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MEDIA RELEASE**

### **LIVING WELL WITH ARTHRITIS: JOIN ARTHRITIS NSW IN MACKSVILLE ON SEPTEMBER 3**

People living with arthritis in the Macksville area are invited to join Arthritis NSW (ANSW) and a panel of local health professionals to discuss areas of interest and challenge around their condition at a free community health forum *Living Well with Arthritis* on September 3.

The forum will be held in collaboration with the Nambucca Valley Care Group at the Macksville Ex-Services Club from 9.30am–12pm on 3 September.

The panel will comprise physiotherapists, occupational therapists, podiatrists and exercise physiologists who will discuss with the community the best approaches to managing particular facets of their condition, such as fatigue and exercise.

‘The value of bringing a panel of specialists from different fields to this forum is that they will be able to take a multidisciplinary approach to topics the community wants to discuss,’ said the Manager of Health Services ANSW Andrew Cairns. ‘At the same time this will give the audience an overview of how the different fields of expertise can work together to optimise outcomes when treating arthritic conditions.’

For those who can’t attend the forum, there will be opportunities to talk to the ANSW team who will host the Rusty Joints Stand at the Rusty Iron Rally on September 1–2. The team will provide visitors with basic arthritis screenings, information on how to self-manage their condition, support and a chance to chat about arthritis and the ways of managing it to get the most out of life.

ANSW’s visit to Macksville is part of the broader Rural Health Initiative developed to give people in regional NSW access to information and services to help them better manage their condition. The Initiative will cover five regional centres in 2018: Bathurst, Parkes, Henty, Macksville and Albury.

‘The number of people living with arthritis in Australia has reached 18 per cent of the population,’ said ANSW CEO Sandra Vincent. ‘That statistic equates to almost 3500 people living in the Nambucca Shire Council area who face the daily challenges of chronic pain and limited mobility.’

‘In the past, ANSW has been unable to fully service all areas of NSW due to geography and resources so we addressed the shortfall with our Christmas 2017 Rural Health Appeal and a grant from Community Underwriting which raised a total \$24,000 for this initiative.’

Macksville local John Hutchinson, 83, was struggling to manage his painful arthritis while operating his chicken, cattle and produce farm in late 2017 when he rang the ANSW Arthritis Info Line. He had been advised to have surgery but was concerned that the length of recovery time would impact his business.

After advising John on exercise and nutrition, the team suggested that a rheumatologist could either provide reassurance around the recommendation or offer alternatives. Knowing he would wait six months for his appointment, John told ANSW that he would welcome a community event in Macksville where he could learn how to improve his mobility, maintain his independence and keep his business alive until he could access specialised medical help.

‘Thanks to stories such as John’s and so many other people from country NSW, we were inspired to run the Rural Health Appeal,’ Sandra said. ‘And thanks to our appeal donors and Community Underwriting, we mobilised our health services to visit rural communities and give them the information and options to help them manage their condition and improve their lives.’

To register for the forum, contact AONSW on 02 9857 3300. If you would like to book online go to: <https://www.trybooking.com/XKCM>.

For more information visit: [arthritisbnw.org.au](http://arthritisbnw.org.au).

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