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# ANNUAL REPORT

**Polio Australia Incorporated**

Gillian Thomas OAM – President

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**Polio Australia**  
*Representing polio survivors throughout Australia*

**July 2021 – June 2022**

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# About Our Organisation

## Our Mission

Polio Australia is committed to standardising quality polio information and service provision across Australia for polio survivors.

## Our Vision

Polio Australia's Vision is that all polio survivors in Australia have access to appropriate health care and the support required to maintain independence and make informed life choices.

## Our Values

Polio Australia represents the needs of the post-polio community and works with passion and professionalism to educate, advocate and achieve recognition for polio survivors.

## Our Purpose

- Educate and inform polio survivors, their families and carers, and the community at large about the late effects of polio.
- Provide information, education and training to General Practitioners and a range of medical specialists and other health professionals to improve the diagnosis and management of the late effects of polio.
- Facilitate the provision of appropriate and consistent health, disability and aged care support services across all states and territories to improve the treatment and management of the late effects of polio.
- Provide outreach to culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander polio survivors to ensure their diverse needs are being met in a culturally appropriate way.
- Advise governments on policy development and programs in relation to the late effects of polio.
- Stimulate research into the late effects of polio.
- Assist the state Networks to support polio survivors and their families, friends and carers at the local level.
- Facilitate and encourage the co-ordination and further development of activities within and between the state Networks.
- Support and promote polio immunisation at a national level, and provide assistance to the state Networks to do so at the local level.



**Gillian Thomas OAM**

## President's Report

In 2021, Polio Australia's work continued to be impacted by Covid-19, resulting in fewer face-to-face educational activities than our Team's 3 Year Strategic Plan had laid out. Having said that, Michael Jackson (Clinical Educator), Steph Cantrill (Community Programs Manager), and Paulette Jackson (Administration Officer), found innovative ways of providing services to Australia's polio survivors.

Working from home, the Team delivered monthly Zoom meetings on topics including NDIS and My Aged Care for polio survivors, and Clinical Practice Webinars for health professionals. Michael also instigated the development and distribution of Post-Polio Hospital Kits, which will be distributed to 200 hospitals across Australia in June this year.

As I have been in the unavoidable position of needing to stay in a care facility since early December 2021, I am keen to see an uptake in a free Aged Care eLearning Course, also developed by Michael. I gave it a test run myself and believe that anything that can help personal care workers learn more about the needs and personalities of polio survivors, the better our future will be.

We were very fortunate to secure Department of Health funding for Steph's program, enabling us to employ Devalina Bhattacharjee, who commenced in the role of Community Development Worker on the 31st of January 2022. Regrettably, Steph decided to leave Polio Australia in April 2022 to take up another opportunity. We were very sorry to lose Steph, but grateful for the solid foundation she had built for our Community Programs. This, together with (previous incumbent) Maryann Liethof's considerable community experience and mentoring, helped ameliorate Devalina's resultant steep learning curve.

Prior to the Federal election on the 21st May 2022, and following a year of uncertainty, we were finally advised that the Department of Health would not be renewing grant funding for Michael's Clinical Practice Workshop program. These Workshops have been a vital service provided by Polio Australia, which have benefitted untold polio survivors since 2017 as a result of better-informed health professionals. Needless to say, we have been actively lobbying the relevant incoming Health and Aged Care Ministers, but they are still settling in, and it does take time to form new relationships. *(continued on next page)*

## *President's Report Continued...*

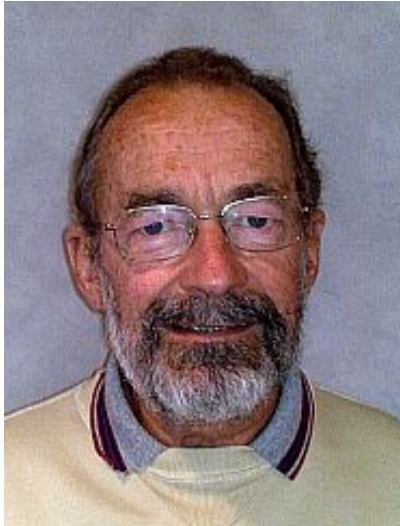
Following an emergency meeting held 4th June 2022, the Board resolved that "In the absence of an extension of funding from the Federal Department of Health for the Clinical Practice Workshop program, Polio Australia will fund the program until 31st December 2022." This funding will come from accumulated donations, a variable and finite resource.

In February 2022, we were very saddened to learn of Neil Balnaves' untimely death. Neil was a polio survivor and a great friend to Polio Australia. Through his charitable Foundation, Neil provided funding to enable us to employ our National Program Manager from 2011-2013. This seed funding enabled us to establish the strong organisation that Polio Australia has become today. Neil's contribution has been an enduring legacy to polio survivors across Australia.

At the 2021 AGM, Alan Cameron was re-elected as Treasurer, while the AGM also saw the resignation of Ross Duncan from Spinal Life Australia (Qld). Polio SA's new President, Andrew (Kyp) Kyprianou, joined the Board as Helen Leach and Nik Surikov stepped down.



*Michael speaking at our Living Well After Polio Conference in Cairns in June*



# Treasurer's Financial Report

Financial Year 2021 – 2022 has resulted in a nett loss of \$86,190 compared to a profit in the previous period of \$199,377. However, it is important that the Board sees these results in context and not purely in the light of the regulatory reporting.

## *Alan Cameron*

The first item to take into consideration is the Perpetual Fund grant of \$91,485.00 which is recorded in the previous period. This was destined to support the Community Engagement program that did not commence until late into that financial year. Had it been recorded that way we would have seen a small profit rather than the loss shown in the statutory accounts.

The second point of note relates to the reduction in donations from \$94,431 to \$29,596. This was almost solely because Jill Pickering, who has been just such a fabulous supporter of Polio Australia for many years, was no longer able to continue donating further. This resulted in a loss of \$60,000 from last year to this. However, that was an entirely understood situation which had been planned for prior to this FY.

The third, and single largest variance, was the reduction from \$110,850 and \$22,586 from JobKeeper and Cash Boost in 2020-2021 to \$0.00 this year. Again, a well understood change and an event planned around in advance.

The result of these three changes was a halving of revenue from \$500,480 to \$257,101.

Looking now at expenditure you will note there has been a significant reduction in administration costs resulting in savings of approximately \$24,000, and increases from \$61,512 to \$79,379 as the Community Engagement program was ramped up over the period.

Subsequent periods will see the full payment by the Federal Government of the Community Engagement program compared with only \$22,000 being taken up in this period, which with all things equal would see us operating at close to breakeven. Unfortunately, it must be noted that the funding for the Clinical Practice Workshops ceased immediately after the close of the financial year, turning some of the assumptions made above no longer valid. The actions that are being taken since the end of the FY are reported elsewhere.



# Clinical Practice Workshop Program Report

## 2021-2022 WORKSHOPS

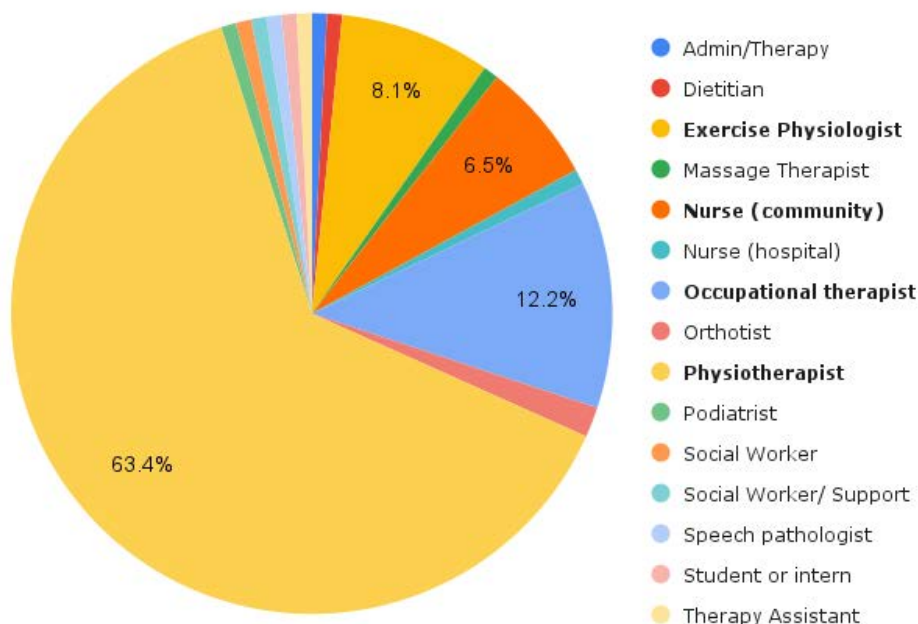
This financial year has seen the CPWs rebound from the most limiting period of the pandemic. With borders reopening, travel becoming more reliable and with minimal interruptions from lockdowns, hospitals and clinics across most regions had increased confidence in receiving external professional education.

**Michael Jackson**

During this period, we reached 366 professionals through 27 in-person and 10 online workshops. State reach and attendee profession is shown below:

2021-22	Workshops	Attendees
QLD	7	79
NSW/ACT	5	45
VIC	6	98
TAS	0	0
SA	7	68
NT	0	0
WA	1	7
ONLINE	10	69

## CPW Attending Professional Types - 2021-2022 FY



(continued on next page)

## *Clinical Practice Workshop Report Continued...*

We were able to reach university health students at the University of Queensland, La Trobe University, and James Cook University with our workshops this year.

### **HOSPITAL KITS**

At the conclusion of this financial year we sent out 200 Hospital Kits to key hospitals (large, teaching, regional and/or rehabilitation) around Australia. The 2022 half of the period was the period of revising, printing, collating and preparing the kits. This also included a thorough revision of the Polio Australia's decade old orange manual Late Effects of Polio: Introduction to Clinical Practice.

### **AGED CARE E-LEARNING COURSE**

This platform has served for four months as the basis for the delivery of LEOp education to Aged Care workers to the end of June 2022. Eighteen aged care workers from a mix of states and backgrounds completed the course in this period.

The development, rollout, uptake and feedback of this course, and the trends forecast in professional education sector worldwide, suggest that this mode of delivery should be an integral part of our education (i.e. developed for other professional audiences).

### **AIHW DATA MINING**

This project serves to improve the accuracy of estimates of the number of polio survivors across Australia, better identify the use of hospitals by this population, and act as a comparison on similar metrics to several select chronic progressive health conditions.

This data mining project is expected to add detail to our argument – and program justification – for continued, widespread, multidisciplinary professional education on post-polio conditions to better serve the polio survivors in Australia.

During 2022 the AIHW gathered our requested data on the hospital admissions of Australian polio survivors over the last decade. (The data was provided in the new financial year period.)

### **OTHER ACTIVITY**

At the Sydney GPCE we hosted a booth to reach NSW GPs, we attended the Digital Health Festival, and presented at the IAGG, RMSANZ, AGG, and Pedorthics conferences.

We had an article on LEOp published in Medicus (AMA-WA), assisted with the development of the LEOp pathway now on HealthPathways Tasmania, and contributed to an article for ABC Illawarra. *(continued on next page)*

## Clinical Practice Workshop Report Continued...

With our research group based in South Australia we have been piecing together how a telehealth model clinic for polio survivors may operate in order to improve access to post-polio clinics and well-informed clinicians.

### PROGRAM STATUS

Our program was relatively young when the pandemic started – only having been in operation since October 2017 (2.5 years). Prior to the pandemic we were still gaining momentum, reaching one target – that of 14 attendees average per workshop in 2019–2020 financial year.

YEAR	WORKSHOPS DELIVERED	WORKSHOP ATTENDEES	AVERAGE ATTENDEES
OCT 2017 – JUN 2018	33	420	12
JUL 2018 – JUN 2019	36	432	12
JUL 2019 – JUN 2020	29	450	15
JUL 2020 – JUN 2021	22	131	6
JUL 2021 – JUN 2022	37	366	9
<i>Totals:</i>	<i>157</i>	<i>1899</i>	<i>10</i>

It is important to note that in the last 12 months we have delivered the highest number of workshops in a financial year than we have in any previous year; it is attendance which needs to grow further.

This program has reached the end of a three-year funding period by the Department of Health (July 2019–June 2022). The program is being caretaken by Polio Australia while further funding is pursued to support another three-five year period.

### PROJECTIONS

The new financial year brings uncertainty for the program; this based on obtaining sufficient funding to extend the program for a third cycle. However, the program is not short of ongoing and planned projects, scheduled workshops, and resources needing to be developed.

Trends towards more flexible modes of education are recognised across the professional education sector, this needs consideration within this program moving forward (i.e. akin to the Aged Care eLearning course).

With the recent funding of Polio Australia's Community Information Session (CIS) Program, broader opportunities present to cooperatively reach audiences in unison.



*Devalina Bhattacharjee*

# Community Programs Report

Community Programs have continued as a mix of virtual and in-person sessions this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 threat. While this isn't ideal, it has been a great opportunity to reach some people who might not have been able to attend in-person sessions and to connect the polio community across not just Australia, but the world at large.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There were 28 community sessions conducted on Zoom during this period:

- 12 general chats, open to anyone
- 4 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) chats, for those in or eligible for the NDIS to share and learn from each other
- 4 My Aged Care chats, for those in or eligible for My Aged Care to share and learn from each other
- 8 Webinars for which we had guest speakers, in all but three

Webinar topics during this period included:

- Information for Carers with Merri Health and Carer Gateway
- Managing Post-Polio Pain with Dr. Stephen De Graaff
- Staying Clear and Strong with Liz Telford
- Smart Home Technology with Assistive Technology Australia
- Problem-Solving Assistive Technology with Solve-TAD
- Backstage Pass hosted by Michael Jackson and Steph Cantrill
- Late Effects of Polio overview, conducted by Steph Cantrill
- Follow Up on SA Community Information Sessions hosted by me

Five in-person Late Effects of Polio overview community information sessions were conducted cumulatively within this period in the states of SA and NSW.

Our much-anticipated *Living Well After Polio Conference* was hosted in collaboration with Spinal Life Australia in Cairns. The topics of the lectures included: Anaesthesia, Sleep and Bone Mineral Density by Dr. Peter Nolan and Dr. Timothy Nolan; Living Well by Dr. Natasha Layton; Exercise by Michael Jackson; and Presentation on new assistive devices by Aida Care. *(continued on next page)*

## Community Programs Report Continued...

### AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

I have replaced Steph Cantrill as Polio Australia's representative on the Assistive Technology for All Alliance (ATFA) and Neurological Alliance of Australia (NAA) alliances.

Submissions and causes that we completed and supported during this reporting period include:

- Attendance at the Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia (ATSA) Independent Living Expo
- Fatigue Management in Post-Polio Syndrome, a guest blog post that was in collaboration with Lynn Tullock, the Clinical Development Manager and Senior Neurological Physiotherapist at Advance Rehab Centre, and Anne Biddlecombe, who is the Senior Occupational Therapist at Advance Rehab Centre
- I was in attendance at the consultation forum the Department of Health had hosted for supporters of COTA Victoria's Assistive Technology for All campaign
- I also attended the GPCE in Sydney and the Digital Health Festival in Melbourne

### STATE NETWORK LIAISON

Polio Australia conducted in-person information sessions in Adelaide and regional SA in collaboration with Polio SA. Sessions were also conducted in regional NSW in collaboration with Polio NSW.



*Devalina speaking at our Living Well After Polio Conference in Cairns in June*



**Paulette Jackson**

# Administrative Report

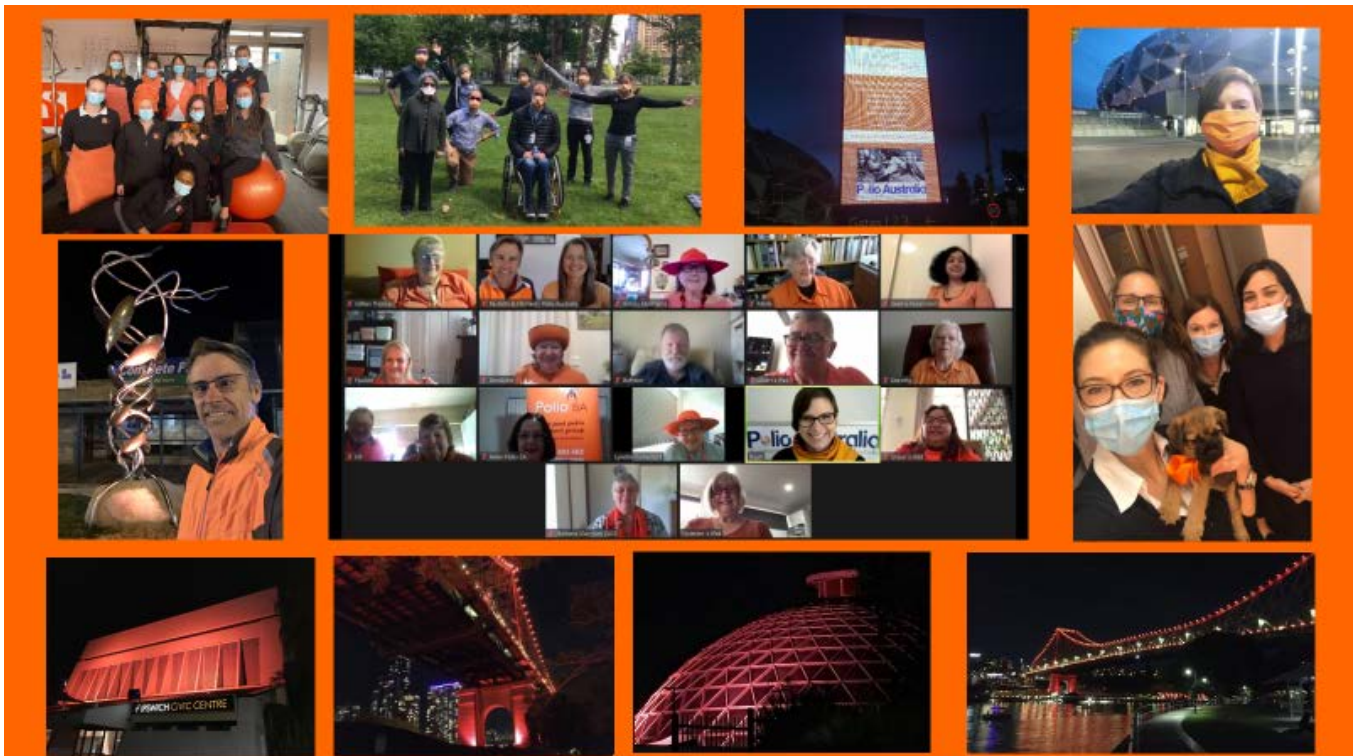
## **POLIO AWARENESS MONTH**

The 2021 theme for Polio Awareness Month was "We're Still Here". Our theme focused on raising awareness for polio survivors living in Australia. One way to raise awareness was through our lighting campaign. We held a contest where we asked polio survivors to contact their local council and ask for landmarks to be illuminated orange. Those who were successful were entered into a drawing for a prize.

Throughout Australia, we illuminated 19 landmarks and 13 tram stops orange throughout the month of October. Bunnings sponsored gift cards for winners and we had four \$50 winners.

In addition to lighting up cities throughout Australia orange, we distributed orange Polio Australia face masks and arranged a day for polio survivors and health professionals to wear orange to increase awareness.

We also celebrated World Polio Day through events with Global Citizen and Rotary District 9780. *(continued on next page)*



## Administrative Report Continued...

### CLINICAL PRACTICE WORKSHOP (CPW) SUPPORT

This 2021-2022 financial year, I have supported the Clinical Educator by:

- Booking, promoting, and providing external outreach/communication for CPW sessions
- Acting as online moderator for Monthly Zoom CPW sessions
- Follow-up emails for CPW sessions with clinical resources and professional development certificates
- Updating the CPW session list and statistics on the Polio Health website
- Ensuring contact information is uploaded into Salesforce for CPW participants and new Health Professional Register (HPR) entries
- Maintaining the HPR
- Assisting with the development of the Aged Care Course and created promotional material
- Sending monthly email reminders to Aged Care Course participants
- Assisting with biannual email updates to past CPW participants
- AOPA and ESSA applications submitted for workshop reindorsement
- Creating advertisements and submitting applications for CPW sessions to be promoted in professional magazines (see example below)
- Assisted with putting together the Hospital Kits
  - Review of resources (books, documents, and factsheets)
  - Creating the kits and assisting with mailing campaign
- Assisted with the review and update of the *Late Effects of Polio: Introduction to Clinical Practice (second edition)*
- Distributing medical alert cards and *Late Effects of Polio: Introduction to Clinical Practice* to the State Networks
- Mailing/emailing *Managing Muscles and Mobility* book orders



**Are you screening for a history of polio?**

- Multi-disciplinary FREE Professional Education + CPD Credit
- Polio Survivors and Their Health Conditions Workshop
- Endorsed by ANMF, AOPA, APNA, ESSA
- Delivered in person or via Zoom

Reduce clinical errors - screen for polio exposure and post-polio risk factors

 **Polio Australia**  
Improving health outcomes for Australia's polio survivors

  
[bit.ly/LEoPworkshops](https://bit.ly/LEoPworkshops)

## Administrative Report Continued...

### GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

As Administrative Officer, I also have 5 hours per week allocated for general administrative support. These responsibilities include:

- Recording meeting minutes and updating the Strategic Plan reporting tool
- Creating the organisational chart for the Board
- Putting together this and the previous Annual Report
- General management of all Polio Australia websites:
  - Updating the Community Information Sessions (CIS) webpage
  - Updating the Polio Australia brochure and fact sheets
  - Updating the Board and Staff photos
  - Publishing blog entries
  - Uploading journal articles onto our research webpage
  - Adding polio survivor stories to the Still Here website
  - Managing the Australian Polio Register website by:
    - Activating new entries and merging duplicates
    - Sending welcome emails with resources to new polio survivors
    - Reconciling 1200 pending entries
- Supporting the Community Development Worker
  - Salesforce database
  - Email outreach campaigns
  - Website management for CIS
- Social media support
  - Posting to Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
  - Created Facebook Birthday Fundraiser campaign and promotion
  - Uploaded videos to YouTube
- Participating on the Polio Awareness Month committee
- Submitting Polio Oz News articles as well as blog entries
- Assisting at the *Living Well After Polio Conference* in Cairns (general support and photography)
- Creating email templates and sending out various email campaigns:
  - Polio Oz News
  - EOFY campaign
  - General emails
  - Polio Awareness Month promotion
  - CIS emails to local survivors about upcoming events
  - Birthday emails
- Sending donor thank you cards, EOFY thank you cards, and holiday cards
- Managing holiday card sales

# Strategic Plan

Polio Australia's Strategic Plan includes five priorities. Under these priorities, a total of 26 targets were set for 2021-2022 (see table below).

The Polio Australia Team met 17 of the 26 targets across priorities. This demonstrates the suitability and achievability of the established targets. Well done team.

The nine targets not achieved for this financial year included:

- **Priority 1, Target 1** – not met due to March and May's sessions having no attendees.
- **Priority 1, Target 3 and Priority 4, Target 4** – not met due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions placed on travel.
- **Priority 2, Target 5** – not met due to COVID-19 restrictions, as well as priority placed on obtaining CIS Program funding and filling the Community Development Worker position.
- **Priority 3, Target 3** – not met due to existing projects being time intensive and new projects were not being initiated.
- **Priority 5, Target 3** – not met as the team overestimated the target for sponsorship of events especially with COVID restrictions.
- **Priority 5, Target 6** – not met, still lobbying for funding.
- **Priority 5, Target 7** – not met due to capacity limitation to offload administrative tasks to organise, plan and attend educational sessions.
- **Priority 5, Target 8** – not met as no working group established due to other tasks taking priority.

Priority 1: Education of health professionals	
1. Host 12 online professional education events	Not Met
2. Linkages with 12 health organisations	Met
3. Linkages with 800 health professionals	Not Met
4. Rating greater than 4 out of 5 for quality of CPW delivery	Met
Priority 2: Education of polio survivors	
1. Add 4 posts per week on Facebook	Met
2. Add 2 posts per week on either Twitter or LinkedIn	Met
3. Add 1 new video per month to You Tube	Met
4. Add 30 new polio survivors to Salesforce database	Met
5. Conduct 20 outreach activities	Not Met
6. Engage with 150 polio survivors and family members	Met
Priority 3: Partnerships	
1. Send 1 'Behind the Scenes' on odd numbered months	Met
2. Two joint grant application with State Network during period	Met
3. Linkages with 1 new organisation per month	Not Met
4. Engage volunteers in programs and resource development	Met
Priority 4: Advocacy	
1. Communicate with key lobbying contacts once per two months	Met
2. Publish 2 advocacy position statements	Met
3. Attend 10 or more alliance meetings	Met
4. Meet with MPs in Canberra	Not Met
Priority 5: Future-proofing	
1. Secure ongoing funding for Community Programs	Met
2. Market Entertainment Book on social media 4x per year	Met
3. Seek out corporate sponsorship for events/activities/support	Not Met
4. Apply for at least 3 grants during period	Met
5. Two donation request and one bequest request	Met
6. Secure ongoing funding for CPW Program	Not Met
7. Upskill staff through provision of professional development	Not Met
8. Fundraising strategies	Not Met

# A Special Thank You To Our Donors Sponsors and Grant Organisations



We would like to thank our donors, sponsors and grant organisations. We appreciate your support. Our programs would not exist without your generosity.

## **Major Donors:**

- Ann Crawford
- Dr John and Pam Tierney
- Graeme and Joan Smith
- M A Knowlden
- Margery Kennett
- Merle Ball
- MJB Evans
- River Birch Foundation

## **Monthly Donors:**

- Gillian Thomas
- Jill Burn
- Liz Telford
- Maryann Liethof

## **Major Sponsorships and Grants:**

- Federal Department of Health – Clinical Practice Workshop Program
- Federal Department of Health – Community Programs
- Perpetual IMPACT Grant
- Rotary District 9780 World Polio Day Event
  - Donations from representatives of 13 different Rotary Clubs
- Rotary Club of Geelong East
- Rotary Club of New Farm
- Rotary Club of Thuringowa Central

# The Polio Australia Team



**Gillian Thomas OAM**  
President & Business Manager



**Devalina Bhattacharjee**  
Community Development  
Worker



**Michael Jackson**  
Clinical Health Educator



**Paulette Jackson**  
Administrative Officer



**Shylie Little**  
Finance Officer



**Michael Lynch AO CBE**  
National Patron



**Maryann Liethof CF**  
Volunteer Editor, Polio Oz News



**Steph Cantrill**  
Community Programs Manager

# Polio Australia Board Members



**Gillian Thomas OAM**  
President

Representing NSW and ACT polio survivors through Polio NSW



**Gary Newton**  
Vice President

Independent, rather than State representative, Board Member



**Maryann Liethof CF**  
Secretary

Independent, rather than State representative, Board Member



**Alan Cameron**  
Treasurer

Representing NSW and ACT polio survivors through Polio NSW



**Arthur Dobson**  
Board Member

Representing Tasmanian polio survivors



**Ross Duncan**  
Board Member

Representing Qld polio survivors through Spinal Life Australia



**Peter Freckleton**  
Board Member

Representing Vic polio survivors through Post Polio Victoria



**Robyn Grote**  
Board Member

Representing Qld polio survivors through Spinal Life Australia



**Ian Holding**  
Board Member

Representing WA polio survivors through Polio WA



**Jenny Jones**  
Board Member

Representing WA polio survivors through Polio WA



**Andrew Kyprianou**  
Board Member

Representing SA polio survivors through Polio SA



**Sue Mackenzie**  
Board Member

Independent, rather than State representative, Board Member



**Billie Thow**  
Board Member

Representing Tasmanian polio survivors



**Bev Watson**  
Board Member

Representing Vic polio survivors through Polio Network Victoria



**Peter Wierenga**  
Board Member

Representing SA polio survivors through Polio SA



**Noel Will**  
Board Member

Independent, rather than State representative, Board Member

# Polio Australia's Australasian Clinical Advisory Group



**Professor Robert Booy**  
Infectious Disease  
Specialist  
NSW, Australia



**Ann Buchan OAM**  
Neurological Physiotherapist  
(retired)  
SA, Australia



**Yvonne Cohen**  
Speech Pathologist  
VIC, Australia



**Professor William Cumming AM**  
Orthopaedic Surgeon  
NSW, Australia



**Denise Currie**  
Coordinator,  
Polio Services Victoria  
VIC, Australia



**Dr Melissa Day**  
Clinical / Health  
Psychologist  
QLD, Australia



**Dr Stephen de Graaf**  
Rehabilitation Physician  
VIC, Australia



**Lillian Drummond**  
Physiotherapist  
New Zealand



**Anne Duncan**  
Clinical Nurse Consultant  
VIC, Australia



**Gordon Jackman**  
CEO - Duncan Foundation  
New Zealand



**Dr Natasha Layton**  
Occupational Therapist  
VIC, Australia



**William Levack**  
Associate Professor of Rehabilitation and  
Academic Head of the Rehabilitation  
Teaching and Research Unit  
New Zealand



**Melissa McConaghy**  
Neurological Physiotherapist  
NSW, Australia



**Dr Graham McGeoch**  
General Practitioner  
New Zealand



**Dr Peter Nolan**  
General Physician  
QLD, Australia



**Melinda Overall**  
Nutritionist  
NSW, Australia



**Dr Gareth Parry**  
Neurologist  
New Zealand



**Dr Nigel Quadros**  
Rehabilitation Physician  
SA, Australia



# Polio Australia

*Representing polio survivors throughout Australia*

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[www.stillhere.org.au](http://www.stillhere.org.au)  
[www.australianpolioregister.org.au](http://www.australianpolioregister.org.au)

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