

# amplified

edition 2 | 2022

Peer support volunteers  
share their stories

Vehicle modifications  
- what you need to know

It's on - AMP-ED Up!  
National Conference!



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individual style



**amplified**  
edition 2 | 2022

Well, after much anticipation and years of planning, postponing and being patient, AMP-ED Up! is finally back, and we can't wait! We are thrilled to be finally hosting our much-awaited national conference in February 2023. I know just how many of you have been waiting for this conference to go ahead, and we are all just as excited as you. Having delivered the bad news of cancellations and postponements over the last 2.5 years, nothing could make me happier than for this event go ahead and have the chance to see everyone again.

Early bird tickets are available now, so make sure to book early, mark the date in your calendar and get your plans underway to head to Melbourne in 2023!

You will also have the chance to meet some of our Peer Support Volunteers in person at AMP-ED Up! and who also feature in this edition - Mazz, Garry, Jim, Mark and Nicky. These volunteers share their personal journeys of amputation, living life and giving back to their community.

Until next time, keep well.

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A full-page photograph of a woman with short red hair, smiling and dancing. She is wearing a black zip-up jacket with white trim and black trousers. Her right leg is a prosthetic, and she is wearing a black sock and a black and white shoe. She is surrounded by a group of children in a room with a wooden floor. The children are also smiling and some have their arms raised. In the background, there is a doorway with an 'EXIT' sign above it.

Mazza's  
dancing  
up a storm!

It was a freezing cold Tasmanian night during May while I was driving and after an accidental quick sleepy little nod off I woke cuddling a guard rail in the back of my wagon. The guard rail had no end on it, but I had driven into it. My two children escaped with no injuries, but I was resuscitated, had broken my left femur (thigh bone) and also lost my lower right leg. There were also little cuts and bruises but, blinded by shock, that became irrelevant given the severe broken parts of my body.

During my stay in hospital, I relied on the doctors, nurses and physiotherapist to put me back together. After two months in hospital, it was up to me to continue rebuilding my body. I was determined to continue to be a dancer in any way that I could, and I also wanted to keep my dance studio open.

My name is Marilyne Jackson (nee Gray), and known to most people as Mazza. I loved dancing from an early age and moved from Tasmania to Melbourne to dance. My 3-year visit to Victoria resulted in staying for 12 years before returning to my Tassie home. My dance partner and I danced through the ranks until we were named 'Australian DanceSport Champions'. Since returning to Tasmania, I have given my time to 'DanceSport Tasmania' and organise dance events for our state. I have been teaching ballroom dancing for 23 years and am super proud of my studio dancers and dance family.

I was so passionate to return to my previous life that I actually bent a titanium rod in my left leg trying to dance and keep classes in my studio running. So, 'Mazza's the Place of Dance' is an incredibly special dance studio and I am supported by my two incredibly special daughters. Even though they have now grown up into young ladies, they that have never left my side.

In 2009 I was inducted to the 'Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women' amongst 30 others. I had the pleasure of joining some inspiring people at the ceremony and was very proud to accept this recognition. Being chosen as someone giving to the Tasmanian community made me realise how far I had come and the



extent of my recovery. It also made me realise that 'dance' is not only my tool to recovery, but my desire to give back to our community is just as powerful and important.

My family, friends, dance studio families and my two girls were my biggest supporters. I can never thank these people enough, but it was up to me to be strong for my daughters and make sure that their lives continued to be as normal as possible. In front of them I was always positive, but I would cry in the shower as soon as they



went to school, then pull myself together and off I'd go again. It was a difficult time. A few years after my accident I became a single mum. Life became about survival, making a good life for my daughters, managing a home, and keeping my dance studio going. Life was extremely difficult, but I never gave up. There were many hard dark days, but I always said "deal with what is put in front of you". My mum received many midnight phone calls and often mum would say "put the kettle on and we will have a cuppa tea together". Mum made those long nights shorter.

So, while this might seem like a sad story it also comes with a successful conclusion.

Over the years I've developed knowledge and skills that might assist others. Learn how your body works. Understand any of the new parts of your body to the best of your ability, and stretch and strengthen. Make it your job to look after your body and it will reward you with more possibilities. It's not easy but essential to listen to your body.

My story is to give others hope. Everyone experiences pain, even a headache is your pain that you feel. There is always someone in more pain than yourself. Try to surround yourself with positive people. Find a way to work towards what you dream to do. It may not be what you thought you would have achieved in the past, but you can still make your dreams come true in a unique way. It is so important to have someone to chat to and share fears and dreams and when communicating with others listen to how they feel, so they know you are not just self-focused but there to support them too.

**Limbs 4 Life is an amazing platform to share stories with people similar to yourself. I wish I had met this group earlier.**

**Get your early bird tickets  
for Amp-ed Up, book today.  
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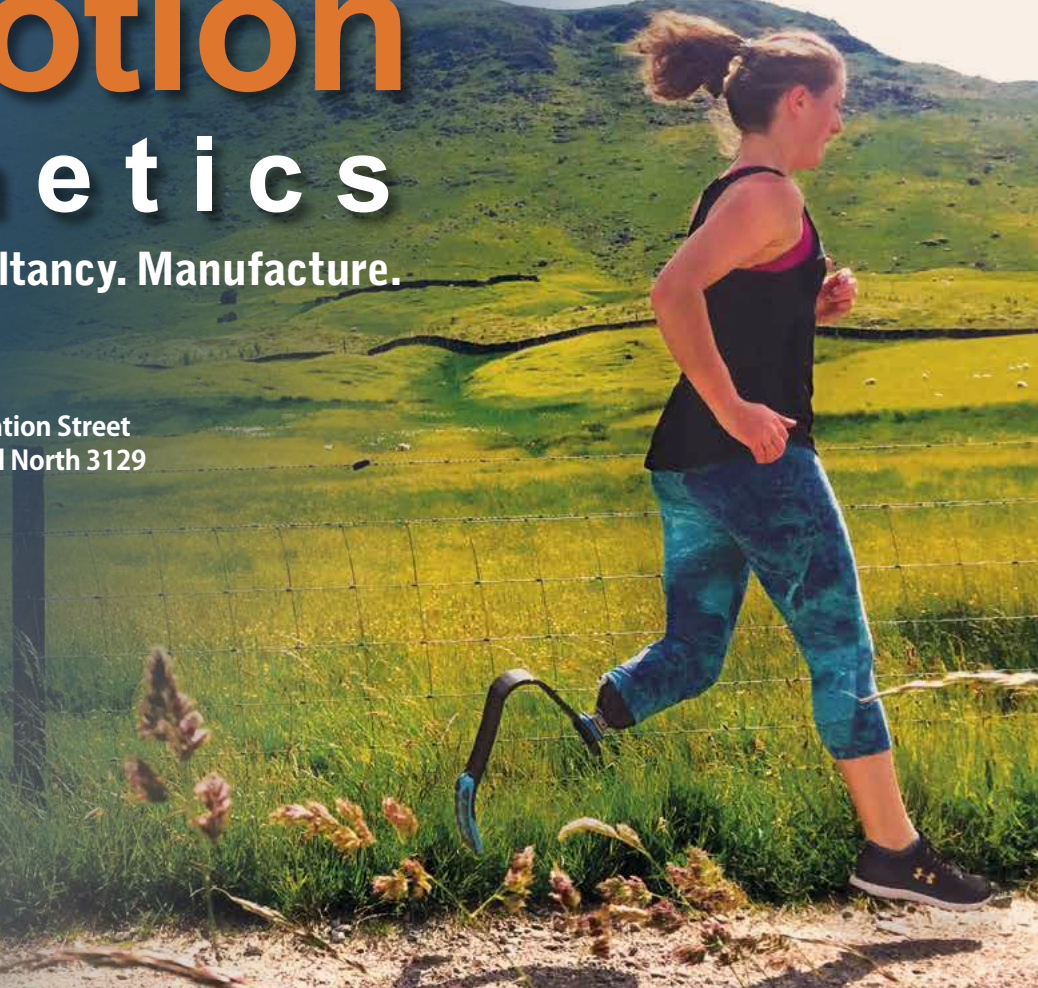
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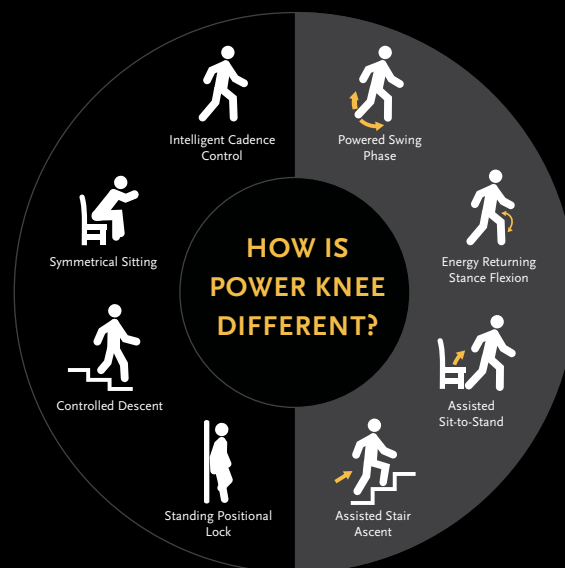
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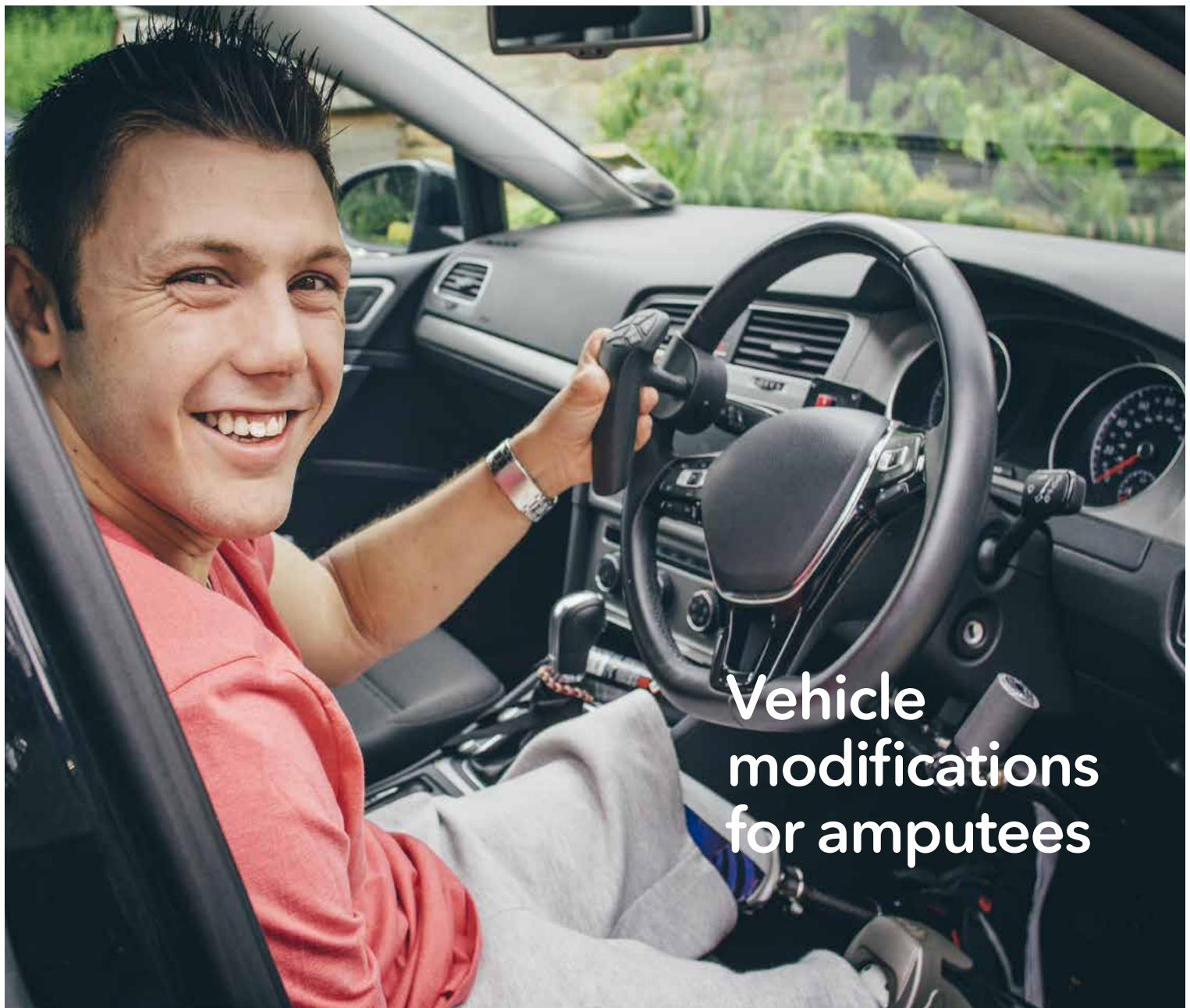


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## Vehicle modifications for amputees

People are often concerned that having an amputation will mean that they are unable to drive again. For most people, especially in a country as vast as Australia, driving is an important way for us to travel, go to and from work, visit friends, shop, and remain active in the community. For some people, most importantly it means independence.

### **I've had an amputation – can I still drive?**

Most people who have undergone amputation/s can still drive if they are deemed fit to do so. Your doctor can assess your ability to drive and may need you to have some health tests prior to doing so. The purpose of these tests is to make sure that it's safe for you and safe for other road users.

### **Do I need to have my vehicle modified?**

The need for vehicle modifications can depend on a number of factors.

If you have lost your left leg then chances are that no modifications will need to be made to your vehicle. If you have a manual car, and are a below knee amputee and want to continue to drive that car, you may need to pass a driving test to prove that you are safe on the road.

If you have had a right leg amputation you may be required to have a left foot accelerator fitted to your vehicle. You also may be required to drive an automatic only car. People who wish to drive a non-modified vehicle will need to pass a test proving that they can do so.



If you have double below knee amputations you may choose to drive with hand controls and/or request to be tested using your prosthesis. In some cases people with both a below and/or above right knee amputation can request to be tested to drive an unmodified car. If you have had an upper limb amputation you may be required to be tested and drive with a spinner knob, have one fitted to your vehicle and use it when driving.

To learn about car modifications, tests and requirements, speak to your occupational therapist.

### **What types of vehicles can be modified?**

Most automatic vehicles can be modified for both upper and lower limb amputees. For those of you who are motorbike enthusiasts, some motorbike can also be modified to suit amputee riders. Depending on the funding scheme you are connected to, it may want to know the age of the vehicle and if it is in roadworthy condition before they approve funding for any modifications.

### **What kind of vehicle modifications are available?**

- Hand controls
- Spinner knobs
- Left foot accelerators
- Hand worn accelerators
- Wheelchair lifters and carriers
- Roof mounted wheelchair transporters/pods
- Swivel Seats
- Auto Assist Grab Bars

### **Who can assist you with information and assessment?**

An Occupational Therapist (OT) specialised in driver assessment and training can assist you in several ways:

- Assess you for driving
- Conduct your driving test
- Recommend the right device for modifying your vehicle.

If you need to find an occupational therapist with skills in driver training in your state or territory you can visit [www.otaus.org.au](http://www.otaus.org.au) and then search in the 'Find an OT' section on their website. The website has a list of OTs, complete with contact details, the funding programs they are registered to support. The OT will work with you to determine your needs and requirements, and arrange for trials of equipment to make sure they meet your needs.

### **Can I receive funding for vehicle modifications?**

Some funding schemes cover the cost of all or some vehicle modifications:

- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)
- Transport accident bodies (state and territory)
- Workcover Workers' compensation schemes
- My Aged Care (Commonwealth Home Support Programme/Home Care Packages)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- State-based equipment schemes





A photograph of an older man with white hair and glasses, smiling and standing in a large stadium. He is wearing a dark coat and a patterned scarf. The stadium seating is visible behind him, and a large screen displays a soccer match in the background.

Garry's still  
kicking goals



My journey to amputation started fifty years ago when I hurt my left knee playing Aussie rules. A cartilage removal was undertaken and any sane person would have perhaps called time and stopped playing. Young and stupid, I continued and this eventually necessitated a total knee replacement when I was in my early forties. This was successful for seven years until I developed osteomyelitis and the bones in my lower leg and around my knee crumbled. Massive bone grafts resulted in my leg being set incorrectly and in order to align my knee another replacement was required. Infections over the years have resulted in me having five knee replacements. Each required removing the internal knee prosthesis, going for three months without a knee joint and using crutches whilst the infection was treated with antibiotics, and then replacing the prosthesis again.

The final time (in 2014) I spent four and a half months in hospital trying to get the infection under control. The day I was due to go home they took one last blood test and I was told that the infection was back, and worse than before. I was shattered, but determined to make the best of my dilemma. I spent a few dark nights around this time.

I sat with the doctors and the surgeon, and it was explained to me that we had fought the good fight and the chance of me winning was less than one percent. The infection would at some stage return and eventually amputation would be the only option. Even if there had been no infection, my leg was nothing but trouble with very limited bend and I was in constant pain. I talked it over with my wife and she supported my decision to amputate then, instead of in the years ahead. I think back now and realise this must have been a big shock for her because the changes to both our lives has been significant.

Within two weeks my left leg was removed above the knee. Then the long rehabilitation process began. I can recall I had been fitted with my first prosthetic leg and was doing a timed walk in a hospital gym when I heard a voice telling me to "take it easy old fella. You'll kill yourself". I then realised this fellow amputee was talking to me. That was like a red rag to a bull. My name was on the top of

the achievement whiteboard from then on. When I was fitted with my first prosthetic leg I can remember thinking I would never conquer being able to walk, but slowly it came. I was determined not to use any walking aids and I like to think that when people see me they don't realise I'm an amputee.

I was extremely lucky that I lived in the first NDIS roll-out area in Perth when it was starting up. With the assistance of my prosthetist, I applied to the NDIS support for my prosthesis, they agreed and provided me with a Genium microprocessor prosthetic leg. I will be forever grateful as it has enabled me to maintain my active lifestyle. I remain determined to get the best out of this leg and repay them for their faith in me.

Two years ago I decided that, despite my past problems with infections, I would undergo surgery for Osseointegration. I must say that it's the best thing that could have happened. I put my leg on at 7am and take it off at 11pm. It is just a "click fit" and then the turn of an allen key to tighten it, so it is also a great timesaver. I have been extremely lucky and have not suffered from any pain throughout this whole scenario.





Our half acre block and huge garden was something we could not handle so we downsized to a smaller house within walking distance of our village. We regularly walk to the shops, cafes, or to local events.

I belong to a swimming club and swim regularly. I have a "bucket list" which included competing in an open water swim of 3.75 kilometres around the Busselton Jetty. This was achieved two years ago in a time of one hour and 20 twenty minutes. I also see my swimming as an opportunity for social interaction and so don't focus on competing.

Another of my goals is to climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Because of COVID, this is on hold at the moment.

I volunteer with Limbs 4 Life and enjoy visiting, supporting and mentoring new amputees.

I also volunteer at Hollywood Hospital and visit patients throughout the wards. The word is gradually spreading that I volunteer with Limbs 4 Life and I have been asked to talk to several amputees in the last few months.

I have been a volunteer at Ronald McDonald House for eleven years. The home away from home they provide for regional families is amazing and they are always highly supportive and grateful for the help provided by their volunteers. Whilst I was in hospital they were always enquiring about my health and took a close interest in my progress. Once I dropped in on my way back from a rehabilitation session to say "hello" and all of the staff came out to see me.

My volunteer work is something I love and intend to continue as long as I can.

I do not see myself as disabled and although I cannot do some of the things I used to do, I tend to put this down to the fact that I am seventy-two years old and it's time to forgive myself for things I cannot do.

Without trivialising the situation, I sometimes say to myself that "it's only a leg and I can get by without it". I also say to people when they hear my story that "life is good" and I choose to be extremely happy with my lot.



## ÖSSUR AUSTRALIA MOBILITY CLINICS

Össur Australia hosts Mobility Clinics, designed for amputees of all ages and activity levels to experience overall mobility while connecting with other amputees in the community.

Join Össur Australia's Official Mobility Clinic Facebook Group and be part of an amazing community.



Scan the QR CODE to join our

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group**







## Why Mark can't stop, won't stop, refuses to stop!

Every day we get up, get dressed, and hit the road for a day's work and head home without much thought about tomorrow. That was the case Mark Bates who was working as an electrician for IKON Electrical both remotely in Western Australia and in Brisbane.

On March 21, 2017, Mark jumped on his much-loved 1600cc Yamaha road bike to get to work on wiring a shopping centre development, like he had done for weeks before.

"I have always loved the freedom of getting on my bike and getting away from it all," Mark said. "It was good for the soul being able to get out on your own, be with your own thoughts and having a burn up the road. I loved it!"

Mark had finished up work for the day and was on his way home when in an instant, his life changed forever. He was travelling on the bike when a Triton 4x4 went straight through an intersection and struck him on the left side. His





leg and foot had been crushed by the impact. He spent the next seven days at the Royal Women's Hospital in Brisbane with his wife Beck, daughter Kaitlyn and his mum, dad, sister, brother and close friends Trudi and Jeremy by his side when – after the doctors had done all they could to put the bones and nerves back together unsuccessfully – the decision was made to amputate below his knee.

Mark was sent home to live what he described as “the new normal” with many lows, lots of raw emotion and doubts about what the future held. “There was a lot to deal with,” Mark said.

“It all became so real when I first got home because it was like I’m home, there’s no doctors with me and I had to try to come to terms with this new normal. It’s not that couldn’t do things, it’s that I had to learn to do them a different way. On the crutches (pre-prosthetic) I had to learn to manoeuvre up and down stairs, drive, shower and remember that I didn’t have two legs to stand on when I was getting out of bed. I went ass up plenty of times,” he said with a laugh.

“People looked at you differently too. Kids were good but adults were the worst. Even when I went back to work people didn’t see me as I was anymore ... they wouldn’t let me lift things. It was like if you only ever wore a white t-shirt and then you had to wear a tie dyed multi-coloured get

up and walk through the shopping centre; you stood out. I found the perception of disability is all in the seeing,” Mark described.

Mark said one of the lowest points at the beginning was experiencing phantom pain; a sensation of pain that feels like it’s coming from a body part that is no longer there. “I had to retrain the brain to try and get rid of that phantom pain because it would start in the morning and by night-time the leg couldn’t touch the bed ... I was just in pain. I used the foot recognition app, mirror therapy and I did hypnotherapy to overcome that pain.”

A frustrating part of the recovery process, Mark said, was the lack of information from doctors and the internet surrounding what was next for a new amputee, especially during the six-month “limbo” period between letting the stump heal and getting fitted for the first prosthetic.

“You start off on an interim leg because they don’t tell you that the size of your stump is going to change up and down depending on your body. This is my fourth leg in 5 years and until it stabilises and maintains that shape, you are forever changing legs as well.”

There were no firsthand accounts of what to expect until you’re there, getting fitted for your first leg, which Mark added, was decorated especially for his adored then four-year-old nephew with a superhero Iron Man character. “We did that initially, so he didn’t freak out at Uncle Mark’s new robot leg, but he didn’t bat an eye. He thought it was cool.”

From there, things improved. After only six months off, Mark went back to work as an electrician in a fast-paced environment which gave him back his sense of confidence and worth. “Getting back to work helped with my recovery and being able to walk normally and well. Because it was a job that had a lot of walking, it let me work out what was right and what was wrong with the leg; what liners worked and what liners didn’t. It also really helped my mental health and my overall health.”

While it was amazing to get back to work, Mark’s love for his job had gone and a yearning to help other amputees and people with disabilities

set in. "After a while the passion had gone from being a sparky and I didn't want to be a 60-year-old amputee still climbing through roofs and digging holes with one leg, so it was time for a change."

In 2018, Mark became a Limbs 4 Life volunteer, and later gained a Diploma in Community Services and is now a senior support worker for Quirky Support Services; a job that is more than the right fit! He works with adults and children with varying disabilities like Down Syndrome, autism and the intellectually disabled.

"I just wanted to try and help people that have gone through an amputation and help them find their way through the process, the highs, and the lows. I like to focus on letting them know that there is hope, that you can get back to normal but it's going to be a new normal. I just love helping people out and recognising that even though they have a disability it doesn't mean they can't live life to their fullest as well. Helping them achieve that is an awesome thing! I tell them positivity is the key, as well as looking after yourself, your limb and just keep trucking on," Mark shared.

"Can't stop, won't stop, refuse to stop; that's my mantra! It's tattooed on my arm to remind me."

The road to recovery has been long with many twists and turns along the way but there has been one constant Mark said, and that's family!

"It's important to surround yourself with loving family and friends. My wife Beck's support was paramount! Without her being there and without that support not just through the initial stages, but from then to now - because there weren't just lows at the start. It's been a roller coaster right the way through and it's something you have to continually work at. Without that support, including from my parents and the rest of the family, it would have been a completely different story."

Mark is now happy in life, work and home, with his days off spent tinkering with his HQ Holden Ute and throwing endless rounds of balls to his best mate Beau, a black and white border collie.

"For me, recovery was the first two years and everything from then on has been onwards and upwards. Just don't give up!"

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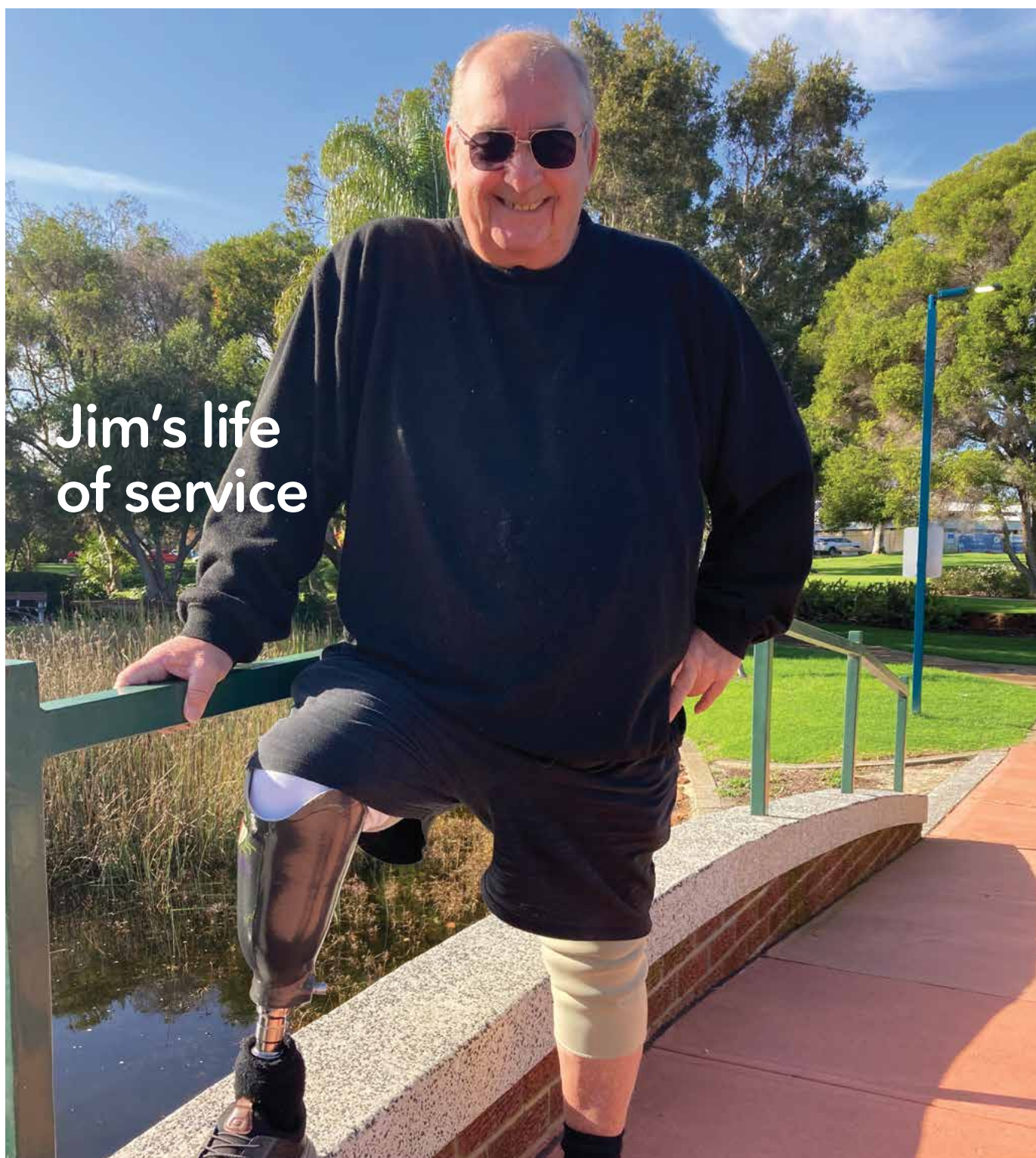


Hear from some wonderful members of the amputee community  
Jason Diederich, Mike Rolls and Sara Shams

Spare Parts is joining us again to help you to Bling your Limb!  
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Pick up your official conference T-shirt and visit the Limbs 4 Life stand for our latest merchandise





## Jim's life of service

I joined the army in 1970 and retired in 1990 after 20 years and 136 days of service. I rose through the ranks throughout my time in service and I left the Army because my body was starting to let me down. The Army was a young man's life.

Just before I took discharge from the Army, I was driving very senior and high-ranking officers and some VIPs around as part of my role, so I was well experienced in this area. After I left the Army, I applied for a role with Commonwealth

Cars (which provide parliamentarians with a driver) and was accepted.

After completing my training at Commonwealth Cars I began driving some Senior Politicians, Senators and High Court Judges around. Some of those people were larger than life and discretion (on my part) was always required. One of the Senators was a bit of a player. I went to pick him up from one of his lady friends places only to find that he wasn't there. A quick call to his mobile determined that I was at the



wrong girlfriend's house! Some days later when I was picking him up from the Airport, I asked which girlfriends' place he wanted to go to ... and I ended up with a sore left arm!

Then in 1992 I was involved in a very serious motor vehicle accident (a head on). I remember seeing a school bus (coming from somewhere) and I took evasive action. That was the last thing I can remember. When I woke up I was advised that I had been in ICU for six weeks. From what I could gather, the ambulance had transported me to Royal Perth Hospital from Northam Hospital. I had gone into cardiac arrest at Northam Hospital and was transferred by helicopter.

I finally managed to find out what had happened at the time of the accident. This news led me into depression that lasted for a couple of years. At the same time my marriage had broken down. It was not easy bringing up two teenage boys on my own, but they kept me busy.

Over the course of the next three years, I had sixteen operations to try to save my leg. Unfortunately, my leg just wouldn't heal. I'd made an appointment to see my doctor and I could tell by the look on his face that the news would not be good. He said, "Jim, I'm out of ideas, I don't know what else we can do to save your leg". And I replied, "I've had enough pain with this leg - take the bloody thing off".

Once my leg was amputated and the pain had passed, I started to come out of the depression. I got back into life with my sons and a few close friends. Like many lower limb amputees, on my first night home from hospital I went to get up during the night, forgot that my leg was missing and fell flat on my face. My sons came racing into my room to see what had happened and I told them that I'd forgotten my leg was missing and ended up on the floor. I started laughing and the boys ended up on the floor laughing with me.

On the day I got my first leg, my sons arrived home from school to find me sitting on the patio with a cuppa. After a while of general chatter I said, "so, who's up for a walk?". They both looked at me oddly. I then stood up. The look on their faces was priceless. It was the first time that they

had seen me standing, I will never forget their look of joy, surprise and disbelief. It was worth more than a million dollars to me.

Over the next three years and after having a few set-backs with infections, I started to get my confidence back. I wanted to get back into the workforce. I had applied for several jobs but kept getting knocked back. Then one day, I noticed a sign in a service station 'We're Hiring'. I decided to go in and speak to the manager. He told me that they required people with two legs due to OH&S laws, but that he would give me a go. The company modified a few things for me, and I ended up working there as a console operator for six years. I was also awarded 'Console Operator of the Year' for Western Australia, then went to Melbourne and I won the 'Operator of Australia Award'!

I have been a Peer Support Volunteer with Limbs 4 Life for a while now and enjoy the chance to talk with new amputees. There was nothing available when I lost my leg and became an amputee. No information, no support and I like giving back to my community. The best thing about this role is that when I go to visit people, they are often looking grim, but I have the chance to put a smile on their face.







## Peer Support Groups – tap into your local support

Limbs 4 Life's Peer Support Groups are growing in various parts of Australia. Peer Support Groups provide a great opportunity to connect with members of your local amputee community.

Peer Support Groups allow people to share and voice concerns, find out information about supports and services in the local area, and learn from other amputees. Family members and partners are also welcome to attend.

Groups are currently operating in:

- Metro south, Victoria
- Metro north, Victoria
- Geelong, Victoria
- Gippsland, Victoria
- Byford, Western Australia
- Forrestfield, Western Australia
- Wanneroo, Western Australia
- Toowoomba, Queensland
- Penrith/Nepean, New South Wales

Contact us today if you are interested in joining a group in your local area or to find out more information.



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## Nicky's 'My ordinary life'

My life is ordinary. I live in an ordinary house, in an ordinary suburb. I have an ordinary job. I am a mother to two sons (they are not ordinary!!), both now in their twenties. I've had all the highs and lows that parenting in today's world brings. I'm an immigrant, like many Australians, coming here to seek a new and better life for my family.

In my life story, the chronology of events as I see it is: I went to school; studied at university; met a lovely man; got married; had a family; and, emigrated to Australia where we have lived for the last 16 years. The fact that I lost my dominant right arm at the shoulder at the age of nine, has never featured consciously as a significant factor in my life. And the fact that when we came to Australia, my husband was working abroad (and still is), while I adapted to a new country with two small children, and brought them up mostly as a single mother, was an emotional, not a physical challenge.

Whilst I acknowledge that having one arm does pose its challenges, my mantra is to do anything and experience life to its fullest. I have played

netball and tennis, scuba dived in many different places and go to gym most days because my health is something I value. I have renovated my house, made curtains, installed plasterboard, and have painted walls, ceilings and floors. I have completed both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in engineering and work full time in a job I really enjoy. I love cooking food to share, being with my family and friends and travelling to different places. I have tried to be the best mother and wife that I could be and can't be more proud of my two sons (so clearly I have succeeded in this at least!

While strangers may see me as an amputee, and doubtless this has shaped some of my personality traits and changed the direction of my life and career, I know my family, friends and colleagues don't see my amputation at all, they see the real me. I credit my parents with the fact that I am fiercely independent and determined, they never told me there was anything I couldn't do. They encouraged me to try anything and they let me fail and try again, and now as a parent I realise how hard that must have been for them. I am truly grateful to them for their restraint in not taking over when the challenges were great (but never insurmountable). My hope is that all those I meet will see an independent strong woman who can change a car tyre or a lightbulb, who cares for her family and friends, is from a generation where being a woman in engineering was unusual, is an active member of her community and will stand up for what is right, supporting those in need, because I am not defined by my physical attributes.

On 17 October 2024 it will be the 50th anniversary of my amputation surgery (half a century!! What a milestone!). I intend to celebrate the event with my family and friends, to acknowledge how it shaped my life to bring me this beautiful family, these beautiful friends and a place in this amazing country where I am so blessed to have this ordinary life.

**Support your community  
become a Peer Support  
Volunteer today!**



# Have you checked out our new Prosthetic Directory?

Limbs 4 Life has added a wonderful new addition to our website. The prosthetic directory features a wide range of upper limb prosthetic options along with lower limb devices such as feet and knees. The lower limb technology is showcased based on activity level from K1, being a low impact user, through to K4 devices, which suit people with high activity levels.

In the future we will be adding to this directory to include the various socket options and cosmetic prosthetic covers.

Check out the Prosthetic Directory today!

[www.limbs4life.org.au/prosthetics/directory](http://www.limbs4life.org.au/prosthetics/directory)



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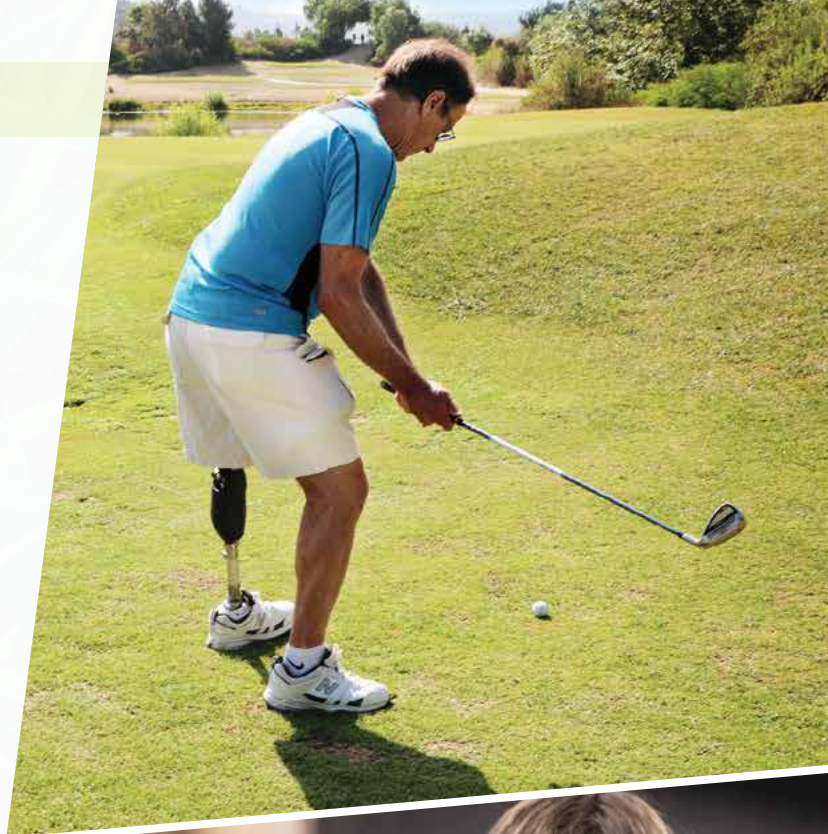
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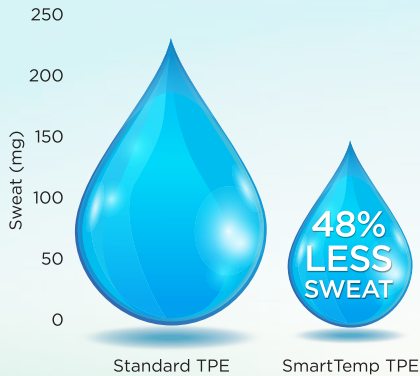
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\*Study data on file and online at [willowwood.com/core](http://willowwood.com/core)



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# Prosthetic pride: finding your individual style

One of my favourite things to do is people-watch, especially for all of the extra things we do to express our own style, personality or even moods. A popular one in Canberra, where I live, is the downtrodden public servant in a corporate suit who wears funky socks.

It always makes me think how we amputees have the added opportunity to wear a prosthesis that makes us feel good. Whether it's the shape, the style, the cover – just like colourful socks, our limbs can help us express our own personalities. I like to call this prosthetic pride.

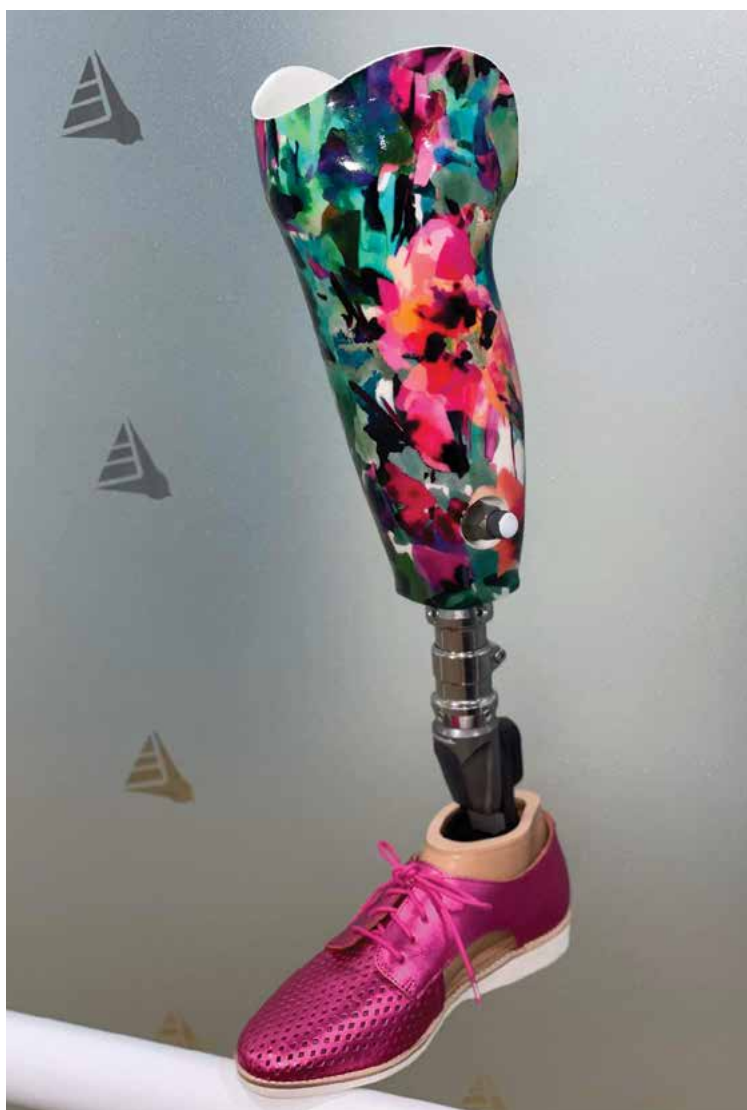


When I first became an amputee, I really wanted a full shape leg so I could 'blend in' and also wear tights, so I bought a silicon skin cosmesis with paintable toenails, and I felt marvellous!

A few years down the track, I was inspired by a fellow amputee to be more bold with my choices. I bought some red with white polka dot fabric for my socket. It became my first ever colourful leg, and it was life changing. I felt like I had the most exciting fashion accessory that I could show off, if and when I wanted to.

In the 12 years since my polka dot socket, I've had all sorts of legs – full shape, pylon only, and, in more recent years, the best of both worlds with removable covers!

When I first got into removable covers, I wanted something more unique than what was available- something that fit my own style. And, as a below the knee amputee, I wanted something that covered my full socket, which also wasn't available at the time. I spoke with my prosthetist, Stuart, at Leading Edge in Brisbane, about printing a chosen artwork on fabric and making a removable cover that would give me the full leg shape. Stuart was able to make my cover dreams come true, and other clients have





since commissioned similar works from him. My tip for using fabric on your socket (or on a full shape or removable cover), is to get the lightest, softest fabric you can. I print artwork onto lycra and it comes out beautifully, but if you are buying fabric, go for lycra, soft cotton, or satin. Steer clear of anything that isn't floppy. Similarly, you can even use a soft t-shirt you love. Over the years, I've also used a few large scarves made from satin or silk. Have a chat with your prosthetist about how much fabric you will need to make your own cosmesis dreams come true. I suggest always buying double the amount necessary- just in case there are any issues and your socket needs to be made a second time.

There are some amazing companies from around the world that you can also buy removable 3D printed covers from, including: Anatomic Studios [www.anatomic-studios.com](http://www.anatomic-studios.com), Nextt Prosthetics [www.nexttprosthetics.com](http://www.nexttprosthetics.com), Art4Leg [www.art4leg.com](http://www.art4leg.com), Alleles [www.alleles.ca](http://www.alleles.ca), and UNYQ [www.unyq.com](http://www.unyq.com).



Your prosthetist can help you with the measurements and fittings.

As for the cost, once again, chat with your prosthetist. The NDIS and other funding bodies will often assist with the cost of cosmetic covers.

Prosthetic pride isn't just about colour and being bold. It's about finding your own style and what works for you. We have choice and control about what we buy and how we look. There are so many options available, including many types of silicon skin cosmesis with tattoos and paintable nails. If you go down that path, my tip is to always check your colour match outside in the sunshine- because no one needs to look part-vampire. You can also get foam covers and stockings, which are a lighter option, with various skin tones available to choose from - or you can always buy colourful knee-high tights to go over them.

**When you get your next prosthesis, ask your clinic about options. And be sure to share a photo with us when you're ready to step out into the world on the Limbs4Life Facebook group, or tag Limbs4Life on Instagram.**







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### APC Prosthetics — Northmead

2 Redbank Road,  
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**P:** 02 9890 8123

**F:** 02 9475 0253

**E:** northmead@apcprosthetics.com.au



# Information sheets


Limbs 4 Life has developed a range of new resources to support members of our community and provide them with valuable information. You can download a copy of these information sheets under the resource section of our website or call us today and we will send them out to you.

Our information sheets include:

- Understanding the healthcare system
- How to set goals
- What to expect when trying a lower limb prosthesis
- Getting back into recreation
- Preventing falls
- Partial foot questions
- Understanding grief and loss, and your mental health
- Talking to your prosthetist.

Our information sheets are designed to educate and empower amputees and their families.





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