



MUSCULOSKELETAL  
AUSTRALIA

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

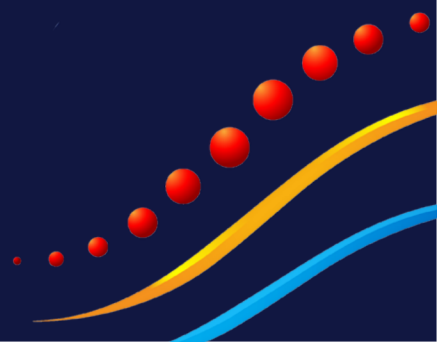
MSK.ORG.AU





“

Musculoskeletal Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of all the lands where we come together to work and live throughout Australia. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and Elders, past, present and emerging. ”





# MISSION

To support people for better musculoskeletal health.

# VISION

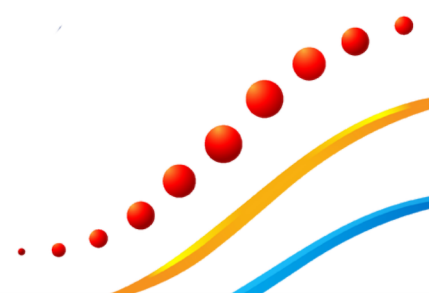
That the quality of life of people who have or are at risk of developing musculoskeletal conditions is improved.



“

Musculoskeletal Australia is 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. ”





MUSCULOSKELETAL  
AUSTRALIA

# Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR	5
MESSAGE FROM CEO	7
REPORTS	9
CONNECTION	10
ENGAGEMENT	15
IMPACT	17
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	19
FINANCIALS	22



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



The directors of Musculoskeletal Australia are pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report.

Musculoskeletal Australia has a long and proud history of delivering quality services, support and information. Driven by our vision to improve the quality of life of people living with or at risk of developing musculoskeletal conditions, we are committed to empowering consumers, their families and carers to lead their healthcare journeys.


Providing access to free, evidence based, quality information, service and support is the foundation on which all our activities are built. As an organisation it would be impossible for us to do this essential work without you – our volunteers, our donors, our supporters and our partners. Thank-you!

Like many profit for purpose organisations, Musculoskeletal Australia has had a challenging year. The impacts of cost-of-living pressures, affecting peoples ability to give, and the competition for government support have all contributed to a difficult year. In spite of this, Musculoskeletal Australia continues to forge ahead as a national leader and respected authority in musculoskeletal health.

From our National Arthritis and Back Pain Help Line to our Consumer Webinar Series, our Peer Support Groups, MSK Kids and Teen Talk we continue to deliver national services and support to thousands of Australians.

Our advocacy work in leading the call for national action to address the growing burden of musculoskeletal disease is evidenced through our submissions, our National Musculoskeletal Consumer Survey, our research partnerships and our campaigns like Rattle Ya Bones Day. We continue to advocate with and on behalf of all those living with the negative impacts of musculoskeletal disease and to drive national action to improve Australia's musculoskeletal health.

Our ability to continue to drive our ambitious agenda is due to our dedicated team. A team made up of our incredible consumer representatives, volunteers, staff and directors all of whom are committed to driving meaningful outcomes that have a positive impact on Australia's musculoskeletal health.



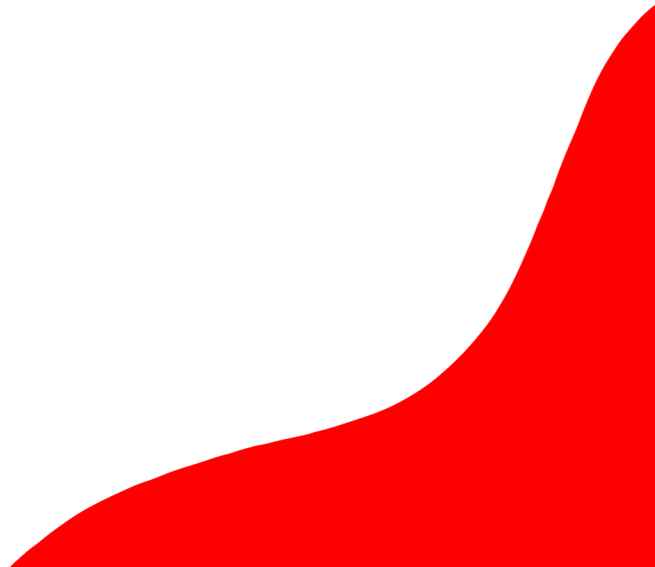


I would like to thank the directors and staff of Musculoskeletal Australia. In particular, I would like to thank Karla Wignall and Kay Mwaba for their leadership throughout 2023 in the role of joint acting CEO. After an extensive search, Musculoskeletal Australia welcomed our new Chief Executive Officer, Helen Jentz in late 2023 and I would like to thank Helen for her significant contribution and commitment since starting in the role.

The Board and staff are looking forward to a successful 2024, driving action and activities to improve Australia's musculoskeletal health and empowering consumers to lead the charge when it comes to their own health and wellbeing.

**JADE ROWARTH**

**CHAIR**





# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Like all profit for purpose organisations, Musculoskeletal Australia (MSK) continues to navigate the challenging ups and downs of making very limited resources go as far as possible to deliver essential services, support, and information across Australia. As a consumer focused organisation, Musculoskeletal Australia is the only national organisation that covers the entire range of conditions, 150 plus, that fall under the musculoskeletal umbrella. But more than this, MSK is also committed to driving a national movement to improve Australia's musculoskeletal health and support all Australians with the tools, services and support they need to manage their musculoskeletal health and wellbeing.


In 2023 MSK once again led the way in the delivery of essential services, support and information. From our nurse led Arthritis and Back Pain Help Line to our national awareness raising Rattle Ya Bones Day, MSK's activities ensured that people living with musculoskeletal conditions or at risk of developing them were seen, heard and supported.

Some of our advocacy and representation activities throughout the year included submissions to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, and our federal pre-Budget submission.

We actively worked with researchers and universities across Australia to support and drive much needed evidence-based research into ALL musculoskeletal disease and conditions. MSK was the first organisation to develop and release a series of self-care plans with the launch of our Self-Care for Health series. Co-designed with consumers and health care professionals, and built on the International Self-Care Foundation's (ISF) seven pillars of self-care, these are yet another excellent example of the great work MSK delivers.

In 2023 we launched the second National Musculoskeletal Consumer Survey. Building on the incredible work of the first survey in 2020/21, this is the only national survey of its kind focused on understanding the real impacts living with musculoskeletal conditions has on everyday Australians.

We were also pleased to welcome Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria as patron of MSK, continuing a long-held tradition of the Governor of Victoria holding this valued position and supporting us to raise awareness and understanding about musculoskeletal health and wellbeing.



Musculoskeletal Australia remains committed to our vision and mission and to have impact and support all Australians in managing their musculoskeletal health and wellbeing. We are only able to achieve the amazing outcomes and deliver free essential services, support and information with the ongoing commitment and dedication of our volunteers, our donors and supporters and our team. On behalf of Musculoskeletal Australia, Thank you!

*Helen Jentz*

**HELEN JENTZ**  
CEO

*Kay Mwaba*

**KAY MWABA**  
INTERIM CEO

*Karla Wignall*

**KARLA WIGNALL**  
INTERIM CEO





# CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

We sincerely thank the MSK CAC members who, in 2023, generously gave their time, expertise, and lived experience to support better outcomes for people experiencing the impacts of musculoskeletal conditions.

Throughout 2023 the MSK CAC provided input across a broad range of areas including:

- The 2023 National Musculoskeletal Consumer Survey Questionnaire
- Responses to State and Federal Government inquiries and consultations including the Therapeutic Goods Administration consultation on the proposed changes to accessibility of paracetamol, the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report, and 60-day dispensing.
- The development of Musculoskeletal Australia's Self-Care Plans
- MSK Pre-Budget Submission

This is just a snapshot of the incredibly important contribution the MSK CAC makes to the work that Musculoskeletal Australia does. The Committee also actively contributes to the development of the critical information, support and services delivered by MSK. These contributions ensure that the consumer, that is you and me, are integral to driving forward national awareness, understanding and action in relation to Australia's Musculoskeletal Health.

As Chair of the MSK CAC, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Committee members for their dedication, commitment and contributions throughout the year. We welcomed new committee members, Kate Ditchburn, Paul Klotz and Rob Chippendale to the CAC and we said farewell to Sophie Thompson who resigned from the Committee in December. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sophie for her contribution to the MSK CAC over a number of years.

*Angela Brown*  
**ANGELA BROWN**  
**CHAIR**







# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN UPDATE



Building on the work done internally from our 'Reflect' RAP – our 'Innovate' RAP was formally approved by Reconciliation Australia in May 2023.

This next stage of the organisation's reconciliation journey is anticipated to be completed over a 2-year period. Along with continued participation in activities that strengthen our relationships with First Nations Australians; it also includes a focus on our commitment to increase awareness and knowledge of musculoskeletal conditions among First Nations Australians through culturally appropriate, relevant and accessible resources. This is in part possible due to funding of a co-design project to develop these resources by a grant from the Iorine Estelle Demmer and Hugh Eardley Demmer Charitable Trust – and we look forward to sharing with you the outcomes of the project milestones as we progress.

## ARTHRITIS AND BACK PAIN+ HELP LINE UPDATE



Our dedicated Help Line Team continued to offer free support and guidance to people looking for information and support on musculoskeletal conditions. Whether it was helping people to understand more about their condition, managing symptoms, exploring treatment options, or discovering effective pain management strategies, our aim has always been to support individuals whose lives are impacted by these painful conditions.

In 2023 we spoke with callers about their workplace challenges and also facilitated access to important services such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), My Aged Care, and chronic disease management plans.

Additionally, we've offered insights into self-care practices, surgery considerations, and the latest research findings.

We appreciate the trust placed in us to address people's concerns about the impacts of musculoskeletal conditions and to be part of each individual's path to better musculoskeletal health.





## PEER SUPPORT GROUPS



Peer Support Groups play an important role in helping to build shared experience and connections for people living with musculoskeletal conditions. And this year groups connected with their members by hosting morning teas, exercise programs and social outings.

The groups and the activities they provide are a great way for people to feel understood, build a sense of community, and share and receive tips and strategies for living with musculoskeletal conditions.

During the year we had the opportunity to visit with several peer support groups, including an invitation for our new CEO, Helen, to attend an end of year celebration at the Cranbourne Arthritis Support Group.

This year we were also pleased to support the introduction of a new online peer support group – The Joint, a forum for young adults with musculoskeletal and chronic pain conditions to connect and de-stress.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the heartbeat of any organisation and ours is certainly no different.



Throughout the year, volunteers dedicated their time and expertise to a range of initiatives crucial to our mission. From webinars to major events like Rattle Ya Bones Day, their contributions have been invaluable in extending MSK's impact and reach.

Volunteers provided essential support through our Help Line, offering guidance and assistance to those in need. Our readers continued to benefit from their involvement in our e-Newsletter – through blogs and delicious recipes and on social media.

Our dedicated and committed Consumer Advisory Committee has kept us connected and responsive to our community's needs. Their commitment and passion is truly commendable, and we are immensely grateful for their tireless efforts in inspiring positive change and making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.



## COMMUNITY WEBINARS

Our community webinars continue to play a key role in keeping people living with musculoskeletal conditions and those that support them informed and connected with high quality presentations. This year was no exception with our webinars receiving more than 113,000 views, achieving an overall viewer satisfaction rate of 90%.

- Our most popular topics from the 2023 series included:  
Understanding Complex Regional Pain Syndrome - Dr Anne Daly, Specialist Pain Physiotherapist
- Anxiety and Depression Linked to Chronic Pain - Dr Jacqui Stanford, Health Psychologist and,
- Diagnosis and Management of Rheumatoid Arthritis – Dr Tina Racunica, Consultant Rheumatologist

Our sincere thanks go out to all the presenters who support and contribute to this important initiative.

**“ I find these webinars hugely beneficial. They help dispel myths or inaccuracies in information that is widely circulated. I really find it valuable to hear from specialists in the different fields and get tips of how to manage chronic conditions. ”**

Subscriber







TOFACITINIB- Xeljanz: Juvenile idiopathic arthritis

After speaking and working with families that have a child or young person living with juvenile arthritis, we were compelled to respond to the PBAC's call for submissions into Xeljanz.

Having the option of an oral JAK inhibitor will be a game changer for the many children and their families who currently struggle with weekly or fortnightly biologic injections. Injections can be traumatic both for the child or young person receiving them and for the parents administering them. Injections also need to be kept cold which makes school camps and travelling difficult. A tablet/oral form of medication (assuming it can be kept at room temperature) will enable families and young people greater freedom as well as reduce the psychological burden of administering an injection to a child who is understandably upset.

### Webinar series

We hosted several webinars that gave families a unique opportunity to learn directly from active and experienced professionals in their respective fields.

- Webinars included:

- What can an OT do for my child? by Monash Children's hospital Occupational Therapist (OT) Natalie Hindman which highlighted how families can be assisted by an OT in

- managing daily routines and unique obstacles they face.

- Learning about the amazing science of pain presented by Dr Joshua Pate – Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy, University of Technology Sydney and who also is the author

- of Zoe and Zak's Pain Hacks.

An interactive workshop session by Carers Victoria's Sally Camilleri: Caring for Yourself – the Carer which highlighted practical and positive strategies to manage the challenges of being a carer.





# MSK KIDS

## Secondary School Resource

Thanks in part to a grant from the Flora and Frank Leith Charitable Trust and the support of health professionals and young people, we have produced an exciting unique resource for young people living with JIA and other musculoskeletal conditions aimed at helping to facilitate the transition from paediatric to adult care, a difficult time at which many young people often disengage from care.

By providing a resource specifically for young people transitioning to adult care we hope to minimise preventable illness-related complications and the risk of disability, pain and chronic diseases later in life.

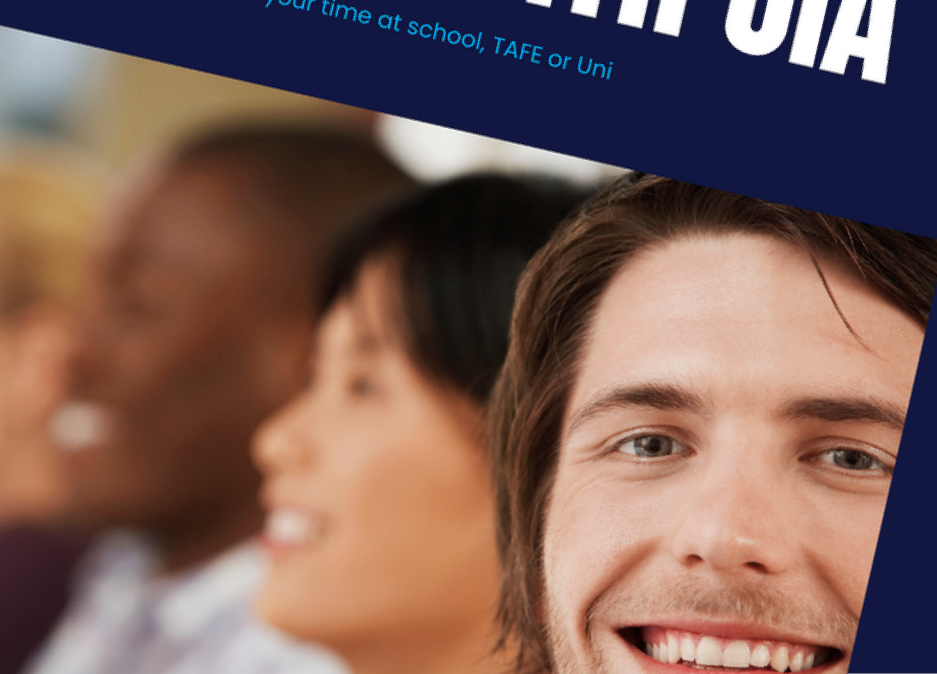
This valuable resource is also a useful tool for teachers, coaches, employers and others supporting with young people impacted by these conditions.

The “Living with JIA” booklet is available for free on request, please email [info@msk.org.au](mailto:info@msk.org.au).



### *Young People* **LIVING WITH JIA**

Get the most out of your time at school, TAFE or Uni







# RATTLE YA BONES DAY



Held on October 31 each year is Rattle Ya Bones Day, our nationwide campaign dedicated to raising awareness of muscle, bone, and joint conditions, which this year reached new heights with the launch of the 2023 National Musculoskeletal Consumer Survey by Federal Member for McNamara, Josh Burns.

We had a fantastic national line up of in-person and live stream events, including the prestigious Koadlow Community Lecture “Back Up”, delivered by multi- award-winning journalist Liam Mannix.

This year’s awareness campaign was supported by a strong presence on social media, and we owe a huge thank you to our amazing partners whose support was instrumental in raising the profile of this very important day and helping us to reach even more people. Together, we made significant strides in raising awareness and fostering support for people impacted by muscle, bone, and joint conditions.

Looking forward, our commitment to building awareness and understanding of muscle, bone and joint conditions remains strong and we can’t wait to share what we have install for 2024.



**mentions on RYBD  
+366.67%**

**REGISTRATIONS**

**2107 registrations received  
for the Koadlow Lecture**



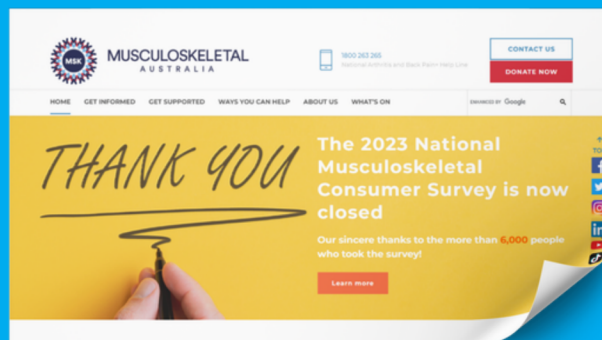
# BY THE NUMBERS

19,363



SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

286,338



WEBSITE VISITS

19,553



E-NEWS SUBSCRIBERS

11,917



WEBINAR SUBSCRIBERS

"I opened my mailbox this afternoon and I was delighted to have the MSK News back.

What a bumper issue and it contained a wealth of information. The content of the MSK news shows how very hard the whole team works. It is now up to me to put into practice the advice and suggestions that have been made. There is so much to read and digest. You have started the year running".

*Subscriber*



# NATIONAL MUSCULOSKELETAL CONSUMER SURVEY



Partnering with the Australian Rheumatology Association and Painaustralia, the 2023 National Musculoskeletal Consumer survey was launched on Rattle Ya Bones Day, October 31, 2023.

The survey aims to provide insight into the lives and issues impacting people with musculoskeletal conditions and those that support them. It builds on MSK's 2020 baseline survey and explores one of the most significant issues identified - the financial impact of musculoskeletal conditions on people's lives.

The survey will serve as a practical tool for guiding support efforts and interventions, ultimately working towards a more informed and responsive approach to musculoskeletal health.

The 2023 National Musculoskeletal Consumer survey received over 6000 responses. We are currently collaborating with The University of Melbourne to analyse the data in preparation for the release of the survey report in 2024.

**“ It is time we pulled off the ‘cloak of invisibility’ to get a clear picture of the impact musculoskeletal conditions have so we can deliver real, systemic change and life-altering solutions for these invisible Australians. ”**

Helen Jentz  
CEO Musculoskeletal Australia







# PICTURE THIS - 1976

Public Record  
Office Victoria

## TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC



Our archivist, has been researching and cataloguing selected photographs that were digitised as part of our archive project back in 2020.

We've been delving deep into our archived newsletters, which date back to 1976, in search of information about the circumstances or events depicted in the photos.

One of our earliest photos of our fundraising efforts was a Wine Tasting and Smorgasbord event held in December 1976. A photo from the evening appears in our newsletter, News Review. A corresponding article enthuses, "Everybody enjoyed the dancing and our candid camera caught some well known R.A.A.V. personalities 'tripping the light fantastic'."

The project is in the final stages of cataloguing, in readiness for uploading to Victorian Collections.

"It's been a real pleasure preserving this valuable collection of MSK's visual history. I look forward to sharing these treasures with you soon."

This project has been made possible thanks to funding obtained from the Local History Grant Program – an initiative of the Victorian Government and the Public Record Office of Victoria.







# OUR COMMUNITY

## Thank you to all our supporters

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.

### Major donors

John & Jennifer Barke  
Elsmaree Baxter  
Rosemary Castles  
Cranbourne Arthritis Support Group  
Ainslie Cummins  
Greg Shalit & Miriam Faine  
Catherine Gray  
Pat Howell  
Sandra Hurst  
JAM Support Group  
SM Linsdell

Joanne Manger  
Gail McKay  
Richard Miller  
Marion Moir  
Dennis & Fairlie Nassau  
Phillip Newson  
Judith Price  
Dianne Shakespeare  
June Smith  
Robert & Beverley Squire  
Lee White

### Trusts and foundations

Australian Communities Foundation  
Iodine Estelle Demmer & Eardley  
Demmer Charitable Trust  
Joe White Bequest  
JOPA Charitable Trust  
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation:

- Hopetoun Fund
  - Ann Rusden Fund
  - Duncan Family Fund
- The Russell Foundation  
William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Trust  
Ward-Ambler Foundation

### Bequests

Lindsay James Baldy  
Athol Ray Edwards  
Ronald Charles Forsyth  
Len Grasso  
Patricia Mary Lawless  
Gwenyth St John  
Edel Wignell





## PARTNERS

Our sincerest appreciation to our wonderful partners for their incredible support in working with us to help achieve our mission. We were thrilled to forge new partnerships during the year and we look forward to working with them to achieve our shared goals.

- AbbVie
- Australian Ethical Health Alliance
- Australian Rheumatology Association
- Australian Self-Care Alliance
- City of Glen Eira, Glen Eira City Council
- Comfort Feet Foundation
- Consumers Health Forum of Australia
- David Southwick MP
- Dragon Claw
- Gary Peer Real Estate
- JMR Advisory
- Josh Burns MP - Federal Member for MacNamara
- Juvenile Arthritis Foundation Australia
- Kingfisher Capital Investments
- Latrobe University

- Macquarie University
- MedAdvisor
- Monash University
- Myotherapy Association of Australia
- National Patient Organisation Network
- Painaustralia
- Paradigm Biopharmaceuticals
- Peninsula Hot Springs
- Pharmacy Alliance
- Pfizer
- Sports Accounting Australia
- Statewide Home Health Care
- The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
- University of Melbourne
- University of Sydney
- Public Records Office Victoria - Victoria State Government



## DIRECTORS AND OFFICE HOLDERS

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

## CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Angela Brown – Chair  
Kerry Bergin  
Rob Chippendale (Appointed December 2023)  
Kate Ditchburn  
Robyn Dunphy  
Melissa Gilbert  
Rachael Havrlant  
Paul Klotz  
Mikayla O'Neill  
Sophie Thompson (Resigned December 2023)

## PATRONS

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC Governor of Victoria  
Sir Gustav Nossel AC CBE FRS FAA FTSE





# Musculoskeletal Australia

263-265 Kooyong Road  
Elsternwick VIC 3185

PO Box 130  
Caulfield South VIC 3162

ABN 26 811 336 442

P: +613 8531 8000

E: [info@msk.org.au](mailto:info@msk.org.au)

W: [msk.org.au](http://msk.org.au)

National Arthritis and Back Pain+ Help Line  
1800 263 265



MUSCULOSKELETAL  
AUSTRALIA

