



MUSCULOSKELETAL
AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



ABOUT US



MUSCULOSKELETAL
A U S T R A L I A

Our mission

To support people for better musculoskeletal health.

Our vision

That the quality of life of people who have or are at risk of developing musculoskeletal conditions is improved.

Our brand

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 our information, services and products.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

We are pleased to present the 2022 Annual Report for Musculoskeletal Australia (MSK).

This year, our first post-COVID, focused on further re-engaging with the sector and developing our advocacy and service models. Attending health sector events, forums, and meetings to engage on a personal level really highlighted what we missed through that challenging period. Getting back into the office to share ideas and consider our future advocacy and servicing priorities gave rise to a new appreciation of what it means to be in a team and what we can achieve together.

We are very proud of the nature and quality of our services. From our nurse-led national help line to our consumer-focused information, webinars and programs, we put consumers first. Our Consumer Advisory Committee provides essential oversight and input to ensure our advocacy and service provision priorities are consumer-driven. We thank them for their critical contribution.

A key priority of MSK is ensuring access and equity are factored into all we do. Because of this, it was important to start our journey of reconciliation to prioritise our most marginalised communities. We are both pleased and proud to have achieved our first Reconciliation Action Plan – 'Reflect' and are continuing our journey to develop our next plan.

2022 was the second year of the national awareness day, 'Rattle Ya' Bones Day'. Our first in-person event was held at Peninsula Hot Springs, where we heard from ambassadors who provided powerful insight into what it's like to live with musculoskeletal conditions.

The reality of running a charity is that our available resources are the only limitation of our ambitions. To that end, we are very grateful to our brilliant supporters, donors and partners - without you, we simply would not be. Your support has helped thousands of Australians living with musculoskeletal conditions.

After five years of service as CEO of MSK, we farewelled Rob Anderson in February 2023. We thank him for his dedication and hard work during his tenure which played a critical role in the development and growth of MSK as national, consumer-led organisation.

Finally, we'd like to thank the fantastic team at MSK. By team, we mean our consumer representatives, volunteers, staff and Board, who we believe are talented and committed to prioritising the consumer voice. We are very excited about 2023 and look forward to continuing to assist even more people to 'own their health'.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dipak Sanghvi', written in a cursive style.

Dipak Sanghvi- Chair

CONSUMER REPORT

As a consumer organisation, MSK listens to and represents the voice of people with musculoskeletal conditions. The work we do is driven by what they tell us.

National Arthritis and Back Pain+ Help Line

Established in 1988, MSK's free nurse-led Help Line has provided information and support to thousands of Australians in their time of need. The team on the Help Line regularly receive positive feedback from callers.

Additionally this year, with in-kind support from the Australian Social Values Bank, we used their value calculator to evaluate the benefits the Help Line provides to individuals and society. We're excited to share that the cost-benefit ratio for every dollar invested in the Help Line, there was a \$10.39 return.



social value =

\$10.39

return for every \$1.00 invested



"Thank you so much for explaining the facts, helping me sort through the medical information overload I was experiencing, and for the helpful tips on finding reliable internet sites."

"I called the Help Line and one of their wonderful nurses listened to my fears and was able to give me the information I needed. It was so reassuring to be able to speak to someone who understood what I was going through."

CONSUMER REPORT



At the start of 2022, MSK presented to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Childhood Rheumatic Disease. Our gratitude to the many families who provided their thoughts for inclusion in our submission. Their voices conveyed the lived experiences of children with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) and their families. A total of 123 submissions were made to the inquiry which clearly showed the need for greater investment into coordinated programs and more healthcare workers in this space. Our submission is available [here](#).

MSK Kids hosted several webinars throughout the year. Topics covered how to help children deal with pain, flare-ups and fatigue; immunisation safety and needle phobia; and foot development. Our thanks to SKiP (Supporting Kids in Pain), the rheumatology nurses from the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and podiatrist Assoc Prof Cylie Williams for presenting these informative webinars.

We were pleased to attend the National School Nurses conference held in Melbourne, where we had the opportunity to further educate school nurses on the challenges faced by students living with JIA and other musculoskeletal conditions. Our school resource 'Caring for a child with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions' was well received with over 100 packs distributed.



Our online support group for people aged between 13-20 who live with a musculoskeletal or chronic pain condition, continues to thrive. Teen Talk provides a safe space for young people to come together, support one another and share tips about living with a chronic condition. It's also a space where we curate resources specific to this age group, such as information on mental health, senior years of schooling and transition from paediatric to adult care.

On advocacy matters, MSK Kids presented a submission to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) on a new oral biologic that provides another option for children who dislike the weekly injections which are often prescribed for juvenile arthritis.

"You can talk about stuff you couldn't with 'normal' kids such as wigs and managing to open a can on your own, just small achievements like that."

Ollie



CONSUMER REPORT

Communications

We place great importance on staying connected with our community and supporters. Our help line, webinars, e-newsletter, social media, and website provide valuable information to people looking to improve their physical and mental health.

Webinars



135%↑

webinar registrations

90.5%

viewer satisfaction rate

Most popular webinar

'All about fibromyalgia' presented by Dr Emma Guymer

2,130 registrations and 31,889 viewed the recording

Here's what people are saying...

"What a great piece of work you produced! As a sufferer of 27 years, it all makes sense. Thank you!"

"I just wanted to say thank you, thank you, thank you. It was amazing. It brought tears to my eyes to finally hear someone that supports what I have experienced for 15 years."

"Thank you for the regular MSK News. This useful paper is something I look forward to receiving in my inbox. Keep up the good work."

CONSUMER REPORT



Website unique visits
338,687



eNewsletter subscribers
21,739



Social media followers
17,920

Koadlow Lecture

Each year MSK convenes a major community lecture in honour of Dr Les Koadlow, a passionate rheumatologist who founded our organisation in 1968.

'Working Wise - Managing your musculoskeletal conditions at work' was a free online event sponsored by Peninsula Hot Springs. It provided information to help people and those that support them, to manage their symptoms at work, as well as tips, strategies and resources to help them continue to work, change jobs and understand their rights.

We were honoured to have three presenters in this lecture – Dr Anne Daly, Specialist Pain Physiotherapist, who outlined what people can do to manage in the workplace; Jessica Dawson-Field, Senior Associate, Maurice Blackburn, who covered people's rights at work when they have a musculoskeletal condition and what they should expect from their employer; and Frank Imbesi, Senior Occupational Consultant, who provided people with some advice about what to do if they need to reconsider their work/career options.

"I questioned whether this topic was going to be useful to me or not. In the end it proved stunningly worthwhile."

"Always professional but relaxed, informative, interesting and on time."

"Thank you, it was very worthwhile."

CONSUMER REPORT

Peer Support Groups

Our Peer Support Groups provide an opportunity for people to connect with others. Groups continue to meet regularly, hosting morning teas, lunches, social outings, walking and other exercise programs. In October, the Warragul Arthritis Self Help Group closed their doors after 30 years of service to its community.

It was a welcome opportunity to thank those involved for the substantial work they have done in the community, particularly the effort involved with their warm water exercise classes. Well done to the tireless leaders and to everyone who volunteered their time.

A dark blue circular icon containing three stylized human figures. One figure is at the top in light blue, and two are at the bottom in medium blue and red, connected by a white Y-shaped line.

"Our monthly meetings always featured a guest speaker that was both entertaining and informative." - Member, Warragul PSG

Self-care

MSK is committed to supporting people with arthritis, back pain and other musculoskeletal conditions to practice self-care. Self-care encompasses all activities that people do to manage their conditions such as exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet, getting a good night's sleep, caring for their mental health, managing pain and fatigue, seeing their healthcare team regularly, learning about their musculoskeletal condition and staying connected with family and friends.

With generous grants received from AbbVie and UCB, MSK has developed content for rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, juvenile arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and back pain self-care plans. In time, people will be able to generate personalised self-care plans via an online platform.



CONSUMER REPORT

Cheaper medicines

We were pleased to work with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Chronic Pain Australia and the Australian Patients Association to advocate for the lowering of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) maximum general patient co-payment. This initiative was designed to address a key issue identified by many people – the affordability of medicines and health care, especially for those with long-term, chronic health conditions. The campaign focused on obtaining a commitment from both major political parties during the 2022 Federal election to lower the cost of PBS co-payments and ensuring that the commitment became action once the new government was installed.

On 1 January 2023, the maximum cost of general prescriptions under the PBS fell for the first time in the 75-year history of the PBS.



WorkWise

With the assistance of our Consumer Advisory Committee, we created WorkWise, an online resource and eBook for workers who live with musculoskeletal conditions. It provides information to help people manage their symptoms at work, as well as tips, strategies, and resources to help them continue to work, change jobs, understand their rights and more. WorkWise can be accessed on our [website](#).

WorkWise was made possible through a generous grant from The Iorine Estelle Demmer and Hugh Eardley Demmer Charitable Trust, managed by Equity Trustees.



Translated information resources

A key priority of MSK is ensuring that access and equity are factored into all we do. Thanks to the generous support of Pfizer and Novartis, we have been able to translate more of our information resources. We're pleased that more resources are now accessible to a broader section of the Australian community. Ankylosing spondylitis, osteoarthritis, psoriatic arthritis, diet and exercise resources are now available in Simplified English, Arabic, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese. They can all be accessed on our [website](#).

**"Organisations like MSK,
who fly the flag for people
like me, help me realise I'm
not alone and give me hope
for improvements."**

Bruce



OUR COMMUNITY

ACT Senior Volunteer of the Year 2022

Our congratulations to Angela Brown, Chair of the MSK Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC), on becoming the recipient of the Australian Capital Territory Senior Volunteer of the Year Award for 2022. MSK was proud to nominate Angela for this award.

Angela uses her role as Chair as a vehicle to engage with people and healthcare planners to implement change. She understands the barriers, treatments, opportunities and needs that a person with musculoskeletal conditions confronts. Angela has a great understanding of the healthcare system and how it operates and uses her experience as an advocate for change. A well-deserved award, and we're honoured to have Angela on our CAC.



Queen's Birthday Honors

We're excited to share that MSK Board Director Emeritus, Prof Peter Choong received the Queen's Birthday Honour of Officer (AO) in the General Division of The Order of Australia.

Prof Choong was awarded for his distinguished service to orthopaedic medicine, research and tertiary medical education, and to professional associations. He has been a tireless supporter of MSK and people who live with musculoskeletal conditions. Congratulations to Prof Choong for this prestigious award.



Nomination for Victorian Senior of the Year

We were pleased to nominate MSK Chair Dipak Sanghvi for the 2022 Victorian Senior of the Year Award. This award celebrates people like Dipak, whose kindness and generosity make our state stronger and fairer.

Since joining the MSK Board in 2016, Dipak has made significant and ongoing contributions to our community. Our nomination also recognised the breadth of his involvement in the wider community. Congratulations to Dipak on this well-deserved nomination.



OUR COMMUNITY



Rattle Ya' Bones Day

31 October 2022 was the date of the second annual Rattle Ya' Bones Day - A National Day of Awareness for all muscle, bone and joint conditions. Thanks to our partners, Rattle Ya' Bones Day was celebrated with a launch event at Peninsula Hot Springs.

Rattle Ya' Bones Day is an outcome of our consumer survey report "Making the Invisible Visible: Australians share the impact of musculoskeletal conditions on their lives". Musculoskeletal conditions can have a significant impact on people's lives, and they must receive the recognition and support they need. Rattle Ya' Bones Day will continue to be celebrated annually to help raise awareness and understanding of these conditions.



Photos reflect our history

Our project to digitise and catalogue our vast collection of photographs and ephemera continued in 2022, thanks to funding obtained from the Local History Grant Program. This grant program is made available through the Victorian Government and Public Record Office Victoria.

Once completed, we look forward to making this collection accessible online as a way to celebrate our organisation's 50+ year history and to give thanks to the many people who have helped us get to where we are today. Keep up to date with this project [here](#).



"Psoriatic arthritis can be a really lonely, isolating condition so it means a lot that Rattle Ya' Bones Day exists because it helps raise awareness and understanding of these conditions."

Bianka



VOLUNTEERS

Skilled volunteers are essential members of the MSK team. Like many not-for-profit organisations, we benefit greatly from their expertise and their willingness to give so freely of their time.

"I love volunteering on the Help Line as I always learn something new and am able to keep up to date with conditions and treatments as I am now a retired health professional."

The nurses on the Help Line are supported by volunteers, including those who live with a musculoskeletal condition. They are in a unique position to share their lived experience and provide an opportunity for callers to speak to someone who 'gets it'.

"After months of appointments, what I really wanted was to speak to someone who had a similar condition to me and understood what I was going through. So I called the Help Line and spoke to a volunteer and I knew straight away they understood."

It's not only our Help Line that is supported by volunteers. Our e-newsletter's most clicked on items are the healthy and nutritious recipes provided by volunteers Kitty, an Accredited Practicing Dietitian, and Lauren, a Registered Clinical Nutritionist.

We are grateful for the tremendous support from our committed volunteers, and we were delighted to have them join us at an end-of-year Christmas gathering – something that was greatly missed during the COVID period.



CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Our Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) includes people with various musculoskeletal conditions from across the country. They volunteer their expertise and time, advising the Board and management on the strategic planning of our organisation, as well as drawing on their lived experience to contribute to the development of our programs and services.

A key achievement of the CAC this year was implementing a national survey on biological disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (bDMARDs). This survey examined the delays experienced by consumers in receiving their scripts and biologic and targeted synthetic bDMARDs. We were pleased to work with Arthritis Australia on this survey.

The report was widely disseminated and provided to the Federal Ministers for Health and Government Services and can be found on our [website](#).

Meet Melissa

We welcomed our newest CAC member Melissa Gilbert in 2022. Melissa was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia in her mid-20's when pregnant with her second child. Now a single mum to two teenagers and working full time, she has a true understanding of the difficulties and rewards that life with musculoskeletal conditions can bring.

"There is so much to be done to ensure people with musculoskeletal conditions are adequately considered and represented when decisions are made that affect us. We have such a wonderful, diverse group of CAC members and I truly believe that we can influence changes to improve how people with musculoskeletal conditions live and enjoy their lives."



Melissa will draw on her lived experience and professional knowledge to benefit MSK and advocate for people with musculoskeletal conditions. She has over 15 years experience in research into women's health and well-being.

We're honoured to have Melissa as part of our team.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

In 2022, MSK successfully completed its 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This was a significant and worthwhile experience for MSK, its staff, Board and Consumer Advisory Committee given the internal reflection and review required. Some of the key learnings and changes that have been made over the last 12 months included:

- A business case developed for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within MSK
- MSK staff, Board and Consumer Advisory Committee undertook online cultural awareness training
- HR policies and procedures were reviewed for any potential discriminatory components and to ensure their suitability moving forward
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our sphere of influence were identified
- Best practice principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations were identified and adopted
- MSK actively promoted National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week to its broader audience and had RAP Working Group members and other staff involved in activities during these significant weeks.

"Going through the RAP process in my workplace has allowed me to learn more about the rich and diverse cultures of First Nations Australians. As someone who was educated in the 1970s and 80s, this information was sorely lacking. The little I did learn was often negative, inaccurate and/or racist. The RAP process has opened my eyes to the many stereotypes and myths that perpetuate in our society about First Nations Australians. I'm grateful for this opportunity to learn and have my eyes opened." MSK staff member

"I strongly endorse our organisation's commitment to be inclusive of all peoples in all it does. The RAP journey is an important part of this, and we look forward to it shaping our organisation and its culture for many years to come. I welcome the opportunity to continue to learn more about our First Nations Australians and their wonderfully rich and fascinating cultures and for the constant reminder that life should always be viewed through many lenses." Jade Rowarth, Board Member & Deputy Chair

MSK's RAP Working Group has commenced work on our 'Innovate' RAP which once endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, will cover a two-year period.



OUR COMMUNITY

We extend heartfelt thanks to our generous donors, philanthropists, trusts and foundations for their ongoing support of Musculoskeletal Australia and our work to improve the lives of people living with musculoskeletal conditions.

Thank you.

Major donors

Geoffrey Baker
Elsmaree Baxter
Benalla Arthritis Peer Support Group
Rosemary Castles
Cranbourne Arthritis Support Group
Ainslie Cummins
Greg Shalit & Miriam Faine
Catherine Gray
Pat Howell
SM Linsdell
James & Yvonne Lewis
Joanne Manger

Gail McKay
Richard Miller
Marion Moir
Dennis & Fairlie Nassau
Phillip Newson
David Orford
Judith Price
Dianne Shakespeare
Robert Squire
Lee White
Janice Wischer

Trusts and foundations

Australian Communities Foundation
Bruce McDonald Charitable Trust
Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
Iodine Estelle Demmer & Eardley Demmer
Charitable Trust
Joe White Bequest

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation -

- Hopetoun Fund
- Ann Rusden Fund
- Duncan Family Fund

The Russell Foundation
The William Angliss (Victoria) Charitable Trust
Ward-Ambler Foundation

Bequests

Patricia Anderson
David M Bird
Patricia Ann Britten
Brian Gerald Cannan
Thomas Richard Cleal
Jurgen August Daeche
Ronald Charles Forsyth

Michael S Herman
Elinor Marie Holland
Margaret & John Leonard
Bruce McDonald
Heather Rose
Mary Elizabeth Saunders

OUR COMMUNITY

Our partners

We are proud to be working alongside these organisations to improve the lives of people living with musculoskeletal conditions.

AbbVie
Australian Ethical Health Alliance
Australian Self-Care Alliance
Australian Social Value Bank
Comfort Feet Foundation
Consumers Health Forum of Australia
Dragon Claw
Freemasons Foundation Victoria
Janssen
JMR Advisory
Josh Burns MP - Federal Member for MacNamara
Kingfisher Capital Investments
Latrobe University

Macquarie University
MedAdvisor
Monash University
Myotherapy Association of Australia
National Patient Organisation Network
Novartis
Pain Australia
Peninsula Hot Springs
Pharmacy Alliance
Pfizer
The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
UCB
University of Melbourne
University of Sydney
Public Record Office Victoria - Victoria State Government

DIRECTORS AND OFFICE HOLDERS

Dipak Sanghvi	Chair, Non-Executive Director
Jade Rowarth	Deputy Chair, Non-Executive Director
Arthur Charlaftis	Non-Executive Director
David Charles	Non-Executive Director
George Kalomaillos	Non-Executive Director
John McLindon	Non-Executive Director
Natalie Sirianni	Non-Executive Director
Erica Traicos	Non-Executive Director
Professor Peter Choong	Director Emeritus
Rob Anderson	Chief Executive Officer (Resigned February 28, 2023)
Karla Wignall	Interim Co-CEO
Kay Mwaba	Interim Co-CEO
Philip Thomas	Company Secretary

Patrons

Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC CVO
Sir Gustav Nossel AC CBE FRS FAA FTSE

CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Angela Brown – Chair
Kerry Bergin
Melissa Gilbert
Rachael Havrlant
Paul Klotz
Mikayla O'Neill
Sophie Thompson

Resigned committee members:

Peter Button (December 2022)
Phil Cole (August 2022)
Anne Gleeson (October 2022)
Annie McPherson (November 2022)

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National Arthritis and Back Pain+ Help Line
1800 263 265



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