

PPViews

Post Polio Victoria Newsletter No 8 - March, 2013

Welcome to our readers to the first newsletter for 2013, and to my first as editor. We will publish quarterly to keep you informed on the issues PPV is pursuing on behalf of all polio survivors in Victoria. We would also welcome your news and views for inclusion, especially to share good ideas for managing our particular challenges.



PRESIDENTS REPORT from Jill Pickering (alias Brumby Jill).

PPV committee has four key goals for 2013:

- that PPV be a strong and sustainable force for Victorian polio survivors
- to increase Advocacy actions and activities
- to continue clarifying our requirements of NDIS to politicians.
- to raise community awareness of polio survivor unique needs.

We have identified key actions to achieve these goals:

- We will meet with relevant politicians in State and Federal Government and Opposition (e.g. Mark Dreyfus, Jenny Macklin, Donna Bauwa and Kathryn King), before the next election. As we have limited funds we need to find ways to assist travel to Canberra and help with accommodation costs.
- After successfully establishing ourselves as an incorporated body, we debated the need to now ask for an annual membership fee, to cover some of the costs to keep us viable. As funding is becoming very difficult to source, a small membership fee seems appropriate, as it is for many of the support groups. However we don't wish to exclude anyone and there will be provision for a hardship clause. The proposed fee would be due at the start of the financial year.
- We plan to hold another GP forum to educate doctors through their networks. We will also hold a general information forum for participants at our November AGM.
- The Advocacy Working Group (AWG) is developing closer ties with Polio Services Victoria (PSV) through periodic meetings, following a productive initial meeting in 2012 with Blaise Doran, co-ordinator of PSV.
- A Polio Needs Survey will be organised to ensure we know the true advocacy needs of polio survivors. Margaret, convenor of AWG will be co-ordinating that project during 2013.
- Joan Smith, our new PPV secretary and news editor plans to widen the scope of the newsletter. Information and letters to the editor are welcome. Bernard Peasley is continuing to maintain our website and is also open to suggestions. All contributions can be made through Jill Pickering 9428 4709 or pickjill@hotmail.com

Finally, we still have some committee vacancies, so please consider joining us. It is not essential to be a polio survivor to become a committee member. Isn't it wonderful to see the return to cooler temperatures! I hope you all found successful ways to manage our record run of hot days. Regards Jill

STOP PRESS – Ian Paroissien, newly elected member to our committee has unfortunately had a quite severe stroke which has badly affected his speech and right arm. Ian is alert and trying to speak, and able to follow some directions. His family requests no visitors for now, but thanks everyone for their calls, cards and good wishes. Ian will be assessed for rehabilitation and hopefully will re-gain a little independence. We feel very sad for Ian's loss of independence but hope his fighting spirit stands him in good stead.

HOSPITAL PROTOCOLS FOR MANAGING PATIENTS WITH POST POLIO

The untimely death of Vivian Endean at St Vincent's Hospital in 2011 has highlighted the shortfall in hospital staff knowledge about managing patients with a history of polio. PPV has been working with Vivian's partner Fleur Rubens to raise medical awareness. This includes the establishment of hospital protocols that would ensure hospital staff are better informed about appropriate and safe management regardless of the primary reason for a patient's admission. Some of the issues needing to be addressed are level of mobility, drug treatments, use of oxygen and other respiratory measures and the special considerations in using anaesthesia. Anyone who has relevant hospital experiences to share, or who has an interest/issue in this area is very welcome to contact us through Liz Telford at PPV post or phone.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE NDIS BILL ENDORSED THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT!

Congratulations most particularly to all of the people with disability in Australia who worked, and talked, and wrote, and met, and consulted, and thought about the NDIS during its journey to this point. Without us this would not have happened.

If not for the drive and push of the disability sector for years and years insisting on rights, inclusion, justice, support, equality and advocacy for one another we could not have achieved this amazing feat.

So take a bow, pat yourselves on the back, and EVERYONE CELEBRATE – We did it! We achieved an enormous milestone in disability in Australian society. Be proud. Politicians of all sides can take a bow if they want.

We have more to do, but let's stop and celebrate this day before the next issue.

Kindest regards to you all, Sue Egan (executive officer, Physical Disability Australia PDA).

ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP REPORT

Margaret Cooper heads up the AWG with Liz Telford being the liaison member on the PPV committee, forming a close working relationship. Margaret reports: 'Not surprisingly, the implications of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) have taken time to work through. The AWGs role has been to advise PPV what current policies are being developed on NDIS and what action should be taken to emphasize our concerns. We found some issues for young and old polio survivors. Younger people need neurologically expert health practitioners, orthotists, occupational therapists, mobility aids and technology to help them follow their chosen lifestyles. Older survivors need all of the above in order to maintain active, community based lives. However, the proposed guidelines of the NDIS exclude people over the age of 65.'

Both Margaret and Peter Wilcox attended a meeting hosted by Mark Dreyfus (federal Attorney General) and addressed by Jan McLucas. Peter and Margaret were able to ask questions. Liz Telford and Jill Pickering have also been very active liaising with Polio Australia and writing to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Legislation Committee (CAC). Jill and Margaret represented PPV at the Melbourne sitting of the CAC, using pictures as well as words to enliven the senators.

Peter Wilcox is representing our interests on the Aids and Equipment Action Alliance.

Liz Telford is working on further discussions with PSV, as mentioned previously.

Next job is to develop a survey to find what polio survivors want from service providers and PPV. Please contact me, Margaret Cooper on martmcl@bigpond.com with any comments or help you can offer on surveys.

AMENDMENTS TO THE NDIS

Following feedback, the Government has looked at some amendment to the age criteria. Jenny Macklin reported 'The NDIS will complement the aged care system to ensure we are delivering a cohesive system that gives people with disability, older people, their families and carers the support they need,' the statement said. 'The Government's amendments make clear that people with degenerative conditions who are under the age of 65 can enter the NDIS, and that people who are NDIS participants will be able to choose to remain in the scheme after they turn 65'. Perhaps this is a start to meeting the needs of older polio survivors.

TOUCHED BY POLIO ART EXHIBITION AND AUCTION

Polio Australia, our national advocacy group, organised this event.



Twenty four artists who have been 'Touched By Polio' produced thirty five pieces to be sold. All funds go towards raising urgently needed funds to keep Polio Australia viable beyond 2013.

Torso and leg plaster casts were turned into art pieces using a variety of mediums and techniques. They include paint, collage, fabric, leather and embellishments. Our childhood traumas of restrictive plasters and splints became creative works of art.

The exhibition was launched on Wednesday 27 March at Kew Courthouse, where an initial \$2,550 plus was raised at auction. The exhibition was launched by Senator Mitch Fifield, Shadow Minister for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector. Dr John Tierney, National Patron also spoke of his polio story. Catering was donated and served by the Rotary Club of Kew – always there working for the Polio cause. The guest auctioneer, Ross Hedditch also donated his time and talent.

For those who couldn't attend the auction, the remaining exhibits are available for sale on the internet at www.polio.org.au Take a peek, be impressed and make an offer.

We thank you Mary-ann and Polio Australia for the on-going work on our behalf. This event has taken months of planning and co-ordination from making of casts at Latrobe University, packing at Bunnings, distributing to artists, collecting finished works, setting up the web site, photography, preparing media releases, contacting speakers and Rotary, and organising the Court house display. Let's get the word out to help sell the remaining pieces.



We send our **Get Well Wishes** to Bernard Peasley who is out of action with back pain.

What you need to know about 'scooters'

From the Bass Coast Crime Watch News

SOME of our frail and infirm citizens have surrendered their driving licence or simply stopped driving.

This can be due to age or medical problems such as failing eyesight or diminished reflexes and judgement.

However, they have found they can still get around town with the use of a scooter or, officially, a Motorised Mobility Device (MMD).

As more of these devices get about on local streets, it is timely to answer questions about the rules relating to them.

Here a few questions and answers that will shed some light on their operation for users and for other drivers and pedestrians:

Q1. Is a MMD a motor vehicle?

A1. Generally speaking, no it is not. A MMD only becomes a motor vehicle if it can travel at more than 10km/h or has greater than 200 watt power.

Q2. Who can use a MMD?

A2. A person can use a motorised mobility device if they are injured or disabled and also if they are unable to walk or have difficulty in walking.

Q3. Do I need a licence or medical examination to drive an MMD?

A3. No, but you should speak to your GP or occupational therapist first.

Q4. Is the driver of a MMD a pedestrian or a driver of a vehicle?

A4. The driver of a MMD is a pedestrian.

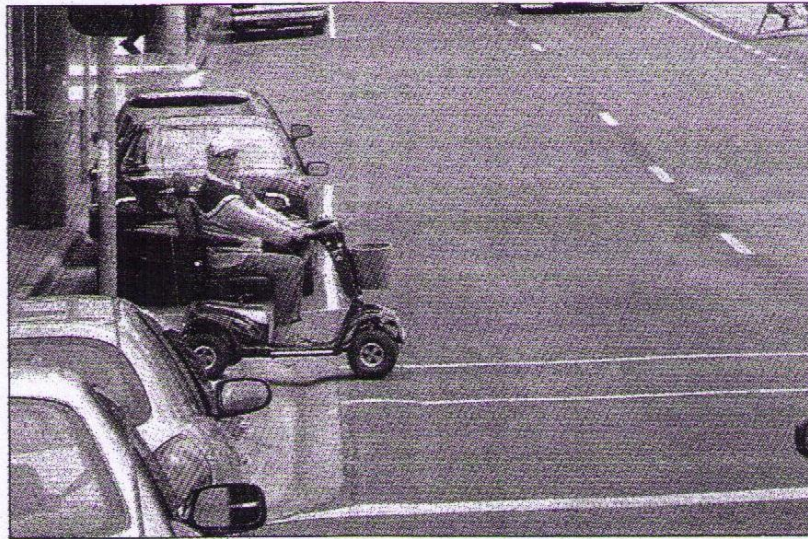
At law, being a pedestrian includes:

- * A person driving a motorised wheelchair that cannot travel at over 10km/h (on level ground)

- * A person in a non-motorised wheelchair

- * A person pushing a motorised or non-motorised wheelchair

- * And a person in or on



You still have a lot of responsibilities where road safety is concerned when you ride a motorised scooter or MMD. m071013

a wheeled recreational device or wheeled toy.

All pedestrian road laws apply.

Q5. Can an MMD be registered with VicRoads?

A5. No, it is not a motor vehicle. However, if your MMD can travel more than 10km/h or has more than 200 watts of power, then it is a motor vehicle and must be registered. If this is the case, you cannot use it on footpaths.

Q6. My MMD has a petrol motor. Can I use it on the footpath?

A6. No, if your MMD is powered by a petrol motor, it is classed as a motor vehicle. It is treated the same as an MMD that has power of more than 200 watts or goes faster than 10km/h. But this does not necessarily mean it can be used on the roads. You need to check with VicRoads, which judges each vehicle individually. If it is classified as a motor cycle you will need a motor cycle licence and registration.

Q7. Can I be charged with drink driving a MMD?

A7. Yes, you can. Remember you are a pedestrian and you should not operate a MMD if you are affected by alcohol. If your MMD is powered by a 200w motor and

will not do more than 10km/h on level ground the offence is being drunk in a public place. If the device is capable of more than 10km/h or is powered by a motor greater than 200w, then you will be charged under the Road Safety Act with the appropriate drink driving offence, such as exceeding .05 or Driving Under the Influence or Being in Charge of a Motor vehicle when Under the Influence, to name a few.

What not to do

Remember you are a pedestrian, not the driver of a motor vehicle.

Q8. Do I have to have insurance for my MMD?

A8. A motorised wheelchair is not required to have third party insurance. However, there are public liability policies, house contents and personal effects policies and personal accident policies. Speak to an insurance broker about your choices.

Q9. Can I drive my MMD in traffic?

A9. No you cannot. When driving a MMD you are a pedestrian and must travel on the footpath. You must obey all road rules as a pedestrian and drivers of motor vehicles must treat you as a pedestrian. You

must cross a road by the shortest direct route.

When crossing at traffic lights you may start to cross on the green light or green man. You must use a footpath where available. If you need to travel on the road you must keep as close to the kerb as possible.

Q10. Are there any safety measures I can take?

A10. There are many ways to improve your safety when riding an MMD:

- * Purchase and use a safety flag to provide visibility.

- * Fit mirrors to observe those behind you.

- * Have lights fitted.

- * Always use a footpath where available.

- * Avoid driving on country roads without footpaths.

- * Take turns slowly so you do not tip over.

- * Do not approach ramps/kerbs at an angle as you may tip over.

- * Be aware of your vulnerability.

- * Wear light coloured clothing, especially at night.

- * Avoid turning when going down slopes.

- * On busy roads always try to cross at pedestrian crossings or traffic lights.

Be particularly careful when driving behind parked cars as you may

not be easily seen.

Q11. Are there any security measures I can take for my MMD?

A11. Yes, of course. Turn off the device when stopped or getting out of the chair. Take the key with you.

Have the device engraved with your driver's licence number. If it is stolen you can be traced through your licence. Take photos of your device and store them with serial numbers in a safe place. Secure your MMD in a garage or inside the house. Always remove the key when not in use.

Q12. What can I do if my MMD breaks down whilst I am out?

A12. Always make sure that your tyres are inflated to the correct pressure. RACV provides roadside emergency and breakdown assistance on 13 72 28 but if you call remember to ask if a charge is involved.

Q13. Can I recharge my MMD if I run out of power when I am out?

A13. Most councils have instigated recharge programs for MMDs and have enlisted the aid of local traders to assist. The RECHARGE Scheme is about encouraging local businesses and organisations to provide a power point so you can recharge the battery on your electric wheelchair or scooter, if required. There is a dedicated website www.rechargescheme.org.au showing the locations of recharge points throughout Victoria, although none are listed in the Bass Coast and South Gippsland shires.

If your council is not participating in the scheme, maybe a letter to your local councillor is warranted.

If you drive a MMD please remember you are sharing footpaths and shopping centres with other pedestrians. Be courteous to other pedestrians and travel at walking speed, particularly in shopping centres and when around children.