



Amputee
Society
of Canterbury &
Westland Inc.

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May 2025 Contents

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Quote of the Month:

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. -*Steve Jobs/Apple*

Fun Fact:

Banging your head against a wall for one hour burns 150 calories.

If you lift a Kangaroos tail off the ground, it can't hop.

Editor's Message

Disclaimer: The information in this editorial does not necessarily reflect the views of the Amputee Society of Canterbury/Westland)

Euthanasia is the process of mercifully ending a person's life, allowing that individual to escape terminal illness or an undignified death. The term has taken on many new meanings in this modern age of medical technological advancement where scientists have devised numerous inventions to help prevent the death of humans faced with medical tragedy. The question is, just how long humans should undergo these life-saving and life-prolonging treatments before they are permitted to die peacefully. The fierce battle between those who support and those who oppose euthanasia has made society recognize the importance of this topic. So, should humans should have the right to a benevolent death and do so with legal backing? Euthanasia, legally termed "assisted dying," is legal in New Zealand under the End of Life Choice Act 2019, which came into force on November 7, 2021. This law allows for medically assisted dying for terminally ill individuals facing unbearable suffering with a prognosis of six months or less to live.

Euthanasia is an option that violates traditional social and religious beliefs but human beings have practiced various forms of euthanasia since the classical era of Greece and Rome. Deformed infants born in the city-state of Sparta were left to die so that the society would not have to admit them into their "strong and robust" society. The Romans would assist their elderly citizens in dying so they could relieve their families of the "burden" of their care.

I have in a way "supported" the notion of "assisted dying" many times during my lifetime when an incredibly hard decision has had to be made to end the suffering of beloved family pets but humans are different. In six weeks, I am travelling to Rotorua to say goodbye to a very dear friend who has chosen the "assisted dying" path after a sudden & unexpected terminal illness diagnosis was received in March this year. I will go, enjoy her company over four days, recollect wonderful memories that we have created and focus that this is a chosen path which is **HER** decision-not on the morality of what **SHE** has decided to do.

MEET RALPH McGUIGAN:

Ralph was born in 1979 at Christchurch and was raised by his single Mum on a family farm at Chertsey. When Ralph was around 1 year old, his mother decided to embark on an overseas trip that ended up with them living in Spain and the UK with family for the next 2-3 years. Unfortunately, because of his young age, he has no memory of this time spent overseas. They returned back to NZ when Ralph was approx. 4 years old as his Mum wanted to finish her Economics degree at Canterbury University and they settled at Sumner. Ralph attended Sumner Primary School before moving on to Linwood High School which Ralph said was both a "life education" as well as providing learning opportunities. He concentrated on science subjects and left school at the end of year 13 whereupon he took a year off. During this time, he gained a salesperson role at McEwings Mountain Sports and in the winter was a ski technician for the firm.



Ralph then commenced a Biochemistry degree at Canterbury University but after year two, he decided that this course was "not for him". He moved to Melbourne and for the next year was a project manager for Telstra before returning to Wellington for a short period of time and then back to Christchurch where he has lived ever since. He did some "temping" before landing a permanent role with Telecom Mobile where his positions included Business Development Officer, Accounts Manager then Store Manager. Ralph stayed in the Telecommunications field and went to work for the opposition, Vodafone. His next career move was to become the Southern Territory Manager for On Gas where he was responsible for the company from Taupo to Invercargill. After about 18 months, Ralph said he was "shoulder tapped" to take up a position selling Shell lubricants where he stayed for the next 9 years. He then moved to Allied Petroleum in a similar Business Development role, before stepping into his current role as National Sales Manager - Lubricants and has been with Allied Petroleum for the last 7 years. He has responsibility for staff all over NZ which requires him to travel regularly, around 6-7 nights away per month, but Ralph said to make things easier, he fly/drives. Ralph, his wife Elyse, 9-year-old son, Xavier and their beloved pooch, Roxy live in Diamond Ave, Spreydon. In mid- January, 2013 when Ralph and Elyse were on holiday at Pohara in Golden Bay, Ralph sustained a small cut to his right big toe when he was coming out of the water one day but thought nothing of it because it was a very minor cut. Two days later, he and Elyse flew out to Brisbane for a holiday. From Brisbane, they then travelled up to Mackay to spend time with his dad and on his first day there, he got badly sunburnt. Unbeknown to him, this episode of sunburn had diminished his immunity and he became quite unwell over the next couple of days which finally necessitated him being taken to hospital by ambulance. From that seemingly innocuous cut, Ralph had contracted Necrotizing Fasciitis whereupon he was placed in an induced coma for the next 9 days. The hospital performed 4 "washouts" of the infected area as well as 2 surgeries but despite their best efforts, amputation of his right leg below knee was the best

RALPH McGUIGAN CONT:

course of action. This took place on Feb 1st, 2013 only a matter of 2 weeks after sustaining the small cut to his toe. He was discharged after 3-4 days and spent the next 6-7 weeks rehabilitating before returning home to NZ in mid-March. Ralph is forever grateful for the wonderful Peer Support that he received while in Mackay and to this end, he has been an engaged Peer Support volunteer for the NZ programme since its inception in 2019. Life as an amputee has challenges and Ralph misses not being able to “run around” after Xavier and to be able to kick a soccer ball properly. Ralph says the he has a go at most things but has learnt the art of plotting & planning things to compensate for his disability. He enjoys giving back as a Peer Support volunteer, supporting Xavier with his football, mountain biking with the family and some hunting pursuits. Ralph laughed when he said that the greatest risk he has ever taken was, “popping the question to Elyse”. Ralph has travelled extensively and has visited Thailand, Bali, Australia, Spain, Germany, Italy, The UK and in September this year, he and Elyse are travelling to Las Vegas to renew their wedding vows to celebrate their 15th wedding anniversary.



FAVOURITE FOOD: BBQ steak and Thai food.

FAVOURITE PLACE: HOME but has enjoyed their family holidays to Thailand & Bali.

FAVOURITE MUSIC: Electronic dance music and listening to DJ's.

FAVOURITE MOVIE: Shawshank Redemption/Marvel movies/Standup comedy.

FAVOURITE AUTHOR/BOOKS: Lee Child “Jack Reacher” although Ralph says he finds it hard to find the time to sit down with a good book due to his busy lifestyle.

CANTERBURY/WESTLAND AGM:

The Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday, March 16th, around 10.30am at the Hornby Club with around 20 members being present. Officers elected were Mark Bruce as Chairperson, Alesha Kelly as Vice-Chairperson, Justine Mangan-Woods Secretary/Treasurer and elected to the committee were, Vaughan Mangan-Woods, Joanne Boereboom, Lisa Gray, Andrea Thompson and a big welcome to a new face, Karla Meredith. Thanks was extended to Janice Frost who had served on the committee for many years but decided to stand down in the coming year due to personal circumstances. At the conclusion of the AGM, a wonderful morning tea, supplied by the Society, was enjoyed by those present.

STORY OF A UKRAINIAN AMPUTEE SOLDIER:

Donetsk Region, Ukraine: The Ukrainian intelligence soldier doesn't know how long his clinical death lasted after an explosive detonated beneath him. All Andrii Rubliuk remembers is overwhelming cold, darkness and fear. When he regained consciousness in his shattered body, missing both arms and his left leg, excruciating pain engulfed him and hallucinations clouded his mind. "It's an experience you wouldn't wish on anyone," the now 38-year-old says.

Two years later, Rubliuk is again dressed in military fatigues, his missing limbs replaced by prosthetics, hooks in place of fingers, one leg firmly planted on an artificial limb. From the moment of the explosion, Rubliuk knew his life had changed forever. But one thing was certain, he vowed to return to the battlefield. "Fighting with arms and legs is something anyone can do. Fighting without them, that's a challenge," he says. "But only those who take on challenges and fight through them are truly alive."



Andrii Rubliuk holds a rifle during training.

Many Ukrainian brigades have at least one, and often several, amputee soldiers still on active duty, men who returned to combat out of a sense of duty amid the grim outlook for their country. They are among Ukraine's 380,000 war wounded, according to President Volodymyr Zelensky. Some 46,000 soldiers have been killed during the three-year war, and tens of thousands are missing and in captivity. On the front line, Russia is expending huge amounts of weaponry and human life to make small but steady territorial gains to the near one-fifth of Ukraine it controls. Meanwhile Ukraine, outnumbered and outgunned, faces challenges not only on the battlefield but also in diplomacy as its once strongest ally, the US, enters talks with Russia, raising fears that Ukraine and its European partners will be sidelined. Rubliuk rejoined the special forces last northern spring as a senior sergeant in the Artan intelligence unit, training new soldiers and monitoring enemy drones. His rehabilitation began in late 2022, but he believes it never truly ends. "Every new day is part of my rehabilitation," he says. His new body, he says, is a balance between self-acceptance and continuous recovery. A comrade who was with Rubliuk when the explosion happened and who suffered minor injuries remembers the moment vividly. "I thought he was dead," said the soldier, who did not give his name in compliance with special forces rules. At that moment, Rubliuk's life hung in the balance. He was transported to a nearby hospital, suffered cardiac arrest and was eventually resuscitated, said Dr Anton Yakovenko, a military surgeon who treated him. After months in hospital wards and rehabilitation centres in Philadelphia and Florida, Rubliuk has returned to take on a role near the front line where, like others who have done so, his knowledge and experience are the greatest weapon.

Rubliuk takes part in training after his surgeries.



AMPUTEES FEDERATION CONFERENCE:

Over the weekend on April 4-6th, the conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel with around 70 people attending. Late Friday afternoon saw the AGM held and officers elected for the coming year before the conference was officially opened on the Friday evening by Ken Sowden, General Manager of Parafed Canterbury after he gave an interesting Power Point presentation outlining the wonderful sporting achievements by fellow disabled persons. Saturday morning was inspirational as Top of the South outlined the success of the inaugural "Stump Club Camp" for 8-16 year old amputees held last December at Whenua Iti Outdoor Recreation, near Motueka. Canterbury/Westland supported this endeavour with a cash grant and hope to be able to do so again this year with the camp due to be held this coming December. To see and hear just HOW MUCH this camp meant to our young amputees was both humbling and heartwarming. If any of our members wished to donate to this incredible cause, feel free to make contact with Mark Bruce. Saturday afternoon was taken up with various activities/free time before an enjoyable dinner with a "mad hatter-bad hatter" theme. Other presentations of interest over the weekend were given by Matthias Blatner, Southern Regional Manager of Peke Waihanga as well as from Al Von Zonneveld from Hawkes Bay about his challenge of running the New York marathon in 2024, completing the 42 kms in a remarkable 5 hours and 41 minutes. Many exhibitors were set up in a room adjacent to the conference with Ottobock, Ossur, Taska, Digital Journey, Extremity, Pro-Armour and St John present and gaining much interest from attendees.

The event was superbly organised and run by Alesha & Justine (our C/W members), well chaired by President, Korrin Barrett and ably MC'd by Ken Te Tau. To summarise, the event was enjoyable, informative and had a friendly, warm "vibe" about it.

HAVE A GO AT WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

Matthew Bryson, the Peer Support & Events Coordinator at Peke Waihanga has organised an exciting event for amputees in our region. "Have a Go" at wheelchair basketball will be held on Saturday, May 10th from 11am-2pm. Similar events of this type held in different regions of NZ have been a huge success so if you would like to enjoy a fun and challenging few hours with fellow amputees, please register your interest asap with Matt on the number below. Registrations can be taken right up to the event date.

Peke Waihanga
Artificial Limb Service
Orthotic Service

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

Calling on all **amputees and people with disabilities** to have a go at **wheelchair basketball** in Christchurch.

📅 11:00 am – 2:00 pm on **Saturday, 10 May 2025**

This event is free to attend!

To register, **contact Matthew on 022 102 5697.**

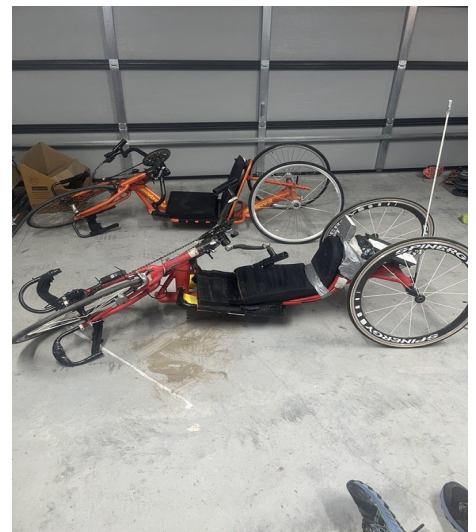


SARAH HORNER-HANDCYCLES:

Sarah was a long time member of our society who lived at Ahaura on the West Coast before moving to Carters Beach, Westport with her partner, Mel, a few years back. Over the last few years, her and Mel had thoroughly enjoyed getting out and about on their hand-cycles. Sadly, Mel passed away suddenly one night last year when he and Sarah were visiting her son at Kirwee to celebrate the arrival of Sam & Ebony's first born. In a cruel twist of fate, Sarah was only just getting over the sudden and sad loss of Mel when she herself was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Sadly, Sarah did not last very long to enjoy the rest of her life but in a show of great generosity, she informed Sam before she left that she would like both their handcycles to go to the Amputee Society.



Sam has given me the following information about Sarah & Mel's bikes. They are both TOP END FORCE G brand and cost around \$3-\$4,000 new when they were purchased. To Sam's estimate, both bikes would be worth around \$1500 each second hand. In Sam's own words, "I think Mum and Mel would love to see the society get some money for them as much as they would love to see other people get enjoyment from them..totally up to you how you do this though". Out of sincere respect for Sarah & Mel's wishes and with Sam's guidance, my decision is that the handcycles will be offered to **financial members** of our society in the first instance for their **personal** use. A signed agreement will be required outlining that the bikes can not be on-sold for a period of 2 years. This criteria **must** be met for the handcycles to be donated. Any expression of interest must be submitted to Mark Bruce (contact details on back page) by **Saturday May 31st. If there is multiple interest in the bikes, a ballot will be held to determine the lucky recipients.** If the offer has not been taken up by this date, I will look at other options with any proceeds gained going to the Society as per Sarah & Mel's wishes. On behalf of the society, we are both humbled and grateful for the incredible generosity of Sarah & Mel and also to Sam Horner for "making this happen"



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Web Sites

**Amputee Society of
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www.amputeeinfo.co.nz

The Amputees Federation of NZ

www.amputee.co.nz

NZ Artificial Limb Service

www.nzals.govt.nz

Peer Support

www.peersupport.nz

Parafed Canterbury

www.parafedcanterbury.co.nz

International Diabetes Federation

www.idf.org

Amputee News

www.amputeenews.com

Disability Rights Commissioner

www.hrc.co.nz

UN Programme on Disability

www.un.org/issues/m-disabl.asp

Paraloan 03 3795983

www.paraloan.org.nz

Email: paraloan@xtra.co.nz

**Nation Wide H&D Advocacy
Service – 0800 555050**

**Aspire Canterbury,
Disabilities Information Service**

Braintree Wellness Centre. 70 Langdons Rd.
CHCH

Website: www.aspirecanterbury.org.nz

Total Mobility. Contact Julie (03) 3669093

julie@aspirecanterbury.org.nz

LifeLinks. 0800 866 877

Web: lifelinks.co.nz Email: office@lifelinks.co.nz



**CCS
disability action**

Including all people

TE HUNGA HAUĀ MAURI MŌ NGĀ TĀNGATA KĀTOA
CCS Disability Action

224 Lichfield St, Ch-Ch. Thomas Callanan.

03 3655661/0800 2272255.

Email: canterbury@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz

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Other Committee Members

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Andrea Thompson, Ralph
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wsturk@xtra.co.nz
Mike Stead
022 0890926
mcstead1973@gmail.com

Prosthetic Advisor

Mark Hills
021 222 0663
markhillsy@icloud.com

Total Mobility Scheme

Agent: Aspire Canterbury
03 3666189
julie@aspirecanterbury.org.nz

Mobility Parking Permit

CCS Disability Action
03 365-5661/0800 2272255

Life Members

Liz Rogers Heather Plows
Ava Thomas Margaret Hunter
Mark Bruce

**Peke Waihanga/Artificial
Limb Service**

330 Burwood Road, Ch-Ch
Phone 03-383-0501
Freephone 0508 383 383
Hours: 8.00am - 4.30pm
Office administrators

Lynleigh Ashcroft
Caroline Leaper
christchurch@nzals.co.nz

**Amputee Society of
Canterbury/Westland Inc**

Westpac 03 0830 026 4400 00

**Burwood Hospital
Hydro Pool**



Wed: 4-30pm-6-30pm
Sundays: 1pm – 2-30pm
This is with Parafed and there
is a \$2.00 charge.



Christchurch City Council

Disability Golf NZ

For any enquiries about
becoming involved, anywhere
in NZ, please contact
Andrew Woo, 021 885678
disabilitygolfnz@gmail.com



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