



BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER



MEET JAMES



1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?

I have had epilepsy since the age of 7. I have had multiple surgeries and have frontal lobe damage.

2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?

Being alive, being able to walk, talk & breathe. My memory is pretty good now.

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

To buy a house and a boat.

4. What do you find your biggest challenge?

Living in an ableist world.

5. What is your favourite food?

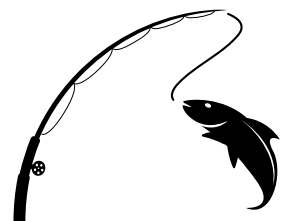
Everything. I'm on a see-food diet. See food and eat it.

6. What is your favourite movie?

I love horror movies.

7. What is your favourite hobby?

Fishing.



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

I find it a good way to be in community. It gets me out and about and communicating.

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

Think positive. Know that you will be capable of something.

10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?

A chance to get to know others who understand.



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REGULAR THINGS HAPPENING AT BIM

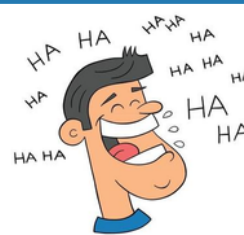
ONLINE COFFEE MORNINGS

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



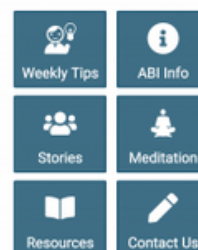
Contact office@braininjurymatters.org if you are interested in joining a group.

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

<https://www.braininjurymatters.org>

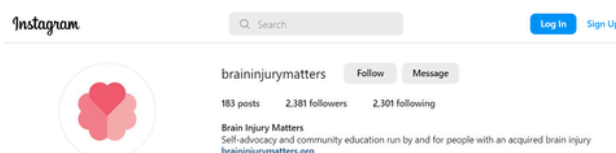
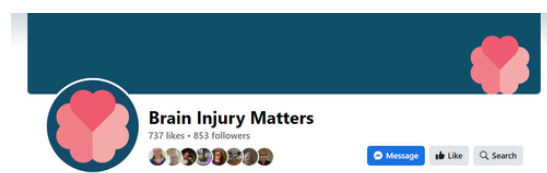
ABIWise App is free to download from GooglePlay and App Store

 ABI Wise



Terms of use

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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

Giddy Everyone

Well, coming into Christmas, it should be a time of joy and singing and dancing, but with BIM it's a sad time. We recently were informed that we were unsuccessful in the latest round of funding that we applied for. Now, before you get too jittery and despairing thinking that the PSG's will fall over sometime in the future, the funding was for the expansion of the Peer Support Groups for another 6 groups, so the current groups are safe. Please attend them as you would normally.

In other news, I attended a party at Ross House for the International Day of People with a Disability. It was a great day, with lots of speakers and presentations, celebrating everyone and their efforts for the year. BIM launched a video at the event that was created by two Monash psychology students, Hannah & Deana, and starred participants from Peers Support Groups, namely, Trang, Simon, Ivan, Steve, Leanne, Gary, Ross, Ivan, Tommy and Eve. (I think that was all of them, if I missed you, I apologise). The video goes for less than a minute and is an excellent example of why the groups exist. You can view it on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYkpK1L6-qE>

Other than that, I want to wish everyone a great Xmas and a Happy New Year and hope to see you in 2025.

Cheers ,
Col Brokenshire
Chairperson



BIM OFFICE REPORT

As the year comes to an end, so does my first twelve months at BIM! The very best thing for me about my time here so far is the warmth, encouragement, generosity and patience shown to me by the BIM committee, staff and our members. You are truly a great group of people and I admire your energy and your commitment to helping others with brain injury. Thank you all so much.

One of the highlights of recent weeks was the event at Ross House organised by Lyn, from Lotus Group, to celebrate **International Day of People With Disability 2024 (IDPWD)**. The event was hugely popular and a great success. It was lovely to see a number of BIM members in attendance. Col (BIM's Chairperson) introduced the video we made featuring some of the members of BIM groups talking about IDPWD and the why they thought the BIM peer support groups were good. It was quite a hit and great to be able to highlight the importance of connecting people with ABI to each other via our peer groups.



Photo from IDPWD gathering hosted by the Lotus Group at Ross House



Click on this image to see our BIM video for IDPWD



We need your help!

After months of waiting on an answer about NDIS funding for our peer group program and future training workshops, we finally found out last week that our proposal was unsuccessful. This was very disappointing and came as a real shock. So, we have been contacting many people to try to bring attention to this problem.

Any BIM Members, or their families or support networks, who believe the peer groups are important are encouraged to contact their local politicians to tell them about this. I have drafted a letter for BIM Members to send, either via email or hard copy, to their local Member of Parliament (MP) and I'll send the draft through to the group facilitators. Please don't wait for my draft - if you have something to say about this lack of funding for BIM, please get in touch with your local MP (either go to their office in person or send an email) and tell them why peer support groups are important and that BIM needs funding to keep them running! Everyone who is connected to BIM - we need your help with this now! Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments:

georgia.tracy@braininjurymatters.org.au

Womens Group (CBD) local Member of Parliament is:

The Hon. Adam Bandt, MP
adam.bandt.mp@aph.gov.au
142 Johnston St
Fitzroy VIC 3065



Ringwood Group (Deakin) local Member of Parliament is:

The Hon. Michael Sukkar, MP
<https://www.michaelsukkar.com.au/contact/> (this one is a website contact form where you need to type in the boxes and submit)
5/602 Whitehorse Road
Mitcham VIC 3132

BIM OFFICE REPORT continued...

Frankston Group (Frankston) local Member of Parliament is...

Ms Jodie Belyea, MP

jodie.belyea.mp@ahp.gov.au

37 Playne St

Frankston VIC 3199

Footscray Group (Fraser) local Member of Parliament is:

Mr Daniel Mulino, MP

daniel.mulino.mp@aph.gov.au

Shop 1, 25-27 Clarke St

Sunshine VIC 3020



Online Groups - Brainwave and Coffee Morning

Wherever you live, you can look up to see the name of your electorate and find contact details for the local MP wherever you live at this website: <https://electorate.aec.gov.au/>

Bendigo Group local Member of Parliament is:

Lisa Chesters, MP

lisa.chesters.mp@aph.gov.au

Corner Williamson & Myers Streets

Bendigo VIC 3550

AWSABI Group (Indi) local Member of Parliament is:

Ms Helen Haines, MP

helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au

79 High Street

Wodonga VIC 3689

Thanks for your support everyone. Have a great start to the New Year and I look forward to working with you again in 2025.

Cheers,

Georgia Tracy

Coordination Support Worker



PSG PROGRAM REPORT

Our peer support groups are really loved and valued by everyone who attends. They provide community, belonging and are unique because everyone truly understands what it's like to live with brain injury. The groups also provide a sense of purpose for us as facilitators.

Unfortunately, the NDIA has overlooked Brain Injury Matters in the last two rounds of grant funding. It is really disappointing, because we are one of the few organisations that are led by people with disability. We really need your help, (whether you're a member, support worker, health professional, family member or friend,) to advocate for the continued funding of Brain Injury Matters. Please send an email or letter to your federal MP, urging them to help us continue to make a difference in the lives of people living with brain injury.

Check out some photos from our group Christmas parties below.
They've been lots of fun.

Merry Christmas to Everyone. Our peer support groups will be back on from the week of January 6th, 2025

Cheers,

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



East Metro PSG



South Metro PSG



West Metro PSG



WOMEN'S PEER SUPPORT GROUP

When: Monday 6 January

Time: 11am -12.30pm

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



What: What have you achieved in 2024 that you are proud of?

Do you have any hopes or goals for 2025?

Please bring a plate of food to share for lunch if you can.



RSVP: please rsvp to
poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org



RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

- Griffith University are interested in conducting informal interviews with people about their lived experience of ABI and substance use
- 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

Why is it Important?

Understand the barriers faced when seeking treatment

Work together to optimise treatment approaches for people with brain injury

Inform the **design** of a **clinical trial** to test effectiveness of the new tailored treatment program

Ethical approval: HREC/2024/QMS/101173

Funded by the Metro South Study, Education, and Research Trust Account (MSH SERTA)

Investigators from Metro South Health, The University of Queensland and Griffith University



Acquired Brain Injury and Substance Use

Participants with lived experience wanted for research focus groups

We want to hear from

Individuals, family members or caregivers who:

- Have experience of acquired brain injury and substance use
- Are 18 years or older and can give consent



Queensland
Government

Princess Alexandra
Hospital
BRISBANE • AUSTRALIA



What will participation involve?

- Attending two focus groups (2hrs each including breaks)
- 8 weeks apart (in person or via telehealth)
- \$50/hr gift cards and reimbursement for travel
- Participation is voluntary - you may withdraw at any time

Scan the QR code below to indicate interest and receive more information



Please direct questions to A/Prof Matthew Gullo
Email: matthew.gullo@health.qld.gov.au
Phone: (07) 3176 5191



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



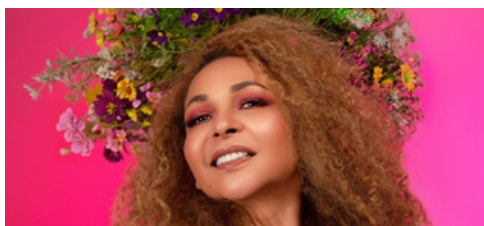
Danny Maia

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!

SOME GOOD NEWS



The University of Melbourne has been successful in its application for funding from the MDI (Melbourne Disability Institute) to co-design a research project which investigates the role of peer support in ABI Transitional Living Centres. More details as follows:

Fostering Recovery & Resilience: Peer-support for adults with acquired brain injury residing in transitional living

Project leads:

Dr Lauren Kosta, Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work, Melbourne School of Health Sciences

Dr Marlena Klaic, Senior Research Fellow Implementation Science, Melbourne School of Health Sciences

Dr Jessica Riordan, Research Fellow and Co-Lead of the University of Melbourne Neurodiversity Project, Faculty of Education

Summary:

People with acquired brain injuries (ABI) are at a high risk of experiencing social isolation and disconnection from established networks. When people first acquire a brain injury, the focus is often on physical rehabilitation and social and recreational skills. However, it can be particularly challenging to adapt to the experience of living with a brain injury, and people can often have questions including those around what their future might look like. Having access to a peer support mentor would be an opportunity to reconnect socially, and making a connection with someone who has a shared experience. The research team has partnered with Brain Injury Matters to co-design a program framework and an accessible training strategy to help train peer support volunteers with lived experience of ABI to provide social support to residents in transitional living centres.

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.

BRAIN INJURY MATTERS
Ross House, Level 4/247 Flinders Lane
Melbourne, Vic. 3000
email: office@braininjurymatters.org
www.braininjurymatters.org (03) 9639 7222

There are 21 elves
in this Newsletter.
Did you find them
all?

