

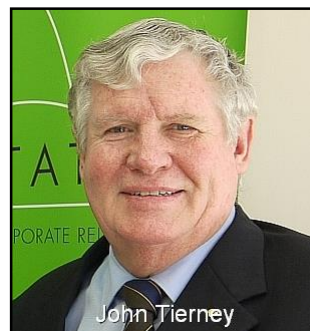
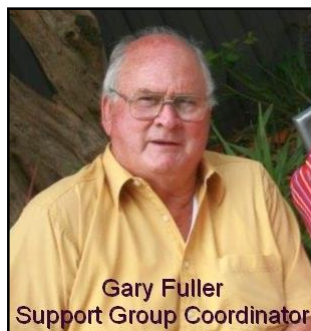
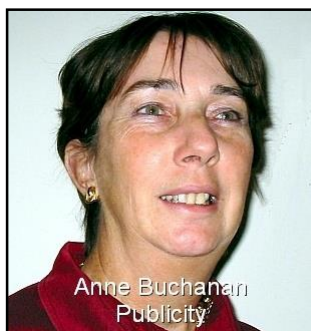
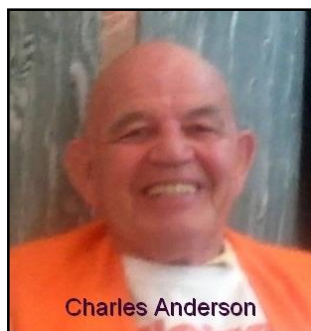
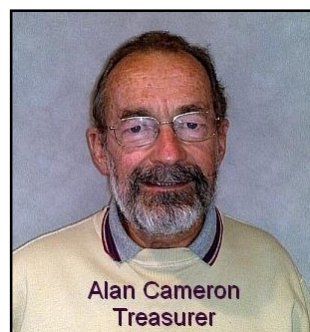


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2013 / 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Polio NSW – 2013/2014 Management Committee

President's Report

Gillian Thomas

At 30 June 2014 membership numbers remained around 800. Although we again had a boost in new members during the year resulting primarily from contacts via the Australian Polio Register, we were sadly also advised of eleven members who had passed away: Gwenneth Atkins (Georgetown), Rouvray Boocock (Lismore Heights), David Buchanan (Cedar Party), Dorothy Connolly (Nerang, Qld), Peter Jones (Kurmond), Vera Olsson (Wyong Creek), Lloyd Robinson (Keiraville), Mary Sale (Revesby), Pauline Stables (Mosman), Neil von Schill (Lavington), and Vivienne Webb (Forestville). The loss of Neil von Schill as past Secretary and Support Group Coordinator was felt very keenly, and a vale was published in *Network News* Issue 90.

At the 2013 AGM we were sorry to say goodbye to Wendy Davies who decided to stand down from the Committee to pursue other interests. We missed her sharp eye for detail and her input at Committee meetings. Wendy's position was not filled at the AGM which resulted in a casual Committee vacancy. Fortunately, foundation member Anne O'Halloran put her hand up early in 2014 and we were pleased to welcome her back – she enthusiastically took on the role of Seminar Coordinator.

Another successful year working for polio survivors saw five issues of *Network News* published in combination with *Polio Oz News* (see page 7); two informative Seminars (page 8); a successful Polio Australia *Health and Wellness Retreat* held in NSW (page 9); and work continuing to populate the new website (page 10). At year end planning was well advanced for a Canberra Country Conference to be held in October 2014, and for a celebratory 25th Anniversary Lunch to be held in conjunction with the 2014 AGM.

Members were also invited to a fundraising concert in October 2013 put on by entertainer Lisa Budin in memory of her mother Mary Le Clair, a long-standing member of Polio NSW. Unfortunately, this opportunity to enjoy a night out and raise funds for Polio NSW at the same time was not well supported by members which was a great pity and a disappointment to Lisa who had put so much effort into staging the event.

Publicity and promotion efforts during the year included participating for the first time in Northcott's *Walk With Me* event in September 2013. We followed this up in October 2013 with the usual annual distribution of posters and flyers during *Polio Awareness Month*. A further opportunity to promote our work came via staffing a Polio Australia stall at the 105th Rotary International Convention held in Sydney in June 2014. Our Office Coordinator, George Laszuk, led the team and he was joined over the four days of the Convention by Committee members Nola Buck (with husband John), Sue Ellis (with husband Keith) and Charles Anderson. The final count of Rotarians at the Convention was 18,603 paid registrants from 153 countries – a great chance to network. Another networking and learning experience, this time with researchers and polio survivors in Europe, resulted from John Tierney and Merle Thompson attending the Second European Polio Conference "*Post-Polio Syndrome – A Condition Without Boundaries*" in Amsterdam in June 2014.

Local Support Groups have continued to meet across the State and I pay especial tribute here to the work of Gary Fuller as Support Group Coordinator, ably assisted by his wife Barbara, over the last two years. Gary has revitalised our connection to the Groups and established regular information exchange between the Committee and Convenors. Sadly, declining health means that Gary and Barbara will both be retiring at the 2014 AGM – we will be very sorry to bid them farewell but they can be most satisfied with a job so well done. They will be a tough act to follow. Gary's comprehensive report on our Support Group network appears on pages 3 to 7.

Financially, the Network remained in a sound position at year end, with our reserves again enabling us to weather an operating loss. The philanthropic dollar is ever more difficult to attain and so we are particularly grateful for the generous support of our members upon whom it falls to fund most of our operations on their behalf. Towards year end we put much effort into a major Federal Government funding submission. Unfortunately, as this report was being finalised we learned we had been unsuccessful. The feedback we received about our application was positive: "*Polio NSW Inc has a long track record of delivering services and ... the organisation demonstrated its capacity to deliver services under this project. The panel assessed that overall, Polio NSW Inc provided good claims against the selection criteria and provided convincing supporting information.*" We were disappointed not to receive funding, however, we recognise that in such a competitive environment there is never enough money to fund all deserving organisations and programs. During the year we again benefited from the practical assistance offered by the Northcott Society, and gratefully received donations from NSW Lions Clubs. A detailed Financial Report, including the *2013/2014 Financial Statements and Independent Audit Report* has been circulated separately to members.

Our office staff once again put in an essential and dedicated effort this year. No Annual Report is complete without also paying tribute to the contribution made by the Network's volunteers. Our success over many years has only been possible thanks to the tireless work of many Management Committee members and other volunteers who help out in the office and elsewhere; our Support Group Convenors and Regional Representatives; the "Mail-Out Mob"; and those many members who distribute leaflets throughout their local communities and put up *Polio Awareness Month* posters. Finally, we sincerely thank our partners, families, friends and carers without whose support many of us would not be able to contribute at the level we do.

Support Groups

Gary Fuller

The following are not my words but are the published words of Convenor Wendy Chaff of the Hunter Area Post-Polio Support Group, telling us of the importance of the Polio NSW Support Group network: *"I think it is helpful to other polio survivors to see what can happen to them if we are NOT equipped with the necessary knowledge and information to help take charge of our own health issues"*.

My experience has been that most of the medical profession today know nothing about Post-Polio Syndrome and when you go to see them that is the first thing they tell you. I can't tell you how many times my wife Barbara has been told that in the last two and a half years. The last Professor told her when she asked *"What will you do in treating me if you finally diagnose Post-Polio Syndrome?"*; he answered *"You will just fade away."* The Professor before him told Barbara that Post Polio Syndrome did not exist. The first Professor just passed Barbara onto the other two.

Wendy Chaff is right – you have to equip yourself *"with the necessary knowledge and information to help take charge of our own health issues"*. One way of doing this is to join a Post-Polio Support Group, participate in each and every meeting, make sure you say something at each and every meeting, and encourage and support your Convenor to call a meeting every month – this will keep the Group alive.

Post-Polio Support Group Convenors are warning me of the situation that they are experiencing all over New South Wales in membership numbers: Bankstown, Dubbo and Nyngan Post Polio Support Groups **do not have Convenors**. Canterbury/Marrickville, Coffs Coast, Condobolin, Northern Rivers and Griffith Post Polio Support Groups **do not meet**. Central Coast, Inner West, Metropolitan Evening and Nepean **are very low on membership numbers**. ACT, Albury/Wodonga, Hills District, Hunter Area, Northern Beaches, Port Macquarie, Shoalhaven, Sutherland, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong **are getting along**.

These are the words to me from our Post Polio Support Group Convenors:

<i>"unable to continue due to ill health"</i>
<i>"membership has been hit hard due to the illness of ..."</i>
<i>"two of our group have passed away"</i>
<i>"meeting will continue as long as people are able to come"</i>
<i>"all members are finding that they are deteriorating gradually"</i>
<i>"the group held only one meeting this year as they could not sustain any more due to illness and other life matters"</i>
<i>"three members have not been well so unable to meet regularly but those who can gather occasionally"</i>
<i>"health problems are becoming more frequent with the passage of time"</i>
<i>"we are saddened to lose 3 members in recent times"</i>
<i>"this small group is depleted mostly through illness, frailty and age"</i>
<i>"long serving Convenor passed away early this year"</i>
<i>"one of our long standing members is housebound in a wheelchair and has many problems living alone – our Convenor rings or visits when she can"</i>
<i>"one original member passed away in May"</i>
<i>"over the past years health problems have become more frequent and there is a dropping membership"</i>

These quotes may be long and boring to the reader but are fatally true and a sign to us of the future of Polio NSW if we do not all urgently make an effort to gain new membership not only of Polio NSW but also of our Post-Polio Support Groups from the existing membership.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY	Convenor: Brian Wilson	02 6255 0875
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The past year has seen the numbers attending meetings drop off slightly. Sadly, long time member Roger Smith passed away in August. However the ACT Support Group has a core group of members who enjoy the meetings and are keen to continue supporting the group. The present membership is 28 and average meeting numbers are 12. During the year, they have had a number of enquiries about the Support Group from new polio survivors and existing members, including three from the Canberra conference. In the last year they only had one guest speaker, from Hughes Hydrotherapy – a purpose-built pool with facilities for the disabled. They also enjoyed two lunch outings, and of course the Christmas party. Brian's register of polio survivors who have made enquiries of the group stands at 157 from the ACT and surrounding regions.

ALBURY / WODONGA	Convenor: Margaret Bennie	02 6021 5568
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The Group meets four times a year at the Commercial Club in Albury, over lunch where they can all join in the conversation. They also meet up with the Wangaratta group a couple of times a year. It is very difficult to get new people to join but they have had a couple lately which is good. They seem to get between 6 and 10 at their meetings but do hope to get more. There has been much sorrow during the last 12 months as the Group has had 4 members pass away, including founder Neil von Schill. All were very regular members at meetings and are dearly missed. Margaret has been putting posters up where she can to advertise and in June 2014 she gave a talk to the Rotary Club of West Wodonga – she does hope that word gets around about the Support Group and that they are there to help. As with other Groups, Margaret thinks that one of the big problems is that they are all aging and mobility is becoming a big problem for many. Margaret participated in the “We’re Still Here!” Campaign and will be going to Canberra for the conference.

BANKSTOWN	Interim Contact: Gary Fuller	02 9523 2428
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The Group has not met for many years due to the slow fall off of membership. Pamela Solomon has carried on as Convenor, the position she accepted in 2000 in better times but she now has family, health and work commitments which has made it impossible to carry on as Convenor and has submitted her resignation after 14 years. The late Neil von Schill spoke very highly of her efforts when he called upon her to help him in his work, including carrying on as Convenor even though the Group had no members. As current Support Group Coordinator I also thank her for her efforts, and know that Alice Smart will miss Pamela not giving out flyers and posters during *Polio Awareness Month*. Pamela’s dedication in helping polio survivors has been invaluable over the years of her membership furthering the aims of Polio NSW. The best thing that Polio NSW can wish you is good health – thank you, Pamela. A request for interested individuals has been posted in *Network News* for both a Convenor and members.

CANTERBURY / MARRICKVILLE	Convenor: Maura Outterside	02 9718 5803
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The Group is available whenever called upon and meets at the Canterbury-Bankstown Leagues Club which has good facilities and access for drivers, and for people who use public transport being diagonally opposite Belmore Railway Station which has a lift.

CENTRAL COAST	Convenor: Wayne Woolley	02 4342 6154
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(Co-Convenor: Ann Connors) The Group continues to meet from 10 am to noon on the first Saturday of the month at the Kincumber Neighbourhood Community Centre at Kincumber, but most meetings do go over time! Conversation just flows and discussion centres on polio and post-polio syndrome matters, but often a lot broader. The Group had 7 members last year, and 8 members this year with the addition of new member Mary Baggott – an increase of a very healthy 12%.

COFFS COAST	Convenor: Shirley Barnett	02 6651 9098
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Convenor Shirley Barnett is the sole member of this Group and has been for some years but there seems to be no interest in the area. I thank Shirley for being most happy to carry on with the position of Convenor. This year she has regularly kept in touch with Polio NSW, with Committee Member Alice Smart and with the Support Group Coordinator. Shirley distributed leaflets and posters during *Polio Awareness Month*, answered a number of phone calls enquiring about polio and Polio NSW, as well as speaking about polio at the Rotary District 9650 Conference at Coffs Harbour in March 2014.

CONDOBOLIN	Convenor: Bill Worthington	02 6895 2870
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Bill knows of two local polio survivors but sees them regularly in town – one of them is his sister. Bill is still available if needed at any time.

DUBBO	Interim Contact: Gary Fuller	02 9523 2428
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The report about this Group is the same as last year as it has not operated for some time. A request for interested individuals has been posted in *Network News* for both a Convenor and members.

GRIFFITH	Convenor: Dawn Beaumont-Stevens	02 6963 0880
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This Group has not met for a number of years. There are a number of polio survivors in the city but they are not interested in Polio NSW membership. Like a lot of our “Convenors without members”, Dawn still publicises Polio NSW with her friends, and distributes *Polio Awareness Month* material to doctors, dentists and shops around Griffith.

HILLS DISTRICT	Convenor: Moya Adams	02 9144 3830
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The Group meets on the second Monday of each month (except January), at the West Pennant Hills Bowling Club from 10:30 am to 12 noon. They are fortunate in having access to the Club’s Boardroom for their

meetings, giving them a quiet space. During the year, attendance has averaged six, with the largest meetings having eight people present. During 2014 they were joined by three new members, two of whom attend regularly. Most members of the Group stay on to lunch in the Club's restaurant, providing a good opportunity for general conversation and getting to know each other more. Their meetings are informal, and they take turns around the group in sharing news or raising problems that they have encountered. In this way, they not only have a chance to share their current problems and successes, but also to learn from each other, often finding solutions and information that helps members in their own post-polio journey. This year they have not had any visiting speakers. Members also keep up-to-date with Polio NSW and Polio Australia news, and have the benefit of having Sue Ellis, Vice President of Polio NSW, as a member and assisting with the group. Seven members of the Hills Support Group attended the NSW *Mid-Year Conference* in July, three of them accompanied by their partners, which they found helpful – a very positive experience for all.

HUNTER AREA	Convenor: Wendy Chaff	02 4957 5254
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This Support Group celebrated their 22nd Anniversary in September. Enthusiasm remains high, with participation by regulars who are supportive of each other and appreciative of the Management Committee's efforts to keep things rolling. Members share helpful hints and experiences, and make suggestions. Guest speakers have been a Textile Artist talking about natural history illustration; a Nun who is a retired Gaelic Chaplain; an overseas aid worker from Compassion; and an adviser from Calvary Aged Care on changes being made to the system. From the Group's inception it has been encouraging that the polio survivors have been strongly supported and accompanied by their spouses, and sometimes by relatives (their sisters/brothers or sons/daughters, cousins, or friends). Over the past year attendance at meetings has varied from 28 to 13. Numerous apologies are received each month – due to health or mobility problems, difficulty with transport, and other unavoidable commitments. People often are willing and eager, but not able. That is regrettable, but not surprising. Monthly meetings are still held at Toronto Workers Club, who freely provide space to meet in the auditorium or bistro area. Those who can stay on after the meeting closes at 12 noon enjoy pre-ordered meals and extended chat time. Wendy's bi-monthly newsletter (*News Report*) keeps everyone in touch and informed about happenings near and far – those who can't get to meetings don't need to feel left out.

INNER WEST	Convenor: Claire Dawson	02 9713 6565
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Now in its 23rd year, the Group now has 4 members regularly attending; their numbers have been gradually diminishing due to ill health. They do not have guest speakers or any projects for next year, and are not active during *Polio Awareness Month*. They meet to talk among themselves, enjoy a friendly lunch, and solve the world's problems.

METROPOLITAN EVENING	Convenor: Maura Outterside	02 9718 5803
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Convenor Maura Outterside and member Diane Shipp meet at 6 pm on Thursday night at the Canterbury-Bankstown Leagues Club which has good facilities and access for drivers, and for people who use public transport being diagonally opposite Belmore Railway Station, which has a lift. They do look forward to and would welcome any new members.

NEPEAN	Convenor: Madeline Coelho	02 4751 1272 / 0484 430 776
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The Nepean Polio Support Group had not met for a number of years and in late 2013 the existing Convenor, Lesley Lewis (who had been in the role since the Group's establishment), retired after many years of very bad health. Polio NSW wishes to express our appreciation for the dedication Leslie made in the original organisation of the Nepean Polio Support Group and continuing on as Convenor even without members. This dedication in helping polio survivors has been invaluable to the aims of Polio NSW. We were fortunate that the Group was revitalised this year by Madeline Coelho when she became its new Convenor. It was decided that the Group would meet at Penrith RSL (which has generously waived fees) with the first meeting held in February 2014, and thereafter scheduled for the third Monday every month. The Group now has a number of keen members and is meeting in the Maze Restaurant which has proved to be a satisfactory venue.

NORTHERN BEACHES	Convenor: Pat Featherstone	02 9970 7790
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The Group continues with 7 regular and 1 occasional polio survivors, and 2 regular and 2 occasional spouses. Those who don't attend keep in touch by phone. It is a very friendly Group with members who share knowledge and give support where needed, having discussions of articles of interest in *Network News* and the media. Being low in numbers they do not have guest speakers or plan any projects. The Group does maintain a very family atmosphere at their morning coffee and some members follow up by having lunch together.

NORTHERN RIVERS	Convenor: Rosalie Kennedy	02 6687 9640 / 0412 827 926
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The Northern Rivers Polio Support Group did not hold any meetings this year. Rosalie still keeps in touch by email with two of the Group members who used to attend regularly. Meetings were held in Ballina and Lismore to make meetings accessible for those who have transport problems. This year has been busy work wise for Rosalie and she has slowed down dramatically with her own post-polio health issues. Many of the old members are now too ill or frail to attend, or they have moved. Rosalie recently found out that a member had suffered a stroke and is now in a Nursing Home. Rosalie has been regularly contacted by relatives of polio survivors who are asking her for information about any medical practitioners in her area who have any understanding of how to treat their loved one. She can only tell them of her personal experience. She gave her GP a copy of *Living with Late Effects of Polio*, and other literature from the website which he has found to be interesting.

NYNGAN	Interim Contact: Gary Fuller	02 9523 2428
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When Convenor Marion Wardman passed away last year Ruth Williamson took over the role as Convenor. Unfortunately, due to ill health, Ruth has now left Nyngan to live with her daughter in Sydney. Since she took over as Convenor of the Nyngan Group, Ruth has always given Gary as Support Group Coordinator the assistance that he truly needed for which he personally thanks her. Gary likewise knows that Alice Smart would have missed Ruth not giving out flyers and posters during this year's *Polio Awareness Month*. Ruth's dedication in helping polio survivors has been invaluable over the years of her membership of the Nyngan Polio Support Group, furthering the aims of Polio NSW. The best thing we can wish Ruth is better health. If any members in the Nyngan area would like to re-start this Group, please contact Gary.

PORT MACQUARIE	Convenor: Gail Hassall	6581 4759 / 0432 881 237
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There are 20 members of this Group, and they average 8 to 10 at each meeting (1st Saturday of every 2nd month, commencing February). This year they have welcomed three new members into the Group. One of their aims for the year had been to increase membership by advertising and marketing the Group but, in fact, the new members contacted them through first contacting Polio NSW. Members all do their bit by putting posters and pamphlets in medical and health facilities that they regularly attend. Gail would like to thank Alice Smart for sending them the recent range of brochures for their continued 'marketing'. Each meeting is informal – combining social contact with current issues of PPS, information and ideas about local resources or practitioners, plus any topic that a member may bring for discussion. In between meetings, Gail sends out a newsletter that includes a report of the previous meeting and any other items of interest, especially for those unable to attend meetings. The Group's aims for next year are to continue to raise awareness of polio and its late effects; generate ideas to increase their membership; promote the Group and Polio NSW by various means; seek opportunities as guest speakers; distribute Polio NSW awareness publications; and keep on smiling!

SHOALHAVEN	Convenor: Dorothy Schünmann	0407 521 979
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The Shoalhaven Group meets on the third Friday of each month. Some members are finding it more difficult to get to meetings which is affecting numbers. They were pleased, however, to welcome three new members during the year: Visko Van Der Merwe, Norma Weatherall and Rod McCauley. They meet for lunch at the Bomaderry Bowling Club, meeting at 12 noon so they can be on their way home by 2:30 pm. Member Alex Rainnie is 87 years old and goes to every meeting by train from Gerringong; she contracted polio in 1927.

SUTHERLAND	Convenor: Ruth Hatton	02 9525 3987
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(Co-Convenor: Carolyn Summers, 02 8544 0492) The Sutherland Support Group has an average attendance of 8 (varying from 6 to 12) – some are no longer able to attend as post-polio syndrome and other health problems have caught up with them, but Ruth and Carolyn always get a good roll up at their Christmas function which is a great time for catching up. Due to a change of venue over the 2013 Christmas season, from the "Tradies Club" at Gynea (who called for \$150 for the room) to the "Menai Club" at Menai (for free), it has been difficult for some members to attend but it was the best that hard-working Co-Convenor Carolyn could arrange in such a short space of time. The Group continues to meet at 2 pm on the first Wednesday of each month. Three members attended the excellent mid-year Seminar at Parramatta and congratulations go to the organisers. The Group has welcomed two new members this year: Leslie Blackburn and Bill Kerton. Bill has had extensive involvement with Post-Polio Support Groups over many years. At each meeting all Group members are called upon to share their experiences over the month. To keep everyone cheerful, Lindsay Tyson usually hands out a page or two of "funnies".

WAGGA WAGGA	Convenor: Isabel Thompson	02 6926 2459
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This Group tends not to meet during the winter but attendance picks up in the warmer months. It is difficult to find speakers so they occasionally play Trivia Games. Some months they just sit and chat which members enjoy. At one meeting a lady did not appear to be very happy but after the meeting she said to Isabel that

it was wonderful to just talk and have a laugh and that this left her feeling much better. It made Isabel feel that she had achieved something in helping a fellow member. That is, of course, one of the great values of our support group network.

WOLLONGONG

Convenor: Dorothy Robinson

02 4271 8655

Please note the new phone number for Convenor Dorothy Robinson. Dorothy's husband Lloyd passed away this year and Gary was told that he had asked for this report at a shocking time: Dorothy was in the midst of dramas relating to changing abode and all involved with becoming single again. Despite this, she still was able to be one of the first to send in an annual report of her Group's activities over the last year – thanks, Dorothy. The Wollongong Group regularly has from 8 to 12 members at their Illawarra Yacht Club meetings – there appears to be 8 sitting at their Reserved Lunch Table at the Club in the photo sent with Dorothy's report. Access to the Club is adequate and meeting conversations range over many topics. Four members enjoyed the *Polio Health and Wellness Retreat* at Baulkham Hills in May and they found that the break, the information and the fellowship were really worth the effort in going. Fay and John Powell plan to attend the *2014 Country Conference* in Canberra. Ian Wilson, Dean of Medicine at the University of Wollongong, who had polio in Adelaide in 1952, attended a recent meeting and they hope to see more of him in the future.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Armidale:	Doug Crocker	02 6772 8335
Blayney / Cowra:	Heather Drady	02 6367 5095
Orange / Bathurst:	Michael Hutchinson	02 6362 8867
Uralla:	Daphne Field	02 6778 4455
Mudgee:	Ella Gaffney	02 6372 1217

Network News

Susan Ellis

During 2013-2014 we are pleased to report that we were able to exceed our goal by publishing and distributing five newsletters – Issues 86 to 90. Our editorial team of two co-editors have continued to be a successful combination with Nola Buck researching articles and editing, and Susan Ellis compiling the newsletter which included articles from both members and from Committee members. Gillian Thomas still offered her expertise in proofing and tweaking the finished product before adding her President's report.

Network News continues to incorporate *Polio Oz News*, which is a newsletter compiled by Mary-ann Liethof, Editor and National Program Manager of Polio Australia, and which features national and international articles about polio. This newsletter is only available electronically and we felt it was of benefit to our members to include this publication in our printed newsletter. It is our aim over the coming year to align the two newsletters by date range, as at present we are usually one edition of *Polio Oz News* behind.

We have been able to produce extensive reports on our seminar presentations with the use of a recorder enabling accurate and detailed information to be transcribed. We hope that this has been useful to our members. It has been pleasing to receive a number of positive comments on our efforts this year, which is always encouraging.

Unfortunately, we have also received a few complaints about the delayed timing of the mail out resulting in not enough warning in regard to upcoming events such as seminars. Please be aware that a reminder calendar of upcoming events is always provided at the end of each newsletter with further details distributed closer to the date. We, of course, would like to be super-efficient and get this information out sooner but there are always so many details to see to with minimal help. The Committee are kept very busy and like all our members, have limited energy and restricted physical capabilities. Remember that your Committee is doing its best and is always appreciative of any help that you may be able to offer, for example, as a volunteer at the mail out sessions or simply by supporting an event through your attendance.

The Newsletter editors would like to thank members for the interesting articles they contributed to the newsletter this year and look forward to their continuing support. We would also like to thank the volunteers who came along and helped at the mail outs, sometimes at very short notice, and with some travelling considerable distances. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the efficiency with which the office staff, led by George Laszuk, prepares for each mail out session making the task so much easier for all.

2013-2014 Seminar Program

Susan Ellis

Our two seminars for this financial year were held on Tuesday 9th July 2013 and Saturday 30th November 2013.

The July seminar, ***Maintaining Our Independence***, was attended by 48 members and friends and consisted of three presentations:

- “It’s Not Always About Age” by Diane Bull, Conjoint Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology, University of Newcastle. Diane spoke about ageing development – “From Womb to Tomb”. This talk encompassed the physiological aspects of ageing such as loss of vision and hearing and the cognitive aspects of ageing such as memory loss (dementia) and problem-solving abilities. Diane maintains that degeneration of cognitive and physical ability is not a function of age and that we can still be achievers as we age. *“As polio survivors, we have already shown the world what we are capable of, so let’s continue the CELEBRATION OF LIFE!”*
- Sue Gorman, Project Officer, Advocacy Support, IDEAS (Information on Disability and Education Awareness Services). Sue spoke about how IDEAS can assist and support people with disabilities, their family and carers to get the help that they need. They are a specialist information service that provides sustainable information on disability to support inclusive communities. IDEAS works to support people with disability to self-advocate, enabling them to make informed decisions about matters of importance to them. This is achieved by providing a range of free information services and products such as how to access different government department or programs such as HACC (Home and Community Care).
- Rebecca Howard, Senior Occupational Therapist, Independent Living Centre NSW. Rebecca spoke about their new premises located at Blacktown and the displays available to help us live independently in our homes eg bathroom, bedroom, kitchen. Rebecca brought a number of items along to demonstrate what can be used to make our lives easier, many are simple solutions. This session was very useful, entertaining and appreciated by all.

The December Seminar, ***Breaking Down Depression and Building Resilience***, was attended by 50 members and followed the 2013 Annual General Meeting. This presentation was given by Anne Reddacliff, a volunteer Community Presenter with the Black Dog Institute. Anne works as a librarian, and is currently completing a PhD in happiness studies. Anne was diagnosed with Bipolar I Disorder at 20 years of age.



The presentation discussed mood disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder, their causes, how to spot early warning signs, what to do, and how to build personal resilience. The desired outcome of the presentation was that people would be better informed, better equipped to identify warning signs, and feel more comfortable seeking help and communicating more openly and honestly. This presentation proved to be very interesting to our members judging by the number of questions and discussion afterwards.

We are keenly aware that many of our members are no longer able to either use public transport or drive themselves to Seminars, Support Group meetings, and other Polio NSW activities. Through the Federal Government’s *Volunteers Grants* initiative, we obtained limited funding for fuel for a volunteer to drive members to/from these activities, and have made vouchers available to members throughout the year.



Despite this initiative, numbers continue to dwindle at Polio NSW events. It is appreciated that many members are unable to attend the Seminars and Conferences for many reasons, not the least of which are increasing age and lessening mobility.

Nevertheless, a considerable effort is required to arrange information sessions for members and acquire presenters who are highly trained professionals in their field giving freely of their time. This is why we encourage as many members as are able to attend any future Seminars. It is not only the presentations that are beneficial to us but the comradery and friendship with other members over the course of the day.

2014 Polio Health and Wellness Retreat

In May 2014, Polio Australia's fifth *Polio Health and Wellness Retreat* returned to NSW where it all began in 2010. The Retreat was held at St Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living in Baulkham Hills – a very peaceful environment and very conducive to sharing and learning new information. Polio survivors from other states joined Polio NSW members to benefit from the world-class program. Pictured below are just some scenes from the highly-successful Retreat which was written up in *Network News* Issues 90 and 91 – more photos and presentation handouts are available on the Polio NSW website.



Webmaster (and Treasurer) Alan Cameron has continued work on populating the new website during the year. With help from the office staff to scan out-of-print issues, Alan has now uploaded nearly every edition of our newsletter (*starting at Issue 1 which was published in November 1988*). The website also made it easy for members to get ready information about Seminars, the Retreat, the Country Conference, and *Polio Awareness Month* activities. We encourage you to visit the website and explore what it has to offer as work continues.

External Support

The organisation continues to maintain friendly relations with the Northcott Society. The Society provides Polio NSW with office space and some administrative assistance with respect to employment of staff, and each year provides one free use of the Northcott auditorium for a one-day Seminar (usually held in July). The Northcott Society's continuing commitment to assist with the production and distribution of Polio NSW publications, particularly *Network News*, is greatly appreciated.

Since January 2005 the Management Committee has been holding its meetings at the centrally located Burwood RSL Club. The Committee acknowledges with thanks the generosity of the Club in providing meeting facilities free of charge, and records in particular its gratitude to the Club's Operations Manager, Dave Viner, who so willingly and obligingly provides any assistance requested.

Committee Attendance Record 2013-2014

Many Committee members travel considerable distances to attend meetings in Burwood – in particular, four members (Merle Thompson, Alan Cameron, Wendy Davies and John Tierney) travelled to meetings from outside the Sydney metropolitan area. In 2014, in recognition of travel and fatigue issues in particular, the Committee resolved to meet quarterly rather than bi-monthly, supplemented by email meetings as necessary. Occasional absences by Committee members during the year were due in the main to illness.

	Meetings Held Jul – Dec 2013		Meetings Held Jan – Jun 2014	
	Attended	Possible Attendance	Attended	Possible Attendance
Charles Anderson	3	3	3	3
Anne Buchanan	3	3	3	3
Nola Buck	3	3	3	3
Alan Cameron	2	3	3	3
Wendy Davies	2	3	---	---
Susan Ellis	3	3	3	3
Barbara Fuller	2	3	2	3
Gary Fuller	3	3	3	3
Anne O'Halloran	---	---	2	3
Alice Smart	3	3	3	3
Gillian Thomas	2	3	3	3
Merle Thompson	3	3	3	3
John Tierney	2	3	2	3

The Year Ahead

With a NSW state election early in 2015, lobbying for services for polio survivors in this state has been stepped up and will continue as the election approaches. On another front, at year end there were some promising early signs of a breakthrough in the establishment of a Post-Polio Clinic in Sydney – watch for updates in *Network News*. As always, sourcing funding avenues remains a top priority and we call on any member with ideas, contacts and/or submission writing expertise to get in touch with the Committee.

The Management Committee commends this Twenty-Sixth Annual Report to you. We wish the incoming Committee a successful year as they work to further Polio NSW's aims and continue to provide information and support services to polio survivors throughout NSW and the ACT.