

WINNING THE WAR AGAINST POLIO ...

World Polio Day is scheduled for Tuesday, October 24, 2017, and there is just cause to celebrate!

With just eleven cases of Polio in two countries in 2017, Rotary International – with strong support from 1,400 Rotary clubs across Australia and New Zealand – is edging towards ultimate victory in its campaign of 32 years to eradicate the dreaded Poliomyelitis virus from the world.

Rotary launched its worldwide campaign in 1985 when there were more than 350,000 cases of polio in 125 countries around the world.

The world's senior service club organisation was subsequently joined by several vital partners in The World Health Organisation, UNICEF, US Centres for Disease Control and Protection, and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – along with many of the national governments of the world.

The discovery of another isolated case of Polio in Pakistan two weeks ago is testimony to the ongoing vigilance of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative spearheaded by Rotary.

Just THREE endemic countries remain to be declared polio free – Pakistan (five cases in 2017), Afghanistan (six cases) and Nigeria (no cases since July, 2016).

The downward spiral of reported cases in recent years is significant – 359 in 2014, 74 in 2015, 37 in 2016, and just eleven so far in 2017.

Rotary International is comprised of more 35,000 Rotary clubs in 220 countries and geographical regions – and all are being urged to mount special celebrations to highlight the importance of World Polio Day and the ongoing campaign.

Since 1985, Rotary has raised and invested US\$1.9 billion in the campaign – and ongoing fund raising is vital to guarantee ultimate success.

Governments of the World have been magnificent in contributing many more millions. The Australian Government has promised a further \$18 million in 2019/20 for a total commitment of \$104 million since 2011; whilst the New Zealand government donated a further \$5 million last month for a total of \$10.1 million to date.

- **Pictured -National Immunisation Day celebrations in Nigeria.**

