

Happy New Year!

The staff at **REHABTech** would like to wish everyone a joyous and prosperous 2003

TechGUIDE supported for all areas of rehabilitation technology

At the recent Symposium on Wheelchair Safety and Standards Monitoring <http://rehabtech.eng.monash.edu.au/sympwc/index.htm> there was a lot of fruitful discussion and certainly reference to how fortunate the Prosthetics industry in Australia was to have a resource and quality management system such as the **TechGUIDE**. There was also a lot of support for the establishment of an **ASSISTechGUIDE** covering all areas of rehabilitation technology. **REHABTech** had to point out (several times) that the establishment of the **TechGUIDE** had little to do with luck and more to do with years of hard work, coordination and continuous contribution from all areas of the Prosthetics industry including practitioners, clinics, manufacturers and suppliers. It certainly shows what can be achieved through the contribution of all parties with a genuine interest in the quality management of their clients.

Well done to all who have contributed and continue to do so.

Research into exoskeletal hybrid orthotics for upper and lower limb



The December issue of the Assistive Technology Journal **Vol 62 Dec 1 2002** contains an overview of some interesting research happening in the area of externally powered orthoses both for the upper and lower limb, from John Hopkins University and MIT (USA).

(see <http://atnet.org/news/dec02/120101.htm>)

Whilst none of these externally powered orthoses are commercially available as yet it is interesting to see the development of these hybrid devices which include conventional orthotics, external power and microprocessor control even allowing voice control of the devices.

Fig.1 (left) - Control of the device is by voice. Image courtesy John Hopkins University - www.jhu.edu/news_info/news/home02/may02/grasp.html

EARLY BIRD FEE deadline extended...

Registrations for the Lower Limb and Upper Limb Prosthetic Courses in February are still available at the **Early Bird Fee** rate. Please contact **REHABTech** to secure your place at this special lower rate.

Please address correspondence to: The Editor- **Tech LINK**
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INTERNET - <http://www.monash.edu.au/rehabtech/>

REHAB Tech's Future - Your questions answered

There have been a lot of rumours circulating about the future of **REHAB Tech**...and we would like to clear some of them up!

▪ ***Is REHABTech going to close this year?***

No! **REHAB Tech** is part of the Centre for Biomedical Engineering, Monash University and neither the Unit, Centre nor the University will be closing in 2003.

▪ ***Will the DVA funding cease this year?***

The Department of Veterans' Affairs funds certain **REHAB Tech** services which are accessed widely throughout Australia. This funding will cease in June 2003. Negotiations are under way with a number of States, Territories and organisations for the continuation of some of these services to ensure a smooth transition into July and beyond. **REMEMBER this only applies to certain services.**

▪ ***Will I be able to access REHAB Tech's services the way I currently do now?***

This depends on the service. Services which are not currently part of the DVA service agreement (custom manufactured devices, wheelchair servicing, device management, legal consultations, some courses etc.) **will remain totally unchanged.** Services which are part of the DVA service agreement may change depending on what arrangements are put into place by June 2003.

▪ ***Will I have to pay for services that I currently receive free of charge?***

Due to the generosity of the DVA, many services were delivered either free or at a heavily subsidised rate to clinics, health professionals and organisations. It is not currently established whether any of the DVA agreement services which may continue beyond June will be subsidised and to whom this subsidy will be applicable.

▪ ***I'm worried about the REHAB Tech's services changing - what should I do?***

Our services are always changing to best meet the needs of our clients. We conduct frequent feedback sessions and reviews and are always modifying what we do accordingly. If you would like to show your support for services that you receive or have received in the past, feel free to forward us a letter of support. This is certainly important feedback both for us and the States, Territories and organisations with whom we are currently negotiating.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions that you have regarding aspects of our services!

Veteran's Awareness Day Acknowledgement

The staff at **REHABTech** would like to thank all members of the Limbless Soldiers' Association who attended the annual Open Day here on 26 November, 2002. The Open Day provided an opportunity for an overview of the latest P & O developments as well as feedback and socialising.

COMING EVENTS

17-21 February, 2003	Lower Limb Prosthetics Course—Melbourne Contact REHABTech .
24-28 February, 2003	Clinical Management of Upper Limb Amputees—Melbourne Contact REHABTech .
21–23 March 2003	Prosthetics, Orthotics and Rehabilitation in the New Century—NZ Fax "Prosth-TH-otics" Congress 0064 4 494 6133
29 March 2003	OPST Tasmania Open day

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