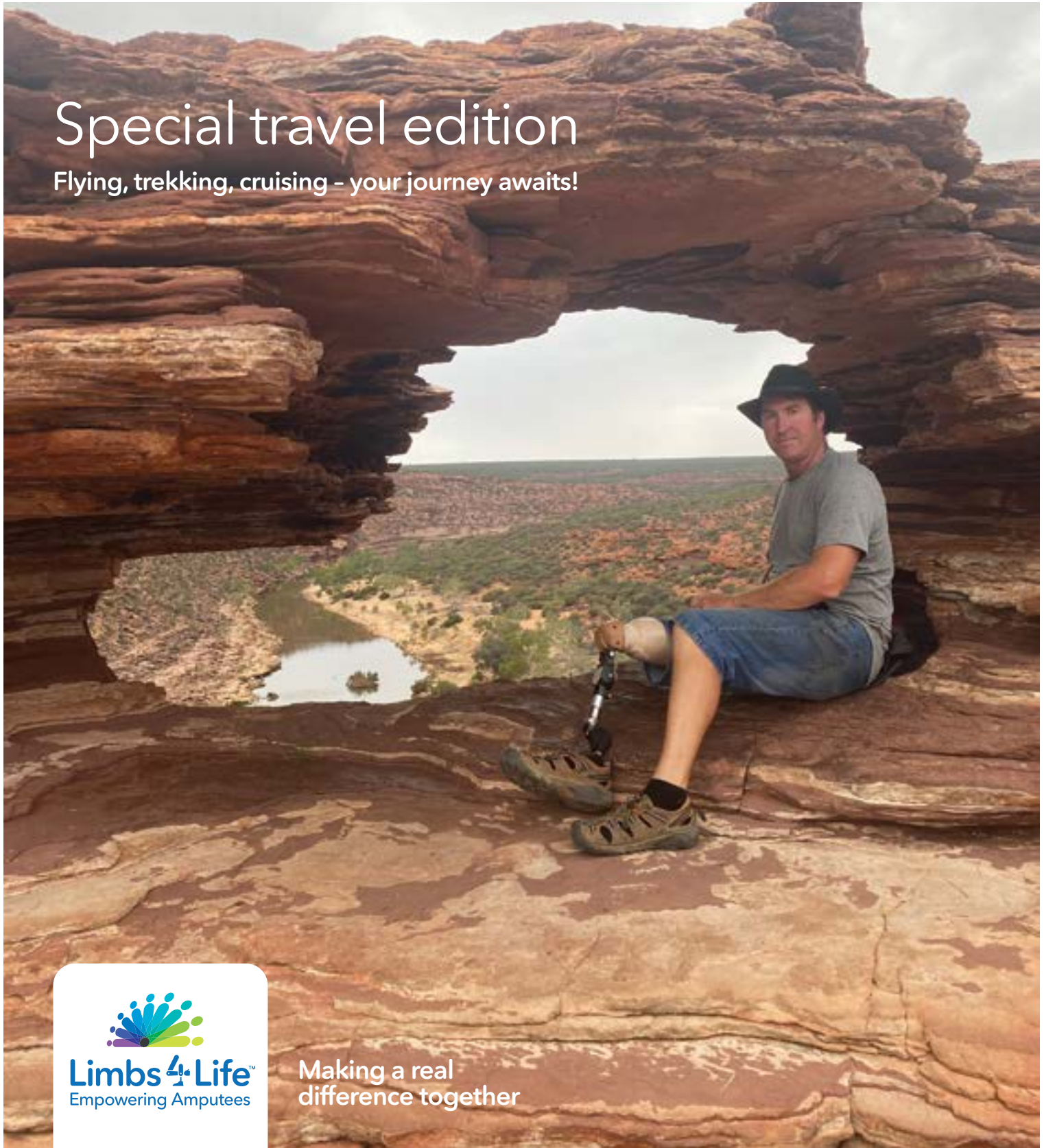


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Inside this edition

Most Aussie's love to travel. We are blessed to live on a diverse continent with amazing beaches that stretch for miles, beautiful sunsets, parklands a plenty and a spectacular vast orange desert in the middle. While we have some amazing places at home many of us like to spread our wings and expand our horizons to different lands.

Travel is a hot topic, and holidaying is a quintessential part of the Aussie dream; so, for that reason and because we receive lots of questions about travelling as an amputee, we have dedicated this entire edition just to travel. In this edition we have some terrific personal stories along with tips (from travellers) to make your holiday experience more enjoyable. So, sit back, relax and start to think about where to plan your next trip. And wherever you go, happy travels!

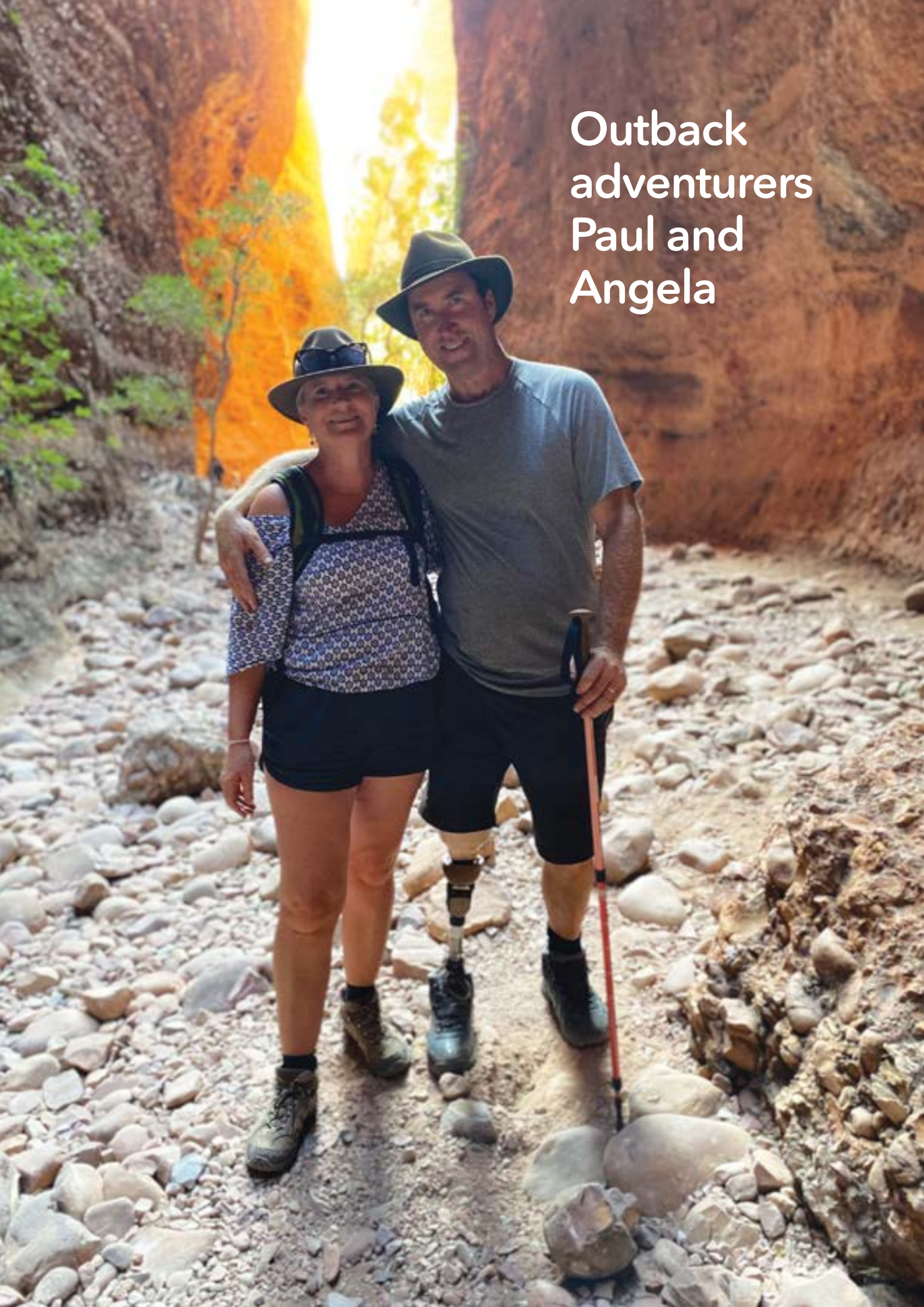
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Outback
adventurers
Paul and
Angela



I'm Paul. I'm 53 years old, happily married with three kids and I live about 45 minutes southeast of Hobart, Tasmania. I've lived in Tasmania all my life. After I left school at 15, I began my career working on fishing vessels on the South and West Coasts of Tasmania. I think this was where my love for adventure and travel began.

When I was 21, whilst working on a trawler, I had a workplace accident. The delay in getting to hospital with no circulation below my knee resulted in me losing my right leg through the knee. Being an amputee has had its challenges, however, my love of the outdoors; fishing, diving, hunting, and bushwalking, has remained strong. Having a positive attitude allows me to continue doing the things I love. I believe that a positive attitude is crucial for any person with disability.

In 2012 I got a new job working on offshore vessels. This job allowed me to see a lot of Australia and made me realise how much more there is out there. I started thinking about how good it would be to travel around Australia, then in 2016 we bought our first caravan. We were fortunate to have family and friends who owned vans as well, so for the next couple of years we did short trips around Tasmania to get used to the van. We loved it! I have not had to make any alterations to our caravan. I have put a stool in the shower to sit on and I bought an extra step for outside the door. I could probably do with



a rail just inside the door to hold onto as I get in and out, but apart from that, I find getting around the van quite easy.

We had been discussing the idea of doing a trip around Australia for a while, then in 2020 I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Great... now I'm an amputee and I have Parkinson's. After getting my head around what this meant for us and getting my attitude back in order, we decided life's too short we're going! We went online and booked the boat for the 20th of March 2022.

A trip like this does take a bit of planning. Here are some of my tips:

1. Work out how long you want to go for. We decided around six months but had no firm end date.
2. Make a budget. Expedition Australia has a great budget app which is free to download.
3. Save, save, save! Going around Australia is not cheap.
4. Follow bloggers on Facebook. There are plenty of people doing this full-time and they have great tips.
5. Download the WikiCamps Australia app.

There are also plenty of books on caravanning around Australia.





We walked endless beaches, snorkelled and swam in the gorges of Ningaloo Reef. In the Kimberleys, we caught mud crabs, saw some incredible Aboriginal rock art, dingoes, donkeys and buffaloes.

So thought I should go over some of the challenges I had. Challenges are going to be different for everyone depending on mobility and level of amputation.

We went to lots of beaches and swimming at beaches without a wet leg isn't easy. I used my crutches to get in the water and a pool-noodle or swim ring to help hold me up once in the water, that way I didn't have to bounce up and down on one leg!

We did a lot of walks ranging from easy up to grade 4 level walks. The only aid I used was a good quality hiking stick and 3B anti-chaff cream is gold! I'm lucky that I don't have much trouble with my stump in the way of pressure sores so that is a bonus. Some of the walks into the gorges were challenging with large boulders and some steep hills but the rewards at the end was worth every cent.

For anyone thinking of travelling Australia or anywhere else for that matter, just do it. Plan well and make it happen while you still can, we're already planning our next one. You won't regret it!



Our trip around Australia was without a doubt, one of the best things we have ever done. We've seen some amazing things and met some wonderful people. We were away for nearly seven months and travelled approximately 28,000 km from the coast to the Outback. To tell you what our favourite part was is impossible.

We parked our van in some amazing places, at Outback stations, on the edge of the great Australian Bight and on the banks of rivers.





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Travel insurance

Before holidaying overseas, we usually first tell our friends and family and it's not too far into the conversation we are told - almost warned - to take out travel insurance to protect as best we can (at least in financial terms) our belongings and our health.

Taking out a travel insurance policy isn't all that hard and can usually be done at the same time you purchase the plane ticket through a travel agent, or, like everything else these days, online. Policies aren't all that expensive either. For a few hundred dollars, if not less, you can usually obtain a policy that will cover lost or stolen luggage, cancelled flights and other unexpected holiday costs. You can expect these same policies to cover overseas hospital and medical expenses and even cover you for loss of income for a period and, in the worst-case scenario, make a payment to your family if you die.

It all sounds like the perfect way to have peace of mind as you head off on a fun-filled overseas holiday...but what if it's not that simple? Unfortunately, like most things insurance-related, the glossy front page of the policy or the glossy poster in the travel agent often isn't a true reflection of how the

insurance company will consider any claim you might have to make. Is it do with the fine print you hear me ask? Unfortunately, the answer is: yes it is (if you're forcing me to answer my own question!)

Most travel insurance policies won't cover health conditions you have or have had before you take out a policy. This can depend on when your health condition arose and what type of condition you have. However, even conditions that are well-treated, responding well to medication and in the opinion of your treating

TIP



Allow extra time. If you are a prosthetic user, you will be scanned at the security checkpoint and sometimes there are long queues especially if your flight is around the time of business travel. Give yourself enough time so that you don't feel rushed or distressed.

doctor or specialist are under control may still not be covered. Of course, it can depend on how much you wish to pay for a policy and the particular health condition you have but experience tells me that more often than not pre-existing health conditions are excluded. And what is more likely is even if the policy doesn't specifically mention your health condition, it will contain a "catchall" clause excluding health problems you were aware of or should reasonably have been aware of before you purchased the policy.

All is not lost, however. Even if the insurer won't cover your health condition, that doesn't mean you can't still get cover for nonmedical things like protection for your luggage or financial protection should your holiday be in some way disrupted. (Depending, of course, on the cause of the disruption...disruption due to a decision of a government or its military won't generally be covered!)

The reality is, when you buy travel insurance you receive a policy booklet that is filled with as many reasons for an insurance company not to pay out a claim as there might be to pay out a claim. All those who disagree speak up now...hmmm...your silence is deafening! There is some good news: you can question any decision an insurance company makes and try to get their decision overturned. You must do it within 6 years from the date you are told about their decision. To dispute an insurance company's decision, the first thing to do is get the decision in writing. This helps to understand the part of the policy the insurance company is relying upon. You can then write to them asking for their decision to be changed. To do this you need to ask for your letter to be considered under the insurer's internal review procedure. This is important.

In your letter set out why the insurer's decision is wrong and if you have any documents to support your claim, provide them (provide copies only, never provide originals). It is important to keep all of your dealings with the insurance company in writing, whether by email, fax or traditional letter (does anyone write letters anymore!) Discussions had over the phone can be interpreted differently by different people and it creates confusion down

TIP



The Australian Government has developed a National Accessible Toilet Map. This public toilet map has been designed with standards in mind. The National Public Toilet Map shows the location of more than 23,000 public and private facilities across Australia. For more information visit: toiletmap.gov.au

the track. Stay away from the phone. Also, if you can, keep a mini-file of your dealings. Keep copies of all letters sent and received and make notes of any conversations you have (if you need to have conversations – see above regarding using the phone).

Once the insurer receives your letter, it has 45 days to review and reconsider its original decision under its internal review procedure. If the decision stays the same (if the insurer again rejects your claim), there are still steps you can take to challenge the decision that require you to appear in court and undergo days of questioning in a witness box by a Kings Counsel! The next step is to lodge your matter with the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). The FOS is an independent umpire who will consider the arguments of both you and the insurance company and then determine who it thinks is right. The FOS is free. Lodging your matter with the FOS can be done quite easily online or if you phone them they will send you forms to fill in to start the dispute process.

The FOS's website is: www.fos.org.au and their phone number is 1800 367 287. It can take several months before the FOS provides its decision, sometimes longer. If the FOS decides the matter in your favour, the insurance company is bound by the decision. If the FOS agrees with the insurance company you do not have to accept the decision and you can still take the matter further.



The FOS doesn't always get it right (it is made up of humans after all!) Action can also be taken against an insurance company if a decision is made not to provide you with insurance because of a disability unless the insurance company can provide evidence that justifies the discrimination. This evidence needs to show, whether from previous claims or actuarial or statistical data, that providing insurance to you because of your disability or ill-health would be an unreasonable risk. Otherwise, it is illegal in Australia to discriminate against somebody because of a disability and you are well within your rights to do something about it and you should do something about it. If you believe the decision of an insurance company is discriminatory you can ask for the decision to be reviewed by lodging the matter with the Australian Human Rights Commission. You can contact the Commission through their website www.humanrights.gov.au or by phoning them on (02) 9284 9600.

The immediate difficulty with disputing a decision of an insurance company on the grounds of discrimination is one of timing.

Not many people (realistically, probably none at all) apply for a travel insurance policy many months out from their overseas trip to allow for the need to pursue a complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission! For this reason, it may be that travel insurance

TIP



If you are staying in an apartment as opposed to a hotel – you can use a supermarket delivery service to get some groceries. Place your order the day prior so that your delivery is there when you arrive. It's also a good idea to let the apartment manager know ahead of time that you are expecting to receive a delivery.

companies are not held to account for some of the decisions they make not to provide insurance to people who have health problems or disabilities even though those problems are stable and are no more of a risk than a person without the health problem or disability.

But what about insuring my prosthesis?

Limbs 4 Life are regularly contacted by amputees who want to know the following:

1. Do I need to insure my prosthesis?
2. Which companies will insure my prosthesis?
3. What do I do if something happens to my prosthesis?

If you plan on travelling around Australia, you shouldn't require any additional cover. Most funding bodies agree that if you take reasonable care to prevent damage, loss or theft of your device then they will consider replacing it for you.

If you are travelling overseas and want to take out cover for your prosthesis there are a couple of things to consider. Insurance cover for your prosthesis can be included as part of your house and contents insurance, but you might find that you get a shock when you receive the bill. If your device is valued between 10 - 15K then it may cost you close to that amount for cover - is it worth it? Well, that decision is yours.

The best recommendations that we can give you is to look after your device. Don't leave it laying around beside a pool or on a beach unless you have someone who can look after it for you.

This article was written by Michael Bates, Principal Lawyer from Leonard And Welch - Superannuation & Insurance Lawyers.

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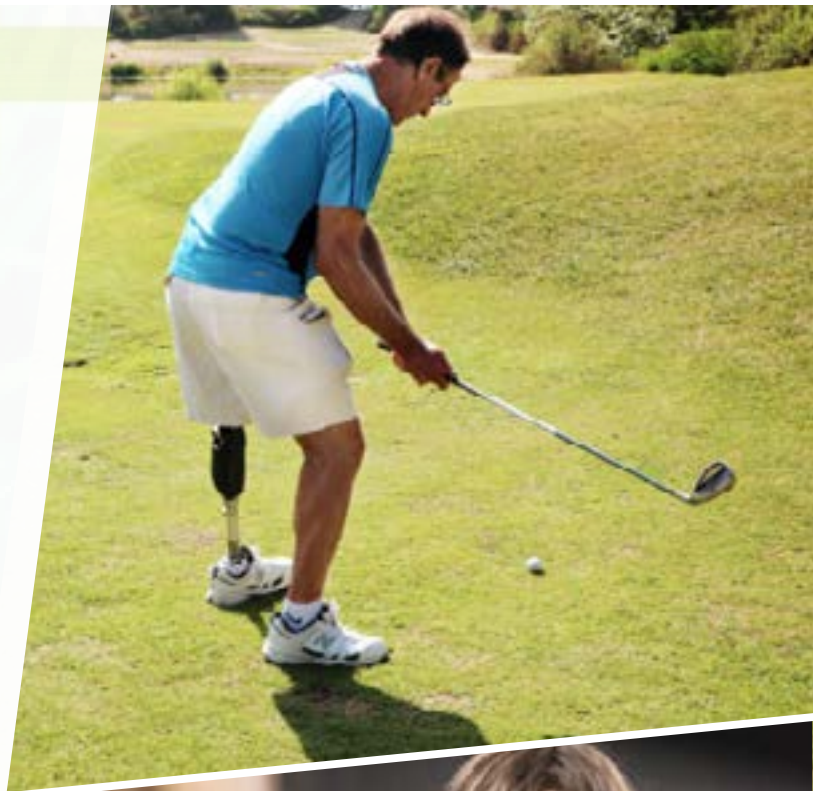
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An aerial photograph of a large cruise ship docked at a port. The ship is white with blue accents and features a prominent funnel. The deck is visible, showing a colorful children's play area with slides and a pool. The ship is docked next to a pier with various industrial buildings and storage areas. In the background, a city is visible, followed by a body of water and distant mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text "Korina's cruising" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Korina's cruising



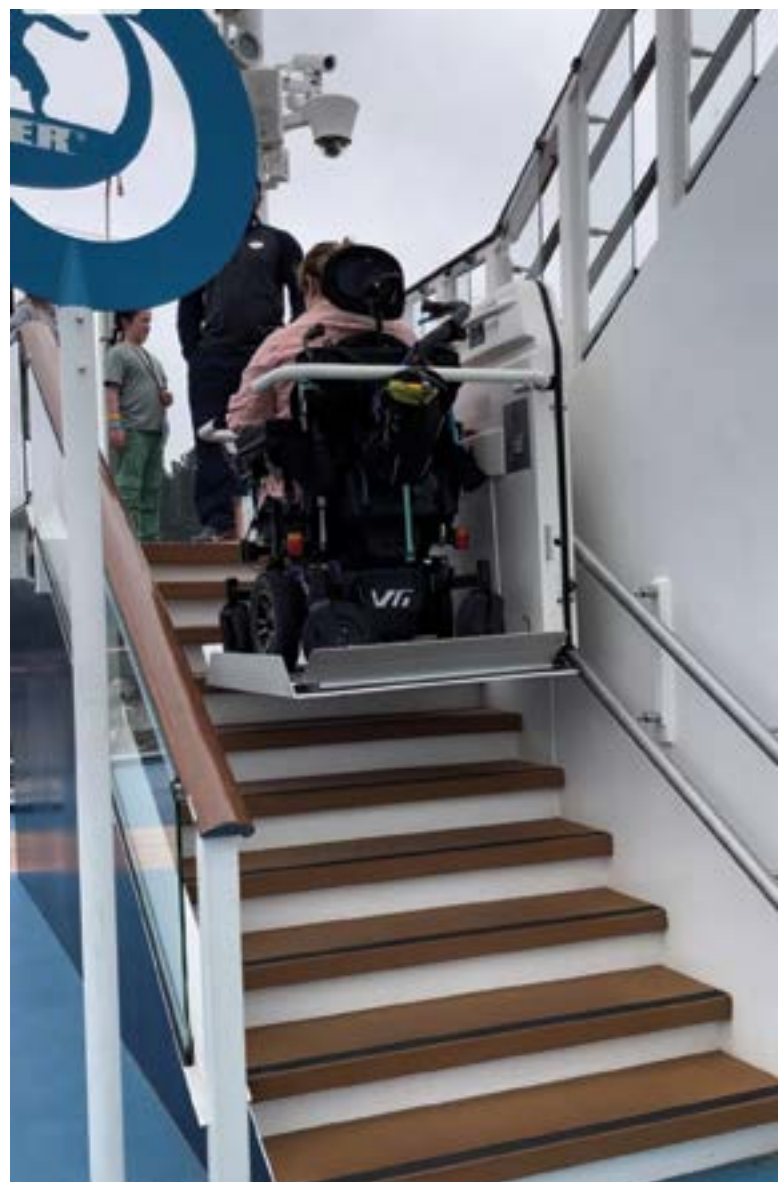
I need to mention first that I am a quadruple amputee and am a full-time electric wheelchair user. I have cruised twice now, with Royal Caribbean on two different ships once pre-Covid, on Explorer of the Seas, and once post Covid on Ovation of the Seas. Explorer no longer comes to Australia and Ovation is currently the largest ship that comes to Sydney.

Booking direct is quite easy and relatively hassle free. Both times we filled out a special needs request form to get the accessible room. They did call last time quite a few times to ask why exactly we needed the accessible room.

Our first cruise was to the South Pacific in December and everything was great. The moment we arrived by transport at Sydney, we were pretty much greeted at the car and helped to take our check-in luggage and shower commode on board. Our children were five and three. The check-in process was also a breeze, and we were guided through pretty much as priority (we bypassed all the queues). I do highly recommend having all

your documents and passports ready to go. The second cruise was to New Zealand in March and much the same as before. The staff both in Sydney and on board were very accommodating. Since Covid you actually can do more of the check-in online, for example taking your photo for your Sea-pass card, so there is really even less that needs doing other than checking your passport.

On both ships, it is very easy to get around as a wheelchair user. All restaurants and venues on board have easy access and the theatres have plenty of spots for wheelchairs. The ships are obviously quite large so I would definitely advise for people to keep that in mind if they are a single or bilateral leg amputees, depending how far they usually walk. As for activities, there are some activities that would possibly not be suitable, such as



Flo Rida (surfing simulator), roller skating, ice skating, or rock climbing. Those activities would obviously be down to each person's ability.

The accessible rooms are a good size, especially for a ship. Wider entry doorways with automatic opening door (swipe your card the door opens for approximately 10/15 seconds and there is a pushbutton from the inside). The beds do have clearance underneath for a hoist if required. There is a bed, a lounge and a desk. There is not a huge amount of room but both times we had a family of four and had no issues. The bathrooms are in my opinion pretty great with full flat access roll in shower, basin with clearance underneath and toilet. We were pleasantly surprised that given their size when you have a shower you do not get water on the toilet and everywhere else.

There are a few public accessible bathrooms throughout the ship however, in my opinion, they would not meet Australian disability standards. They do have plenty of room in them which is great for those not using wheelchairs, but especially on Ovation they were all wall hung pans with no cistern (or in wall) so they were extremely close to the wall and not suitable to transfer. We found it just as easy to go back to the state room.

Destinations/ports are something to be mindful of depending on what you are wanting from

your cruise holiday. Any of the locations that are 'tender to Port' means that from the ship you need to get into a small boat to go across to the port. They are not wheelchair accessible. The staff on board are always very helpful and will help people with mobility issues but you do have to step down into the boat and then obviously back up to get out. Only once on each of our cruises did we have a tendered port which I could not get off. I was completely fine with that, and in fact, they were great ship days with less people. You will find some of the ports are working ports, which means you must be transported out, this again was no issue with the South Pacific cruise providing wheelchair accessible taxis and New Zealand providing wheelchair accessible buses. Once on land, if you wish to do a tour or something, you will need to book that yourself.

We love cruising as the destination itself. There is so much to do on board, and all the staff are really lovely and willing to go above and beyond to make your stay comfortable. You only get a very brief viewing of the port/destinations as you are only there for a maximum of eight hours. Being on a ship so the boat does rock on occasion. There were a couple of days on our New Zealand cruise that the seas were quite high but due to the size of the ship the motions of side to side are large, but slow.

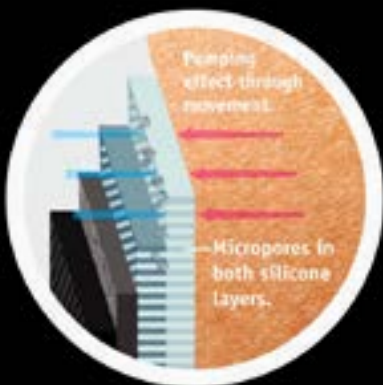


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Frequent flyer - Carl

I've travelled to all 7 continents twice, to be fair I did all that before amputation. I travel quite a bit for work, in Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Because I work for an American company, I travel to the US at least once a year. And my wife Deb and I save up all year for a big holiday, usually to visit my family in England. My most recent trip was to Thailand and the Philippines for work, I was speaking at a couple of events and meeting some customers. I had the weekend in Asia and stayed in Hong Kong with a day trip to Macau. Wow it was warm!

My first trip after amputation was within a few months, but I needed to travel to England due to a family emergency, but we made it work. I'm confident travelling alone now, I don't really have any fears, as I plan in great detail, and always have a fallback position. I

obviously fear falling, and I've taken a tumble a few times, but if you are in public there's usually some strong folks around to pick me up! At Orlando airport I was once whisked back to my feet by a US Marine.

Accessible hotel bathrooms are a must. Or at the very least a walk-in shower. My biggest concern is that I'm not allocated an accessible bathroom when I've specified it. That worries me a lot to be honest. I have found that some hotel chains only take accessible room "requests", and if there's not one available when you get there... well tough. Accor and Hilton are my go-to's as they absolutely guarantee accessible bathrooms.

I use wheelchair assistance at airports where I can. No point in tiring myself out walking through massive airports like LAX or Bangkok for instance. And it's also a great way of jumping the queue at security and immigration.



I usually wear shorts day to day, but I always do while travelling.

People are usually so kind and will go out of their way to help you. You can always ask for help, and a steadying arm is always given.

I have a second leg, which acts as my shower leg and a spare should the main leg fail or get damaged. And it travels in a prosthetic specific carry bag. I always check it, and have it marked "fragile" by the airline. They have special handling of fragile baggage and to date it's never been lost.

I broke a prosthetic leg at Windsor Castle, or should I say it started falling apart, and the staff there patched it up for me with gaffer tape. I nursed it carefully around the castle - and got a special assistance ride in a hidden elevator built for the Queen. We also got a quick surprise visit to her grave in the chapel. I had my spare leg back at the hotel.

I do take my leg off on long flights, and hand it to the flight attendant for stowage in an overhead locker. Legroom becomes less of an issue! I keep on a shrinker or sleeve to stop Mr Stumpy from swelling up too much. Flight attendants have seen it all before.

Triplt is a great App...it will change your life! You email your booking confirmations and tickets etc to Triplt and it organises it all for you in the Triplt app. Essential.

Planning is key to getting around. It's important for me to pre-book transfers etc, but also be aware of how to use taxis or rideshare. Many countries don't have Uber but have other apps like Grab. It's important to understand what's available for each destination so that you can be safe, and don't get ripped off. Rideshare apps also help you overcome language difficulties. In most places I book a bigger size car just for the leg room, and so I don't get jammed into a Toyota Yaris!

We asked Carl if there was anything that he would have done differently? "I probably wouldn't have stayed in the Ibis hotel in Hong Kong. There was a massive black cockroach sharing my room. I called him Barry. Barry the



cockroach. Good location, pretty ordinary hotel." Carl shared

Do you have preferred airlines/hotels/services etc. and if so, why?

"I'm really loyal to Qantas. I'm a high-ranking Frequent Flyer which gives me access to the lounges in Australia and overseas. That's a massive plus for comfort in personal and work travel. For work (when they are paying!) I like Hilton hotels. The main reason is that they ****guarantee**** an accessible bathroom upon booking. Other hotel chains don't, and you can end up with shower over bath which is an absolute nightmare. Accor hotels are also good for accessibility - Ibis, Novotel and such. There is an Accor app." said Carl.

"Deb and I use Airbnb a lot for our own personal travel. There are some great accessible stays around, particularly in Australia and NZ. The app allows you to filter by accessibility options."

Carl's travel tips and hacks

I've put Apple AirTags in my checked luggage. This enables me to track my luggage when I land. I can see that it's made it to the airport, but most importantly, I can sit down at the baggage carousel, and not have to keep an eye open for my bags. When they appear the app show "With you" and I can stand up and retrieve them. So much easier. And if the checked bags go astray, you can tell the airline exactly where they are!

Next adventure?

Deb and I have an adventure to Punta Arenas, Chile and the Falkland Islands booked next year. That's a bucket list place for me. Highlights will be visiting King Penguins on the Falklands and as a bit of a history buff, to visit some of the battlefields of the Falklands war.

If you have a story that you would like to share, then we'd love to hear from you.



Living life unlimited

Korrin Barrett. Motivational speaker, board member, disability advocate, TASKA Champion.

People talk about ‘the little things in life’ a lot. But many won’t have the context to appreciate what a big deal these little things are unless they spend fifteen minutes having a chat with Korrin Barrett.

“Just being able to hold a knife. You can’t imagine what that meant.” Korrin said of a recent restaurant experience. For the first time, going out to a restaurant with her TASKA CX™, her friend asked (as per usual), ‘Would you like me to cut your food for you?’ and Korrin was able to say, ‘No, I’ve got this.’

Korrin is a quad amputee. She lost both her legs below the knee and the fingers of her left hand, as well as her right arm to mid-forearm, from sepsis caused by an undetected perforated bowel. Her ordeal led to many days spent in an induced coma, followed by months in the hospital as she painstakingly relearned to be independent.

Prior to Korrin’s return to New Zealand from Australia in 2018, she reached out to the TASKA team about testing the new TASKA Hand. “When Mat and David had the prototype ready for me to try, they actually flew up and met me in Hawkes Bay.” The next day, Korrin flew out to the bilateral limb conference “Skills for Life” in the United States, ready to begin testing the TASKA Hand.

Korrin is popular on the public speaking circuit and has a strong message to share about the power of resilience. “Growing up, life wasn’t great, so I’ve always been resilient.



“
This new hand has been a real
jump in **quality** and **trust** for me.”

Before this happened, I took so many things for granted. It was a major shift in appreciation and gratitude.”

Korrin says the biggest lesson is learning to appreciate the little things. Celebrating the achievements along the way. Making sure we are looking forward - being realistic about goals.

Much of Korrin’s time is spent being an ambassador for organisations or ideas that are personal to her. It’s one of the reasons she clicked with TASKA. “As a Kiwi myself, I love that it’s made in New Zealand,” Korrin adds with a patriotic tone, “Anything goes wrong, and TASKA are on to it. Nothing’s a problem.” Korrin has visited the TASKA headquarters in Christchurch, she likes the family feeling there – she feels like she’s not just a number.

“
Just being able to hold a knife.
You can't imagine what that meant.”

Korrin has three mottos she lives by that she strives to share with other people:

1. Don't sweat the small stuff.
2. If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you.
3. Life is 10% what happens and 90% how you respond to it.

Life is all about how we choose to react, and there is lots of life to live.

“I love that the TASKA CX is quite feminine, and I love changing the Coverplates,” Korrin says she likes matching her wardrobe to her hand. Her favourite plate for evening functions is the white one. “Best of all, I can hold a glass of wine.” With her previous hand, Korrin had a grip malfunction and couldn't let go of the wine glass. She ended up taking the glass home from the event. “That was quite the taxi ride home!” she laughs. “This new hand has been a real jump in quality and trust for me.”

For more information on the TASKA CX Hand, visit taskaprosthetics.com



“
Don't sweat the small stuff but
appreciate the little things.”



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*VGK-X model is designed for lightweight adults.

For more information, please contact an Australian distributor or visit manufacturer's website:

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Travel tips for amputees

There are a few things that you should consider before embarking on your journey. We've included some tips below to help you with planning and to get you thinking. Holidays should be relaxing, fun and enjoyable so it can be handy to plan ahead and be well prepared for your adventure.

- 1 Have a prosthetic maintenance check before you go on holiday. Don't wait for something to go wrong – get your device checked before leaving home.
- 2 Always take essential items in your carry-on baggage. That way if your luggage gets lost, you have what you need until it is located.
- 3 If you use ointment or gels make sure you pack these in your carry on luggage. Just be mindful of international travel restrictions for liquids and ensure that they are packed in a clear see-through bag.
- 4 Make sure that your prosthetic liners are in good condition and take a spare prosthetic liner with you. If you use stump-socks, have plenty of those on hand.
- 5 When flying, if you choose to remove your prosthesis, make sure that you keep your liner on. You may find that your stump swells in the air and it could be difficult to re-donn your prosthesis.
- 6 Take any medication you need and, if possible, pack two sets. Place one set in your carry-on bag, in case the other set in your suitcase is lost or damaged. It can sometimes be helpful to have a letter from your doctor when carrying prescription medication.
- 7 Take your doctor's number in your wallet in the event of an emergency or if you need to obtain prescriptions while you are away from home.
- 8 Most airlines have disability policies and action plans – you can view these policies on their website, or call the airline for more information.
- 9 Take your prosthetist's phone number and email in case you need some advice while you are travelling.
- 10 Get the contact details of prosthetic facilities in the areas you are travelling to, in case of an emergency or damage to your prosthesis. If travelling within Australia, remember the Limbs 4 Life website has a national listing of prosthetic providers.

11

Consider bringing fold-up travel crutches or a walking stick if you think that the extra activities and walking may cause excessive stress or fatigue.

12

Find out about accessibility at your destination hotel. Does it have an accessible entry and shower and does it have bathroom rails? Does it have steps and, if so, how many? When researching hotels ask about their accessible options. Get the hotel to send you photos of the room if you are unsure about the access.

13

Your prosthesis will set the alarms off when going through security checkpoints at airports. Let the staff know you are wearing prosthesis before you walk through, or better still, wear shorts. Security staff will probably want to scan you with a hand-held wand to locate any metal objects. They may give you a 'pat-down' (ie. light touch of your body over the top of clothing). A pat-down should be done by someone of the same gender as you, and you can also request it be done in a private room if required. You may also be scanned for drugs and/or explosives at the time of security check.

14

Mobility aids such as walking sticks and crutches can be taken on aircraft but they need to be screened by security.

15

Some airports can be large and have long distances between where you check-in and where you board your plane. You may want to consider requesting wheelchair assistance (either in the form of a motorised vehicle or travel chair) and/or baggage assistance to get to or from a gate lounge.

16

Comfort and accessibility is important, particularly during long flights. You may consider booking an aisle seat or book a seat with more leg-room. Upper limb amputees may prefer a window or aisle seat on the same side as your amputation, that way you can collect food and beverage service with your sound limb.

17

Most lower limb amputees prefer to carry their shower/ wet legs onto the aircraft rather than pack them into checked baggage. If you plan on carrying these items onto the aircraft speak to the airline (prior to travelling) about size restrictions and let them know why you are taking them on-board.

18

If you're travelling with your own wheelchair, almost all airlines will ask you to check it in (usually at the gate lounge) prior to boarding. Some airlines won't carry electric wheelchairs due to the weight and size of the chair. If your wheelchair has power-wheels (with lithium batteries) you will be required to obtain a Dangerous Good License and take it with you when you travel. Not all aircraft will allow cartage of lithium battery power-wheels. The decision is at the discretion of the captain, so you should seek advice from the airline before you travel.

Remember, if you need assistance, just ask.



Getting the best out of your holiday



The internet, along with social media and various apps have made traveling and research ahead of your trip much easier.

There are Apps for just about everything now, from hotels, and Airbnb's to trip planners, getting fuel, campsites, along with other sites specific to the country that you may visit. There are also disability specific Apps, so do some homework and find out which Apps best suit your needs.

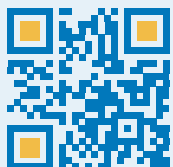
Social media sites like Facebook can be a great place to ask questions of people who have been to destinations before - what works and what doesn't. Jump onto those sites and ask away.

There are also platforms like Trip Advisor and you can also check out reviews of places on Google. Doing some homework and planning may help to make your adventure even more special.



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Join Össur's community for amputees and elevate your learning experience. Connect with other amputees, access exclusive information and resources, and stay up to date with the latest advancements in prosthetic technology. Expand your horizons with captivating user stories, event announcements, webinars, clinics, and technology updates. Embrace the future of possibilities and join our Össur Family Hub community today.



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Where in the world?

Marcela is a bilateral below knee amputee who recently enjoyed a 6-week adventure in Europe, and not the well-travelled tourist track either! Marcela travelled with her cousin, and visited Finland, Austria and the Czech Republic. We spoke with Marcela and got some handy tips and advice for people travelling with prosthetics and mobility aids.

Where have you travelled?

Czech Republic, including my hometown, Sternberk in Northern Moravia, Austria and Finland.

What made your trip more accessible?

Disability car parking was available in the towns and cities we visited and there were no problems with parking. If I was staying in accommodation that didn't have an accessible bathroom, I asked at the reception desk for a shower commode chair and found that most places had them.

Did you experience any problems and how did you overcome those?

The hotel we stayed at in Austria was advertised as 'accessible' on their website. However, there were stairs leading to the entry and no handrails. The solution offered by the staff was to walk, downhill, and enter through their cellar where we could access an elevator! I chose to use the main entrance and hold on to the wall for balance while going up the stairs!

The weather was hot, and I wasn't acclimatised coming from Winter in Australia. Access to cold water in public was a challenge in some places. In Austria, I was offered beer in a supermarket! Unfortunately, I don't drink beer...

Coming home late one night while staying with family in Sternberk, I encountered a challenge. The entrance to the home was via a steep hill and there was no lighting. The next-door neighbour and my cousin's husband put me in a wheelbarrow with a mattress for comfort and pushed me up the hill! They do say that necessity is the birth of invention! Good laughs and memories!

I found that in some towns, the streets made it difficult to walk, due to things like cobble stones, hills, uneven footpaths and big crowds. It's important to pace yourself, take regular breaks and stay hydrated.

How did you manage to get around your destinations?

We hired cars and found that most of the cars are electric, and the steering wheels were easily manageable. Most of the car hire companies don't offer cars with hand controls in the cities we visited. Check through paraplegic or disability organisations in the country you are travelling to; I managed to hire a car with hand controls in the Czech Republic. I struggled with the knob on the hand control as it was triangular and uncomfortable. My cousin made me a homemade knob which was perfect!

In some of the big cities we visited, we used 'Hop On - Hop Off Buses' and purchased 24-48-hour passes. If you can negotiate stairs and get a seat on the upper level, it's a bonus because you will see everything and can hop off any time. These buses are generally accessible for wheelchair users and have a ramp and a flat platform to get you onboard.

We went on some tourist cruises and found that boarding the boats was easy as we didn't have to negotiate stairs.

Is there anything you would have done differently?

Make sure that accommodation, whether it's hotels, guest houses or something else, is accessible. Ask if an accessible bathroom is available and ask if access to the property is easy and suitable for people with reduced mobility. Contact the accommodation directly by phone or email to ask these questions. In future, I will book my accommodation directly with the relevant hotel/property instead of using a travel agent or online booking company.

Do you have any general travel tips/travel hacks?

Take your Disability Parking permit with you if you have one. Check your destinations, as many countries allow and recognise permits from Australia.

Disability Parking permits sometimes grant the holder free entry to tourist attractions such as museums, so it's well worth carrying it with you on your trip even if you don't plan to hire a car. Carry it when you're out and about seeing the sights.

Most public toilets in Europe charge a fee for use, however accessible/disabled toilets can be used for free. Let the person in charge of the facilities know that you have a disability and save yourself about 1 Euro each time!

Where will your next destination be?

I'm hoping to see Canada on the Rocky Mountaineer and go on an Alaskan Cruise.



Office closure

The Limbs 4 Life office
will close for the
Christmas break
on Wednesday 20
December and re-open on
Wednesday 3 January.

We wish everyone
a very Merry Christmas
and a healthy and
happy New Year!



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Frequently asked travel questions

Can I get a travel bag for my wet/shower leg/s?

Yes. Speak to your prosthetic provider and ask them to give you one. Most of the major companies provide them at no cost.

Do I need to remove my shoes when travelling through a security check at Australian Domestic airports?

No. You don't need to take off your shoes. Explain to the security personnel that you are unable to remove your footwear.

Can I get assistance at airports when flying?

Yes. If you are booking your ticket online, there is usually a checkbox that you can tick – or call the airline in advance if you need help getting to the gate-lounge.

What should I do if I damage or break my prosthesis when travelling?

If you are travelling in New Zealand or the United Kingdom – Australia has reciprocal rights with both these countries. This means that you can get a minor repair done at no cost to you.

If you are travelling outside of those two countries you will incur out of pocket expenses for repairs.

Can I hire an accessible vehicle in another state of Australia?

Many car hire companies have vehicles available with hand-controls, however it is extremely difficult to find a car with a left foot accelerator.

Do I need to pay excess costs for disability equipment if my baggage exceeds the luggage allowance?

Disability equipment (within reason) is exempt from additional costs and charges.



OUR GOAL

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