2022/23

ANNUAL REPORT

Arthritis AUSTRALIA

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1. A message from our Chair

Kaylene Hubbard
Arthritis Australia Chair

It has been a year of great progress for Arthritis Australia. Together with our partners in the States and Territories and other national bodies, as well as our sponsors and supporters, we have pursued our vision of Freedom from Arthritis. The results and benefits of our activities this year are set out in detail in this report. However, there are a few key achievements that should be highlighted.

We continued, with the support and partnership of the State and Territory arthritis organisations, universities and medical and health professionals, to roll out the National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis. These projects are funded by the Commonwealth and are focused on initiatives to help people with arthritis get the treatment, care and support they need to live well with arthritis. The projects are scheduled to be completed within the next financial year.

In November 2022 we launched the 'impactful arthritis research report' with the assistance of Research Australia. The Report was launched at Federal Parliament House in Canberra and the launch was well attended by federal politicians and stakeholders, and received significant media attention. The Report sets out a new, consumer driven agenda for arthritis research in Australia to ensure that research reflects consumer priorities.

We have subsequently convened an Advisory Group to work through and prioritise the recommendations in the Report and look forward to moving forward with this important work.

Our research programme again coordinated the delivery of grants to many dedicated researchers.

Our dedicated websites, MyAS, MyRA, MyPsA, MyJointPain and MyBackPain are continually engaged with by Australians with arthritis. We are looking into developing further condition specific websites and the Board has recently committed to developing MyOA, a website specific to osteoarthritis, in the coming year.

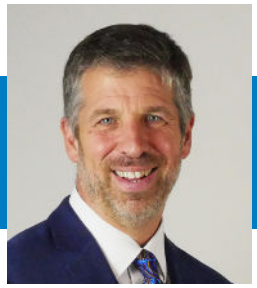
We have continued to engage with the highest levels of government, through the launch of the 'impactful arthritis research report', the launch of the Parliamentary Friends of Arthritis in March 2023.

These and other achievements of the past year are testament to the commitment and hard work of the staff, members of the Board, our Committee members and other volunteers who participate in steering and project committees, focus groups, testing and reviews, surveys, and our other activities. I would like to acknowledge the strong support we receive from our State and Territory affiliated organisations, other national body partners, including the Accessible Design Alliance, the Australian Rheumatology Association, and our generous sponsors and supporters.

Over the coming year our priorities will be:

- Continuing delivery and completion of the National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis;
- Developing our response and implementation plan with respect to the 'impactful arthritis research report' and taking action; and
- Working with our partners to continue to advocate for the needs of people with arthritis.

2. A message from our CEO



Jonathan Smithers
Arthritis Australia CEO

I am delighted to report on a year of progress and positive change. As I write, now close to three years since my appointment, with the disruption of Covid in the rearview mirror, we have a good perspective of the progress we have made and continue to make in delivering the strategic objectives set by the Board. The National Strategic Action Plan grants continued to dominate the landscape of our activities. Two of the three grants will be completed by December 2023, the third by June 2024. A number of resources, including consumer care guides for rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile arthritis, will be launched shortly together with a digital solution for consumers to access exercise programs via a portal.

Working closely with our delivery partner, Arthritis and Osteoporosis Western Australia, we are looking forward to the launch of culturally informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander resources, again to be completed by December 2023. A more detailed report on all the National Strategic Action Plan Grants appears on page 10.

Consumer Information Resources have been a major focus of our activities this year. Over the years we have accumulated a fantastic resource, originally paper-based, but now digital, including the condition specific websites, MyJointPain, MyRA, MyPsA and now MyAS which was launched this year. The Board have just approved for work to commence on a complete upgrade and update of MyJointPain, to become MyOA. This will be in collaboration with Professor David Hunter and is expected to be completed by the end of the next financial year.

All our information resources need to be fully managed and, as we move forward towards a greater degree of digitisation and through that engagement with more consumers, we will need to devote more resources in the future for that area.

Our advocacy this year was again led by my colleague, Louise Hardy, Director of Policy and Advocacy, whose report appears on page 9. Our engagement and activities in Canberra have increased substantially, not just with the election and budget, but also with two parliamentary events and many political meetings.

The first parliamentary event, in November 2022 was to showcase the results of our project undertaken in conjunction with Research Australia to construct a national consumer driven strategy for arthritis research. This significant piece of work took nearly a year to complete. It is particularly important for us, as the strategy is grounded in considerable research into what consumers want and need. Implementation of the recommendations are designed run over a number of years but will certainly increase our influence in arthritis and musculoskeletal research and assist in

securing better funding and investment. Our second event in February 2023 was the first meeting of the Parliamentary Friends of Arthritis for the 47th Parliament. Chaired by Senator Louise Pratt, with Co-Convenors Senator Janet Rice and Dr Anne Webster MP, it was also held in partnership with the Parliamentary Friends of Child & Adolescent Health & Mental Health and the Juvenile Arthritis Foundation Australia. This work will cement important relationships with influential parliamentarians and assist us greatly in our ongoing policy and advocacy work.

The announcement by The Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler, that certain medicines for chronic disease would be available for dispensing on a 60-day basis has become controversial in some quarters. But for us, as a consumer led organisation, it has been an opportunity to strongly advocate for reduced cost and improved access to medicines for arthritis consumers.

The Accessible Design Division, (page 12) is a very exciting and evolving part of our delivery and our strategy for serving consumers. We continue to lead a group of 11 consumer charities in coordinated advocacy to improve design through the Accessible Product Design Alliance.

Our research program (detailed report page 14) is an area of our work, of which we are very proud. The coordination of grants from our generous donors, support for our expert peer review process and then administration of numerous grants over multiple years as well as the communication of research outcomes, is a considerable undertaking but one which we know consumers both want and need in furtherance of our mission.

One of our strategic pillars relates to organisational sustainability which has continued to be a focus this year. The upgraded finance function is working well and truly embedded under the leadership of our Finance Manager, Fahima Fouzdeen. We have also continued work on updating and reviewing numerous policies and ensuring compliance with principles of good governance, assisted by our Company Secretary, John Butt.

The work which I have detailed, and much else besides, is undertaken and facilitated by my colleagues (page 25). I am proud to lead such a dedicated team. It is also a great pleasure to work collaboratively with a wide-ranging of stakeholders, first and foremost our Affiliated arthritis organisations in the States and Territories and the Australian Rheumatology Association together with so many other industry partners.

In the next year, we are looking forward to continuing our success in providing information resources, advocacy and research for and on behalf of consumers and towards our mission of ***Freedom from Arthritis***.

"As a 76-year-old PsA newbie, I just want to say a huge, heartfelt thank you for what has been undertaken."

- Consumer comment

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 Australian Capital Territory, 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 organisations deliver these resources, 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 partnerships with national organisations 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 is an important part of improving the lives of people living with arthritis, and their carers and family. We continue to work with consumers and healthcare providers to deliver tailored support, specific to individual needs.

The launch of MyAS included a successful media campaign with TV, radio and online media coverage. The campaign aimed to increase awareness of axSpA, particularly among young women to support an earlier diagnosis.

myAS
AXIAL SPONDYLOARTHRITIS SUPPORT PROGRAM

Arthritis Australia launched MyAS in August 2022. A website designed specifically for people living with axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA), including ankylosing spondylitis and non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis.

The website builds on the same architecture of its sibling websites, MyRA and MyPsA by tailoring information to support people living with axSpA. People can register to the website to customise their profile, and receive recommended resources on a range of topics to help them self-manage their condition.

"Looks great. I wish there was something like this 20+ years ago, to help me navigate my AS."

– MyAS consumer comment

Targeted Therapies Alliance

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

The Alliance developed and promoted a range of evidence-based educational resources, tools, and interventions to support consumers, specialist prescribers, pharmacists, nurses and other bodies to achieve the best possible health and economic outcomes from the use of these medicines. A range of resources for people with rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, and ankylosing spondylitis, as well as other conditions is now available on the Arthritis Australia website, including translations.

Arthritis Australia website

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

More than 341,800 users visited the website in the 2022/23 financial year.

www.arthritisaustralia.com.au

" I feel very fortunate to have now discovered your wealth of helpful, informative, and encouraging online resources. These have assisted me to see some positives and a way forward, within what could be seen as a negative situation."

- Consumer comment

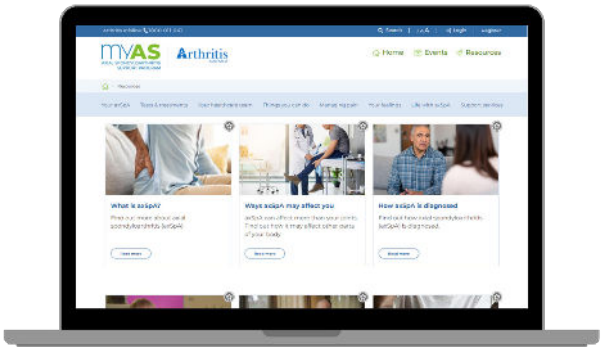
Arthritis Australia social media

Our Facebook community is 25,000 followers strong across the nation and remains an important source of real-time consumer insight and information sharing.

Our Instagram page is our best performing social platform and has a following of 2,770 people.

Our X (Twitter) performance has remained stable, providing real time content and updates for our advocacy efforts, focusing on our parliamentary engagement.

Our growing LinkedIn community has a following of 611 people.



341,814 visitors to our website
11,229 calls to the Arthritis Infoline
29,602 social media followers across all platforms

6. Advocacy

Speaking up for arthritis

Arthritis Australia has continued our strong national advocacy for better support for consumers and investment in research, as well as continuing to deliver on the implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis.

Ministerial and parliamentary engagement

With a change of government following the May 2022 election, Arthritis Australia engaged strongly with the new parliament, strengthening our existing relationships with key MPs and senators, and meeting new parliamentarians, particularly those with a health background.

We took a delegation of consumers and researchers to meet with Health Minister Mark Butler to discuss our research advocacy, reconvened the Parliamentary Friends of Arthritis, and held two parliamentary events bringing together our community of consumers clinicians and leading researchers to meet with Ministers, MPs and senators.

Pictured left to right: Prof Lyn March, Prof Susanna Proudman, Prof Kim Bennell, Hon Mark Buttler MP (Minister for Health and Aged Care), Ms Kerry Mace, Ms Kaylene Hubbard and Ms Louise Hardy.

Arthritis Australia made a pre budget submission and we were pleased to see funding for a number of measures we have advocated including:

- $800,000 for early detection of juvenile arthritis
- $446.7m to add Shingrix (shingles vaccine) to the National Immunisation Program for patients who are severely immunocompromised, or are taking highly immunosuppressive therapy
- $2.5 million for the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia multicultural health collaborative, of which we are a member

We also continued to advocate strongly for a Government response to the Parliamentary inquiry on childhood rheumatic illnesses.

Biologics access

We collaborated with the ARA and Musculoskeletal Australia to advocate for reduced delays to biologics access, on the back of our consumer survey highlighting the severe consequences of consumers missing doses of their medicines.

We received responses from Minister Butler as well as Minister for Government Services Bill Shorten, indicating that work is underway in response to the March 2022 PBAC recommendations to simplify authorities for a range of biologics, and that a project is underway which will enable online real time processing.

60 day dispensing

Arthritis Australia took a lead role advocating in support of the Government's policy to allow a 60 day supply to be dispensed of many common medicines for people with chronic diseases including arthritis, saving consumers money and cutting down on unnecessary trips to the doctor and pharmacy. We were active in the media, lobbied MPs and provided information and regular updates to consumers to support them to prepare for the changes.

Arthritis Australia CEO Jonathan Smithers and Health Minister the Hon Mark Butler MP on the first day of 60 day dispensing.

"Today Jonathan was one of the first Australians (if not the first!) to get a 60-day prescription... We know how important cost of living relief is for Australians and making medicines cheaper is one of the ways we're delivering it."

- The Hon Mark Butler, Minister for Heaith

Contributing to major policy reviews

Arthritis Australia made submissions to a number of important reviews highlighting key issues for people with arthritis, including the National Medicines Policy, Health Technology Assessment review and the TGA's proposed changes to the way paracetamol is scheduled and can be accessed.

Action Plan Grants

Three grants were awarded to Arthritis Australia by the Department of Health in 2020 under the Chronic Conditions Prevention and Management funding scheme, to implement the National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis. These grants are a four year investment by the Federal Government totalling $4 million. Each grant has their own objectives and are being delivered by different collaborative groups.

Action Plan Grants

1. Consumer Awareness and Education Grant
2. Information, Education and Support Grant
3. Health Professional Education and Training Grant

1. Arthritis - Consumer Awareness and Education Grant

Following the successful national launch of the MyPsA website, this year sees progress on:

- the development of consumer-focussed guides for rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile idiopathic arthritis, including providing consumer input into the development of clinical care standards
- a web portal for exercise and arthritis resources
- the "Staying Moving Staying Strong" project to develop culturally appropriate arthritis information and education resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is near completion
- new resources on managing pain and fibromyalgia

2. Arthritis - Information, Education, and Support Grant

This grant is being conducted in partnership with the States and Territories Arthritis Affiliate organisations, covering two consumer-centric enhancement projects for the National Arthritis Infoline and kids camps for children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA).

We continue to build on the momentum of the roll-out of the National Arthritis Infoline Framework in 2021 to enhance the service, which now includes webchat in several States. National and local promotional campaigns continue to raise awareness and usage of the Infoline, in response to the social media, radio, internet advertising and local newspaper promotion. In June, a transit advertising campaign ran, appearing on the back of 198 buses in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, and Brisbane.

A new family centred day camp model was successfully launched in the ACT, while NSW kids camps in new strategic locations has facilitated access for children from regional and interstate areas.

The delivery of the planned face-to-face camps to children with JIA were postponed in line with public health safety precautions related to COVID-19. A re-design of the program will see the ACT and NSW affiliate arthritis organisations run kids camps with novel approaches to encourage and facilitate attendance from new and remote participants.

3. Arthritis – Health Professional Education and Training Grant

The Australian Living Guideline for the Management of Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis was partly supported by this grant, and delivered by a consortium comprising of the Australia and New Zealand Musculoskeletal Clinical Trials Network, the Australian Rheumatology Association, and Cochrane Musculoskeletal, led by Monash University. Seven recommendations have been published onto the guideline and are publicly accessible on the MAGICapp platform: An Australian Living Guideline for the Management of Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. The guideline is also endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The content development for the health professional e-learning education modules has been completed by a consortium comprising of: University of Sydney, University of Melbourne, Arthritis and Osteoporosis Western Australia, Curtin University, Monash University. There are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis specific modules as well as common modules on general and lifestyle management topics. Once the content is digitalised, user tested by expert contributors, the final e-learning program named 'ATLAS – Arthritis Training Learning And Up-Skilling for Health Professionals', will be launched nationally in 2024.

This bus was spotted in Darwin!

7. Accessible Design Division

Advocating to government and industry to improve product and packaging accessibility.

Arthritis Australia proudly leads the Accessible Product Design Alliance, a collective comprising 11 not-for-profit health consumer organisations. In the previous year, this coalition issued a joint position statement, shedding light on the challenges faced by 5 million consumers living with chronic conditions and disabilities in both Australia and New Zealand. This statement highlights the need to rectify the accessibility shortcomings found in products and packaging.

ACCESSIBLE PRODUCT DESIGN ALLIANCE

Moreover, our ongoing efforts to bolster the Accessible Alliance's digital presence have yielded noteworthy results this year. The Accessible Alliance Instagram account has received focused attention, aimed at expanding its following. We maintain a online presence by consistently sharing posts, articles, inspiring quotes, and pertinent news pertaining to the realm of accessible design. This engagement serves to raise awareness and inspire action in support of our mission.

That's a Wrap 2022

The Accessible Design Division's annual social media campaign is designed to assess packaging that affects arthritis consumers, differentiating between the best and worst examples. This initiative offers essential insights into the experiences of our arthritis community and guides the Division in addressing problematic packaging formats.
In 2022, the campaign achieved remarkable success, setting new engagement records. It garnered an unprecedented number of nominations and votes in both the best and worst packaging categories. Moreover, it attracted significant attention from companies whose products were nominated in the "worst" category, underscoring the campaign's significance in providing a platform for consumers.

Worst Packaging:

- Pre-sealed meat trays (debut entry): Commonly used for food products like meat and seafood, these trays proved almost impossible to open by hand. Many consumers had to resort to unconventional methods, such as using knives, which posed injury risks even after successfully opening the packaging.
- Jars (Plastic and Glass with Metal Lids): Opening jars was a painful challenge that required considerable strength, affecting both arthritis-afflicted individuals and able-bodied users.
- Plastic Bottles: The problem of hard-to-grip caps persisted, requiring assistance from strangers or family members. Some users used tools to break initial seals, while others abandoned their attempts entirely.
- Medication Packaging (Screw Cap): A close runner-up for the worst packaging of 2022, this category revealed stories of users resorting to tools like knives, sometimes destroying the lid in the process. Anxiety loomed large as consumers grappled with opening certain medicine packaging.
- Push-Through Tablet Trays/Blister Packs (Top Spot Winner): Taking the top spot this year, blister packs mirrored the struggles of medication accessibility. Participants reported pain and the near-impenetrable nature of the "super thick packaging," making it a pressing issue.

Best Packaging:

The campaign received a diverse range of nominations, involving products like coffee sachets, resealable bags, and laundry detergents. Notably, the Dettol Hand Sanitiser Dispenser (200 ml) emerged as the winner in the best packaging category for 2022. This product's ease of use and initial opening, coupled with its ergonomic design that minimises the force required to break the opening seal, made it a standout choice.

This campaign emphasises our commitment to improving accessibility for arthritis consumers and advocates for positive changes in product packaging.

The Good, The Bad & The Hack

The campaign's primary objective is to encourage individuals living with disabilities to share their product experiences, thereby raising awareness about both accessible and inaccessible design aspects. Our aim is to provide support to others seeking ways to simplify their lives, as well as to educate product and packaging manufacturers about areas in need of improvement.

Participants were invited to submit short videos that fell into three distinct categories:

- The Good: These videos highlighted product designs that have positively impacted everyday life, showcasing solutions that enhance accessibility and convenience.
- The Bad: In this category, participants spotlighted designs in need of improvement. These videos served as a platform to critique and identify areas where products can be made more accessible and user-friendly.
- The Hack: Participants in this category shared innovative tips and tricks related to products, often featuring unconventional or creative approaches that help users perform activities more efficiently or with reduced discomfort.

To participate, consumers submitted their videos through the submission form available on the Arthritis Australia website. These videos depicted them using products falling into one of the three categories. The submissions were carefully reviewed, edited, and subsequently shared via our social media platforms.

The campaign ran throughout the month of September, during which four impactful videos were posted.

Arthritis Australia effectively engaged the Arthritis Champions database, which was launched late 2022, to enlist the participation of interested members within our community. A dedicated mailing list was curated, and these champions were provided with comprehensive details and instructions on how to create and submit their videos.

This collaborative effort highlights our commitment to fostering a supportive community, amplifying the voices of those living with disabilities, and advocating for positive changes in product and packaging design.

"I was extremely encouraged to discover the Accessible Design Division within Arthritis Australia and the variety of helpful, well-researched resources that have been developed."

- Consumer comment

"Again, I want to express my gratitude to Arthritis Australia for their continued support of research"

- Consumer comment

8. Research

Research is vital part of Arthritis Australia's commitment to the Arthritis Community; our mission is to find solutions and innovative treatments to improve the lifestyle of the numerous sufferers in the various types of Arthritis.

We distributed $652,000.00 in research and training funding for the year 2023. The majority was expended through the National Research Program (details on page 16).

We are grateful to the ARA Research Trust, ARA Victoria, Arthritis and Osteoporosis Western Australia, Arthritis New South Wales, together with generous donations from the members of our community, made via our website and through bequests who understand the need to invest in research for the future of Australians with arthritis.

National Strategy on Arthritis Research – Research Australia

In November 2022 we launched our series of reports on Impactful Arthritis Research, setting out four key consumer priorities for research and a range of recommendations both on advocacy initiatives and changes to Arthritis Australia's research program. Since the launch, we have convened an Advisory Group to advise on implementation, bringing together consumers and leading researchers. We have launched our Arthritis Champions program, allowing consumers to register their interest in research involvement and connecting them with research projects.

Paediatric Rheumatology Scholarship

We funded one Paediatric Rheumatology Scholarship to the value of $100,000.

"Thank you for giving me this chance; it would be an honour to support Arthritis Australia's worthwhile efforts."

- National Research Program recipient

2023 Grants Application round

Our National Research Program is conducted annually. Assoc Prof Helen Benham was the Chair of our Research Grants Assessment Committee in 2022 for the awards distributed in 2023. In 2023 we awarded 2 fellowships, 2 scholarships, 5 project grants, 2 grants-in-aid, and 1 private practice grant.

Recipients of the research funding and their research is outlined below. To read a summary of each recipients work visit www.arthritisaustralia.com.au/programs-research/

FELLOWSHIPS

ARA Ken Muirden Overseas Training Fellowship
Dr Thomas Khoo
Southern Adelaide Local Health Network
Research project: $100,000.00
Identifying predictors for the development of severe statin-related muscle disease and optimising its treatment through exploring the role of the anti-HMGCR antibody
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Fellowship
Ms Penny O'Brien
The University of Melbourne
Research project: $50,000.00
Staying Moving, Staying Strong. Evaluating culturally adapted health information resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with arthritis
From funds donated by: Janssen Cilag Pty Ltd

SCHOLARSHIPS

Dr Catherine Cho
Concord Repatriation General Hospital
Scholarship: $30,00.00
Osteoporosis and fracture risk in chronic inflammatory rheumatic disease
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

Ms Taylah Bennett
Monash University
Scholarship: $30,000.00
Achieving benefit without harm: Targeting GILZ for a next generation anti-inflammatory therapy
From funds donated by: The Grace Cameron bequest

PROJECT GRANTS

Dr Danielle Berkovic
Monash University
Project Grant: $72,000.00
Consumer-focused opportunities for reducing low-value care for arthritis
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

Dr Alberta Hoi
Monash University
Project Grant: $75,000.00
Effects of temporal withholding of mycophenolate in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

Dr Angus Stock
Walter Eliza Institute of Medical Research (WEHI)
Project Grant: $60,000.00
Stopping blood vessel remodelling in vasculitis
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

Dr Rachel Black
Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN)
Project Grant: $43,000.00
A Randomised Trial of a Novel Glucocorticoid Tapering Clinic for Rheumatology Patients
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

Assoc Prof Milena Simic
University of Sydney
Project Grant: $45,000.00
Gait retraining for people with knee osteoarthritis
From funds donated by: Arthritis NSW, Arthritis & Osteoporosis WA and Suzette Gately

GRANTS-IN-AID

Dr Hunter Bennett
University of South Australia
Grant-in-Aid: 10,000.00
Staying Strong: Improving Health for Rheumatoid Arthritis Using Blood Flow Restriction
From funds donated by: Arthritis & Osteoporosis WA

Dr Laura Ross
St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne
Grant-in Aid: $20,000.00
Development of a patient global assessment for systemic Sclerosis
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

PRIVATE PRACTICE GRANT

Dr Ai Tran
University of Western Australia
Private Practice Grant: $40,000.00
Antibody response to the Pfizer and AZ COVID vaccination in patients with immune mediated inflammatory disease. An extension study
From funds donated by: ARA Research Fund

9. Board & Governance

Board Members
Ms Kaylene Hubbard
- Chair

Prof Susanna Proudman
- Deputy Chair & Medical Director

Mr Paul Ritchie
-Treasurer

Ms Margaret Stone
- Independent Director

Ms Charlotte Bachali
- Consumer Director until Nov 2022

Dr Ian Dover
- Independent Director

Mr Simon Smith
- Consumer Director from Feb 2023

Ms Sonja Read
- Independent Director from Feb 2023

Company Secretary
Mr John Butt

Chief Executive Officer
Mr Jonathan Smithers

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 Nigel Corne - Chair (NSW)
Ms Kate Templeman (QLD)
Ms Sylvia Caratti (WA)
Mr David Waterford (SA)
Ms Hilary Fowler (NT)
Ms Frankie Forsyth (TAS)

Consumer Advisory Panel
Mr Simon Smith (Chair) - From Feb 2023
Dr Susanne Armstrong
Ms Charlotte Bachali - Until Nov 2022
Mr Brett Coshell
Ms Annique Daran
Ms Cecilia Donohoe
Ms Sharyce Helyar
Ms Harpreet Kaur
Ms Ruth Lee
Ms Sharon Lee
Ms Gayle McNaught
Mr Kevyn Morris
Ms Fiona Naughtin
Ms Alison Park
Ms Jeanette Pritchard
Ms Hayley Stephens
Dr Christine Walker
Dr Hugh Watson
Ms Shirani Wright

Scientific Advisory Panel
Prof Susanna Proudman (Chair)
Prof Kim Bennell
Ms Linda Bradbury
Prof Andrew Briggs
Dr Fiona Goldblatt
Prof Ian Harris
Prof David Hunter
Prof David Menzies
Prof Mark Morgan
Prof Lorimer Moseley
A/Prof Jane Munro
Prof Michael Nicholas
Prof Debra Rowett
Prof Deborah Turner
Dr Emily Webb

Grants Assessment Committee
Assoc Prof Helen Benham (Chair)
Ms Charlotte Bachali
Dr Tania Crotti
Assoc Prof Helen Keen
Prof Graeme Jones
Prof Rana Hinman
Dr Lauren Host
Prof Chris Little
Ms Kerry Mace
Assoc Prof Mandana Nikpour
Prof Susanna Proudman
Assoc Prof Jenny Walker

10. Financial overview

Treasurer's Report

Paul Ritchie
Arthritis Australia Treasurer

I am pleased to present the audited financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2023. Having successfully come out of the pandemic, this financial year we need to acknowledge the challenges many businesses and members of the community are currently facing, including the soaring cost of living, the sharpest cycle of interest rate rises in Australia's history and increasing/unsustainable expenditure related to Australia's ageing population. In the context of this environment, Arthritis Australia is pleased to report a surplus of $814,295 as compared to a surplus of $217,826 in the previous year.

This year's result is mainly due to general donations that have been received (an increase of $869,794 from the previous year), which we are extremely grateful for such support, as it allows Arthritis Australia to deliver on providing quality information, education and support for consumers, together with important advocacy work as well as our ability to drive the national research agenda.

Costs were generally in line with budget. It should be noted that Education and Awareness expenditure increased by 23%, however this was funded from the National Strategic Action Plan Grants.

The total revenue for the year was $4,234,717, which was ahead of budget. The financial position of the organisation remains sound, with a positive net increase in equity of $1,149,919.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Restricted funds consist of specific-purpose bequests and donations and funds from National Strategic Action Plan Grants and other federally funded projects.

Restricted Funds reported a net surplus of $135,137, with continued strong dividend receipts, albeit slightly down on the previous year.

The total restricted funds under administration have experienced a net increase of $451,467, primarily due to 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 Accessible Design (the accessible packaging advisory division) and fees from trademark licences. Federal government grant funding includes an element of contribution towards operational costs. This year has seen an increase in donations and bequests as compared to previous years.

Unrestricted Funds produced a surplus of $679,158, mainly driven by larger than anticipated bequests.

There has been a net increase in the total unrestricted funds under administration of $698,452.

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

Total investment at the end of the financial year was $7,795,183 as compared to $7,036,363 in 2022, with a net return after fees of 8.9% for the year to 30 June 2023.

During the 2023 financial year, all corners of investment markets were affected by persistently high inflation, and despite headline inflation data falling in the last quarter of FY23 (and continuing into the first quarter of FY24), volatility is still expected as core inflation remains high, driven by a lack of housing and labour. To that end, the portfolio is actively managed by Koda Capital and is positioned to respond to the market.

CASH POSITION/LIQUIDITY

The Cash Position as at 30 June 2023 was $2,585,244, an increase of $312,679 from last financial year end. Positive net cash from operating activities (including donations and dividend receipts) was partially offset by a net cash deficit from investing activities, predominantly attributable to the purchase of investments.

BALANCE SHEET

Accumulated equity at the end of the financial year increased by $1,149,919 to $7,540,419. Together with the operating surplus, this was as a result of the net gain of $361,417 on the revaluation of the investment portfolio.

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

OUTLOOK

Ongoing inflationary pressures are generally impacting the economy and leading to uncertainty, with investment markets being priced for a soft recession. We are cognisant this is continuing to impact on Federal government's fiscal position, which as the National Strategic Action Plan Grants wind down over the course of FY24, present some challenges in the competition for funding.

In response, the Board and Management have conducted a review of strategic business objectives to create plans to drive the sustainability of operations and to focus and broaden the scope of income. The Board has also completed a review of internal costing mechanisms, which has and will continue to aid budgeting and forecasting.

I would like to extend my ongoing thanks to the CEO, staff, volunteers and fellow Directors for all their hard work to support delivery of services and desire to achieve the vision of freedom from arthritis.

Financial position

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Current Assets	$	$
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,585,244	2,272,565
Trade and Other Receivables	112,514	207,914
Other	25,906	22,827
Total Current Assets	**2,723,664**	**2,503,306**
Non-Current Assets		
Financial Assets	7,795,183	7,036,363
Property, Plant & Equipment	25,838	28,730
Right of Use Asset	184,540	22,519
Total Non-Current Assets	**8,005,561**	**7,087,612**
Total Assets	**10,729,225**	**9,590,918**
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	2,903,408	3,117,798
Employee Benifits	77,263	46,644
Lease Liability	79,997	23,528
Total Current Liabilities	**3,060,668**	**3,187,970**
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employee Benefits	17,613	12,448
Lease Liability	110,525	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities	**128,138**	**12,448**
Total Liabilities	**3,188,806**	**3,200,418**
Net Assets	**7,540,419**	**6,390,500**
Accumulated Funds		
Contractually restricted funds	6,360,692	5,909,225
Unrestricted funds	1,179,727	481,275
	7,540,419	**6,390,500**

Profit & Loss

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
As at 30 June 2023

INCOME	2023	2022
	$	$
Donations/fundraising		
General	3,727,425	2,696,545
Affiliates	122,750	137,750
Total	**3,850,175**	**2,834,295**
Membership Fees	840	880
Investments		
Interest	4,557	334
Dividends	378,697	416,195
Total	**383,254**	**416,529**
Other Income	448	195
Total Income	**4,234,717**	**3,251,899**
Expenses		
Research	652,383	741,500
Education & Awareness	1,621,834	1,316,316
Administration	904,903	782,340
Fundraising	129,489	89,514
Depreciation	101,003	101,465
Lease Interest	10,810	2,938
Total Expenses	**3,420,422**	**3,034,073**
Surplus/(Deficit)	**814,295**	**217,826**
Other Comprehensive income		
Net Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of Financial Assets	361,417	(673,404)
(Loss)/Gain on Disposal of Investment	(25,793)	18,575
Other Comprehensive Income/(Loss) for the Year	335,624	(654,829)
Total Income/(Loss) for the Year	1,149,919	(437,003)
Surplus attributable to members of the entity	814,295	217,826
Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss) attributable to members of the entity	**1,149,919**	**(437,003)**

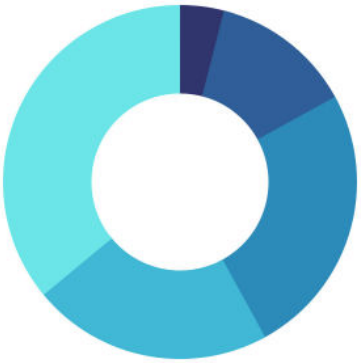
Revenue & Expenditure

Following is the summary of revenue & expenditure of Arthritis Australia

ASSETS HELD	**$10,729,225**
LIABILITIES HELD	**$3,188,806**

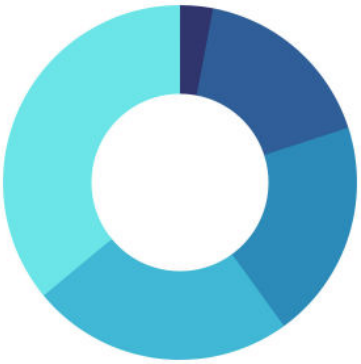
REVENUE

Funding for consumer projects, resources & information	$1,433,561	34%
National Research Program	$599,883	14%
Income from other Sources	$1,678,313	40%
Investment Income	$383,254	9%
Accessible Design	$139,706	3%
TOTAL	**$4,234,717**	



EXPENDITURE

Funding for consumer projects, resources & information	$1,355,955	40%
National Research Program	$652,383	19%
Employee Expenses	$753,492	22%
Other Expenses	$566,707	17%
Accessible Design	$91,886	3%
TOTAL	**$3,420,422**	



11. Donors & supporters

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

Awareness and education

Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd
Novartis Australia
UCB Australia Pty Ltd
Sandoz Pty Ltd
Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd

Parliamentary Friends of Arthritis in the 47th Parliament

Senator Louise Pratt - Chair
Senator Janet Rice - Co-convenor
Dr Anne Webster MP - Co-convenor
Dr Monique Ryan MP - Member
Senator Anne Ruston - Member
Mr Steve Georganas MP - Member
Senator Tammy Tyrrell - Member
Ms Zali Steggall MP - Member
Senator Carol Brown - Member
Mr Graham Perrett MP - Member
Senator Catryna Bilyk - Member
Dr Gordon Reid MP - Member

2022-2023 Donations of $500+

Laurence Charleson
Estate of the Late Joy Lorraine Babidge
William Goodrich
Matt Wilson
Mr Bruce Wallis
APS Foundation
Estate of late Corrie Eleanor Heath
Sally Landman
Andrew Lear
Stephanie Johnston
Paul Scott
John Day
Peter McGovern
James Lewis
Meridy Taite
Louise Gunning
Jonathan Shead
Thu Ngo
Christine Woodruff (Glow Worm Foundation)
Chris Flavelle-Smith
Allen Au
Estate of the Angelo Casella

"These efforts, including the myPsA website, have provided me with a better-informed confidence to undertake the rest of my life journey."

- Consumer comment

Our supporters

Thank you for your support

ADJUSTA MATTRESS
ITS NOT JUST A MATTRESS ITS AN ADJUSTA MATTRESS

AIP
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Australian Government
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Australian Rheumatology Association

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12. Arthritis information & contacts

For all arthritis information:
Arthritis Infoline 1800 011 041
www.arthritisaustralia.com.au

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Jonathan Smithers
Chief Executive Officer

AFFILIATE OFFICES

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Rebecca Davey
Chief Executive Officer

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Hilary Fowler
Secretary

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Alex Green
Chief Executive Officer

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Sarah Grindlay
Programme Director

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Jackie Slyp
Chief Executive Officer

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www.arthritiswa.org.au
Ric Forlano

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

myPsA Psoriatic Arthritis Support Program

A consumer support website dedicated to psoriatic arthritis.
www.mypsoriaticarthritis.org.au

myAS Axial Spondyloarthritis Support Program

A consumer support website dedicated to axial spondyloarthritis.
www.myas.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

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

13. Our team

Jonathan Smithers
CEO

Louise Hardy
Director of Policy and Advocacy

Fahima Fouzdeen
Finance Manager

Krista Sutherland-Smith
Consumer Information Resource Manager
(From 2/23)

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linkedin.com/company/arthritis-australia

Alex Brayshaw
Accessible Design Manager

Peter Brongo
Accessible Design Coordinator
(From 12/22)

Maryanne Ng
Senior Project Manager

Courtney Brown
Project Officer

Jenica Alano
Administration Assistant
(From 4/23)

Patricia Aviet
Administration Assistant
(Until 2/23)

Arthritis
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