

Dear Sir/Madam,

For too many years amputee`s have been required to function with equipment equal to that of a THIRD WORLD COUNTRY. As an above elbow amputee I am still being fitted with 1960s technology. This has been the case for the past 50 years and nothing has changed.

While I have managed to function to the best of my ability why do I need to fight the system at every turn just to achieve 'standard' life quality? I am not a 'standard' person, I want to live my life and participate just like everyone else.

More funding is needed so that amputees can obtain access to advanced prosthetic technology. That way, we can gain employment, contribute to the community, support the public purse and live life to the best of my ability. In addition, better technology would also provide better mental health. I try with the best of my ability to support my wife and family, just like everyone else. Yet I feel I am way behind the eight ball here.

Currently if any Australia amputee (funded by the public system) wants access to prosthetics other than basic standard equipment they are required to pay for it all at their own cost. This outstands me! – we call ourselves the lucky country and that beggar's belief if you are an amputee.

Funding for public patients is a joke. I feel that amputees are overlooked. And some amputee`s have to travel a great distance to get access to a prosthetic clinic, which is just another added cost upon many other costs that people living with a disability face. Don't be mistaken; I am a very proud man and I want to give the best to my family and of myself but, (and it's a heartfelt but) I find it continually difficult to do so with the current system and funding provision for prosthetic limbs. If you could see the limb I use you would agree. With no disrespect to the maker it is beyond belief.

In some countries these costs are supported by the government eg: New Zealand: do fund part of the cost for traveling to medical appointments, and in general provide a better standard of prostheses. How can New Zealand achieve this when the likes of Australia in this area is so far behind?

I want a standard, a standard that upholds the life style and employment capacity that amputees (individuals) can achieve. I want to see accountability and transparency (like New Zealand) and I want to know that everyone is given the best possible chance for contributing to their community and life as a human

being. I want to see one body managing amputee funding (with consumer participation) where everything is fair.

Surely this is not a big ask; in many countries of the Western World it is fair and it is the 'norm'.

Any Australian amputee (individual) should be able to have the choice to be treated in any other state or territory if he/she so desires without the discrepancy currently in place. Example: If one day I can afford to travel to Queensland and my arm breaks – surely my personal funding would cover this and living with an arm developed from the 60's (just like a car of the same age) one would expect it to break down. I question however; how many people in this day and age drive vehicles with technology from the 60's yet this is supposed to be my life! I can't image anyone who would be prepared to function with anything from the 60's.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Hare.