

REPORT FROM AMPUTEE FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE WELLINGTON APRIL 2015

It was planned for eight (8) members of the Society to attend the 69th Annual General Meeting in Wellington over the weekend of April 17th-19th.

Due to unforeseen circumstances of family related health issues, 2 members were unable to travel and negotiations have been entered into with Air NZ to hold these airfares as credits for future use.

The conference was opened by His Excellency Lieutenant-General the Right Honourable Sir Jerry Mataparae, Governor-General of New Zealand on Friday evening before the AGM of the Federation. All present were extremely impressed with his friendly & engaging personality and he took the time to mingle throughout the room and personally speak to every person present.

A successful AGM was conducted and Canterbury/Westland was awarded the right to host next year's conference over the weekend of April 22nd-24th, 2016.

A subcommittee of (4) persons, (Eileen Popplewell, Margaret Hunter, Ed Jones & Mark Bruce) has been established to plan for this event and they will report back to the executive & membership as matters progress. This committee will be seeking funds by way of sponsorship & donations to assist with the requirements of the host Society. Due to some greatly appreciated donations already received, a fantastic base has been set to assist in the successful hosting of this important event which has not been held in Christchurch for over 10 years.

Saturday morning provided free time for attendees and after lunch, the conference was addressed by Professor Dirk De Ridder from the Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago on the topic "Why does the brain create phantom sensations and how can they be treated"

This was a very informative presentation and enjoyed by all present. This was then followed by an address from the new CEO of the NZ Artificial Limb Service, Sean Gray. Only having been in this role for (2) months, Sean displayed an incredible degree of understanding to matters surrounding the provision of services to amputees and seems to have a passion for advancing the rights and entitlements of amputees in NZ. He specifically addressed the burning question of the imbalance of funding for amputees under the MOH as opposed to ACC clients. He has promised to continue working with the funding providers and Government in the year ahead to obtain a fair and equitable funding scenario for all amputees. We look forward to an update on progress surrounding this problem over the next year.

Saturday evening provided an opportunity for all attendees to "let their hair down" at the Dine and Dance and a most enjoyable time was enjoyed by all present.

Due to flight availability, we were unable to remain at the conference on Sunday morning to hear an address from Ben Lucas, CEO of the NZ Spinal Trust but we did have the opportunity to meet & speak with him at the Dine & Dance.

The weekend was most informative and provided us the wonderful opportunity to network with other amputees from all around New Zealand.

Mark Bruce/President.