



**Amputees & Families Support Group Qld. Inc.
Toowoomba Sub-Branch**

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2009

amputees.org.au

From the President Hello to you all, I hope you are all happy and well.

We'll start with the bad news that Sandy has tendered his resignation as Treasurer of the group, effective immediately. This is nothing to do with the group—he just feels he is unable to do justice to the position. He is going to be very badly missed as I am sure you are all aware that he did most of the heavy lifting at all our functions. Of course this is going to put pressure on the remaining members of the committee, so the sooner we find a replacement for him the better. Thank you Sandy for a job well done!

What a night we had at the City Golf Club with Cossette and her boyfriend, her sister and her friends. Cossette and her friends danced the night away.

The BBQ on Sunday 1st March was well attended. Thanks to Paul for doing the BBQ and also to Marg and Jean for serving the food out. There were apologies from Sandy & Lynda, Terry & Wendy, Geoff & Jayne Ralph & Annie, and Barbara.

Other news:

Ralph & Annie had a car accident—they are both OK with little damage to the car. Theo Bosch is to see a specialist on 19th March. We wish him well.

That's all the news for now. See you all at the next meeting on Sunday 5th April at 10am.

Terry.

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Government Grant

Sandy and I went to Harvey Norman and bought two Toshiba laptop computers, the student edition of Microsoft Office, a Canon fax/scanner/printer and printer cable, two surge protection outlets and extended warranties, all for the budgeted \$2000.00 (\$1950 Government grant and we threw in the \$50.00 donation from the Condamine Sovereign Council (see incoming correspondence). We did well, thanks to Sandy's negotiating skills, Harvey Norman's generosity through Nathan Thomas, and Jim Tyrrell. One laptop will be used for secretarial work and record keeping—once I have mastered Windows Vista I hope to be able to chuck out the reams of paper we have. The other will be used at the meetings for things like checking out our website (and other sites) and for the Presidents emails and reports the rest of the time. The printer/fax/scanner has gone to Sandy but he is so busy with his new house he hasn't had a chance to set it up.

Social Meeting 20/2/09

Cossette invited our group for dinner at the City Golf Club. Terry, Sandy, Lynda, Paul and Jean were able to make it, and we met some of Cossette's family as well as her partner and some of his family. They were in Toowoomba mainly to see the Countdowns.

Social Meeting 1/3/09

Eleven of us (Paul, Jean, Joyce, Fred, Anne, Graham, Marg, Terry, Dallas, Cliff and Theo) met at Pechey Park for hot dogs and good company. A gold coin donation netted us \$19.00 after expenses were deducted. We had the park to ourselves, either because everyone else was still at the PCYC markets or because the day was only suitable for mad dogs and Englishmen. (The council BBQ was so hot there was almost no need to light it). Graham and Marg also provided some welcome dessert and have invited us to a social at their house now that their patio has a new cover on it.

QALS SERVICE REPORT—January 2009

I touched on QALS' problems a few months ago and they have now issued a report that quantifies a lot of what I said. Briefly there has been a massive cost blow-out due to circumstances beyond their control

1. **Migration:** new residents to Qld requiring limbs went from 25 in 1999 to 71 in 2008
2. **Componentry:** Changes in the TGA required components manufactured by overseas companies to be tested to Australian standards. This resulted in many cheaper components becoming obsolete (not worth testing) and so many prostheses became obsolete. The cost of testing was also passed on. The average cost of a prosthesis has increased by 47% since 1999 due mainly to a 74% increase in the cost of componentry in the same period.
3. **Exchange Rate:** The recent global financial crisis has caused a cost increase of 15% solely due to the falling Australian dollar

In spite of these increases QALS' budget is only given a 3% CPI increase in **some** years. An exercise done by QALS reveals that if their allocation had been factored with the above items they would be well under budget, indicating an improved service delivery by them.

Saving strategies:

1. All second/emergency/cosmetic/recreational limbs go on a waiting list and are issued as funds become available.
2. Replacements/repairs outside set time frames (e.g. 3 years per prosthesis) go on a waiting list.
3. Revenue from other sources—workmen's comp, insurance companies etc.—are being vigorously pursued.

A copy of the report is available for anyone who wants to read it.

Amputee Clinic—Discussion Paper submitted to QALS

Attached is the paper I presented at the last meeting of QALSAC. I realise I am probably at odds with a lot of the group who feel that if we find enough wrong with Baillie Henderson we can go back to the Base. It may sound defeatist but it is **not** going to happen. The feedback I have had is overwhelming in this regard. A once-a-month clinic cannot expect to have a dedicated facility and needs to piggyback on another, such as a physiotherapy gymnasium. I think there are only two Government facilities in Toowoomba (B.H. and the Base), but shoot me down if I am wrong. The clinic was moved from the Base because it was too small and patients waiting outside disrupted the activities of other wards. In addition, private prosthetists tended to overstay the time allotted to them, disrupting activities **inside** the clinic.

Terry has recently attended the clinic and has reported a vast improvement in the provision of privacy screens. He and I visited last week to photograph the accessibility problems and while we were there we spoke to some of the physios about the parking problems and they have offered to put in a word. They reminded us that the parking is unsatisfactory for **everybody**. On the subject of parking, Debra Berg of QALS recently inspected both facilities (B.H. and the Base), and pointed out that there is no longer any parking outside Cossart House, and so to visit a clinic there would involve either parking in the street or paying to go into the parking garage.

I think I also heard that the concerns we had about lack of privacy from the ‘inmates’ has also been addressed, with some restrictions being placed on their movement, but I can’t be absolutely sure on this.

The report was well received by the committee, who recommended that we send it to the General Manager of the Base for his attention and action. If nothing comes of it, Debra is going to want to know why, as the Base has a contract to provide a service to QALS.

Website

Jayne has been putting in a lot of effort updating our website. She is one of those quiet achievers who form the backbone of our group—always volunteering to sell tickets, serve coffee at the clinic, check out things that need checking out and probably doesn’t get enough recognition

A big thank you from us all.

Calendar

5th April	-	Meeting
3rd May	-	Social
14th June	-	Meeting
5th July	-	Bowling
2nd August	-	AGM
?th Sept	-	Golf Day (exact date to be confirmed)
4th Oct	-	Meeting
1st Nov	-	Social
?th Dec	-	Christmas party (date to be confirmed)

Next Meeting

As Terry mentioned, Sunday 5th April at the Bridge Club for 10 a.m. morning tea and a start soon afterwards.

Please let the Secretary have any items for the agenda by midday Thursday 2nd April. It is important to have these items before the meeting so that everyone can give them the thought they deserve. If an item is sprung in the middle of a meeting the committee then has to think on its feet which it is probably not too good at, and decisions may be too hasty.

Especially welcome would be nominations for the post of treasurer, so please think about nominating yourself or somebody else.



Paul Watkins
Secretary

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House Calls

A pipe burst in a doctor's house and he called a plumber. The plumber arrived, unpacked his tools, did mysterious plumber-type things for a while and the doctor a bill for \$600.

The doctor exclaimed, "This is ridiculous! Even I don't make that much money as a doctor!"
"Neither did I when I was a doctor," said the plumber.

How to get into Heaven

An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him, "How do you expect to get into Heaven if you're always naughty?"

The boy thought it over and said, "Well, I'll just run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until St Peter says, **'For Heaven's sake Jimmy, come in or stay out!'**"