis Affiliate organisations across Australia who strive every day to deliver better outcomes for people living with arthritis.

Members of our National Arthritis Consumer Reference Group at work
From left: Linda Spurrier (ACT), Wendy Favorito (Chair, NSW) and Michelle Graham (Queensland).

3. About Us

Providing information and support to people living with arthritis

Arthritis Australia is Australia's leading national arthritis charity. We work in collaboration with affiliated arthritis organisations in the ACT, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia to deliver information and support to people living with more than 100 types of arthritis.

Our vision is to achieve freedom from arthritis for the more than four million Australians of all ages who currently live with arthritis and for the many more who will develop these conditions in the future.

To achieve our vision, our key strategies are to provide information and support to people affected by arthritis, to fund research into better care and potential cures, and to advocate for policy and programs to ensure people with arthritis get the treatment, care and support they need.

We also work in partnership with peak health organisations, the federal government and national corporations to support collective goals and to seek funding to sustain our organisational purpose and activity.

Consumer support

We provide comprehensive information resources to help people live well with arthritis and, through Affiliated state and territory arthritis organisations, deliver a comprehensive range of information, education and support services.

Research

We are the leading non-government funders of arthritis research in Australia and work in partnership with the university and medical sector to support and advocate for increased funding for research into arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions.

Advocacy

We advocate to the government and industry for policies, programs and funding for initiatives to ensure everyone facing the challenge of arthritis gets the care and support they need to live their best possible life.

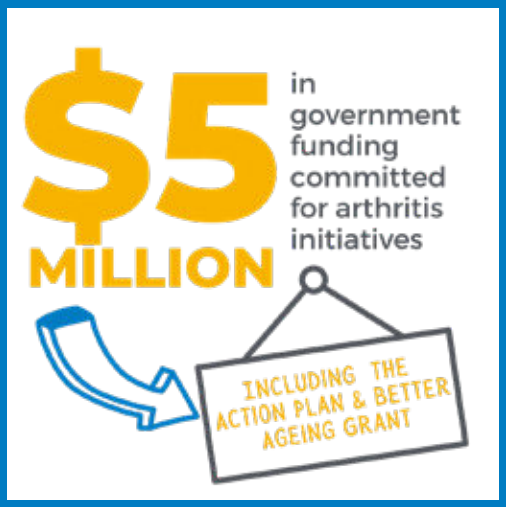
Sustainability

To help fund and support our activities to achieve our organisational vision, we develop corporate partnerships with national companies with aligned values.

National partnerships

We work collaboratively with Affiliated arthritis organisations and other peak health organisations to develop and deliver national programs and to support our common goals of improving the health and wellbeing of people living with arthritis.

4. Highlights



5. Consumer support

Helping people live well with arthritis through information and support.

Providing information and support to help people with arthritis gain the knowledge and skills they need to live well with their condition is one of our primary aims.

This year we have continued to build on our strategy of providing tailored Information and support that responds to an individual's needs. These needs vary depending on the type of arthritis an individual has, their age and life stage, the severity and duration of their condition and their cultural needs.

In addition we responded to the major events of 2020 with enhanced and timely information to assist people with arthritis dealing with the impact of COVID-19.

MyRA – supporting people with rheumatoid arthritis

In May 2020 we launched the ground-breaking MyRA website to empower people with rheumatoid arthritis to take control of their condition and become active participants in its management.

Responding to what people living with rheumatoid arthritis were telling us through a national survey, we developed a website that provides individually tailored information on a comprehensive range of topics. These topics include treatment options, diet, exercise, day to day tips, support services and how to manage pain, mental health and fatigue, as well as how to build a healthcare team. It also links through to the National Arthritis Infoline to connect people to local support services offered by Affiliate arthritis organisations in the states and territories.

The website was developed in partnership with the Australian Rheumatology Association, and supported by unrestricted, educational grants from a number of corporate sponsors.

MyBackPain

In July 2019, we launched the new MyBackPain.org.au website to provide accurate information to counter widespread misinformation about lower back pain. More than 11,000 people visited the site on the day it was launched.

The website helps people with lower back pain to understand how to manage their condition by finding out what treatments work, learning from the experience of others, and receiving recommendations that are tailored to them.

MyBackPain was developed in partnership with University of Queensland, University of Sydney, University of Melbourne, and Cochrane Back and Neck, using the digital foundation of the MyJointPain website which we developed for people with osteoarthritis.

MyBackPain was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Medibank Better Health Fund is also funding a clinical trial into the effectiveness of the website, with results to be released in late 2020.

COVID-19 Initiatives

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic quickly pushed the organisation and our consumers into new territory. People with arthritis were identified as a potentially vulnerable group during the pandemic due to the immune-suppressing medications they often take for their conditions, or because of their age and co-morbidities.

To enhance information and support for people with arthritis during this challenging time, we developed and delivered a number of initiatives.

A **COVID-19 information hub for people with arthritis** was set up on our website where consumers could quickly locate arthritis-relevant messages from the Australian Government and the Australian Rheumatology Association.

In addition the hub provided information to support people's physical and mental wellbeing during the pandemic, including medicines advice, information about arthritis-appropriate online exercise programs and links to advice to support mental health.

We created and launched **a national awareness campaign** for people living with inflammatory arthritis, to support them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The campaign encouraged people to seek support by calling the National Arthritis Infoline which links people to their local arthritis organisation to access individualised information and support.

We raised funds for an **outbound calls program** delivered by the Affiliate state and territory arthritis organisations who reached out to vulnerable people with arthritis to offer support and reduce their isolation.

We increased direct communications with people with arthritis by increasing our e-newsletter frequency to fortnightly and providing regular updates via our social media platforms in order to keep people informed on the latest information on COVID-19.

Giant Cell Arteritis

A new suite of information resources about Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) was launched in November 2019, urging older Australians to look out for symptoms of GCA that could put their eyesight at risk, and to speak to their doctor without delay.

More than a thousand Australians over 50 years old are affected each year by GCAs, an autoimmune disease that causes pain and inflammation in the temples. Without timely diagnosis and treatment, GCA can cause irreversible blindness within days of symptom onset.

The new resources include videos featuring an expert rheumatologist and a woman who was 48 hours away from going blind in her left eye when her doctor identified inflammation that led to the diagnosis of GCA.

Arthritis Australia social media

Our Facebook community has risen to more than 22,000 followers across the nation, and remains an important source of real-time consumer insight and information sharing.

Over the past year, Arthritis Australia's Instagram profile has increased its followers, connecting with many other musculoskeletal organisations around the world.

The Arthritis Australia Twitter profile has made its mark this year within the health professional and research community, with a focus on showcasing innovative projects funded through this year's National Research Program.

Multicultural Resources

In October 2019, we launched a series of new multicultural information resources to improve access to information about arthritis and its management for people in non-English speaking communities.

The new resources include information sheets on the most common forms of arthritis in three new languages – Bahasa Indonesian, Punjabi and Mandarin. In addition, we also expanded the range of information sheets we have in other languages to cover additional types of arthritis and ways to manage arthritis, including physical activity and healthy eating.

We now provide 145 arthritis information sheets in 15 community languages, including our resources in English.

Arthritis Australia website

The Arthritis Australia website continues to play a crucial role in providing important infomation to consumers and health professionals.

More than 660,000 unique users visited the website in the 2019/20 financial year, 57% up from the previous year. We continue to share the website across all our social media channels as the main place for up-to-date arthritis information.

803,483
consumer engagements from:

756,902 visitors to all our websites

6,606 calls to the Arthritis Infoline and head office

2,000 emails to info@arthritisaustralia.com.au

25,753 social media followers across all platforms

1,295 consumer survey respondents

6. Advocacy

Advocating to the federal government and national corporations for health initiatives.

Arthritis Australia advocates to the government and industry for policies, programs and funding for initiatives to help ensure everyone facing the challenge of arthritis gets the care and support they need to live their best possible life.

This year we saw our ongoing advocacy efforts finally start to come to fruition, with four million dollars in government funding allocated to support the first stages of implementing the National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis.

While this funding is greatly appreciated, significant additional funding will be required to realise the objectives of the Action Plan.

We will continue to advocate for greater investment in appropriate services and supports for people living with the impact of arthritis, as well as research into cure and better care.

Action Plan Projects

Arthritis Australia was successful in winning all the grants offered to support the Arthritis Action Plan, to the collective value of four million dollars. These grants will support a range of projects to enhance consumer information, education and support including:

- Enhancing the Arthritis Infoline service
- Supporting more children with arthritis to attend kids' camps
- Developing culturally appropriate information resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Developing a MyPsA website for people with psoriatic arthritis, building on the MyRA website
- Developing a range of new consumer information resources including resources on exercise, pain management and fibromyalgia.

In addition, the funding will support the development of online education and training for health care professionals in the management of both osteoarthritis and inflammatory forms of arthritis.

This program will be delivered by a Consortium of universities and health organisations led by Arthritis Australia and will include:

- Education modules for a range of health care professionals on delivering appropriate care for people with osteoarthritis and for people with inflammatory arthritis
- The development of 'living' clinical guidelines for the management of children with juvenile arthritis
- A 'Detect early' awareness and education campaign for inflammatory arthritis targeting primary care health professionals to promote the new education modules and to support early referral to specialist care.

Accessible design advocacy

Arthritis Australia's Accessible Design Division supports people with arthritis, and others, who struggle with hard-to-open and hard-to-use products and packaging. It does this through advocacy and promotion of accessible design principles to government and industry, and by providing testing and design services for companies wishing to improve the accessibility of their products and packaging.

As part of this work, we run a number of initiatives to promote accessible design.

Winner of the 2020 Accessible Packaging Design Special Award: Ecolean easy to open flexible pouch

Accessible Packaging Design Special Award

Arthritis Australia and Arthritis New Zealand have partnered together for the second year to sponsor the Accessible Packaging Design Special Award as part of the 2020 Packaging Innovation Design Awards.

This award encourages and recognises innovation for accessibility in the packaging industry. The Gold winners for 2020 are Ecolean for their innovative easy-to-open flexible pouch and Bannister Downs Dairy for being industry leaders in utilising this type of packaging for their products.

That's a Wrap: The Best and Worst in Packaging of 2019

Arthritis Australia, together with Affiliate arthritis organisations, runs this social media campaign every year to find out what packaging consumers are finding easy or hard to open and to help us educate the packaging industry about our community's experience with packaging.

This year we had over 150 nominations from consumers and the scores have revealed the top five worst packaging items of 2019 were:

1. Plastic water bottle screw caps
2. Clamshell packaging
3. Milk bottles – including both twist caps and half-moon seals
4. Jars – glass jars with the vacuum 'safety button' seal topping this section
5. Child-proof packaging – especially push down and twist lids.

This year we had a tie for the easiest-to-open packaging between the Gaviscon Dual Action Liquid sachets, with a perforated tear off seal, and Colgate's toothpaste flip lid.

2020 Harry Lovell Award

We would also like to congratulate our Accessible Design Senior Technical and Design Lead, Ms Alexandra Brayshaw who was awarded the 2020 Harry Lovell Award. The award, presented by the Australian Institute of Packaging, recognises Alexandra's dedication to accessibility and packaging technology, and her outstanding academic achievements in completing the Diploma in Packaging Technology.

> Research is a key pillar of our important work.

7. Research

Along with education and assistance, Arthritis Australia spearheads the effort to further our knowledge of arthritis and to search for potential cures.

Much of our work is directed toward raising funds for the Arthritis Australia National Research Program. This program is conducted annually and is open to both national and international researchers. It is led by Prof Susanna Proudman, the Medical Director of Arthritis Australia, and Prof Graeme Jones who is the Chair of our Research Grants Assessment Committee.

To improve awareness of the activities and outcomes of our National Research Grants Program, we produced a series of short videos featuring some of the researchers talking about their projects. These were well-received by both funders and the broader community.

In 2019-20 we provided over $744,000 in funding for a range of research grants, fellowships and scholarships.

In addition, Arthritis Australia funds the Florance and Cope Chair of Rheumatology at the University of Sydney, currently held by Professor David Hunter.

Florance and Cope Chair's report

Professor David Hunter

Professor Hunter is a clinician-scientist rheumatologist whose major focus is clinical research on osteoarthritis (OA). Translational research is at the centre of his work – endeavouring to make sure that his research findings are implemented into medical practice and provide meaningful improvements in the health of people with OA.

Research objectives

My translational research program is internationally renowned for reducing gaps between evidence and clinical practice in OA, introducing new interventions, pioneering novel disease-modifying therapies, and leading a paradigm-change in policy and the clinical management of OA.

My research and clinical group continue to disseminate information and implement activities to optimise care for people with OA. Ultimately it is through the development and translation of new knowledge that we will make a difference to the burden experienced by people with OA.

2020 Affiliations and Ongoing Contribution

- Florance and Cope Chair of Rheumatology, Professor of Medicine at University of Sydney, Rheumatologist at Royal North Shore Hospital
- Supervision of 4 PhD students and a team of 12 researchers. 3 PhD students graduated this year.
- Visiting professor at Universities of Queensland and Melbourne, and three universities in China
- Editorial board member for *Arthritis and Rheumatology*, *Arthritis Care and Research* and *Osteoarthritis and Cartilage*
- Section editor for UpToDate Osteoarthritis: a resource used by 1.7 million clinicians worldwide.
- Co-lead of the Sydney University musculoskeletal alliance (SydMSK; this is an alliance of more than 300 musculoskeletal researchers of all disciplines at University of Sydney)
- Co-lead of the musculoskeletal stream of Sydney Health Partners (the Advanced Health Research Translation Centre at the University of Sydney)

National Research Program 2019

We awarded 21 grants, fellowships and scholarships from our National Research Program in 2019-20 to the value of $744,000. Recipients of research funding provide a lay summary of their research and provide short, informative videos about their research projects which are available from our website.

To read a summary of each project listed below, visit www.arthritisaustralia.com.au.

FELLOWSHIPS

Dr Fabien Vincent
Rheumatology Group, Centre for Inflammatory Diseases, Monash University
Research Project: $50,000
Identification of molecular signatures in Indigenous Australians with systemic lupus erythematosus.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association and Arthritis Australia

Dr Anna Shalini Antony
Dept of Rheumatology
Monash University
Research Project: $50,000
Longitudinal Psoriatic Arthritis observational cohort study.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association Victoria

Ken Muirden Overseas Training Fellowship
Dr Adam Rischin
Dept of Rheumatology, Centre for Inflammatory Diseases, University Hospital Southampton, NHS Foundation Trust and Southampton Musculoskeletal Research Unit
Research Project: $100,000
Identifying predictors of trajectory in patients with inflammatory disease across the life course.
Awarded by: Ken Muirden Overseas Training Fellowship: Australian Rheumatology Association

PROJECT GRANTS

Dr Feng Pan
Menzies Institute for Medical Research
The University of Queensland
Research Project: $44,000
The role of systemic inflammation in osteoarthritis pain trajectories.
Awarded by: Reckitt Benckiser (Nurofen) and Arthritis Australia

Dr Jenny Setchell
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
The University of Queensland
Research Project: $45,000
Improving delivery of the biopsychosocial approach: enhancing low back pain healthcare practice.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Assoc Prof Tony Kenna
School of Biomedical Sciences
Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation
Queensland University of Technology
Research Project: $40,000
Personalised medicine in the treatment of ankylosing spondylitis.
Awarded by: Arthritis Western Australia and Arthritis Queensland

Dr Helen Keen
School of Medicine and Pharmacology - Fiona Stanley Hospital, University Western Australia
Research Project: $30,000
The epidemiology and longitudinal population-based outcomes with respect to gout in a Western Australian population based sample.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Prof Catherine Hill
Rheumatology Unit, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and University of Adelaide
Research Project: $15,000
Development of a patient reported outcome measure (prom) for glucocorticoid impact in rheumatic diseases.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Dr Laura Diamond
School of Allied Health Sciences, Griffith University Queensland
Research Project: $20,000
Personalised hip joint load modification using real-time biofeedback.
Awarded by: Eventide Homes

Dr Cynthia Lewis
Inflammation Division, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research
Research Project: $15,000
Targeting specific cell survival proteins to treat inflammatory arthritis.
Awarded by: Estate of the late Marion A Simpson

Assoc Prof Peter Malliaras
Physiotherapy, Monash University
Research Project: $30,000
The efficacy of high versus low dose exercise for rotator cuff disease.
Awarded by: Arthritis South Australia and Arthritis Australia

Prof Chris Jackson
Sutton Arthritis Research Laboratory, Kolling Institute
University of Sydney
Research Project: $50,000
Loss of EPCR attenuates inflammatory arthritis in mice via inhibiting DC maturation and migration.
Awarded by: Arthritis Australia and the Estate of Heather Joy McKenzie

Dr Justin Holland
School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences
Queensland University of Technology
Research Project: $15,000
Understanding rheumatoid arthritis sufferers' motivations and intentions towards exercise prior and post undertaking a five-week exercise trial.
Awarded by: Estate of the Late Marion A Simpson

Dr Tiffany Gill
Adelaide Medical School, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute
Research Project: $25,000
Sleep, pain and physical activity.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Dr Ayano Kelly
Medical School, Australian National University
Research Project: $15,000
Outcomes of adherence interventions in rheumatology.
Awarded by: Estate of the Late Marion A Simpson

Prof Marissa Lassere
Rheumatology, St George Hospital
Research Project: $25,000
Treatment outcomes by gut microbiome shotgun metagenomic profiles in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.
Awarded by: Estate of the Late Marion A Simpson

Dr Luke Kelly
School of Human Movement & Nutrition Sciences
The University of Queensland
Research Project: $15,000
A multi-system approach to understand painful midfoot osteoarthritis.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Dr Ross Penglase
Rheumatology and Haematology
St Vincent's Hospital/St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research/Uuniversity of New South Wales
Research Project: $15,000
Immune reconstitution following Autologous Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation for Systemic Sclerosis (Scleroderma).
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Dr Yingyu Feng
Institute of Bone & Joint Research,
Rheumatology Department, University of Sydney,
Royal North Shore Hospital
Research Project: $15,000
Improving health outcomes through appropriate care: an investigation of the variations in knee replacement for people with osteoarthritis in Australia.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Dr Joshua Zadro
Institute for Musculoskeletal Health
Sydney School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
Research Project: $15,000
The development of a patient decision aid to reduce subacromial decompression.
Awarded by: Australian Rheumatology Association

Dr Jaio Jaio Li
Kolling Institute, Faculty of Medicine and Health,
University of Sydney/Royal North Shore Hospital
Research Project: $15,000
A novel regenerative therapy for treating osteoarthritis.
Awarded by: The Estate of Suzette Gateby

8. Partnerships

Arthritis Australia partners with Affiliated arthritis organisations in the states and territories and other peak health organisations to develop and deliver national programs and to support our common goals of improving the health and wellbeing of people living with arthritis.

The Joint Movement program

In July 2019 we began to roll out The Joint Movement exercise program for seniors, funded by a Better Ageing grant from Sport Australia. This evidence-based program is being delivered in collaboration with Affiliated state and territory arthritis organisations across Australia.

People with arthritis often worry that exercise may harm their joints and cause more pain. However, research has established exercise as a safe and recommended treatment for people with arthritis which also provides many other health benefits. The Joint Movement offers two group exercise class options supervised by a trained exercise professional – land-based strength exercise or warm water exercise.

Uptake of The Joint Movement program has been encouraging with nearly 2,000 participants in the program. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, face-to-face delivery of the program had to cease temporarily. Our partner organisations were able to quickly pivot from face-to-face to online delivery of the activities with great success. The online classes have proved popular and are likely to continue even as pandemic restrictions ease.

Accessible Design Research Hub

Following on from the formation of the Accessible Product Design Alliance (APDA) in 2019, Arthritis Australia, the APDA and the University of New South Wales have partnered together to develop a research hub for accessible and sustainable product design. The research hub aims to improve the accessibility and ease of recycling of food packaging. This will be achieved by developing design processes, guidelines, and toolkits for accessible packaging. Once established, this research hub will help expand accessible thinking throughout the industry, and help make accessible packaging the norm.

Arthritis Action Plan partnerships

Arthritis Australia has established partnerships with Affiliate state and territory arthritis organisations and seven other health and educational organisations to deliver projects under the *National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis*.

Targeted Therapies Alliance

Arthritis Australia is working in partnership with eight other national health organisations representing specialists, pharmacists, consumers and research experts, to deliver a three-year Government funded program to optimise the quality use of biologic medicines.

These medicines, known as biological disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs, or bDMARDs, have made a significant improvement in the management of inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis.

The Alliance is jointly developing a range of evidence-based educational resources, tools and interventions to support consumers, specialist prescribers, pharmacists, nurses and governance bodies to achieve the best possible health and economic outcomes from the use of these medicines.

+ TARGETED THERAPIES ALLIANCE

Helping consumers and health professionals make safe and wise therapeutic decisions about biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (bDMARDs) and other specialised medicines. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health through the Value in Prescribing bDMARDs Program Grant.

Australian Rheumatology Association · Arthritis Australia · Cochrane Musculoskeletal · ANZMUSC · University of South Australia · Pharmaceutical Society of Australia · shpa · CATAG Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups · NPS MEDICINEWISE

9. Sustainability

To help us fund our activities to support the arthritis community, including programs delivered through Affiliate state and territory arthritis organisations, Arthritis Australia develops corporate partnerships with national companies with aligned values.

TGA Approval for Easy to Open and Ease of Use

People with arthritis report struggling with medicines packaging more commonly than any other type of product packaging.

In a major development this year, Arthritis Australia has received special permission from the Therapeutic Goods Administration to use our 'Easy to Open' and 'Ease of Use' certification for medicines and medical devices. This would otherwise not have been possible under current advertising and endorsement regulations for therapeutic goods.

The TGA approval will allow our Accessible Design Division to work with companies marketing therapeutic goods to help develop and promote more accessible medicines packaging.

Accessible design testing

Arthritis Australia partnered with a number of companies to provide testing and design services to improve the accessibility of products and packaging. We partner with Healthshare in New South Wales and Health Purchasing Victoria to provide benchmark testing for the accessibility of packaging for food products supplied through hospitals and other state government institutions.

Fundraising for national initiatives

Arthritis Australia raises funds for national initiatives to support our mission, which are delivered in collaboration with Affiliate arthritis organisations in the states and territories.

In 2019 we secured funding from a number of funders and sponsors for a range of programs which are outlined elsewhere in this report, including:

- The rollout of The Joint Movement exercise program
- A number of projects funded under the *National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis* to improve consumer information, education and support and to enhance education for health care professionals in arthritis management
- A radio-based awareness raising campaign for inflammatory arthritis to encourage people to seek information and support from the Arthritis Infoline during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Funding for the printing and distribution of our range of arthritis information booklets.

Corporate Sponsorship

Arthritis Australia secured a corporate sponsorship with Adjusta Mattress, a company which provides adjustable massage mattresses that are listed with the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration as a medical device to assist with sleep.

During the launch of the sponsorship a discount coupon was offered to members of Arthritis Australia and Affiliate arthritis organisations wishing to purchase these products.

10. Board & Governance

Board Members

Ms Kristine Riethmiller - Chair
Mr Roger Mattar - Deputy Chair & Company Secretary until August 2019
Mrs Wendy Favorito - Consumer Director
Ms Kaylene Hubbard - Treasurer from March 2020
Prof Susanna Proudman - Medical Director
Ms Colette Smith - Independent Director
Mr Michael Touma - Treasurer until February 2020
Ms Margaret Stone - Independent Director from November 2019

Chief Executive Officer

Mr Andrew Mills

Patron

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AS DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Emeritus Directors

Ms Ita Buttrose AC OBE
Dr Mona Marabani MBBS
Prof Patrick McNeil

Council of Advice Members

Mr Andrew Walker - Chair until September 2019
Mr Nigel Corne - Chair from December 2019
Ms Hilary Fowler
Ms Kate Templeman
Ms Frankie Forsythe - from December 2019
Ms Silvia Caratti
Ms Michelle Herriot - from September 2019

National Arthritis Consumer Reference Group

Mrs Wendy Favorito - Chair
Ms Danielle Dunlevey - South Australia
Mr Paul Forrestal - Western Australia
Ms Michelle Graham - Queensland
Ms Sarah McHarg - ACT
Ms Alison Park - Tasmania
Mr Murray Smith - NSW
Mr Max Stoneman - Queensland

Scientific Advisory Committee

Prof Peter Youssef – Chair
Prof Jim Bertouch
Prof Peter Brooks AM
Dr Scott Graff
Dr Julien de Jager
Dr Anna Dorai Raj
Prof David Hunter
Prof Graeme Jones
Prof Michelle Leech
Dr Mona Marabani
Dr Andrew Taylor

Grants Assessment Committee

Prof Graeme Jones - Chair
Prof Susanna Proudman - Chair
Dr Helen Benham
Dr Tania Crotti
Mrs Wendy Favorito
Prof Rana Hinman
Dr Helen Keen
Prof Chris Little
Dr Mandana Nikpour
Assoc Prof Jenny Walker

Australian Paediatric Rheumatology Committee

Dr Christina Boros - Chair
Prof Susanna Proudman
Mrs Wendy Favorito
Dr Krista Makin
Dr Davinder Singh-Grewal
Dr Helen Benham

Medical Director's Report

Professor Susanna Proudman
Arthritis Australia Medical Director

This has been an exciting year for Arthritis Australia with the launch of MyRA, an innovative and contemporary web-based platform that delivers an individualised education programme for people with rheumatoid arthritis. In order to provide tailored information and content, the MyRA site gathers a range of health-related information about the history of a person's condition, their medication use and their symptoms, to guide them to resources that meet their unique educational needs.

MyRA also links people to their local Affiliate arthritis organisation for access to services in their local area, providing an indispensable tool for people with arthritis and their healthcare providers alike.

Arthritis Australia plans to develop similar web-based educational resources for people with psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis next year.

This was also the year that the impact of arthritis on individuals and the health budget was recognised by the Federal government, at least in part, with the announcement of a $4 million funding package for the implementation of some of the recommendations outlined in the *National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis*.

Arthritis Australia was successful in winning all three grants which will support consumer information, education and support programs and enhanced health professional education. This impressive achievement presents an excellent opportunity for Arthritis Australia and the Affiliates to really augment existing educational programmes and to develop new and innovative resources. It is also a testament to the hard work over many years by the team led by the National Policy and Government Relations Manager, Franca Marine.

The program of works will have impact across Australia and includes enhancing the Arthritis Infoline service, supporting more children with arthritis to attend camps and developing a range of new information resources, including resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In addition, the health professional education package will provide education and training for a range of health professionals in managing people with osteoarthritis and inflammatory arthritis.

A 'Detect early' awareness and education campaign will also be developed to promote the education package and enhance recognition of inflammatory arthritis among primary care health professional to support early referral to specialist care.

As a rheumatologist who sees people struggle with arthritis on a daily basis, these achievements represent major advances in our understanding of the impact of all forms of arthritis on people's lives and a wonderful opportunity to tap into educational supports that are responsive to people's needs.

Consumer Director's Report

Wendy Favorito
Arthrritis Australia Consumer Director

As with all organisations locally, nationally and globally, Arthritis Australia rapidly and successfully adjusted to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff moved online to work from home and Board meetings were conducted virtually. More importantly Arthritis Australia, as well as our Affiliates, moved rapidly to identify the best way forward to support our consumers.

Unfortunately face-to-face services nationally were ceased. However, online resources and supports were enhanced. A key message provided by Arthritis Australia was that consumers, including myself, needed to maintain contact with our health care providers. We also delivered timely and up-to-date information regarding how to best manage living with arthritis during these unusual times.

The launch of the MyRA website in May 2020 was timely given our need to unexpectedly provide greater online support to our consumers. The website provides support for people living with rheumatoid arthritis. The site caters for all consumers whether they are newly diagnosed or have lived with their condition for decades.

The National Arthritis Consumer Reference Group has continued to deliver input to Arthritis Australia on advocacy issues and I thank our members for their ongoing voluntary support.

The Accessible Design Alliance met successfully online during the pandemic, which was a great success given the number of people involved. The Alliance will continue to work collaboratively to address accessibility needs of consumers with a disability.

I will be stepping down from the Board at our November Annual General Meeting after serving three terms in the role of Consumer Director. It has been a pleasure to work with the dedicated team at Arthritis Australia and other organisations who support our work.

It has been a privilege to meet so many inspiring consumers living day to day with their arthritis.

11. Financial overview

Treasurer's Report

Kaylene Hubbard
Arthritis Australia Treasurer

I present the audited financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2020. This financial year has seen a deficit of $172,809 in difficult times for the global and local economy as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

This result is mainly due to lower dividend receipts and interest, and the revaluation of the share portfolio, together with a reduction in receipt of licence fees and sponsorships as a result of the impact of COVID-19, and associated reductions in discretionary spend from corporate sponsors and partners. Costs remained steady and in some cases lower as a result of a reduction in staffing expenses and travel costs, and efficiencies adopted across the organisation.

The total revenue for the year was $2,394,525. The organisation saw a net reduction in equity of $1,040,416, almost entirely as a result of revaluation of the investment portfolio.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Restricted funds consist of specific-purpose bequests and donations and funds from contracts with private and government sectors for project delivery.

Restricted Funds reported a net deficit of $191,295. This is mainly due to reduced dividend and interest receipts, and some realisation of share trading losses.

The total restricted funds under administration have decreased by $1,020,143 as a result of the revaluation of the investment portfolio.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Unrestricted funds support our operational costs and consist of public donations and bequests. Additional funding is from arthritis Affiliate organisations, Accessible Design (the accessible packaging advisory division) and fees from trademark licences.

Unrestricted Funds fared better posting a modest surplus of $18,486.

This year has seen a decline in donations and bequests as compared to previous years, and below budget performance of the Accessible Design project. The favourable surplus recorded has been mainly attributable to savings in project management, and the reduction in operational costs, and the impact of COVID-19 relief including JobKeeper and the Cash Flow boost.

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

Total investment at the end of the financial year was $4,770,319 as compared to $5,825,785 in 2019. The portfolio consists mainly of equities and term deposits.

The negative movement is due to the revaluation of the portfolio, and to a smaller extent the liquidation of equity investments into cash assets for restricted research funding and cash flow.

CASH POSITION/LIQUIDITY

The Cash Position as at 30th June 2020 was $4,508,917, an increase of $1,334,141 from last financial year end. The primary source has been advance receipt of funding for the *National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis* from the Commonwealth Government.

BALANCE SHEET

Accumulated equity at the end of the financial year reduced by $1,040,416 to $5,937,827. This is almost entirely as a result of revaluation of the investment portfolio

There were no major variances recorded in the movement of the other Balance Sheet items.

OUTLOOK

The result for the financial year was significantly impacted by COVID 19 and its impact on the global and Australian economy. We expect the first half of financial year 2021, if not the full financial year, to be affected similarly, and we are planning accordingly. Executive Management and the Board are continuously reviewing the sustainability of the operation, implementing tighter management and cost controls to continue to deliver on committed projects, and exploring new revenue streams. In consideration of the exposure of the organisation to the market as a result of the significant investment portfolio, the Board is reviewing investment policies and strategies to manage the portfolio in the uncertainty of the current environment.

Financial position

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 30 June 2020

	Note	2020	2019
		$	$
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	4,508,917	3,174,776
Receivables	5	364,420	311,982
Total Current Assets		**4,873,337**	**3,486,758**
Non-Current Assets			
Financial assets	6	4,770,319	5,825,785
Property, Plant & Equipment	7	12,570	17,752
Right of Use Asset	8	457,094	-
Total Non-Current Assets		**5,239,983**	**5,843,537**
Total Assets		**10,113,320**	**9,330,295**
Current Liabilities			
Payables	9	3,622,500	2,267,670
Short term provisions	10	53,200	59,102
Lease Liability		76,727	-
Total Current Liabilities		**3,752,427**	**2,326,772**
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provision for Employee Benefits		23,844	17,426
Lease Liability		399,222	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities		**423,066**	**17,426**
Total Liabilities		**4,175,493**	**2,344,198**
Net Assets		**5,937,827**	**6,978,243**
Accumulated Funds			
Contractually restricted funds		5,511,700	6,531,843
Unrestricted funds		426,127	446,400
		5,937,827	**6,978,243**

Profit & Loss

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
for the year ended 30 June 2020

INCOME	Note	2020	2019
		$	$
Donations/fundraising			
General		2,201,775	2,217,634
Affiliates	11	192,750	220,250
Total		**2,394,525**	**2,437,884**
Membership Fees		960	1,120
Investments			
Interest		23,822	27,774
Profit /(Loss) on Sale		(9,551)	(71,557)
Dividends		276,214	676,409
Total		**290,485**	**632,626**
Other		99,468	4,389
Total Income	**2**	**2,785,438**	**3,076,019**
Expenses			
Research	13	1,044,225	1,167,975
Education & Awareness		1,065,419	956,704
Administration		582,377	594,637
Fundraising		154,515	144,115
Depreciation	7	93,021	4,034
Lease Interest		18,690	-
Total Expenses		**2,958,247**	**2,867,465**
Surplus/(Deficit)	**19**	**(172,809)**	**208,554**
Other Comprehensive income			
Net Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of Financial Assets		(867,607)	325,086
Other Comprehensive (Loss) / Income for the Year		(867,607)	325,086
Total Comprehensive Income/ (Loss) / Income for the Year		(1,040,416)	533,640
Surplus/(Deficit) attributable to members of the entity		(172,809)	208,554
Total Comprehensive Gain/(Loss) / Income attributable to members of the entity		**(1,040,416)**	**533,640**

Revenue & Expenditure

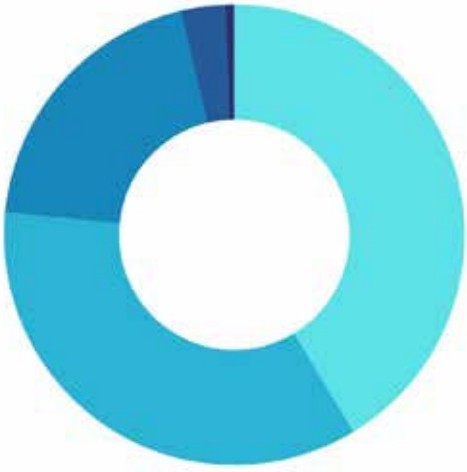
ASSETS HELD	**$10,113,320**
LIABILITIES HELD	**$4,175,493**

REVENUE

PROJECTS	$1,717,775	61.7%
RESEARCH GRANTS	$599,000	21.5%
INVESTMENTS	$290,485	10.4%
MEMBERSHIP ADMIN FEES	$78,710	2.8%
OTHER	$99,468	3.6%
TOTAL	**$2,785,438**	**100%**

EXPENDITURE

PROJECTS	$1,219,934	41.2%
RESEARCH	$1,044,225	35.3%
ADMINISTRATION	$582,377	19.7%
DEPRECIATION	$93,021	3.2%
LEASE INTEREST	$18,690	0.6%
TOTAL	**$2,958,247**	**100%**



12. Donors & Sponsors

We are extremely thankful to our donors and supporters who have helped to advance our work in raising awareness, delivering education and support services, providing annual research grants and developing advocacy programs. Many have contributed expertise, time, funding, goods and services.

Thank you for your support.

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Hon Dr David Gillespie MP, Convenor, House of Representatives, Canberra
Dr Michael Freelander MP, Convenor, House of Representatives, Canberra
Senator Rachel Siewert, Convenor, the Senate, Canberra

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13. Arthritis information & contacts

For all arthritis information:
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www.arthritiswa.org.au
Ric Forlano, Executive Director

Arthritis AUSTRALIA

No matter who you are, or your experience with arthritis, we're here to help you manage your symptoms and get on with life.
www.arthritisaustralia.com.au

myRA RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS SUPPORT PROGRAM

A consumer support website dedicated to rheumatoid arthritis. www.myra.org.au

MyJointPain.org.au

Information and self-management plans tailored for people who have joint pain or been diagnosed with osteoarthritis.
www.myjointpain.org.au

MyBackPain.org.au an Arthritis Australia initiative

Information and self-management for people living with low back pain.
www.mybackpain.org.au

empowered

Online support for Australians living with rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and psoriatic arthritis.
www.empowered.org.au

14. Future direction

Our focus over the coming year will be on delivering the range of projects for which we have secured new funding, including:

- Delivering two new, tailored websites for people with psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis
- Co-ordinating nationally funded Arthritis Action Plan projects to enhance consumer information, education and support and to provide education to health professionals on treatment and care for different types of arthritis.

In addition, we will strengthen the role and impact of our advisory groups to provide broader engagement with consumers and stakeholders in the musculoskeletal field to support our mission.

We will also continue to monitor and assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with arthritis and on our operations.

Follow Us

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15. Our team

Andrew Mills
CEO

Franca Marine
Policy & Government Relations Manager

Alex Brayshaw
Senior Technical & Design Lead

Hannah Atkin
Accessible Design Coordinator (from 11/19)

Patricia Aviet
Administration (from 3/20)

Athena Tzigeras
Administration (until 2/20)

Devika Ravindran
Accountant

Lindsey Parks
Digital & Social

Fahima Fouzdeen
Finance Assistant (from 9/19)

Ron Richardson
Financial Administrator (until 8/19)

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