



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: 01/04/2019

Issue:

This media release is in response to the recent funding announcement by the Federal Minister for Health Hon. Greg Hunt MP to invest \$4 million dollars towards the National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis.

\$1.00 per person with arthritis is just not good enough

01 April, 2019- Melbourne –

Consumers are asking how long do people with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions have to wait before there's real commitment to improving their health outcomes?

Despite the much celebrated budget surplus, this week the Commonwealth Government has announced they will invest a paltry \$4 million toward an action plan on a condition that affects millions of Australians and costs \$13.8 billion.

Annie McPherson, consumer advocate with Musculoskeletal Australia says “It's just not good enough! This is clearly a step backwards for people living with these conditions. How can the government ignore a health condition which is impacting 4 million members of the community every single day? Arthritis affects people at all stages of life from toddlers, teenagers and into working age and accounts for 12% of the total disease burden on the Australian economy. Arthritis consumers are getting angry at being ignored.”

In 2002 arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions became a National Health Priority Area, in recognition of the significant burden of disease in Australia. These conditions include osteoarthritis, gout, back pain, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis. “Over the period of 2002-2010, the Commonwealth Government committed \$26.3 million to fund targeted arthritis strategies. The size of the problem has only gotten bigger. “I think the federal government have badly misjudged this one” said Rob Anderson, CEO Musculoskeletal Australia. “At a time of budget surplus and a difficult election coming up, I wouldn't be upsetting 4 million voters living with Arthritis. It will be interesting to see what the Labor opposition can do for consumers, as nothing is more important to Australians than their health.”

About Musculoskeletal Australia

Musculoskeletal Australia (MSK) is a consumer organisation working with and advocating on behalf of people with arthritis, osteoporosis, back pain, gout and more than 150 other musculoskeletal conditions. MSK conditions affect every part of your life, where simple tasks such as walking to the letterbox, picking up a glass, working, sleeping, looking after your family can become extremely difficult. It affects your finances with the costs of medication and treatment as well as loss of income for those that are unable to work. As such anxiety and depression are common among people living with these conditions.

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