



# Polio Australia Incorporated

Representing polio survivors throughout Australia



[www.polioaustralia.org.au](http://www.polioaustralia.org.au)

## Reflections

April 2013

May already, and there has been so much happening at Polio Australia, it's difficult to know where to start! Since the last edition of "[Polio Oz News](#)" in March, Polio Australia has run its 4th annual Health and Wellness Retreat in Glenelg, South Australia, launched our "[Touched by Polio: from casts to catharsis](#)" art exhibition and fundraiser, sadly farewelled one of our 'younger' Committee of Management members, Michael Judson, due to bone cancer, and looked hard at ways to generate more funding - not easy to do with such limited resources. Alas, the Senate accepted the National Disability Insurance Scheme with the 65 year cut-off still in place. However, with federal elections taking place in September this year, we are making plans to head back to Canberra on Wednesday 19th June 2013, before the House rises, to remind politicians of all persuasions that "[We're Still Here!](#)" and **still** waiting for much needed financial support. Please join us if you can!

*"To finalize, the purpose of an election is to hear the will of the people, not to fabricate votes."  
~ Lincoln Diaz-Balart*

### In this e-Bulletin

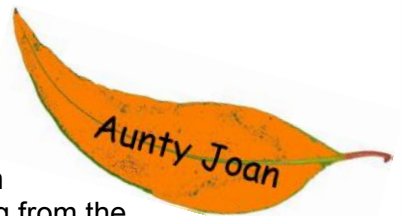
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### ["We're Still Here!": The Federal Election Campaign . . .](#)

Polio Australia is, once again, asking for any polio '[heroes](#)' to join us at Parliament House, Canberra on Wednesday 19th June, 2013, in the lead up to September's federal election. Last October, 60 members of the polio community made the trip to Canberra for Polio Awareness Month - most of whom met with their local Members of Parliament to discuss the total lack of support being given to Australia's polio survivors from the federal government. In spite of the fact that everyone who attended was required to arrange and pay their own way, including transport, [accommodation](#) and meals, the campaign heroes all felt they had accomplished something that had never been done before, and the presence of so many polio survivors in one place made a definite impact on the Parliamentarians. The [Program](#) for the day will be similar to the October 2012 campaign - complete with a complimentary buffet lunch in the Members and Guests Dining Room. However, more details will become available in the coming weeks.

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Have you checked your family tree for polio?

Apart from leaving the Parliamentarians specific, budgeted information on what Polio Australia is asking from the government, this visit we also want to acknowledge the wider circle of people who are “Still Here!” with us. We are working on a ‘family tree’ theme and will be issuing all the campaign heroes with an orange card leaf to hang up at Parliament House. One side will be printed with the words “Honouring Australia’s Polio Survivors” and the other side is where people can write their own name (as a polio survivor), or that of someone they know who had polio: parent, spouse, sibling, child, Aunty Joan, school friend Peter, etc. These leaves will also be sent to all the Parliamentarians with a request that they do the same thing and display it in their window. We will be inviting any politician who wants to know more about our issues to attend the ‘Honour Ceremony’ and make time to meet with small groups of our campaign heroes.

We encourage as many polio survivors and their supporters as possible to join the Federal Election “We’re Still Here!” Campaign. There has never been a better time to make our voices heard, especially as most polio survivors will not derive any benefit from the National Disability Insurance Scheme due to the 65 age limit (now known as DisabilityCare Australia).

Contact [Mary-ann](#) for more information and/or to add your name to the list of campaign heroes heading to Canberra!

### **Walk With Me**

Last September, Polio Australia teamed up with Scope at Federation Square, Melbourne to participate in the annual “Walk with Me” awareness and fundraising activity. Polio Australia’s National Patron, Dr John Tierney, was in Melbourne on the day to do the walk, and polio veteran, Fran Henke, completed a 4 km ‘walk’ on her scooter around the foreshore in Hastings (Victoria), along with her two dogs. Between them, John and Fran raised a healthy \$3,670.00, which was a fantastic effort!



This year, Polio Australia is pleased to be joining Scope again for their Melbourne “[Walk](#)” on Sunday 1st September, and we’re asking for people wanting to help the post-polio community to take up the fundraising challenge. Negotiations are also taking place for Polio Australia to join up with Northcott’s “[Walk](#)” in New South Wales. If two people can raise \$3,670.00 between them, just think what a several teams can do!

“Walk with Me” is not a fun run, nor a competitive fitness event but a recreational 2km or 4km walk, providing family, friends, colleagues, businesses and members of the general public with the opportunity to walk along side people with a disability in a non competitive, lively, fun and very public environment. You can:

- **Register and Walk** as an individual, family or team
- **Support A Hero** and fundraise for a team or make a donation
- **Volunteer** as an individual, community or business group

The website is still under construction but Polio Australia will keep you informed about this activity over the coming months. Contact [Mary-ann](#) if you would like to participate.



## Polio Health and Wellness Retreat

By all accounts, the [2013 Health and Wellness Retreat](#) got the thumbs up from the 70 polio survivors and their spouses/family members. Participants came from all over Australia: 17 from NSW; 2 from the Northern Territory; 7 from Queensland; 25 from South Australia; 4 from Tasmania; 12 from Victoria; and 3 from Western Australia. This year I was also delighted to have 2 volunteer helpers, Vivienne and Alex, who researched and wrote up a report on the logistics of the Retreat as part of their final year of Physiotherapy studies at the University of South Australia. We also managed to raise more than \$400 in raffle tickets for the winner's pick of one of the "Touched by Polio" artworks, in addition to one piece being bought outright for \$400. Polio Australia was also delighted to receive a few generous donations towards the continuation of its work. It was a wonderful acknowledgement of the benefits of this annual program.

You can download Presenters' handouts and read people's experiences of the Retreat [here](#).

If all goes according to plan, the 2014 Retreat will be held again in New South Wales, where it all began!



## Touched by Polio Art Exhibition

The "[Touched by Polio: from casts to catharsis](#)" Art Exhibition Launch and Fundraising Auction was held on a very hot and windy evening in March, and was attended by around 40 people who braved the unpleasant weather conditions. Thirteen of the thirty five pieces were sold on the night, with a further four having been sold since, raising a total of \$4,600 to date. Check the [exhibition website](#) for pieces that have been sold already and consider making an offer for one of the remaining artworks. Each one tells a story, and any one of them can be packaged and sent anywhere that mail is delivered! Contact [Mary-ann](#) for details.



## National Disability Insurance Scheme Update

**Source:** [Joint Media Release](#) - The Hon Jenny Macklin MP with Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Deputy Prime Minister Wayne Swan

On the 1st of May, the Gillard Government announced changes to the Medicare levy to build a better life for Australians with significant and permanent disability. *[Ed. - As long as you are less than 65 years of age when the national rollout occurs in 2018].*

Labor is transforming disability services by creating and locking in funding for DisabilityCare Australia, the national disability insurance scheme. This reform will provide peace of mind to all Australians that if they or a loved one acquire a disability, they will be supported. It is the most fundamental social policy reform since the introduction of Medicare.

To be implemented, DisabilityCare requires a strong and stable funding stream to provide certainty and security to the 410,000 Australians with disability, their families and carers.

For this reason, the Government will increase the Medicare levy by half a percentage point from 1 July 2014. This will take the Medicare levy from 1.5 per cent of taxable income to 2 per cent.

For someone earning around average wages of \$70,000 a year, this will be a modest contribution of around 96 cents a day.

*[Ed. - To date, Western Australia is the only state not to have signed up to the NDIS.]*

## How Ken Sutcliffe survived the peril of polio

by Daniela Ongaro

Source: [The Daily Telegraph](#) - 9 May 2013

VETERAN sports broadcaster Ken Sutcliffe vividly recalls the new red trike he got from his mum and dad when he was three years old.

What he didn't realise then was it was for him to exercise and strengthen his legs, which had been weakened by polio.

In 1950, with Australia in the grip of a polio epidemic, the Sutcliffes' eldest son developed a high fever and cried out in pain with every turn of his head. By chance the local GP in the tiny railway junction of Werris Creek, in the state's north, was away and a relieving locum from Sydney recognised the symptoms.

*"I was lucky because he just happened to be in town for two weeks ... and he recognised the symptoms (of polio) straight away because he'd seen a lot of it in Sydney,"* Sutcliffe said yesterday.

Read full article [here](#).



Polio survivor Ken Sutcliffe  
Pic: Virginia Young  
Source: The Daily Telegraph

## Australia reaffirms support for polio eradication at Global Vaccine Summit

Source: [AusAID website](#) - 24 April, 2013



Akram Azimi, Young Australian of the Year and Ambassador for The End of Polio campaign, hands over a petition, signed by 16,000 Australians, to Mr Pablo Kang, Ambassador to United Arab Emirates. Photo: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Australia's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, Mr Pablo Kang, reaffirmed Australia's support for polio eradication today in Abu Dhabi. Ambassador Kang was joined by the 2013 Young Australian of the Year, Mr Akram Azimi, and Dr Chris Elias, President for Global Health and Development at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation at an event in the lead up to the opening tonight of the Global Vaccine Summit in Abu Dhabi.

On behalf of the Australian Government, Ambassador Kang commended the initiative of His Highness General Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, in convening and hosting the Global Vaccine Summit on 24 and 25 April in Abu Dhabi, in partnership with Mr Bill Gates, Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon.

A new Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013–2018 will be launched at the summit. Australia is pleased to see the focus in the Endgame Strategic Plan on linking polio to the strengthening of routine immunisation. *"In Australia and around the world it has been the introduction of routine mass immunisation which has saved millions of lives,"* said Ambassador Kang.

Read full article [here](#).

## Hilary Koprowski Dead: Pioneering Polio Vaccine Developer Dies At 96

Source: [Huffington Post](#) - 04/13/13

PHILADELPHIA — Dr. Hilary Koprowski, a pioneering virologist who developed the first successful oral vaccination for polio, died this week at his suburban Philadelphia home. He was 96.

Although not as well-known as fellow researchers Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin, Koprowski's 1950 clinical trial was the first to show it was possible to vaccinate against polio, the crippling and sometimes fatal disease that's now all but eradicated.

Koprowski's son, Christopher, said Saturday his father liked the scientific recognition his work received without the celebrity of Salk and Sabin.

Read full article [here](#).





## Polio This Week

Source: [Polio Global Eradication Initiative](#) - as of Wednesday 8 May 2013

Total cases	Year-to-date 2013	Year-to-date 2012	Total in 2012
Globally	26	53	223
- in endemic countries	26	50	217
- in non-endemic countries	0	3	6

### Case breakdown by country

Countries	Year-to-date 2013				Year-to-date 2012				Total in 2012	Date of most recent case
	WPV	WPV3	W1W3	Total	WPV1	WPV3	W1W3	Total		
Pakistan	6			6	13	2	1	16	58	22-Mar-13
Afghanistan	2			2	6			6	37	28-Mar-13
Nigeria	18			18	21	7		28	122	12-Apr-13
Chad					3			3	5	14-Jun-12
Niger									1	15-Nov-12
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>223</b>	
<b>Total in endemic countries</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>217</b>	
<b>Total outbreak</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	

Data in WHO as of 8 May 2012 for 2012 data and 07 May 2013 for 2013 data.

## Treating polio in Afghanistan

Published on Apr 7, 2013

CNN's Anna Coren reports on the effort to save Afghanistan's children from polio. Watch the video [here](#).



## Disease of the past lives on overseas

by Angela Saurine - [The Sunday Telegraph](#) - May 12, 2013

**LIKE many Australians, I'd always thought of polio as a disease of the past.** It wasn't until I travelled to India for the first time last year that I realised it was still a major issue in some parts of the world.

At nearly every train station we arrived we were confronted with the heartbreaking sight of people with severe polio deformities begging for money.



The extent of the deformities was almost incomprehensible. I clearly remember one man who had a head, torso and arms, but no lower body. Another - in a makeshift triangular wheelchair - had one giant foot attached to his body. Yet another man's body was so badly twisted he could only walk on all fours. As moved as I was by their plight, I had been told not to give money to beggars.

In India, children with polio are kidnapped from rural villages and forced to spend their lives in big cities such as Mumbai asking for money, which goes straight into the pockets of what is known as the "begging mafia". So when I returned home I researched polio charities in India and sent a small donation.

Until last year, India was one of only three polio endemic countries left in the world - an impressive feat considering four years ago it accounted for nearly half of the world's polio cases.

One inspiring Australian is determined to see the end of the infectious disease in his lifetime. Tasmanian tour operator Rob Pennicott, from Pennicott Wilderness Journeys, spent 101 days circumnavigating Australia in a yellow rubber dinghy to raise money and awareness for polio eradication. He was named a National Geographic Traveller of the Year last year. Mr Pennicott was attracted to the cause because it is achievable in his lifetime.

*"We have a chance as a global society of eradicating polio and if we don't take it it could explode again in future generations and be a massive problem,"* he said.

The only two polio endemic countries left are Pakistan and Afghanistan. *[Ed. - In fact there is a 3rd country - Nigeria.]*

*"They're hard countries,"* he said. *"The political situation in both of them makes it very difficult."*

The cause is also close to the heart of Microsoft founder Bill Gates, whose Foundation has given hundreds of millions of dollars to Rotary International in its fight to eradicate polio.

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard's government gave \$50 million of its international aid budget towards the fight, which led Gates to contribute another \$40 million in an attempt to encourage other developed nations to follow her lead.

With all the global effort, Mr Pennicott is upset parents in Australia could be tempting fate by not vaccinating their children.

*"It's a fine line,"* he said. *"If everyone had that view we are opening our door for a potential problem,"* he said. *"I really think that kids should be immunised."*

I certainly wouldn't like to see the sights I saw in India on Australian streets. Full article can be read [here](#).



**POLIO AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED**  
Representing polio survivors throughout Australia

**Please pass this e-Bulletin on to friends and colleagues who have an interest in the late effects of polio**

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- ◆ If you do not wish to receive any further communication from Polio Australia, please email us [here](#).

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