



## The Bone & Joint Decade 2000-2010 PRESS RELEASE

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[www.bjdonline.org](http://www.bjdonline.org)

### Talk of Treating Back and Neck Pain to Stir Up Gold Coast

10 October 2007 | GOLD COAST (AUSTRALIA) – Global attention on bone and joint health will converge on the Gold Coast from October 11 – 14, when delegates of the 2007 Bone and Joint Decade World Network Conference and the International Patient Advocacy Seminar come together to shape the direction of Musculoskeletal Health around the world in the coming years. Representatives include government officials, doctors, researchers, NGO's and patients from nearly 40 countries around the world.

The Australian branch of the Bone and Joint Decade, chaired by Mr Ben Horgan, international patient advocate, was established to promote the mission of the Decade with the public and was a member of the partnership which led to the Federal Government naming Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Health as one of its National Health Priorities in 2002.

**"Bone and Joint Decade On the Move"** is the motto of the BJD 2007 World Network Conference, which focuses on best standard of care for musculoskeletal pain – particularly of the back and neck, and promoting a cost-effective health economy. Chairman of the BJD Australian Network, Mr Ben Horgan said: "As the leading cause of time off work for sick leave, Back Pain is a costly issue and will be a crucial talking point during our Network Conference. Our Australian Network is working towards listing Back Pain within the National Health Priority and this meeting will play a fundamental role in moving this forward."

The Hon. Dr Michael Wooldridge, Minister for Health and Aged Care, endorsed the BJD on behalf of the Department of Health and Ageing and the Australian Government in 2001. To date, the United Nations-endorsed Bone and Joint Decade has the support of 61 governments around the world.

The 2007 World Network Conference on the Gold Coast from October 11 – 14 will attract National Action Network and Patient Advocacy leaders from nearly 40 countries around the world and provides an opportunity to focus on the impact, burden and challenges relating to musculoskeletal conditions in Australia.

Highlights in the events held during the conference include:

- Thursday 11 Oct: A free Public Meeting entitled "You and Your Neck" using a 'hypothetical' style of questioning that should provide some entertainment as well as serious debate on the challenges of dealing with Neck Pain. opened by Mayor Ron Clarke MBE (Mayor, Gold Coast City Council) and chaired by Professor Peter Brooks (Executive Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Queensland). This is not to be missed, at the Marriott Resort on Ferny Ave from 7pm.
- Thursday, Friday 11-12 Oct: A two-day Patient Advocacy Seminar, with Mick Hoare from the Dept of Health and Ageing.
- Friday 12 Oct: A one-day combined session on Back Pain with the Australian Orthopaedic Association which will be led by internationally renowned experts in the field.
- Friday 12 Oct: A Public Walk for Mobility to promote the message that keeping moving is important and to highlight International Arthritis Day. Also attended by Mayor Ron Clarke MBE and with a free concert by rock icon Normie Rowe. At Evandale Parklands from 8am.
- Saturday, Sunday 13-14 Oct: The 2007 World Network Conference, attended by BJD Network delegates from around the world.

Professor Lars Lidgren, chairman of the Bone and Joint Decade, and head of the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Lund in Sweden, said: "Our vision is a society where prevention, treatment and care of people with musculoskeletal disorders are of high standard and accessible around the world – our work is focused to this end. The commitment, support and action by the Australian Network as demonstrated here has made a significant contribution towards the mission of the Bone and Joint Decade globally as well as locally for the benefit of the Australian society and those affected by musculoskeletal disorders and their families."

## **The Bone and Joint Decade in Australia**

The inaugural meeting of the National Action Network of Australia for the Bone and Joint Decade was held in April 2001, attended by the Australian Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon. Dr Michael Wooldridge, pledging the Australian Government's support for the Decade. Initial participation by representatives of the Arthritis Foundation of Australia, the Australian Orthopaedic Association, the Australian Rheumatology Association, and Osteoporosis Australia was soon followed by the Australian and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society, the Australian and New Zealand Society of Biomechanics, the Matrix Biology Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Rheumatology Health Professionals Association.

The Australian Network, chaired by Mr Ben Horgan, nationally and internationally praised speaker and patient advocate, was established to promote the mission of the Decade amongst the public, participate in awareness and educational programs related to musculoskeletal disorders, enlist the support of the Australian Department of Health and Ageing and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Please see <http://www.bjd.org.au/> for more details.

### **Background**

The Bone and Joint Decade 2000 – 2010 was launched in Geneva in January 2000 during a World Health Organization conference on "The Burden of Musculoskeletal Conditions at the Start of the New Millennium." Kofi Annan, secretary general of the United Nations, endorsed the Bone and Joint Decade on behalf of the United Nations. The driving force behind this initiative was the recognition among healthcare professionals and patient advocates of the significant impact and the growing burden of bone and joint disorders on society, healthcare systems and individuals, and that no single organisation alone could accomplish the desired benefits.

Prof Lars Lidgren said: "Musculoskeletal disorders are the leading cause of disability around the world, affecting one out of every four adults and accounting for 25% of the total cost of illness."

The Decade aims to build awareness of the burden of musculoskeletal conditions by educating the public and driving research and legislation which will lead to the improvement of care. The Bone and Joint Decade is a global initiative with localised national strategies and actions. Please see [www.bjdonline.org](http://www.bjdonline.org)

### Some facts:

#### **In Australia, musculoskeletal disorders are**

- The second most common cause of presentation to a general practitioner
- The third leading cause of health system expenditure with an estimated total cost of over \$3 billion AUS (1993-1994)
- Responsible for over 300,000 hospital admissions, 15 million medical services and 13 million prescriptions per annum

#### **Worldwide**

- One in every three women over age 50 will suffer a fracture caused by osteoporosis.
- Up to 80% of people will suffer from back pain during their lives and back pain is the second leading cause of work-place sick leave.
- Every 30 seconds someone in the world dies in a road traffic accident, and in the same time frame three others are severely injured.
- Road traffic accidents are the leading cause of death and disability for people under age 45.

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For more information or to arrange interviews, contact:

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