

JOINT SUPPORT

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER
December 2012

Arthritis awards recognise special New Zealanders



(From left) Nicholas Leach (Abbott); Professor Colin Green; Clare Richards; Alan Henwood; Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae; Sandra Kirby; Martin Cheer (Pub Charity); Els Dutton; and Matt Lockwood. Photo by Woolf Photography

The incredible efforts of four individuals and two businesses were acknowledged by the Governor-General of New Zealand Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae at Government House on Saturday 3 November, as he hosted the Arthritis New Zealand biennial awards.

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in New Zealand and the awardees have contributed in a major way to raise awareness of this chronic condition.

The Young Achiever's Award, which identifies the achievements and potential of a young person affected by arthritis, was awarded to Matt Lockwood, who was first diagnosed with arthritis at the age of 8. He is

now 24 and is a professional racing driver. He recently won the inaugural V8 Challenge Cup at Pukekohe. And for the past two years he has been an extraordinary ambassador for Arthritis New Zealand.

The Premier Award recognises those who have been diagnosed as having arthritis and have been able to achieve goals and act as a role model for others. This year it was awarded to Clare Richards of Christchurch. Since the diagnosis of her own arthritis back in 1980, she has demonstrated considerable courage and determination to manage her home, family and run a variety of support groups. Despite numerous joint replacements she has maintained a positive outlook on life

and is a great example of what people can do if they have the right attitude.

The Distinguished Service Award acknowledges volunteers who have made an outstanding contribution to the work of Arthritis New Zealand and was awarded to Professor Colin Green, who has been a valuable member of the Arthritis New Zealand Research Grants Committee for over six years, providing expert advice on research grant proposals.

There were two recipients of the Business Development Award, which recognises significant financial contributions that have had a major impact on raising awareness of arthritis.

Abbott Laboratories NZ Ltd (Abbott) has supported Arthritis New Zealand in a variety of different ways over a number of years. Abbott supported the ankylosing spondylitis awareness campaign, which generated hundreds of calls to Arthritis New Zealand as well as thousands of visits to our website. This resulted in increased referrals to rheumatologists for previously undiagnosed ankylosing spondylitis.

Pub Charity Inc supported the Arthritis New Zealand osteoarthritis awareness campaign, as they believed this would make a 'real difference to the lives of many New Zealanders'. The financial contribution from Pub Charity and their interest and commitment to the work of Arthritis New Zealand over many years is recognised in this award.



In this issue:

- 1 Arthritis Awards
- 2 From the President
- 3 From the Chief Executive
- 4 Arthritis doesn't hold him back; Levin Arthritis Support Group celebrates 25 years
- 5 Horses for courses
- 6 Arthritis New Zealand Annual Appeal
- 8 Annual Appeal launched at Parliament; Finitre Forte Plus
- 9 Arthritis causes huge smile; MabThera funding
- 10 Milk, cherries, vitamin C & gout - Fact or fiction?
- 11 Key facts about gout (MGAG)
- 12 Honorary life memberships awarded
- 13 Fit For Work report released
- 14 Living with two forms of arthritis; Exploring the benefits of hydrotherapy
- 15 Rheumatoid arthritis and smoking

Editor: Darryl Ward
Email: editor@arthritis.org.nz
Phone: 0800 663 463

Official magazine of Arthritis New Zealand
ISSN 2324-1357 (Print)
ISSN 2324-1365 (Online)

Products advertised and information provided in editorial in Joint Support do not imply endorsement by Arthritis New Zealand.

From the President

Arthritis New Zealand started with a group of committed people volunteering their time and energy. Many things have changed over the intervening years – but our reliance on the commitment of volunteers has remained. At every level in our organisation from the Governing Body to those people who offer us an hour or two at the time of our Appeal, volunteers make a difference. To all of you who have helped this year, my thanks and good wishes. Your efforts are noticed – we couldn't do this work without you.

In that vein, it was a pleasure to be invited to attend the Levin Support Group's anniversary celebrations in September, and to see the numbers there. It is clear that there is a need and a role to play for such groups in providing community support. Then, a few days later, I was at Parliament for the launch of our Awareness Week: a different group but the same passion for Arthritis New Zealand and equally vital.

It is always an honour to be part of the national volunteer awards ceremony. This year the Awards have been particularly special as they were held at Government House in Wellington with our Patron Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, the Governor-General of New Zealand. Our award recipients will remember this day for many years. The photos show what a great event we had.

The awards recognise the hard work of our volunteers – people like Matt Lockwood, our Young Achiever, who shared his experience of living with arthritis to all of New Zealand and

helped us raise public awareness and challenge the myth that arthritis is just part of ageing. Professor Colin Green's award recognised the years of support he has given us through his role on our Research Grants Committee. For many years Colin has carefully and thoughtfully reviewed research grant applications and considered the best use of the research funds so that Arthritis New Zealand can make the biggest impact in research – nationally and internationally. He has done that without fuss and without publicity and his award recognises the debt of gratitude that we owe to Colin and the many others like him. To Matt, Colin and the other award recipients once again I extend my congratulations and thanks.

At the AGM in November we also acknowledged Kathie Smith's years of service to Arthritis New Zealand. Kathie has stepped down from the Governing Body after 31 years continuous service to the organisation. Kathie has been an inspiring volunteer and a role model. Her contribution in the then Auckland division; at the National Board and as Governing Body Member and President has been immense and she will be missed at the board table.

With Christmas upon us, I would like to wish you and your family a happy and safe festive season.

Alan Henwood
President

From the Chief Executive

Kia ora tatou

One of the fundamental principles that our Arthritis Educators teach is that of self management. There is good evidence that for chronic conditions like arthritis that improvement in a person's quality of life comes from changes in the day to day activities. The people who attend the Living a Healthy Life courses around the country testify to this on a daily basis.

At an organisational level we have done the equivalent of a self management programme. We have reviewed and made changes. We are doing things differently. The past year has shown us that the new ways of delivering services are working. The number of people receiving services has not changed – and this is great news. The savings we have made from reducing our overhead costs have made an impact. We have freed up some resources so that we can implement other effective strategies – the awareness campaigns; the conference and the renewed advocacy programme have all been highlights this year.

Making changes, however necessary, is hard. I know this at a personal level – and I am sure you do too. And we can all share the challenges of making changes for Arthritis New Zealand.

Country music singer Jimmy Dean once said "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination." That, to me, is the essence of change. We can't fight against the elements but we can work with them.

I have been privileged to be able to spend time with arthritis organisations from a range of countries over the

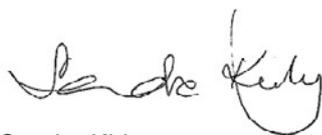
last few months. Almost all our sister organisations are challenged by the same issues we face – membership numbers are declining, younger people are not joining organisations even where they are active supporters; providing services in a tight economy; raising public awareness and challenging government policy effectively are shared across continents. Ironically some of the challenges are those created by the huge advances in treatment options for people with arthritis – people can now continue to work and have less need of the social supports that many groups set up to meet. There is however an increased need for advocacy – such as the Fit for Work programmes, and the ongoing pressures on health budgets.

I have been humbled by the interest shown in the way Arthritis New Zealand has responded to these challenges. Our actions have been noted internationally. I am particularly grateful to Abbott Laboratories and the Bone and Joint Decade who have funded my travel.

As we come to the end of another year I once again thank all of you who work with and for us – paid and voluntary; new and long standing – your practical help and moral support sustains Arthritis New Zealand.

As we look towards 2013 – we will again be watching the wind and adjusting our sails to maintain the direction.

Nga mihi o te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou.



Sandra Kirby
Chief Executive



Contact us

Regional Offices

Northern (Auckland) 09 523 8900

Midland/Central (Wellington) 04 472 1427

Southern (Christchurch) 03 366 8383

National Office

Level 2, 166 Featherston Street

PO Box 10 020, The Terrace

Wellington 6143

Phone 04 472 1427

Fax 04 472 7066

Toll free 0800 663 463

To donate \$20 phone 0900 333 20

Arthritis New Zealand is grateful to be supported by:



Arthritis doesn't hold him back

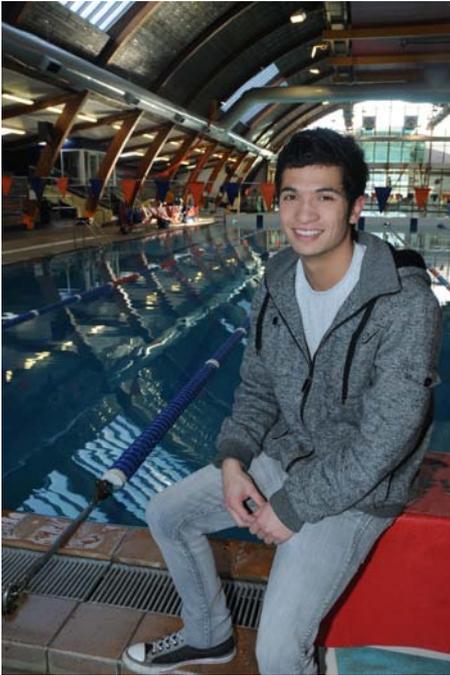


Photo courtesy of The Hutt News

Tyler Stevens of Lower Hutt is a swim coach, but the active nineteen year old's life was forever changed when he was diagnosed with arthritis.

When he was 17, he developed pain and discomfort that impacted greatly on his life. Tyler says he "was stopped from doing everything". Some nights, his pain was so bad he couldn't get out of bed, and his ability to swim was greatly affected.

Tyler's GP recognised that he had arthritis, and referred him to a rheumatologist, who diagnosed him as having ankylosing spondylitis. Ankylosing spondylitis (AS) is a form of arthritis that mainly affects the spine and causes ongoing inflammation of soft tissues around the vertebrae.

The perception that arthritis is an older person's condition is one that needs to be broken down. In fact, arthritis can occur to any one at any age, and there are more than 1,000 children in New Zealand living with the condition.

So far Tyler's arthritis has been controlled by drugs, including steroid injections and he has not yet required any surgery. His treatment enables him to continue to lead an active life: as well as being a swim coach, Tyler works in a café and is a student.

In the Wellington Region, there are about 75,000 people living with one of the more than 140 different forms of arthritis.

Levin Arthritis Support Group celebrates 25 years



Mary Robb, Alan Henwood (obscured) & Janet Tillson cutting the birthday cake.

On 10 September 2012, the Levin Arthritis Support Group celebrated its 25th anniversary with more than 40 support group members. They were joined by Arthritis New Zealand President Alan Henwood, Horowhenua

District Council Mayor Brendan Duffy and other invited guests.

Janet Tillson, who first formed the group back in 1987, gave a brief history on the support group.

Everyone was entertained by the Levin Intermediate School ukulele group *The Mandarins*, which also had some very talented singers. This was followed by cutting of a cake, which was a three way affair with Janet Tillson, the group's first President; original member Mary Robb; and Arthritis New Zealand President Alan Henwood all holding the knife.

In its 25 year history the support group has only had six Presidents, and the two past presidents are still involved with the support group.

Its current president Yvonne Mabey has held the position for the last 10 years and says the group's real strength is its members. Without members there simply wouldn't be a group, and there is definitely a real need for groups like ours. It gives us a chance to get together for a few hours, have some fun and not think too much about our arthritis.

Horses for courses



Abby Letteri on her horse *Fly Me to the Moon* at the Waikanae Spring Show in September

Abby Letteri and her daughter have six horses, which they compete at local and regional shows. Abby also has Rheumatoid Arthritis, and had her first debilitating flare-up last year.

At the time, while she was sorting herself out and making a plan to manage her condition and the associated pain, several friends joined together to help her care for her horses. They formed *Team Letteri* and took turns riding, exercising and grooming Abby's horses. They even took her horses out to a few shows for her. For Christmas, they surprised her with hats and t-shirts with a beautiful *Team Letteri* logo.

Abby has made a pledge, in honour of *Team Letteri*, to donate money to Arthritis New Zealand for every ribbon, rosette or sash earned by members of *Team Letteri* this season (August 2012 - May 2013). She will donate \$5 for every ribbon or rosette and \$10 for every sash. Because horses are so unpredictable, she also offered to donate \$1 for every time a horse bucked during a competition. It's a way of encouraging her friends as well as acknowledging how much they have encouraged her.

In the first month, *Team Letteri*, earned \$54 — including \$5 for a ribbon Abby received riding

her 25 year old horse - who has osteoarthritis in his knees - at a recent show!

Arthritis New Zealand is delighted at the creative new ideas for fundraising that are thought up by its members and supporters. We are grateful to Abby and *Team Letteri* for their support and we wish them all the best for the rest of the season.

If you have an interesting idea for fundraising, please don't hesitate to tell us, no matter how unusual it may seem.

Arthritis New Zealand Annual Appeal



Kate Conner with John and Dame Elizabeth Harper from Mayfield Lions collecting in Geraldine (photo by John Hobbs/Fairfax NZ)



Simon from Abbot Laboratories (NZ) Ltd collecting in Wellington



Students from Lincoln University and St Margaret's College in Christchurch collecting outside the Re:START Mall

Arthritis New Zealand is grateful to the many volunteers, members, businesses and donors who contributed to the success of our recent annual appeal. Members and supporters came out in force and helped turn the country orange for a week to raise awareness of arthritis and to raise funds to support the more than 530,000



HAMILTON'S Victoria Bridge turned orange for the week.



A street day was held in Rotorua.



Sport Wairarapa collecting in Masterton



Staff from Pfizer

New Zealanders who are living with arthritis. Here is a small selection of images from our annual appeal.

While our street collection has finished, you can still support our work with a \$20 donation by phoning 0900 333 20. Or you can donate through our website: www.arthritis.org.nz.



Collectors in Hamilton



Westport South School held a cupcake sale and mufti day to raise funds for us.



Shirley Primary School in Christchurch held a mufti day to raise funds for us.

Annual Appeal launched at Parliament



Arthritis New Zealand's Annual Appeal was launched at Parliament at a function hosted by Michael Woodhouse, MP, and the Parliamentary Friends of Arthritis. Members of Parliament, representatives of Arthritis New Zealand, and a group of people with arthritis attended. Joanne Wakelin and Paul Baker, both of whom have arthritis, captivated and inspired all who attended, with their personal stories of living with arthritis. Two young women who are living with arthritis also shared their stories quietly with MPs at the table.

Finitro Forte Plus

Arthritis New Zealand urges caution to people considering buying the health supplement Finitro Forte Plus, which claims it is "...the most effective cure worldwide" for arthritis. The product's advertising makes some strong claims about its effectiveness, which it claims are backed up by "independent research".

Both the Commerce Commission and the New Zealand Advertising Standards Authority have advised they consider this advertising is potentially misleading, and Arthritis New Zealand agrees with this. Arthritis New Zealand is not aware of any health supplement or other product that can cure arthritis.

People who are living with arthritis are warned to be wary of Finitro Forte Plus, or any other product that claims to cure arthritis, because any such claims will almost certainly be misleading.

Arthritis causes huge smile



Brigitte Barker was the lucky winner of the Arthritis New Zealand Lottery, and was handed the keys to her Red Toyota RAV4 Limited by Arthritis New Zealand Chief Executive Sandra Kirby.

Ms Barker, who lives near Geraldine, couldn't believe her luck when Sandra called to give her the news. "I purchased tickets thinking I was giving a well deserved donation to Arthritis New Zealand. I never expected to win. It really hasn't sunk in yet."

The lottery is an important fundraiser for Arthritis New Zealand, which heavily relies on donations and grants to raise awareness of arthritis, advocate for the 530,000 people in New Zealand living with arthritis, and provide education and support. Ms Barker had previously bought a lottery ticket from Arthritis New Zealand, but this is the first time she has won a major prize in any lottery.

"I was delighted to be able to present this prize to Brigitte, just a week before our next major fundraising event, our annual appeal", said Sandra.

MabThera funding

Arthritis New Zealand is delighted with the announcement from PHARMAC that District Health Boards will be funded to provide rituximab (MabThera) from 1 July 2013. This will overcome the 'post code funding' that those with Rheumatoid Arthritis have faced.

Sandra Kirby, Chief Executive of Arthritis New Zealand, has highlighted the importance of

investing in more biologic options. This is very good news for people who have not responded to other treatments.

Rheumatoid Arthritis is one of the most severe of the chronic progressive diseases, characterised by inflammation and joint damage affecting all aspects of patients' lives, from education and employment through to family and social life.

Arthritis
New Zealand
would love to hear
YOUR story!



Please email
editor@arthritis.org.nz



Milk, cherries, vitamin C and gout Fact or fiction?

Gout is a common and painful form of arthritis caused by a build up of uric acid in the body. Because many foods are broken down by the body to uric acid, gout has long been associated with dietary excess, in particular rich food and alcohol. A resurgence in interest in gout over the last 5-10 years has led to new insights into foods that can contribute to as well as help protect against gout.

Foods that can trigger gout: The more widely recognised dietary triggers for gout remain important. These include alcohol, red meat and seafood. Over recent years the role of fructose has been highlighted. Fructose is a sugar found in fruits and many sugar sweetened fruit drinks which has recently been associated with the risk of higher uric acid levels and gout. For patients with gout, intake of these foods that can trigger gout should be minimised.

Foods that can protect against gout: Of more interest recently has been recognition of certain foods or food groups that can protect against gout. The two of most interest are low fat dairy products and vitamin C.



Low Fat Dairy and gout: The Health Professionals Follow-up Study of more than 47,000 men in the USA reported a 21% reduction in the risk of gout for every additional daily serving of total dairy products over a 12-year period. This effect was greatest with low fat and skim milk. Furthermore studies have shown that the higher the low fat dairy intake the lower the blood uric acid levels. Research undertaken at the University of Auckland by Associate Professor Nicola Dalbeth has confirmed that consumption of certain low fat dairy products of a three month period can reduce the number of gout attacks.

Cherries, vitamin C and gout: The beneficial effects of cherries in patients with gout has been recognised since the 1950's when Dr. Ludwig Blau reported that cherries could help control attacks of gout and lowering uric acid levels. A study published this month confirmed the finding that in patients with gout eating cherries was associated with a reduced risk of gout attacks. Cherries contain vitamin C - 1 cup of cherries has ~10mg of vitamin C. This vitamin which can only be

obtained through the diet has been suggested to lower blood uric acid levels and reduce the risk of gout. We have recently undertaken a study in patients with gout comparing vitamin C 500mg daily and allopurinol, the standard treatment for gout. The reduction in blood uric acid levels in those who received vitamin C was much less than in those who received allopurinol. The blood uric acid reduction in those who received vitamin C was insufficient to have any beneficial effect on the long term management of gout. This suggests that while cherries may have beneficial effects in patients with gout this is unlikely to be due to vitamin C.

Further research into the diet and vitamin C is continuing in New Zealand and overseas and new insights into triggering foods and protective foods will emerge. Patients with gout should avoid foods they know trigger their gout and consider increasing foods known to be protective.

Lisa Stamp

University of Otago Arthritis Research Theme

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/christchurch/research/arthritis/>



Key facts about gout (MGAG)

Things for everyone to know, especially if you have a family history of gout

- Gout is a form of arthritis (painful joints).
- Gout is caused first by a high uric acid level in the blood, which forms crystals in the joints.
- It's not just your kai (food) that gives you gout; having a high level of uric acid is also in your genes.
- Gout is very treatable. The safest treatment is allopurinol tablets taken every day - it will lower the uric acid to the target level (0.36) and help prevent further gout attacks.
- Pain medicine will treat an attack of gout, but allopurinol will stop it coming back.
- Getting gout also means you have a higher chance of getting heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease, so a regular check-up is important for people who get gout.
- To prevent gout and gout attacks
 - o be active
 - o avoid food and drink which make gout more likely (sugary fizzy drinks, fruit juice, beer, too much meat or seafood)
 - o try to lose weight.

Things to know if you get gout

- The target level of uric acid in the blood is below 0.36, under this level you won't get gout. If you have gout, find out what your uric acid level is.
- If you have had two or more attacks of gout in 12 months, ask your doctor for allopurinol.
- If you take allopurinol for gout, make sure you have regular blood tests to be sure your uric acid is below 0.36, so you don't get gout flares.
- Allopurinol only works when you are taking it every day. Make sure you get a new prescription before your pills run out - if you stop allopurinol, the uric acid will go back to the high level within 2 days.
- Keep taking allopurinol even if you have a gout attack, and see your doctor – you might have to increase your dose to get your uric acid level down.
- Once your uric acid level is below 0.36, you will be able to eat and drink small amounts of the things you enjoy even if they used to trigger your gout.
- If you or anyone in your whānau (family) suffer from gout arthritis and aren't getting treatment to keep your uric acid level down, you may be suffering unnecessary pain, time off work, limited activities, and limited diet.

If you require any further information about gout, please phone 0800 663 463 and speak with one of our Arthritis Educators.

STOP PRESS!

Whanganui Garden Amble Wellington Anniversary Day Monday 21 January 2013

Tickets are \$10 and will be available from December from local garden shops and some shops in Victoria Avenue. For further information please phone David Orr on 06 345 0428

Charity Golf Event

Thursday 21 February 2013
Paraparaumu Beach Golf Course
Watch our website for updates. For further information, please contact Lani Taulapapa on (04) 472 5642 or 0800 663 463.

Gerbera Club

Arthritis New Zealand was delighted to be able to host guests at thank you functions in the Sharp Corporation's premises in Auckland and Wellington. There was lots of envy from our guests about the size of the flat screens and other Sharp products on display.



Arthritis New Zealand now publishes monthly e-letters to keep you up to date with what's happening in your region. If we don't already have your email address, please tell us, so we can add you to the list.

Honorary life memberships awarded

Els Dutton and Phil Donnelly were elected Honorary Life Members of Arthritis New Zealand at its AGM in November. Honorary Life Memberships identify individuals who have rendered outstanding service to Arthritis New Zealand.

Els had her life membership certificate presented at the Arthritis Awards ceremony at Government House.

Els first became involved with the then Northland Division of Arthritis New Zealand in 1981, when she took on the position of volunteer adviser, and she has widely contributed to all aspects of our services in Northland. After being an active and enthusiastic volunteer and providing local leadership through organisational changes, life membership is a fitting tribute to her dedication and commitment.



(Left to right) Arthritis New Zealand President Alan Henwood, Els Dutton, Governor-General Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae. Photo by Woolf Photography



Phil Donnelly with Arthritis New Zealand Chief Executive Sandra Kirby

Phil was unable to be at the AGM or Awards Ceremony, so his award will be presented at a later date.

Phil was a key member of the original support group for parents and children with arthritis, The Joint Connection, which started in 1996. He has worked tirelessly and passionately over many years to support Kids with Arthritis New Zealand (KWANZ) and Arthritis New Zealand, and drawing on his own experience as a parent of a child with arthritis, has often provided emotional support to children with arthritis and their parents. Phil became the National Secretary/Treasurer of Kids with Arthritis New Zealand, when it formed in 2011.

His life membership is a worthy recognition of the time and energy he has spent promoting awareness and advocacy of arthritis within our society.

Fit for Work report released

The Fit for Work report, which was released in September, has found Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs), such as arthritis, affect one in six New Zealanders and are reducing the productivity of thousands of workers at huge cost to the health and welfare system. MSDs comprise 25% of total annual health care costs and are the second largest cause of Sickness and Invalid benefit payments due to both direct and indirect effects of ill health.

The report also revealed that the individual and economic burden of work-related ill health in New Zealand is set to expand unless coordinated and prompt action is taken.

The Fit for Work report was developed by The Work Foundation, a renowned global institute specialising in policy issues around work, calls for a collaborative approach from Government, clinicians and employers to support people with MSDs and help them return to work as soon as possible.

Findings include:

- MSDs and the associated expenses are estimated to cost New Zealand more than \$5.57 billion each year
- In 2010, 14.5% of sickness benefit claims and 11.7% of invalid benefit claims were for MSDs, making it the second largest category of conditions resulting in such claims. This means 17,940 people were receiving sickness or invalid benefits as a result of musculoskeletal conditions, the bulk of which will be arthritis

- In 2010, 15.2%, of New Zealanders aged 15 and over were living with at least one type of arthritis
- It is forecast that 16.9%, or more than 650,000, New Zealanders aged 15 and over will be living with at least one type of arthritis by 2020
- Currently, the odds of participating in the labour force are 31.5% lower for those with a chronic condition, such as most MSDs
- Workplace participation and productivity is crucial to New Zealand's economy, particularly as the country rebuilds after the Canterbury earthquakes.

Arthritis New Zealand Chief Executive Sandra Kirby said the report was well timed, due to recent discussions about keeping people in work and encouraging those on benefits to return to the workforce.

"It is a holistic look into a significant national health issue with a wider reaching impact on society. Fit for Work illustrates a need to focus on early detection of MSDs such as arthritis and effective intervention to significantly improve outcomes both for the individual people involved and also for the society as a whole. The best outcomes will have people with arthritis and other MSDs being able to stay in work or have the earliest possible return to work."

She added that chances are workplaces with more than six employees are likely to have at least one person with a diagnosis of arthritis.

"Look No Hooks"



The original comfort bra without fiddly hooks

The Fastener Free Bra stretches so it is easy to get on and off, step through or overhead. No hooks and no wires. It is an easy fitting comfort bra.

**Call 0800 170 015
For your free brochure**

Fastener Free Bra

"The high percentage of people affected demonstrates the size of the challenge. Changes will need to be made on all levels to overcome an obstacle of this size. We all have a role to play — Government, healthcare providers and employers - in supporting workers and ensuring they are effectively equipped to manage their condition, perform their work duties and live well.

For people with arthritis there are also adjustments – we know people want to work – making it happen is the shared challenge".

Living with two forms of arthritis

Karen Browne (61) of Dunedin is kept busy by her work as an administrator at the Faculty of Medicine at Otago University. Her work is about 60% physical and 40% sedentary, and she manages this while living with two forms of arthritis.

Fifteen years ago, an orthopaedic surgeon diagnosed Karen as having osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is often referred to as 'wear and tear' of the joints, and is the most common form of arthritis. It affects almost half of all people over the age of 60, and virtually all over the age of 80 will have osteoarthritis. Then, four years ago, Karen was told she probably had Calcium Pyrophosphate Dihydrate Crystal Deposition Disease (CPPD), which is sometimes known as 'pseudo-gout'. This diagnosis was confirmed by a joint aspiration earlier this year.

Her arthritis affects both knees, hips, her lower back, the base of her thumbs and, at times, her shoulders.

Karen has not yet had any surgery for her arthritis, but she finds wearing supportive splints for her wrists and thumbs especially helpful, but she usually only wears these at nights, because they limit her movement.

Arthritis has had a considerable impact on Karen's life. She used to enjoy windsurfing and skiing, but she can no longer participate in these activities. She used to be a voluntary ambulance officer with the Wellington Free Ambulance, but she had to give this up because of knee pain and instability. Housework and gardening are now very difficult, and Karen can't garden for more than an hour or two now. She also now finds herself asking people to slow down so she can keep up.



Karen was referred to Arthritis New Zealand by her GP and she found it very helpful to speak with an Arthritis Educator and she attends our seminars from time to time.

Exploring the benefits of hydrotherapy

Exercise has long been recommended for people with arthritis, and different forms of exercise have been found to have various benefits for arthritic hip and knee patients, including decrease in pain and stiffness, and improvement of function.

Clinical experience suggests hydrotherapy has a number of benefits when compared to land-based exercises. The warm temperature of hydrotherapy pools may decrease pain and stiffness and promote relaxation, and buoyancy reduces the amount of load going through a joint. But few studies have been able to demonstrate water-based exercises are superior to other forms of exercise.

Jordyn Dangen, supervised by Dr Peter Larmer & Associate Professor Paula Kersten, School of Physiotherapy, AUT conducted a research project under an Arthritis New Zealand summer scholarship on

the benefits of hydrotherapy. Fifteen participants were recruited (twelve females, three males) from Auckland in January 2011.

The participants commented on the benefits of having an opportunity to exercise in a hydrotherapy pool with the instructor. For some participants the instructor made the experience enjoyable and created a supportive atmosphere, while others found that the knowledge the instructor was able to provide was important.

The findings of this project identified the following benefits:

Strength

Gaining strength through hydrotherapy was described by participants.

Flexibility/Mobility

Participants described feeling less stiff afterwards, or feeling more limber, mobile and flexible.

Social

Participants, particularly in the AUT focus group, frequently described socialising and interacting with others in their hydrotherapy group as a benefit.

Psychological

Participants described psychological benefits from going to hydrotherapy.

Maintenance

Maintaining a certain level of function was seen as an important benefit by participants. Many stated they did not know how their osteoarthritis would be affecting them if they weren't coming to hydrotherapy. Participants also stated that when the pool was closed over a summer period or for re-furbishing they really noticed a negative difference. As osteoarthritis is a progressive, degenerative disease maintenance is potentially a very important factor.

Rheumatoid arthritis and smoking

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a common, chronic disease affecting 1-2% of the population. RA has significant social, medical and economic costs to both the individual and the health care system. It is characterised by inflammation of the joint synovial membrane, cartilage degradation and bone erosion.

Smoking remains a major health problem in New Zealand. It is well known that smoking increases the risk of developing chronic conditions. There is increasing evidence that smoking has a direct impact on RA in a variety of ways. It increases the risk of developing RA, results in greater severity of the disease and reduces efficacy of medications used to treat RA.

In addition, smoking is a recognised risk factor for cardio vascular disease, which was shown to be significantly increased in patients with RA. Smoking results in higher mortality in patients with RA.

Since smoking predisposes to developing RA a higher proportion of patients with RA are smokers. Recent studies have reported that 20-28% of RA patients are current smokers.

Arthritis New Zealand is participating in a very interesting project working with a PhD student Pip Aimer supervised by Associate Professor Lisa Stamp from Otago University in Christchurch.

Arthritis Educators Alexe Hewitt and Suzanne Croft in Christchurch will be providing education (clinics) and

support for the experimental group of patients with RA who smoke to help them to adhere to the smoke cessation programme.

Arthritis New Zealand and the Health Research Council co-funded this research.



Arthritis New Zealand

Arthritis New Zealand



Yes, I want to support New Zealanders affected by arthritis!

My details:

First name:

Last name:

Mailing address:

Please fill in this donation slip and post back to us:

Freepost 157311
Arthritis New Zealand
PO Box 10020
Wellington 6143

Enclosed is my donation of:

\$120 \$80 \$50 \$25 other:

I am paying by:

Visa Mastercard Amex Diners
 Cheque enclosed (please make out to 'Arthritis New Zealand')

Card number:

Expiry date:

Card holder:

Signature:

Did you know that you can also donate online?

Visit www.arthritis.org.nz.

Thank you for your generosity!

For further information...

Call free 0800 663 463

When you phone our free 0800 number you will be put in contact with one of our trained Arthritis Educators, who can give you advice and support on managing your arthritis. You can also find out about your region's support groups, and when an Arthritis Educator will next be visiting your district.

Make a donation

Did you know that by phoning 0900 333 20, you can make an automatic \$20 donation to support the more than 530,000 New Zealanders who are living with arthritis?

Visit www.arthritis.org.nz

Visit our website for the latest news about arthritis, information about different types of arthritis, downloadable brochures, to find out what's on in your area, and more.



facebook.com/arthritis.newzealand



twitter.com/arthritisnz

Concentrated fish oil, so you can take fewer capsules

OMEGA-3 OMEGA-3

50c per pack donated to
ARTHRITIS NEW ZEALAND



ASK A NATUROPATH



FREE CALL 0508 75 74 73



naturopath.blackmoresnz.co.nz

Always read the label and use as directed. Supplementary to a balanced diet.

Today's the day™ **BLACKMORES**
blackmoresnz.co.nz