

Ankylosing Spondylitis Victoria Inc

Annual Report 2026

Our Purpose

Ankylosing Spondylitis Victoria Inc peer support group is an organisation of people who wish to improve knowledge of AS and the ability to manage the condition. Our group embraces the goals and objectives of people and families living with Ankylosing Spondylitis.

Our Mission

1. Provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas and experiences.
2. Distribute information to patients and healthcare professionals on Ankylosing Spondylitis.
3. Provide educational events, workshops and seminars on Ankylosing Spondylitis.
4. Co-ordinate and interact with local, interstate and international Arthritis and peer support groups including participation in their events and activities.
5. Arrange social events and activities, for our group members, family and friends.



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Presidents report 2026



Welcome to the 2026 annual report. Our work with the Monash University, School of Public Health and Preventative Medicine, Department of General Practice and Dr. Nadida Kachkouche, senior lecturer, continued in July. Whilst introducing first year medical students to patients with a chronic musculoskeletal condition, ankylosing spondylitis (AS), this is often the first exposure medical students have to real patients. Talks around life journey, family, work and the healthcare system bring forth many questions and discussions. AS Vic member, Michael Feehan, has joined our lived experience team.

Supporting the World Axial Spondyloarthritis Day in May, our social event welcomed new members. Discussions followed covering many topics on AS and the logistics of, navigating day to day challenges of the healthcare system.

Several AS Vic. members have been assisting with the co-design and preparation of a survey of AS capability and lived experience with Dr. Danielle Hitch from the Occupational Therapy school at Deakin University, Geelong campus. The research has been shared around the Australian AS Community and we hope to have the survey ready for analysis later in the year.

Our advocacy has contributed to Arthritis Australia's New Idea Grants that are part of the \$100m Research Mission for arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions from the Australian Governments' Medical Research Future Fund. Nearly 7 million Australians live with these conditions every single day. The Mission will fund the research breakthroughs that can change their lives. We are fortunate to have an AS Vic member, consumer representative Dee Lynch, join their strong Consumer Advisory Panel.

AS Vic consumer representatives continue their involvement in the Australian and New Zealand musculoskeletal clinical trials network (ANZMUSC) Consumer Advisory Group and contribute to Australian medical research.



Annie McPherson. President 15/07/2026

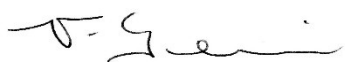
*Research:
Patient advocacy*



Treasurers report 2026

AS Victoria holds \$16,408 total assets at 30 June 2026, comprising \$11,116 in cash at Bank, \$5,292 in term deposits.

We have 64 registered members, 22 are complimentary being Health Professionals, Volunteers and former Committee members. Our Facebook followers now number 1,276. We look forward to another successful year for 2026-27.



Vicky Genius Secretary / Treasurer 13/07/2026

SCHEDULE 1

(Regulation 15)

FORM 1

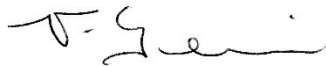
Associations Incorporation Act 1981 Sections 94(2)(b), 97(2)(b) and 100(2)(b)

ANNUAL STATEMENTS GIVE TRUE AND FAIR VIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION OF INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

We, Vicky Genius, and Adam Collard, being members of the Committee of “Ankylosing Spondylitis Victoria Inc”, certify that –

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position of “Ankylosing Spondylitis Victoria Inc” during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30th June 2026

Signed:



Vicky Genius

Dated:

10/07/2026

Signed:



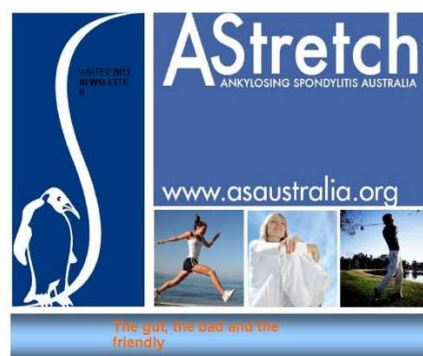
Adam Collard

Dated:

10/07/2026



Social Events



The immune system protects us from all sorts of nasties – bad. One genetic studies highlighted the importance of the cytokines (the messengers, though immune is more of a term) in order to do IL-23 and IL-17 in AS. Inhibition of IL-17 has proven so effective that the immune system has developed really complex and so far therapy is early clinical trials, demonstrating that this is not the worst way of distinguishing good from bad, or harmless from important drivers of inflammation in AS. Tissue studies have found. Obviously this works well but in the case of infection taught us lots about the cells producing and responding to these or causes or widespread inflammation and subsequently the cytokines. But we still don't understand why they are produced immune system goes wrong. In AS, the immune system attacks in the first place. To investigate this we've based our focus on the body's own cells and tissue. We know that cytokines can towards the gut.

ponents of the immune system called cytokines. Cytokines are like messengers of the immune system, they allow one White, at first glance, investigating the role the gut plays in AS cell to communicate with thousands of cells – may seem like a bit of a stretch, but that's the reality. The co-existence of AS and gut bugs and every group of people and try to spread to them, you inflammation has been known for some time and between 5 could either talk to each other individually and robustly (10% of AS patients develop clinically diagnosed inflammatory and probably more not as spreading to every, or you could use a word disease (IBD), and a further 70% of AS patients develop irritable bowel to every your message a long way with little effort, subclinical gut inflammation. In reactive arthritis (ReA), a type of immune cell, sense something is wrong it can release members of the SpA family, inflammatory arthritis sometimes lots of cytokine molecules that float through the blood system develops following gastrointestinal infection with particular to influence of other cells and also then to what's happening, bacteria, indicating that inflammation in the gut may influence

Astretch WINTER 2013 PAGE 1

Astretch Newsletter

AS Victoria Inc Financial Statements	2026 Year	2025 Year
ACCOUNT Balance (previous year)	\$16,212	\$16,469
Add Income		
Membership fees	\$0	\$0
Donations From Membership	\$20	\$20
Donations from Events	\$1000	\$120
Grants & Other DHHS	\$0	\$50
Seminar Income	\$0	\$0
Interest	\$657	\$407
DVD Sales	\$0	\$0
Total	\$1677	\$596
Less Expenditure		
Postage	\$0	\$0
Printing	\$0	\$0
Ink Cartridges	\$0	\$0
Stationery	\$0	\$0
PO Box / Web Site	\$237	\$607
Meeting Costs	\$996	\$0
Meeting Costs/Catering	\$0	\$0
Subscriptions	\$248	\$246
Gifts	\$0	\$0
DVD/Booklet Purchases	\$0	\$0
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$0
Total	\$1481	\$853
BALANCE AT BANK	\$16,408	\$16,212
Bank Reconciliation		
Cash at bank	\$11116	\$2939
Term Deposits	\$5292	\$13,274
PayPal	\$0	\$0
Unprocessed payments	\$0	\$0
BALANCE AS ABOVE	\$16,408	\$16,212

*Coffee and Chat meetings
joining with YWASG*



Promotion of Warm Water Exercise



Dee Lynch – Committee Member / North Central Region Representative



I was in my late 30s when diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS). I sought advice from AS Victoria's President, Annie, who explained the condition, shared ways to live well, and even taught me to self-inject biologics, which helped reduce symptoms. Being diagnosed with a strange-sounding arthritis felt isolating, but joining a peer support group was vital for my physical and mental health. Members are diverse and at different stages in their AS journey, so we celebrate small wins and empathise together. Living in regional Victoria, I often attend meetings online—usually from my couch with my pug by my side—while also travelling to Melbourne for social events. The group participates in international research, conferences, and education for health professionals, which provides us with valuable information and chances to contribute to studies.

I now manage a regional support group through Young Women's Arthritis Support Group and have been appointed to the Arthritis Australia Consumer Advisory Panel.



Monash University July 2026 L to R Dr Nadia , Marion , Annie, Rasul and Michael



Rosstown Lunch July 2025
L to R Shayne, Michael, Rasul, Tracey and Vicky



Committee Members of AS Victoria Inc 30 June 2026

Adam Collard (Gippsland Region Representative)

- Member from 2006, lives in Korumburra
- SGASG convener and Community representative
- Community Volunteer

Annie McPherson (President)

- AS Victoria Inc Co-Founder and member from 2005, lives in Kew
- Retired IT- Business Analyst
- Patient advocate and MSK research Consumer representative

Dionne Lynch (North Central Region Representative)

- Member from 2014, lives in Bendigo
- Local Government employee
- Community volunteer

Maria Makris

- Founding member from 2005, lives in Doncaster East
- Retired Secondary Teacher
- Community Volunteer

Shayne van der Heide (Vice President)

- Member from 2015, lives in Boronia
- Tertiary Educator/ Manager
- SES & St John Ambulance Volunteer

Vicky Genius (Secretary/Treasurer)

- Member from 2011, lives in Northcote
- Retired Finance employee
- Community Volunteer



Peer Support Meetings

AS Victoria Inc has support from and interaction with many organisations and individuals these are our main connections

- ARA – Rheumatology Health Professional Special Interest Group
- Ankylosing Spondylitis Group of Queensland
- Arthritis Australia
- Austin Health Spondylitis Clinic - Dr Lionel Schachna (Rheumatologist)
- Australia New & Zealand Musculoskeletal Clinical Trials Network (ANZMUSC)
- CreakyJoints Australia (CJA)
- Donegan's Accountants
- MBE Printing Services Kew
- Musculoskeletal Health Australia
- Young Womens Arthritis Support Group (YWASG)



Practical training for medical students

International Bodies

- Axial Spondyloarthritis International Federation (ASIF)
- National Axial Spondyloarthritis Society (NASS) UK
- Spondylitis Association of America (SAA) US

Ankylosing Spondylitis Victoria Inc

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