



# POLIO AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

## Representing polio survivors throughout Australia

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### ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

There have been a number of significant developments and achievements in the fortunes of Polio Australia over its first reporting period.

All States having signed a Memorandum of Understanding and adopted a Constitution, with the granting of Incorporation on 11 August 2008 Polio Australia elected the inaugural office bearers of the association. Gillian Thomas (NSW) was elected to the position of President with the other executive members being Vice President Arthur Dobson (Tas), Secretary Tessa Jupp (WA) and Treasurer Trevor Jessop (SA). Maria Harding (SA), Jenny Jones (WA), Michael Judson and Mary-ann Liethof (Vic), Margaret Peel and Frances Porter (Qld), Billie Thow (Tas) and Neil von Schill (NSW) were appointed to the remaining Committee positions.

In November 2008, Polio Australia was registered for GST and endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a *Deductible Gift Recipient* and to receive *Charity Tax Concessions*. Polio Australia also holds a *Charitable Fundraising Authority* granted in January 2009 by the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. Fundraising Authorities in other states will be arranged as required, together with ASIC registration as a Registerable Australian Body.

In September 2008 a delegation comprising Gillian Thomas, Peter Garde, Rebecca Rodwell and Neil von Schill capably led by John Tierney visited Canberra to present a funding submission and lobby Federal politicians. Although no funding was forthcoming the tenor of the discussion and level of understanding of Ministers and staff had increased significantly from our 2007 visit.

During March 2009 the opportunity arose to seek substantial federal funding through the Department of Health and Ageing. The submission addressed the Education of Consumers in Chronic Disease Self-management and Lifestyle Risk Factor Modification. Gillian Thomas and Mary-ann Liethof prepared the submission and whilst we were unsuccessful this time, the NSW Network lodged a further submission with a philanthropic trust and at year end learned of a donation to help conduct a Wellness Retreat in NSW in 2010. We were also hopeful of securing further funding towards the Retreat from polio vaccine producer GlaxoSmithKline.

Through the initiative of a NSW Network member, Peg Hatherly, we were able to meet with a Federal Labor Member, Jill Hall MP, who offered to seek to arrange a meeting with the House of Representatives *Standing Committee on Health and Ageing*. In other initiatives, Polio Network Victoria member, Fran Henke, and others in that state effectively lobbied their local politicians on an ongoing basis which has resulted in a number of parliamentarians now being much more aware of polio issues. We thank these members for their tireless efforts. In the coming year we need to build on this and deepen the awareness at the federal level through all State Networks encouraging and supporting members to engage with their local politicians.

In June, John Tierney led another delegation to the federal capital comprising Gillian Thomas, Peter Garde, Mary-ann Liethof and Neil von Schill. This visit resulted in a number of notable outcomes. Our delegation was able to address members of the *Standing Committee on Health and Ageing* and visit a number of supportive Federal MP's from both sides of politics. The outcome was that four federal members agreed to be Parliamentary Co-Patrons of Polio Australia. Jill Hall and her Labor colleague Catherine King agreed to be co-patrons, whilst from the Coalition ranks Greg Hunt and Mark Coulton had earlier offered to take on a similar role. In a further development, Catherine King and Jill Hall initiated a debate calling for the recognition of the plight of polio survivors and their needs – at year end we were hopeful of the debate occurring in August.

With the assistance of our parliamentary co-patrons we are still vigorously pursuing federal funding. Recognising that this is a long-term goal, we are also working towards raising some interim funds to establish a secretariat to further the cause of Polio Australia. To help achieve this goal, at year end we submitted an application to the Trust Company Philanthropic Services seeking funding to employ a part-time staff member to help conduct the pilot Wellness Retreat and get other national information and support programs underway. Australian polio survivors have much to look forward to in 2010.

President  
16 December 2009