



GPSG NEWS



INFORMATION FOR POLIO SURVIVORS IN THE GEELONG REGION AND BEYOND

NOVEMBER 2019 EDITION

Next Meeting:
4th Nov 10:30am

In The Chair:
Sharyn M.

Meetings are usually held on the 1st Monday of every month Main Conference Room, McKellar Centre, Nth Geelong (first left past main Reception Desk) just before The Hub Cafe

Accessible Geelong?



Making our cities more accessible for people with disability is easier than we think
David Kelly and Richard Tucker

You would think a city that each year hosts Australia's largest conference for people with disability would be the most accessible for all people.

Not according to our research

which highlights 119 issues that need fixing if Geelong, Victoria, wants to be a model "city for all".

Clearly there's a shortfall between aspiration and reality, which is surprising given that in the last Census count, about 6 percent of Geelong's population reported they needed help because of disability. That's higher than the national figure of 5.1 percent.

Geelong is also home to the National Disability Insurance Agency, WorkSafe, and the Traffic Accident Commission, so it should be a shining example of what is termed access and inclusion (A&I) for people with a disability.

A city for everyone

The challenge for Geelong is to identify what is a model city for people with a disability.

There are a few examples to consider. Many cities around the world have tackled disability access through technological solutions to help people get around, such as personal navigation with smartphones.

Melbourne introduced beacons that connect to a smartphone app, to help vision-impaired people navigate their way inside Southern Cross Station and some other stations.

(Continued Pg 3)



THIS MONTH

Gary Newton 2nd
Apologies to Maggie Carroll for missing your birthday in Oct but we don't have it on file



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Convenor's Corner

I found our speaker last month very informative and I for one will look into volunteering more in some way next year. It's good to know that even though we have disabilities we are still able to help in the community.

I recently had my cousin and her partner staying with us for a few days. First visit to Victoria so it was our job to show them around our beautiful area. I was disappointed to find a few of the shops and cafes in the tourist areas are still not disability friendly. It's frustrating when you have a walker and you have to find a way of getting yourself and walker up stairs. Of course you can decide not to go into that shop or café but why should we have to be excluded. There are some cities in the world that excel at being disabled friendly and

others that fail miserably. I am very thankful for the ones that have thought of the physically disabled person and made sure their premises have good access.

This year is nearly over. Already seeing signs of Christmas everywhere, my favourite time of year. I love decorating my Christmas tree and the house. Most of all I love gathering the presents I'm going to give my family –especially my grandkids.

As most of you know our Christmas party is on the 2nd of December so I need to know who is coming. If you haven't put your name down yet don't forget to do that at our next meeting or phone me to let me know. Next month we are bringing something to share with our group-a sort of show and tell. I hope to see some very interesting things.

That's all for this time.

Cheers,

Sharyn

Australian Polio Register

Have you added your polio details?

The Australian Polio Register was established by Polio Australia in October 2010 to gather information on the numbers of polio survivors living in Australia today, whether or not they contracted polio in this country. To make the Australian Polio Register truly reflective of the unmet need for polio services throughout Australia, we urge every Australian polio survivor to join the Polio Register. Our strength lies in our numbers – please help us to get you the services you need by adding your polio details to the Register. You can register online or by downloading and completing a paper copy (attached for hardcopy subscribers).

www.australianpolioregister.org.au

Polio Australia's "We're Still Here" website is a hub for sharing people's stories, polio survivors in the media, polio awareness raising campaigns, events of interest, Rotary talks, and so much more. It is constantly being updated, so check in often.

www.stillhere.org.au

Exciting News Senors & Señoritas! 3RD EUROPEAN POST POLIO CONFERENCE 2020 Spain Awaits YOU

Some important information has just been passed on to us from Polio Denmark via Maryann at Polio Australia

It's something we should seriously consider attending if you are able to travel as this will be a BRILLIANT conference! (Plus a GREAT chance to holiday in Spain)

"I am happy to inform you that the third European Congress on Post Polio Syndrome is on its way.

It will be held in **Spain** in the city **Vitoria-Gasteiz** in June 10 - 12th of 2020.

Please see more information on the website and in the First announcement.

Soon the preliminary program will be displayed on the website <https://postpoliocongress.com/en/>

Be There If You Can. Spain is SPECTACULAR!

From the Editor's Desk

Greetings all and welcome to the November 2019 edition of our Newsletter. Oh BOY!! Nearly Christmas! On Sunday (Oct 20th) I returned from a terrific few days in Sydney where I took part in **Polio Australia's AGM & Board Meeting** followed by PA's **Final Polio Retreat** where I got the opportunity to learn so much more about polio's late effects, catch up with some old friends and make some new ones. A host of topics were addressed including Kate Bradbury on the 'Polio Body', History of KAFO's, Dr Helen Mackie on 'Psychological Adjustment', Swollen Polio Legs and Polio Australia's President Gillian Thomas ran a very enlightening session on 'Early Polio Memories'. This past weekend I have been up to **Horsham** staying overnight on the Friday to help raise awareness of the post polio issues currently being faced by many of us survivors, also thanking **Rotary** and encouraging continued support for eradication efforts by Rotary. A BIG thanks to the two Rotary Clubs in Horsham for inviting me to do a Presentation and for their **\$3000 donation**. It was also great to meet Horsham's Mayor **Mark Redford** at the event and hear of his support for polio survivors. Remember to notify Sharon asap about attending our Christmas luncheon. I hope to see you there! Til next month! Cheers Gary



CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME.

If you have anything you would like to contribute or share with the GPSG community in upcoming issues please contact g.newton@inet.net.au

Disclaimer: The aims and objects of the Geelong Polio Support Group is to gather and disseminate information on Post-Polio Syndrome and Late Effects of Polio, to support each other in any way we can. This newsletter is written for interest and information only. Information of a medical nature in this newsletter is not authorised in any way. Please contact a medical professional before adopting or acting upon anything contained herein. The writer of this newsletter accepts no responsibility for the authenticity of services and does not warrant they are either accurate or true. We do not purport to be medically qualified. Consult your doctor before trying any medication or new form of exercise. Please give relevant information to your doctor and help them to help us. We do not endorse any product or services mentioned.

COMING UP at our November meeting

Helen Hunter - 'Something You Love'

Accessible Geelong? (continued)

Deakin University accessibility priorities

Overseas, the city of Breda, in the Netherlands, was this year declared Europe's most accessible city. It has done several things to improve access, such as smoothing the centuries-old cobbled pathways, providing ramps, and rolling out digital navigation across the city.

Central to all these efforts is the collaborative design of solutions, working with people who have experience of disability access.

The need for change

In Geelong, more than 100 people responded to a visitor's survey, and 75 people with experience of disability participated in a series of three workshops and three focus groups.

We found there are a series of things that could be implemented to improve accessibility and inclusion in Geelong.

Some things are simple, such as providing ramps instead of steps, and adequate restroom facilities; others involve remaking the city and may seem more difficult.

But the response from people with disability was typically modest, with one participant saying "we don't expect the Taj Mahal".

In all, we recommend six priority areas for action.

A number of problems continue to undermine efforts to rectify city-wide problems and these must be addressed. These include amendments to legislation to define and ensure "access" and "inclusion" are within the planning framework.

6 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS



1. **Improve planning legislation** to define and ensure access and inclusion within the planning framework.



2. **Raise awareness of and improve attitudes towards access and inclusion** across different policy initiatives, platforms of communication and events.



3. **Build an 'Inclusive Geelong Visitor Centre'** run and managed by people with disability, with support staff.



4. **Increase the supply of accessible and affordable public and community housing.**



5. **Increase business groups' confidence and participation** in developing employment initiatives around inclusion.



6. **Raise expectations and aspirations of the employment and economic participation system** by co-designing work arrangements with people with disability.

There also needs to be significant change to the business-as-usual approaches to housing, instead prioritising the supply of public and community housing in general, but especially for people with disability.

On employment, we need to co-design workplace arrangements so both the needs of people with disability and employers are met. This is key to ensuring those with a disability who seek work are able to attain it.

Access to information

One action identified was to build an Inclusive Geelong Visitor Centre (IGVC) run and managed by people with disability, with accessibility support staff. The centre would provide accessibility information and serve as a landing pad where people can gather information before exploring the city.

Many participants noted this idea has been discussed in various forums for the past 30 years, but nothing had ever happened.

Projects like this are often seen as luxuries that are more symbolic than tangible. Our analysis shows that if implemented in coordination with a

series of other actions, such as providing disability support services and empowering people with disability to lead conversations, it could encourage further change and reform.

In isolation, an IGVC was evaluated by the community as having a high impact rating (10/10), but a low feasibility rating (3/10). The low perception of feasibility perhaps explains why this project has never come to fruition.

At a bare minimum, an IGVC must have a full suite of accessibility support services and provide spaces for all abilities where people can access up-to-date information and plan activities for the length of their stay.

The Conversation

David Kelly, Human Geographer, Deakin University and Richard Tucker, Associate Professor, Associate Head of School (Research), co-leader of the research network HOME, Deakin University

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Focus On Your Breath

**By Paul Cavendish, Clinical Health Educator
Polio Australia**

It is often taken for granted that we can breathe well and that 'other demands' can make us tired. But this is not always the case. We can have respiratory problems at rest, with exertion, and during sleep. Describing to your GP your symptoms (e.g. patterns at the beginning or end of the day) will help them to identify the best assessment and any other underlying factors to consider.

How can polio history affect breathing?

The poliovirus can weaken muscles that help us breathe in and out. The diaphragm sits at the top of the rib cage to push down and open space up for our airways to fill. Our abdominal, chest and neck muscles also assist to get air in and out of our body. Damage to the muscles may lead to restriction in breathing.

Our posture plays an important part in how we breathe. Muscle weakness may create curvature of the spine – either a hunch, or excessive bending to a side. This posture can impact lung function.

An unknown percentage of people had bulbar polio. This refers to damage, or lesions, at the brain stem. A common area that is affected is the message to take in a breath of air. This can reduce (rather than stop) our inhalation.

What are some signs we may need a review?

- Sleepiness
- Feeling sleepy all the time, especially when you wake up. While this may be due to poor sleep

practices, waking up throughout the night may be a sign of low oxygen levels.

- Headache at the end of the day
- If you notice you seem to be short of breath, and develop a headache (regardless of activity levels), this may be a sign of fatigue.

- Shortness of breath
- There are two parts to our breathing – getting air in and getting air out. There are many reasons why either the breath in or out can be difficult. If you had any problems with breathing during the initial polio infection/recovery, this puts you at increased risk for difficulties again later in life.

Common Tests for Breathing Function

A spirometer measures the amount of air you can breathe in and out, and also how quickly you are able to breathe out. This is performed several times. With polio survivors, it is recommended all results, rather than just the best, be recorded in case there is breathing muscle fatigue.

The diaphragm is an important muscle to check if it is functioning adequately. Sometimes when there is partial weakness or paralysis of the diaphragm, people do not have shortness of breath at rest (only during activities). A chest X-Ray is often used to identify a raised diaphragm position. Confirmation is often made by a subsequent 'sniff-test'; a fluoroscopy radiograph identifies the diaphragm raising rather than lower with a breath in. Ultrasound can also be used to detect this.

A sleep test is often required to check you are getting enough oxygen throughout the night.

(from Polio Oz News)

Just Jokin'



"How do you know this isn't the button for the nurses' station?"

Bob, a 70-year-old, extremely wealthy widower, shows up at the Golf Club with a breathtakingly beautiful and very sexy 25-year-old blonde-haired woman who knocks everyone's socks off with her youthful sex appeal and charm and who hangs over Bob's arm and listens intently to his every word.

His buddies at the club are all aghast. At their very first chance, they corner him and ask, "Bob, how'd you get the trophy girlfriend?"

Bob replied, "Girlfriend? She's my wife!"

They're knocked over, but continue to ask: "So, how'd you persuade her to marry you?"

"I lied about my age," Bob replied. "What? Did you tell her you were only 50?"

Bob smiled and said, "No, I told her I was 90."