

# amplified

edition 2 | 2020

Employment for  
people with disabilities  
**THE FACTS**

Assistive Technology  
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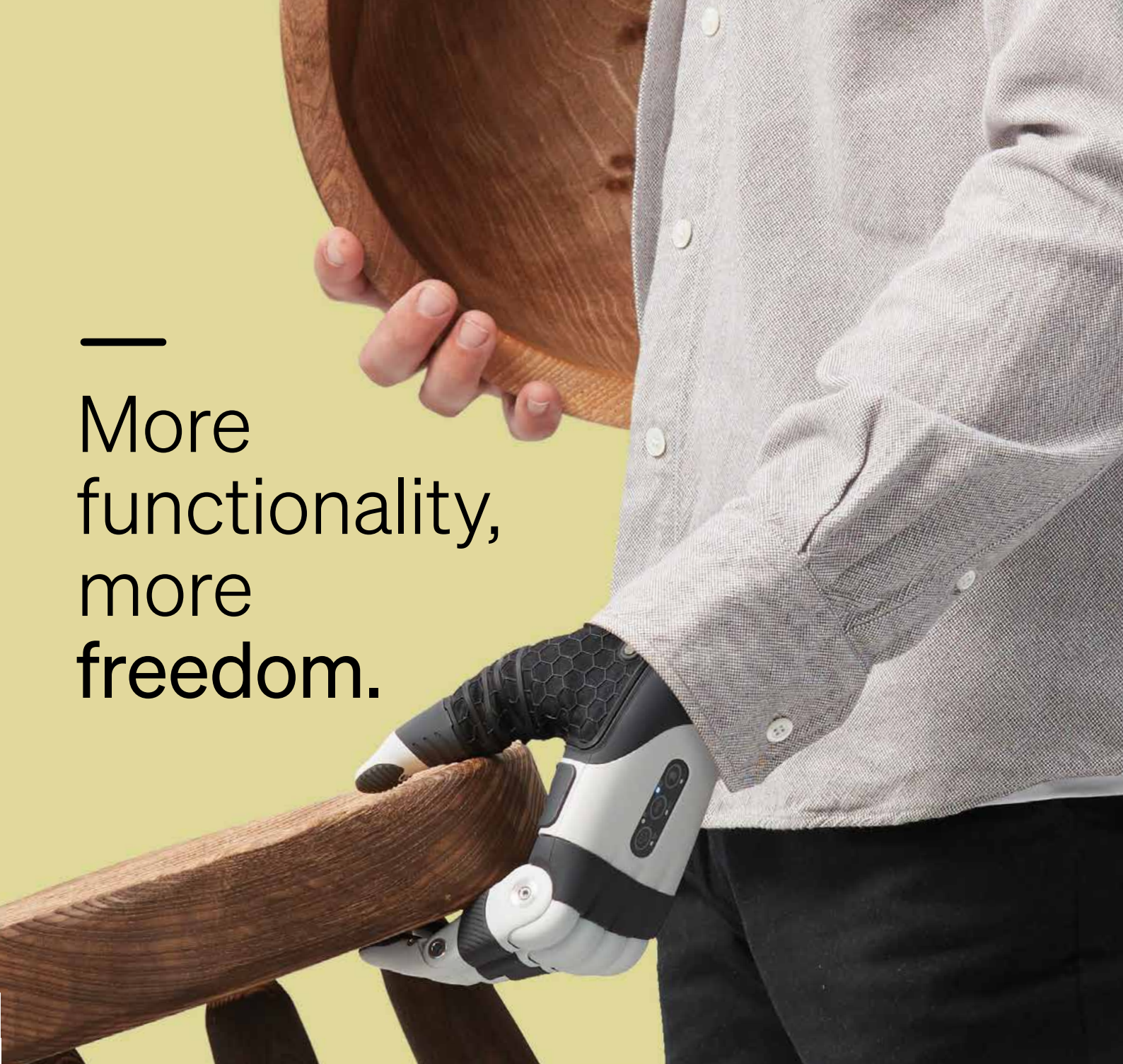
Limbs 4 Kids website  
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**Limbs 4 Life**  
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A close-up photograph of a person's arm wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved button-down shirt. The person is holding a large, round wooden cutting board with their right hand. Their left hand is wearing a white and black prosthetic arm, the TASKA Hand, which is gripping a thick wooden handle. The background is a solid light yellow.

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INCORPORATING THRIVE  
**limbs 4 kids**



## amplified

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As we navigate our way through the changes and challenges that COVID-19 presents, we are mindful that many people have been impacted by the restrictions that this pandemic is placing upon us and the Australian society in general.

Some people have experienced delays in seeing their healthcare providers, leading to frustration and the inability to continue with life as we know it. While for others, staying inside and a lack of community connectedness is proving to be difficult. The other area that has impacted many people is job security. We know that during this time people have been stood down from their regular place of employment or seen significant changes to the way work is conducted. While this has affected a wide range of individuals, for people with disabilities we know that gaining and maintaining meaningful employment may have become difficult at this time.

In this edition we learn about employment experiences of three amputees in their various roles, outline the areas of employment options you may wish consider, along with the supports that are available to assist you in engaging in meaningful employment.

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# Meet Sara Shams No legs, no worries!

## **Can you describe your limb difference?**

I became a bilateral through-knee amputee at a young age due to a congenital limb anomaly, called tibial hemimelia. I have been a full-time prosthetic user for 15+ years – a typical day for me would be legs on at 6am and off at 10pm (or whenever bedtime is)!

## **What type of work do you do?**

I am a community pharmacist by background. However, being a pharmacist in a community pharmacy meant I was on my feet in the dispensary/pharmacy for 10+ hours a day.

Even though I thoroughly enjoyed the daily interaction with patients, it was time to have a break from the physical aspects of the job. I am now in a learning and development role where I coordinate, facilitate and oversee education and training for pharmacists and pharmacy staff. I also lead and coordinate a number of projects that are delivered across Queensland.

## **As your limb difference was congenital, did this influence the career pathway you chose?**

Not necessarily – I didn't let my disability fully determine my career path and what I wanted to do with my life professionally. I have always



been passionate about contributing positively to healthcare and this led me becoming a pharmacist. The flexibility of the profession (and the various career options available) means I can still play a part in improving healthcare but from an office! Growing up as an amputee, the support of my family and friends played a huge part in me achieving my goals at every stage in life.

### **Have you required any modifications or support in your current and/or previous workplaces?**

In my past and present roles, I have required minor adjustments. For example, in the office environment, I have had handrails installed in the toilets, requested a chair with handles etc. At the pharmacy, I had trouble with getting down onto the floor to access stock. However, once I raised this concern, it was very easily resolved.

Navigating work with disability can often be difficult however I cannot stress the importance of being honest with your employer! I have found that speaking up and clearly communicating my needs or concerns makes both you and your employer's work environment safe and healthy (both mentally and physically).



## **Tips for adults or young people living with limb loss who are exploring career pathways or seeking employment**

1. Passion and talent. Try to find something that you are genuinely passionate about AND have a flair for (or can develop the skills for). This will hopefully lead to clearer goal setting and excelling in your chosen career path.
2. Make your disability a positive catalyst. If there are obstacles, there are often several solutions. Do your research, network with people in similar situations as you and problem solve - you do not need to do anything alone! Organisations such as Limbs 4 Life are a fantastic in helping people with disability navigate pathways to being independent.
3. Communicate your needs. By being honest and clearly and confidently communicating your needs, you can do your part to set the tone for a workplace culture that supports your professional growth.



# Tips to finding a job when times are tough

Gaining and maintaining meaningful employment is not always easy. In Australia, at the moment we are facing some of the toughest social and economic challenges in decades. Sadly, we are in recession and watching the unemployment levels rise. We also know that people living with a disability are often more vulnerable to unemployment than the general public. So, if you are facing employment challenges at the moment what are some of the ways that you can find your 'niche' and a job that suits you?

The Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Businesses has listed the following industries as ones experiencing employment growth at the moment:

- Healthcare and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Construction
- Professional scientific and technical services
- Education and training
- Manufacturing
- Food services
- Public administration and safety
- Transport, postal and warehousing.

Another area which you may not have considered is the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and their Community Partners.

Many NDIA Community Partners are seeking people with lived experience of disability to work as Local Area Coordinators or Planners. These positions are available nationally and new staff receive on the job training. These roles are advertised on the NDIS website, community partner websites and SEEK.

## Have you ever considered volunteering?

Another way to build up your skill base is by volunteering. Volunteering opportunities can be found in a wide range of sectors, including disability, health and community to name but a few. While we know that volunteering for an organisation won't pay the bills, it may help you to grow your skill set which can assist when applying for employment in an area where you have limited or no experience. Volunteering can help to build up your networking skills, and is a great way to meet new people and make some meaningful connections.

You can search for volunteering opportunities by contacting organisations that interest you or searching through website hubs such as Volunteering Australia or SEEK Volunteer.

# Disability and employment in Australia

## FACTS AND FIGURES

### What is a disability?

The definition of disability is very broad and includes physical, psychological, sensory and intellectual disabilities and some medical conditions. A disability might be something that affects or limits your movements, your senses, your ability to communicate and/or to learn. The Australian Government's formal definitions of disabilities is outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

### Disability statistics

- 4.4 million Australians live with disability, 17.7% of the population. That's almost 1 in 5 people.
- 3 in 10 Australian households include a person living with disability.
- Around the same number of males and females live with disability.
- The prevalence of disability increases with age. 1 in 9 people aged 0 – 64 years (11.6%) live with disability, but 1 in 2 (49.9%) aged 65 years and over live with disability.
- 1 in 2 people with disability use aids and equipment as part of their condition.
- 3 in 5 people with disability need assistance with at least one daily activity.
- 3 in 4 people's disability is a physical one.

### Disability and employment

- 2.1 million Australians living with disability are of working age (15 – 64 years). Of these just under half (47.8%) are employed, compared with 80.3% of people without disability.
- Just over one-quarter (28.3%) of people with disability of working age are employed full-time, compared with more than half (54.8%) of those without disability.
- The unemployment rate for people with disability (10.3%) is nearly double that for people without disability (5.3%).
- Australia ranks poorly, 21st out of 29 countries, on disability employment rates among Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. (i) (ii)

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#### Sources

Except where otherwise stated, data has been taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia 2018, viewed 5 March 2020.

- (i) OECD. (2010). *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: A Synthesis of Findings across OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- (ii) PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2011). *Disability expectations: investing in a better life, a stronger Australia*. PWC, Australia.





# Benefits of hiring a person with disability

Considerable Australian and international research point to the employment of people with limb loss, and disability more broadly, as being of significant benefit to the person and the business they work in.

Research suggests that hiring anyone with a disability can:

- assist in attracting and hiring new talent
- build inclusive workplaces which are likely to be more engaged, motivated and productive

- build a business' reputation and brand, as employees and customers are more loyal to organisations that value diversity and inclusion and this can also be taken into consideration when awarding contracts
- improve marketing and customer retention as demonstration of diversity, which is reflective of the wider community, is likely to lead to greater customer loyalty and gain an edge over competitors
- demonstrate good corporate social responsibility
- reduce risk as workers with disability have been shown to have less time away from work smaller employee turnover, lower rate of workplace injury
- reduce the likelihood of workplaces breaching discrimination law. (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi) (vii)

With respect to amputees:

- returning to work following amputation is quite common
- many have completed tertiary education, gained qualifications and/or have significant workplace experience which can benefit businesses
- employment is broad and wide, and within industries such as medical, allied health, education, transport, law, trades and retail to name but a few. (i) (ii)

## Sources

- (i) Whyte, A and Carroll, L. (2002) A preliminary examination of the relationship between employment, pain and disability in an amputee population, *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 24:9, 462-470.
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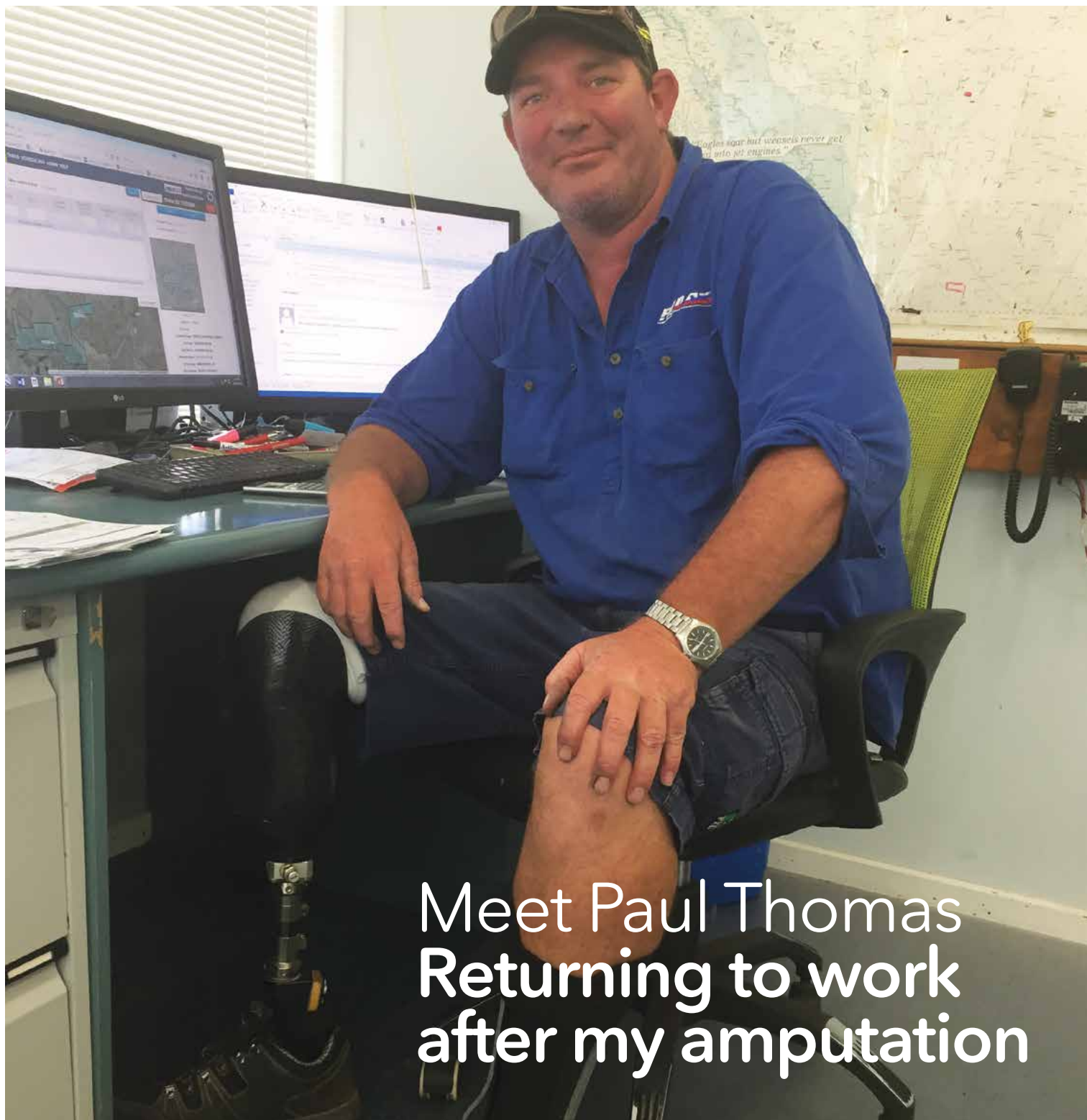
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## Meet Paul Thomas Returning to work after my amputation

### What led to your limb loss?

I was diagnosed with Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease in 1991, after growing up experiencing significant difficulty playing sport and actively keeping up with friends and school mates. Despite many sprained ankles, tendon transfer surgery, over five unsuccessful ankle fusion and tow pin surgeries, leg lengthening, developing ulcers and experiencing allergic reactions, my ability to walk became harder and harder. And I was spending months at a time on crutches.

As one leg started collapsing and subsequently became shorter than the other I had to wear specially made shoes, further exacerbating the situation.

In 2013, on my way to Melbourne to see my specialist again, I concluded that amputation would offer me a much better quality of life. After talking with my doctor the decision was made and on 22 July 2013 I had the operation and I haven't looked back since!

## What type of work were you doing prior to your amputation?

I had been working for Field Air Pty Ltd since 1996, with the last 17 years as the Operations Manager in Deniliquin.

## Did you return to the same employment after your amputation?

I returned to work as the Operations Manager five weeks after my amputation. My role is largely administrative but also involves some manual work. I cover a range of office and management activities including accounts, filing, stock control, fuel sales, and the mapping of paddocks to be sprayed or spread. I also oversee the safety of aircraft pilots and staff and the chemicals being used. Around ten percent of my job entails loading materials on to aircraft, checking the safety of airstrips and some maintenance – all done by utes and specially built trucks. I'm on call 24 hours a day, but typically work 8 to 13 hours during our busy October to April season.

## Did you need any workplace modifications or support when returning to your workplace?

My employer was incredibly supportive, asking me whether I needed any changes to make the return to work as smooth as possible. While I can and do still drive some manual utes and trucks, my boss did purchase an automatic ute which certainly makes it easier. My employer is very understanding when it comes to the appointments I have with my prosthetist, podiatrist and doctors - there is no problem and no questions asked.

## Tips for people living with limb loss who are seeking employment or already in the workforce

- Have an open and honest relationship with your employer, so that they understand any needs you have.
- Consider using tools or materials that might assist you to complete your work effectively and easily.
- Remember that being an amputee doesn't have to stop you from working, but you might just need some changes that enable you to be as productive as you were previously.
- Always try and have a smile on your face!

## Connect with us today.



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# Increasing employment opportunities for people with disability – the conversation we need to have



Rick Kane, CEO, Disability Employment Australia

**Employment is valuable for people with limb loss. Like anyone, meaningful work gives us a sense of satisfaction, self-worth, achievement, social connections and financial independence.**

Rick Kane, CEO of Disability Employment Australia, shared his views about the value of employment for people with disability at last year's AMP-ED Up! Conference. Rick highlighted that inclusive workplaces are ones where employers look beyond a person's disability and focus on the skills they can bring to a team, emphasising that Australia needs to do more to make this approach the norm. The following is a transcript of the interview we conducted with Rick at last year's conference.

*"I think the question why employment is important to a person with a disability is the same as why it is important for anyone! Work, endeavour, creativity, getting involved with things, achieving things – they're all part of the human drive. And the fact there are far less people with a disability gaining employment and being able to engage in those sorts of feelings and achievements is just wrong. But at the heart of it is something that is actually quite ordinary. And that is, what do you want to do? There are many, many things that every one of us has that stymies our ability to be at work from 9am – 5pm Monday to Saturday, or whatever. The fact that some of these factors get a light shone on them as if they're the reasons a person shouldn't be in the workplace is laughable. And we need to have that conversation."*

*When I told my workplace that I wanted to leave at four o'clock to go and watch my kids play footy they said "good on you". But if someone said "I have a mental health appointment every second Thursday and I need to leave at 4pm" there would be an inside frown from the employer, because they would say "Yeah, but couldn't you do that on your own time?" So, it's the normalisation of all of us - what we take for granted, what we accept and what we mean when we say "good on you mate". We should be saying that for everyone in relation to whatever their needs are and whatever their interests are. What we are interested in is people getting the work done.*

***We're asking for you, the employer, to understand a person's life in the same way that you understand mine or Jane's or Harry's. Look there's a lot of myths about people's capability, because of their disability, engaging in the workforce. Pretty much every argument that's been raised in that regard has been dispelled.***

*Well, what's in it for an employer is the right person for the job. There are a lot services and*

*supports available for employers. The question is, do people know about them? So, firstly, we think a lot more needs to be done in that regard - campaigns to inform employers and the general community of supports and services available. Secondly, and this is a critical one, we have to deeply engage the conversation about stigma and discrimination. This will lead to more understanding and enable employers making choices about whether the next person you employ needs to look exactly like you. If we keep employing people who look exactly like we do we're going to have a very homogenous sort of workplace. Or do we want a more diverse workplace with a range of different people bringing their lives, their interests, who they are and, most importantly, their various skills and capabilities to that workplace? So, something more is being asked of the employer. We ask that when an employer is next hiring and they have a choice between Jenny Smith without a disability and Jenny Smith with a disability that Jenny Smith with a disability is not ruled out on the basis of her disability."*

To watch Rick's video, and a range of others, visit Limbs 4 Life's YouTube channel.

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## Meet Terri Smith When nursing is in your blood

### What led to your limb loss?

I had a workplace injury in 2004 where I tore my calf muscle. After many months of rehab and returning to work as a nurse, I tore my other calf muscle and then developed ulcers on my toes as a result of the changes to my gait. Between 2005 and 2008 I had numerous toes amputated and in November 2008 developed sepsis from osteomyelitis in my large right toe and into the foot. I consequently had a right below-knee amputation in November 2008. I then went on to have a left forefoot amputation in 2010 after developing osteomyelitis in a few of my toes.

### What type of work were you doing prior to your amputation?

Prior to my workplace injury I was a registered nurse in the Emergency Department at Canberra Hospital. After my workplace injury in 2005 I moved into a managerial/clerical role within the hospital.

### Did you return to the same employment after your amputation?

I continued in my hospital clerical role after my amputation, a job I very much loved. I was very

lucky that while in hospital recovering from my amputation I was able to come into the office and complete some work - the perks of being in the hospital and working there too! Upon my formal return to the workplace, the hospital was very supportive and assisted me to create a safe and functional workplace reflective of the fact I was in a wheelchair. I have been in and out of a wheelchair over the years and I have had the support of my workplace in every way.

### **Did you need any workplace modifications or support when returning to the workplace?**

When moving into different workspace areas I have always been included in the decisions making process, regardless of whether I was using a wheelchair at the time or not. This has been important to ensure that the space was accessible. As part of this assessment I checked out desk heights, the ability of chairs to move or roll away when sitting down, and ensure there were no trip hazards. This has always been done to prevent the risk of injury and ensure my workplace is comfortable.



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## **Tips for people living with limb loss who are seeking employment or already in the workforce**

- Ask for what you need.
- Accept help - it can sometimes be hard when you are used to being independent.
- Acknowledge that things may need to change but you are still the same person, maybe just doing things a little differently.
- Ensure your workplace understands any health needs and that you may need to go to appointments for physio, prosthetic fittings etc.
- Definitely have a positive mindset and surround yourself with those people who have a 'can do' attitude.
- If there is an option, involve the workplace injury or occupational health and safety management team in the redesign of the area to make it safe and workable for you.



## What employment support is available?

There are a number of government services available to assist people with disability pursue their employment goals and pathways.

### JobAccess

JobAccess is the main Australian Government initiative that aims to support the employment of people with disability. It is a hub of information that is beneficial to not only job seekers and workers, but employers and colleagues as well.

Assistance for people with disability including details about: financial support; Disability Employment Services (DES); advice on changing or keeping a job; advice on workplace modification and flexibility; and, access to training and current vacancies.

Assistance for employers including details about: financial support; tools and resources; creating flexible work environments; recruiting and retaining staff; rights and responsibilities; and, disability employment toolkits.

To learn more visit - [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au)

### Disability Employment Services (DES)

DES is the Australian Government's employment service to assist people with disability find and keep a job. Support can include: career advice; employment preparation; resume development; and, training. It can also assist with job searching and ongoing support at work (if necessary), including funding for necessary workplace modifications and provision of wage subsidies to employers.

DES is provided by a mix of for-profit and not-for-profit organisations across Australia. To learn more and find one in your area visit - [www.jobaccess.gov.au/find-a-provider](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/find-a-provider)

### Employment Assistance Fund (EAF)

The EAF gives financial help to employers to people with disability to buy work related modifications, equipment, Auslan services, and workplace assistance and support services. The EAF is available to eligible people who are about to start a job, are self-employed or who are currently working. It is also available to people who need assistance or special work equipment to look for and prepare for a job.

To learn more and submit an EAF application visit - [www.jobaccess.gov.au/employment-assistance-fund-eaf](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employment-assistance-fund-eaf)

### Government Public Service Employment

The Australian Government and State/Territory Governments are working towards attracting more people with disability into public service roles. Some have dedicated recruitment schemes which allow for people with disability to apply for vacancies and be considered for roles. Some jurisdictions also have targets to increase the number of people with disability employed in public sector positions.

The Australian Government 'RecruitAbility scheme' is just one such approach aimed at employing more people with disability in the Australian Public Service (APS) - [www.apsc.gov.au/recruitability-scheme-guide-applicants](http://www.apsc.gov.au/recruitability-scheme-guide-applicants)

Other state and territory governments are offering similar schemes and approaches, all aimed at increasing diversity in their government workforces. For more information contact the Public Service Commission in your state or territory.

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## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Customised Employment Support



NDIS participants can build employment support into their NDIS Plan. This is known as 'customised employment' and linked to a person's employment goals.

Customised Employment is a person-centred approach which matches the skills, interests and support needs of an NDIS participant to meet a business need or create a new market (self-employment or micro-enterprise).

Currently support to access employment support sits within 'Finding and Keeping A Job', which is connected to the Capacity Building section of a NDIS Plan. However, this may be changing during 2020. So, if this interests you it's a good idea to speak to your Support Coordinator or NDIS Local Area Coordinator to find out more.

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# Ramping up4work

Ramping Up 4 Work (RU4W) is Limbs 4 Life's first employment project, and is currently being piloted in Western Australia. Funded by the Western Australian Department of Communities, this program aims to support amputees to realise their employment potential.

Ramping Up 4 Work supports amputees who:

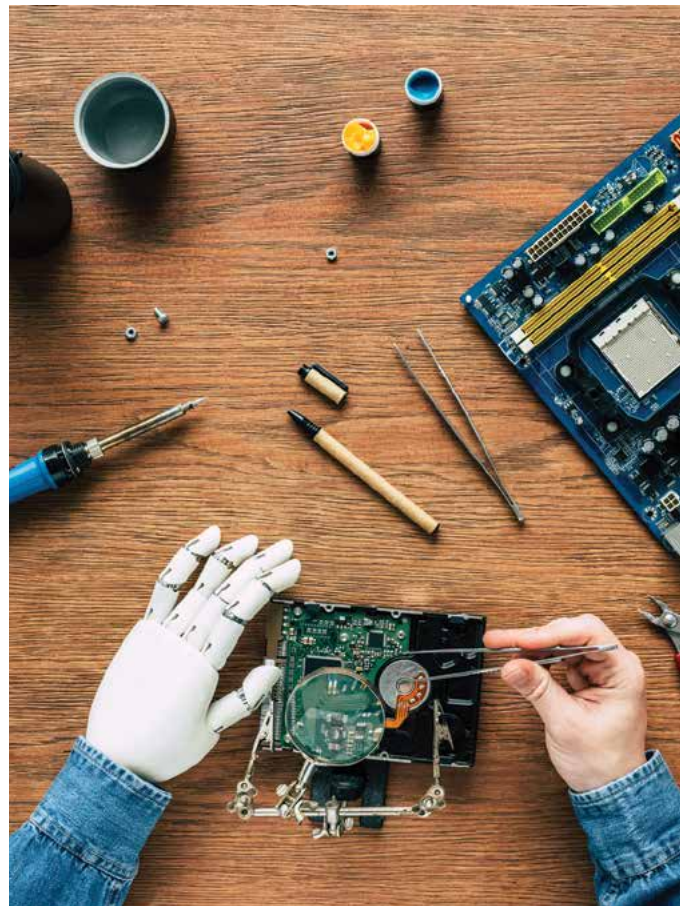
- Are seeking to regain their employment
- Are keen to re-train for a new role
- Need assistance navigating employment opportunities for the first time.

Ramping Up 4 Work aims to encourage, empower and motivate people experiencing limb loss to gain and/or maintain employment, through the provision of information, advice and one-on-one peer mentoring. This is delivered through face-to-face and telephone support provided by Peer Mentors.

Ramping Up 4 Work offers four streams of employment assistance.

1. Realise employment - designed to assist those living with limb loss and entering the workforce for the first time.
2. Retaining employment - support for those in employment at the time of their amputation surgery.
3. Returning to employment - support and assistance for those who have been out of the workforce for some time.
4. Re-adjusting and retraining for employment - advice and assistance for people who need to change career fields as a result of limb loss.

If you are seeking support or would like more information about this program contact us or visit - [www.limbs4life.org.au/steps-to-recovery/ramping-up-4-work](http://www.limbs4life.org.au/steps-to-recovery/ramping-up-4-work)





# Disability Royal Commission

## Employment Issues Paper



The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has released an 'Employment Issues Paper'. This inquiry is looking for feedback from individuals and organisations regarding their workplace experiences, and we need your help.

Limbs 4 Life will be making a submission to this inquiry to ensure that the experiences of amputees are included and contribute to positive workplace changes. So, we've created a 'Employment Survey' and want to hear from you! We are keen to learn about your

workplace experiences, views on government employment services, and tips on ways of making workplaces positive and accessible for amputees. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete and can be accessed at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/LimbLossEmployment](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LimbLossEmployment)

The survey is open to anyone over 16 years. And even if you're not working at the moment or are retired - you are welcome to comment on previous experiences. If you have any questions about this survey, or need assistance completing it, please contact us.

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## Assistive Technology for All Alliance

# We need your help!

Assistive Technology for All (ATFA) is an alliance of organisations from across the ageing and disability sectors. The Alliance was created in response to growing concern about the lack of access to assistive technology for people who are not eligible for NDIS funding support.

Currently older Australians who are over 65 and not eligible for the NDIS have limited access to funding for assistive technologies like wheelchairs, prosthetics, screen reading software and home modification equipment to help them remain safe and independent at home.

Limbs 4 Life is a key ATFA member, advocating for improved access to assistive technology from both state and commonwealth governments. Like all other members of the Alliance we are growing increasingly frustrated with the situation and are fighting for reform which will see equitable access to assistive technology regardless of a person's age or location.

Please join our 'Assistive Technology for All' campaign and help us to advocate for better outcomes for people with disability that sit outside the NDIS. Your voice is powerful and we need your help!

If you believe that all Australians with disability have the right to be treated equally, please sign and share our petition - [assistivetechforall.org.au/take-action/](https://assistivetechforall.org.au/take-action/)

**ATFA**   
Assistive Technology for All



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# Victorian Limb Loss Empowerment Project

Limbs 4 Life is delighted to announce the launch of our Victorian Empowerment Project for amputees, made possible through a NDIS ILC Individual Capacity Building Program grant. We are also thrilled to announce that Mike Rolls, a long-term Limbs 4 Life Peer Support Volunteer, has taken on the role as Program Manager for this exciting initiative.

Over the course of three years, this project will lead to the establishment of metropolitan and regional Peer Support Groups and expand our Peer Support Program. It will involve the creation and roll-out of workshops, webinars, resources, and training. The Limb Loss Empowerment Project will engage people with limb loss in the development of activities and materials using a co-design approach; making sure that our community has the opportunity to share knowledge and insight throughout project delivery.

This project builds on the success of the South Australian Limb Loss Capacity Building Project, using lessons learned. We look forward to working with members of our community on this exciting new initiative. Very soon we will be asking you to participate in a survey so that we can hear about your thoughts and ideas.

If you would like to 'meet' Mike Rolls, why not visit the Limbs 4 Life YouTube channel. There you can hear Mike talk about the value of connecting with peers, as well as strategies for building resilience and keeping on top of your mental health.





# How to self-advocate and know your rights

Self-advocacy means speaking up for yourself about the things that are important to you, and having your voice heard. It means feeling able to ask for what you need and want, telling people your thoughts and feelings, ensuring you are listened to, and making sure you have the same choices as everyone else. Many people say that the more they exercise self-advocacy the more comfortable and confident they become with the process.

There are many places and situations where you may need to advocate for yourself. These include: speaking with health care providers; NDIS staff; employers; educators; and, community members.

## Benefits of self-advocacy

- Being able to make your own decisions.
- Gaining self-confidence and self-respect.
- Learning new ways to properly express your needs to achieve goals.
- Learning to work with others who can assist you (teamwork).
- Developing problem-solving skills.

## Tips for effective self-advocacy

- Be an active and assertive participant in the process, but avoid being aggressive.

- Directly state (say) what your needs are in a clear, firm and polite manner.
- If something isn't clear to you, ask questions.
- Take time to listen to others, and respect their point of view.
- Get enough information to make informed choices.
- If necessary, have an advocate, family member or friend with you at meetings.
- If you feel you are not being heard, consider putting your request in writing.
- Keep a folder of all notes, plans, and letters/emails so that you can refer to these in the future.
- Take notes when you attend meetings and during phone calls.
- Make sure that anything you agree to (e.g. NDIS plan) is put in writing.

## Self-advocacy steps

1. Work out what the problem is:
  - What is the problem or issue (e.g. need a new prosthesis, need an updated NDIS Plan, need new working arrangements)?
  - What do I need to do to fix this situation (e.g. device, funding, support)?
  - What facts do I have about the problem (e.g. information about new prosthetics, NDIS planning schedule, employment rights)?



## 2. Information gathering:

- What information or facts do I need regarding this situation (e.g. laws, rules, policies, reports)?
- How can I get this information (e.g. personal notes, internet, organisations)?
- Who is the decision-maker (person) who can help me solve this problem (e.g. prosthetist, teacher, NDIS staff)?
- Are there other people who can help me (e.g. Limbs 4 Life, family, disability advocacy organisation)?

## 3. Solution analysis:

- What are some possible solutions to this problem/ issue, that are realistic and specific?
- What are some barriers that might get in the way of me achieving these solutions?
- What do I expect the other side (people or organisation) to do?

## Human rights

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international treaty of the United Nations, and Australia is a signatory to this. It is intended to protect the rights and dignity of all people with disability, and ensure people get treated equally. All countries that have signed this treaty promise to do as much as they can afford to ensure people with disability have access to things like housing, education and health care. This includes areas such as access to independent living, assistive technology (e.g. prosthetics), information, learning, good healthcare, employment, and participation in community and political life.

There are several Commissions and Ombudsmen that can respond to issues related to human rights, services and disability issues. In addition to the ones listed below Ombudsmen operate in all states and territories and can respond to local matters.

- Australian Human Rights Commission – [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Ombudsman – [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

## Consumer rights

Through Australian Consumer Law, all people have the right to complain if they buy a faulty product or service. So, if you've received a product or service (e.g. mobility aid, prosthesis, home repairs) that is not 'fit for purpose' or not working properly you should complain to the business or person who supplied it. Depending on the situation you may be entitled to repair, replacement or refund. This law protects you when you use your own money, or buy goods and services using your NDIS funding.

To find out more, learn about your rights and options, or get assistance when making a complaint:

- The consumer protection agency (sometimes called 'consumer affairs') in your state or territory
- NDIS 'Quality and Safeguards Commission' (1800 035 544)

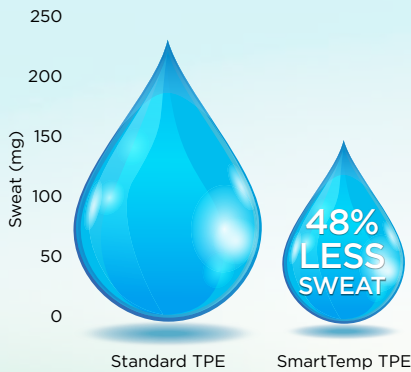
Understanding your human rights and consumer rights are important if you feel that you have not been treated equally, that a service has not met your needs, or you have received a poor-quality product you need to live safely and independently. Knowing what your rights are and how to complain can be very useful self-advocacy tools.

Limbs 4 Life is available to assist amputees who have encountered a problem that relates to your assistive technology needs (i.e prosthetics etc). We may be able to help you with self-advocacy planning, if feel your human rights have not been met or want to complain about an amputee related service or product. While we may not be able to assist in all cases, we are always here to listen. And if we can't help you directly we will work with you to find another way of managing the problem.

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



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# Annie Pateman The Strength Within



Every amputees' journey with limb loss is different. And along with the challenges it brings, for many amputees it also leads to opportunities and gains. This was very much the case for Annie Pateman.

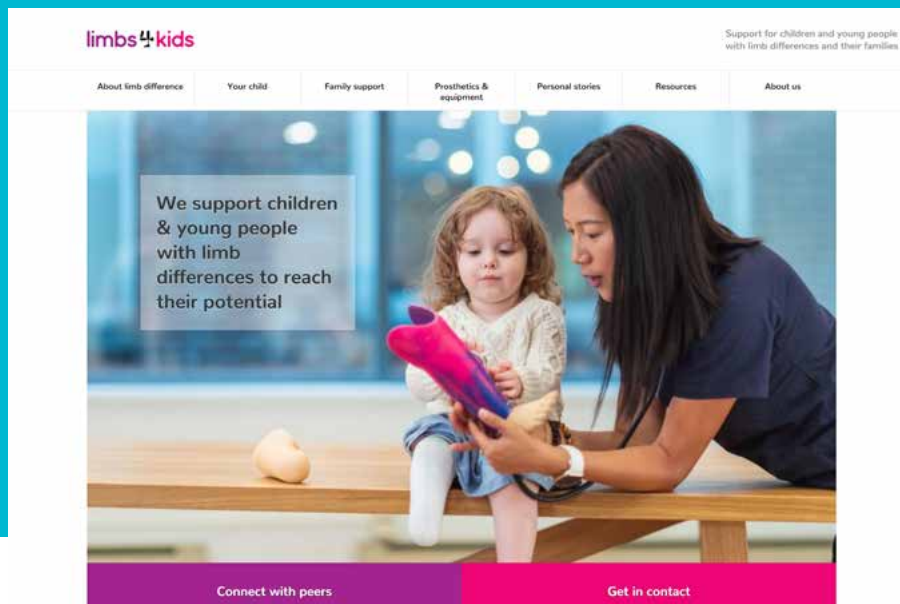
*"It was 1979 - I was 3 months pregnant with my second child. I was suffering excruciating pain in my left leg - I couldn't walk, I couldn't stand, I couldn't sleep. The pain had started a year earlier and was getting progressively worse. In just a year, I'd gone from being an active young woman to being almost entirely incapacitated. The journey to find the crux of this pain was going to be almost as diabolical as discovering the diagnosis.*

*Another three months passed and I went for my six-month check-up to my obstetrician at the local hospital. He told me everything was fine... but it definitely was not!! I weighed 42 kilos and my left leg was abnormally swollen. I'd been dealing with chronic pain every day for almost 18 months.*

*On the 1st April 1980 - I underwent a biopsy - the lump, the size of a tennis ball on the inside of my knee, was identified as a tumour - Ewing's Sarcoma - a rare form of bone cancer. It was such a relief to finally discover the cause of the pain because I could now tackle and overcome this obstacle and move on with my life, or could I? The surgeon advised it was operable, fortunately ... but at the cost of my leg and almost in the same breath said the baby may not survive due to the trauma of the surgery. I was 26 years old and 26 weeks pregnant.*

*That was my first confrontation with cancer - two more to follow. The strength is within us all - you just have to reach for it. There is light at the end of the tunnel; even when you can't see it, even if you think everything is hopeless. You just have to keep going, as I did, especially when it seems like you have nothing left. 40 years later, I am here to share my story and give you hope."*

If you would like to connect with Annie, learn more about her story, or purchase her book visit:  
[www.anniepatemanauthor.com.au](http://www.anniepatemanauthor.com.au)



## Launch of the new Limbs 4 Kids website

We are very excited to announce the launch of our new Limbs 4 Kids website. Throughout the site redesign our main focus has been to provide parents, carers, educators and health providers with more streamlined and up-to-date information which supports children with limb differences. It's a place to learn, connect and access support.

Several highlights of our relaunch include:

- more personal stories
- information targeted towards children's life stages and milestones
- easier navigation and usability for mobile devices
- access to downloadable fact sheets, NDIS planning resources, and links to prosthetic providers across Australia.

Limbs 4 Life is indebted to Australian Paper who raised funding during the Reflex Masters Golf Charity Days, as well as several parents who generously fundraised in their workplaces, to make this new website possible!

We hope you enjoy using the new site and find the knowledge resources useful and easy to navigate. We'd love to receive any feedback regarding your experiences of the new Limbs 4 Kids website – just send an email to [kids@limbs4life.org.au](mailto:kids@limbs4life.org.au)

To check out the website visit [www.limbs4kids.org.au](http://www.limbs4kids.org.au)

**limbs 4 kids**

## Why not join in on the Limbs 4 Kids conversation?

Our Limbs 4 Kids website is a closed group which enables parents and carers of children with limb difference to share achievements, discuss challenges, seek tips and access articles. It's a growing community made up of close to 600 members, sharing the common lived experience of caring for a child with limb difference.

[www.facebook.com/groups/349205931872070/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/349205931872070/)

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