

# Purpose

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Journal of the



**Amputees  
Federation**  
of New Zealand  
Incorporated

March 2017

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## **PURPOSE**

**No. 110**

**March 2017**

**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.**

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## EDITORIAL

“Quakes and quakes, some flooding, more quakes, some rebuild, and now fires..... Come on, Mother Nature, what’s next?”

Yes, you’ve no doubt guessed that this refers to the Canterbury region, even although it is quoted from a recent article in the Otago Daily Times. However, although Canterbury, and Christchurch in particular, has carried the brunt of most of what’s been handed out in recent years by Mother Nature, the fact remains that we are a vulnerable country subject to extremes of weather and seismic variances. As amputees, we are perhaps more vulnerable than most to the down-side effects of such variances and adversities.

Any lower limb amputation leads to additional energy consumption when walking and scientific research has found that this energy consumption is higher for those individuals with higher levels of amputation. This issue of *Purpose* includes articles on coping with extreme heat conditions. It also includes some good practical advice by the Ministry of Civil Defence on what to do in an emergency.

This is a busy time of the year for Societies leading up to AGMs and for the Federation as we head towards our 70th Annual Conference - being held this year in New Plymouth on 7-9 April.

For me, there is an additional task of preparing a reprint of *An Ongoing Challenge*. With 1,000 copies being distributed every year, it is an ongoing challenge in itself to keep updating this popular book and include new profiles. It is hoped the new edition will be ready and available in early April to include in our Information Pack.

Until next time, go well!

*Lorraine Peacock*

## MNZM

Congratulations to our Paralympians who were awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year honours - Anna Grimaldi, Kate Horan, Nikita Howarth and Liam Malone. Another well deserved achievement!

### ROBOTIC FINGERS - A NATIONAL FIRST

Chris Jones lost three fingers in a fishing accident on the West Coast in 2014. He's the first to be fitted with a partial robot hand, which will allow him to write, use cutlery and ride motorbikes again.



When Chris Jones' fingers were torn off by wire in a West Coast fishing accident, he faced a gruelling, two-hour ride back to shore and an abrupt end to a family legacy. "They tried to surgically repair the damage but the fingers had spent too long without blood flow," Jones said. The fourth generation fisherman, from Nelson, lost three fingers on his right hand and the tip of his pinky, plus the tips of his left hand. Chris (23) is the first

person in New Zealand to be fitted with a partial hand prosthesis that can change grips with a simple gesture. The partial robotic right-hand replaces the three fingers he lost. Each digit is made up of a motor and two joints, then two electrodes. The electrodes pick up signals from specific muscles which activates the prosthesis to move. After some basic training, the robotic hand was sent back to Scotland where it was manufactured for completion. ACC has covered the cost (about \$100,000), as it will allow Chris to re-enter the workforce. He is the first in New Zealand to be fitted with the partial prosthesis; others will come about as they're assessed by ACC, according to Sean Gray, CEO of the NZ Artificial Limb Service.

*(Read more at [www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/81743400/Robotic-fingers-fitted-on-amputee-in-national-first](http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/81743400/Robotic-fingers-fitted-on-amputee-in-national-first))*

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

**Patron** - Her Excellency The Rt Hon Dame Patsy Reddy, Governor-General of New Zealand, has agreed to be our Patron, following the conclusion of Sir Jerry Mateparae's term.

**NZALB** - Kevin Ross of Wanganui has been appointed as the Federation's nominee to the NZ Artificial Limb Service Board.

## TEMPERATURE CONTROL WITH A PROSTHETIC LIMB

*(With acknowledgement to ArtLimb [www.artlimb.com](http://www.artlimb.com))*

As warm blooded mammals, our bodies are constantly working to maintain our normal core temperature of 37.0 degree Celsius. In a comfortable situation, when we are relaxing in an air conditioned room, our bodies control this temperature without us even noticing. Walking outside in the heat of summer however is a different matter entirely. In both of these situations, our bodies are producing and losing heat through several different mechanisms.

Any lower limb amputation leads to additional energy consumption when walking which means additional heat production from the muscles. Scientific research has found that this energy consumption is higher for those individuals with higher levels of amputation. This means that a person with a short above knee amputation will use much more energy than someone with a partial foot. Another complicating factor to be aware of is that all socket style prostheses cover up the skin. The three ways that heat is lost from the body (radiation, convection and evaporation) are blocked by the materials covering the stump such as: liners, stump socks and the socket.

What can you do?

- Pay additional attention to the condition of your stump during the hot season. Check your skin before and after limb use. If something feels uncomfortable during use; take the prosthesis off and check your skin. If something is concerning you, consult your prosthetist for advice.
- Wash and dry your stump daily (in the morning and before bed).
- Talk to your prosthetist about specific skin creams and lotions to reduce the effect of sweat, irritation and damage to the skin.
- If you use socks directly against your skin, make sure you have access to clean dry socks that can be changed during the day if required.
- If it is possible, try to limit hard physical labour or activity on days

that are especially hot.

- When out and about, try to keep in the shade as much as possible.
- Drink enough water. If you live or work in extremely hot regions, consult your medical specialist (GP) regarding drinks containing electrolytes.

It can at times be difficult to avoid situations when we are unprotected from overheating. With advances in modern prosthetics, your specialist can often offer individual solutions to your situation.

 **OUR THANKS** to the Lottery Grants Board and Pub Charity for recent grants - their support is greatly appreciated

**Osseointegration** - Further to the Editorial in the November 2016 issue of *Purpose*, the Ministry of Health has advised that they “would not stipulate one procedure over another, as this would be dependent upon clinical considerations including clinician capability, equipment and rehabilitation requirements.” Further, that “in some cases, for surgery not available within New Zealand, applications would be considered for patients to receive treatment in other countries, provided the evidentiary standards are met” and that they would “seek advice from the NZ Orthopaedic Association and any other relevant organisations on the clinical evidence and requirements for maintenance of clinical competence.”

**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)

***Little Jellybean*** by Margot & Anton Wuts - for child amputees, their parents and families(24 pages)

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** and any other contributions to *Purpose* are very welcome (300 words maximum please). If you have anything to share with readers, 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](mailto:info@af.org.nz)



## INTRODUCING BRUCE MOTE

*(Excerpts reprinted with acknowledgement and thanks to the Canterbury/Westland Society)*



Bruce was born at Burwood Hospital in 1953 and was part of a large family comprising eight brothers and sisters. He recalls his younger life as being very tough with a father who was an alcoholic, and from an early age he quickly learnt to be self-sufficient. By the age of 11, Bruce was mowing lawns and delivering groceries to earn extra money and says he loved those jobs. He felt he was making a better life for himself and this attitude guided where and what he did in his future life. Bruce has lived the majority of his life in and around Belfast where he is widely known in the community. Prior to moving to Belfast, Bruce attended Bishopdale Primary then Papanui High School before leaving school at 15 to go

to sea - a huge challenge for a young boy. He started off as a deck boy on the Aramoana doing stints on the Aranui & Maori then after 2-3 years progressing to international work for about 10 years with BP Oil. He subsequently completed all his tickets and became an engineer specializing in steam. A variety of jobs ensued before a position with Scott's Engineering offered him an opportunity to become involved in the installation of boilers & LPG tanks. This eventually led to Bruce becoming self-employed and cleaning and repairing fuel and chemical tanks all over the South Island.

It was in Timaru in 1985 when Bruce was instructing the Fire Service how "not" to get burnt while cleaning tanks that his accident happened. Whilst kneeling in acid in the bottom of a tank, a pair of faulty overalls allowed acid to come into contact with his legs and his problems began. He spent 18 months in Burwood Hospital and after numerous skin grafts to save his leg, a decision was made to amputate his right leg. After being fitted with a prosthesis, Bruce successfully carried out maintenance work for local schools for around 2 years before an accident damaged his left leg and he had to have it amputated after another 3 months of trying to save it.

In 2004, Bruce and his wife Dorothy travelled overseas together for the first time to attend their daughter's wedding in Ireland. Since then,

they have travelled back to Europe, UK, USA, Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia and he says he is an experienced “disabled” traveller. Bruce said he has seen a lot of amputees “begging” on the streets but they always look a bit “sheepish” when they spot him without any legs pushing himself along in his wheelchair!

## GetThru

*(Excerpts from the website of the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management [www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz))*

Due to its location and environment, New Zealand faces many potential disasters. In some cases, such as a weather related or volcanic disaster, there may be time for a warning. But an earthquake or a tsunami close to land could strike without warning. All disasters have the potential to cause disruption, damage property and take lives. So it’s vital that you prepare now.

In most emergencies you should be able to stay in your home. Plan to be able to look after yourself and your household for at least three days or more. Assemble and maintain your emergency survival items for your home as well as a portable getaway kit in case you have to leave in a hurry. You should also have essential emergency items in your workplace and in your car.

### **Emergency Survival Items**

- Torch with spare batteries or a self-charging torch
- Radio with spare batteries
- Wind and waterproof clothing, sun hats, and strong outdoor shoes.
- First aid kit and essential medicines
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Pet supplies
- Toilet paper and large rubbish bags for your emergency toilet
- Face and dust masks

### **Food and water for at least three days**

- Non-perishable food (canned or dried food)
- Food, formula and drinks for babies and small children
- Water for drinking. At least 3 litres per person, per day
- Water for washing and cooking
- A primus or gas barbeque to cook on
- A can opener

If you, or a member of your household or community has a disability

or any special requirement that may affect the ability to cope in a disaster, make arrangements now to get the support needed.

### **Build a personal support network**

- Organise a personal support network of a minimum of three people to alert you to civil defence warnings, or to help if you need to be evacuated. This could be family members, carers, friends, neighbours or co-workers.
- Ensure you have an emergency plan before a disaster happens and practice it with your support network. Plan for various disasters and situations you could encounter.
- Discuss your needs with the support network and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.
- Inform your support team if you are travelling or away from home.

### **Consider also:**

- Ensuring you have emergency survival items, including any specialised items you need, and a getaway kit in case of evacuation.
- Keeping at least seven days' supply of your essential medications and make provisions for those that require refrigeration.
- Wearing a medical alert tag or bracelet to identify your disability or health condition.
- When travelling, letting a hotel or motel manager know of your requirements in case of an emergency.
- Knowing where to go for assistance if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

### **Physical disability or mobility impairment**

If you or someone you are caring for has a physical disability or difficulty with mobility, include mobility aids in your emergency getaway kit. This will help you cope if you are evacuated to a different area. In a major earthquake the ground-shaking will make it difficult or impossible for you to move any distance. If you cannot safely get under a table, move near an inside wall of the building away from windows and tall items that can fall on you, and cover your head and neck as best you can. Lock your wheels if you are in a wheelchair. In bed, pull the sheets and blankets over you and use your pillow to protect your head and neck.

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

## NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

**Auckland & Northland** - in spite of having limited funding and resources, we are pleased to have an increase in members. There is still so much more to do and so many needs. Many thanks to the Fiji Hackers Club for their donation as a result of their Golf Day (*Helen Kocks, Secretary*)

**Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts** - A Well-being Waikato Show (Connecting with Customers - Engaging with the Community) will be part of the Waikato Show on 7-9 April.

**Hawke's Bay/East Coast** - Four new members joined the committee at the recent AGM. Over the past year our membership has continued to creep upwards and we get a lot of positive feedback from our members regarding the service given by our Field Officer Geoff, the events we organize, our fundraising events and our newsletter. (*Diane Walsh, President*)

**Taranaki** - The fishing trip to the Coromandel with our Waikato colleagues in November went well, with Lee Cook and Chris Fromont arguing over the bragging rights as to who caught the biggest Snapper. There was a good turnout at the AGM on 18 February and the status quo has been retained with no major changes in personnel with regards to the committee. A small team has been working behind the scenes on hosting the National Conference. The theme for the Saturday night will be "Western" - just bring along your cowboy gear and a band (Midlife Crisis) will entertain you. (*Wally Garrett, President*)

**Manawatu** - The last member function was a visit to the Easie Living Centre on Main St in Palmerston North and those attending were impressed by the tour conducted for us and the huge range of aids currently available for those facing mobility issues. The next function on Saturday 25th February is a luncheon to be held at The Woolshed in Sanson. With our membership spread over an extended area the location of this venue is an attempt to meet in a more central location. (*John Maher, Secretary*)

**Greater Wellington Region** - Kate Horan (President) and I were invited on Waitangi Day to the 177th commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi at Government House. Congratulations to Kate who will return to Government House again this year to receive her New Years Honour, MNZM for services to Paralympic Sport. We will be holding our AGM on the 5th of March

at the Wellington Artificial Limb Centre where we recently farewelled Michi and thanked her for her nearly 23 years of service as receptionist there. (*Ken Te Tau, Vice President*)

**C**anterbury & Westland - Things are going well for C/W as we move into 2017. Ten members of the Society, six of whom have never attended, are looking forward to being in New Plymouth next month for the annual conference. Our AGM is set down for Sunday March 12th, with an informal lunch afterwards. Membership numbers remain steady and many contacts have been made with new amputees as the result of numerous hospital visits undertaken. (*Mark Bruce, President*)

**O**tago & Southland - The AGM scheduled for 11 March will feature Guest Speaker Robbie Francis, founder of the Lucy Foundation - a group of young people committed to working with local communities to promote education, employment and a culture of disability inclusiveness through environmentally, economically and ethically sustainable trade. (*Lorraine Peacock, Coordinator*)

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

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



The New Zealand Artificial Limb Service has launched their new look website ([www.nzals.co.nz](http://www.nzals.co.nz)). It has been re-designed to make it easy to navigate and quickly find the relevant service or information you require.

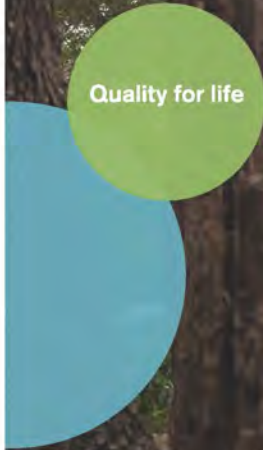
**Access4All** is an accommodation and activity guide intended for use by anyone with mild to major mobility difficulties, and an undiminished desire to travel. It has listings of motels, apartments, holiday parks and activities in most of the major NZ destinations. Every property listed includes an option of 1 or 2 bedroom accommodation for travellers with family members and/or caregivers. It is a graphic guide - its aim above all is to give impaired mobility vacationers confidence by showing what need to know places (especially bathrooms, entrance areas, bedrooms) and activities are like. Bookings can be made directly from the site [www.access4all.co.nz](http://www.access4all.co.nz)

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