

BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

MEET DAVID



1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?

4 years ago - May 2020.

2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?

It's debatable, but reaching self independence, while also accepting that my life has changed and I need to follow new goals under constraints.

3. What do you want to achieve in the near future?

I dream of contributing to the community, combining my previous skills with new awareness from the accident journey

4. What do you find your biggest challenge?

To be a supportive, normal husband overcoming some of my limitations coming from before and after the accident.

5. What is your favourite food?

Barramundi fish, grilled or steamed.

6. What is your favourite movie?

Many, but one example is *Gorillas in the mist* about Dian Fossey.

7. What is your favourite hobby?

Exercising in beautiful, natural settings. For example, it used to be cycling up between the ferns and trees on Mt Donna Buang.

8. What do you want to achieve through Brain Injury Matters?

Good friendships and a lot of learning about the post brain injury journey.

9. What advice would you give to someone with a new brain injury?

It's a long journey. Every injury is unique. You need to explore in all aspects of what is now possible, get healthcare and peer support. There are many possible pathways, so don't give up.

10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?

BIM is facing the real world, but knowing that there are many ways to assist people after a brain injury. It is a positive community.

Table of Contents

Meet a BIM Member.....	1
Regular things happening at BIM.....	3
Committee of Management Report	4
Office Report	5
PSG Program Report.....	6
Women's PSG Ad for December.....	9
Benefits of Peer Support Groups Presentation.....	10
International Day of Disability Event.....	14
Adrian's Blog	15
'Have a Say' Conference	16
Melbourne Recital Centre Relaxed Performances for 2025.....	17
Enabling Women Leadership Program	18
Transport Accessibility Strategic Framework	19
Chat n Chuckle Ad	20
Study Cert III Disability Support.....	21
Young People with ABI & Substance Abuse Research	22

REGULAR THINGS HAPPENING AT BIM

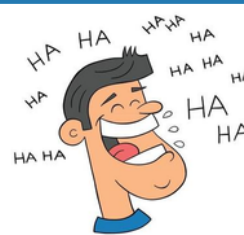
ONLINE COFFEE MORNINGS

Mondays at 11am

Open to anyone with a brain injury.

A fun way to start the week includes jokes, quizzes, and conversation starters.

Contact office@braininjurymatters.org to receive the Zoom link.



PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

- **Northcote** - Tuesdays, 10am
- **Frankston** - Tuesdays, 10am
- **Online only** - Wednesdays, 10am
- **Ringwood** - Thursdays, 10:30am
- **Footscray** - Thursdays at 10am
- **AWSABI (Albury-Wodonga Stroke & Brain Injury Inc)**
- 4th Thursday of the month, 10:30am
- **Bendigo** - Fortnightly on Thursdays, 11:30am
- **Melbourne CBD Women's Support** - 1st Monday of the month, 11am




Contact office@braininjurymatters.org if you are interested in joining a group.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE, ABI WISE APP, FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM

<https://www.braininjurymatters.org>

ABIWise App is free to download from GooglePlay and App Store



Brain Injury Matters
737 likes · 853 followers

Instagram

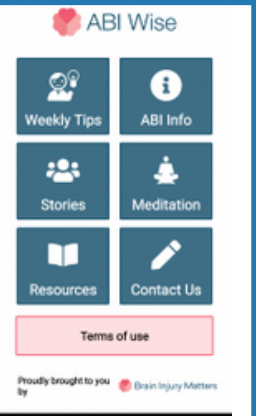
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183 posts 2,381 followers 2,301 following

Brain Injury Matters
Self-advocacy and community education run by and for people with an acquired brain injury
[braininjurymatters.org](https://www.braininjurymatters.org)



ABI Wise

- Weekly Tips
- ABI Info
- Stories
- Meditation
- Resources
- Contact Us

Terms of use

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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

Giddy Everyone,

Well, the preparations for and execution of the BIM AGM have taken over the previous weeks' energy and we think we got it right. We had speeches, guests, stars and food and it was a great celebration. Thank you to all those that turned out, both in person and online.

Our Committee of Management for the year ahead includes: Myself (Col Brokenshire) as Chairperson, Nia Giddings as Vice-chair, Peter Lester as Secretary, Roger Astel as Treasurer and the general committee members are Kelvin Lim, Anat Bigos, Adrian Jones and Nat Linke. At the AGM we farewelled Carol Franklin from the committee and Peter Persson from the staff team. Thank you to all the committee members and staff who worked hard to put on the event. Thank you also to our guest speakers, Nat, Nia and Marlena. You can read a summary of the talk later in this newsletter.

In other news. If you are looking for a particular website, or know of one that would be useful to other members or visitors to the BIM website, enter the details into the form on the links page, or please let me know via my email address of chairperson@braininjurymatters.org and we will have a look at it.

Other things that are not occurring at BIM is the news of the funding. Notification of whether we have or haven't been successful still hasn't come through, so all I can say is, stay tuned for the next edition of the newsletter and we might have something to add...till then...

Cheers ,
Col Brokenshire
Chairperson



BIM OFFICE REPORT

Another busy month in the BIM office, with lots of enquiries coming in via phone and email from new members or people enquiring about joining the Peer Support Groups; word certainly gets around! While we are still waiting for news about the NDIS grant we applied for back in August, we are learning more all the time about Foundational Supports. This is a new funding stream from the Federal Govt coming in 2025. Hopefully, this will provide ongoing funding for BIM.

We have been talking to the Talbot Rehabilitation Centre about peer mentors to go there and visit people while they are on their rehabilitation journey from ABI. We have also been talking to both Monash and Melbourne Universities about some fantastic research projects for 2025-2026: finding out more about their plans and how BIM members can become involved. We have also been speaking to Lyn from the Lotus ABI group about the great day they have planned at Ross House for International Day of People With Disabilities (IDPWD) taking place on 3rd December - it is shaping up to be an exciting celebration - all welcome.

This month, I have loved coming to visit the Melbourne Metro groups to deliver talks on gardening as therapy. I hope people have enjoyed learning about the benefits of spending time in the garden and caring for plants - it can be a very rewarding and health-promoting process! We also had fun potting up herbs to take home. Looking forward to visiting the Northcote group for more of the same early next month.

Cheers,
Georgia Tracy
Coordination Support Worker



PSG PROGRAM REPORT

We can report that our peer support groups have been having lots of fun in the last month. There have been excursions to Myuna Farm, Moonlit Sanctuary and St Kilda beach and 'Therapeutic Horticulture' sessions where we all got to plant seedlings. Our metro & online groups are averaging over 90 attendees each week - and that's not counting our regional groups.

Peer Support Group	Weekly average # attendees
Coffee Morning (online)	15.8
Women's Group	8.0
South Metro	13.5
North Metro	12.1
Brainwave (online)	10.0
West Metro	9.8
East Metro	21.2
Overall average attendees across 7 groups	90.4

Check out some photos from our groups below.

Cheers,

Andrew, Fiona, Nick, Peter, Poppy, Ross, Ryan, Sally, Troy and Yannick



South Metro PSG at Moonlit Sanctuary



Maureen & Fiona feeding kangaroos



East Metro PSG at Myuna Farm



Abbey patting the lambs



A white peacock showing off to the resident peahens

Andrew & Puja being checked out by the llamas

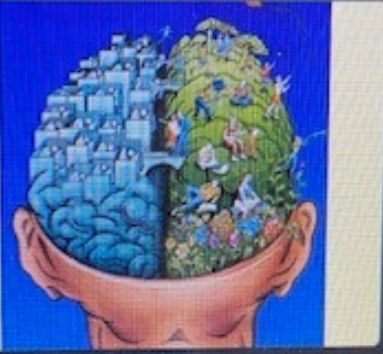


Therapeutic Horticulture with Georgia at East Metro, South Metro & West Metro PSGs



Nature & Health Theories

- ↑ Ecopsychology (Ulrich)
- ↑ Biophilia (Wilson)
- ↑ Attention Restoration Theory ART (Kaplan)
- ↑ Stress Reduction Theory (Searles)

An illustration of a human hand holding a brain. The left side of the brain is blue and represents a cityscape, while the right side is green and represents a natural landscape with trees and flowers.

WOMEN'S PEER SUPPORT GROUP

When: Monday 2 December

Time: 11am -12.30pm

What: End of year celebration lunch

Where: New Rainbow Room, Level 4
251-253 Flinders lane Melbourne

What: I will provide some catering
however, if you can, please bring a
plate of food to share.

RSVP: please rsvp with any dietary
requirements to
poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org



BENEFITS OF PEER SUPPORT GROUPS & CO-DESIGN IN RESEARCH

Below is a summary of the presentation at the AGM given by guest speakers:

Nat Linke, Brain Injury Matters

Nia Giddings, Brain Injury Matters

Marlena Klaic, University of Melbourne

Nat's presentation was about research co design

Nat said that the research project was about finding out whether the BIM Peer Support Groups are doing a good job and whether BIM members liked going to the groups and why they thought they were helpful. The research was paid for by a grant from the Melbourne Disability Institute which is part of the University of Melbourne. The aim of the grant was to connect researchers to community organisations such as BIM.

Nat talked about how our research project was “co-designed” by Melb Uni and BIM. This means that the researchers from Melbourne Uni worked with people from BIM to decide what the interview questions should be and what kind of information would be provided to BIM members who volunteered to participate. They also talked about the best ways to conduct the research and the most effective ways to ask questions so that the researchers could get accurate information. Communication challenges were overcome by emailing reminders, breaking up meetings into smaller meetings that were on similar themes, setting up clear expectations, using simple language.

Nat explained that it was very useful to have so many people from BIM interested in participating in this research. 31 BIM members took part. She also spoke about the benefits of being involved in research and encouraged people with brain injury to take part in other research projects in the future when the opportunity arises. Nat explained that it can be very rewarding for people who participate.

Many people with ABI have important insights and experiences which are useful for others to know about. That's why it is helpful when people share their ideas and experiences with researchers. It helps researchers collect information which might be useful for other organisations that are interested in doing something similar eg. setting up and running peer groups.

Nia from BIM and Marlena from Melbourne Uni talked more about this research...

Nia and Marlena explained that neither BIM nor Melbourne Uni would have been able to do this research without each other because it needed both organisations working together. It would not have been the same. Marlena said that the researchers learned a lot from talking to people with brain injuries. Nia said that being part of this research project helped her to gain heaps of confidence.

It was easy to find BIM Members to be part of the research and it was great that people were interested and wanted to be involved. There was a lot of diversity in the BIM participants – they all had ABI, but they came from different backgrounds, different ethnicities and different age groups. The researchers encouraged people to speak very freely about their experience which gave the researchers a lot of very detailed information.

BIM originally created the peer support groups, because many people with ABI experience social isolation as BIM members have reported in the BIM Annual Needs Survey.

The researchers tried to find other evidence about peer support groups, but there was no other research done in groups which are led by peers and facilitated by peers with ABI. This is what makes BIM peer support groups different. Most of the other research studies in the past were about people in hospitals, or rehab, rather than in the community. Their groups were led by a healthcare worker (different to BIM groups).

Marlena said the researchers exhaustively worked through the results to try to understand and report on what people were saying about the BIM PSGs. The results of the study are not yet published but they have some “preliminary findings” that show us that the peer groups really work to help people with ABI.

Main themes from the research are:

- People in the groups talked about having a fuller life – reestablishing meaningful engagement after their brain injury (filling out life – due to time in the PSGs, they are more engaged in things outside the group);
- Going to the BIM Peer Support Groups is their own choice;
- People like going to the groups because they are not medical or legal appointments;
- Power of joy – a positive emotional state. People get this from going to the groups. They enjoy interactions with others and this also sustains them in their lives outside of the groups;
- The groups help people to make social connections with others. They can contribute and get something out of it. People learn things by going to the groups;
- The groups help to create “normalcy of relationships” ie. Having something else to talk about – non medical;
- There are no other relationships like peer support. Peer support can’t be replaced by other interpersonal connections;
- People get more confidence and an improved sense of self. Many people also said the groups helped them with self-acceptance, self-worth and gave them a sense of purpose;
- Going to the groups, people learn about others’ brain injuries and how they can be different or the same as their own experiences: the “diversity” of brain injuries;
- What you learn from peers is not what you learn from medical staff;
- The groups help people with talking, memory and sometimes physical abilities. The groups give people self confidence and confidence in their abilities;
- Someone in the research said that the BIM PSG they went to “answered my unknown questions.”;

- Peer support groups helped people have a sense of identity – “becoming my own self again”;
- The groups provide safety, where people with ABI are at liberty to be their real selves and feel you are being truly understood;
- Sense of belonging, feeling felt, seen and heard;
- You don’t have to say too much.

Conclusion

The answers people gave the researchers helped them understand that the peer support groups are very helpful for people with ABI. The comments also helped researchers to understand the reasons why the groups are so important and enjoyable for people. This research helps BIM to know that it should keep providing the PSGs. We are going in the right direction. It also might help other organisations to decide if they should set up peer groups or use peer support for people with ABI.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABILITY EVENT

COME CELEBRATE WITH US DECEMBER 3, 2024

Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane
Melbourne Level 4
Hayden Raysmith Room
10:45am for an 11am start



International Day of
People with Disability

Please wear something
purple. Prizes for the most
noticeable “PURPLE
PROMOTOR”

SPEAKERS - SELF ADVOCATE PRESENTERS - BADGE MAKING -
NEW SELF ADVOCACY PASS THE PARCEL GAME - BANNER
CREATION - INFORMATION/GIFT BAGS

LUNCH PROVIDED SO PLEASE
LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE COMING



An event for everyone!
Support Workers/Carers
Welcome!

INQUIRIES/RSVP:
Lyn 0413239236 or
lotusgroupabi@gmail.com



Organised by Lotus Group Projects in
partnership with Ross House and COSHG.
Funded by the City of Melbourne

Sometimes, it happens...

Some things in life are beyond control. The important thing is to remember that how you respond is always within your control. Reaction is action without thinking about it- such as a laugh when something is funny. A response is action with objective thought behind it. Many people confuse the two- making a quick decision, which is in fact a reaction. If something disastrous happens, it's natural to react emotionally. The problems start when people continue to react emotionally. For example, when someone reacts emotionally to what someone else says or does. This is a natural response and totally understandable. But this doesn't mean the person should continue this course of action, especially if it's not appropriate. It's far better to think about your reaction objectively and decide if that's the correct course of action.

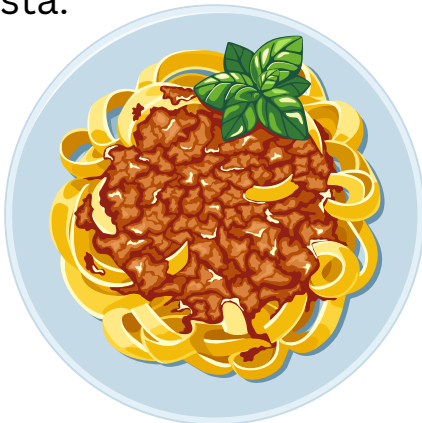
In My Kitchen...

Not Spicy Chorizo Pasta

(only spicy if you add red chilli flakes- not my cup of tea!)

Ingredients:

- Sundried tomatoes;
- Small bag spinach leaves;
- Onion;
- Capsicum;
- Bolognese sauce;
- Chorizo;
- Pasta.



Method:

- Boil water with oil and salt, cook pasta 11 minutes ;
- Chop capsicum, onion, chorizo and red pepper;
- Fry onion till brown (5 minutes);
- Add chorizo and capsicum (5 minutes);
- Add sauce;
- Simmer for 10 minutes;
- Add cooked pasta and sundried tomatoes to pan;
- Optional red chilli flakes for a bit of spice;
- Add mixture to bowl and enjoy!

A.B.I. – Always Be Improving!!

<http://www.alwaysbeimproving.net>



Having a Say Forever!

Having a Say Conference 2025

28th, 29th & 30th January 2025

Theme: Our Lives, Our Voices!

The Having a Say is a national event held each year in Geelong, Victoria. It is an opportunity for people with disability to be in the spotlight and shine, as presenters, performers, volunteers and self-advocates. It aims to give people with disabilities the opportunity to build their skills, knowledge and connections through being involved in planning and running the event.

Having a Say has been supporting people to find their voice....
to speak up, be heard and be respected - for 24 years.

It is an event where people listen to each other, not just to the speakers on stage. It is an empowering experience where people respect each other's views and opinions and celebrate their common causes and achievements.

For more information go to the [Have a Say](#) website
or register at [Humanitix](#)

2025 Relaxed Performances

Join a Relaxed Performance at Melbourne Recital Centre, designed to create a safe and welcoming environment.

About Relaxed Performances:

Designed for people who are neurodiverse, have a disability, or those with additional sensory or communication needs, Relaxed Performances welcome all audience members seeking a comfortable and less formal musical experience.

Relaxed Performances include:

- 45-minute duration with no interval
- Open venue doors
- Quiet space in the foyer
- Accompanying visual story
- Altered lighting and sound
- 50% capacity for ease of access
- Seats and cushions for audiences

10.30am: tailored for individuals and community group
12noon: tailored for school groups



Quar t z

Tuesday 18 Mar, 10.30am & 12noon
String quartet classics



Parvyn

Tuesday 29 Apr, 10.30am & 12noon
Soul fused Indian raga



Antelodic

Tuesday 27 May, 10.30am & 12noon
Smooth sax and guitar



Nobuntu

Tuesday 24 June, 10.30am & 12noon
Zimbabwean vocal quartet



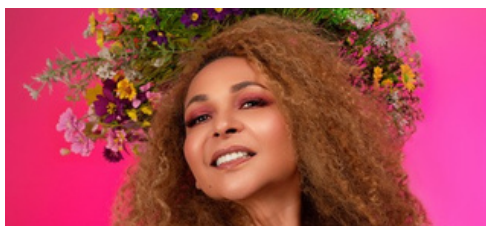
Danny Maia

Tuesday 22 July, 10.30am & 12noon
Brazilian samba and funk fusion



Eliza Hull

Thursday 14 Aug, 10.30am & 12noon
Striking singer-songwriter



Iaki Vallejo

Thursday 4 Sept, 10.30am & 12noon
Afro jazz and funk rhythms



Amelia Evans

Monday 13 Oct, 10.30am & 12noon
The A-Z of jazz standards

All
tickets
\$10!

TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Victorian Government Department of Transport and Planning have created a new Transport Accessibility Strategic Framework. It will inform the government's new Transport Accessibility Action Plan for 2025-2029. The framework aims to help make our transport network more inclusive and accessible for all, no matter their age, background, or abilities. It was developed in consultation with various disability advocates. The full framework and an easy read version can be found at <https://www.vic.gov.au/transport-accessibility-strategic-framework>

Transport Accessibility Strategic Framework



September 2024

CHAT n CHUCKLE ABI GROUP IN GLEN EIRA

Come along and join ...



Chat n' Chuckle

A fortnightly discussion group for anyone with an acquired brain injury to meet others, share news and views, discuss ideas and have fun. You don't have to live in Glen Eira.

For further information or to register, contact Council's Service Centre on **9524 3333** or email accessandinclusion@gleneira.vic.gov.au

Location:

Online or Godfrey Street Community House, 9 Godfrey Street, Bentleigh

When: 2024

Meetings are held on Fridays (during school term) from 11am to 12.30pm

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------|
| • 9 & 23 February | 8 and 22 March | 19 April |
| • 3, 17 & 31 May | 14 & 28 June | 26 July |
| • 9 & 23 August | 6 & 20 September | 18 October |
| • 1, 15 & 29 November | 13 December | |

Do you enjoy discussions, books and movies?

Do you enjoy talking about news and current issues?

Keen to meet others who feel the same?

Interested in great conversations and friendships?





Live with disability and want to study?

Work in the disability sector providing support to others.

Scan the QR code to register for an information session



Gain a vocational qualification



Support and adjustments to help you study and manage your disability provided by the Disability Employment Catalyst



Funded spots available



Learn new skills and gain a CHC33021 in Individual Support (Disability)



Your lived experience of disability will be valued



Introductions to large disability service providers

SEEKING INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ABI & SUBSTANCE USE

- Griffith University are interested in conducting an informal interviews with people about their lived experience of ABI and substance use
- This will help them with a grant application which Dr Kate Gould and Prof Jennie Ponsford at Monash University are also involved with.
- They want to speak with people who used substances when young adults (aged 14-24 years)
- You do not need to be aged 14-24 now so long as you have lived experience of substance use and/or ABI during this age period.
- The ABI does not need to have been caused by substance use.
- The interview can be done via video call or phone call.
- It will take about an hour
- They will send the questions in advance so that you have time to prepare.
- In total, it usually takes about 2 hours
- You will get remuneration of \$50/hour in the form of cash (direct transfer) or Coles gift voucher.
- If you are interested, please contact Hannah: h.lindsay@griffith.edu.au

Newsletter Contributions Welcome

Contributions by BIM members to our newsletter are always welcome.

If you have any tips, stories or experiences that would be of interest to others, please contact office@braininjurymatters.org

Brain Injury Matters is a self-advocacy organisation and we welcome all members having a voice. However, please note that opinion pieces published in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the position of Brain Injury Matters.

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