



AMPUTEES AND ASSOCIATES
NEWCASTLE AND NORTHERN REGION INC. formed 1976 OFNI 2945
 Affiliated with Amputees Association of NSW and Amputees United of Australia

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February 26, 2003

Parliamentary Committee on Aged Care Years On

c/- Jill Hall MHR
 26 Macquarie Street
 BELMONT NSW 2280

Dear Jill

AGED CARE 40 YEARS ON

First I must apologize for my lack of preparation for the Forty Years On Meeting. I was only asked to attend at about 11 a.m. as I had come in to do some voluntary work and so was able to attend.

Having thought about the issues involved I would suggest that the under mentioned need follow up re Amputees:-

1. Anticipated growth in numbers: obesity, diabetes, circulation and accident related causes -education campaigns for a healthier lifestyle and diet.
2. More proactive blood testing advice and follow up at GP and other levels.
3. Prevention is better and far cheaper than amputation.
4. We are very concerned at the very restricted number of qualified and competent prosthetists. Private prosthetists are employing people virtually off the street, without training. Ring Henry Armstrong on 49 32 0791 for an actual experience!
5. There is, I believe only one institution in Australia providing a prosthetist's degree and that is in Victoria-a long way from home for many young people who *could* be interested in such a career.
6. Re the *quality* of work turned out by some qualified prosthetists (see attached article) from one of our members and remember that these are not isolated cases.
7. Australia ranks lowest in the Western world for the provision of prosthetic devices and services.

Allyson - Suggest check whether medical literature to be submission re Mr Condit

Er. 6/3

8. To give an example:-

A Hunter Valley amputee received an artificial leg in England after an accident. The leg fitted well and she was able to resume her nursing career and use her talents as a first violinist in the Hunter Symphony Orchestra. Since her return she has required a new leg and if the leg being made by the senior prosthetist at Westmead Hospital is unsuitable, as other Australian made legs have been, she will be in limbo.

In the meantime she is using Canadian crutches for mobility and doing what nursing services she can perform (very limited). The use of crutches is bowing her arms and making her hands rigid in a "claw" position thus affecting her ability to play her chosen instrument. It would be a great pity to see such great talent destroyed.

9. Considering the many and varied voluntary support organisations existing for specific disabilities, and all have similar problems in lack of sufficient volunteers, the aging of the volunteer force, together with costs associated with support visits to a dispersed population of disability sufferers, the provision of a community "facilitator" to help address the problems of insufficient volunteers etc. could be most advantageous.

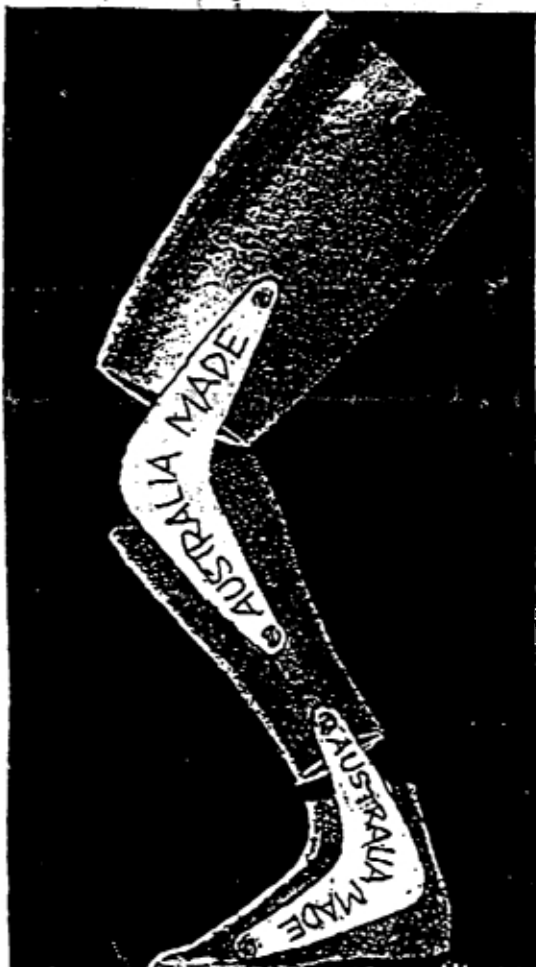
Yours faithfully,

Phil Condie

Phil Condie
Treasurer.

LETTERS 9/4/02.

Out on a limb



Why is it that Australians can win gold medals at the Winter Olympics and run the best-ever Summer Olympics but cannot make a functional artificial leg?

In late 1988 I approached the Government's limb-making centre in North Sydney. Three unwearable legs were made for me there. All had obvious pain-inducing faults (e.g. rivets not countersunk), forcing me to approach a private limb centre in Redfern. This company's badly constructed limb also contained the same defects, making the limb unwearable.

I moved back to the Hunter region and made do with older prosthetics, which had long passed their use-by date.

In 2000 the artificial limb centre attached to a Newcastle hospital supplied the most crudely made artificial leg I have ever examined in my 60 years as an amputee. The faults are beyond correction. At the present time a private prosthetic company in Islington is trying to produce a wearable leg for me.

I could go offshore, as many of our traditional and successful industries have done, and get a mail-order artificial leg from London. I have done this successfully since 1956. But the collapse of our dollar puts this beyond my limited means. Where is this society headed?

Henry Armstrong, Farley.