

Knox - Yarra Ranges Polio Support Group



ANNUAL REPORT – CALENDAR YEAR 2009

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Items for inclusion in newsletter welcome. All sources must be acknowledged. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the group. Any medical information should be discussed with qualified practitioners before being considered for use. The group does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned herein.

The Department of Human Services financially assists our group.

MEMBERSHIP & GROUP ADMINISTRATION

During this year we have welcomed into our group more members, taking our total to nearly 50. Sadly we lost Margaret Child to cancer in February.

CONTACT PEOPLE:

While we do not have formal structure to our group, there are still some jobs that need to be done by somebody.

Marlene and Joan have continued in the role of Convenors and contact people for the group. Ursula has catered for our afternoon tea at meetings and Dianna has kept up the flow of birthday greetings. Graeme has continued on as treasurer with Marlene and Elsie being the other signatories.

We also have wonderful support from Mary-ann at Polio Network, and we wish her well in her new roles next year.

FINANCE:

We produce a quarterly finance report, when our bank statements are received. Because of our book project, we now have a special purpose account to keep all donated money separate from our operating funds.

Our sources of funding are from membership fees and an annual grant from the Department of Human Services. We applied for all our running costs – printing, postage, resources etc. and received our requested amount of \$1590.00. Membership fees are used for items not covered by D.H.S. such as catering / hospitality / speaker thankyou's etc.

MEMBERSHIP & GROUP ADMINISTRATION – CONTINUED

A yearly transaction statement is attached to show our complete financial business for the calendar year 2009.

Joan has submitted our application for next year. It is a request for \$1665.00 which reflects our increased postage and printing costs associated with our expanding mailing list and resource materials requirements. The process was a little more complicated this year with a change in administration of the grants being taken over by the Department of Planning and Community Development – Disability Self-help Grant. The due date for requests was moved to an earlier date in August. At this time we still have not heard of the outcome. Presuming we are successful, we will be able to keep our annual membership costs to just \$10 per person, for next year.

COMMUNICATION:

Joan produces a bi – monthly newsletter for distribution to members, other groups, and organisations. We constantly seek items / stories / photos from members to be included.

We also forward on any Emails relevant to members who have that access. If you would like to be added to our Email tree please send your address to Joan (see letterhead).

We have continued to be involved in public education again this year. It is through constant communication with others that we will achieve better understanding in the wider community, and life will be a little easier for us all. I have already accepted invitations to speak to CWA, Probus and Care Network groups in 2010 following the launch of our book.

We have copies of pamphlets produced by Polio Network, as well as our own. PolioNetwork has produced a brochure titled “The Late Effects of Poliomyelitis – Information for Health Professionals” Don’t forget to take opportunities to distribute these to local health and medical centres. There is also a brief summary brochure on “Late Effects of Polio”, and a “Polio Services Victoria” brochure. Ring if you need any further copies of these.

During the year, Elsie, Joan and Bev attended an Advocacy Course hosted by the City of Knox Council. It was a useful tool in clarifying our group’s goals in communicating to the community and we focused our attention on getting support for the book project.

MEMBERSHIP & GROUP ADMINISTRATION – CONTINUED

PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES PLANNING:

This year our venue for Saturday meetings changed to The Basin Hall, but we will be using a Ferntree Gully location in 2010 which seems to be better equipped for our needs. Our members are all invited to assist with ideas and planning for speakers. In 2009, Marlene organised our Social network nights, and Joan booked our speakers. The more people involved in planning, the less work load for everyone. We all know how much fatigue post-polio brings to us all.

At our planning meeting for 2010, we discussed ideas for next year, and called for more help with organising speakers while Joan is taking fewer duties during ill health. Helen will co-ordinate the program. Thanks everyone for your ideas. It is really important to have your say in what speakers interest you. That way we can all have ownership of the group. The February meeting will be the book launch. We reported on the planning for the launch. A sub-committee of Helen, Marlene, Ron, Judith, Joan and Graeme are organising a day to remember! Invitations will be circulated shortly.

Apart from February, the other meeting dates will occur on the third Saturday each month to avoid further changes for public holidays.

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

FEBRUARY:

We began our year with a visit from Mary-ann, Polio Network and Amanda May, Metro Access person at Knox City Council. Amanda listened to our questions and spoke of the services she could offer. She left us with a range of resource materials. We also discussed changing our name to incorporate Knox, as many members live in that area. Amanda felt it would also facilitate access to Knox funding and support. The idea was adopted and with approval from neighbouring support groups, was implemented.

Mary-ann spoke of the plans for Polio Day based on the Warm Springs conference to be held in April.

MARCH:

In March we enjoyed dining at the Dorset Gardens. It was really great to see Henry, and Joan and Jack. Our nights out together provide great opportunities to help each other out with tips and have a good laugh and general companionship.

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW – CONTINUED

APRIL:

In April after a brief business up-date, we enjoyed a very informative session with Linda Stammers, local podiatrist who had included post-polio in her studies! She demonstrated a variety of materials used for orthotics and how they worked. Linda also explained the Enhanced Care Package which enables us to access five consultations a year, funded by Medicare.

MAY:

May saw us at a new haunt, the Olinda Creek Hotel in Lilydale. Thanks to Joan and Jack for that suggestion. Another night of good food and information exchange.

JUNE:

After cleaning up vandal damage and finger print powder, we finally got underway with Independence Australia psychologist, Andrew Sinclair. His main topic was pain management and the need to be assertive in getting the services you need. Andrew is now a regular contributor to Polio Perspectives.

JULY:

In July we had a special breakfast meeting at Upwey RSL. Apart from a huge meal and endless cups of tea/coffee, we enjoyed the company of Peter Maldon from Boronia Rotary Club. He presented us with a cheque for \$600, from funds raised at their recent Bunnings Sausage Sizzle. That boosted our book fund considerably. Peter enjoyed meeting other members of our group as a follow-up to my talk at one of their nights.

We had fantastic news of Joan's successful submission to Shire of Yarra Ranges Community Funds for \$3000 towards our book publishing costs. We were presented with the award at a reception in Montrose. Helen was also successful in securing \$400 from Ferntree Gully Bowling Club to cover photography costs for the book. Suddenly 'The Calliper Kids' was going to happen very soon. Joan and Graeme began meetings with the printer regarding format and sought advice on editing from Anne, professional editor and friend of Elsie.

AUGUST:

We were able to make use of Kallista Fire Station facilities for a lunch and DVD session to view 'Post-Polio Syndrome – Shades of Grey'. We only had time to see part of the very informative recording made by Mary-ann during her 2008 study tour. With her permission we made copies for those who requested.

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW - CONTINUED

SEPTEMBER:

We took our patronage to Ferntree Gully Bowling Club, as a token of our thanks for their support of our project. We were pleased to see our thankyou certificate on display.

OCTOBER:

Polio Day in 2009 focused on Wellness, and was based on activities experienced at the Warm Springs Conference. Presentations were given by the four Victorian participants, and there were lots of supporting materials which have been added to our resource collection. In the afternoon there were lots of discussion groups and activities to try.

Mary-ann has already been working towards an Australian Retreat in 2010 and has secured some initial funding of \$10,000.

NOVEMBER:

A return to Ferntree Gully Bowling Club for tea was followed by a quick update on the book launch and planning for next year.

More good news – Joan's submission to City of Knox Community Programs was successful. That money will fund the launch and some book distribution costs. A presentation night was attended by the launch subcommittee in November.



OUR YEAR IN REVIEW - CONTINUED

DECEMBER:

With some 300 invitations sent out, we anticipate a great day in February to celebrate our tenth birthday and book launch. We hope the early notice will allow some politicians, medical and aged care providers to attend. The book has gone to print with further support from the paper supplier Dalton and Genuine Print. At time of writing this report we eagerly await the delivery. Our Christmas break-up venue is courtesy of the Bells, while Joan is travelling a little slower for a while. We decided a home venue was more conducive to socialising than a restaurant can allow with freedom of movement / access. Kris Kringle will make his usual appearance.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN 2009

A. CHANGE OF NAME:

Yarra Ranges Polio Support Group became Knox-Yarra Ranges Polio Support Group.
ParaQuad Victoria became Independence Australia.

B. THE CALLIPER KIDS:

Successful submissions to Shire of Yarra Ranges, Knox City Council, Boronia Rotary Club, Ferntree Gully Bowling Club and Dalton Fine Paper.

Successful completion of book with assistance from Anne Boyd, editor, volunteer writers, and Graeme Smith, formatting.

Launch and tenth birthday planned for February 11th includes displays, give-aways and afternoon teas.

C. PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE:

MP Ms King representing the ALP Ballarat, moved that the House recognises that:

1. polio survivors continue to be the single largest disability group in Australia today, numbering in the tens of thousands;
2. this number not only includes those who contracted polio in Australia during the epidemics last century, but also young polio survivors who have migrated from countries where polio is still prevalent or only recently eradicated;
3. the needs of polio survivors have been largely neglected since vaccination against the disease became a reality, and as they age with chronic disabilities this neglect must be addressed as a matter of urgency;

4. over the past 20 years much attention has been drawn to the development of new, previously unrecognised, symptoms which occur in people who were thought to have reached a stable level of recovery after acute disease;
5. symptoms of the late effects of polio include unaccustomed fatigue unrelated to activity, decreased strength and endurance, pain in muscles and/or joints, an inability to stay alert, weakness and muscle atrophy, muscle and joint pain, muscle spasms and twitching, respiratory and sleep problems, swallowing and speaking difficulties, depression and anxiety.
6. over the last 20 years polio survivors have established state-based post-polio organisations to provide information and support for fellow survivors, and that these networks are run by polio volunteers who themselves are experiencing increased disability and decreased mobility; and
7. in the coming years it is increasingly inevitable that many state networks will cease to function as volunteers find themselves unable to continue the service, thereby creating the necessity for a central body, Polio Australia, to take over responsibility for state functions.

D. DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME:

National Disability Services welcomes the Prime Minister's announcement of an inquiry into a national long-term care and support scheme for people with a disability. A no-fault social insurance scheme is needed to replace the current lottery in which many Australians with disability cannot get the support services they need. The Productivity Commission will conduct an inquiry into the costs, benefits and feasibility. The inquiry will consider the complex interactions with aged care, income support and state-based compensation systems. A national long-term care and support scheme would relieve people with a disability, family carers and service providers of much frustration and anxiety. It would be critical in delivering on the Government's commitment to social inclusion and its ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2010

The Calliper Kids – eleven life journeys of polio survivors
Book launch and tenth birthday bash
Thursday 11 February 2010 at 2.15p.m. Ferntree Gully Library
RSVP by 18 December 9758 9158, Email Monahan@melbpc.org.au

Mary-ann Liethoff takes on the new role of National Project Manager for Polio Australia in January 2010. It will be a two days per week contract employment. We wish her great success working on the national initiatives for the polio community. She has achieved a great deal on our behalf in Victoria, and we should be pleased to share her skills Australia-wide. Our thanks and good wishes to Mary-ann.

Finally we forward on our best wishes also to staff at Polio Services, and all other support groups. To all our readers, enjoy a wonderful Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year.

PROPOSED PLANNING FOR 2010

Venue and speakers to be advised when confirmed.

Thursday 11 th . Feb	Book Launch
Tuesday 9 th . March	Social / Networking
Saturday 17 th . April	Information (TBA)
Tuesday 11 th . May	Social / Networking
Saturday 19 th . June	Information (TBA)
Tuesday 13 th . July	Social / Networking
Saturday 21 st . August	Information (TBA)
Tuesday 14 th . September	Social / Networking
October (TBA)	Polio Day
Saturday 9 th . November	Planning for 2011
Saturday 11 th . December	Christmas Dinner

Newsletter to be published bi-monthly from February. Contributions always welcome.

Attached to this report:

1. Fee notice, personal information up-date, confidentiality release and feedback form.
2. Annual calendar year finance report.



Merry Cristmas & A Happy New Year