

Molly Morrissey

N17HB109

Effects of polio still linger for many

Alana Rosenbaum

A BOUT of polio more than 73 years ago left Molly Morrissey with one hand significantly smaller than the other.

But an inability to water ski was the only limitation imposed by a right hand that remains weak to this day.

"I have been to a few meetings for people who have had polio and I feel like a bit of a fraud because I am quite fit," Ms Morrissey said.

At the age of five, Ms Morrissey was hospitalised with poliomyelitis, a virus that attacks the central nervous system.

Her only memories of the illness are needing to wear a splint to school and her mother bathing her bad arm.

"She would soak my arm in salt water and massage it," she said.

Ms Morrissey was one of 40,000 Australian children identified with poliomyelitis between 1930 and 1960, before vaccines all but eradicated the virus in the developed world.

But Mary-Ann Liethof of ParaQuad Victoria estimated that the illness went undiagnosed in a further 360,000 Australians, who contracted it in a milder form.

Ms Liethof said many sufferers were only now feeling the late effects of the disease.

She said polio was associated with the death of motor neurons, most of which were replaced in the healing. But the new motor

neurons were not as resilient as the originals and often showed signs of distress in old age, Ms Liethof said. She said the residual effects of polio, including muscle and joint pain, unusual tiredness, cramping, twitching and limping, were often misdiagnosed by doctors.

The Livingstone Community Centre at 1 Livingstone St, Heidelberg, will host a free, two-hour session on the late effects of polio on Tuesday, November 15, from 1pm. Inquiries: 9786 1445.

A valuable invention

Alexandra Roginski

TEACHING aide Sylvia Sarris, of St Helena, never aimed to become a patented designer. But that changed when she was confronted with the challenge of trying to find a suitable way for her daughter, Melina, to carry vital medical equipment needed to treat her life-threatening food allergies.

Ms Sarris designed an insulated pouch in which Melina stores the adrenalin auto injector that is the first line of defence if she suffers anaphylactic shock from eating food to which she is allergic.

Melina's allergies appeared as a baby.

Now 17, she has outgrown all of them except cashew nuts.

"The first time we found out she was allergic to eggs was when she was six months and was given chocolate mousse," Ms Sarris said. "She swelled up and was very ill. We had to take her to hospital."

Because of her mother's vigilance, that first attack has been the only one, but Melina still carries the auto injector with her everywhere - just in case.

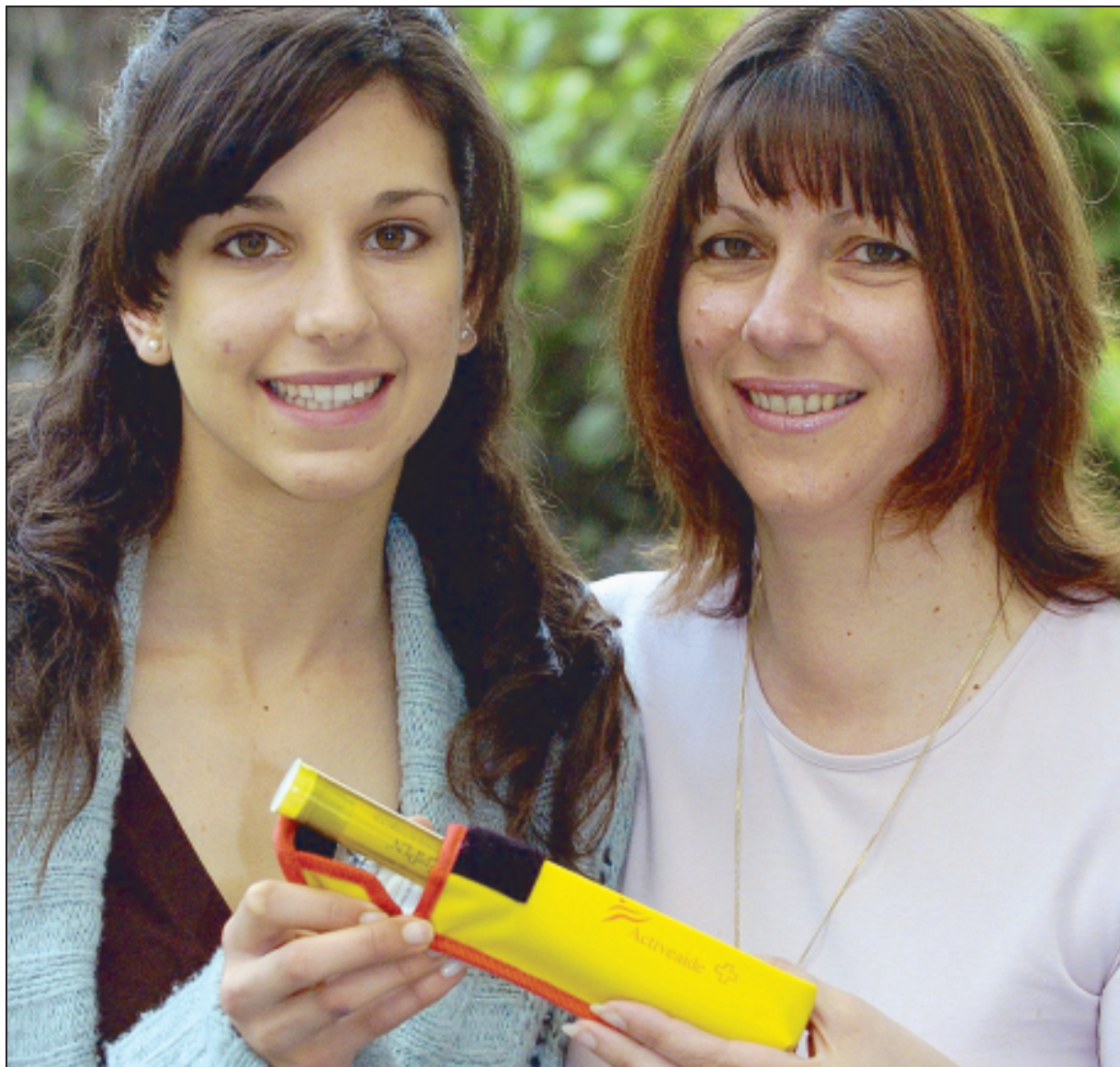
Realising the value of the portable pouch for other children and adults who suffered anaphylactic shock, Ms Sarris co-founded a business, Activeaid, that manufactures the pouches.

"I just felt from the beginning that there was a need for a product to enable people to keep the auto adrenalin injector with them at all times," Ms Sarris said.

She said the compact pouch also insulated the adrenalin, which must be stored at a temperature of less than 30C.

People with allergies and support groups for anaphylaxis have welcomed Mrs Sarris's invention.

Jenny Brown, head nurse in the allergy department of the Royal Children's Hospital, said she showed the pouch to patients as one



Sylvia Sarris with her daughter Melina.

Picture: LAWRENCE PINDER N15DV307

possible transportation method when teaching them about auto injectors.

"It will certainly make it easier for teenagers who carry their own

(adrenalin)", she said. "And it's great for adults who are out hiking, travelling the world, or backpacking."

"It's a convenient way of carrying

the device when you're on the move."

For more information about the auto adrenalin injector pouch, go to www.activeaide.com.

In brief

Dingo protection

A PUSH to save the dingo will be launched at Montsalvat in Eltham on Sunday, October 30. Eltham Labor MP Steve Herbert will launch the Dingo CARE Network's species recovery program for the Australian predator at 3pm. Dr Ian Gunn, a veterinarian and director of the Animal Gene Storage and Resource Centre of Australia at Monash University, will be the main speaker.

Pet owner grief

RSPCA Victoria and the Centre for Grief Education have set up a companion animal loss support group for pet owners who have lost a loved animal. The support group meets on the second Saturday of each month at the RSPCA Education Centre, Burwood Highway, Burwood East. Information: 9224 2222.

Free water audits

YARRA Valley Water and Archicentre have teamed up to promote free water audits and home safety inspections for pensioners and health card holders. Yarra Valley Water can arrange for a plumber to carry out a water efficiency audit and if needed fix inefficient appliances to conserve water as part of its Smart Homes program. Archicentre's service provides an architect to give a report and cost estimate on necessary repairs and safety additions.

Program kicks off

THE NEW Telstra Football Anytime program aims to increase the number of soccer players at grassroots level. The program, which seeks to attract boys and girls, provides a chance for children aged six to 12 to learn how to play the game through one-hour coaching sessions. For information phone (02) 8354 5555.

Protecting our lifestyle

Protecting our lifestyle

Victoria affords its residents many lifestyle privileges including fresh air, clean water and plenty of green open spaces. While we enjoy these benefits today, we mustn't forget to respect our environment and its natural resources to ensure our children and grandchildren continue to enjoy the same privileges. To do so, we need to make sustainability part of our everyday lives.

A sustainable state

The State Government recently launched the Victorian Environmental Sustainability Framework, which outlines our main environmental challenges, why achieving sustainability is so important and the steps we all need to take to get there.

The framework explains three key directions that government, business and community sectors must integrate into everything they do: maintain and restore natural assets, use resources more efficiently and reduce everyday environmental impacts.

These directions are detailed through a set of 13 environmental objectives and targets aimed at guiding Victoria towards — and positioning it as a world leader in — environmental sustainability.

Take the challenge

One initiative to help Victorians get started is the Sustainables Household Challenge, which invites people to commit to making 10 simple changes to their daily habits.

Examples include taking shorter showers, switching to Green Power, putting food scraps in a compost bin or worm farm, using chemical-free cleaning methods and opting to walk, cycle or catch public transport instead of using the car.

By signing up to the challenge, you'll also have the chance to win great prizes. For more information visit <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/thesustainables>

Tony Kelly, Managing Director