

**ARTHRITIS WEEK PHONE-IN**  
**Bringing Specialist Bone and Joint advice to**  
**Rural and Regional Victoria**  
**Wednesday 13 April 2005 during**  
**Arthritis Awareness Week**

**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ~ APRIL 2005**

The Arthritis Awareness Week Phone-In takes place on **Wednesday 13 April 2005**. An initiative of Arthritis Victoria and the Victorian Branch of Australian Rheumatology Association, the Phone-In is an opportunity for people throughout Victoria to access the expertise of a **Bone and Joint Specialist (Rheumatologist)**.

"Recent statistics tell us that 3.37 million Australians have an arthritic condition and that 79% of these people experience limitations due to their illness. The Arthritis Week Phone-In enables people speak to a Bone and Joint specialist (rheumatologist) free of charge, and thus access advice about the management of their condition. Our members offer this service in a voluntary capacity in conjunction with Arthritis Victoria." says Dr Andrea Bendrups, President of the Australian Rheumatology Association, Victorian Branch.

Arthritis Awareness Week, 10-16 April 2005, aims to raise awareness of the impact of arthritis in the community and to help put people in touch with information and services.

**Phone-in Details:**

**The number to call is:** 1800 011 041 (no mobile calls please)  
**Date:** Wednesday 13 April 2005  
**Times:** 10.00am-1.00pm and 2.00pm-4.00pm

For further information on Arthritis Awareness Week events contact Arthritis Victoria toll free on 1800 011 041 or visit [www.arthritisvic.org.au](http://www.arthritisvic.org.au)

**MUSCULOSKELETAL FACTS:**

- Arthritis affects 3.4 million Australians (16.7% of the population)
- The disability burden of arthritis is equal to that of dementia and second only to depression
- Exploding the myth that arthritis is an older persons disease, 60% of all people with arthritis are of working age (15-64).
- In 2004, the financial costs (direct and indirect) of arthritis totalled \$19.25 billion

Ref: Arthritis-the bottom line. The economic impact of arthritis in Australia.  
Access Economics for Arthritis Australia. January 2005.

**Media Interviews:**

To arrange an interview with an Arthritis Victoria Representative please contact Gillian van der Drift on 0409 438 725.

To arrange an interview with a Rheumatologist during Arthritis Awareness Week please call Fiona Landgren or Clare Burns on (03) 9429 6728 or 0408 530 865.

**Media Kit:**

Please email [clare@cfh.com.au](mailto:clare@cfh.com.au) to obtain a copy of the Australian Rheumatology Association (Vic branch) media kit—Includes further information about musculoskeletal conditions.

Further information about the Australian Rheumatology Association is available from [www.rheumatology.org.au](http://www.rheumatology.org.au)

**The Arthritis Awareness Week Phone-in number is 1800 011 041**

