

# Polio Australia

*Representing polio survivors throughout Australia*

## PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

## 2026-2027

Proposal by:

**Polio Australia Inc**

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## About Polio Australia

Polio Australia is dedicated to supporting those affected by polio living in Australia. Our mission is to ensure that all polio survivors have access to appropriate health care and the support required to maintain independence and make informed lifestyle choices.

## Executive Summary

Polio Australia seeks funding in the 2026-2027 federal budget to enhance support for polio survivors' health and care quality across Australia. Our proposals aim to improve post-polio health outcomes, increase societal and clinical awareness of post-polio conditions, and ensure the sustainability of condition-specific services for the polio community.

# Recommendations

To advance our mission, Polio Australia seeks funding support to implement programs and staffing that will enhance our operational capacity, expand stakeholder education, advance post-polio care, and ensure that critical resources remain up to date and widely accessible.

Our proposed initiatives include establishing a National Post-Polio Register to strengthen epidemiological understanding; employing key staff to enhance organisational capacity, clinical leadership, and public health engagement; and undertaking a Digital Twin scoping and feasibility study to explore innovative, data-informed approaches to post-polio management. We also seek to deliver a national awareness and education campaign, develop discipline-specific eLearning modules for healthcare professionals, redesign our primary websites to improve accessibility and information delivery, and review and republish our clinical education manual to ensure best-practice guidance remains current.

These investments will enable Polio Australia to continue providing essential advocacy, education, and support for polio survivors across the country.

- 1 - National Awareness and Education Campaign
- 2 - Employment of Key Staff to Enhance Operational Capacity
- 3 - Digital Twin Scoping and Feasibility Study
- 4 - Establish a National Post-Polio Register
- 5 - Develop Discipline-Specific eLearning Modules for Clinicians
- 6 - Redesign and Development of Polio Australia's Websites
- 7 - Review, Update and Republishing of the Clinical Education Manual

## 1 - National Awareness and Education Campaign

- **Proposal:** Launch a campaign to raise awareness about the needs of those living with post-polio and alert medical and health professionals to post-polio health presentations.
- **Rationale:** Increased awareness will lead to better diagnosis, treatment, and support for known and unidentified people affected by polio, and reduce long-term healthcare costs.
- **Funding Required:** \$321,195 over 2 years.
- **Funding Utilisation:** Two annual \$70,000 media campaigns and employment of a part time media and communications specialist (inclusive of salary and on-costs) to implement the campaigns for Polio Australia.

## 2 - Employment of Key Staff to Enhance Operational Capacity

- **Proposal:** Employ three full-time staff members to ensure Polio Australia's operational capacity can deliver essential programs, projects, and advocacy efforts.
- **Rationale:** Polio Australia is a small but highly active organisation that requires staffing to sustain and expand its operations. An Administrative Officer will manage day-to-day operations, stakeholder engagement, and sector communications. A Clinical Educator and Programs Lead will advance post-polio-specific clinical expertise and deliver education programs to healthcare professionals and stakeholders. A Public Health Engagement Facilitator will lead population education initiatives, community engagement and advocacy efforts, and enhance public awareness of post-polio.
- **Funding Required:** \$1,238,460 over 3 years.
- **Funding Utilisation:** Employment of three full-time staff members (inclusive of salary and on-costs). Provision of remote office hardware, software, and presentation equipment. Monthly interstate travel for the Clinical Educator and Public Health Engagement Facilitator.

## 3 - Digital Twin Scoping and Feasibility Study

- **Proposal:** Conduct a scoping and feasibility study to define, prototype, and evaluate the development of a Digital Twin model for broad-scale individualised post-polio management.
- **Rationale:** A Digital Twin is an adaptive computational representation of an individual's biological and functional state. It is designed to integrate individuals' measurable clinical, functional, and activity data into longitudinal models of change. A Digital Twin is well suited to post-polio's clinical complexity, delayed consequences, and high individual variability. This study will identify and operationalise computational components, develop a prototype twin architecture, and assess the technical, clinical, and financial feasibilities of digital-twin-enabled post-polio care, with a focus on functional trajectories and intervention response rather than disease biology.
- **Funding Required:** \$1,150,000 over 3 years.
- **Funding Utilisation:** Engagement of subject matter experts in post-polio care, computational modelling, and digital health; stakeholder consultations with post-polio clients, clinicians, and policymakers; technical infrastructure and software; and comprehensive feasibility and translational reporting.

## 4 - Establishment of a National Post-Polio Register

- **Proposal:** Develop and maintain a health system and AIHW integrated register of people living in Australia who contracted polio.
- **Rationale:** A national register will facilitate better understanding of the demographics and needs of those experiencing and at risk for post-polio health challenges. This will further inform the targeting of health resources and interventions, and the development of inclusive and supportive policy.
- **Funding Required:** \$354,270 over 4 years.
- **Funding Utilisation:** Employment of a part-time public health statistician for Polio Australia.

## 5 - Development of Discipline-Specific eLearning Modules for Clinicians

- **Proposal:** Create and publish six discipline-specific eLearning modules for clinical utilisation Australia-wide, to facilitate informed medical and allied health care for individuals in Australia affected by polio. The modules will cover the disciplines of general practice, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, pedorthics, and mental health.
- **Rationale:** Education tailored to each clinical discipline will equip professionals with the necessary skills to identify and manage post-polio conditions effectively, ensuring consistent, evidence-based care, and reducing variability in treatment quality.
- **Funding Required:** \$294,525 over 2 years.
- **Funding Utilisation:** Instructional design services, subject matter expert consulting, module hosting and promotion, and 12 months of enhancement.

## 6 - Redesign and Development of Polio Australia's Primary Websites

- **Proposal:** Redesign and modernise Polio Australia's two primary websites, polioaustralia.org.au and poliohealth.org.au, to improve functionality, accessibility, user experience, and the delivery of resources for polio survivors, healthcare professionals, and the broader community.
- **Rationale:** The current websites are ageing and lack the functionality to effectively meet the growing needs of polio survivors and clinicians. An updated design and functionality will ensure modern styles of resource access, and usability across devices and demographics.
- **Funding Required:** \$259,823 over 2 years.
- **Funding Utilisation:** Web design services for the redesign of two websites, and part-time employment of a resource development officer (inclusive of salary and on-costs) at Polio Australia.

## 7 - Review, Update, and Republishing of Our Clinical Education Manual

- **Proposal:** Review, update, and republish Polio Australia's clinical education manual, "Managing Muscles and Mobility", in both electronic and hard copy formats.
- **Rationale:** The manual is an essential resource for clinicians supporting polio survivors. Updating the content with the latest research and clinical practices will ensure the manual remains a trusted and accurate reference. Reformatting and republishing it in electronic and print versions will increase accessibility and distribution.
- **Funding Required:** \$99,750 over 1 year.
- **Funding Utilisation:** Subject matter expert for 4 months to review and update existing manual, and design consultant for manual's re-design; and printing 1000 hard copies with sales management.

# Funding Summary

PROJECT	TIME FRAME	COST
National Awareness and Education Campaign	2 years	\$321,195
Employment of Key Staff to Enhance Operational Capacity	3 years	\$1,238,460
Digital Twin Scoping and Feasibility Study	3 years	\$1,150,000
National Post-Polio Register	4 years	\$354,270
Development of Discipline-Specific eLearning Modules for Clinicians	2 years	\$294,525
Redesign and Development of Polio Australia's Primary Websites	2 years	\$259,823
Review, Update and Republishing of Our Clinical Education Manual	1 year	\$99,750
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$3,718,023</b>

## Conclusion

Polio Australia urges the Australian Government to consider these recommendations in the 2026-2027 federal budget. Investing in these initiatives will significantly enhance the well-being of Australian residents living with post-polio, and contribute to a more inclusive and supportive healthcare system.

