

Polio Network Victoria

# Polio Perspectives

Vol 21 No 1 Autumn 2009



## New name, New direction

### The launch of Independence Australia!

On Wednesday 3rd December 2008, our new brand Independence Australia was officially launched nationally. This occasion celebrates a new and defining chapter in our history, as we continue to strive to support people in their dreams and aspirations of independence.

For over 50 years ParaQuad Victoria and Independence Solutions have passionately and professionally responded to the changing and challenging needs of people with a disability. This is an achievement we can all be justifiably proud of.

Our initial focus in the 1950's was primarily on people in Victoria with spinal cord injuries. Today however through our two major divisions, we support people with varying abilities and disabilities right across Australia; all the while never losing sight of our goal of improving quality of life for all our clients and customers.

This change has seen us grow in our capabilities, our expertise and our reach. In response to this change, we have developed a new brand that better reflects our broader focus, and more accurately positions us as an organisation able to take on new opportunities and lead the way into the future.

This new brand is 'Independence Australia' and represents one integrated organisation with two primary focus areas; Community Solutions (specialised services and care for people with a disability or physical need – including Polio Network Victoria) and Health Solutions (continence, wound care, other personal healthcare products and rehabilitation equipment services).

Our new name and brand focus is clear as we move into the future. It is about supporting all people with physical needs to achieve optimal quality of life and their pursuit of independence.

We look forward to this exciting new chapter in our history, and your involvement in it along the way.

Peter Turner  
**Chief Executive Officer**



## Black Saturday

by Elaine Smythe  
Sale Polio Support Group Member

Our chook shed and side fence about 20 feet from our house

Saturday the 7th February started like any other day that week – hot and dry. The fire in the Bunyip State Forest had been burning for about four days but had posed no threat. We (husband Jeff, son Bastian and myself) weren't too fussed by the fire threat as the forest is about 4 km's away with farm land in between. Jeff put buckets of water around the house and filled big bins and had mops and bags ready to put out spot fires as we were on ember alert. About lunch time my daughter Amy rang advising me to go to her house in Drouin, 6 km's away from where we live in Drouin West, as they had a good view of the smoke and it had gone out of control. I grabbed my photo albums and laptop and told Jeff I was going to Amy's and taking the dogs. He said the dogs would be fine at home but I took them anyway.

The day was so hot we put my two pugs, Amy's two boxers and one poodle in the house with Amy's three kids and Amy and I stood on the deck and watched the smoke. Amy's husband Steve went to my house to give Jeff a hand. We rang home to

tell of any change but as it got closer mobile contact was not available. It got so bad I was starting to think we would have to get out of Drouin altogether. I kept trying to ring my daughter Claire who was at my house with her husband Scott and finally got through to her screaming "GET THE TRUCKS! THE FIRE'S HERE! WE NEED HELP!" Amy and I both rang 000 but after being on hold for 7 minutes, Amy said to go to the fire station. They sent two trucks and another three met them there.

Back at Amy's, Bastian and girlfriend Ashlee arrived. He was in a terrible state, telling how the fire came over the hill and how he's grabbed two old family photos and my baby doll, which I've had since young. He was saying "sorry I didn't have time to get any more", thinking the house was gone and that Jeff, Steve, Scott and two friends were leaving the area as well. We waited for what seemed like hours. The wind changed, thank God, and the fire swept past Drouin. Claire arrived with our neighbour from across the paddock about 500 metres away. Her two story house →

## Inside

**Polio message**  
on Opera house



**Glimpses of Polio...**  
book project



**Visit with**  
**June Middleton**  
**Ian's story**  
**PAC election**



## Polio Perspectives

is published quarterly by  
Independence Australia

208 Wellington Street  
Collingwood Victoria 3066

P 03 9415 1200

1300 704 456

F 1300 704 451

E polio@independenceaustralia.com

W www.polionetworkvic.asn.au

www.independenceaustralia.com

### Polio Community Officer

Mary-ann Liethof – 9418 0411

## POLIO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Chairperson

Michael Judson – 0412 302 997

### Members

Jill Burn – 9499 4015

Margaret Cooper – 9773 2437

Geoff Dean – 5662 2643

Jo McKenna – 9308 8440

Gordon McKinnon – 5565 8660

Liz Telford – 9489 8328

Peter Willcocks – 9578 5953

## PAC MEETING DATES 2009

- March 27 • April (cancelled)
- May 29 • June 26 • July 31
- August 28 • September 25
- October 30 • November 27

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Polio Network Victoria

• Direct Line – 9418 0411

• Switchboard – 1300 704 451

Polio Services Victoria – 9288 3845

Breakdown Service (RACV) – 131 111

Carers Association – 1800 242 636

Centrelink, Disability – 132 717

Centrelink, Aged – 132 300

Disabled Motorists (Vic) – 9386 0413

Emergency AH Service – 1800 059 059

Emergency Wheelchair and

Scooter – 9362 6111

Independent Living Centre

– 1800 686 533

Melbourne Mobility Centre

– 1800 735 266

TADVIC – 9853 8655

Victorian Aids and Equipment

Program – 1800 783 783

Polio Perspectives welcomes articles of interest and reserves the right to edit or reject submissions as it sees fit. Published articles do not necessarily reflect the policies of the organisation. Any information in Polio Perspectives is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice.



## From the Editor

editor Mary-ann Liethof

**This has already been an action packed year, not least of which has been the horrific ‘fire season’ Victoria has endured. We all know how dry it’s been with the continuing drought but who could have imagined the consequences?**

I’ve had messages of concern from various post-polio organisations including those located in New Zealand and the USA. As such, I thought it would be an idea to include some local news on how this has impacted on our community. As this edition goes to print, there are ongoing concerns for ‘ember attacks’ from fires that are still burning, and we are still receiving forecasts predicting more hot weather and wind changes. To all those readers in affected areas, you are in our thoughts.

Other activity that has been taking up time and energy is a second trip to the USA. Having several weeks of annual leave that needed whittling down, I decided to attend both the **‘Post-Polio Wellness Retreat’** and ensuing **‘Living with Polio in the 21st Century’**, the 10th International Conference organised by Post-Polio Health International at Warm Springs, Georgia, USA. These forums are only held once every 3-4 years and are unique in the type of information presented, specifically relating to Post Polio Syndrome (PPS).

The knowledge brought back from the Wellness Retreat and Conference will be extended to the wider polio community through the production of a report, arranging and delivering community presentations, writing up progressive newsletter articles and uploading information onto the website. The concepts presented at the Wellness Retreat will also be used as a base for Polio Network Victoria’s annual Polio Awareness Month and **Polio Day** forums – one metro and one rural – in October 2009.

I was incredibly fortunate to be awarded a grant from the Harold Mitchell Foundation which assisted in funding this sojourn. I am also very pleased to have three polio survivors

joining me on the trip: **Fran Henke** (Mornington Peninsula Polio Support Group), **Shirley Glance** (Bayside Polio Support Group) and **Liz Telford** (PAC Member). All have been raising their own funds to travel, with Fran blitzing the team with a substantial grant from the William Angliss Foundation and additional funds from her support group, Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, an afternoon tea fund raiser, and being awarded the “Suburban Superstar” prize (see Page 6). Shirley is aiming to have a film night with the proceeds being split between funding her trip and the Bush Fire Appeal. It appears Australia will have quite a contingent, with one from QLD, maybe one from NSW, I just heard about one from SA, and the four of us – that’s just the people I know about! The Americans will think they’re at The Oscars, with all those Aussie accents!

The **Polio Advisory Committee (PAC)** has been busy working on our priorities for this year, and you can read more about this on Pages 5 and 11. I have organised my visits to all the **Polio Support Groups** this year (see Page 12), so it will be good to see you there. The PAC is keen to strengthen contact with the groups, so I will be accompanied by a member for many of these visits.

Following on from my Churchill Fellowship study tour interviews last year, a DVD entitled **‘Shades of Grey’** has been produced and will be distributed to all Victorian Polio Support Groups and Australian state networks in the near future. PAC Member, Peter Willcocks, has been very generous with his time and efforts in converting the edited files into DVD format, and thinking up a name for it. Although there are a number of viewing hours involved, we hope the groups will consider scheduling a few sessions whereby they can watch a chapter, then stop and discuss the issues. I’m sure people will find the information presented by those interviewed to be extremely interesting. •

Until next time – safe journeys...

**Mary-ann Liethof**



**As a nation, we have once again demonstrated how generous we can be when a disaster hits.**



# Independence Australia staff raise funds for bushfire victims

by Mary-ann Liethof

**We have all been deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic loss of life and wide spread devastation left in the wake of the Black Saturday bushfires.**

As a nation, we have once again demonstrated how generous we can be when a disaster hits. We have dug deep and collectively donated an incredible \$150 million to the bushfire appeals.

As part of our support for the bushfire victims Independence Australia has donated \$10,000 worth of children's nappies and adult incontinence pads and our staff have rallied together to raise. With 700 staff across the state, we anticipate the funds raised through the "Independence Australia Victoria Bushfire Appeal" will provide some much needed relief and assistance to those affected.

After extensive research, we are pleased to report that to date no Independence Australia client or staff member has been directly impacted by the fires through loss of life or property. Therefore the monies raised will be directed to victims with disabilities and we are currently investigating the most appropriate channel to reach those people.

Having said that, I am acutely aware that many polio survivors who receive 'Polio Perspectives' are not actually 'clients' of Independence Australia, and many live in the areas affected. The only way I will know if these people have been impacted on is if the newsletter is marked 'Return to Sender' because there is no actual address to deliver it to. Thankfully, news from Victoria's 17 Support Groups has indicated that their regular members are fine. •

## Statewide fire situation map



## Fire Status

🔥 Going 🌸 Contained 🛑 Controlled

- ➡ A Going fire is spreading on an external edge, in whole or in part.
- ➡ A Contained fire is not spreading beyond the perimeter or an external edge but requires continuous suppression action to bring about a 'Controlled' situation.
- ➡ A Controlled fire requires routine patrol including occasional mopping up work.

➔ continued from front page  
was gone and she didn't know where her husband and son were. Amy rang her husband's mobile. Thankfully, he was OK but didn't know where their son was. We found out much later that he was OK too.

Time seemed to stand still. Jeff and the others had still not arrived and we couldn't raise them on the mobile. I have no idea how long – it seemed like hours – before we were told everyone was OK and my house was

still standing. Another neighbour living 400 metres up the road lost their house. And Bob across the road, 100 metres away, was missing. He was found in his driveway two hours after the fire went through, and ended up in the Alfred Hospital on life support due to smoke inhalation. He is doing well.

At 10pm that night, we took our food outside and trees were still burning. A burning tree came down across the road just minutes after we drove past it. The fire had come

to within 3 metres from my car shed. We were so lucky. If Jeff and crew and neighbours hadn't stayed, and the trucks hadn't come when they did, who knows how many houses would be remaining. We lost three houses, five are still standing, all in a distance of 500 metres. No matter which way you look you see black as the fire raged all around us. We were so lucky. Can't wait for winter! •

**Footnote** Drouin is in Victoria's Gippsland region, approx. 100 km's South-East of Melbourne



PHOTO: Mark Wallace/Rotary Down Under

## Polio message beamed on Opera House

February 24, 2009

Rotary International's campaign to rid the world of polio has stepped up a gear with the words "End Polio Now" beamed onto the Sydney Opera House. The message coincided with the organisation's 104th birthday on Monday, with five more displays planned for some of the world's most renowned landmarks.

"This is to remind people all over the world that Rotary's major international project, which has been going for around 25 years, is almost complete, with only four countries remaining where polio is endemic (including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nigeria," a Rotary statement said.

Projections will be made on Table Mountain in Cape Town, The Coliseum in Rome, The Houses of Parliament in London, Niagara Falls in the US and the United Nations Building in New York.

### Source:

<http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/polio-message-beamed-on-opera-house-20090224-8g0q.html>

## Kenya issues polio alert

by Catherine Karong'o

NAIROBI, Kenya, February 25

The government issued a fresh polio alert on Wednesday while admitting that there had been constant shortages of BCG and Polio vaccines in the country since mid last year.

This followed a confirmed case of a four-year-old girl in Lokichoggio, Turkana North District, while a second case involving a one-year-old child was under investigation at the National Institute of Communicable Diseases laboratory in South Africa. The confirmed case of Wild Polio Virus type 1 is said to be an importation from Southern Sudan.

Director of Public Health Dr Shahnaaz Shariff said the government now required Sh5 million to conduct emergency campaigns in the affected areas. "It will be done in two rounds tentatively from early March, because it has to coincide with the rounds in Southern Sudan, Eastern Uganda and Ethiopia, which are also affected," Dr Shariff said. "Mothers in Kenya should be worried because one case of polio is considered as an outbreak," he added.

The campaign will include mobile house to house strategies covering all manyattas (homesteads) and fixed posts to reach a target of close to 100,000 children in Turkana district under five years old. He defended the regular vaccine stock out saying it was an international crisis.

"There has been a vaccine shortage internationally because about four major vaccine manufacturers in India have been stopped due to quality, and there has also been a fluctuation in foreign exchange," he said. "Our agreement with UNICEF on vaccines also expired in December 2007 and it took about six months to renew the vaccine agreement."



**Mothers in Kenya should be worried because one case of polio is considered as an outbreak...**



Dr Shariff said that they would get medical supplies from the World Health Organisation (WHO), which has stocks in Democratic Republic of Congo. WHO recommends that an emergency vaccination campaign be conducted four weeks after a reported polio outbreak to contain the disease. WHO Country representative, Dr David Okello recommended that Kenya scales up its routine immunisation to ensure it remains polio free.

"Since about the time of the post election disturbances, we have noticed a slackening in routine immunisation in many parts of the country," Dr Okello said. "We were doing very well at the end of 2007, our coverage had gone up but I must say things have started weakening and there are many children who are not covered by our routine immunisation."

Dr Okello said that although Kenya was considered the best across Africa in some areas of immunisation, the coverage had now come down to about 60 percent in some parts of the country, which is far below the 80 percent coverage recommended by the global health body. "That is why our children are being infected by imported polio," he said and added, "If we are not protected by routine immunisation we will remain at risk because there is a lot of movement between countries."

Kenya has remained polio free for the last 20 years owing to intensified polio campaigns. •

### Source:

Capital News, Kenya

# Polio Advisory Committee Planning Day

by Mary-ann Liethof

## Wild Poliovirus Weekly Update

Data as at 24 February 2009

Source: [www.polioeradication.org/casecount.asp](http://www.polioeradication.org/casecount.asp)

| Total cases                 | Year-to-date 2009 | Year-to-date 2008 | Total in 2008 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Globally                    | 68                | 111               | 1654          |
| - in endemic countries:     | 52                | 105               | 1507          |
| - in non-endemic countries: | 16                | 6                 | 147           |

| Country       | YTD 2008 | YTD 2007 | Total in 2007 | Date of onset of most recent case |
|---------------|----------|----------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| India         | 13       | 82       | 559           | 7 February 2009                   |
| Kenya         | 1        | 0        | 0             | 7 February 2009                   |
| Sudan         | 5        | 0        | 26            | 1 February 2009                   |
| Pakistan      | 7        | 2        | 118           | 30 January 2009                   |
| Benin         | 2        | 0        | 6             | 29 January 2009                   |
| Afghanistan   | 2        | 2        | 31            | 27 January 2009                   |
| Nigeria       | 30       | 19       | 799           | 26 January 2009                   |
| Togo          | 2        | 0        | 3             | 26 January 2009                   |
| Burkina Faso  | 2        | 0        | 6             | 15 January 2009                   |
| Niger         | 3        | 2        | 13            | 6 January 2009                    |
| Mali          | 1        | 0        | 1             | 4 January 2009                    |
| CAR           | 0        | 0        | 3             | 30 December 2008                  |
| Chad          | 0        | 1        | 37            | 26 December 2008                  |
| Angola        | 0        | 1        | 29            | 26 December 2008                  |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 0        | 0        | 1             | 24 December 2008                  |
| Ghana         | 0        | 0        | 8             | 8 November 2008                   |
| DRC           | 0        | 0        | 5             | 18 October 2008                   |
| Nepal         | 0        | 2        | 6             | 15 October 2008                   |
| Ethiopia      | 0        | 0        | 3             | 27 April 2008                     |

**Clearly, the input provided by PAC members is not just 'tokenistic' and it is only through this type of contribution that Polio Network Victoria can ensure the needs of our polio community are met – within the scope of it's role as an information service, that is...**

Check page 11 for more details.



The PAC is made up of eight dedicated polio survivors who work with me to establish and achieve a number of goals which we consider important to the support and information available for all Victorian polio survivors.

### In February, we got together to discuss a range of issues:

- What has the PAC achieved?
- What are the PAC's strengths?
- Where is the PAC going?
- What might impact on this?
- Realistic solutions?
- What are the priorities?

### Achievements include:

- Extended knowledge to general public
- Worked on information to include on PNV (Polio Network Victoria) website
- Arranged radio interviews
- Instigated and applied for June Middleton's Guinness World Record
- Supported Medical Cooling Concession/Networking
- Lobbied politicians for increases in funding for Aids & Equipment and Polio Services Victoria (PSV)
- Contributed information for the development of 2 PNV brochures and A4 poster
- Wrote letters of support for Polio Community Officer's grant applications
- Worked on themes for Polio Days
- Contributed ideas for PNV's School Speakers project
- Utilised networking contacts (formal and informal)
- Supported the establishment of Polio Australia
- Provided information to assist support groups
- Continuing to work up ideas for Book Project
- Contributed experiences to disability parking & taxi issues
- Suggested items of interest for Polio Perspectives

### The priorities for this year are:

- Wellness/self-management forum – Polio Day (October 09)
- "Shades of Grey" DVD (interviews recorded during 2008 study tour) distributed to networks
- Promotion of PAC to PNV members
- PAC connecting to Polio Support Groups through visits
- Work on attracting new members to PAC to replace departing committee members (see page 11)
- Explore information resources for younger, migrant polio survivors. PSV has 200 clients under 30, many less than 20 years old
- Develop mini survey to find out what these younger people feel would help them
- PSV to distribute survey to their young polio patients – translated in their language, if required
- Sub-committee to determine timeframe for Stories Project (see page 10)
- Quality of life for people with post polio syndrome

# Noticeboard

## Wagga Wagga Conference Saturday, 26 September 2009

Post-Polio Network (NSW) Inc.'s Country Conference this year is being held in Wagga Wagga, hosted by the local Support Group. The conference will be held on Saturday, 26th September, 2009 and the venue is the Country Comfort Motel on the corner of Tarcutta and Morgan Streets in central Wagga Wagga.

Proposed speakers include Mary-ann Liethof, Community Officer from the Polio Network Victoria who will have returned from the US following her attendance at an international polio conference in Warm Springs, Georgia titled 'Living with Polio in the 21st Century'.

Mary-ann will address us on aspects of interest. From the IDEAS group at Tumut, a disability service provider. We should have Sue Gorman who will speak on a range of available services.

We have many members from throughout the state who regularly support our Country Conference. Members who live in the ACT, Riverina and southern NSW are particularly urged to put this date on their calendar. I know that we will also have strong support from our friends in Wodonga and the north east of Victoria.

**Neil von Schill**

Post-Polio Network (NSW) Inc.

## Do you have an email address?

If you would like to receive Polio Perspectives electronically instead of through the post, email [polio@independenceaustralia.com](mailto:polio@independenceaustralia.com)



## Fran Henke 'Stars'

At the end of 2008, Fairfax Community Newspapers invited staff across Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula to be nominated for a new community service award called "Suburban Superstar".

Fran Henke, in FCN's Hastings office of the Independent News, was nominated by her regional editor Keith Platt, for her work on behalf of polio survivors, as well as local community activities such as Western Port Festival and McClelland Guild of Artists.

In the past she had designed a healing garden for Rosebud Hospital and a garden for dementia patients at a rehabilitation centre, as well as foundation memberships of horticultural organisations such as Heritage Roses and the Garden History Society during her garden writing stage.

From four finalists in an Oscars' style event, Fran won and was given the opportunity to speak to approximately 600 colleagues at the FCN Christmas dinner and awards night, on the

needs of polio survivors, setting off a standing ovation. "The reaction was overwhelming," she said. "Many people came up afterwards to tell about family members who were polio survivors and now experiencing late effects, while one young woman at the Dandenong table asked what polio was," Fran said.

The award carried \$1000 to a nominated charity. FCN chairman Don Churchill, was happy for it to go to the appeal for her to attend the Polio Health International conference at Warm Springs in April. On hearing the polio story, Dandenong and other Hastings journalists who won awards, donated their cheques to her as well.

"For an old girl from Hastings to get an award (any award) of 'Suburban Superstar' is pretty funny", she said. "But I'm so grateful for the opportunity to spread the word about our needs to so many grassroots communicators and colleagues. It was a fabulous start to the fundraising for Warm Springs."

**Footnote:** Fran Henke is a regular contributor to Polio Perspectives and an active member of Mornington Peninsula's Polio Support Group.

## Home Medicines Review

Do you know your medicines? If medicines aren't used properly, or if the wrong ones are used together, the results can be serious. Each year more than 140,000 Australians have to go to hospital with problems caused by their medicine. It has been shown that in up to 69% of these cases the problem can be avoided. Older people are particularly at risk. As a response to this problem, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has developed the Home Medicines Review (HMR) Program.

### What's involved in an HMR?

An HMR involves your GP and a community pharmacist of your choice. Your GP sets up the review by writing a referral to the pharmacist. A pharmacist conducts an interview, preferably in the comfort of your own home, and then writes a report back to the GP. The GP will discuss any recommendations with you and may make appropriate changes to your medication regimen. The solutions may involve:

- showing you how to take your medicines correctly
- explaining why and when to take them
- explaining where they should be stored
- what to expect when taking them
- what problems you should report to the GP
- checking that prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines and vitamins are appropriate to take together
- clarifying any confusion with generic medicines
- giving you some help so you can remember to take your medicines
- changing your medicines.

### Who should have an HMR?

HMRs are particularly useful for people who:

- take more than five medicines a day

- have recently spent time in hospital
- are concerned about their medicines
- are confused about their medicines
- do not always remember to take their medicines.

### How much does it cost?

The pharmacist's review and report is paid for by the Australian Government, so it will not cost you anything. Your GP may bulk-bill or charge you for the GP consultations.

If you (or someone you care for) might benefit from having an HMR, talk to your GP or pharmacist about organising one. HMRs are available in all States and Territories.

## Good Thinking New Psychology Column



Andrew  
Sinclair

We all have times when we feel blue or are particularly stressed. Usually these times pass and we begin to feel like ourselves again. Sometimes these problems persist for a long time or start to interfere with our daily life. We may have trouble sleeping, may feel more irritable, or begin to have difficulty in our jobs and relationships. It is these times that talking to a psychologist may help.

Independence Australia recognises that counselling helps people achieve greater health, happiness and enjoyment in their lives. Our team of registered psychologists are trained and experienced in counselling people who are living with the challenges associated with a physical disability. Our dedicated

service is available at no cost to people experiencing the late effects of polio and their family members.

In October 08, Independence Australia psychologist Dr Andrew Sinclair attended Polio Day in Frankston and was available to answer questions about our counselling service. Andrew reports that he is seeing an increase in the number of people with the late effects of polio attending for information and support. Some are seeking strategies for managing the everyday experiences of living with a disability. Others are looking for ideas to assist them in responding to their changing physical needs or vocational capabilities. Relationship concerns often prompt people with the late effects of polio to attend with their partner. This option allows the exploration of how both partners can support and assist each other through the challenges they are experiencing in their lives.

### What can our service help with?

- Depression
- Grief and loss
- Disability and aging
- Anger and frustration
- Intimacy and sexuality concerns
- Self-esteem
- Family and relationship conflict
- Stress and anxiety
- Identity issues
- Thoughts of suicide
- Social isolation
- Pain and fatigue

Andrew will be writing a regular column in Polio Perspectives exploring the unique issues that confront people living with the late effects of polio.

**If you have a question you would like answered or a topic you would like explored, please email Andrew at: [Andrew.Sinclair@independenceaustralia.com](mailto:Andrew.Sinclair@independenceaustralia.com) or call him on 1300 704 456.**

# Visit with June Middleton

by Mary-ann Liethof

**Time draws closer to June's 60th anniversary of contracting polio in April 1949 and she is as chipper as ever.**

June chatted away happily about her upcoming visits to friends in Hastings and Mornington and how she was enjoying her not-so-new accommodation (moved in 2 years ago) at Yooralla's community house in Thornbury. But there was also a lot of discussion about her beautiful companion, Angel. Angel is half labrador and half golden retriever and moved in with June last year on the 8th of August. She's got the softest ears and lovely nature, although June reckons Angel can be a bit of a 'hussy' around the boys – rolling over with legs splayed (most un-lady-like) for a tummy rub.

Apparently Angel enjoys collecting little 'gifts' for June when she's out on her walks and has a special penchant for plastic bottles. Recently, Angel was sniffing around a car parked near the



local parklands, the inhabitants of which had been quietly smoking marijuana from an improvised 'bong' in the form of a plastic bottle. However, they had made the mistake of putting it outside to clear the air (we surmised). That was a very interesting addition to June's plastic bottle collection.

June told me that Angel had been one of a litter of ten, with all of her siblings' names starting with the letter "A". She had been training with the Guide Dogs

Association – an organisation that June has supported for 50 years – but was too smart to stick to the script (according to June). That's how Angel became June's trusted and beloved companion, and their mutual pleasure in each other's company can be seen in the photo.

I'm sure we all wish June a 'Happy Anniversary' – such as it is – and birthday greetings for May. June's positive approach to life is a total inspiration and I left our visit feeling happier for the experience. •



Jim was the dance caller who was at the centre of the world's biggest square dance boom here in Australia; one of his big nights calling for 4000 square dance beginners at Centennial Hall, Adelaide, another calling for 8000 square dancers outside Parliament House, Melbourne. He had eleven square dance radio programs per week running when he contracted polio (one year before the Salk Vaccination became available), and was put into an iron lung for life support in 1954.

Confounding medical opinion, Jim fought his way out of the iron lung and, although now disabled, bounced back to continue his entertainment career, calling more square dances in Melbourne, Adelaide,

## Vale Jim Vickers-Willis

by Tony Vickers-Willis

**Famous square dance caller, Jim Vickers-Willis, who taught thousands of Australians to square dance in the 1950's and 60's, died 30th December 2008.**

Sydney and Brisbane, and then producing puppet pantomimes on early Australian television. Jim joined the insurance industry forging a 47 year career, which included passing final exams at Deakin University, when aged 82, to become a Certified Financial Planner, before retiring 6 years later.

Jim zealously campaigned for social change. He stood for Parliament in 1967 against the Vietnam War, then waged his own war against cigarette smoking. He fought to get the Melbourne foreshore bike path built, and sought reforms to our prisons. In the early 1970's he researched and wrote a bestselling book titled "Are You (Really) Fun To Live With?", and he advocated for increased sex education in our community. Jim maintained that sex and relationship education, for all ages, was one of the most vital needs in our society, which would help to ease such social problems as sex crimes, drug abuse, alcoholism,

suicide, and marriage breakdown. He succeeded in getting bans lifted on the sex education film *The Language of Love*, and succeeded in his drive for the creation of legal nude bathing beaches. Recently he turned his attention to promoting more use of solar power and the right to die with dignity.

Originally trained as a journalist with *The Herald Sun* Newspaper, Jim served as an RAAF flying instructor in Canada during the Second World War. A man of great courage, resilience, determination, vision, and wisdom, who redefined for us all what is meant by the term 'quality of life'.

He leaves a wife, Beth - the No. 1 lady in his square dance exhibition set and No. 1 lady in his life with whom he shared more than 60 years of marriage - his daughter Suellen and sons Peter and Tony.

For further details on Jim's amazing and inspiring life story, you are invited to visit his website at [www.vickers-willis.com](http://www.vickers-willis.com). •

# Ian's story

by Michelle Duley  
Nurse Team Leader  
Brooke Street Medical Centre

**Sometime in the mid 1950's my Grandmother was the mother of two young children only a little younger than my own children are now. One morning her little boy (my uncle) was sitting by the fire crying, she called to him and when he stood up to come to her, he fell down. He stood again, took a few steps, screamed and fell again. Ian was three and half and knew how to walk. But on this day he couldn't walk and he didn't walk again for many, many months.**

My Grandmother clutched her child to her and ran to the dairy. She knew what was wrong and she didn't need to explain it to my Grandfather as he watched his little boy attempt to stand. Infantile Paralysis or Poliomyelitis as it was later called was epidemic throughout the world at this time. At the turn of the century in Australia 'Infantile Paralysis' reared its head as a disease that paralysed small children and often caused death. This disease was every parent's greatest fear. For fifty years epidemics swept through Australian communities infecting tens of thousands. It was 1956 when my uncle contracted polio.

My Grandparents took their son to see Dr Connell in Kyneton. He examined Ian and said "I don't want you to be frightened." "I need you to take Ian to see a Specialist that I know in Collins Street, Melbourne, as soon as you can." Dr Connell did not mention the words 'Infantile Paralysis' or 'Polio', these for most of the early century were not words that people said out loud. Polio carried a stigma. When the Queen visited Australia in the 1950's she chose not to shake hands with anyone for fear of contracting the disease. Children were sent to school with pegs on their noses.

Ian's parents waited through a long weekend before they could see the specialist. Doctor Connell told them that "under no circumstances are you to let him stand or walk." For three days they took turns holding and watching their feverish child night and day. Finally they arrived at the Collins Street Specialist and he told them that he "suspected this was indeed Infantile Paralysis" and an ambulance was called.

Michelle and her son  
**"Through the universal immunisation program we've been spared the suffering and heartache my grandmother and her son went through"**



When the family arrived at 'The Queens Memorial Hospital for Infectious Diseases' in Fairfield, they were asked by a nurse to wait in an isolation room. The nurse came with the Doctor and they explained that to confirm the child's condition some fluid needed to be taken from his spine. The Doctor told my grandparents that they wouldn't be able to see Ian for quite a while, that they should leave, for whilst the procedure would not be very painful the child would cry. They waited, and their child cried for a long time; and so did they.

Infantile Paralysis was confirmed, Ian was confined to a ward with many other children, some with full pelvic and leg braces to prevent movement. Some in iron lungs – to help them breathe. It was six weeks before his parents were allowed to see him again.

Once Ian was no longer considered infective my grandparents visited frequently. On one of these visits my grandfather met a man with whom he had served in the war. The man was waiting for a decision to be made about his wife. She had contracted Polio and had almost total paralysis and her twins were soon to be born.

The Collins Street Specialist called one day to say that my uncle could go home providing he was taken twice a week to see Mr Gymer in Ballarat. Mr Gymer was a well know physiotherapist with a special interest in Poliomyelitis in children and adults. So began many months of dedicated rehabilitation. Exercises by the fire three times a day, long trips back and forth to Ballarat, salt baths, hours of bandaging on the awkward leg and a pelvic brace. Ian was not allowed to walk so my grandfather made him a large pram with bicycle wheels. Many dads around the country were designing and building similar things to transport their paralysed children.

Nine months after my uncle was diagnosed he was resting in his pram without his callipers, his sister (my mother) was in the pram with him. My Grandparents heard a crashing noise and rushed to see what was wrong. Nothing was wrong. My uncle had jumped from the pram and was running

across the room. This was the first time in a long time that my Grandmother cried tears of happiness.

The doctors had not been sure if my uncle would walk again, but he did, with a limp that he still has today. Doctor Connell told my Grandparents "get him into football it will strengthen his leg", they did and he played for many years – badly – but he loved it!

This unfortunately is not the end of Ian's story. Whilst he has gone on to live a full and productive life at the young age of 61 he has begun to show signs of 'Post Polio Syndrome'. Initially Polio was considered to be a chronic, yet stable condition, once the acute phase was over and rehabilitation had restored a greater or lesser degree of function. More recently it has become known that many polio survivors develop new symptoms after decades of functional stability. These new symptoms include things like: incapacitating fatigue, memory loss, new muscle weakness, pain, heat and cold intolerance, breathing and speech difficulties and related to these anxiety and depression.

Anyone with concerns about post-polio syndrome should speak with a doctor for treatment and referral. There are also a number of self-help groups available – please speak to Michelle Duley for information. Information is also available at: [www.polionetworkvic.asn.au](http://www.polionetworkvic.asn.au) •

## Spread the news

by Mary-ann Liethof

I was pleased to meet up with Michelle Duley, author of "Ian's story", at Polio Day in Shepparton last October. As indicated, Michelle is the Nurse Team Leader at Brooke Street Medical Centre in Woodend, approx. 70 km's N/W of Melbourne. Michelle booked in to attend Polio Day with her uncle Ian who lives in the Shepparton area. She was subsequently inspired to write this article which appeared in her clinic's Summer newsletter. Thanks, Michelle, for helping to 'spread the news'.

# Glimpses of Polio...

by Mary-ann Liethof

**A relative few Victorian polio survivors have written about their experiences. Now Polio Network Victoria's Polio Advisory Committee plans to compile a book of polio experiences at critical moments in the lives of survivors (subject to funding access).**

Your memories of these key moments are essential to making this happen. We are particularly interested in experiences linked to Victoria, i.e. either born / raised in Victoria or now living in Victoria.

Certain experiences stay in our minds. The purpose of this book, 'Glimpses of Polio' (working title) is to help teach others about polio and assist some survivors with their own memories. Whether we like it or not, we are always teaching health professionals, friends, family members and service providers about polio and life thereafter. The Polio Advisory Committee also hopes that a book expressing these poignant memories may help other polio survivors to feel more connected.

If you would like to contribute a short article, photograph or poem around one of the more important moments in your life – from funny to sad – you might like

to consider writing about the memories evoked by particular sights, smells, words or actions from others, and feelings. These can be selected from any time throughout your life, as we will look at creating sections covering:

- Childhood (e.g. falling ill, reactions of family, hospital stay)
- Teenage (e.g. fitting in, school, finding work)
- Adult (e.g. falling in love, getting married, having children)
- Senior years (e.g. physical changes, relationships, life adjustments)

As indicated, we are not seeking full life stories, although we appreciate how interesting these can be. Try to select one significant 'glimpse' that will help to make up the whole, once the book is compiled.

If possible, it would be wonderful if your contribution could be typed on a computer and emailed to: polio@independenceaustralia.com. If not, then hand-written (printed) will still be most welcome. All photo's received will be scanned and returned promptly.

Whether typed or written, please aim for no more than two A4 size pages – or approx. 1,000 words. We would like to receive all contributions by Friday 26 June 2009.



We anticipate compilation will take the rest of 2009, with publishing by mid-2010, and ready for distribution at the 2010 Polio Day.

**When submitting your piece, you are also required to sign and send the following Consent Form to:**

Polio Network Victoria  
Independence Australia  
208 Wellington Street  
Collingwood, Victoria, 3066.

The Book Sub-committee will then review the piece, work out how it fits into the book, and may even edit for grammar, flow or size.

If you would like any further information about the 'Glimpses of Polio' book project, please contact:

**Mary-ann Liethof at Polio Network Victoria on P: 03 9418 0411 or E: polio@independenceaustralia.com •**

## Statement of informed consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name)

have read the information in Polio Perspectives or on Polio Network Victoria's website and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree that my contribution may be used in a book about experiences of polio survivors. My contribution, or an extract, also may be presented at conferences and used in journal articles, on condition that my name is not used.

I understand that the Book Sub-committee may not accept my contribution or may edit it. Any editing will be done carefully without altering the spirit of my contribution. The edited version will be returned to me for approval before being included in the book.

I accept that I will not be paid for my contribution but will receive a free copy of the book once published.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from active participation in this project at any time. My contribution will then not be used and it will be returned to me.

**Name of Contributor** (please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Chair of Polio Advisory Committee** (please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Manager** (please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Polio Advisory Committee Election

**The Polio Advisory Committee (PAC) is currently seeking applications from people interested in discussing issues, contributing ideas, and suggesting actions for the Polio Community Officer to follow through on. Four new positions on the PAC will be taken up in July 2009 and cease at the end of June 2011.**

**Please return the application form below no later than 5pm on Friday 1st May 2009 to:**

PAC Nominations  
Polio Network Victoria  
208 Wellington Street,  
Collingwood Victoria 3066

E: [polio@independenceaustralia.com](mailto:polio@independenceaustralia.com)

The PAC meets at Independence Australia offices, 208 Wellington Street, Collingwood on the last Friday of every month (except Dec), unless otherwise agreed by the members, and comprises a representative group of rural and metropolitan people who can commit to the following:

## Role

- Advise the Polio Community Officer on issues of relevance to people who have had polio;
- Assist the Polio Community Officer in developing action plans;
- Confer with the Polio Community Officer when matters need to be discussed and/or clarified;
- Provide assistance and support at PNV events and seminars;
- Maintain a positive relationship with Polio Services Victoria through regular feedback and information exchange with the Polio Services Victoria Coordinator.

## Responsibilities

**Each member of the PAC must:**

- be a current financial member of Independence Australia\*;
- be able to attend meetings as scheduled;

- abide by the PAC Guidelines;
- bring to the PAC issues raised by members of PNV for discussion and/or clarification;
- actively and positively promote activities, events and services of PNV and Independence Australia among members of PNV and the wider community.

Ballot Papers detailing applicant profiles will be posted in a separate mail out in first two weeks of May. All Victorian Polio survivors can vote for their preferred candidates and will need to return Ballot Papers to Polio Network Victoria by 5pm on Friday 29th May 2009. The ballot paper will also be posted on the web site and voting by email will be available.

If you have any queries regarding the PAC please contact either:

**Michael Judson**, PAC Chairperson  
P: 0412 302 997  
E: [mjudson@tpg.com.au](mailto:mjudson@tpg.com.au), or  
**Mary-ann Liethof**, Polio Community Officer at Independence Australia  
P: 9418 0411  
E: [polio@independenceaustralia.com](mailto:polio@independenceaustralia.com).  
To give you an idea of PAC activities, Guidelines and Minutes can be found on the Polio Network's website:  
**[www.polionetworkvic.asn.au/PAC](http://www.polionetworkvic.asn.au/PAC)**

\* Contact 1300 704 456 for membership application or to check status.



## Application Form 2009–2011

### Applicant Details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/s \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Interest

Please attach a brief profile of yourself and your interest in joining the PAC. Also include a photo (returnable) or email a digital photo for use in the Ballot Papers.

### Category (tick any categories as appropriate)

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rural* | <input type="checkbox"/> Polio Support Group Member                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metro  | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent<br>(not a Support Group Member) |

\* Rural reps can nominate a deputy person with whom they can share attendance at monthly meetings or join in on meetings via telephone

I confirm that I am a current financial member of Independence Australia.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Polio Services Victoria (PSV) Clinics for 2009

Regretfully, Jane Henderson has resigned from the PSV Service Coordinator & Physiotherapist position. Her last day with PSV is 20/3/09. Recruitment for a replacement has commenced.

PSV's Orthotist, Darren Pereira, goes on long service leave in April 2009 and will not be returning to PSV. However, he will return to work at St Vincent's Hospital so will be available to train up the full time replacement Orthotist. Darren will also continue to run his private practice where many polio survivors are already seeing him.

PROVISIONAL CALENDAR – SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO AVAILABILITY OF REGIONAL CLINICAL CONSULTING ROOMS.

**PSV – PH 9288 3900**

## Metropolitan

All metropolitan clinics are held on WEDNESDAY from 10am – 4:30pm

- March 11, 25
- April 22
- May 20
- June 17
- July 1, 15
- August 12, 26
- September 9
- October 7, 21
- November 18
- December 2, 16

## Regional

- Wangaratta Wednesday 8 April
- Ballarat Wednesday 3 June
- Mildura Wednesday 29 July
- Leongatha Wednesday 23 September
- Warrnambool Wednesday 4 November

## Knox–Yarra Ranges Polio Support Group

The Yarra Ranges Polio Support group has been discussing the benefits of incorporating “Knox” into their group name to assist in accessing services provided by Knox Council such as the use of their community bus. Quite a few of their members live in the City of Knox and their new venue is also located within that municipality. After checking with neighbouring groups to ensure the change would not create any issues for them, the group moved and passed a motion to now be known as Knox–Yarra Ranges Polio Support Group.

# Polio Support Group Contacts

## Ballarat Post Polio Support Group Inc

Meeting: 1st Wed in February, then bi-monthly  
 Cliff Sewell ph: 5336 1557  
 Ruth Grose ph: 5332 4755  
 email: n\_grose@vic.australis.com.au

## Bairnsdale Post Polio Support Group

Meeting: 1st Tue in February, then bi-monthly  
 Margaret Griffiths ph: 5156 7646  
 email: d-mgriffiths@datafast.net.au

## Bayside Post Polio Support Group (Hampton)

Meeting: 1st Thu of every month  
 Shirley Glance ph: 9592 8212  
 Email: howshirl@optusnet.com.au  
 Peter Willcocks ph: 9578 5953

## Bendigo Post Polio Support Group

Meeting: 3rd Sat in February, then bi-monthly  
 Bob & Dawn Colbourne ph: 5443 8161

## Eastern Region Polio Support Group Inc (Box Hill)

Meeting: 3rd Sat of every month  
 Janice Gordon ph: 9874 5363  
 Tricia Malowney ph: 0400 640 624  
 Email: gordonjanice@hotmail.com

## Echuca Post Polio Support Group

Ring Group Contact  
 Di Lauder ph: 5859 6311  
 Email: di\_lauder@yahoo.com.au  
 Helen Murray ph: 5482 2132

## Geelong Polio Support Group

Meeting: 1st Mon of every month  
 Marion Kosseck ph: 5243 8848  
 Neil Winter ph: 5241 9591  
 email: tlmg@bigpond.com

## Hume Polio Self Help Group (Wangaratta)

Meeting: 2nd Saturday of every month  
 Margaret Goodman ph: 5752 1347  
 Harry Wilkinson ph: 5722 1472  
 email: hagd@tadaust.org.au

## Knox-Yarra Ranges Polio Support Group (The Basin)

Meeting: 2nd Sat of every month  
 Joan Smith ph: 9756 6383  
 Marlene Wookey ph: 9758 2232  
 email: joansgra@bigpond.com

## Mornington Peninsula Post Polio Support Group

Meeting: 2nd Sat of every month  
 Dennis & Deirdre Lloyd ph: 5974 3495  
 email: ddllloyd@aapt.net.au

## Northern Region Post Polio Support Group Inc (Coburg)

Meeting: 1st Sat of every month  
 Rosslyn Pickhaver ph: 9386 0413  
 Jo McKenna ph: 9308 8440  
 email: rosslynp@tadaust.org.au

## Sale Polio Support Group

Meeting: 1st Fri in February, then bi-monthly  
 Kathy Glover ph: 5144 3443  
 email: bastian@dcsi.net.au

## Shepparton Post Polio Support Group

Ring Group Contact  
 Rhonda White ph: 5832 3100  
 email: Rhonda.White@gvhealth.org.au

## South Eastern Region Polio Support Group (Springvale)

Meeting: 2nd Sat of every month  
 Lyn Bates ph: 9546 5497  
 email: lyn\_bates@bigpond.com

## Traralgon Post Polio Support Group

Meeting: 3rd Thu in February, then bi-monthly  
 Pauline Corrigan ph: 5174 6904  
 email: pcorrigan@vic.australis.com.au

## Warrnambool Polio Support Group Inc.

Meeting: 4th Tue of every month  
 Bill Hill-Peters ph: 5561 3980  
 Anne Clapham ph: 5562 5685  
 email: anne.clapham@yahoo.com

## Wimmera Polio Support Group (Horsham)

Meeting: 1st Sat in March, then quarterly  
 Gordon Reynolds ph: 5382 7303

## Polio Network Victoria - 2009 Support Group Visits

| Support Group                     | Date                 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Knox-Yarra Ranges                 | Saturday 14 February |
| Echuca/Shepparton (joint meeting) | Thursday 12 March    |
| Mornington Peninsula              | Saturday 14 March    |
| Bairnsdale                        | Tuesday 5 May        |
| Bayside (Hampton)                 | Thursday 7 May       |
| Geelong                           | Monday 1 June        |
| Ballarat                          | Wednesday 3 June     |
| Northern (Coburg)                 | Saturday 6 June      |

| Support Group              | Date                  |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bendigo                    | Saturday 20 June      |
| South Eastern (Springvale) | Saturday 11 July      |
| Warrnambool                | Tuesday 28 July       |
| Hume (Wangaratta)          | Saturday 8 August     |
| Wimmera (Horsham)          | Saturday 5 September  |
| Eastern (Box Hill)         | Saturday 19 September |
| Sale                       | Friday 2 October      |
| Traralgon                  | TBA                   |