Podiatrists help to maximise mobility through improvement in foot function. To do this, they need to be able to work in a range of diverse and complex settings in order to diagnose and deliver optimal treatment. Podiatrists analyse and solve complex problems, communicate their findings effectively and provide a high standard of treatment.

THE FUTURE OF PODIATRY

We are living in a time where there are significant changes occurring in the characteristics of our population. People are living longer and expect to maintain or expand their activity levels.

The range of sporting and leisure activities undertaken in our community continues to evolve and places different demands on our feet.

In response, podiatrists must adapt and re-orient their services to appropriately address the increasing and changing demands of the community.

There is a need to continue to integrate changes in technology which will significantly alter the methods by which diagnosis and management of foot and leg problems are undertaken.
The role of a podiatrist

TREATMENT
Podiatrists undertake hands-on diagnosis and treatment for a range of foot and leg problems. These range from skin lesions such as corns, callus and blistering through to management of diabetes and other chronic disease-related foot complications involving major wound management.

EDUCATION
Education is undertaken by podiatrists in their own practices and in the community through involvement with a range of groups across government, sporting, education and not-for-profit sectors.

CLINICAL BIOMECHANICS
This involves evaluation of the individual’s foot structure and walking patterns to diagnose problems with the foot and leg mechanics. These may be treated using one or a combination of options, including shoe changes, exercises, insoles or orthotics. In areas such as diabetes management, treatment can include manufacture of casts to alter patterns of pressure on the foot.

SPORTS INJURY
Podiatrists are involved in the screening, management and treatment of sportspeople for a range of lower limb and foot problems.

Career opportunities
Podiatrists are the experts in assessment and treatment of the foot and lower leg. Our program is designed to develop your knowledge and expertise so you are equipped to practise as an effective practitioner upon graduation.

Podiatrists work in:
- private practice
- public practice such as hospitals, community health, domiciliary care services and aged care
- industry including footwear, industrial safety and medical sales services
- education
- research.

Podiatrists are employed throughout Australia in metropolitan, rural and remote areas.

Pursuing a research pathway

Dr John Arnold
PhD, Exercise for Health and Human Performance Research Group, UniSA

After completing his Honours, podiatry graduate, Dr John Arnold, decided to pursue a higher degree by research after receiving a scholarship to complete a PhD. ‘Completing Honours opened up opportunities for me. I was able to explore a topic in detail and was fortunate enough to be introduced to established and enthusiastic researchers within the University.’

John’s research focussed on how the function of the musculoskeletal system is involved in the cause and treatment of injury and disease. ‘I enjoy the freedom to pursue my ideas. Knowing I’m making a contribution to advancing knowledge in my area is important, as hopefully in future we can develop better treatments for foot and ankle conditions.’

A career highlight to date, is the four weeks he spent overseas, visiting a world renowned orthopaedic and bioengineering research institute in Italy and attending two international conferences. ‘I was able to present some of my work and interact with researchers in my area. The experience was invaluable to my development as a researcher.’