

**AMPUTEES FEDERATION OF  
NEW ZEALAND INCORPORATED**

# ***PURPOSE***

**Newsletter of the  
Amputees Federation of New Zealand Incorporated**



**JULY 2012**

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NZ Artificial Limb Board**

Mrs Kerry Wilfred-Riley  
Ms Paula Tesoriero

**Hon Solicitor**

Mr Lindsay Trotman LL.M(Hons)  
Palmerston North

**Federation Website**

[www.af.org.nz](http://www.af.org.nz)

## GUEST EDITORIAL

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### No. 96 – July 2012

Greetings to you all and thank you for reading this Guest Editorial. In my household, my youngest daughter has come home today with some good news. She has done well in a mathematics test – not her best subject! This represents a real step forward for her in personal confidence. It came from perseverance and an ever increasing self-belief. It got me thinking of those first days of stepping forward with a new limb and trying to keep the thing on and get over the initial discomfort for the greater gain of more independence. How are you going stepping forward?

Some of you may have noticed some recent media coverage of Osseointegration. On the face of it, this seems like a real sign of progress and innovation. I encourage you to be informed about it; there is a lot of information available on the internet. This system will certainly suit some but not others and there is always the issue of complications with medical procedures and raised expectations that will not be able to be met for all. The Federation is always keen to hear of amputees' views on issues like this. Why not drop us a line?

I enjoyed the conference in Napier and pass on a big thank you to the Hawke's Bay/East Coast Society for hosting us. There was some good discussion about ACC and we are keen to know of what your experiences have been. The hotel we stayed in was close to the beach and we also had an informative bus trip on the Sunday morning. What a view from the top of that steep hill!

Facebook patronage continues to grow and our new Marketing Officer, Chris Ross, is doing a splendid job in promoting the welfare and camaraderie of amputees through this medium. As well, the revamped website looks really good and is a credit to Lorraine and all others involved. If you haven't visited either of them I really recommend a visit to the website [www.af.org.nz](http://www.af.org.nz) and from there you can connect through to our Facebook page. On technological matters, we in the Federation and some District Societies are investigating using Skype as a more cost effective way of holding meetings. For those that don't know, 'Skyping' is a way of talking to other people with a video camera attached to your computer so you can see each other. If you haven't tried it before, it is a great way of staying in touch with family and friends. The software that allows you to Skype can be downloaded free from the internet.

There is a lot happening in New Zealand at present with lots of change and I know many of you will either know others or maybe are yourself in need of some support. For one, I welcome emails from any members who would like to give me some anecdotes of their experiences as an amputee or want to talk about their views of how we can better represent you. My email is [simmysgm@hotmail.com](mailto:simmysgm@hotmail.com). Take care.

*Simon McMillan*, President

### NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

**Auckland & Northland** - A van load of amputees and caregivers travelled from Whangarei to Dargaville on Sunday 10 June to meet at the home of Peter and Shirley Mackenzie. Everyone took a plate for a "pot luck" lunch - good food, good company and a great day was had by all. After lunch they had a walk or wheel in Shirley's garden and a look at Peter's passion - restoring vintage tractors, chain saws and engines. Visiting Peter and Shirley's home was informal and relaxed - thanks to them for opening their beautiful home to everyone.

**Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts** - A get-together at the Oak Tree Restaurant in Tauranga in early July sounded too good to miss. Lunch was to be followed by a speaker from Panacea Health Care.

**Hawke's Bay/East Coast** - The momentum has continued following their hosting of this year's National Conference. Last month several new members and their partners were welcomed at an afternoon tea at a local cafe and on 8 July a mid winter dinner was planned, with guest speaker Mervyn Monk of the Artificial Limb Board. They hope next year to appoint a volunteer Field Officer to improve contact, support and care of amputees in their area.

**Taranaki** - Their last newsletter reported the passing of three members - Brian Coombe, Patron Doreen Schuler, and past Secretary, Winsome Sarten. They have recently appointed an additional part-time Field Officer.

**Manawatu** - New Committee member, John Maher, has recently taken on the position of Field Officer. It's great to see these positions opening up within District Societies.

**Greater Wellington Region** - It's good to have a strong link to this new Society with their President, Jon Fitzpatrick, joining us on the National Executive; we look forward to Jon's input.

**Nelson & Marlborough's** membership has grown after a mailout to non-members which was carried out with the support of the Limb Board. A physiotherapist from Nelson Hospital was scheduled to speak about mirror therapy at a meeting in July and on August 25th double amputee Tony Christiansen will be speaking at a fundraiser dinner.

**Canterbury & Westland** has recently completed the rebranding of their marketing and promotional material, with a new look which is fresh, bright and full of promise. They intend extending these efforts into an 'Amputee Awareness Campaign' which will go full steam ahead later in the year, and a July mid-winter dinner will provide a great reason for members, friends and family to come together.

**Otago & Southland** - Seventeen members and partners attended and thoroughly enjoyed the Napier conference. We wish our Paralympians, Holly Robinson and Chris Ross, all the best for the London Games.

**N**ewsletters of District Societies are available to readers on the Federation's website ([www.af.org.nz](http://www.af.org.nz)), along with plenty of other useful information.

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

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**L**'Anon' (in the March issue of *Purpose*) is fortunate in walking easily from the start without an aid. But there is no shame in accepting help when you need it. After deteriorating badly in 10 months between accident and amputation, I tried to oblige a physiotherapist who insisted I should make walking alone my goal - and it set me back disastrously. Better to walk evenly with a stick than to draw attention by any lurching which only leads to more trouble. Yes, a stick can be a nuisance - when you need an umbrella, say, and a third hand - but a small backpack or shoulder bag can help. Maybe other correspondents will have ideas?

Sgd. *Another Anon* (22 years a B/K amputee)

*Letters to the Editor are always welcome - see contact details inside front cover.*

**STATISTICS OF INTEREST**

*(Reprinted from the Annual Report of the NZ Artificial Limb Board for the Year Ended 30 June 2011)*

**New Referrals** - During 2010-11, the number of new patients referred and registered at the New Zealand Artificial Limb Board was 412 compared with 399 for the previous year. Of the new referrals, 69% were male and 31% female. The under 20 age group comprised 6%, 35% were between 20 and 59 years, 58% were over 60 years, with the remaining 1% unknown. NZ Europeans made up the largest group at 63%, with 15% being Maori, 9% Pacific people, and a range of others making up the remainder.

The 412 newly registered had 454 amputations, which included 36 people with more than one amputation. 50% were at the below knee level, 34% above knee, and 3% upper limb. A range of minor categories made up the remainder, e.g. hip disarticulations and through-knee amputations.

As at 30 June 2011, the service catered to 4,231 current patients registered with the NZ Artificial Limb Board throughout New Zealand.

**6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE - MARCH 2012**

*by John West of the Nelson/Marlborough Society*

I went to my first Conference with my wife Claire, our local Secretary, and 5 others from the Nelson/Marlborough Society Committee: John and Sharon Ealand (Blenhiem), Amy Hindley and William Miles, and Malcolm Higgins, (Nelson). We had some funding from the Federation and from the Lion Foundation to help with our travel and accommodation costs. The Conference was on the north side of Napier, at the Crown Hotel on the Ahuriri beach front, and our rooms looked out onto Hawke's Bay. We arrived early afternoon on Friday and the delegates got straight into it with a training session run by our National Coordinator, while we partners had an afternoon free to sightsee.



*John & Claire West*

After a relaxed meal at the hotel restaurant the Conference was officially opened on the Friday night by Napier's Mayor, Barbara Arnott: she told us since their 1931 earthquake the city's motto has been "Faith and Courage". Then we listened to Hadleigh Pierson and Chris Ross talk about their involvement with Paralympics NZ - Hadleigh is the Athlete Development Manager and has represented NZ as a disabled swimmer. He showed a clip of Cameron Leslie winning gold at the 150m medley- awe inspiring, and then spoke about his own role identifying potential sports people at various training camps held around NZ with their Accelerate 2 Excellence programme. It left us thinking about local amputees we know who would love to try to identify their own sporting attributes at such a programme. Chris Ross was one who did try, and after swimming in circles found he was a natural on a bike, and is now one of NZ's top ranked cyclists in the 2012 Paralympic team. Chris is a fantastic advocate for young amputees, and we heard about and met the teenagers the Federation had brought to Conference from all over NZ. They were to have their own programme over the next two days - going sailing, horse trekking, and white water rafting. Each delegate then briefly updated the Conference about their local events, with some lively discussion about how things

can be improved to help them go smoothly. The night finished with dessert outside on a balmy Napier night.

A big day on Saturday with the AGM - Simon McMillan of Dunedin took over from Wally Garrett as President and John Ealand of Blenheim was elected Vice President. New members elected to the Executive Committee were Jon Fitzpatrick (Wellington) and Chris Ross (Dunedin, now of Auckland). In the afternoon there were enlightening talks from the Manager of Enable, David Guest, and then from Artificial Limb Board members - Claire Johnstone (Chair) and Mervyn Monk (CEO). Government funding seems to be assured at the same level thanks to these hard working people – the message was that investing in “pain free mobility” to help amputees get on with their lives with help from the Limb Centres = Public Good. Graham Flanagan, National Prosthetics Manager, finished with an update of the exacting “Service Standards” each Centre has established. The day finished with the Conference dinner, good food, chat, entertainment from an outstanding young magician, presentation of a Life Membership, and an update from Chris on the young delegates’ day.

Sunday consisted of a relaxing bus tour around Napier, out to Te Mata Peak lookout, and back through Havelock North. This was time out to meet others from around the country too, and to have those conversations which spark ideas for the future. Back to the hotel for lunch and to catch up with the young people, to look at photos of their adventures, and to see and hear the impact of three days of fun with their peers. Then out to the airport thinking about how our Committee can make 2012 a good one for our Society, stimulated by a great weekend.

*(Thanks John for an excellent report - Ed.)*

**P**UBLICATIONS available (no cost) from the National Coordinator or District 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 10 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)

**JOIN US ON FACEBOOK - GO TO OUR WEBSITE [www.af.org.nz](http://www.af.org.nz) and click on our name to LIKE us!**

We appreciate the support of the Southern Charitable Trust for their financial assistance in the upgrading and rebuilding of our website.

## OUR NEW LIFE MEMBER

One of the highlights of our Conference weekend was the presentation of Life Membership to our Honorary Solicitor, Lindsay Trotman. The citation to Lindsay read as follows:

*Lindsay Trotman was elected Honorary Solicitor of the Federation at the 32nd Dominion Council Meeting of the New Zealand Civilian Amputees Association held in Dunedin in May 1978.*

*Lindsay’s link with the Association was established through his father, Gordon, who was President from 1964 until 1984, the year that the Association’s name was changed to the Amputees Federation of New Zealand. Gordon was presented with Life Membership in 1985.*

*Since his appointment in 1978, Lindsay has attended most national conferences. There have been numerous alterations made to the Federation’s Rules during this time and we are indebted to Lindsay for his valuable input and expertise in expediting these changes. As with most groups of such widespread diversity, the Federation has encountered some challenging times within its ranks over the years and Lindsay has been a cornerstone in providing sage advice during times of conflict resolution.*



*We look forward to Lindsay’s continued association with the Amputees Federation and wish him well for the future.*

*Lindsay accepts his Certificate from Past President, Wally Garrett*

## HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

Just one paragraph in your Will can help us to assist other amputees:

*“I give and bequeath to the*

*Amputees Federation of New Zealand Incorporated*

*the sum of .....*”

Thank you for your support. We are dependent on your goodwill and donations.

## GIVE IT A GO! FOCUS ON YOUTH

*The other tremendous success story of the Conference weekend was the Youth event. The following is written by Chris Ross.*

On a crisp winter's afternoon, while sharing some lovely home baked blueberry muffins, a young and spirited Rory McSweeney, an excited Chris Ross, along with a rather overwhelmed Lorraine Peacock, concocted the idea of a youth event. At the National Conference in Napier, the idea became a reality when the Amputees Federation of New Zealand held its first Give it a Go! Focus on Youth event. Attended by a youthful range of amputees aged between the ages of 18-30 the event was bound to be entertaining right from the word go. With 9 amputees in attendance and some great activities lined up it was to be a great weekend.

First up was a meet and greet with the main conference attendees and a great presentation by the awesome duo Hadleigh Pierson and Chris Ross, then the real business began. We arose on a calm Saturday morning and headed off to Mohaka Rafting where we jumped into two rafts and headed off down the Mohaka River, along the way seeing some fantastic sights, hitting a few rapids and experiencing a few 'man' overboard calls. The lunch from Subway which had been taken along was also a great hit. Straight out of the river and then off to the back of Mountain Valley on a horse trek, where James Ward found himself saying "Yeekhaa" a little too often, while Glen wished his horse would stop eating all the time. After our lengthy ride it was back to the hotel for the conference dinner - a fabulous feast with the rest of the conference attendees.

Sunday was another busy day - up at the crack of dawn and off to Sailability, where everyone got to show off their Peter Blake sailing skills. The first group got the wind and it has to be said that Tyler outclassed the rest of the field, with Phoenix a close second; who knows what Tony and James were doing?! The second group with the lighter wind found it a wonderful calming experience, with Abby going solo, while Nikki got the luxury of having an experienced sailor with her. We then headed off to rock climbing at Kiwi Adventure Trust - an experience that was both daunting and



challenging - with Claudia showing some great strength, climbing the walls with the never-give-up attitude that we love to see.

Overall, this youth event was not only challenging and a great way to experience new stresses on the body, it was also a fantastic way for the youth to talk about their different experiences and expand their support networks. We would like to thank the Federation for their support in providing funding which allowed the event, including travel and activities, to be almost completely free.

*(Thanks to Chris for coordinating GIAG which we hope will become an annual event. Thanks too to Pub Charity and Southern Victorian Charitable Trust for providing funding for our weekend. Ed.)*



See more photos on our website and Facebook.

**GOOD LUCK TO CHRIS AND THE OTHER AMPUTEES  
COMPETING IN THE LONDON PARALYMPICS!**

**WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO PUBLISHING A HEAP OF  
GOOD NEWS STORIES IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *PURPOSE***

**Have YOU got what it takes to be a Paralympian?**

Find out through Paralympics' Xcellerate2Xcellence programme

More information and

Application forms available at [www.paralympics.org.nz](http://www.paralympics.org.nz)

# OSSEOINTEGRATION

Excerpts from the website [www.orthodynamics.com.au](http://www.orthodynamics.com.au)

**What is the Integral Leg Prosthesis?** The ILP is a new type of prosthetic care for above-the-knee amputees, making a conventional prosthesis shaft unnecessary. The ILP is modelled on the anatomy of the human body and takes the load back to the thigh bone and hip joint when walking. The ILP is implanted directly into the thigh bone facilitating a safe connection between the patient and the prosthesis.



**How is the Integral Leg Prosthesis Constructed?** The ILP is made up of several modules which can be divided into an inner and an external module. The ILP-Module, the so-called femoral stem, is directly implanted into the thigh bone (femur). The special feature of the implant is the patented Spongiosa-Metal® II surface. Bone grows

through this three-dimensional grid structure (osseointegration), providing secure fixation of the prosthesis. A dual adapter connects the internal and external modules. Fixed internally, it leads out of the stump and is fitted with the knee connection components on the outside. The silicone cover is used to protect the exit hole (stoma). The cone sleeve and the rotation disc serve as connection for the knee-lower leg prosthesis system. All other components can then be quickly and easily linked to the internal-prosthesis using the knee connection adapter.



## What are the Advantages of the Integral Leg Prosthesis?

Mobility allows full freedom of movement at all levels; the stump is not forced into a predetermined form; muscular strength can be developed freely; freedom of movement is not restricted by the interfering edges of a prosthesis shaft regardless of whether you are sitting, standing or walking; less feeling of weight; more control over the prosthesis. Strength is directly transported from the bone to the prosthesis enabling its precise handling. Using the ILP puts the hip joint under strain in a natural way and it also counteracts decalcification of the bone.

In combination with an improved perception of ground conditions, the ILP facilitates a secure and harmonious walking pattern. The ILP can be attached and removed completely within a few seconds when seated. Possible variations in the volume of the stump have no effect on the prosthesis' fit. No skin irritations due to friction, sweat or heat occur, meaning the prosthesis can be worn for longer periods without pain or discomfort and mobility is not restricted at any time.

**How does the operation take place?** The implantation of the Integral leg prosthesis is carried out in two surgeries which are each performed under general anesthetic. In the first operation, the lower end of the thigh bone is uncovered and the femoral stem is implanted. When the implant is correctly positioned, the sleeve is fitted and the stump is closed up again. In the following four to six to eight weeks, osseointegration that fixes the implant to the bone will take place. In the second operation, the circular skin opening (stoma) is created. The dual cone adapter is connected to the internal femur stem through this stoma. The remaining components of the prosthesis can then be attached externally. Partial weight-bearing and the adjustment of the prosthesis can take place as early as a few days after the second operation. This happens under the supervision of physiotherapists and orthopaedic technicians.

*(Our Comment - This is an innovative and relatively new procedure on this side of the world and many of you will have been following the media coverage of the two NZ amputees who have recently undergone the operation in Australia. Phil Coulson of Nelson was the first and, in order to maintain a balance to this article, the disadvantages as identified by Phil also need to be made known. During an interview for a local newspaper, Phil said disadvantages of the new technology included a risk of infection through the stoma, or where the metal exited the skin. A high-impact fall could also shatter the implant. Cost was another drawback. Phil received some sponsorship from the company in exchange for his help in raising the profile of the product in Asia Pacific. However, he had to pay for the two operations and aftercare amounting to about \$50,000; a cutting-edge micro processor knee to go with the technology cost another \$50,000. We will watch with interest future developments with this technology and its acceptance or otherwise within the medical profession in New Zealand. In the meantime, we would welcome your comments and feedback in a Letter to the Editor.)*



The Annual NZ Amputee Golf Tournament is to be held in Christchurch on Thursday/Friday 25/26 October. It is a purely social event - you do not need to have an official handicap or be a gun golfer. For more details and a registration form, see their website [www.amputeegolf.co.nz](http://www.amputeegolf.co.nz)

## UNLEASHING LIFE! A CANINE PARTNERSHIP

*Contributed by Michelle Smith*

The Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust (Mobility Dogs) is a non-profit organisation, established in 2003, that trains highly skilled service dogs to assist New Zealanders with a wide range of long-term physical disabilities. A Mobility Dog helps open the door to the world, assisting to break down social barriers; allowing ordinary tasks to be done independently; and is a constant, and faithful, companion. This in turn has the positive effects of increasing confidence, self-esteem and participation in the wider community.

Mobility Dogs are trained to provide functional assistance with everyday tasks, including: retrieving dropped items, opening/closing doors, pressing lift and pedestrian buttons, assisting with transfers, taking shoes and socks off, switching lights on and off, paying for purchases across the counter, carrying items, fetching the phone in an emergency or barking to attract attention. Tasks are directed towards a recipient's needs and a Mobility Dog can work with over 50 linked commands.

You may think that your needs are not high enough, or that you don't meet the criteria. However, the functional abilities of our recipients are very varied; the smallest things are usually the hardest to do, and generally the easiest of problems a Mobility Dog can solve! In order to meet the varied needs long-term physical disabilities present, the Trust offers 3 levels of service dog:

- A Service Dog provides support both in the home and out in the community with full public access rights.
- An Assist Dog provides support at home. Public access will be managed by a facilitator.
- A Skilled Companion Dog provides the support of a highly skilled pet and will mitigate at least three aspects of disability.

Mobility Dogs relies solely on grants and public donations for the work it does. Each highly trained dog costs approx. \$45,000 which is covered by the Trust's fundraising activities. For the recipient, there is a placement cost of \$4,000-\$6,000, and the usual costs of having a dog. The dog becomes your responsibility - we encourage all recipients to look at community funding sources to help with these costs, if required. Our application form is very comprehensive – we need to know as much about you, your disability and your perceived requirements, as possible. That way our team can assess if a service dog suits your lifestyle and needs – not everyone who applies is approved to receive a dog. All dogs are carefully placed to ensure a successful outcome. Please check out our website [www.mobilitydogs.co.nz](http://www.mobilitydogs.co.nz) for stories written by a number of our recipients which showcase our dogs, the range of tasks they do, and the difference to people's lives they have made.

## TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY

*Reprinted with permission from inMotion March/April 2012*

Travelling always has the potential of being a frustrating, stressful situation, as it encompasses many variables and unknowns. Add to this mix travelling with a disability and it can appear to be somewhat daunting. This need not be the case; there are many ways to maximize the pleasure of your travel experience while minimizing the stress. If you are new to travel (or not so new) and are unsure of how to make the most of your vacation time, enlist the aid of a qualified travel agent who understands your needs and is a good listener. A qualified travel agent can save you time and money and is an excellent resource should you encounter any problems. Now for the caveat: You are still the person responsible for having a successful trip, and you need to know how to take control of your travel experience. You need to be proactive and learn that you are your best advocate.

For starters, understand that one of the most important things you can pack is a good attitude and a smile. These go a long way when dealing with personnel, whether at the airport, the hotel, the cruise ship, etc. Know your rights! Getting through security at the airport seems to pose all sorts of unpleasant experiences for many travellers. Know what is and isn't allowed. For example, a person with a disability does not have to remove their shoes. You are responsible for knowing what a person with your situation is allowed to do. If you have a problem with airline personnel not helping you properly, ask to see the Complaint Resolution Officer (CRO) before you get upset and ruin your trip. CROs are employed by all airlines and must be available in person or by phone whenever flights are operating. There may be times when the problem is not solved to your complete satisfaction, but they will do the best they can to make you happy. You also need to know how to request the services that you need, such as the equipment you require in a hotel, assistance with embarking and disembarking cruise ships, etc. Learn to plan ahead and contact personnel to explain your special needs. Ask for a confirmation reply so you know your requests have been heard. Learn who the right people are to ask for specific items. Need a roll-in shower and a shower seat? When you call a hotel to make a reservation, ask to speak to the head of housekeeping to find out what type of equipment they have and which rooms have roll-in showers. In case you arrive at a hotel to find that your requests have not been met, request that the hotel find you another property where your needs can be accommodated and be sure any increase in price is paid for by the original hotel. Finally, Never take no from someone who does not have the authority to say yes! Always ask for the manager or supervisor. Try to manage your frustration and/or anger. Understand that you are ultimately responsible for the outcome of your trip, and a good attitude will help to ensure that your experiences will be positive and your trip successful.

## AFFILIATED DISTRICT SOCIETIES

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Greater Wellington Region	Natasha Boulcott 2/54 Holborn Drive Stokes Valley Lower Hutt 5019      Phone (04) 526-8788

**REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE NOT THE  
FIRST PERSON TO HAVE LOST A LIMB -  
MANY OTHERS HAVE PASSED ALONG  
THE SAME ROUTE AND ACHIEVED  
CONSPICUOUS SUCCESS.  
IF YOU WISH TO DO THE SAME,  
YOU ARE MORE THAN HALF-WAY THERE -  
THE REMAINDER IS AS EASY OR AS  
DIFFICULT AS YOU MAKE IT.**