

Purpose

Journal of the



**Amputees
Federation**
of New Zealand
Incorporated

March 2015

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PURPOSE

No. 104

March 2015

**Published by
Amputees Federation
of New Zealand Inc.**

Registered with the
Charities Commission
(CC26629)
for income tax
deductibility of
donations

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**Contributions welcome.
Deadlines for articles
and advertising material
15th February, June
and October each year.**

Included in this Issue

The National Executive	2
Editorial	3
News from our Societies	4
Publications	5
Letter to the Editor	6
Our Thanks	7
Artificial Arms Keep Athletes Balanced	8
Differences in Prosthetic Feet	9
Introducing Sean Gray	10
Kate Smashes World Record	10
Affiliated Amputee Societies	12

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EDITORIAL

Well the girls certainly have it in this issue! What a pleasure it is to read good news stories about our younger members - well done Holly, Anna and Kate - you can justifiably feel very proud of your achievements to date and we look forward to more of the same!

We as a Federation also have good cause to feel proud. The year 2014 was a huge one for us with our rebranding. Our new logo, representing the inter-linking and coming together of amputees, has been well received in all quarters. In addition, there has been a steady demand for our new Information Pack containing our publications *A New Challenge* and *An Ongoing Challenge*.

All in all it was a satisfying and productive year but much still remains to be done. We are a relatively small section of the population and it's not uncommon for those who enter our ranks to have never heard of the Federation and our nine Regional Amputee Societies. We will continue to do what we can to actively promote the services we offer but we need the support of our members to do the same and reach out to new amputees in particular. It's perhaps too easy for us to achieve independence and forget that others will be facing that long, hard and often lonely road. Maybe you can play your part by becoming an **active** member of your Society?

A warm welcome to Sean Gray, newly appointed CEO of the NZ Artificial Limb Service, who took up his position at the beginning of this year. Sean has expressed a desire to build collaborative relationships with us and we look forward to playing our part in developing this process.

On a lighter(?) note, it was good to receive a response to Chris Ross's Guest Editorial in the last issue - the letter from Alan and the reply from Chris appear on pages 6/7. Maybe you also have some views you would like to share? I encourage you to put "pen to paper" or, easier still, just flick an email through to the coordinator@af.org.nz.

Good reading and may 2015 be all that you want it to be.

Lorraine Peacock

NEWS FROM OUR SOCIETIES

Auckland & Northland - The Society is holding its AGM on Sunday 22 March starting at 1pm, followed by Coffee, Cake and Chat. As Janis is stepping down as Secretary/Treasurer, applicants for this position are keenly sought.

Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts - Some sadness in this region with the news that a long-serving past Secretary/Treasurer, Edith Sealey, passed away mid February just a day after her 86th birthday. On a brighter note, President Lee Cook is looking for starters for a fishing trip to the Coromandel.

Hawke's Bay/East Coast - At the time of writing, Hawke's Bay/East Coast is gearing up, like most other Societies, for our AGM. Once that is over, we will be ready to settle down for another year of offering the very best support we can to our amputee members and their families. In the past year we have more than doubled our financial membership and in the process we have met lots of lovely people and sadly farewelled a few too. We have worked hard and we're proud of what we've achieved. We look forward to developing new ideas and endeavouring to grow our society even further in 2015. See some of you at the Conference in Wellington. *(Diane Walsh, President)*

Taranaki - The Society has held some successful meetings over recent months: at the South Taranaki Club in Hawera in November, a Christmas function in December and at the New Plymouth Club in January. Holding our meetings/social events at various venues around the province cannot be understated; it is proving a popular method of attracting our existing and new members. I am very pleased with the turnouts and the inputs from those attending - they can help identify issues of which the Society is sometimes unaware. Our two Field Officers - Colleen Mundt (Sth Taranaki) and Margaret Barraclough (Nth Taranaki) are only a phone call away for any enquiries. *(Wally Garrett, President)*

Manawatu - A very active committee made the decision to hold an end-of-year Christmas function over until February when 22 members attended, with 7 travelling over from Wanganui. Members have been encouraged to participate and this year 9 of us will be attending conference in Wellington with one taking part in the GIAG for youth. Janice Frost on our committee has relocated to her home town of Wanganui and had her first coffee get together in

February, with 9 people enjoying each other's company. Janice is a keen advocate of the Society and Wanganui amputees can look forward to her serving their interests in the future. It is expected that a member function will be held in the river city later this year.
(John Maher, Secretary)

Greater Wellington Region - Ken Te Tau (Field Officer) has been busy supporting amputees and their whanau on clinic days at the Wellington Limb Centre. The committee has undergone some changes with Raewyn Te Tau taking on the role as temporary Treasurer. The AGM is scheduled for 14 March at the Wellington Artificial Limb Centre and they are looking forward to hosting the National Conference at The Amora Hotel 17-19 April.

Canterbury & Westland - Our AGM is to take place at the Hornby Working Men's Club on 29 March when guest speaker Rachel Fleury will speak about health and disability advocacy.
(Eileen Popplewell, Secretary)

Otago & Southland - There was good support for the quadrant multisports, golf and barbecue towards the end of last year and it's hoped there'll be a good turnout at the AGM on 14 March when entertainment will be provided by budding paralympians - Rory, Holly and Anna.

Newsletters of Regional Societies are available on the Federation's website (www.af.org.nz), along with other useful information.

**SUPPORT YOUR REGIONAL AMPUTEE SOCIETY
IT SUPPORTS YOU!**

PUBLICATIONS available (no cost) from the National Coordinator or Regional Society Secretaries

A New Challenge - Advice for New Amputees (a 32 page booklet)

An Ongoing Challenge - A 60 page publication which covers a wide range of topics and includes personal profiles of 11 amputees.

A Challenge with Purpose - A History of the first 50 years of the Amputees Federation of NZ Incorporated (275 pages)

The Amputee Society of Otago & Southland Inc. - The first 60 years (146 pages)

*Age is something you become aware of
when your back goes out more often than you do*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lorraine,

I have just read the Guest Editorial in the November issue of *Purpose*. What a load of condescending claptrap. Mr Ross suggests we are all “disconnected from reality”. Mr Ross should take off his rose tinted, privileged glasses and put himself in the shoes of everyday amputees. Tobase what an Indonesian villager expects to receive against the Western world’s expectations of amputee care is absolute nonsense and Mr Ross should get in the real world. Considering Mr Ross’s view that we should not expect to be offered the latest in prosthetics – Mr Ross himself has done very well in this regard. He has received the latest in technological advances in order to follow his full time career as a cyclist. What’s good for the goose is good for the gander Mr Ross! Perhaps when Mr Ross has been in full time employment (not a full time University Student) and has put in a 45 hour week, year after year, he will then appreciate that Amputees not only expect but demand the best treatment that is available. We don’t expect a Rolls Royce prosthesis but one that enables us to put in a good day’s work to support our families.

The care in New Zealand, compared to overseas, is adequate. Over the last 30 years, I have had mixed experiences with Limb Centres around NZ, as well as treatment in centres in the UK and Canada. The quality of care I have experienced around New Zealand and overseas has varied from superb to indifference, and despite all the new technological developments, a positive outcome for an amputee is solely dependant upon a comfortable, well-fitting socket. This can only be achieved by the prosthetist’s attitude, care and skill. Listening to the amputee’s concerns goes a long way in this regard.

Yours, Alan Darby

And Chris Ross replies.....

Dear Alan

Thank you for your interesting letter and I welcome this opportunity to respond. Unfortunately there are a few inaccuracies in your statements which need to be put right. Firstly, I have been in full time employment for the past 3 years and regularly have 55-60 hour plus work weeks. Prior to this, yes I was a cyclist; however while cycling I had a 20 hour a week job, completed a Masters degree and made selection for the New Zealand Paralympic Team; therefore I feel I have a very good understanding of what an amputee would expect


from their prosthesis in order to achieve their goals in life. Secondly, I am unsure of the reason for your statement regarding my 'rose tinted, privileged glasses'. In fact, the prosthetic I have does not differ from what others have and I am no different to most other amputees. It is the same style as what I had when I was two and the same style they probably produced when Muldoon was in office. Your reference to my receiving the 'latest in technological advances' does I presume refer to the additional arm (to which we are all entitled to if needed) which was the same as my current one with the addition of two strips of rubber bolted on (so that I could get into my aero bars) and painted black with the silver fern logo. Your letter does, however, stimulate intrigue by the contradiction that the 'care in New Zealand, compared to overseas, is adequate' and that you have experienced superb service in New Zealand. This was exactly my point; although we would like the latest Rolls Royce in prosthetics from what we have seen on the television or Internet, we now more often than not expect it and that is the problem. The Artificial Limb Service in NZ is required to provide the best service it can within limited resources without chasing the Rolls Royces of prosthetics. If it bought and serviced everything everyone 'wanted' or believed they needed, then it too would end up like many people - choked by debt - and we would subsequently have a service we would have to fund ourselves. What we are offered in New Zealand is essentially a good service and one we should be proud of. We should be content with what we have, as what we have, more often than not, is what works, and is better than that in many other countries.

It would be good to meet up with you some time and discuss our "differences of opinion"; maybe at the forthcoming National Conference in Wellington?

Regards, Chris Ross

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

and any other contributions to *Purpose* are very welcome. If you have anything to share with readers, please send it to the Editor at 213a Bay View Road, St Clair, Dunedin, fax to (03) 455-9547, or email to info@af.org.nz.

 **UR THANKS** to the NZ Lottery Grants Board, Pub Charity, the Lion Foundation and the NZ Community Trust for their recent grants; we very much appreciate this support.

ARTIFICIAL ARMS KEEP ATHLETES BALANCED

(from "Stuff" 27.1.15)

New artificial arms are helping two Kiwi athletes to pump iron in a determined bid to hone their athletic prowess for the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. The prosthetic weight-training arms are giving a "helping hand" to medal-winning javelin thrower Holly Robinson, 20, and her fellow Dunedin paralympian, Anna Grimaldi, a 17-year-old sprinter and long jumper. Both Anna and Holly were born missing a hand and lower forearm but neither has allowed their disability to hold back their sporting careers. However, once they embarked on increased physical training as paralympians, they were surprised to discover their bodies were weaker on their affected sides.



Both Anna (left) and Holly (right) credit their new specially designed limbs as giving them an extra edge that ultimately might translate into medals at Rio. "We have found our helping hands, me and Holly," Grimaldi says. Hokitika-born Robinson, who claimed a silver medal in javelin at the 2013

paralympic athletics world championships in France, agrees. "It's possibly the best thing we've done." She started trialling weight-training arms several years ago after avoiding artificial limbs for most of her life. "My first one I hated as a kid so I buried it in the backyard when I was about 3 or 4. We never found it so it's still there." Robinson, who donned a black handless prosthetic with a silver fern emblazoned on it for competing, said it had taken a lot of trial and error with the Dunedin Artificial Limb Centre to find the best weight-training hand. Her current attachment clipped onto her existing left prosthetic and its claw locked closed around weights, allowing her to work out using both arms. "My balance had been really bad and so was my strength in my shoulder and back. Now, they're much much better and I'm far more balanced." Grimaldi, slender and about 48kg, had never worked out at a gym until early

last year, when she joined Dunedin's high performance gym at the Forsyth Barr Stadium for her training. "Before that, I'd never realised how lopsided I was. I thought I was just missing a hand and that's it." However, she discovered her right shoulder, back and leg was weaker and potentially affecting her performance. "In the long jump, it was quite hard to land with my feet together." While at the gym, she spotted Robinson using her artificial hand attachment to lift weights. Like Robinson, she had avoided getting an artificial arm all her life, preferring to use her stump and wrist for all activities. The Limb Centre gave her the new weightlifting limb mid-last year, which fitted over her right stump and had a claw that locked onto the weightlifting bar for her to pump iron with both arms. "It's been amazing."

DIFFERENCES IN PROSTHETIC FEET

(Reprinted from inMotion Jan.2015)

Foot designs with cushion heels are considered the most basic of prosthetic feet and are typically designed for people who do a limited amount of walking with little variation in speed. Single-and multiple-axis ankle designs permit motion at the ankle to adapt to inclines, declines and uneven surfaces. Likewise during standing, we all sway a little, and, as we age, sway increases. If motion is permitted in the ankle, it has been suggested that less muscular effort is required at the knee or hip, reducing the possibility of fatigue during standing. To take advantage of this benefit, equal weight-bearing between the prosthesis and sound limb must occur in standing. As activity increases, the value of a movable ankle becomes more apparent, especially on ramps, hills and uneven terrain, which are easier to negotiate with the additional motion provided at the ankle. However, as you learn to balance over the prosthetic foot, greater muscular control is required within the socket, as well as at the hip, knee and trunk. It is the speed and efficiency of the muscular effort, however, not the brute strength, that assist with prosthetic control. Carbon-fiber dynamic-response feet with a full-length foot plate can be more responsive and allow amputees to have better balance and walk faster with greater ease. They are typically designed for amputees who have the ability to vary their walking speed, change directions quickly, or walk long distances. The advantages of dynamic-response feet are realized only if the transition of weight over the foot is of the magnitude and duration to permit the foot-plate system to work as designed. In other words, to take full advantage of a dynamic foot, you must allow your full body weight to pass over the foot long

enough for the foot-plate to fully bend and release the stored energy. If higher level activities such as sports are performed, time should be spent learning how to properly land, load and change direction with the foot to maximize performance. A wide variety of dynamic feet are available to meet everyone's activity levels. Consult your prosthetist to discuss which prosthetic foot design best fits your lifestyle.

INTRODUCING SEAN GRAY

(Newly appointed CEO of the NZ Artificial Limb Service)



A family man, with a commitment to people with disabilities and challenging medical conditions, has been appointed CEO of the New Zealand Artificial Limb Service. Sean Gray, who has a Bachelor of Applied Science from Massey University and a Master of Business Administration from Macquarie Graduate School of Management, Sydney, has served in senior management roles with Diabetes Australia-NSW, AIMEDICS and Life Without Barriers. Life Without Barriers is a national service provider for disability, foster care and community aged care in Australia.

While Diabetes Australia-NSW provides services to over 245,000 people with diabetes through a range of government contracts and commercial activities. Sean took up his position with the Crown Entity late last month and is committed to enhancing NZALS's reputation of providing clients with the maximum quality of living, independence and participation in the life of their community.

KATE SMASHES WORLD RECORD

(from "Stuff" 31.1.15)

Wellington paracyclist Kate Horan obliterated a track cycling world record today in Cambridge. Clocking in at 13.551 seconds, Horan made mincemeat of the old 200m time trial record in the C4 class record of 15.736s, shaving more than two seconds off. The flying 200m time trial is an obscure record for paracyclists given it isn't raced in Paralympic competition, but Horan said it was something her coach suggested she try to break. "My coach had decided it would be a good record to go for. He says I've got a good sprint on me so I just wanted to come out here and give it my best shot," she said. "I was

really, really nervous. It's quite technical, so being a 500m sprinter, it's just about going fast and concentrating on the start, whereas the flying 200m you have to warm up and there's a lot more to it." You could see the nerves in Horan's body language before taking the track. It's not the first time she's been in the limelight - she won a Paralympic silver medal running on the track in Beijing - but this was different. Riders were asked to finish their pre-race warm-ups and clear the road, then all eyes turned to the 39-year-old. The big screens failed at the Avantidrome just before Horan mounted her bike, so her time remained a secret to the watching crowd. "You go out there and you give it everything and when you finish it's just like, 'oh, it's over'. It's sort of a sense of relief." Then it takes a while to process. . . what the time was and things." Judging by her reaction, it seemed Horan had missed out on the record. That wasn't the case. It took about five minutes for the nervous energy to subside, then came the smiles and laughter with her support team knowing she had shattered the record.



It wasn't love at first cycle for Horan, but having learnt the technical aspects of her new sport she is starting to really enjoy the competition. She began cycling about two years ago after several injury niggles in her running career. At five-years-old, her left leg was amputated because she was missing a bone in the lower leg. For a long time, particularly as a teenager, Horan struggled with being different, but paralympic sport showed her that her leg wasn't a disability. "As a five year old I had my leg amputated, and I guess you

could say I never looked back," Horan said. "I've had some tough times, but Paralympics has definitely given me the ability to believe that having a disability is in fact positive, not a negative. With the world record attempt out of the way, Horan's focus turns back to to qualifying for the Rio Paralympics next year.

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