



# Polio Australia Incorporated

Representing polio survivors throughout Australia



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

## Reflections October 2013

Once again, October's Polio Awareness Month has come and gone and, as always, the publicity surrounding it has resulted in numerous polio survivors contacting Polio Australia seeking information about their symptoms and the late effects of polio. It's always interesting when speaking with others, how many know someone who had polio, yet how 'invisible' they are in the community. Of course, this has been a necessary survival tactic used by many since they 'recovered' from both the virus and the often traumatic rehabilitation. Being 'normal' and just 'getting on with it' were very effective tools for achieving success in a world where any form of weakness and/or disability was often judged negatively. Thankfully, this attitude is slowly changing for the better. However, we can often be our own worst enemy by continuing to battle on and not asking for support. After all, what can be done about it anyway? Sound familiar? Well, the more we 'come out' and make our voices heard and presence felt, the more forthcoming the appropriate support will be. Let's all work on revealing ourselves within our respective communities, and encouraging our still 'hidden' brethren to sign up to the [Australian Polio Register](#) to increase the numbers of polio survivors we *KNOW* are out there!

*"Refusing to ask for help when you need it is refusing someone the chance to be helpful."*  
~ Ric Ocsek

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### **Newcastle Doctor Examining Ramifications of Polio Increase**

Source: [ABC News](#) - 4 November 2013



A Newcastle public health professor says Australia is in a good position to thwart possible importations of the deadly polio disease as it resurges overseas.

The number of polio infections has dropped dramatically worldwide since an eradication program began in the late eighties.

But recent months have seen the disease spread from the endemic countries of Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan to the Horn of Africa and Syria.

Chair of the National Polio Certification Committee Professor David Durrheim says vaccination is vital and it is important frontline clinicians consider polio if a patient presents with a floppy paralysis of the limb.

He says there are surveillance programs across Australia.

*"Anybody returning from any of those areas known to be endemic for polio, could potentially have been exposed,"* he said.

*"The Australian Government is certainly taking steps, last year there was a comprehensive review of Australia's polio surveillance to make sure that we would detect early any importation of polio and be able to adequately respond."*

Read more [here](#).

## Special Purpose Post Polio Fund

Independence Australia has made a one-off distribution of \$20,980 to Polio Australia, representing the balance of the Special Purpose Post Polio Fund. This fund was established in 2005, initially through a transfer from the Post-Polio Foundation, and later topped up by donations.

Independence Australia CEO, Peter Turner, stated that “we are very pleased to be able to distribute these funds to assist Polio Australia in its future endeavours”.

Independence Australia will continue to auspice Polio Network Victoria, convene the Polio Reference Group and will remain a Member of Polio Australia through its two representatives on its Management Committee.

President of Polio Australia, John Tierney OAM, and Vice President, Gillian Thomas, welcomed the distribution of funds for polio awareness and education purposes and recently met with Peter Turner in Sydney to accept the cheque.



Peter Turner, Gillian Thomas, and John Tierney

## Vale Janet Powell AM (1942-2013) nee McDonald

by Peter Willcocks



Janet, aged 10 years, was living in Nhill when she contracted polio in 1952. Janet trained as a secondary school teacher and throughout her personal, professional, community and political life, she always showed her dedication and passion for the rights of women.

This dedication was a constant in her life, whether in her role as a senator, mother, or as President of YWCA Victoria.

Janet was the Federal Parliamentary Leader of the Australian Democrats 1990-91.

Janet was a founding member of the Post-Polio Foundation and she did much in the community and in parliament to raise awareness of the later effects of polio.

On the 1st of October 2013, Janet lost her battle with cancer at the age of 71.

We have much to thank her for.

Read more [here](#).

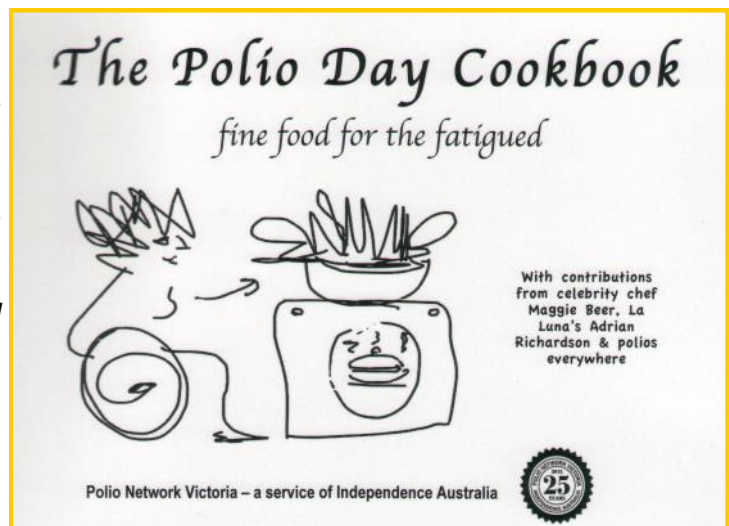


## “The Polio Day Cookbook fine food for the fatigued”

The latest literary contribution by Fran Henke was launched at Polio Network Victoria’s Polio Day on Saturday 26th October at The Pier in Geelong.

“The Polio Day Cookbook: fine food for the fatigued” is a delightful collection of recipes and tips from a wide range of sources, and compiled and illustrated by Fran Henke “in recognition of new needs for nutrition and cooking skills.”

Copies can be purchased for \$15.00 by contacting [Jen Sykes](#) at Independence Australia on Ph: 03 9418 0452.



## ***“It’s Not About The Polio” Website***

**by Chris Gilbert**

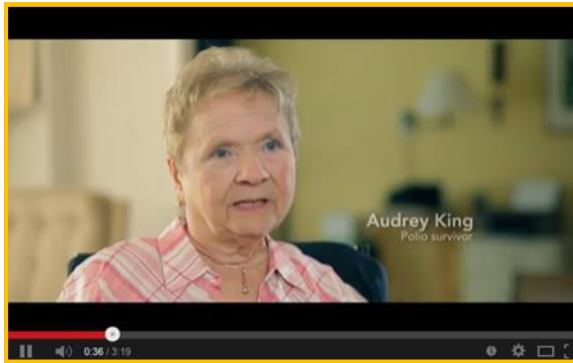
I thought I would set up this site because one era is ending and another is beginning. My era, as a polio survivor from the 1951 epidemic, is drawing to a close as I enter my final, sunset years, complete with declining health and PPS. The new era is a less personal, more public one – the era of (at least in Australia) the NDIS, or National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is just getting underway, is not yet fully operational nationwide, but it has the promise of revolutionising life for the disabled in this country in a way unheard of during my earlier years of coping with life as a polio survivor. As the poet once wrote, "the old order changeth, yielding place to new". At these sorts of moments in history, people sometimes feel a need to set down their memories and experiences, to tell the world what it was like in the old days before things changed for ever and those memories lost.



So it is with me. No one quite knows how the NDIS will pan out. Both sides of the political divide say they are fully committed to it. However, with government finances generally on a knife-edge, it remains to be seen whether bipartisan political commitment is backed up with the necessary dollars. My personal feeling is that the pent-up demand for NDIS services will be so great, that governments may be forced to cut back on financial commitments to the scheme. If that happens, many disabled people may find at least some of the liberating potential of the NDIS turning to bitter ashes. I hope I am wrong; I often am about these things. However, as a former would-be politician from many years ago, I am cautious – perhaps cynical – about the trustworthiness of governments.

Read more about Chris on his website here: [www.itsnotaboutthepolio.com](http://www.itsnotaboutthepolio.com)

## **The ‘Then and Now’ of Life With Polio**



Sanofi-pasteur, the world's largest polio vaccine producer is celebrating its 100th birthday by producing some [YouTube videos](#) of polio and other diseases.

Canada’s Audrey King sent this link to the ‘then and now’ of life with polio.

Audrey spent two years in the hospital with polio when she was a child in the 1950s. She shares her story and her hopes for polio eradication.

The videos contain photos of the Uffington White Horse and the British iron lung Audrey was in in.

## **National Disability Insurance Scheme Has Priced Some Services 'much too low'**

**by [Bridie Jabour](#)**

**Source:** [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) - 30 September 2013

**Chief executive says service providers will not be financially sustainable if the budgeted rates are not increased.**

The Minister for Social Services says he will talk to participants and providers before the insurance scheme is rolled out.

Parts of the National Disability Insurance Scheme have been priced too low and will have to be significantly increased when the scheme is rolled out across the country.

The federal government has budgeted about \$35m over the 2013-14 financial year to roll out the insurance scheme in specific launch sites in New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria.

Pricing for the services provided were released in June but the Chief Executive of National Disability Services, Ken Baker, said one of the major issues had been that the National Disability Insurance Agency had undervalued some of the services.

*"The agency released different prices for different types of support and some prices, in particular, for one-on-one support are just much too low," he said. "Service providers just couldn't be financially sustainable if those prices continue. I think they were put together fairly hastily and they were designed to reflect market conditions in each of the different launch sites, so they vary across locations."*

Read full article [here](#).

## Back to the NDIS Future

Source: [ProBono Australia](#) - 25 September 2013

DisabilityCare Australia has now officially reverted to the original name of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) under the new Coalition Government - a move welcomed by the Not for Profit sector.

*"Going forward, the Agency will be known as the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA),"* the CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency David Bowen confirmed.

The President of not for profit organisation People With Disability Australia, Craig Wallace, has welcomed the move to revert to the NDIS saying the name should never have been changed in the first place.

*"DisabilityCare was widely disliked by people with disability as it reflected an attitude that those people who would benefit from the scheme were passive rather than taking control of their future,"* Wallace said.

Read more [here](#).

## Disability Reform Is Enough To Keep Any Minister Busy

by ABC's Stella Young

Source: [The Drum](#) - 19 September 2013

*Given Australia's lacklustre record on disability reform and the number of people relying on improvement, let's hope we don't rue the abolition of a dedicated minister for this portfolio, writes Stella Young.*

Awaiting the announcement of Prime Minister Tony Abbott's new Cabinet appointments earlier this week, there was one question on my mind: Would Senator Mitch Fifield be our new minister for disability reform?

I was hopeful. In his role as shadow minister for disabilities, carers and the voluntary sector, Fifield was a tireless champion for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Furthermore, he understands that disability reform isn't just about the NDIS; it's about education, employment, infrastructure and inclusion in all aspects of Australian life.

There couldn't be a better appointment for the Disability Reform portfolio. (Well, I suppose there could be a cabinet minister who actually has lived experience of disability, but this is Australia where education and employment opportunities for people with disability are few and far between, so that's pretty unlikely to happen soon.)

So it came as a bit of a surprise to hear Fifield named not as Minister for Disability Reform, but Assistant Minister for the new portfolio of Social Services. This new brief will be overseen by Kevin Andrews and will encompass aged care, disability, housing, all income support payments and pensions, services for migrants and refugees, as well as multicultural affairs.

Furthermore, the Abbott Government will [disband](#) the social inclusion board, established under the former government to look at the causes and effects of entrenched disadvantage.

Read full article [here](#).

## Fifield In Position To Act For Disability

by Dr George Taleporos

Source: ABC Ramp Up - 23 September 2013

Last week, Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced Senator Mitch Fifield as the Assistant Minister responsible for disability and carers in his new ministry. Dr George Taleporos spoke with the man who is tasked with fulfilling the Coalition's promise to fully implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme and advancing the opportunities of people with disabilities.

Read more [here](#).

## National Disability Insurance Scheme News

Source: NDIS Website

Can't get enough of the NDIS? Keep up-to-date with all the latest NDIS News by subscribing here: [www.ndis.gov.au/news/latest-updates](http://www.ndis.gov.au/news/latest-updates)



## Polio This Week

Source: [Polio Global Eradication Initiative](#) - as of Wednesday 6 November 2013

Total cases	Year-to-date 2013	Year-to-date 2012	Total in 2012
Globally	328	181	223
- in endemic countries	116	176	217
- in non-endemic countries	212	5	6

### Case breakdown by country

Countries	Year-to-date 2013				Year-to-date 2012				Total in 2012	Date of most recent case
	WPV1	WPV3	W1W3	Total	WPV1	WPV3	W1W3	Total		
Nigeria	51			51	83	18		101	122	8-Oct-13
Pakistan	56			56	45	2	1	48	58	14-Oct-13
Afghanistan	9			9	27			27	37	27-Sep-13
Ethiopia	7			7						19-Sep-13
Cameroon	1			1					0	1-Oct-13
Somalia	180			180					0	30-Sep-13
Syrian Arab Republic	10			10					0	4-Oct-13
Kenya	14			14					0	14-Jul-13
Niger									1	15-Nov-12
Chad					5			5	5	14-Jun-12
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>223</b>	
<b>Total in endemic countries</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>217</b>	
<b>Total outbreak</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	

Data in WHO as of 7 November 2012 for 2012 data and 6 November 2013 for 2013 data.

Following confirmation of polio in Syria, health ministers of the Eastern Mediterranean declared the circulation of poliovirus in the Region an 'emergency' for all Member States at its Regional Committee meeting in Oman last week. It called on Pakistan to take necessary steps to ensure all children were accessed and vaccinated as a matter of utmost emergency to prevent further international spread and requested Syria and adjoining countries to coordinate intensified mass vaccination campaigns using the most appropriate tactics and vaccines to interrupt this new outbreak within six months. For more on the Regional Committee meeting click [here](#).



## Syria Polio Outbreak 'Spreads'

Source: BBC News - 25 October 2013



At least 22 people - most of them babies and toddlers - are now believed to have contracted polio in Syria, the World Health Organization has reported. If confirmed, it would be the first outbreak of the disease there in 14 years.

Before Syria's civil war began in 2011, some 95% of children were vaccinated against the disease. Now, Unicef estimates 500,000 children have not been immunised.

People are flooding across borders in an uncontrolled manner and this increase the possibilities and means by which the virus can spread.

The WHO is now working with the UN, Syria's Health Ministry and other agencies on a mass immunisation programme. But it is expected to be a difficult undertaking, says the BBC's Imogen Foulkes in Geneva, given the widespread insecurity and estimates that over half of Syria's medical professionals have left the country.

More than four million Syrians have been displaced internally by the conflict and generally live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions. The WHO has already reported increases in cases of measles, typhoid and hepatitis A.

Aid agencies are also developing emergency immunisation plans for Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt.

Read full article [here](#).

## Authorities Try to Track Source of Mysterious Polio Virus in Tampere

Source: YLE (Finland) - 2.11.2013

Authorities are puzzled by the origin of a polio virus detected in the [Tampere](#) sewage system. They are particularly baffled by the fact that the unknown carrier seems to have all three types of the polio virus.

The virus was first detected in the Tampere sewage system back in December 2008 and has been showing up in the waste system ever since. Since then they have been unable to identify the source of the virus.

This year the virus showed up again in the Tampere waste system, where more than 70 polio virus populations were identified, all of them apparently originating from a vaccine.

The individuals from whom the virus spread into the sewage system are probably unaware that they may be hosting the virus without displaying any symptoms of infection.

Read full article [here](#).

## India Admits 57 Children 'given wrong vaccine'

Source: AFP – 16 September 2013

KOLKATA — Almost 60 children were taken to hospital in eastern India after they were mistakenly instructed to swallow a hepatitis B vaccine instead of polio drops, officials said Monday.

The children started vomiting and sweating after they were orally given hepatitis B vaccine, which is normally injected, at clinics in a village in West Bengal state on Sunday, the health officials said.

Some 120 children in total swallowed the medication at the clinics, set up to administer polio vaccine drops as part of a campaign to eradicate the disease, before health workers discovered the mistake, said Biswaranjan Sathpaty, director of West Bengal Health Services.

Doctors and officials were quoted by local media as saying the hepatitis B vaccine would not cause any long-term harm, but the mishap could deter parents from allowing their children to be vaccinated in future.

Read full article [here](#).

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

- ◆ If you are not the original recipient of this e-Bulletin and would like to receive it directly in future, please email us [here](#).
- ◆ If you do not wish to receive any further communication from Polio Australia, please email us [here](#).

PO Box 500 Kew East Vic 3102 ◆ Suite 119C, 89 High Street Kew Vic 3101

Telephone: (03) 9016 7678 ◆ Mobile: 0466 718 222

E-mail: [office@polioaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@polioaustralia.org.au) ◆ Website: [www.polioaustralia.org.au](http://www.polioaustralia.org.au)

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