



GPSG NEWS



INFORMATION FOR POLIO SURVIVORS IN THE GEELONG REGION AND BEYOND

FEBRUARY 2020 EDITION

Next Meeting:

Monday 4th Feb - 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.

March Guest Speaker: Darby Munro Geelong Council re Waste Management

Polio Australia launches clinical advisory group

Rowan Cowley - The Senior
14 Nov 2019, 3:02 p.m.

POLIO is largely thought to be a problem of the past in Australia, but there are thousands of survivors living with the disease's late effects who are slipping through the cracks of the health care system.

Polio Australia has launched a new clinical advisory group which will aim to increase the amount of support services for people living with polio's late effects and to increase the knowledge of health professionals.

Health promotions officer Rachel Ingram said 400,000 Australians were diagnosed with polio before it was eradicated from Australia and

thousands were living with late stage effects which include muscle weakness in new areas, pain and fatigue.

She said polio killed motor neurons, so as survivors aged, remaining motor neurons were killed off at a faster rate.

"It almost feels to many polio survivors as if their polio has come back again," she said.

"Most health professionals don't know about the late effects of polio, most view it as a problem of the past."

The advisory group will be made up of 16 leading specialists who will help Polio Australia deliver the best clinical practice research.

"We can use the expertise of these people to inform the

workshops we do and improve support services and advocacy efforts."

The organisation is also preparing to launch a new blog for polio survivors which will provide up to date news and information for polio survivors.

"The blog will keep people informed about new initiatives and activities that will be out there and will highlight various resources that will be available."

"It will also provide an opportunity for survivors to write in and share their stories."

For more information, email office@polioaustralia.org



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
to you.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

NOELENE LUGG 8TH JAN
ROBIN STRINGER 21ST JAN
ROSEMARY MORGAN 22ND JAN
GRAHAM TREVASKIS 7TH FEB
NORMA MACKENZIE 24TH FEB



Convenor's Corner



Flashback to an old picture of our gang from 2013.

We're BACK!

Well another year has come and gone and we are at the start of another year. I hope all of you had a great Christmas and New Year.

My Christmas was busy as usual with cooking and preparing for the day. I am finding it harder to do all of the things you need to do to make the day special. I feel I need to listen to

my body more and know when to slow down, which for me is always a challenge. I think next year I will have to pass the work onto someone else and have a time to rest and enjoy someone else doing it for a change.

Of course for us with post polio it is easier said than done. Most of us like to keep active - even if it

means we just want to show the rest of the world we can still do it. I guess the secret is always in moderation.

So with that in mind we start another year of meeting together where we will learn a lot from speakers and each other on how to manage this condition we all share.

Look forward to seeing you all.

Sharyn

Contact Us

Support Group Coordinator:

Sharyn Matthews

Contact: 0435 719 333

Email:

sharynmatthews56@gmail.com

Our Mailing Address:

PO BOX 39, Leopold Vic 3224

GPSG Newsletter Editor:

Gary Newton

Contact: 0409 239 773

Email:

g.newton@inet.net.au

Older Australians and those with heart conditions urged to avoid bush fire smoke

Australians with conditions such as heart failure, and those aged 65 years and over are being urged to be aware of the risks to their health and the need to protect themselves from the smoke haze which continues to blanket parts of the country.

Heart Foundation Chief Medical Adviser, cardiologist Professor Garry Jennings, said bushfire smoke contains harmful gases such as carbon monoxide, and very small particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs.

Professor Jennings said if smoke particles cross from the lungs into the bloodstream, it can contribute to inflammation and narrowing of blood vessels, as well as increasing the chance of blood clots, in vulnerable people. This can worsen pre-existing conditions like heart failure and high blood pressure and can trigger events such as heart attacks.

"Australians at a higher risk should stay indoors where possible and safe, and close their windows and doors to minimise smoke in the home. If you have air-conditioning, switch it to recycle or recirculate to help filter particles from indoor air, and avoid being outdoors while smoke is in the area.

"Friends, relatives and carers should be extra watchful and check in regularly.

"If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or call the healthdirect helpline on 1800-022-222. Most importantly, if you are having trouble breathing, or experience chest pain or tightness, you should seek immediate medical help by calling Triple Zero (000)."

Aircraft are an integral part of firefighting efforts

Meet the man who choreographs a 'magic dance' of firefighting aircraft

The first thing NSW RFS Air Attack Supervisor Sean Bremner wants people to know about firefighting aircraft is that they're part of a team.

"Aircraft don't put out fires, we just slow them up for the guys on the ground," he said.

"The RFS, Fire and Rescue, Parks, Forestry, Navy, police, ambulance, many NSW government departments all come together to protect lives and property.

"We're working as part of a team."

Aircraft play a unique role in fighting fires. Although they don't put fires out, they do waterbomb them to slow their spread.

On rare occasions, they drop fire - incendiaries - instead of water.

They are able to accurately map fire fronts and see exactly what communities are at risk at any given time. Messages to at-risk communities are primed in advance of the fires. Once air crews identify where the fire is going, they contact the control room, which activates the warning texts. Sometimes they are able to send them in as little as 10 minutes.

Air crews can also provide information to ground crews about potential hazards, such as power poles.

And in extreme situations, like Saturday, December 21, they are able to rescue people trapped on properties before the blaze reaches them.



Photos: Sean Bremner

"We were mapping it, we're in there with a Navy MRH helicopter, and he's dropping down and grabbing people from properties."

He praised the Navy's support, and said HMAS Albatross supported fire crews "year after year with open arms".

Mr Bremner, a Worrigeer resident, said there were up to five radios being used in a single aircraft at any one time.

His role is to "coordinate the aerial dance" of up to 13 aircraft, of different types, as they support crews on the ground.

"Power lines are our worst enemies," he said.

"We're a close-knit team, we have each others' backs and we need to in that environment. It's all one big magic dance, but it works."

Mr Bremner has been an Air Attack Supervisor for 12 years, and has been in charge of up to 13 aircraft at a time.

Three of those are the fixed-wing Fireboss, a yellow aircraft that can scoop off water from rivers, lakes and even the ocean, although that is riskier.

"They've been a real benefit," Mr Bremner said.

"They'll pick up 3000 litres at a time. Some days here we've had them take just four minutes drop to drop.

"Five loads of that is equal to a large air tanker [LAT] - a C-30 or 737. And you can't get that turnaround time out of a LAT.

He said early in his career the role had been stressful, particularly when fixed-wing aircraft were introduced to work alongside helicopters.

"As you get more experience you can keep calm," he said.

Fire conditions mean it's not always possible - or safe - to fly.

He said despite all the challenges, he loved his job.

"I enjoy my job because I can make a difference quickly, as long as I do the right thing and I have all the right people happening," he said.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Footnote: Sadly, at time of writing one of the Firefighting aircraft described in this story crashed near Canberra killing all three crew onboard.

They were 3 American specialist firefighters here in Australia to lend us a helping hand. Our thoughts are with their families, fellow crewmembers and the broader emergency services family that knew and worked with them. (Ed.)

CRISIS RELIEF EXCHANGE for Bushfire Effected People With Disability

DEAS is a disability support not-for-profit which has launched a bushfire crisis relief exchange website for people with disability to access equipment and non-perishable consumables for their needs in times of crisis.

Find out more about the website here: <https://buff.ly/38mnwPd>

Or head straight to the new eBility website here: <https://buff.ly/3ar8OII>

Australian Polio Register

Have you added your polio details?

3rd EUROPEAN
CONGRESS ON

Vitoria-Gasteiz,
Spain June 10 -
12th, 2020.

POST
POLIO
SYNDROME



A conference that aims to promote, better care and attention for the nearly 700,000 European citizens who suffer the late effects of polio, sharing knowledge and experiences among doctors, researchers, polio survivors and all types of health specialists of Europe and of the whole world.

Get more information on the Congress visit <https://postpoliocongress.com/en/>

Be There If You Can. Several people will be travelling from Australia including Polio Australia's Rachel Ingram & Michael Jackson who will present a paper at the Congress.

Certainly it's a long way to go for just a few days but undoubtedly worth the trip. Why not stay on for a holiday. Spain is SPECTACULAR and well worth the visit!

From the Editor's Desk

Hello again everyone! Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2020. Here's hoping your Christmas was a good one.

Our annual Christmas break up/luncheon (in early December) at the **Sphinx Hotel** in North Geelong saw us come together to enjoy a nice roast meal, each others fellowship and reflect on how 2019 had been for us on a personal level and as a group. Sadly our numbers were down from the previous year with many obviously finding it too difficult to get out. A great big *thank you* to those who did manage to make it to our celebrations.

Yet again a tremendous amount of work went into this gathering with **Winnie Teo** making sure that Santa didn't forget our group and so everyone there got a present. Well done Winnie and thank you...you really are an amazing asset to our group and a very caring person who is very much appreciated for all that you do.

Thanks too, for past and future efforts, to all who contribute to this Newsletter. A special shoutout (or as we used to say in the good ole days - *cheerio*) to **Doris Jarvie** and **Jan McDonald**. Keep up the good work ladies...as many hands make light work!! I mentioned at our November meeting that I was going up to

Sydney from Geelong to get a specialist assessment of my current polio situation at **Mt Wilga Hospital, Hornsby** in the hope of getting some further understanding as to my exercise capabilities and why I'm starting to fade so quickly.

Kate Bradbury, the head physiotherapist at **Mt Wilga** and a truly delightful lady did comprehensive testing on my upper body only as it was agreed that there wasn't much point in testing the lower half as, at 67 it's beyond repair or saving. In fact it is my upper limbs and their rapid decline in strength and function that I am most concerned about.

After seeing Kate for well over an hour, we all took a break for lunch (& a breather) and I then saw **Dr Helen Mackie**, Consultant in Rehab Medicine for further assessment. Just before Christmas I was delighted to receive in the mail a 5-page Evaluation Report with Recommendations, which I feel were well thought out. Most of these recommendations I feel will be acted on by me.

Looking back, I'm pleased I made the trip to Sydney for this particular assessment (bulk-billed so no charge to me) and for the advice given by both Kate and Dr Mackie. In my opinion, it was well worth the time and effort to get there. Till next time...cheers!

Sary



CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME.

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

Valerie Taylor - the autobiography of a polio survivor

AT 83, **Valerie Taylor** has lived a big, bold, adventurous life.

From trainee animator to Spielberg, from Jaws to Blue Lagoon, to falling in love with the ocean and her husband Ron, she has led an exceptional life as a marine conservationist, photographer and shark expert.

Arguably one of Australia's national treasures, Val is an award-winning cinematographer whose documentaries have been used to lobby governments to promote the conservation of some of the world's endangered reefs.

Peer such as Sir David Attenborough hold her in the highest regard.

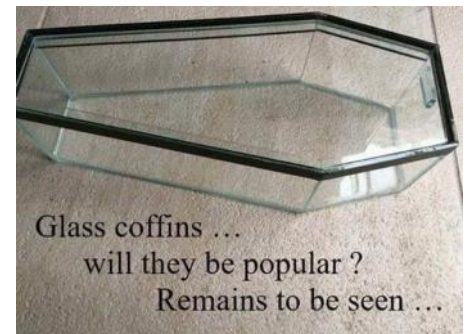
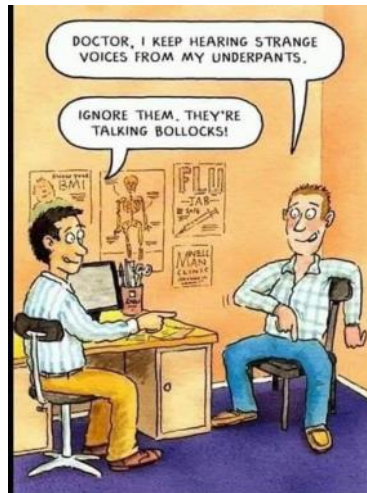
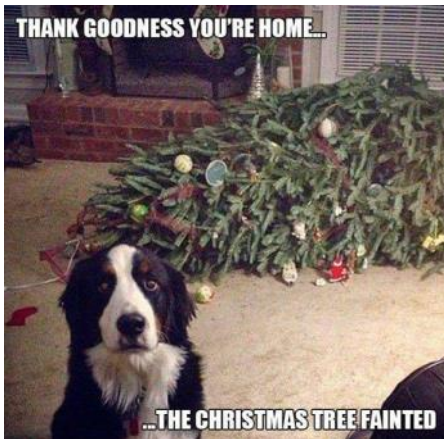
A talented artist, she dropped out of school when she contracted polio; it was two years before she could walk unaided.

At 15 she found work as an animator, all the while thriving on being close to the ocean. In the 1950s she met Ron Taylor and her real adventures began.

Valerie Taylor: An Adventurous Life (Hachette Australia) RRP \$34.99.



Just JOKIN'



Time For Bread

A woman, cranky because her husband was late coming home again, decided to leave a note, saying,

"I've had enough and have left you...don't bother coming after me"

Then she hid under the bed to see his reaction.

After a short while, the husband comes home and she could hear him in the kitchen before he comes into the bedroom. She could see him walk towards the dresser and pick up the note.

After a few minutes, he wrote something on it before picking up the phone and calling someone.

"She's finally gone...yeah I know, about time, I'm coming to see you, put on that French nightie.

I love you...can't wait to see you...we'll do all the naughty things you like."

He hung up, grabbed his keys and left.

She heard the car drive off as she came out from under the bed, seething with rage and with tears in her eyes.

She grabbed the note to see what he wrote.

"I can see your feet. We're outta bread; be back in five minutes."

FLASHBACK

