

Productivity Commission

SUBMISSION

DEAR SIR/MADAM

I would very much like to make the following points to the Disability care and support inquiry

I have read the preliminary report and I'm still very concerned that the matter of services available to the AMPUTEE section of the Australian community is still not being addressed as it should be.

1. I am an above knee amputee and the Secretary of the Mid West Branch of the Amputee Association of NSW Inc. I became an amputee 16 years ago from a farming accident and am still very active and being a volunteer support person for new and existing amputees I can speak for others as well as myself.

2. The funding for NSW amputees is totally inadequate which means that the more advanced prosthetic components are not available to our amputees unless covered by insurance companies following certain accidents. These improved components would allow active amputees to return to the work force much sooner, have greater safety and less falls, thus reducing costly hospital stays and allow A/K amputees to negotiate stairs if fitted with the quality knee components, which are available but not covered under the present system due to the lack of funds.

3. Numerous studies suggest amputees benefit greatly when prescribed a more advanced prosthetic system.

4. New amputees spend many months waiting for the swelling, at the base of their residual limb, to shrink to a size suitable for their first prosthesis. If they were supplied with a "shrinker sock" from the beginning, this would reduce the waiting time considerably. These are not available unless purchased privately, once again due to the lack of funding. Major prosthetic companies strongly recommend these to be fitted and worn by the amputee. This could also reduce the hospital stays, therefore less expense to the Government.

5. If improved and advanced components are available to the amputee it can reduce energy expenditure, have significant reduction in falls, increase mobility including walking on inclines and stairs and reduce the frustration of not being able to do these normal functions.

6. Improved prosthetic components would also allow the amputees walking speed to improve and make crossing roads much safer, reduce uncontrolled falls, which in turn can lead to fewer injuries and a reduction in long term health costs. Safety is a very important factor and can be improved by the more advanced prosthetic components.

Regards,

Win Beer

Mrs Gladys Winifred Beer.