

# UNLIMBITED



AMPUTEE SOCIETY OF WAIKATO, BAY OF PLENTY & DISTRICTS INC.



Heya, it has been a while since we've shared some interesting information with you. The summer has been beautiful but has almost gone, and winter is already here. We're happy to say that we have been busy trying to organise events that everyone would enjoy. Summer Camp will be planned in Taupo next year, which will definitely satisfy those who love long walks.

Our AGM held in April, brought some major changes. We had to say goodbye to some life long members, and we also welcomed new ones that are ready to help us achieve our long term goals. And last but not least, we have appointed a new Vice President, Darren Ross who will be sharing his life story in this newsletter.



## Message from the President

Kia ora koutou,

I hope you all have enjoyed your summer and are getting ready for the colder months. Our AGM was held in April, where we welcomed new committee member. Collen Sellar joined the Committee, and this was a natural step for her as she is Paul's wife, one of our Committee member. She has been there for Paul throughout his journey. Our new Vice President will be introduced to you in the newsletter.

Lee Cook and Jean Cave has stepped down from the committee. We thank them both for their continual support and contribution to the Waikato BOP Amputee Society for many years.

We have an excellent committee and we hope to organise a few events throughout the next financial year.

A massive thank you to the committee members and to Maya for compiling and editing our newsletters. I can't stress enough how much your contribution for membership means to us. Thank you to everyone who has taken care of their outstanding fees. Fees for this financial year, 2021 are now due. A membership form is attached to this newsletter. We welcome any feedback and ideas so please get in contact and we hope to see you at one our events.

## Shoe swap for Amputees

Meet Anna Reid and Erica McLean who came up with a fantastic idea of opening a page to help people swapping their shoes. This might be an interesting page for all amputees wanting to expand their shoe rack.

Traff1k Digital have single shoes for FREE to give away – they are brand new and never been worn – single left men's shoe, size 9 x 3 and 1



single women's right shoe – around size 7. We are reluctant to throw away and would love these to go to someone who can get benefit from them. If you know of someone, or that sounds like you - let me know – Erica McLean – [erica@traff1k.com](mailto:erica@traff1k.com).

There is also a Facebook page that you can join, here is the link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3405817002789185>



## EVENTS

We thought the best way of introducing our Summer Amp Camp in Taupo would be by sharing the experience of someone who took part in their first amputee event, Praise Magee.

“My hubby and I were asked by our friend Matt if we were interested in coming along to the

the Tarawera Falls walk and having lunch/swim together afterwards. I was an absolute yes and so keen to join along.

Firstly wow, some of the people I met and their stories were phenomenal, I could sit there all day and listen to their journeys and walks throughout their experiences of becoming

newer or long-time amputee. But NOTHING stops them, to be honest they were hiking up some hills better than I was at some points I am genuinely impressed how there is such epic events for great people, to be able to connect and banter.

People came from all over NZ & that made me rather chuffed to have people from all over be able to do some pretty fun stuff. The whole day was just an absolute buzz, we were all laughing, swapping lollies, and sharing lunch, some great memories I will not forget. I'm definitely in on this again next time. Great people. Fabulous event."

Did this pique your interest? Well I hope it did and that next year you will have another great story to share.

## Wheelchair basketball

We are still encouraging all of you to join us in Wheelchair basketball games held in Tauranga. These games are organised by Parafed BOP, who are actively involving people with disabilities into different sports such as Powerchair football, Wheelchair rugby, Boccia and more. To find out more about their annual events check out their online page or click on this link <https://www.disabilitysportfest.co.nz/>





### **Bird Park Katikati**

Here is something for people who like walks in the nature. The idea is to have a picnic in the Garden and connect with fellow amputees.

The Bird Gardens are on the outskirts of Katikati and were created in 1976 with a little over ten acres of land running down to the harbours edge. These are tar sealed on slopes or in possible damp areas. The paths are 1.4 metres wide so our Golf carts can negotiate them. The garden and aviary tour is a 45 - 60 minute walk. To find out more about the park visit <https://www.birdgardens.co.nz/>

## **OUR GUEST CELEB ARTICLE**

Darren grew up in Tokoroa and has been living in Tauranga for the past five years.

Before Darren became an amputee, he had six operations to try and repair his ankle and foot. The operations were unsuccessful, and he became an amputee in June 2019. A few days after his operation, a couple of amputees came and visited him while he was in hospital. Darren said that by meeting these people, this gave him strength, knowledge, and comfort to know that he wasn't the only one who has gone through what he was going through.

In asking Darren if becoming an amputee changed his life, this is what he said. "Becoming an amputee has changed my life for the better. I do have a very interesting past and because of things I did in my younger years, I realised that I

wanted to give back to society rather than taking away from it." He joined the Waikato BOP Amputee Society a few months after he became a part of the special club. "I am defiantly more community minded and I am now giving back and sharing my knowledge and supporting amputees where I can."

Darren has taken this negative event in his life and turned this into a positive. "I am a Peer Support Volunteer, am the Vice President of the Waikato, BOP Amputee Society and have recently been elected as a Board of Trustees committee member for the Welcome Bay Community Centre."

Joining the amputee community has been a very interesting experience for Darren. "I had to adapt to only having half a leg and I had to



Hobby: Star Wars Collection (started six years ago).

learn how to use a prosthesis. I learnt a lot about myself too. I realised I do have limits. I had to carry on in living my life as an amputee. My partner Jannen, has supported me all the way and I could not have done this without her.”

I asked Darren if he had any interesting experiences so far in the amputee world. To get Darren out of bed in the morning, his grandson hands his leg to him and says “leg on granddad.” If he doesn’t get up, he is more persistent. This brings a smile to Darren’s face and he says it is a great way to start the day.

In public, Darren often get asked ‘What happened’? He often makes up stories. “I joked with a man once that I became an amputee because I annoyed my wife too many times and she ran over my leg with the car until it came off.”

It was a pleasure talking with you Darren about your journey. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me and we are excited to see that the future holds for you.

Interview by: Matthew Bryson.