

Date 10 August 2012

Subject Support for youth with limb deficiency and their families now available in Victoria

The trauma of limb loss or living with limb deficiency is a challenge that children and their families in Victoria will no longer have to endure alone, thanks to a new partnership between Limbs 4 Life and nib foundation.

Established with a \$550,000 nib foundation grant the Carers, Children and Youth Program will host its first consultation with the limb deficiency community this Sunday. Children and youth who have undergone limb amputation or were born with a limb difference will take part in a golf clinic while their parent carers, academics, and health professionals will come together to workshop the needs of families living with limb loss.

Limbs 4 Life Executive Officer, Melissa Noonan, said with current programs only supporting amputees aged over 18, the need for an age-specific program targeting children and their families was paramount.

"There is an increasing number of children across Australia with limb loss or difference, with around 100 children born with a limb deficiency each year alone," Ms Noonan said.

"Our peer-to-peer support program will provide this often forgotten age group of amputees with invaluable support to empower them deal with their limb difference," she added.

Already a proven success with adult amputees, the program matches new parents or young adults with volunteers with similar experiences, helping to provide knowledge and inspiration that only another person in their situation can provide.

Limbs 4 Life Board Member and amputee, Michael Tudball, understands first-hand the difficulties faced by youths with limb loss and believes the program is critical to helping them prepare for the future.

"I was born with a limb deficiency and had my right leg amputated below the knee at the age of two. I still recall a time in my early life that I presumed my leg would actually grow back and was devastated when Mum told me it never would," Mr Tudball said.

"Having a program like this when I was growing up would have helped me better understand the ongoing management and future expectations of living with limb loss.

"The volunteers can provide personal experiences, real life stories that they can relate to, while also providing practical ideas and solutions to problems and questions," he added.

nib foundation Chairman, Keith Lynch, said the program included the essential ingredients to improve the lives of young Victorian amputees, their families and carers.

"The combination of access to information and one-on-one support is an effective model for promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion," Mr Lynch said.

"We are proud to be able to assist Limbs 4 Life to bring this important program to children, young adults and their families throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria."

For more information about the Carers, Children and Youth program, please visit www.limbs4life.com

Photo/Filming Opportunity

The inaugural workshop will be held from 1pm on Sunday 12 August 2012 at the Sandhurst Club, 75 Sandhurst Boulevard, Sandhurst, Victoria. Media are welcome to attend. Alternatively, images will be available for publication.

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