

President Dr Jack Edelman,
MBBS FRACP

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2015
Annual General Meeting 27th April 2016

Welcome to the 44th Annual General Meeting of the Arthritis Foundation of WA. Once again I am pleased to report that the Foundation has had a most successful year. Income for the year of \$3.9 million has provided a solid base for us as we move forward in developing and delivering more programs whilst increasing our commitment to vital research.

We are a non-government organisation relying on the support of the community to pay our way. Most of our services are available for free or for a small fee.

Arthritis is the umbrella name for over one hundred conditions; the name to be some of the most prevalent, disabling and costly chronic diseases in Australia. They affect more than 3 million people of all ages and they cost the health system well over \$4.3 billion annually.

However, regardless of these facts and the increasing prevalence and severity of these conditions, they are rarely given the validation and the support they deserve. The number of people with arthritis will significantly increase over the coming decade due to an ageing and increasingly obese population.

To alleviate, the personal, social and economic burden of this large population, especially those residing in Western Australia it is imperative that we strategically improve the health service provision to this vulnerable population coping with painful and debilitating arthritis.

If not treated and managed correctly, people with inflammatory arthritis will require hospitalisation as they are already at increased risk of pneumonia, heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.

Taking steps now to reduce the impact and severity of arthritis is critical, according to Arthritis Australia 'Time to Move' strategy:

- Improvements in longevity in recent decades mean that not only are more people developing arthritis, they are living longer with the condition and because arthritis is mostly progressive, the longer people live with the condition, the more severe it becomes.
- In addition, arthritis is a leading cause of disability and early retirement, costing \$1.3 billion annually in Disability Support Pension payments and \$9.4 billion in lost GDP due to early retirement.
- The personal, social and economic cost of arthritis, including lost wellbeing and reduced productivity, was estimated to be \$24 billion.
- Osteoporosis is a common disease affecting over 1 million Australians. This disease makes bones become brittle leading to a higher risk of breaks than in normal bone. Osteoporosis occurs when bones lose minerals, such as calcium, more quickly than the body can replace them, causing a loss of bone thickness (bone density or mass).

As bones become thinner and less dense, even a minor bump or fall can cause a serious fracture. A 'fracture' is a complete or partial break in a bone. Any bone can be affected by osteoporosis, but the most common sites are the hip, spine and wrist.

Fractures in the spine due to osteoporosis can result in height loss or changes in posture. Osteoporosis usually has no symptoms until a fracture occurs,

this is why osteoporosis is often called the 'silent disease.'

Chronic musculoskeletal disorders impact on all facets of daily living activities, reducing the quality of life of those affected, their carers and families. However early diagnosis and quick treatment will greatly improve the quality and enjoyment of living.

The Arthritis Foundation is committed to assist those people with Bone and Joint disease and has a proven track record of offering quality health programs and providing funds for research.

I am pleased to report that our commitment to research continues.

The Board of Management has agreed to fund a PhD scholarship in the memory of John Donald Stewart who left a substantial bequest to the Arthritis Foundation of WA.

This scholarship is to be awarded under the supervision of Prof. Hans Nossent, preferably to a medically trained candidate with a special interest in rheumatology, or a candidate with a solid background in medical science/public health at a Masters level.

The initial PhD research will focus on epidemiology of rheumatoid arthritis in WA with a view to expand research. The scholarship will be for a period of 3.5 years at \$50,000 per annum - \$175,000 in total. It is expected the successful candidate will commence sometime in 2016.

Arthritis and Osteoporosis WA has developed a number of innovative disease specific self-management education programs lead by Ms Jean McQuade and her team.

Abstract presentations throughout 2015 include:

Ankylosing Spondylitis self-management education program

- Poster presentation at the European Arthritis Scientific Conference in Rome and at the Asia Pacific League against Rheumatism
- Poster presentation at the American College of Rheumatology

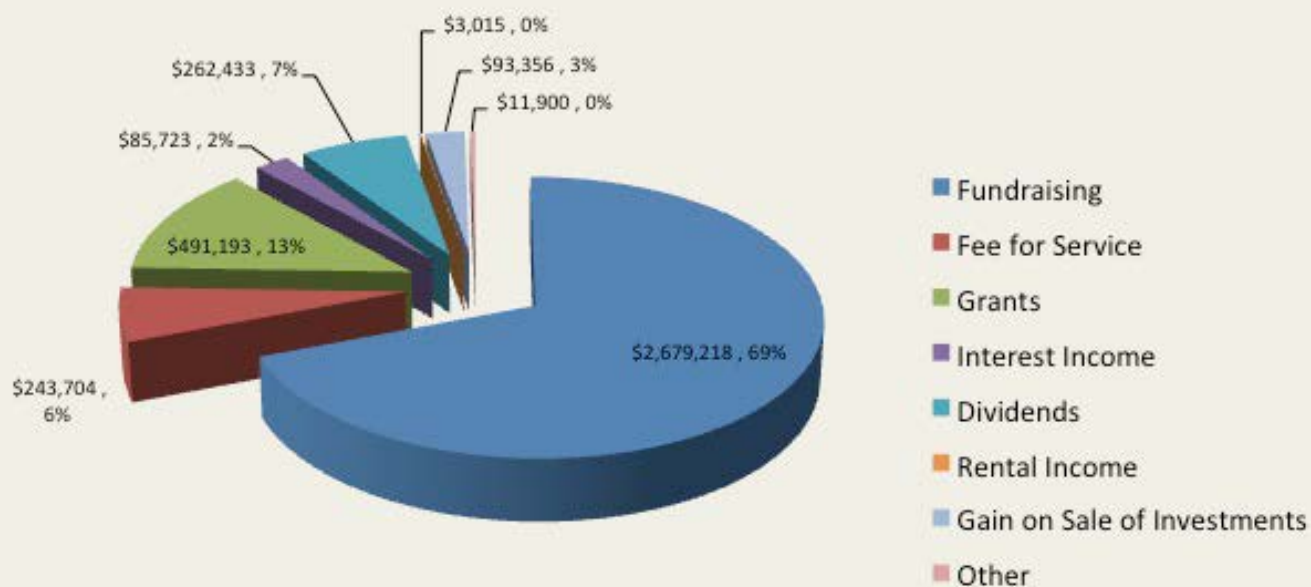
Osteoarthritis of the Knee self-management education program

- Oral invited presentation 'Osteoarthritis Workshop'- University Surrey UK- Abstract to be published special supplement in BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders

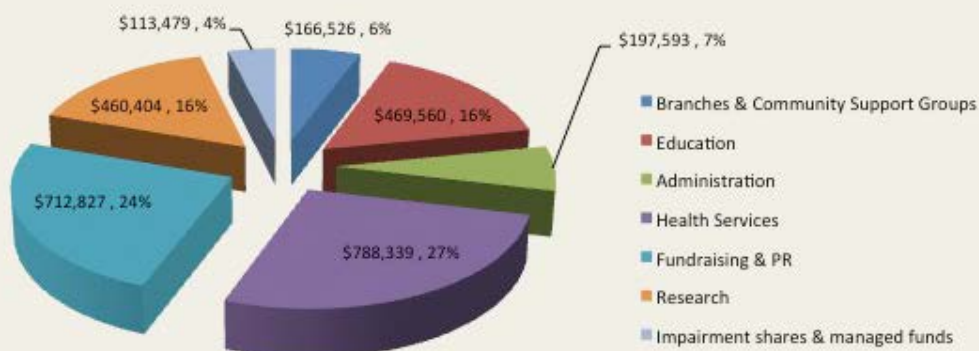
The Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Program (JIA) caters for young people with juvenile arthritis and their parent carers. Various services and events are held throughout the year. Parent carers are also able to connect with other parents for support and can receive counselling if required.

The JIA Camp has now been running for 25 years with a record number of 50 participants. The camp provides not only the kids the opportunity to mix with other children with JIA but the gives the parents respite from their caring role.

This year an Open Forum for parents was organised with a paediatric rheumatologist where parents/carers had the opportunity to ask questions and gain information about their caring role.



Arthritis & Osteoporosis WA
Revenue 2015 \$3,870,542



Arthritis & Osteoporosis WA
Expenditure 2015 \$2,908,728

Our thanks to LotteryWest who provided part funding for the camp and I would like to acknowledge Ms Kerry Mace and her team of volunteers who made the camp a success.

We have now also added a weekender for Young Adults with arthritis. The schedule included education with specialists and health professionals along with motivational speakers. Many of the participants were unable to work and received a disability pension.

Arthritis and Osteoporosis WA is also contracted by the Department of Health to deliver a number of services they are:

- Coordinators of Rural Rheumatology Clinics throughout WA
- Building Workforce Capacity in metro and regional WA
- Pain Management Workshops for GP's and Health Professionals
- Disease specific Self-Management Training Programs (RA, AS, OA of Knee and osteoporosis)
- Provision of self-management programs to consumers
- In 2016 a Juvenile Arthritis Program will be added to our agreement

Our thanks to Dr John Quintner and his team who has volunteered his time to run a number of Pain education programs for both the consumer and health professional.

We are committed to continue to provide high quality programs and publications. They include:

- Health Promotional campaign for bone and joint disease in the print media
- Arthritis Today – a high quality magazine published three

times a year with a circulation of over 10,000. With contributions from leading health professionals

- Monthly E-newsletters distributed to over 4,500 recipients
- Facebook is now approaching 6,000 followers
- Website visits approaching 15,000 per month
- Seminars and community talks throughout the metro and regional areas
- Telephone advisory service and a social line telephone program
- Support groups throughout the metropolitan area and some regional centres
- Information booklets and facts sheets are available freely covering most of 100 bone and joint diseases
- Exercise Programs which include:
 - Tai chi for Arthritis
 - Pilates
 - Yoga
 - Osteoporosis Exercise Program
 - Ankylosing Spondylitis exercise and hydrotherapy program
 - Warm Water Exercise

The foundation is reliant on community support for its existence and the bulk of its income is derived from fundraising. In 2015 we were fortunate to receive a number of bequests totalling over \$1.4m. Bequest income has been strong in recent years, however, it is an income source that is very difficult to predict.

It is pleasing to see that our efforts in establishing a bequest program is now "paying off" as

this has enabled us to strengthen our research commitment as mentioned earlier.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and volunteers of the Fremantle International Portrait Prize chaired by Prof. Lawrie Beilin. Their competition has raised approximately \$50,000 to date with almost \$28,000 raised in 2015.

Another major fundraising program is the weekly Bingo run by the Mal Atwell Leisure group. This has been a constant and reliable program over the years and our sincere thanks go to Mal Atwell for his contribution.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that the Board has recently completed a strategic review of the Foundation and reaffirmed its mission statement:

"To reduce the incidence and disabling effect of arthritis, osteoporosis and related conditions in the people of Western Australia."

The board identified three Strategic Goals:

1. Peak Body- including research and advocacy
2. Sustainable and Diverse Funding
3. Prevent, Manage and Cure

Finally, many thanks to all the people who volunteer their services that help ensure the success of the Foundation. Too often, they tend to be overlooked but without them, the Foundation would not be in the position it is in today.

To the staff, thank you for your continued hard work and the Board of Management and committees that give their time willingly for your support throughout 2015.