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Hello, and welcome to a special issue of MSK News! But first, a joke...

*A man walks into the doctor's office and exclaims to the receptionist: "Help! I think I'm invisible!" She replies: "I'm sorry, the doctor can't see you."*

If only this was just a terrible dad joke. Unfortunately, many people with musculoskeletal conditions, like arthritis, back pain, osteoporosis, and fibromyalgia do feel invisible. They look healthy and well because there are often few visible signs of the pain and suffering caused by musculoskeletal conditions. And so, most people are unaware of the enormous impact they can have.

That's why we created [Rattle Ya' Bones Day](#); to raise awareness of these invisible conditions so that those who have them are seen, and their pain understood. It's an annual event every Halloween (31 October).

In this issue of MSK News, we're sharing messages from people living with these conditions. We hope they inspire you to share your story and to encourage others to share theirs. Together, we can raise awareness and draw attention to the pain, distress and disability these silent, invisible conditions can cause. Please help us make some noise this week by [rattling ya' bones](#) and getting involved.

And don't forget to use the tags #MyMskStory #RattleYaBonesDay @MSKAust.

Thank you. Your support for this important day is invaluable.

Rob Anderson, CEO

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### Cassie Butler

"You might think it's the pain, tiredness and the symptoms that come with fibromyalgia, but to be honest, it's people [not understanding my condition](#) and people not being able to support you because they don't understand."

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### Paul Klotz

"Externally having a body that appears robust and strong, yet the internal story is one of a fragile existence, where my chronic pain from a spinal injury, rheumatoid arthritis, and other conditions, means that I am unable to participate in daily activities...walking my dog, basic hygiene, gardening etc. Simple and basic aspects of my life that I once took for granted. Travelling in a car is a trip to hell and back. Yet the world sees this able-bodied individual and wonders, why is he in a wheelchair? Why do they need to stare and make me feel uncomfortable and then wonder why I stay at home away from 'stigma' eyes. But, I still [rattle my bones whenever I can.](#)"



### Sophie Thompson

Sophie also has rheumatoid arthritis and [talks about work and social life challenges.](#) "You can look really well even when you feel really bad...so it can be hard for people to understand that you're not coping or doing so well."

## Halloween pumpkin spice muffins

Looking for a frightfully tasty treat to whip up for the family and friends this Rattle Ya' Bones Day? This [spook-tacular recipe](#) from dietitian Melissa will have them howling for more! Bone appetite!



## Bianka Ismailovski

"Having [psoriatic arthritis has challenged me in many ways](#) - physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. When I was diagnosed at 27, I had no idea there was much more to arthritis than sore joints. I didn't know about the fatigue, mental drain, emotional stress, and debilitating agony I was in store for. The lack of awareness surrounding the impact these conditions have on us is alarming. In my own life, my friends and family truly don't understand my condition. Even I struggle to remember (or accept) that I have limitations now - that one day I may be healthy and feel good, but the next I am bedridden and crying in pain. We need more people to talk about the effects of arthritis, so people can be more understanding and supportive of these conditions."

Will you pledge \$7 a month as a show of support to the 7 million Australians whose lives are impacted by musculoskeletal conditions? As a regular donor you'll help provide a reliable source of funding and help give hope and support to people that rely on us in their time of need. [You can become a part of our regular giving family here.](#)



### **Mikayla O'Neill**

"Being young, you grieve the idea of living a normal life. Watching others your age achieve incredible things while you sit back and watch from bed is hard. You often feel exhausted from overdoing certain tasks like work. You could be smiling, but your joints are on fire. You learn to smile through the pain. Being so young with RA affects your social, mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. You often can't enjoy time and the normal things with your friends, family and peers. I hope one day to live my life to the fullest and be able to work a full-time job and ensure a lot of awareness for RA for people like me."

### **Thalia Salt**

"Growing up with a musculoskeletal condition is incredibly lonely. I still have not ever met someone my age with osteoarthritis or a hip replacement. I was the only person in my primary school in a wheelchair and it was hard for teachers and students at my primary school to [understand my condition](#)."







## Rob Anderson, CEO Musculoskeletal Australia

"It's great that we're beginning to see more diversity of people represented in the media. But how do you include people with 'invisible' musculoskeletal conditions? As many of these stories highlight, others can't see the internal pain and suffering. So that's a challenge. To highlight the invisible in an empathetic, realistic way. And storytelling is one of the best ways we can do this. So please, take the time to make some noise and share your story this [Rattle Ya' Bones Day](#). Every voice and story makes a difference."

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