

Dear Sir

I am an above-knee leg amputee. I lost my leg in 1974 because of a bone tumour in the proximal tibia. I was 16 years old. I am now 52. I am still living an active productive life as a specialist equine veterinarian. I have read and would like to strongly endorse the comprehensive submission made to the productivity commission by Limbs4Life.

Over the years I have used many individual prosthetic limbs. My basic mobility needs have been met by the basic limb components on offer through the government artificial limb scheme (and I am grateful for that), however to be comfortable and safely active I have paid for "extra" components myself. These extra components have not been sophisticated componentry such as computer-knees, but have been relatively simple (yet always expensive it seems) things such as flexible suction sockets, silicon socket liners and feet that can provide better energy return when walking. Such things are necessary, not for advanced mobility, but simply to provide basic comfort and to allow me to work in a field where mobility and stability are very important. It was a battle when I had private health insurance to get any sort of assistance for an external prosthesis from my private health insurance provider. I achieved it only on one occasion. My partner at the time pointed out that it would have been easier to get some money back for a health club membership or gym shoes than for my artificial leg!

As I get older I am more and more aware of the progressive deterioration in my back and "good" leg associated with the extra stresses and demands of my active life. It is frustrating that technological advances in prosthetics that can minimise these long-term health health problems among other advantages are not made more available under government-funded support services for amputees. I feel this not so much for myself but for other, particularly younger, amputees where comfort, mobility and support for self-esteem can be life-changing.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Racklyeft
NSW