

A STEP AHEAD



SUMMER EDITION 2021

CENTRAL OFFICE

Logan Central Community Centre
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PO Box 31, Kingston Qld 4114



Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 2.30 pm

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We would like to thank InHouse Print & Design for the printing of our quarterly newsletter. Please contact them for all your printing requirements.

Disclaimer: Amputees & Family Support Group Queensland Inc (Amputees Queensland) does not provide specific medical advice or endorse any specific treatment, technology, company or device. Consumers are advised to consult with their healthcare professionals.

FROM THE OFFICE

Welcome to the Summer Edition of A Step Ahead!!

As we head into Summer and the Christmas season we can reflect on what a year it has been! We started the year with a lot of hope that 2021 would not look like 2020 but we ended up with lockdowns, border closures and mask wearing! Although at times this was difficult we have been luckier than most States here in Queensland.



Let's hope that as we head into 2022 things will open up more and we can all get back to seeing our friends and family throughout Australia and the World!

As we planned and prepared for our 35 Year Anniversary Luncheon it looked like we might actually go into lockdown but thankfully we were able to go ahead with reduced numbers and the luncheon was a great success!

A big thank you to everybody that attended and to our amazing sponsors who helped make the day such a success!

For us the 35 Year Anniversary Luncheon kicked off Amputee Awareness Week and what a week it was! A big thank you to everybody that got involved in the activities and helped spread awareness.

Amputee Awareness Week helps raise awareness in the community of people living with limb loss or limb difference through a range of activities and awareness events. We have shared some of our photos in this newsletter.

Thank you to everybody that brought tickets in our Amputee Awareness Week raffle and a big congratulations to the winners:

1st Prize – \$100 gift card – Kasia & David (Black ticket B80)

2nd Prize – \$75 gift card – J. Green (Red ticket F90)

3rd Prize – \$50 gift card – A & K Holding (Purple ticket F82)

On behalf of the staff and management at the Amputees & Families Support Group Qld Inc I would like to wish everybody a merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynda". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Amputees and Families Support Group Qld Inc is partially funded by Queensland Health.

MEET THE NEW MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2021/2022

Congratulations to the new Committee and thank you to the
2020/2021 outgoing Committee.



Darren Wyer
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Mary Woods
Vice President



Susan Merry
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Judi Corrigan
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Sid Dyson



Kevin McIntosh



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DATES FOR THE DIARY

December

3rd Simple Savings & Preventative Health (page 14)

17th Christmas Closure

January

19th Guild Pharmacy - Medication Information



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Celebrating 35 Years



Thank you to everybody who joined us for our 35 Year Anniversary Luncheon at Diggers Services Club!

A big thank you to our sponsors (page 10), Matthew Ames, Bionics Queensland for an informative session on Bionics for Amputees.

Congratulations to Sid Dyson who received a Life Membership in recognition for his hardwork and dedication. Thank you Sid.



Celebrating 35 Years



A special thank you to our sponsors who helped make our 35 Year Anniversary Luncheon such a fantastic event.

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Amputee Awareness Week Activities



Thank you to everybody that joined in for our Amputee Awareness Week activities. Amputee Awareness Week helps raise awareness in the community of people living with limb loss or limb difference through a range of activities and awareness events. This year we kicked off Amputee Awareness Week with our 35 Year Anniversary Luncheon and then followed on with a range of activities which everybody enjoyed.

Fishing

We partnered with Fishability Qld for a fun day out on the water!



This was a great day out on the water, we had two boats and lots of fun.

The feedback from this event has been amazing and everybody who attended has already asked when the next one would be.

One of our members said "this was a fantastic day, the best day I have had in a long time, to get out of the house and away from the four walls and just enjoy being on the water was amazing, put me down for the next one!"

Amputee Awareness Week Activities cont.

Residual Limb Care

This was a great session from Heather Spalton at the Physio Lounge.

Heather discussed and demonstrated how to look after your residual limb. Thank you to our volunteer Glenn for helping Heather with her demonstration.

If you would like to contact The Physio Lounge:

Tel: 0409 913 297

Email: info@thephysiolounge.com.au



Golf

We partnered with Ben Tullipan from Empower Golf for an all abilities Golf Clinic at Top Golf, Oxenford. Empower Golf run FREE clinics all through the year and you can check out the venues and dates on their website: www.empowergolf.com.au



Greenslopes Mall

A big thank you to Sid Dyson who sat at Greenslopes Mall all Amputee Awareness Week raising awareness in the community.





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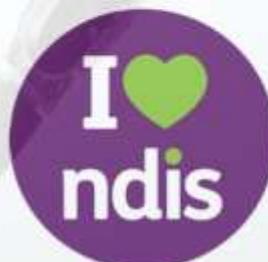
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Amputations in Australia

Limb amputation is one of the earliest forms of surgery, allowing a person to survive severe injuries and infections.

Historically the main causes of amputation were trauma and wound infections. However in first world countries trauma is no longer the main cause of amputations because:

- ◆ Emergency medicine has greatly improved and more limbs are saved because a person can be transported to hospital quickly.
- ◆ Some amputated limbs can now be reattached with microsurgery.
- ◆ The number of workplace accidents have dropped significantly due to Health and Safety laws.
- ◆ Surgical sterilisation techniques and antibiotics control most infections.

In a modernised country such as Australia the main causes of amputations are vascular disease and diabetes. Other causes of amputation are traumatic injuries, infections, tumors and congenital deformities.



Vascular Disease: Vascular disease occurs when the arteries in the legs become blocked. This condition can happen to anyone but is more severe in patients with diabetes. The narrowed arteries prevent the heart from pumping enough oxygenated blood to the feet, resulting in severe pain in the legs, foot ulcerations and ultimately gangrene of the toes/foot.

Diabetes: Diabetes is the cause of half of the amputations performed in Queensland. Diabetes does not just increase the severity of vascular disease it also reduces feeling in the feet and slows wound healing; resulting in foot ulcers. People with diabetes are more prone to skin infections and gangrene or sepsis may occur, resulting in amputation.

Amputations in Australia cont.

Trauma: Trauma resulting in amputation is most frequently related to motorcycle, motor vehicle and industrial accidents.

Other causes are home accidents and burns. Most upper limb amputations are caused by traumatic injury. Trauma is the most common cause of amputation for young adults.

Infection: Infection as a cause of amputation occurs when bacteria, for example, Staphylococcus (Golden Staph) and meningococcal enter the body. These bacteria rapidly overwhelm the body resulting in severe infection, often with the patient unconscious and therefore unaware of the situation. The progression of the infection is rapid often resulting in multiple amputations to save the patient's life.

Congenital defects: Children are sometimes born with missing or misshaped limb/s. The limb may form without a large bone making it too short or it may have extremities that have formed differently such as 'nubbins' instead of fingers/toes. To allow fitting of a prosthesis part of the limb may require amputation. Congenital defects are the most common causes of amputation in children.

Tumors: Bone cancer is a common cause of amputation. When a tumor does not respond well to conventional treatment it may be necessary to remove the affected tissue and bone to save the patient's life. Limb-sparing surgery is preferred but amputations are performed if the limb sparing surgery would result in a non functioning limb or the tumor is too difficult to remove without amputation.



This Article was taken from "Information for People Living with Amputation" by Queensland Health. If you would like a copy of this book please contact the Amputees & Families Support Group Queensland Inc on 07 3290 4293 or via email admin@afsg.org.au and we will arrange for a copy to be sent to you.

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Amputee Support Association Sunshine Coast

Members Update

Seasons greetings and wishing everyone a Safe and Happy Christmas!

I am pleased to report the Sunshine Coast Amputee Support Group is alive and well after a challenging year of COVID-19 restrictions, a change of office bearers and meeting venue and the transfer of our mobility aids to Amputee & Families Support Group Qld central office in Logan.

Our members continue to offer help and social support to all amputees!

Many thanks to members of parliament, Fiona Simpson and Jarrod Bleijie! They have been our support group patrons for many years and have both offered their support and guidance for another year.

We are fortunate the Sunshine Coast University has had a Prosthetics and Orthotics (P & O) Program for the past several years. This gives our members the opportunity to be part of the program by attending lectures to answer student questions and to volunteer to have students practice casting techniques on residual limbs. The leaders, Adam Holden and Brian Delaney have been proactive in encouraging amputees to share their experiences with students; it's a win - win situation. Secretary, Robyn Boxsell has been a participating member of the P & O External Program Advisory Committee for over three years and invited me to take part in the June and November meetings,, so we get to contribute in a practical and positive way.

Robyn has also been our voice at Queensland Amputee Limb Service meetings for the past several years and I have attended one meeting with her. This is a great opportunity to have an input and to make sure Queensland amputees who miss out on NDIS funding, (over the age of 65) get good quality limbs and service from prosthetic providers.

A reminder to members that our last general meeting for the year is on the 16th November 2021 at Club Mooloolaba and our first meeting in 2022 will be on the 15th February.

Our new mobile phone number and email are as follows:

Mobile: 0475 052 980

Email Address: sunshinecoast@afsg.org.au

The committee sends best wishes to Amputees, Supporters and their families and we look forward to seeing you at our meetings and social events next year.

Cheers
President & Committee



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Adapting to Limb Loss

Limb loss is a stressful and devastating experience that affects every aspect of a person's life, including their relationships, career, dreams and emotional well-being. It is common for amputees to experience grief, depression and anxiety after a surgical amputation or traumatic event.

An amputation significantly affects a person's life and psychological state for several reasons. First, the amputee must handle the sensation of losing a limb and a loss of function. They may experience challenges with mobility and need to depend on others until they adapt and regain independence. Some individuals experience phantom limb pain, which can negatively impact their quality of life.

Amputation & Grief

Loss is something everyone goes through.

It is difficult to deal with loss because we don't like to experience negative feelings, however, grieving is a necessary part of the healing process and various emotions are a "normal" part of that experience.

Grieving does not always occur in any special order.



Losing a limb can trigger grief in the same way as losing a loved one. Grief is how people naturally react to losing anything or anyone they love. It encompasses various stages and emotions as a person processes the loss and adapts to changes.

As time goes on and the person adjusts to a new life, the pain of grief lessens.

Still, grieving is difficult, and everyone experiences grief in their own way. Some people will go through all the stages of grief. Others may only experience a few. The grieving process also does not occur in a particular order, nor can it be rushed.

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Adapting to Limb Loss cont.

Understanding what grief looks like can increase self-compassion and help you determine your needs. Here are the different stages of grief and how they relate to limb loss:

Denial: Denial helps reduce the pain of a significant loss. It may feel like numbness, shock or confusion. People in the denial stage may avoid thinking or talking about the loss. For example, a patient about to undergo a surgical amputation might refuse to talk about the impending procedure or answer questions. Someone who experienced an amputation in a traumatic event might be in a state of disbelief that the loss occurred.

Anger: People may feel angry as they start to release emotions related to their loss. During the anger stage, a person might feel frustrated, resentful, irritable or pessimistic. Patients might express anger toward doctors or nurses after amputation for "tricking" them into getting surgery, for example.

Bargaining: Bargaining can feel like guilt, fear and anxiety. Someone in the bargaining phase might dwell on the past and wish they did something different. They will try to think of ways to avoid the pain they are feeling or anticipating. For instance, a patient might try to postpone their surgery despite it being necessary for their health.

Depression: At some point during the grieving process, a person realizes bargaining is not an option. They start to look at the situation realistically and feel the intensity of their loss. Depression is characterized by sadness, despair, hopelessness and disappointment. Someone who is depressed might experience decreased energy and withdrawal from others.

Acceptance: When someone reaches acceptance, they no longer fight reality or try to bargain for something different. They may still experience sadness, but they are less likely to feel anger or denial about their loss. They may be able to live in the present moment, cope with difficult emotions in a healthy way, and communicate honestly about how they feel. Individuals with an amputation may not reach the acceptance stage until they are in a rehabilitation program. *(Excerpt PAM Health 2021)*

If you or somebody you know needs assistance please contact:

Australian Government - Head to Health Resources

www.headtohealth.gov.au

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Men's Line

Telephone & support service

Phone: 1300 789 978 (24/7)

www.mensline.org.au

Positive Ways to cope with Limb Loss

It takes time to process the emotions you feel and adapt when experiencing an amputation. It is important to remember that difficult feelings will decrease over time. In the meantime, surrounding yourself with supportive people and trying different strategies can help you cope with the loss. Here are a few positive ways to cope with limb loss:

1. Acknowledge Your Feelings

Acknowledging your feelings can help you heal and move through the grieving process. Know that it is OK to feel angry or sad after your loss. You might experience a vast range of emotions until you adapt to the changes in your life. Allow yourself to feel all the different emotions that arise rather than force them aside. If you feel stuck in an emotion, consider speaking with a mental health professional.

2. Express Negative Emotions

It is better to express negative emotions than ignore them. You might write about your feelings in a journal, paint a picture or play a song - whatever appeals to you. The point is to let your emotions out so you can deal with them in a healthy way.

3. Connect with Others

Connecting with others can help prevent a sense of isolation. It is essential to contact friends and family members who are good listeners and optimistic. You might also join a support group to connect with people who have gone through what you are going through. By sharing your experience with supportive people, you can learn new coping strategies and better understand your feelings.

4. Find a Purpose

Try to find something that makes you excited to start each day. You might focus on a career change, pick up a new hobby or volunteer in your community. No matter how big or small, having a purpose is a way to lead a satisfying life.

5. Set Meaningful Goals

Setting realistic and meaningful goals adds purpose and structure to life. When you have dreams you are working towards, you may also experience a boost in self-esteem. During rehabilitation, your team can help you establish goals that are important to you.



Positive Ways to cope with Limb Loss

6. Create a Daily Routine

Having a daily routine is comforting and can help you focus on goals rather than dwell on the past or negative emotions. A routine can also help keep you motivated. Try to include something physical, creative and social in your daily routine. For example, you might exercise, engage in a hobby and contact a friend every day. Make sure your routine includes self-care and doing things you love.

7. Embrace Optimism

Keeping a positive attitude can help people cope with limb loss. Focus on the things you can do and ways you have grown since the loss. Many individuals grow psychologically after an amputation. For example, a person with an amputation may experience more motivation to pursue their goals, greater resilience and improved coping skills. Staying positive does not mean you need to ignore your feelings. Instead, it is a way to focus on your strengths and move forward in life.

Although living with an amputation presents challenges, positive coping strategies can help amputees find a new path in life and overcome difficult emotions. If you or a loved one have recently undergone an amputation, know that many people live a fulfilling life once they adapt to changes. The first step to healing from limb loss is acknowledging your feelings and the various factors impacting your mental health. From there, you can apply coping strategies that work for you.

Excerpt PAM Health 2021





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- Ross Powrie, Custom Prosthetics, Australia.

I used to cover my foot with plastic bags and old socks, it was such a hassle! Now the Pro Armour Lite has made a massive difference in my life. I wear mine all the time, except for dinner parties! I think every amputee should definitely get one.

- Naomi, BK amputee

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Wednesday, 23 March 2022
Wednesday, 27 April 2022

Time: 9.15am for 9:45am start

Where: Logan Central Community Centre
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RSVP is essential for catering purposes.

RSVP to Lynda on 3290 4293 on the Friday before each Bingo session. **Sorry NO walk ins.**





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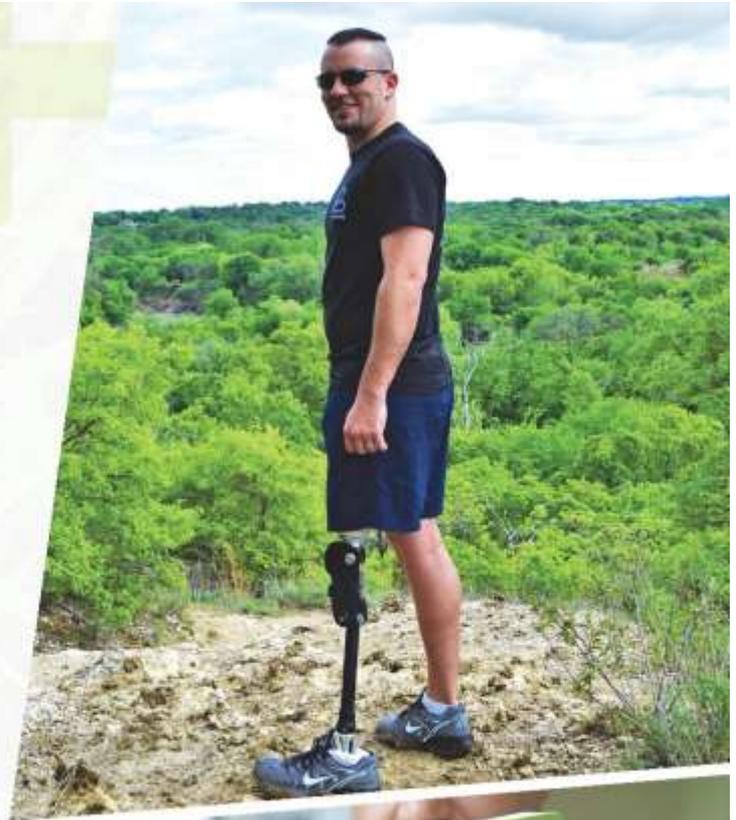
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Top 10 tips to maintain your mental health



Plan and prioritise

Focus on one thing at a time, keep calm and plan ahead. Set priorities, action steps and reminders. Celebrate your progress.



Sleep well

Lack of sleep can cause stress and exhaustion. We need an average eight hours sleep to function best. Turn off the TV at least 30 minutes before bed.



Eat healthy food

Good nutrition is important for your mental health. Eat nutritious, well balanced meals and drink plenty of water. Search the web for healthy recipes.



Tune in

Listening to music for leisure can help you relax and increase creativity, productivity and focus. The right type of music can be calming and reduce stress levels.



Join in

Join a club, group, society, gym or whatever you're interested in. Get involved in your community and build strong social connections.



Cut down

Set realistic goals and try cutting back on alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs. If you want to quit, find support to help you do it effectively and for good.



Switch off

Try not to become too focused on electronics such as TV, DVDs, games, mobiles and tablets. Turn them off even for 5 or 10 minutes a day. Take a walk outside or read a book instead.



Engage with others

Make the time to connect with people who make you happy. Ensure you make time to see your family and friends in person.



Exercise for your mind

Exercise can make you feel better and improve your outlook. Move more and sit less. Walk your dog or take a gym class.



Seek advice & support

If things are getting too much and you aren't coping, talk to someone. See your GP, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467. Reach out to others and ask them if they're OK.



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*The administration fee (\$25 per entitlement used), is non-refundable. Travel in Rail Beds and First Class sleepers requires an additional upgrade paid for berth and meals which are mandatory inclusions in these accommodation types. Refer to the fact sheet above for examples or contact Queensland Rail Travel for more fare information.

Pensioners are currently unable to book online, to make your booking call Queensland Rail on 1800 872 467 or visit www.queenslandrailtravel.com.au for more details.





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Name: _____

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Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

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Limb/s amputated: _____

Cause of amputation: _____

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\$15 Adult single \$20 Families/ Pensioner Families \$25 Organisations

I would like to make a donation of \$ _____

I would like someone to contact me about volunteering.

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Please us first initial and surname in the reference field.

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I enclose my Cheque / Money Order to the value of \$ _____
for membership and/or donation.

Signature.....Date:.....

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