

June-July 2026

Engaging with local communities

Our volunteers have been very busy in the last few months giving presentations to community groups and running stalls at expos and local libraries.

Katherine - 29 & 30 April

With project funding from Arthritis Australia, long term volunteer Ruth travelled to Katherine to present the self-management information session “Understanding and managing arthritis and osteoporosis” on 29 April. This was very well received by the 6 people attending. We regularly run 3 different sessions in Darwin, offering one or other of them on the 3rd Friday of each month. See page 8 for types of session and dates.



Making the most of the Katherine visit, Ruth also hosted a stall at the Katherine Seniors Expo (pictured). With samples of our information sheets, booklets and brochures on various aspects of arthritis and bone health, many people enjoyed the opportunity for a chat and to pick up information.



Darwin High School Health Expo - 29 May

Our interactive stall on the Skeleton System focused on both bone and joint health. Firstly the importance of developing healthy bones early in life to maintain strong bones into older adulthood, and on prevention and management of sport injuries to minimize the risks of developing osteoarthritis. Students had the opportunity to participate in a quiz referring to the materials on display as well as their general knowledge. *Continued over page*

Inside

P 2 Engaging with local communities

P 3 That's a wrap

P 4 Exercises for elbow pain

P 5 Safe and Found

P 6 Hand exercises with therapy dough

P 7 Recipe - Mini vegetarian pizzas

P 8 About us & what we do

Engaging with local communities

Darwin High School Health Expo *continued*

For several years, Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT has participated in this annual event. It is designed as an opportunity for young people to connect with essential health and wellbeing resources at a crucial time in their lives. The wide range of exhibitors helps students understand what support is available in the community empowering them to make informed decisions about their health.

Palmerston Library Info Hub - monthly

We have been supporting this program since late last year, providing an info stand in the library foyer on the fourth Friday of every month. The Info Hub program is an opportunity for not-for-profit organisations, government departments, and other community groups or clubs to showcase their services and activities.

The invitation to participate came about through one of our Board members participating in the Palmerston Seniors Network, an advisory body to the Palmerston Council.



Litchfield Community Library Pop-up stall - 25 May

We recently provided a pop-up stall at Litchfield library, located at Coolalinga Central. We first met up with the library staff when participating in the inaugural Rural Seniors Expo last year, when we gave a presentation about the role of AONT and services provided, as well as staffing an info stall.

Coming up...

Palmerston library

Tuesdays at 10am-12pm
City of Palmerston Library Community Room

The library provides loads of opportunities to bring the community together through a variety of programs, including the **“All in Activities”** program.



“Join us for a guided painting session where participants will create their own artwork on canvas, led step-by-step by a facilitator. Come along and join in with the activities that are fun, creative and inclusive. These sessions are suitable for all skill levels. Bring a friend and let's get creative.”

All materials are provided. Tea and coffee also provided.

Details provided by the Library Outreach Officer, Martin Blakemore

Alice Springs

Planning is under way for AONT to visit Alice Springs later in the year, with funding from Arthritis Australia, to provide a series of our self-management info sessions.

Update on “That’s a Wrap” - an advocacy project of Arthritis Australia

Do you have problems opening containers — jars, seals, bottles, medicine packs and others? So do many other people including those who may not normally have trouble doing things with their hands.

Have your say! Nominate your best and worst packaging

Arthritis Australia runs an annual survey on the worst and best packaging found in foods, medicines etc and is seeking nominations for this year’s competition.

Contact them on (02) 9518 4441 or info@arthritisaustralia.com.au with your suggestions.

From all the submissions, Arthritis Australia selects the winners in both categories and then lobbies industry to improve their packaging.

Top 5 worst offenders of 2025

- 1 “Winner” - medicine blister packs—the packaging can split, you can cut your fingers, you may need a knife, the product may not pop out easily
- 2 Jars — very tight lids, especially wide ones, are very hard to grip. In the worst case you can break the glass
- 3 Water bottles — tight caps are supposed to be convenient but can be very frustrating
- 4 Medicine bottles — child resistant caps may be safe but also need to be accessible
5. Induction seals (for example vacuum packs that have a corner marked “peel here”) demand painful levels of grip and dexterity

What makes up the “worst” packaging?

You couldn’t open it at all or only after a struggle; it caused you pain or you hurt yourself opening it; you had to use a tool like a knife or scissors to open it; opening it caused you to damage or spill the contents; or you hesitated from anxiety or fear from previous negative experiences.



What is the “best” packaging?

Genuinely easy to open, not just slightly better than a really bad alternative.

Best packaging of 2025

Kellogg’s single serve cereal packs are now one of Arthritis Australia’s Easy to Open Certified products, as they are simple and easy to tear open.

Other easy to open products include egg cartons, rectangular twist-top coffee jar lids, Lindt chocolate blocks, Sensodyne toothbrush packs and some regular twist coffee jar lids.

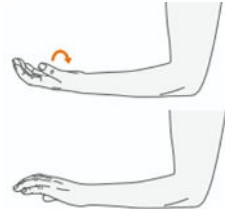


Exercises for elbow pain

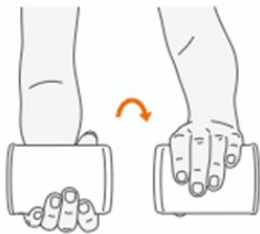
If you are bothered by elbow pain you may like to try these suggestions from Arthritis UK. Start gradually, perhaps trying out just one or two of them at a time with fewer than the suggested number of movements. If any exercise aggravates your pain, stop that exercise and seek professional advice. Talk to your doctor or physiotherapist to see if these are right for you.

1. Wrist turn

Bend your elbow at a right angle and hold out your hand, palm up. Turn your wrist slowly so that your palm is now facing down. Hold for 5 seconds and then slowly release. Do three sets of 10 repetitions.



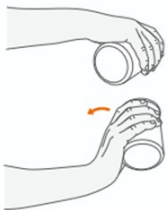
2. Wrist turn with weight



Repeat exercise 1 while holding a light weight, for example a tin of beans. If you have tennis elbow you may find it easier to exercise without weights at first, but once it feels more comfortable try to progress to light weights.

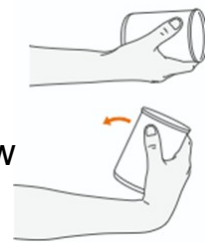
3 & 4. Wrist lift, palm down and palm up

Bend your elbow at a right angle. Hold a light weight e.g. a tin of beans. Bend your wrist slowly towards you, and then slowly release. Do three sets of 15 repetitions twice a day. This needs to be done for 8-12 weeks for tennis elbow or golfer's elbow.



Palm down,
good for tennis elbow

Palm up,
good for golfer's elbow



5. Elbow bend

Stand up straight and lower your arm to one side. Bend your arm slowly upwards so that your hand is touching your shoulder. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Repeat 10 times. You can also use a light weight to help build up strength in your upper arms.



6. Palm lift



7. Place your lower arm and palm on the table and lift the fingers up. Place your other hand across the knuckles at 90° and push down as the bottom hand tries to pull up. You should feel the muscles of your forearm contracting. Swap hands and repeat.

7. Wrist flex



Keeping your arm straight in front with your palm facing down, gently bend your wrist down. Use the other hand to press the stretching hand back towards yourself and hold for 15-30 seconds. Straighten your wrist. Gently bend the stretching hand backwards and use the other hand to pull the fingers back. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Do three sets with each wrist. This exercise is especially good if you have tennis elbow, and starting it with the palm facing up is good for golfer's elbow.

www.arthritisresearchuk.org
 Exercise/Arthritis UK, Elbows, shoulders etc/elbow-pain-exercise-sheet.pdf

Safe & Found

At a recent Expo, we were given some information about the Safe and Found scheme, which may be of interest to those concerned about the safety of loved ones prone to wandering and getting lost.

Safe & Sound is for people who might be at risk of becoming disoriented, lost or reported missing, for example someone with dementia, autism or other cognitive impairments. When Police locate the missing person, they can use the member's profile details to predict their behaviour or destination, share their image with the wider community if needed, or scan their ID bracelet for information needed to ensure the person's safe return.

Safe & Found was launched in WA in 2021 in partnership with MedicAlert. It now operates in the NT and Queensland with the support of their Police Forces. Some members will be familiar with Medic Alert, a service often used for those who are at risk of serious falls. The MedicAlert Foundation is an independent charitable organisation based in Adelaide that has been operating for over 50 years. The Safe & Sound profile stored with MedicAlert contains much information including a current photo and description, relevant medical and behaviour details etc, all securely stored on a database accessible only by authorised people, either MedicAlert staff or Police officers.



There are costs in registering with Safe & Found and with MedicAlert. Funding options are available for those with access to Government schemes such as NDIS, Veterans, Aged Care etc.

For more information:

Phone 1800 88 22 22 Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5.30 pm

Email: enquiry@safeandfound.org.au Website: www.safeandfound.org.au

Email: enquiry@medicalert.org.au Website: www.medicalert.org.au

Hand exercises with therapy dough you can make yourself

<https://www.liveup.org.au/media/Therapy%20dough%20recipe%20for%20healthy%20hands.pdf>

Following from the article on hands in the last newsletter, here are some exercises for your hands.

This is a great activity to do with kids! “**Theraputty**” is a strong, latex-free, putty-like material used for rehabilitation and strengthening your hands. By stretching, pinching, kneading, and squeezing the putty in your hand, you exercise the muscles. You can purchase it online at

<https://www.thetherapiststore.com.au/product/theraputty/>

Alternatively, you may like to have a go at making your own therapy dough which works in the same way.

Recipe for therapy dough

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar
- 1/2 cup cooking salt
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- Food colouring (optional)
- 1 cup boiling water

Method

1. Mix flour, cream of tartar, salt, and oil in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add food colouring to boiling water (if using).
3. Gradually add water to dry ingredients and mix until the dough comes together.
4. Allow mixture to cool.
5. Knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

Notes

- Therapy dough can last up to 6 months if stored in an airtight container.
- Use wheat free ingredients if you have a wheat allergy.
- Add sand or rice to change the texture of the dough.

Hand strengthening exercises using therapy dough

Hold each position for a few seconds and repeat 5 to 10 times depending on your ability.

Important safety note

These exercises may not be suitable for you. Consult a health professional before beginning this exercise if you are unsure. Seek medical assistance if you feel any new or increasing pain, or if you feel dizzy, clammy, or short of breath. Do **NOT** consume therapy dough.



Left: Squeeze the dough with all your fingers and thumb.

Right: Keep your knuckles straight, and bend the tips of your fingers to squeeze the dough.





Left: Pinch the dough with your thumb and each finger.

Right: Bending your hand only at the large knuckles, press the dough down against your thumb.



Left: Press the dough against your index finger with your thumb, keeping the other fingers straight.

Right: Squeeze the dough between your thumb and the side of your index finger.



Mini vegetarian pizzas

These little pizzas are a quick and fun dinner idea, and great for lunchboxes. A good source of protein and excellent source of fibre, they'll keep you full for longer and can be adapted based on the vegetables you have on hand.



Ingredients

- 4 wholemeal English muffins, cut in half
- ½ cup tomato paste
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 225g canned pineapple pieces in juice, drained
- ¼ red onion, finely diced
- 1 green capsicum, diced
- 4 button mushrooms, diced
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat cheese

Method

- ◆ Pre-heat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Line a large baking tray with baking paper.
- ◆ Place the English muffin halves on the baking tray, cut side up. Using a spoon, spread the tomato paste evenly across the English muffin halves and sprinkle on the dried oregano.
- ◆ Place the pineapple pieces, red onion, green capsicum and mushrooms evenly across the eight halves. Top with the grated cheese.
- ◆ Cook in oven for 10 minutes, or until browned and the cheese is melted.

Recipe notes

Alternative topping suggestions: olives, diced tomato, leftover diced roast vegetables.

To keep costs down, use in-season vegetables. Canned vegetables are also great options.

Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for 2-3 days.

<https://hw.qld.gov.au/blog/boost-your-recipes/mini-vegetarian-pizzas/>

About us & what we do



- Respond to walk in and telephone enquiries
- Provide personalised information packs in response to enquiries
- Host regular education sessions. Call the office on 8948 5232 for more details and to reserve a spot on our upcoming sessions:
 - ⇒ **Friday 19 June, 9:30am to 1:00pm “What a Pain!”**
 - ⇒ **Friday 17 July, 10:00am to 12:00pm “Taking the first step to becoming more active”**
 - ⇒ **Friday 21 August, 10:00am to 11:30 am “Understanding and managing arthritis and osteoporosis”**
- Provide information stands at a range of forums throughout the year
- Deliver presentations to community groups
- Keep in touch with other community health organisations and the services they provide
- Deliver bulk materials on request to a range of health services
- Produce this newsletter six times a year
- Liaise with Arthritis Australia, interstate arthritis affiliates and Healthy Bones Australia
- Make applications for various small grants to assist with special projects

The Arthritis Foundation of the Northern Territory Inc. Trading as **Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT**

Patron

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(excluding Public Holidays)

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