



**POST - POLIO NETWORK (NSW) INC.**

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**NETWORK NEWS**

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**Patron: Professor Emeritus Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE FAA FRS**

**Special  
Dubbo Conference  
Souvenir Edition**

Anyone who attended the Zoo walk-around at Dubbo can't stop talking about the giraffe's tongue – now you can see why !



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**President's Corner**

**Gillian Thomas**

Welcome to this bonus *Network News* which brings a report on the Dubbo Mini-Conference held on 6 and 7 September. My thanks to Bing Mak, Brian Wilson, Gregg Kirkwood and Peter Garde for providing the photographs included in this issue.

The Agenda for our **Fifteenth Annual General Meeting** to be held on **29 November** is enclosed, including details about the AGM Seminar *Obstructive Sleep Apnoea* to be presented by Professor David Barnes, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. We look forward to seeing you there - the next *Network News* with all your favourite features and the Network's 2002/2003 Annual Report and Financial Statements will be posted in November.

You will also find **Post-Polio Awareness Week, 1-7 November**, material included with this issue. If you are able, please help us to get the word out about the late effects of polio by putting posters up somewhere in your local community. If you want more posters please ring Alice on (02) 9747 4694. We have also prepared an Awareness Week Media Release for use by Support Group Convenors and Regional Representatives. If anyone else is able to help promote the Week by contacting your local newspaper, radio or television and offering to tell your polio story, please contact Alice to have a Media Release and Network information sent to you. We would appreciate receiving a copy of any publicity you are able to organise.

Don't forget the **picnic on 1 November** at the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, 30 Taylor Place, Theresa Park (near Camden), hosted by Network member, Sister Diadema. From 10:30 am you can enjoy a picnic in peaceful surroundings. It is very generous of the Sisters to open their home to us and it is a great way to help celebrate Post-Polio Awareness Week. A map is available to help you get there. Please ring Alice with any enquiries.

Finally, **Prince Henry Hospital** celebrated its **122nd anniversary** on Saturday 27 September. The celebrations were more low-key than last year but the Network again had a stand and helped to farewell the Hospital. Thanks to the members who made it out to Little Bay on the day and came by to say hello, especially those who helped on the stand.

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# Dubbo Conference a Great Success

**Neil von Schill**

**Support Group Co-ordinator**

On the weekend of 6 and 7 September members, partners and friends from throughout the state travelled to Dubbo to attend the Network's Mini-Conference. The response was excellent with approximately 80 people in attendance. A large contingent travelled from Sydney and towns throughout the Central West were also well represented. People came from as far south as Melbourne, as far north as Mullumbimby, west to Lightning Ridge and east to the north coast and south coast.

I much appreciated the assistance of Committee Members in organising the event, and extend a special thanks to Gregg Kirkwood, Convener of our *Dubbo Support Group*, for hosting us at the Dubbo Showground venue and providing magnificent weather!!!

We also wish to thank all presenters for their effort and contribution and for travelling long distances to be with us. Each speaker was presented with a finely-crafted pen, hand-made from Australian timber, as a memento of the occasion.



*Above and below* – Network members and friends soaking up the atmosphere and the information on offer at the Mini-Conference. For many country members it was the first Network gathering they had attended and many commented on the warmth and friendship which was evident.





The conference was addressed by Jac Cousin (*left*), physiotherapist from Canberra, and Paul Galy (*right*), orthotist / prosthetist / pedorthist from Bondi, whose respective presentations on pain management and future directions for makers of medical grade footwear were well received.



The screening of the film *“The Epidemic – I don’t remember anything but I’ll never forget”* had a stunning effect on the audience. Attendees were moved to share reflections on their polio experiences brought to mind by the “walk down memory lane” with Danish film-maker Neils Frandsen. The film is now doing the rounds of our Support Groups.



Convenor of the Network’s *Northern Rivers Support Group*, Rosalie Kennedy from Lismore, shared her experiences on the benefits of Support Groups.

She told how her involvement with polio support groups led her from living in isolation and denial to the polio survivor she is today, empowered to speak out about her polio experience and help others to cope with their changing lives.

As Rosalie notes *“A support group circle is unique. It is an empathetic self-help service. To function effectively it must be positive and supportive. Support group members are there to provide lots of encouragement, to listen and to participate in the discussion about ‘polio life’. It is not a lobby group or a fund raising group.”*

Finally, Sue Gorman told us about the many services offered by her organisation, IDEAS.

A raffle which had been started at the Members’ Forum in June was drawn at afternoon tea. Thanks to the generous donation of prizes, the raffle realised \$290 which was put towards the cost of running the Mini-Conference.

<b>Prize</b>	<b>Donated by</b>	<b>Drawn by</b>	<b>Won by</b>
Avon Gift Basket	Elizabeth Woods	Paul Galy	Alice Smart
Crocheted Rug	Melitta Kovacs	Sue Gorman	Isabel Thompson
Knee Rug	Pamela Marchant	Bob Tonazzi	Ken Hannaford

In the evening over 50 participants joined us for dinner at the Dubbo RSL Club where people enjoyed fellowship and the opportunity to extend their personal network.



There was food a-plenty on offer at the RSL Bistro, although some preferred to talk rather than eat – the chance to chat at length with friends old and new could not be missed!

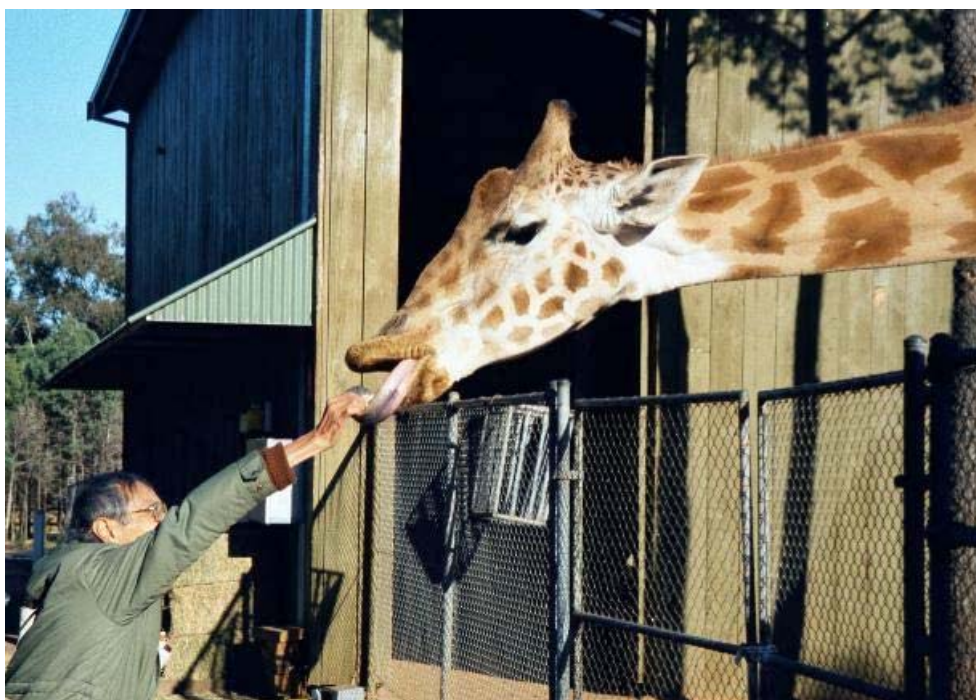
On the Sunday morning 51 souls showed their enthusiasm by being at the gates of the Western Plains Zoo by 6:30 am to participate in an Early Morning Zoo Walk. People walked, hobbled, drove or were pushed around the inner sanctums of the Zoo where they experienced a behind-the-scenes look at a variety of exotic animals.



Seminar Co-ordinator, Bing Mak, took this picture of the man-made lake in the middle of the Western Plains Zoo, tranquil in the early morning light.



The Zoo visit included feeding the giraffes who have the longest tongues!!!



Bing feeding *that* giraffe at the Western Plains Zoo

We then adjourned to the Zoo cafeteria for a well deserved cooked breakfast which was relished by all. Even those who had “walked on wheels” were ravenous after the early start and the brisk morning air.

Following breakfast some members enjoyed more of the Zoo whilst Support Group Convenors and Management Committee members returned to the Dubbo Showground for a workshop session. There were 12 Convenors present as well as several other Network members who are keen to either establish a Support Group in their area or act as a Regional Representative which was very encouraging. As a result we hope to see representation extended to four new country areas. We were also pleased to welcome Jill Pickering who was representing the Victorian Polio Network. Convenors reported on activities and there was a useful exchange of ideas.



Network Support Group Convenors and Regional Representatives meeting with Management Committee members after the Zoo walk-around. It was an invaluable opportunity for Network volunteers from across the state to network with each other. It was interesting to note how the various Groups have developed in diverse ways as a result of the different environments in which they operate, but whether they meet in person, over the phone, or by mail, all have friendship and mutual support at their core.



## Victims of polio unite

People suffering from polio and post polio, a condition that follows the illness, should know they are not alone.

For the first time a mini post polio conference was held in Dubbo for those affected by the condition.

About 70 people attended the event, some travelling from as far as Canberra, Trangie, Forbes, Narromine, Wellington, Tamworth, Orange and Victoria.

"It's been an overwhelming response with very good questions asked and positive feedback from those who attended," Dubbo post polio support group convener Gregg Kirkwood said.

"It was good for people who are affected by these problems to know they're not alone," he said.

The event was sponsored by the NSW Post-Polio Network.

☐ Lyn and Merle Thompson with Paul Galy.

☐ Barbara and Bob Steer of Trangle.

☐ Gillian Thomas with Neil von Schill.

☐ Maura Outterside and George Laszuk.

☐ Frank and Pat Featherstone.

☐ Gordon and Dot Kitto.

The publicity arranged by *Dubbo Support Group* Convener, Gregg Kirkwood, both before and after the Mini-Conference did much to raise the profile of the Network in the region, and resulted in us welcoming several new members to the Network. On 3 September the *Daily Liberal* published a story featuring Gregg, "*Battling Polio's Lingerin Legacy*". His story attracted wide interest with phone calls taken from areas south west of Forbes, Narromine, Trangie, Cobar, Wellington and Orange as well as local calls from Dubbo. The paper also arranged for a photographer to attend the Conference. The above clipping from the *Daily Liberal* the week after the Conference shows just a few of the 80 people who attended.

In thanking the paper for the coverage provided, Gregg wrote "*Without your support, it is difficult for organisations such as ours to reach out to people who have been in contact with polio. Thanks to you and your newspaper there is now much greater awareness in the community on the whole issue of polio and the late effects of this virus.*"



Left  
Neil von Schill  
Support Group  
Co-ordinator



Right  
Gregg Kirkwood  
Dubbo Support  
Group Convener

On behalf of the Management Committee, Neil and Gregg would like to express their sincere thanks to all the Network members who made the effort to travel to Dubbo to participate in a regional Conference. The Committee has resolved to hold another Conference in a regional centre in 2005. In this regard, the Committee was pleased to receive feedback from several Dubbo Conference attendees which will help us to streamline arrangements for future events.



# Support Group News

**Neil von Schill**

**Support Group Co-ordinator**

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**Email: [support@post-polionetwork.org.au](mailto:support@post-polionetwork.org.au)**



Two new Support Groups are commencing in November – if you live in the Port Macquarie or Marrickville areas we hope you will be able to attend and help get the Groups off to a good start.

In **Port Macquarie** convenor, **Pat Adamson**, has been working very hard to organise an inaugural meeting to establish a Support Group in her area. Pat has arranged to meet at the Recreation Hall of the Retreat Village, 3 Lincoln Road, Port Macquarie on **Friday 7 November 2003** commencing at **5:00 pm**. She would welcome a call from members who are interested in attending and can be contacted on **02 6581 3704**.

Earlier this year the Network received assistance through Marrickville Council's Community Grants to help establish a Support Group in the **Marrickville** area. The inaugural meeting will be held at the **Petersham RSL Club** which is in close proximity to Petersham station, local bus routes and has ample parking. The meeting will be held in the auditorium which is on the first level, to the left of the stairs and lift, on **Thursday 27 November 2003** commencing at **2:00 pm**. This will be followed by afternoon tea in the Coffee Shop. Any members who are interested in attending are asked to ring me on **02 6025 6169**. I will be delighted to hear from you!



## Post-Polio Post



*Member Agnes Castle from Coffs Harbour thoroughly enjoyed her first attendance at a Network gathering and very kindly thanked the organisers for getting the show "on the road".*

Dear Gillian

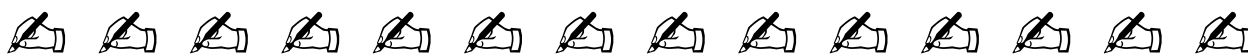
A very sincere "thank you" to yourself, Neil, Gregg, Peter, Merle (the list could go on and on) for the wonderful time we had in Dubbo at the Mini-Conference.

I realise the team-work and organisation that goes on behind the scenes to make a Conference like this such a success, and as it was my first experience of a Mini-Conference, I say congratulations to all concerned for the informative presentations and the professionalism that was evident during the whole of the proceedings.

The first-class catering and the Western Plains Zoo visit were all part of making the weekend an unforgettable experience for us all.

Once again, many thanks to a hard-working team for caring enough to make our lives a little easier.

God bless you all.



**If you can help to get the word out about the late effects of polio by putting Network pamphlets on display in, for example, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries or waiting rooms, clinics, shopping centre notice boards, libraries and community health centres, please contact Alice (02 9747 4694) and she will post some out to you.**



# Post-Polio Network

**Fifteenth**

**Annual General Meeting**

**followed by a Seminar**

**"Obstructive Sleep Apnoea"**

presented by Professor David Barnes

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

*see further details on the enclosed AGM Agenda*

**Saturday  
29 November  
2003**

commencing  
at 11:00 am

Independent  
Living Centre  
600 Victoria Rd  
Ryde

## Network Volunteers – Who Does What

At our recent Members' Forum, it was requested that the names, roles and contact details of the Network's core volunteers be included in *Network News* to help members make contact with the right person. Many of these details have appeared in previous issues of the Newsletter, but the consolidated list below should make it easier for members to get in touch. The list will appear in each *Network News* as space permits.

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