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Journal of the



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Federation**
of New Zealand
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March 2021

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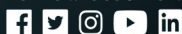


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and welcome

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Included in this Issue

The National Executive	2
Editorial	3
A Big Day Out	4
Conference Cancelled	4
A Sad Farewell	5
Limb-it-less Shaz Dagg	6
A Timely Reminder	7
Rehab Psychologists	7
Regrets	9
From Our History	10
News from the Regions	10
Affiliated Societies	12

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EDITORIAL

Well, here we go again! As I write this, Auckland is at Covid Level 3 and the rest of the country at Level 2. How quickly things can change - and no doubt will have further changed by the time this goes to print. And were we indeed becoming complacent as has been suggested? Although the Government and Ministry of Health have made some mistakes in the handling of Covid and with isolation facilities, we are however so fortunate to be on this side of the world.

Our National Executive made the decision late last year to cancel this year's conference which was to have been held in Rotorua in April. Our priority was, and always will be, the safety of our members, and given the uncertainty and various restrictions which apply at different alert levels, particularly those which limit gatherings to less than 100, the decision to cancel was certainly the right thing to do. Many organisations are now having to face similar decisions, with a variety of events being cancelled or postponed throughout the country.

On another theme - by the time you read this, the chances are that your Society has had its Annual Meeting. Did you go? Or was it a case of sitting back and letting it all happen rather than turn up and risk getting roped on to the committee? Did you know that it is really encouraging to those who hold office in your Society if you show your support by just being there?

It's not only at Annual Meetings that you can show your support - most Societies hold functions throughout the year. Your membership of a Society is appreciated - your visible support at functions would be even more so.

Take care and keep safe

Lorraine Peacock

National Coordinator

Search **Amputees New Zealand** on Facebook
and **Like** us (Closed Group also available)



A BIG DAY OUT

(Executive member Mary Humphreys and her husband Dave represented the Federation recently at the Waitangi Day Garden Reception at Government House. Here's what they had to say about their experience.)



We arrived at the main gate and were directed to the public car park from where we made our way to the front of the building to be greeted by two rows of waiters with trays of drinks. This was followed by tray after tray of delicious finger food. We mingled around talking to people from the large crowd that

had assembled and at around 4.30 the Governor General and her husband were welcomed. The Governor-General gave a lovely speech on the importance of the Treaty now and going forward in the future. Later we were permitted to tour the house and see the elegant décor, huge paintings and sculptures, as well as cabinets full of gifts collected over the years. It was a wonderful experience and we appreciated the opportunity to represent the Federation.

CONFERENCE CANCELLED

Given the ongoing Covid-19 situation, the decision to cancel this year's Conference has certainly proved to be the right thing to do. The business of the Council Meeting will now be held virtually (as was the case in 2020) and we will look forward (hopefully!) to celebrating our 75th Jubilee in 2022.

T-shirts – The Canterbury/Westland Society has followed through with an initiative which was shelved due to the cancellation of the 2020 Conference and is selling T-shirts featuring the Federation logo on the front and an attractive logo on the back. They are available in various sizes at a cost of \$23 plus postage. For enquiries and/or to order contact the Secretary of the C/W Society justinemw@me.com

A SAD FAREWELL

(Contributed by the Amputee Society of Hawke's Bay/East Coast)



Sadly, Geoff Hansen has decided to hang up his Field Officer hat and move into another chapter in his life. Geoff has held this role for over 8 years and has tirelessly been our go to, go between, and everything else during this time. Over the years, Geoff has always been a constant support, knower of

everything, Limb Clinic support person in both Hastings and Gisborne, new amputee support person at hospital and in home, peer support person, newsletter and email distributor, local society committee member and a representative on the Amputees Federation of NZ committee, plus so much more. We know Geoff will still be available for anyone who needs anything or just wants a chat – however his knowledge and expertise in this position and with the Amputee Society in general will be very much missed. A big shout out to you Geoff – thank you for everything!

(Geoff served as a member of the National Executive for 3 years and we can certainly vouch for his capabilities and value as a team member)

We are indebted to the Estate of S M Wells
for a recent generous bequest to our Federation

Have you seen our two publications?

A New Challenge - Advice for New Amputees
and **An Ongoing Challenge**

Both are an interesting read and available from the National Coordinator or your Regional Society

LIMB-IT-LESS SHAZ DAGG

And its all over! Shaz has smashed her goal of completing the gruelling Kathmandu Coast to Coast in an amazing time of 18 hrs 29 mins 54sec. The crew are all so super proud of her mammoth effort! Shaz would like to thank everyone for their supportive messages and posts along her awesome journey! Time to relax, unwind and think about next year.... (Facebook Post)



Feilding-based Shaz Dagg is New Zealand's first elite para-triathlete, winning silver medals at the Paratriathlon World Cup and Oceania Championships. She took up the sport after losing her left arm above the elbow, following a farming accident in 2016. Last year Shaz's focus was on the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, for which she successfully qualified. However, after they were postponed, Shaz's focus shifted to the Coast to Coast,

New Zealand's toughest multisport competition. Shaz competed in the kayaking stage of the race with Palmerston North's Brett Garret paddling with her as event organisers ruled that she had to have someone in the kayak with her for safety. Shaz was the first to admit that learning to kayak had been her biggest training challenge. She had never done it before and needed to figure out a way to keep hold of the paddle. Brett and the Artificial Limb Service came up with a solution - they made a socket to connect to her arm and Brett, who works for a plumbing company, then made a device out of some pipe, a couple of washers, and some hose clamps to keep the paddle connected to her. (Excerpts courtesy of Voxy.co.nz)

A Gem from our History

An amputee batsman's wooden leg came off as he was running between wickets. Relying on momentum and his good leg to get him to the far end, he hopped in. A one-armed player fielding at point swooped in on the wooden leg and used it to throw down the wicket. The umpire gave the batsman out.

A TIMELY REMINDER *by Korrin Barrett*

I am a bilateral below knee who had Osseointegration surgery in Australia in 2016. I now have titanium implants in both tibias and I connect into my prosthetic poles with clamp connectors. My prosthesis are exactly like every other prosthetic leg, they just connect to me in a different way. I've had these components for 4.5 years and on Sunday 24 January one of the connectors failed! My connector had eroded over time and worn through its titanium parts. It snapped and caused me to have a nasty fall. I was extremely lucky to not do more damage to myself and even luckier that it was only the supermarket floor I landed on - not a road, carpark or airport tarmac!

I have since found out that these parts have a limited lifespan and need to be disassembled, checked, cleaned and reassembled 3-4 times a year!

Please have your prosthetic components thoroughly checked at your next Limb Centre appointment.

Rehab Psychologists work with the Limb Centre team to support individuals following amputation. Having an amputation is a significant adjustment which can have an impact on some or all areas of life. As a result, many people following amputation experience some of the following at different stages in their recovery journey:

- Low mood, sadness, and/or despair
- High levels of distress, which may include anxiety/worry, fears, and feelings of stress
- Feelings of loss and grief
- Feelings of not coping
- Frustration and/or anger
- Change in body image and self-esteem
- Self-medicating against emotional distress through use of substances
- Chronic pain

Supporting you to work through these emotions is an important part of your rehabilitation journey. In the same way as a Physio assists by suggesting exercises for an injury, a Rehab Psychologist provides suggestions that can help you to navigate the emotional journey of recovery following amputation.

(From a NZALS Fact Sheet)

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REGRETS - *Anonymous*

I was in downtown Chicago, going on crutches from my dorm room to the cafeteria a city block down the street. I had had my new prosthesis adjusted just before arriving for the fall semester. Unfortunately, it became excruciatingly obvious that it needed a couple of more adjustments as my skin kept breaking down on my residual limb - I'd wear the leg for a few days then take it off for a couple to let the skin heal. The dark autumn sky threatened to split open. As I crutched on, I started to feel the sting of hail pinging off my neck and bare arms. A loud crack of lightening was followed by the dumping of buckets full of hail all over the street. I needed cover fast but there was nowhere to hide. Being the tenacious stubborn person that I was, I lowered my chin and kept on toward my dinner. I heard a voice call out but ignored it as I was sure nobody was talking to me. That's what I had learned to do in the city - mind my own business. I heard the voice again and could make out the words "Get in". I glanced toward the street on my left and saw a yellow cab keeping pace with me right next to the curb with the front passenger door open. The driver, a little paunchy in a Hawaiian shirt, called louder "Get in the car!". Not one to accept candy from strangers, I shook my head "No thank you." He breathed in a chest full of air, let it out with a sigh, closed the car door and drove off. I made it to dinner - miserable and wet.

It wasn't until recently that I realised how darned independent I was then and still am. I've recently gone through the process of having a rebuild. The socket is so much better than my last one but I started physical therapy and have had several modifications - for good reasons, like having lost a few pounds and building more muscle. On top of that, my physiologist wanted me to have a very minor surgery which set me back 3 weeks more - no leg, just crutches.

I had forgotten what the world is like out there when you can't wear your leg. Forgot how some people just see the residual limb and not the person wearing it. I had some admiring looks from men as I would wear my jeans skirt and fly all around the dog park on crutches chasing my dog around - uh-huh, I have an attractive leg and strong toned arm muscles. Most of all, I forgot how people like to help, whether you need it or not. I'm not that stubborn college kid any more and know that it's important to let people be kind. Although sometimes I feel like saying "No, I don't need you to hold the door" or "I can get that paper off the floor, thanks", to allow folks to give to

me after having had to be such a tough nut all these years has been a real challenge. Here's how I'm looking at it for now. I give folks the opportunity to help. They give me help. Voila!

If I could go back to that day in Chicago, I think I'd let that 30-something taxi driver give me a one block ride up the street. Then I'd turn to him and give him a sincere thank-you before hopping out and heading into the cafeteria.

From our History

At the conclusion of lengthy discussion at the 11th Annual Conference held in June 1957, it was resolved that a Petition to Parliament be presented as follows:

The NZ Civilian Amputees Association humbly sheweth that:

- The cost of artificial limbs, crutches and stump socks has risen steeply during recent years.
- Many amputees need new limbs, crutches and stump socks every few years.
- Most amputees find it difficult to meet these costs every five years and therefore make do with ill-fitting devices.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the full cost of artificial limbs, crutches, stump socks and the Distaff machine, their replacement when necessary, and all maintenance costs, be paid from the Social Security Fund. And your petitioners, in duty bound, will ever pray.

(In September 1964, following numerous ongoing submissions, an announcement was made by the then Minister of Health that the full cost of artificial limbs would be met by the Government.)

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Auckland & Northland - We will be holding our Annual General Meeting on Sunday 7 March at the Auckland Artificial Limb Centre starting at 2 pm. Guest speaker will be Matt Bryson. Come and hear how his amputation changed his life, and many more things about Matt we don't know. *(Janis Bourne, Secretary)*

Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts - Our Society organized a summer amp camp at Tarawera falls in January - the walk and scenery was outstanding. We are looking at having next year's summer amp camp in Taupo. Throughout the year, our committee intends to organize fun events for everyone to enjoy. These include

a sailiablity trip and a wheelchair basketball day. Our annual snow trip is planned for the winter at Mount Ruapehu - if you would like to attend, please get in touch. *(Matthew Bryson, President)*

Hawke's Bay/East Coast - After Covid-19 causing so many disruptions earlier in 2020, it was lovely to finally hold our Christmas function on Sunday 13th December at the Filter Room. Once again it was great to see a good turn out with nearly 40 attending. We had the indoor restaurant area to ourselves which was lovely and there was a band playing outside. It seemed everyone was happy to catch up with people and happy with the venue, meals and drinks. We had 3 recent amputee/members attend and hope to have another function in a few months. *(Korrin Barrett)*

Manawatu & Districts - No recent news from this Society. We trust the Christmas BBQ in December was successful.

Greater Wellington Region - The Wellington committee met for our first meeting of the year at the lifestyle block that is home to Kate Horan and her menagerie. A lovely BBQ, committee meeting, and animal petting session was had. *(Rob Penhey, Secretary)*

Top of the South - Nothing new to report from this neck of the woods; life continues to plod along. We are still getting a good turnout to our monthly coffee mornings in Nelson and our monthly lunches in Blenheim. Remember: "Life is a daring adventure or it is nothing at all"- Helen Keller. *(Max Alty, President)*

Canterbury & Westland - After a successful Christmas function in November, we are looking forward to our first function of 2021 with our AGM on Sunday March 14th at the Hornby Club at 10.15am, followed by morning tea at 10.30am. We are continuing our commitment for community awareness by supporting the Federation in a T-shirt promotion, and having our own Society's pen promotion. So far so good for 2021. *(Justine Mangan-Woods, Secretary)*

Otago & Southland - There was a good turnout of members at both our Invercargill meeting and dinner and our pre-Christmas dinner in Dunedin. We are looking forward to catching up with members again in 2021. *(Lorraine Peacock, Coordinator)*

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

If you are receiving Purpose in printed form and would like an e-copy emailed to you, please let us know.

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