



## Polio still affecting the young

October is Polio Awareness Month, with [Polio SA](#) highlighting that while many think it a disease of the past, over 400,000 Australians have had polio at some stage and, with this year's outbreak in [Papua New Guinea](#), it has never been more important to vaccinate our children against this debilitating disease.

Polio Australia will be hosting two large national events in Adelaide in October, with interstate guests to descend on the state to raise awareness and funds at the annual 'Walk With Me' walk and four-day Health and Wellness Retreat.

Many Australians don't remember the terrible impact that the poliovirus had, which initially presented as flu-like symptoms and went on to cause paralysis in 1 in 200 cases, with some children being sent away from their families and put into care homes for years at a time.

Decades after the poliomyelitis epidemics in Australia, the aftermath of the disease is now becoming evident in our ageing 'polio population' too. The problem is also exacerbated by a younger population, some only in their thirties, who are migrating to Australia and who also require management and support.

[Kim](#), 34, was born in Cambodia, and contracted polio when she was less than one year old. She migrated to Australia with her family as a nine-year-old.

"I'd like the community to understand the ongoing impact that polio has on those of us who have experienced it – physically as well as emotionally."

"Vaccination against polio is as necessary as prevention. It's still happening all over the world, in pockets here and there. The more information we can spread about this, the better," says Kim.

Polio SA president Brett Howard advises that polio is only a plane flight away and complacency could end up in an Australian outbreak if we're not careful.

"It is common that those who had polio when they were younger, like me, have fought hard to overcome polio."

"However, the younger generation are simply not aware that by deciding to not immunise the next generation, the country could be at risk of an outbreak, like our neighbours in PNG," says Brett.

As the work to end polio continues worldwide, here in South Australia awareness-raising and fundraising events are happening across the state to keep fighting the disease, improve quality of life and create hope for survivors living with the Late Effects of Polio.

Those who suffered when they were younger may be experiencing the Late Effects of Polio (LEoP) or Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS), with symptoms being misdiagnosed or left untreated.

Over the month, events for health professionals and those impacted by polio or PPS are happening across the state:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
2 Oct	Clinical Practice Workshops for Health Professionals	Port Pirie
3 Oct	Polio Survivor Info Session	Yorke Peninsula
4 Oct	Clinical Practice Workshops for Health Professionals	Adelaide
6 Oct	Polio Survivor Info Session	Glenunga
8 Oct	Clinical Practice Workshops for Health Professionals	Whyalla
11 Oct	<a href="#">Walk With Me</a> (National Event). 70+ people attending, including interstate guests	Glenelg
11 - 14 Oct	Health and Wellness Retreat (National Event).	Glenelg

To join Polio SA go to [www.poliosa.org.au](http://www.poliosa.org.au) or call 0466 893 402 to find out more about the above events.

To stay up to date with the latest news, events and stories subscribe to the Polio SA newsletter via the website.

**ENDS**

**For further information, hi-res photos & interviews please contact:**

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#### **About Polio SA**

Polio SA is a not for profit organisation which provides information about the late effects of polio and Post Polio Syndrome (PPS) to members and the public. PPS is the late effect of polio, usually occurring 20 to 40 years after the initial infection.

Polio SA provides a support network through consultations, referrals and social gatherings. It also provides advice and information for members to ensure they are aware of their rights regarding their disability.

[www.poliosa.org.au](http://www.poliosa.org.au)