

Purpose

Journal of the



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Federation**
of New Zealand
Incorporated

November 2020

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are invited
and welcome

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EDITORIAL

The Editorial of *Purpose* 12 months ago stated "Finding pleasure in our day-to-day lives starts with accepting things the way they are." How difficult that would prove to be for so many people as they faced the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic in the months that followed. Thank goodness for spring and the joys it brings - warmer days and the beauty of spring flowers. An hour or so spent in the garden, maybe just to sit, provides an opportunity to think and reflect on the uncertainties and changes of the last few months. Perhaps Covid-19 brought significant changes to your life? For me, it led to more online shopping and playing online bridge! But how good the feeling has been of getting back to some semblance of normality. And good too is the knowledge that we are so lucky to be living in this part of the world.

The uncertainty and changes that come with Covid are likely to continue for some time yet and how we adapt to them is sure to provide its own challenges. For this Federation, there is some uncertainty as we move into the new year as to whether or not our annual National Conference will take place in April. We sincerely hope so but the decision may be out of our hands should the coronavirus re-surface and restrictions are again enforced.

And, at the time of writing this Editorial, there is no doubt uncertainty in many minds as to the road the newly elected Government will take us. Labour and Jacinda Ardern crushed Judith Collins and National in an extraordinary election, with Labour winning sufficient seats to govern alone, unprecedented since MMP began in 1996. Now comes the challenge of the next three years. Politicians like to pronounce, as they win, that they will govern for all people. But this ideal will be nearly impossible to fulfil, even for Jacinda. There will always be winners and losers and conflicting interests when the pressures of policy, politics and spending priorities are applied. Even with the best intentions, Jacinda's road ahead will be bumpy, with plenty of rocks and potholes. We're in for an interesting time.

Have a safe and relaxing Christmas.

Lorraine Peacock

National Coordinator

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INTRODUCING MARY HUMPHREYS *(Executive Member)*



I am 61 - a wife, mother and grandmother. At the age of 3 my parents immigrated from Scotland and settled in Porirua, Wellington, before discovering soon after that I was hard of hearing. In NZ, the doctors did not believe in fitting children with hearing aids and my parents sent home for two hearing aids which helped my speech development immensely. After attending Viard College, I went in a different direction with a hairdressing apprenticeship; this continued for the next 30 years. During this time, I married and had two daughters; however, having a hereditary blood clotting disease, I spent both pregnancies in hospital.

At the age of 35, I had my right leg amputated. Waking up from surgery I looked down to find my leg had gone. I had two options; feel sorry for myself or move on and I chose the latter. Ten days later I hopped back on my motor bike and all was going great until I stopped and tried to put my foot down forgetting it wasn't there! I continued enjoying many things - camping, motor and road biking, swimming, gym, boxing and Zomba - all while holding down my hairdressing job. On my 40th birthday I went for my first sky dive in Australia and a week later my second in New Zealand, I climbed a 40-foot pole, walked a tight rope and had a bungee swing. I got involved with the Amputee Society in my early days but with family life I had too much on my plate or so I thought. In 2002 my life changed forever when my marriage of 22 years ended, I was heartbroken but knew I had to move on once again. Later that same year I met the true love of my life, Dave. We married 5 years later and have enjoyed many activities such as walking all night for relay for life (a half marathon fund raiser) and climbing the Sydney harbour bridge. I helped to re-start the Greater Wellington Region Amputee Society and am currently Co-Vice President. I am much more involved - learning to ski at the first amputee ski trip, snorkeling, canoeing, zip lining and attending the Mount Taranaki amputee weekend. As well, being a peer support volunteer has brought me so much joy; the joy of helping others.

Sadly seven years ago my health took a turn for the worse and I spent six months in hospital. It was a very long road to recovery and in this time I decided to give up my hairdressing career and turn my love of cake decorating into a small home business. I entered and

won many national cake decorating competitions and now have two ladies working with me. I love getting out of bed every day to face the wonderful adventures ahead, I get out there and live my life to the fullest!

NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND GIAG 2021

As this issue of *Purpose* goes to print, there is uncertainty as to whether or not next year's Conference and Give it a Go event will take place. They are scheduled to be held in Rotorua on 16-18 April but will depend on the availability of our chosen hotel (currently being used for quarantine purposes) and whether or not any Covid-19 restrictions exist at the time. An announcement will be made on our website early in February.

MEET ANDREA THOMPSON

(Earlier this year, Andrea took on the role of Secretary of the Amputee Society of Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts. Here is her story)

I had a major fall in June 2016 and spent several months in Waikato Hospital while they rebuilt my shoulder, pelvis, right leg and ankle. I now have a large quantity of metal plates, screws and rods supporting my bone structure. I don't remember the fall or the 7 operations at Waikato but eventually I was transferred back to Rotorua Hospital for rehabilitation. On a wonderful day 5 months later, with massive support from my husband, family and the Hospital Rehab Unit, I finally went home in November 2016. Some months later I was up and walking without aid when I noticed that my right ankle was swelling



badly and becoming painful and I had to start using crutches again. At my next surgeon's clinic, X-rays showed damaged bone that could only have been caused by an infection from my surgery. I don't know who was more upset - my surgeon, my husband or myself. I had two choices: a year of complex, painful operations, with no guarantee of success or a below knee amputation. The choice was actually easy for me, I had spent so long in hospital already I was not prepared to do so again. I chose

amputation and to move on with life. In July 2017 I had my operation and 3 weeks later was home again. I had my first prosthetic fitted in September and in no time at all was walking without aid.

So how is life after this massive change? Excellent - my new leg has become an extension of myself and not something that holds me back. I approach life with "How can I do this" rather than "I can't do this". My attitude is that nothing, within reason, is impossible, I just need to take the time to stop, think and plan my approach to physical problems. I may sound strong but it has taken some major support to get to this frame of mind.

I have been very lucky to adapt so well and I realise that it is not the same for everyone. This experience has given me a strong desire to help other amputees. I had wonderful support from the Amputee Society along my journey and when at the last AGM they needed a Secretary, I put my hand up to help. It's the start of my next journey in life, to help others.

NEWS SNIPPETS

***OUR THANKS** to the Lottery Grants Board for assistance towards administration expenses and to the Rehabilitation Welfare Trust for their donation towards the cost of reprinting *A New Challenge*.

* It is good to see a **new Artificial Limb Centre** established in Tauranga.

* **Outward Bound** is running an 8 day Activate course for young people over the age of 18. Some funding and places are still available for the course scheduled for 3-10 February next year. For further information contact ccampbell@outwardbound.co.nz

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

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

A “GEM” FROM THE PAST - The Braemar Trophy



While undergoing a tidy up of remaining possessions of the dis-established Taranaki Society, former President Wally came across this handsome trophy and subsequent referral to the Federation's history threw some light on its existence. The following are excerpts from page 41 of *A Challenge with Purpose*.

What was to become a regular event for many years commenced on 29 April 1963 in Palmerston North when the Manawatu and Wellington Associations

met for an indoor bowling tournament.

The Wellington Association subsequently won the Earl Hinks trophy donated by Mr Hinks of Feilding, and for the next few years the competition took place between only those two Associations, won on the majority of occasions by Wellington. However, following its affiliation, the Taranaki Association successfully participated in 1967. At the 25th Jubilee Conference in 1972, an invitation was extended to all Districts to compete for the Hinks Trophy and at Labour Day weekend of that year a successful tournament was held in Feilding, with teams from all seven North Island Associations (Auckland, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, Taranaki, Wanganui and Wellington) competing for the Hinks Trophy and the Braemar Trophy (named after the first President of the Manawatu Association and awarded to the best mixed team of amputees and non-amputees). The Hinks Trophy was won by Hawke's Bay and the Braemar Trophy was won by the Wanganui Association. However, both trophies were soon to be won by Auckland when played for at Napier on 17 March 1973, with teams from Auckland, Taranaki, Manawatu and Hawke's Bay competing. In June of the same year Taranaki went to Auckland with a challenge and this resulted in both trophies being returned to New Plymouth. Further tournaments took place in Feilding during Labour Day weekend in 1974 and 1976, with teams from Taranaki, Wanganui, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu and Wellington taking part. Purpose recorded in November 1980 that the bowls tournament had been held at Labour Day weekend that year and that the Taranaki and Wanganui Associations in particular were very keen participants. However, the tournament lapsed in 1981 and a

remit to the 1982 Conference asked that the bowls tournament at Feilding be reinstated at Labour Day weekend. The competition was revived for the last time during the Conference at Flock House in 1988, when Manawatu won the Hinks Trophy. (It can be presumed that the Braemar Trophy was won by the Taranaki Association).

PEER SUPPORT SERVICE

A nationwide Peer Support Service was established in August 2019 by Peke Waihangā – NZ Artificial Limb Service in conjunction with the Amputees Federation of New Zealand. Invaluable support was also received from Melissa Noonan, Limbs4 Life, Australia and it has proved to be an important and most successful service for people who are coping with such a life-changing event. Currently there are 71 trained volunteers and to date over 160 people have been supported by the service.

Through the referral process, the service can match up recipients with trained peer support volunteers based on their age, gender, reason for amputation, location and even their interests.

If you would like to become a volunteer, or you think that you, or someone that you know, may benefit from this Peer Support Service, please check out their website www.peersupport.nz or make contact with the service via phone 0508 773 778 or email info@peersupport.nz

MEET BRENDON KETE (Peer Support Volunteer)



Brendon is a Peer Support Service volunteer who became an amputee following a motorcycle accident 44 years ago. Brendon, who lost his right leg, recalled waking up the following day and feeling like his leg was there, but it wasn't. "It's pretty traumatic, and I would say these days there are a lot more amputees than back then." When Brendon lost his leg, he had no one to talk to. These days, as a Peer Support Service volunteer, he listens to people's issues and questions. His role

as a volunteer has been busy, supporting four people in as many months. Due to Covid-19 much of the support had to be over the

phone. But what he enjoyed about volunteering was being able to use his experience to help others understand what was going to happen as an amputee.

And Brendon's advice to anyone thinking about becoming a Peer Support Volunteer? Be a good listener; you have to listen and try to develop open-ended questions. Sometimes it can take 2 or 3 phone calls to get them to open up. Give them plenty of time to respond and have a good sense of humour.

(Excerpts from the Bay of Plenty Times and the NZALS website)

HOW CAN I PREVENT FALLS AT HOME?

(From a NZALS Fact Sheet)

There are some things that you can do to reduce the risk of falling at home.

You can have an assessment to determine if you need any equipment to help you at home. This may include handrails, ramps or grip bars. If you feel you might need an assessment, speak to a member of the rehabilitation team.

You can also:

- Remove mats or rugs from the floor
- Make sure there are no cords or leads in areas where you may walk
- Wipe up any spills immediately and watch for slippery floors
- Rearrange furniture so you have enough room to move around
- Leave a light on at night
- Use a pickup stick to reach items from the floor or items which are above your head.
- Wear a rigid removable dressing if you have been advised to, as they also have a protective function.

A lot of falls happen when people wake in the night and forget they have had an amputation. To help prevent falls at night

- Take your time to wake up properly
- Sit on the edge of the bed until you have got your balance
- Turn lights on
- If possible leave your wheelchair beside your bed

What Happens if you do have a fall?

Sometimes falls can still happen. As an amputee, getting up after a fall can be more challenging. You may need to learn some new skills and techniques which will help you. Remember when you have a fall

it will most likely give you a fright. Instead of trying to get up in a hurry:

- take a moment to catch your breath
- think about how you can get up safely and
- what you need to do.

Plan your recovery in your mind before you actually try to do it. If you think you have hurt yourself or if you are unable to get off the floor, call for help. It may be a good idea to wear a medical alarm or keep your mobile phone close by.

Examples of what can contribute to falls

Medication: Some can cause dizziness or light-headedness. If you are concerned about this, speak to your GP.

M e m o r y : Forgetting to put the brakes on your wheelchair.

Balance: Losing your balance when you are reaching forward or leaning down.

Phantom sensations: Feeling that the leg is still there.

Environment: Cluttered spaces, leads or mats on the floor.

Muscle strength: It is important to build up your strength and do your exercises as given to you by your physiotherapist.

Bladder & bowel problems: Rushing for the toilet can lead to falls. Where possible, give yourself time.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Auckland & Northland - Covid 19 in Auckland has really changed lives; hopefully we will be back to Level 1 by the time this goes to print. Visiting fellow amputees or having any sort of social event has been impossible to organise this year. Our health is more important at this stage, and social distancing and the wearing of masks is mandatory. Roll on 2021 and we hope for a better, brighter and healthier year. Take care of one another. *(Janis Bourne, Secretary)*

Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts - A casual snow trip took place last month at Whakapapa and 10 people attended, including support people; we all had a blast! We are looking forward to organising next year's amputee snow trip. Our end of year Christmas function is being planned for the end of November and we are also planning a 2nd Summer Amp Camp for early next year. *(Matthew Bryson, President)*

Hawke's Bay/East Coast - We had our postponed AGM in mid July and welcomed a new Secretary Vikki and 3 new committee

members - Margaret, Ted and James. Our President Jacqui stayed on and was joined by an existing committee member to be our new Vice President who is also Jacqui (must be a theme for rulers) and Korrin stayed on as Treasurer. We farewelled a long term Officer Diane Walsh who was initially our Vice President & then did about 6 years as President; she came back in our time of need as Secretary two years ago. Diane produced our newsletters for many years and did a great job in all her roles, thanks Diane. Things are at present back to normal with our aqua exercise sessions running and we are looking for venues for our upcoming functions and planning a movie night fund-raiser. *(Geoff Hansen, Field Officer)*

Manawatu & Districts - Two events are planned before Christmas: a lunch in the rural area of Upokongaro on 14 November and a Christmas BBQ at Marton on 13 December. Get in touch if you would like to join us. *(Eddie Johnston, Secretary)*

Greater Wellington Region - No up-to-date news from this region - Vice President Mary Humphreys is a member of the National Executive and features in this edition of *Purpose*.

Top of the South - Even though the country again went through a couple of levels of restrictions for Covid-19 we were able to start up our monthly coffee and lunch sessions again. It has also been good to see a couple of new faces at these sessions. We held our AGM (even though it was late) and decided to keep the status quo (minus a couple of committee members) until the next AGM in 2021. Remember this - "No-one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Eleanor Roosevelt. *(Max Alty, President)*

Canterbury & Westland - Our Society is proud to be a strong supporter of the NZALS Peer Support programme; we currently have 15 trained PS volunteers (9 men and 6 women) covering Canterbury, South to Timaru and West to the coast. Since August 2019, they have made contact with over 40 new and prospective amputees. Our Christmas function, is to be held on Sunday 22nd November at the Garden Bar Cafe in Shirley, Christchurch. *(Justine Mangan-Woods, Secretary)*

Otago & Southland - We are looking forward to getting together for our annual events in Dunedin and Invercargill later this year. *(Lorraine Peacock, Coordinator)*

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

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