



MUSCULOSKELETAL
AUSTRALIA



'Rattle Ya' Bones Day' raises awareness of invisible conditions at Halloween

Traditionally October 31 has been all about Halloween. That is until now! Now, Musculoskeletal Australia (MSK) is also counting on October 31 becoming known as 'Rattle Ya' Bones Day'.

The numbers are alarming: **7 million Australians** have a musculoskeletal condition that affects their muscles, bones, and joints. And it's all too easy for these 7 million people to blur into a statistic – until now!

Rattle Ya' Bones Day is a National Awareness Day for all muscle, bone and joint conditions. It's a day that will shine a light on these conditions and makes visible the very real impacts they can have on the people we care about.

There are over 150 different musculoskeletal conditions that affect muscles, bones, and joints – like arthritis, osteoporosis and backpain. And they affect people of all ages and backgrounds.

The [report](#) from Musculoskeletal Australia's 2020 national consumer survey, 'Making the invisible visible', identified that **people with musculoskeletal conditions often felt invisible** and that there is a level of **pain and suffering in our community that is little known** and largely ignored.

- **66%** of people who responded to the survey said they tended to keep to themselves and not contact friends and family when they felt unwell, and
- **45%** said they could not make firm commitments to socialise.

A survey respondent told us: *"I find very few people, except my immediate family who see what I go through, actually understand RA [rheumatoid arthritis]. Even work colleagues who are also healthcare professionals don't seem to understand it. There are weeks where I am doing better, but mostly for me, it's a struggle to get my work done in the time allowed so I work overtime. I have asked for support, and it is not given easily. Once when I had a month off work with breast cancer, I was given great empathy and support BUT never has anyone ever asked about the RA. I don't complain about it, that's not my style, but it must be obvious on days I limp or can't move very well. I think people really don't know how to handle it. I don't look like I have a disability, but I do." **And another:** "The hardest thing about having a chronic disease is that people lose empathy and understanding as there is no end date. You never get better. You just get better at hiding pain, so others don't feel uncomfortable around you."*

To help overcome the widespread lack of community awareness around musculoskeletal conditions, MSK is launching Rattle Ya' Bones Day on Sunday October 31, 2021. We're excited to announce that both Pharmacy Alliance and Pharmacy Guild will be supporting Rattle Ya' Bones Day by encouraging their member and community pharmacies, staff and customers to get on board and spread the word about the day.

Rattle Ya' Bones Day aims to build visibility and understanding around conditions like arthritis, osteoporosis, back pain, and gout. Rob Anderson, Musculoskeletal Australia's CEO, believes no one should "just have to live with" their condition and wants people to know that help and support is available.

This Rattle Ya' Bones Day we're encouraging people to speak to their local pharmacist or to call the free, national, MSK Help Line on 1800 263 265 for information and support on muscle, bone and joint conditions.

- **40%** of people who responded to the survey said they wanted to know more about the services available to them, and
- **25%** wanted access to support and services in their local area.

MSK is asking everyone to get behind Rattle Ya' Bones Day by either posting a short video of themselves letting people know they are supporting the day and where people can access free information and support OR by participating in the 'Rattle Ya' Bones Challenge' to help build awareness about muscle, bone, and joint conditions. Further details about how people can get involved are on the Musculoskeletal Australia website at <https://www.msk.org.au/rattle-ya-bones-day/>

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About Musculoskeletal Australia

Musculoskeletal Australia (MSK) is an ACNC registered, for-purpose organisation that supports people for better musculoskeletal health.

There are almost 7 million Australians who live in pain due to a musculoskeletal condition. Arthritis, back pain, osteoporosis, gout, fibromyalgia and juvenile arthritis are just some of the more than 150 musculoskeletal conditions affecting the young and old. Living with a musculoskeletal condition is a battle, but there are things we can do to give people a greater sense of control. Musculoskeletal Australia has been providing vital information and support to those in need for more than 50 years.

We are committed to empowering people with musculoskeletal conditions and those at risk of them. We do this with empathy and understanding through the provision of information, services, and products.

National Help Line: 1800 263 265

Website: www.msk.org.au **Instagram:** [@mskaust](https://www.instagram.com/mskaust) **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/MSKAust/>

About Pharmacy Alliance

Pharmacy Alliance is the largest independent pharmacy network in Australia. The Pharmacy Alliance has over 700 members and works to support its members to increase their profits by providing them with innovative and effective retail tools and services.

About Pharmacy Guild

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is a peak national employer organisation, which represents Australia's community pharmacies. For over 90 years, it continues to serve its members and the Australian public who value their local pharmacy.

Available for interview

[Sophie Thompson](#), aged 29, diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.

One of the biggest challenges for Sophie can be a lack of understanding or empathy from those around her, as on the outside, she looks like a healthy 29-year-old. "You look well when you have rheumatoid arthritis, you don't look sick. In my case I'm quite active, I like wearing makeup, I like doing my hair – I actually look particularly healthy – and it can be really hard to have people, through no fault of their own, understand that you're facing something challenging. Things

like getting a seat on public transport or having a bad day at work with no one checking in on you, it can be quite isolating.”

Rob Anderson, CEO, Musculoskeletal Australia

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