Research Partnerships & Support Guidelines

Better research. Better lives.





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Our approach to research partnerships & support

As the national peak organisation representing people living with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions in Australia, our Arthritis Australia Strategy reflects our commitment to partnership and collaboration with universities, medical research institutions, public and private health service providers at every stage of research.

Please note: throughout this guide, the terms 'consumer engagement', 'consumer involvement' and 'lived experience' are used interchangeably.

Research partnership support

We offer a range of partnership support options for researchers, outlining what we can offer ranging from consumer involvement through to promotion and dissemination and research and translation into policy.

Our Research Partnership Guide will help you identify the right level of support and associated funding required for your project.

The funding required and Arthritis Australia resourcing considerations outlined in this guide are intended as a practical starting point to support research planning and grant development. We recognise that every project is different, including the level of funding available. Arthritis Australia works collaboratively with research teams to tailor support and discuss flexible approaches on a case-by-case basis to ensure the partnership is practical, meaningful and achievable for all involved.

Letters of support

Endorsement through a letter of support can be provided for grant applications.

Letter of support requirements

- A minimum of two weeks is the expected lead time
- Provision of a draft letter of support. A template can be provided on request.

How we assess letters of support requests

Assessment criteria include:

- Alignment with Arthritis Australia's priorities.
- Evidence of, or plans for, involvement of people with lived experience of arthritis and/or musculoskeletal conditions at all stages of the research project to ensure the project addresses consumer needs and priorities.
- Support and inclusion: Does the proposal provide adequate remuneration, recognition and support for consumer participants? If significant input from Arthritis Australia is sought, has any budget been allocated towards this?

Grant funding to consider

Strategic partnerships

Arthritis Australia can support grant proposals and funded projects with deeper collaboration across governance, program integration, policy input, and ongoing resource support. Funding required is determined case-by-case.

What we offer

Our current partnership offering to researchers may include:

Contribution description	Funding required ($ per year)
Promotion of study recruitment	No charge, with more intensive paid option
Consumer matching program	**From $5,000**
Input on adapting the intervention, and the study protocol	**$5,000**
Dissemination of the research study results	**$5,000**
If clinically and cost-effective, assistance with incorporating the research into policy	**$20,000**

Promotion of current studies

Arthritis Australia offers a tiered program of promotional support to help researchers recruit participants for new studies or clinical trials.

Promotional support includes listing eligible studies on the Arthritis Australia website to help increase visibility and support recruitment. New study listings also feature in our monthly community newsletter, distributed on the first Thursday of each month, directing readers to current research opportunities as well as our general monthly social media post.

For researchers seeking broader reach and more targeted engagement, Arthritis Australia also offers enhanced promotional support packages. These can include tailored social media campaigns and email & newsletter communication to our arthritis community. Integrated campaign support including strategy, content planning and development, campaign management, paid spend and analytics reporting starts from $5,000 AUD.

Review process

Website review process

For your study to be considered for placement on the current research studies page of the Arthritis Australia website, please send info@arthritisaustralia.org.au the following information:

- Approval by your ethics committee (please provide the documents)
- Full particulars of the study including a summary of research, objectives, protocol, locations, dates, what it entails for volunteers, volunteer profile, who to contact to enlist and any other relevant information
- Patient Information Sheets
- Consent forms
- A brief study summary for potential placement on the Arthritis Australia website. For sample content, please refer to other studies already posted on the Arthritis Australia website current research studies page.

We recommend that if the subject matter discussed with study participants has the potential to cause distress, that Patient Information Sheets include details of mental health support services such as Lifeline

Once the study has completed recruitment, please notify info@arthritisaustralia.org.au

Social media process

Note: Only research studies that first receive approval for posting on the Arthritis Australia's *current research studies* page will be considered for promotion on Arthritis Australia's social media. Please also note that your study/trial may appear on one or all of

Arthritis Australia's social media platforms (this is at the discretion of the Website and Social Media Manager) and will only be promoted once.

To have your study considered for placement on Arthritis Australia's social media channels, please include this in your request for promotion.

Key dates

Promotion of current studies runs on a monthly cycle:

- **1st of each month** – deadline for new study submissions to be promoted in that month
- **Within 5 working days of submission** – new studies added to the current studies page
- **Third week of the month –** social media promotion of current studies page on the Arthritis Australia website
- **First Thursday of each month** – promotion of Current Studies in the Arthritis Australia newsletter with link to current studies page

Partnering for meaningful consumer involvement

Arthritis Australia works alongside researchers to embed meaningful consumer involvement across all stages of the research process, from early grant planning and priority setting through to recruitment, governance, co-design workshop planning, implementation and lived experience impact reporting.

Through partnerships with leading research organisations including Professor Ranjeny Thomas's research project RESET-RA and Professor Sophie Payne's abdominal Vagus Nerve Stimulation research project at the Bionics Institute, Arthritis Australia has supported end-to-end consumer involvement approaches that place the lived experience of people with arthritis at the centre of research programs.

These partnerships have included:

- developing consumer involvement strategies and engagement plans,
- recruiting and matching lived experience partners
- facilitating advisory groups, workshops and co-design activities,
- supporting governance and consumer representation,
- providing onboarding, agreements and remuneration administration,
- and helping researchers build sustainable and inclusive consumer partnerships throughout the life of a project.

By working collaboratively with researchers and our Arthritis Research Champions, Arthritis Australia helps create research partnerships that are practical, easy to implement and aligned with best-practice consumer involvement principles. These approaches strengthen the relevance, accessibility and real-world impact of arthritis research while supporting researchers to confidently integrate the lived experience perspectives into their programs.

This guide has been developed to support research teams in planning and delivering meaningful consumer involvement activities and outlines the different ways Arthritis Australia can partner with researchers across the research lifecycle.

Who are Arthritis Research Champions

Arthritis Australia Research Champions are people with lived experience of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions who share their insights to help shape and improve research. As supported consumer partners, Champions contribute their perspectives across the research lifecycle, from setting priorities and reviewing study designs through to sitting on advisory panels and co-designing research activities.

Through our matching service, we connect you with Champions whose lived experience and skills align with your project, so their contribution adds genuine value to your work.

Matching program

Our Arthritis Consumer Champion Matching Service connects you with suitable Arthritis Consumer Research Champions to support meaningful involvement in your project. We can help at every step, from identifying the best approach to involvement, through to matching Champions to your project and supporting onboarding and remuneration.
How the matching program works:

1. **Project brief** — You provide a project brief outlining your study, your research aims, and the types of consumer perspectives and involvement you are seeking.
2. **Introductory planning meeting** — The Arthritis Australia Research and Consumer Involvement Manager meets with your research team to discuss your project, planning and strategy for embedding consumers successfully into your study. Together we clearly identify the types of consumer perspectives needed, the stages and roles of consumer involvement, and the delivery of engagement, budget and timeline.
3. **Expression of Interest (EOI) developed** — Arthritis Australia prepares an Expression of Interest tailored to your study to attract suitable Arthritis Australia Consumer Research Champions with relevant lived experience and interests.
4. **Arthritis Research Champion shortlisting** — Arthritis Australia short-lists interested Research Champions who respond to the EOI and interviews each candidate to confirm suitability and fit for your study. This step generally takes up to 10 working days from the planning meeting.
5. **Arthritis Research Champion profiles provided** — Arthritis Australia supplies the short-list of candidate profiles for your review, including background, lived experience and any criteria relevant to your study.
6. **Researcher selects and connects** — Your research team selects preferred candidates, and Arthritis Australia facilitates the introduction. Additional support for onboarding, briefing and preparation is provided as needed.
7. **Supporting consumer partners** – Arthritis Australia checks in periodically with consumers appointed to projects to provide information and support.
8. **Evaluation and effectiveness** — Arthritis Australia requests that a short evaluation be completed by both the researcher and the consumer at an agreed point in the study, to ensure the partnership remains meaningful, effective and well-supported.

Consumer Advisory Panels and Workshops

For projects seeking deeper involvement, Arthritis Australia provides end-to-end support for establishing and running a consumer advisory panel. This includes:

- Panel set-up and ongoing management: recruiting, supporting and coordinating a panel of consumers across the life of your project.
- Impact reporting: capturing and reporting on the value and outcomes of consumer involvement.
- Evaluation reporting: working with consumer panels to evaluate and report on how effectively consumers were engaged throughout the project.

We support co-design workshops from initial strategy through to independent facilitation:

- Workshop strategy and planning: co-designing the approach for consumer workshops aligned to your research aims.
- Workshop facilitation: independent facilitation of co-design workshops or advisory group sessions.

Consumer involvement program funding to consider

Arthritis Australia offers a 3-tiered partnership support program for lived experience engagement.

Program	Suitable for	Includes
Starter matching Program	Researchers who will self-manage most aspects of recruitment	Briefing session, EOI with applicants to contact research team directly and research team to run selection process. Arthritis Australia will check in with the selected consumer partners to provide support.
Full matching program partnership	Larger projects and researchers who want more support with matching and onboarding	Briefing session, EOI, matching service, interviews, onboarding agreement support as required. Arthritis Australia will check in with the selected consumer partners to provide support.
Co-design support	Full end to end projects	Matching Program & Strategy and planning & Full facilitation of workshops or groups & impact reporting

For more information on each support program please see the guide below;

Starter matching program			
Activity/Services	**Research self-manage**	**Arthritis Australia administer**	**Indicative funding required**
Provide brief	✓	–	No charge
Briefing session	✓	✓	
Develop Expression of Interest	✓	–	
Promote opportunity to consumer network	-	✓	
Assessment and selection of consumers	✓	–	
Interview co-ordination	✓	–	
Interviews (if further vetting required)	✓	–	
Consumer agreements & onboarding support	✓	–	
Remuneration administration	✓	✓	
Consumer involvement evaluation support	✓	✓	

Full matching program partnership			
Activity/Service	**Research self-manage**	**Arthritis Australia administer**	**Indicative funding required**
Provide Brief	✓	–	**From $5,000**
Briefing session	✓	✓	
Develop Expression of Interest	–	✓	
Promote opportunity to consumer network	–	✓	
Recruit and match consumers.	–	✓	
Interview co-ordination	–	✓	
Interviews (if further vetting required)	–	✓	
Consumer agreements + onboarding support as required	–	✓	
Remuneration administration	✓	✓	
Remuneration payment	✓	–	
Consumer Involvement Evaluations	–	✓	

Full lived experience co-design partnership			
Activity/Service	**Research self-manage**	**Arthritis Australia administer**	**Indicative funding required**
Full Matching Program Partnership	–	✓	**From $10,000**
Co-design planning and strategy of workshops	–	✓	
Facilitation of workshops(based on 1 workshop)	–	✓	
Impact Reporting	–	✓	

Getting started

1. Ensure you include all the information required.
2. Send your request to info@arthritisaustralia.org.au
3. Arthritis Australia assesses the partnership on a case-by-case basis and acknowledges and engages with the applicant as appropriate.

Expectations for researchers

We encourage research teams to:

- Involve consumers early and throughout all research stages — design, implementation, and dissemination.
- Budget for consumer remuneration in line with national best practice and ideally include more than one consumer representative in the project team.
- Budget for some funding support from Arthritis Australia when the involvement sought is significant.
- Provide consumer support, such as orientation and mentoring to help consumers engage confidently.
- Share findings in accessible formats for the arthritis community.

References and additional resources

1. Research Australia Best Practice Guidance for Consumer Driven Arthritis Research
2. Remuneration and reimbursement of health consumers
3. Understanding the Arthritis Research Landscape Report
4. What Consumers Want: Identifying the Unmet Needs of Australians Living with Arthritis Report
5. Impactful Arthritis Research Report

Requests for letters of support can be emailed to info@arthritisaustralia.org.au