

PPViews

Post Polio Victoria Newsletter No 9 - June, 2013

Welcome to our readers to the June edition of PPViews. Hope you are managing the cold winter comfortably. As you read our news don't forget that we'd also like your news and views for inclusion, especially to share good ideas for managing our particular challenges.



PRESIDENTS REPORT from Jill Pickering (alias Brumby Jill).

Hello from faraway England, where it is summer-time, and I'm thinking of you all trying to manage the Melbourne cold weather.

We have accepted two resignations from our committee; Ian Paroissien due to ill health and Liz Telford who has too many other big commitments. Liz has worked very hard in helping to establish PPV and in her role as past president. We were pleased to welcome Graeme Smith and Rod Hysted as new committee members.

Because of the resignations we still have vacancies to fill. The types of jobs you might like to be involved with can include lobbying politicians, writing submissions, planning information sessions, negotiating, bringing your ideas about educating health care providers, distributing information, using IT skills, or just enjoying talking to people.

As you can see there is something to suit everyone's experience. The more people we have helping, the less taxing on everyone's energy levels, so don't be shy in putting up your hand.

This election year provides the best opportunity to affect change. PPV supports the Polio Australia 'We're Still Here' Campaign in Canberra, Wednesday 26 June. Joan and Graeme Smith will participate and report back.

Finally my congratulations to Gillian Thomas from Polio Australia, for managing her appearance and excellent question on ABC's Q and A program. Regards Jill

OTHER ITEMS OF NEWS AND VIEWS

PILOT PROGRAM ON FATIGUE AND STRATEGIES

Margaret Petkoff, occupational therapist at Polio Services, is setting up a pilot program. *'I envisage that it will be 3 sessions of up to two hours. I can extend to four if required. First 2 sessions will be talking about fatigue and strategies. I expect people to do home work after each session with discussion at the following session. The third session will be people sharing strategies they have implemented and whether it made any difference. I expect to have about 4 weeks between 2nd and 3rd sessions and about 2 weeks between the 1st and 2nd session. I expect that they will be conducted on a Friday in the treatment room. I have only had 1 person enquiring so far. I would like a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 10 participants. A definite start day and date will be set when there are sufficient numbers. At this stage, the program will be conducted at St Vincents for English speaking clients only. Regards Margaret'*

Margaret can be contacted at Polio Services Victoria, St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, 14 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, www.psv.svhm.org.au or telephone 9288 3602.

The following News Updates were published by National Disability Services and forwarded by Margaret Cooper:

TAXI INDUSTRY REFORM SHOULD IMPROVE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

The Victorian Government's recently released [response](#) (PDF 217KB) to the Taxi Industry Inquiry, which was chaired by Prof Alan Fels, should improve taxi services for people with a disability and service providers. NDS welcomes the Government's response, in particular:

- improved driver training to assist people with disability, allow more accessible and purpose-built taxis;
- discouraging wheelchair accessible taxis from undertaking non-wheelchair work;
- the development of a new central booking service in metro areas to reduce wait times and provide more accurate booking information;
- \$3 million for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis, with a subsidy of up to \$44,000 for a new or replacement Wheelchair Accessible Taxi for operators in country zones;
- Changes to regulation to allow a greater diversity of vehicles to be used as taxis which can meet more accessibility needs, similar to the London black cab, and;
- Ensuring all taxi meters can 'talk' to consumers - improving access for people who are vision-impaired.

High quality, reliable and safe taxi services are vital for people with disabilities to be able to participate in the community. Increasingly, disability service providers are using taxi services as part of their operational models.

NDS congratulates the Government for introducing these reforms. We will now seek to work with the Government to ensure the reforms are properly implemented and meet their overall objectives.

Contact Information:

James O'Brien, State Manager, NDS Victoria, Phone 03 8341 4312, james.obrien@nds.org.au

DISABILITY CARE GOES LIVE

Information about Disability Care is now available on a dedicated [website](#). Members are encouraged to keep checking this site for new information which will be added regularly.

The application form to be a registered provider of supports is expected to be available on this website by the end of next week. Providers which have existing contracts with State Governments and some Commonwealth Programs who operate in the launch sites for Disability Care Australia will receive the application form electronically in the very near future

People with disability can now also complete a questionnaire - [My Access Checker](#) - to help determine whether they are likely to be eligible for support from Disability Care. If the Access Checker indicates they are likely to be eligible, and if they live in a launch site and meet any age requirements it might have, they will be given a phone number to call.

Even if they do not meet the access requirements, but live in a launch site, Disability Care may be able to provide information about other supports that could be of benefit assist in referral to these.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY CARE AUSTRALIA TO BE ESTABLISHED

Parliament has agreed to establish a Joint Select Committee to oversee the implementation of the national disability insurance scheme – Disability Care Australia. The Coalition has been arguing that there was a need to establish such a mechanism to provide parliamentary oversight; the Government has now agreed to do so.

This Committee will have a role in examining the implementation of the NDIS in the launch sites, with a particular focus on 6-monthly reports from Disability Care Australia on aspects such as:

- average expenditure on package costs;
- sector capacity and workforce issues;
- Client take-up rates; and differences between the child, adolescent and total population launches.

It will present a preliminary report on the rollout of Disability Care after 12 months of operation, and a final report 12 months later

PPV MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

As mentioned in our March PPViews, this year we are due to consider introducing a membership fee to help keep us viable. Well, the pressure is off because we were successful in part funding our operating costs through the Disability Self Help Grants. However there are guidelines which restrict the ways we can use that money, limiting what we can achieve. We have attached a quick little survey to get your feedback before making any decision. You can also complete the survey on-line by using the following link <http://bit.ly/11YbTrZ> Please have your say!

MEMBER NEEDS SURVEY

The PPV committee endeavours to put maximum effort into the areas which will assist the maximum number of our members. To ensure we understand your needs, we have attached a survey for you to complete. That will allow us to prioritise future actions. Your feedback helps us stay relevant. We have included a stamped self-addressed envelope for you to return your surveys. If you receive your newsletter electronically, you can also complete the survey on-line by using the following link <http://bit.ly/18Ysm4x> that will allow us to collate responses easily.

MORE POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT

Geoff Dean forwarded a copy of a letter from The Hon Greg Hunt MP. While I can't include it all in our available space, I quote some important sections:

'There remains a gap in health system in terms of specific and direct recognition of post-polio syndrome. It is something to which I have committed on a bi-partisan basis with people from both sides of the House'. Greg pays tribute to Fran Henke for her information. 'There are 400,000 polio survivors or those who have post-polio syndrome in Australia. In particular, the post-polio syndrome side needs greater recognition'. 'It is my belief that we need to have a full and independent inquiry into the scope and extent of the syndrome as well as the needs of sufferers of post-polio syndrome, and the steps we can and should take going forward as parliament, not as a government of one persuasion or another, but as a parliament to deal with these issues. That includes how we deal with post-polio syndrome within the National Disability Insurance Scheme framework – noting that the vast majority of sufferers would already be or will soon be over 65 years of age.'

'We may recognise their condition but they may still fall through the gaps. That means we need to have a specific action plan for post-polio sufferers. People such as John Tierney, Mary-ann Liethof and others involved should be commended for their work, but our commitment is to practical action to assist them going forward.'

'My specific contribution is to call for and propose the inquiry into post-polio syndrome, its extent, its impact and the steps forward which we can take if not in this parliament then in the next parliament'.

Greg Hunt is Federal Member for Flinders, phone 03 5979 3188, Shop 4/184 Salmon Street, Hastings.

MYKI FREE TRAVEL PASS FOR PEOPLE WITH A PERMANENT PHYSICAL DISABILITY.

The Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass is for people who depend on the use of a scooter or wheelchair for mobility outside of the home but can use the myki ticketing system independently. The pass requires you to tap on and off to be valid. The form can be completed by the client. If the customer has a Multi-Purpose Taxi Card number, no health professional is required to complete the form, if the number is known. Otherwise the customer will need their disability certified by a General Practitioner or specialist, to be eligible.

Please visit <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/fares-tickets/free-travel-passes/scooter-and-wheelchair-travel-pass/> for more information and to download the Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass application forms. You may also have the application forms sent to you by contacting Public Transport Victoria (PTV) on 1800 800 007.

POLIO AUSTRALIA’S CANBERRA CAMPAIGN – JUNE 2013

A comprehensive 24 page document was presented to all MPs who joined the campaign launch or who had individual appointment times with campaigners.

Information to politicians included the vision, the mission and the purpose of Polio Australia (PA). It set out the four strategic priorities of Capacity Building, Education, Health Service Promotion and Collaboration, as well as detailing the many existing programs. Future plans were identified along with the current limitations and enablers. PA funding is due to run out this year so it becomes a top priority to find an on-going source. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing made three recommendations twelve months ago. PA already has the expertise, programs and strategies to meet those recommendations but needs the government to follow up with a commitment to funding.

The other major part of the campaign identified the lack of access polio survivors have to the NDIS due to the age criteria. Liz Telford and Dr Margaret Peel wrote of the costs of specialised equipment and the very long waiting times for any part-subsidy.

After assembling for sign in and collecting T-shirts, we were escorted to the Sir Richard Baker Room. We added our signed leaves to the Polio Family Tree. Dr John Tierney gave a short address then we were joined by a number of ‘Polio Savvy’ parliamentarians for the launch of the ‘Polio Family Tree’. There were three members who spoke, expressing their support of PA and our issues – Senator Mitch Fifield (Lib), Senator Rachel Siewert (Greens) and Senator Claire Moore (ALP). Campaigners then moved off to individual appointments with their local MPs. After lunch some participants attended question time, then we all met up for tea and a well-earned rest in our various accommodation venues. Thank-you to Mary-ann and the PA Committee for organising such a comprehensive campaign. Perhaps you might like to visit your local MPs and make them aware of our issues before the next election.



Top left: All campaigners assemble in foyer of parliament house.



Top right: Joan Smith adds her leaf to the Polio Family Tree.



Centre left: Mary-ann Liethof with Queensland MP Karen Andrews.



Centre right: Campaigners are addressed by some ‘polio savvy’ MPs



Lower left: Hon Greg Hunt joined us for morning tea and an impromptu talk.



Lower right: PA National Patron and President John Tierney addresses the group.