

**DRAFT: WORLD FIRST: AUSTRALIAN AMPUTEE SHOULDERS ON  
TO THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE**

**18 August 2022 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Sydney, Australia** – In a world-first, Sydney man and arm amputee, Drew Veitch, will receive a ‘helping hand’ from the orthopedic team at [Macquarie University Health](#), led by pioneering surgeon, [Professor Munjed Al Muderis](#). The surgery, termed [osseointegration](#), will give Drew a new, custom designed shoulder that allows the direct attachment of an external prosthesis through the surgical insertion of an implant directly into the bone.

Drew sustained horrific injuries in a motorbike accident resulting in his arm being amputated at the shoulder. This type of amputation makes using a socket prosthesis almost impossible as there is nothing to attach it to. Professor Al Muderis knows there’s a better way.

“Using incredible 3D modeling designed by our own surgeon, [Mustafa Alttahi](#), and team of engineers, Drew’s new shoulder will re-lay the structural foundations needed for osseointegration. With a traditional socket prosthetic being almost impossible to use, this surgery will improve Drew’s quality of life by reducing his pain, increasing mobility, and reopening a world to him where it’s possible for him to pick heavy things up, carry twice the number of grocery bags, open jars – that sort of thing,” he said. “The stuff we two-armed people take for granted.”

Osseointegration has been successfully used to restore mobility in lower limb amputees for years. One of the most exciting parts of this technology is that recipients can feel the ground beneath their “feet”, telling the difference between grass and concrete, carpet and floorboards, something a traditional prosthetic just can’t offer. There is potential for the same – and more – for Drew’s arm.

Dr. [Kevin Tetsworth](#) is one of the most experienced osseointegration surgeons in the world – second only to Professor Al Muderis. He is part of Drew’s surgical team, and his view is that this procedure offers the possibility of a [myoelectric](#) prosthesis in the future.

“A myoelectric, or thought controlled prosthesis, is not as far-fetched as it may sound,” he said. “Utilising Professor Al Muderis’ technique to incorporate targeted muscle reinnervation (TMR) into the surgery enhances the possibility that sensation can also be restored. In future this means a touch, temperature, pressure; everything a healthy arm feeds back to the brain,” he said.

Macquarie University Hospital (MUH) CEO, Walter Kmet, praised the innovative surgery, and the pioneering work of Professor Al Muderis and his team.

“We continue to invest in state-of-the-art technology and our expert clinicians are introducing new techniques to Australia, performing world-first procedures and participating in international research. Our record of surgical innovation and taking on challenging and complex cases is extensive, and we provide patients with the best treatment available” he said.

Following his accident on Australia day last year, and a range of COVID-19 related delays, Drew's just keen to get on with things.

“People have asked me how I feel about having the world-first surgery of this kind,” he said. “And to be honest, I'm surprised that with technology moving as fast as it does, that I am the first. Having said that, I am excited” he said.

“At the end of the day, I was an interstate truck driver before the accident and since, I've not been able to work. I just want to get back on the road and get my life – and my job – back” Drew explained. “The reality is that I need an arm to do this, and I know that if anyone can give me that, it's Munjed”.

A media opportunity will be available:

Saturday, 20 August 2022

Macquarie University Health

3 Technology Pl, Macquarie University NSW 2109

Please confirm your attendance with Bernadette Robinson to ensure compliance with hospital protocol.

#### **Available for interview**

- Professor Munjed Al Muderis - via Kate Reddin - 0411 055 955
- Drew Veitch - via Kate Reddin - 0411 055 955
- Walter Kmet – via Bernadette Robinson – 0404 489 150

#### **About Professor Munjed Al Muderis**

Professor Al Muderis is an Australian trained Orthopaedic Surgeon. His day-to-day work involves hip and knee arthroplasty and reconstructive surgery. Munjed holds several academic titles including Clinical Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Macquarie University, Adjunct Clinical Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University Of Notre Dame Australia School Of Medicine Sydney, Honorary Associate of the School of AMME/Faculty of Engineering and IT at the University of Sydney. Munjed teaches at Notre Dame and Macquarie Universities, trains local and international surgeons, registrars and medical students. Just recently Munjed won the 2020 NSW Australian of the Year, being recognised for his humanitarian work and contribution to medicine.

**About Macquarie University Hospital:**

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Macquarie University Hospital is Australia's first private not-for profit teaching hospital on a university campus. The hospital integrates clinical care, education and research with patients benefiting from collaboration between industry specialists and researchers. The hospital is home to more than 30 specialist clinics, state-of-the-art facilities, expert clinicians, innovative technology, and ground-breaking research. As the nation's only truly integrated academic campus, Macquarie researchers are able to collaborate with doctors and pharmaceutical industry partners to identify, refine and develop treatments that will cure or prevent illnesses economically and effectively.