

## **ARTHRITIS AND OSTEOPOROSIS VOLUNTEER WINS AWARD**

**Thursday 15 May, 2014 – Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria (A&OV) volunteer and Life Member Annie McPherson was yesterday only one of only two people, from a pool of 800, to receive a 2014 Minister for Health Award for outstanding individual achievement for volunteer services in primary care.**

Ms McPherson is the Founder and President of the Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) Group of Victoria, has been a A&OV community speaker for nine years, and is a health consumer representative and advocate at La Trobe University and The University of Melbourne.

“Volunteers like Annie are an asset to our organisation, she is a dedicated and hard working woman and deserves all the accolades that come her way. The list of ways in which she contributes to the musculoskeletal (MSK) community could go on forever,” said CEO Linda Martin.

Through Ms McPherson’s leadership the A&OV AS Peer Support Group has delivered a range of events, activities and opportunities for people living with this debilitating condition. In addition, the group provides the platform for people to meet and exchange ideas on managing their condition and experiences of living with AS.

“Annie has lived with AS, a condition that causes spinal fusion and joint inflammation, for over 40 years. But she has not let that stop her improving the lives of so many people living with a MSK condition,” said Ms Martin.

Through her tireless work Ms McPherson has increased the knowledge of over 600 people living with AS and the general community, through delivering information and education to a range of community groups and individuals.

“I am very excited to receive such a huge recognition for work I enjoy and for all that Peer Support Groups do to help others. Thank you to the team at A&OV. We are able to increase awareness of AS a very debilitating MSK condition,” said Ms McPherson.