



Late effects of polio discussion paper released

The House of Representatives Health and Ageing Committee today released its discussion paper, *Late Effects of Polio/Post Polio Syndrome* which highlights the need for greater awareness to improve diagnosis and management of the condition.

Key recommendations of the report include establishing measures to help estimate the number of people living with the late effects of polio/post polio syndrome (LEOP/PPS) and increasing awareness of LEOP/PPS amongst medical students and experienced medical practitioners.

Although polio was eradicated in Australia in the year 2000, it is believed that between 20 000 and 40 000 Australians were infected by the virus between the 1930s and 1960s. Many years after contracting the initial infection, some polio survivors have developed a range of biomechanical and neurological symptoms known as LEOP/PPS.

Committee Chair, Mr Steve Georganas, said that with LEOP/PPS symptoms being largely unrecognised to date, there is a clear need for improved diagnosis.

“It is imperative that awareness of LEOP/PPS is raised within the medical community, including during undergraduate medical training and also within the community at large. These initiatives would be aimed at ensuring that clinical history of polio is considered when assessing symptoms,” Mr Georganas said.

The committee’s report, which focussed on a number of key areas including the prevalence, diagnosis, management, treatment and support of LEOP/PPS was based on a roundtable that brought together a range of participants with interests in the advocacy, support, treatment or management of LEOP/PPS. It highlighted the substantial physical, social, emotional and financial effects that LEOP/PPS has on its sufferers.

“Improved diagnosis will lead to better estimates of the prevalence of the condition and in turn better management and treatment outcomes for LEOP/PPS sufferers,” he said.

Copies of the committee’s discussion paper may be obtained from the committee’s website www.aph.gov.au/haa.

For media comment: Contact Ms Hannah Frank from the Office of Steve Georganas MP on 0419 849 048.

For all other enquiries, please contact the Committee Secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa.