

# Newsletter - March 2025



*Make sure to open the end of our newsletter if it is clipped in your email browser!*

## Meet Suranga



**1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?**

I had a car accident in 2014.

**2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?**

**6. What is your favourite movie?**

I don't have any favourites.

**7. What is your favourite hobby?**

I like to video call my family.

Having positive thinking and working hard.

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

To go back to Sri Lanka.

**4. What do you find your biggest challenge?**

I can't think of any.

**5. What is your favourite food?**

Rice and curry.

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

To come to play games and interact.

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

Positive thinking and living is the key.

**10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?**

Sharing & helping each other.

## Committee Of Management Report



**Our Committee** for this year includes Adrian, Peter (Secretary), Anat, Nia (Vice President), Roger (Treasurer), Kelvin, Col (President) and Nat (absent from photo).

Giddy Everyone

Reports that come to the office are that you are continuing to enjoy the Peer Support Groups. This is excellent. I participate in the Coffee Mornings that are held on Monday mornings at 11am and are online via Zoom. Come along if you haven't found a Peer Support group that you feel comfortable with. The Coffee Morning has lots of jokes (bad ones) and a lot of interaction.

On the subject of funding: we still haven't had any indication that any is coming our way. The possibility of NDIS funding, that we have discussed before, looks like it might come to fruition, as we have had an application for a proposal from the NDIA land in our office inbox in the last week. The timelines are very tight.

We are meant to start the project on the 7th of April. We have requested an extension on the start date and will keep you posted on the developments of this project.

Here is an extremely useful app (and I don't say this often), for people who use wheelchairs and are able to drive. Check out [fuelService](#) to find a petrol station that offers assistance, so that you don't have to exit the vehicle. The app is available at both the Google Play and App Store for free.

Cheers,  
Col Brokenshire  
President



## Office Report

So, we are now well in to 2025 and there's a lot happening in the BIM office.

With the help of SARU (Self Advocacy Resource Unit), we submitted a grant application to the Dept of Social Services (DSS). The Federal Govt. has allocated this funding for disability-led organisations to develop projects that will make the community more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. We hope to find out next month if we were successful in getting the funding.

BIM is also currently involved in the application process for another bit of funding through the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency), so we are very busy with that.

I am thrilled to let all the BIM members and supporters know that we will be

hosting a webinar next month all about Assistive Technology for people with Brain Injuries. The webinar will take place online on Tuesday, 15th April, 2025, 2pm – 3pm. Everyone is invited. See the flyer attached to this newsletter about My Technology Space to find out more. It is free to attend the webinar and we would love everyone who is interested in finding out more about how Assistive Technology may be useful for them in their daily lives. If you are interested in attending, please register via the following link <https://www.trybooking.com/DAGFN>

Cheers,  
Georgia



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## Assistive Technology Webinar

Tuesday, Apr 15,



2-3pm

Please join us for a *free* information session presented by Libby Callaway from Monash University. Libby will be presenting 'My Technology Space' - a new resource about assistive technology and telling us how it may help people with brain injuries in their daily lives.

[Register here](#)



my technology space

mytechnologyspace.org

Scan me

A digital education resource on assistive technology used for cognitive support in everyday activities after brain injury.

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**2 entry points**

**For people with acquired brain injury, their family, friends and other key supporters**

There is a part of the the website that is for people with acquired brain injury and their key supporters

- Information** (Question mark icon): For the person and their family and friends to consider goals, supports, assistive technology and outcomes.
- Checklists** (Checklist icon): Checklists to think or talk together about assistive technology.
- Tools** (Wrench icon): Tools people can explore when they are thinking about technology used for cognitive support after brain injury.
- Other resources** (Stack of books icon): Weblinks to other assistive technology resources including stories of technology use.

**For allied health professionals or other assistive technology advisors**

There is also a part of the website for allied health professionals or other assistive technology advisors

- Information** (Question mark icon): To consider the person's goals, supports, assistive technology and outcomes.
- Checklists** (Checklist icon): Checklists to use with the person to think about assistive technology.
- Tools** (Wrench icon): Tools to use with people when thinking about technology used for cognitive support after brain injury.
- Other resources** (Stack of books icon): Weblinks to other assistive technology resources for allied health professionals and assistive technology advisors; stories of technology use.

## Peer Support Group News



Our peer support groups continue to expand in size. Some groups have up to 50 people in attendance (including members and support workers). The numbers really show how much members value having a weekly catch-up with others who understand ABI. Here's what the groups have been up to in March:

- The South Metro PSG has made pancakes, been to Oliver’s Corner cafe at Frankston Pier (see photos above), had a discussion about ‘fatigue after ABI’ and had a BBQ at Tooradin Jetty;
- The West Metro group has had a planning day and a games day at the West Footscray Neighbourhood House. They have also been to a cafe in Watergardens and had Metro Trains give a presentation;
- For the East Metro group, a BBQ at McAlpin Reserve, a music trivia quiz, a visit to Sweet Lime Cafe in Mitcham and a “Brainstormers’ Got Talent” session have kept them busy;
- The North Metro Group has recently been to the Botanic Gardens and the Museum and had some great discussions about problem solving and social connection;
- Our online ‘Brainwave’ PSG has discussed ‘What have we learnt about ourselves after ABI?’, also ‘Teamwork’ and ‘Resilience’. They also had Annika from Metro trains give a presentation on ‘Rail Safety and Awareness’;
- Monday online coffee mornings have also been well attended and continue to entertain with bad jokes and conversation starters about favourite entertainers, ‘socks or barefoot?’ and what needs to exist to promote accessibility in public spaces; and
- The Women’s PSG met at Ross House for International Women’s Day and the Bendigo group continue to meet fortnightly at Lazy Moe’s.

Thank you to everyone who turns up to groups. Your presence encourages everyone else.



# Joining a Peer Support Group

Join Us

You can sign up as a member at our website by clicking the Join Us button above.

Alternatively, if you would more information about any of our peer support groups, please send an email to the appropriate group.

## Online

Online Coffee Morning – Mondays 11am [onlinecoffeePSG@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:onlinecoffeePSG@braininjurymatters.org)

Brainwave PSG – Wednesdays 10am [onbrainwavePSG@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:onbrainwavePSG@braininjurymatters.org)

## In-person

Frankston: Tuesdays 10am [southmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:southmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org)

Ringwood: Thursdays 10.30am [eastmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:eastmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org)

Northcote: Tuesdays 10am [northmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:northmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org)

Footscray: Thursdays 10am [westmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:westmetroPSG@braininjurymatters.org)

Bendigo – [co-ordinator@bnh.net.au](mailto:co-ordinator@bnh.net.au)

Albury-Wodonga – [awstrokeandbraininjury@gmail.com](mailto:awstrokeandbraininjury@gmail.com)

Women's Group – [poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org)

# Fatigue and ABI



**Fatigue after ABI** - an extreme tiredness and lack of energy, not relieved by sleep or rest.  
 Definition from Headway UK

Some of our peer support groups have been discussing fatigue – a common side effect after ABI. Our South Metro Group came up with the following table outlining their experiences and strategies to combat fatigue.

| FATIGUE   |  |
|---|--|
| GROUP MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES OF BEING FATIGUED  | TIPS FOR MANAGING FATIGUE  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigue affects people in different ways</li> <li>• For some, falling asleep is easy, for others it is hard</li> </ul> <p>When fatigued, some shared about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty getting up in the morning</li> <li>• Hard to function/think</li> <li>• Balance issues</li> <li>• Mood changes</li> <li>• Difficulty stringing words together/slurred speech</li> <li>• Memory challenges</li> <li>• Heightened noise sensitivity</li> <li>• Grumpiness</li> <li>• Hard to socialise</li> <li>• Feel overwhelmed</li> <li>• Sleep apnoea</li> <li>• Medications can make fatigue worse</li> <li>• Feel like other judge them as lazy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naps in the daytime (but not too long)</li> <li>• Having routine/structured days</li> <li>• Go to bed early</li> <li>• 12 hours sleep a night</li> <li>• Trying to drink more water instead of tea/coffee</li> <li>• Exercising</li> <li>• Turning off devices 1-2 hours before bedtime</li> <li>• Listening to music/audiobooks to rest before bed</li> <li>• Putting aside anxious thoughts by writing them down or recording</li> <li>• Asking for help when fatigued</li> <li>• CPAP machine has helped some</li> <li>• Being kind to yourself and achieving little goals</li> <li>• Having a good support team</li> <li>• Calming apps</li> <li>• Remembering that rest is the brain's way of healing</li> </ul> |



Here are some other videos/websites that might be of interest:

- Fatigue Management Video from ABI Ireland  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhxF1KgVF-0>
  - Strategies from Headway UK  
<https://www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/brain-injury-and-me/drained-by-fatigue-try-these-8-ways-to-cope-after-brain-injury/>
- Fact Sheet from Brain Injury Australia  
<https://msktc.org/tbi/factsheets/fatigue-and-traumatic-brain-injury>

## Women's Group in April

### A Visit to ACMI

**DATE:** Monday, 7th April

**TIME:** 11-12:30 pm

**PLACE:** ACMI

**ADDRESS:** Federation Square, Flinders St, Melbourne

**COST:** Free

Meet at the entrance to ACMI on Flinders Street

Please register your attendance with [poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org)



## What Self Advocacy Needs Now & in the Future

Self Advocacy Groups in Australia (like BIM) need money to survive and continue doing good work for and by people with disability. 12 Self Advocacy Groups recently got together to write a report to the Government to explain the consequences if they are not adequately funded. If

Groups close, Self Advocates with disability will lose:

- their community;
- peer support;
- a safe place to talk;
- jobs for people with disability; and
- they might feel alone and not have anyone to help them.

We want to keep urging the Government to provide ongoing (long-term) funding to BIM and other groups through a new NDIS venture called *Foundational Supports*. Feel free to contact your local Federal Member of Parliament.

If you'd like to read the report, you can find an Easy Read version and the Full Report below:

[Easy Read Report](#)

[Full Report](#)

## Opportunities to help with research

**Are you interested in completing a survey** to help us understand experiences following Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) ?

**We are seeking**



**Adults with a TBI** living in Australia

**and**

**Family members or friends** of someone with a TBI in Australia

Express your interest by completing **one** of the following

**Scan the QR code**



**Follow the link**

<https://forms.gle/utfXrWPq35T8DeZ46>

**Contact us**

tbi.rehabproject@monash.edu  
03 9426 8923

Implementing evidence-based care for cognitive and psychosocial consequences of moderate-to-severe traumatic brain injury (TBI)  
This project has been approved by The Alfred Health HREC (Project #11402)

AlfredHealth



UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA



Health Western Sydney Local Health District



THE UNIVERSITY of SYDNEY



MACQUARIE University

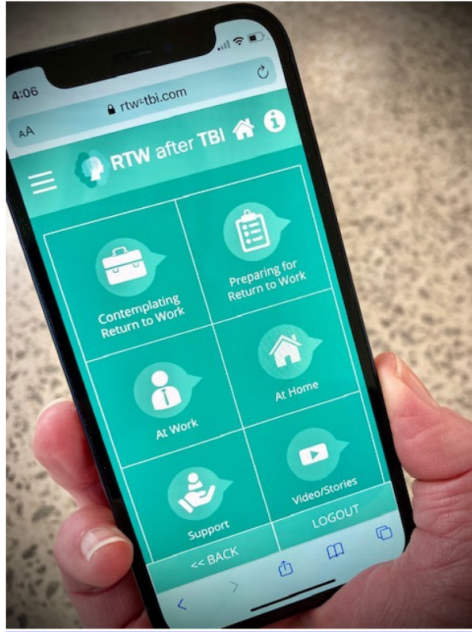


MONASH University



## Calling all individuals with brain injury who are returning to work!

Are you interested in using a new brain injury specialised return to work phone app to help guide your return to work?



Dr Lauren Libeson, Dr Pamela Ross, Dr Marina Downing and Professor Jennie Ponsford, expert clinicians and researchers in brain injury and vocational rehab, have developed a return to work after traumatic brain injury (TBI) phone app:

### The RTW after TBI app

This brand-new app contains practical information to help plan for returning to work. It includes some of the difficulties encountered when returning to employment after brain injury and strategies to manage these challenges. It also contains videos of individuals with brain injury who share their experiences of return to work.

It has been designed to provide useful information and emotional support to assist you during your return to work journey.

To determine whether the app can improve return to work experiences for individuals with brain injury, we are conducting a **clinical trial**.

We are looking for individuals with TBI who are returning to work to take part in this trial by downloading the app (assistance to do this is available) and using the app to find out information about, and support with returning to work following a brain injury. You will be asked to complete some short surveys upon commencing the study and again at 6 months. You may also be asked to participate in an interview to provide your views on the strengths and weaknesses of the app.

**If you are interested in participating, please contact Lauren Libeson**

**Email: [lauren.libeson@monash.edu](mailto:lauren.libeson@monash.edu)**

This project has been approved by the Monash Health Human Research Ethics Committee (project number: RES-23-0000-080A) and is being funded by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC).

Version 2, January 2024

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# Engagement opportunity: Attorney-

# General's Department Review into the Disability Discrimination Act

In September 2023, the Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) published a report which made 222 recommendations to government relating to how laws, policies, structures and practices can be improved to ensure a more inclusive and just society. A number of these recommendations included changes to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).

On 31 July 2024, the Australian Government published its response to these recommendations. This included accepting, in principle, the 15 recommendations related to the Disability Discrimination Act. This report can be read here:

[Government response to the Disability Royal Commission.](#)

The government committed \$6.9 million to the review and modernisation of the Disability Discrimination Act and has asked the Attorney-General's Department to lead the review of the Act.

Our department's review of the Act is considering the recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission related to the Disability Discrimination Act, in addition to further changes recommended by stakeholders to improve the experiences of people with disability.

In late 2024, the Attorney-General's Department began the review by collaborating closely with representatives from the disability community to inform our approach.

The next step will be to launch a broad and accessible public consultation process in March 2025, which will ensure that all voices are able to be heard. The government values all opinions and will invite everyone to share their views on this important reform, including the following groups:

- people with disability
- carers
- advocates
- employers
- unions
- service providers
- small business
- education providers
- academia
- the broader community

To be involved in this important review, please [sign up to our mailing list](#) to be notified when the public consultation process begins. By signing up to the mailing list, you will automatically receive updates as the review progresses.

## Other News/Events

### Voices for Change

Voices for Change is looking for new members! The group are self-advocates with acquired brain injury and experience of the criminal justice system. They raise their voices to make the justice system better for people with an ABI. To find out more, call Kelly on 0439 730 252. You can also follow their work at [voices-for-change.org](https://www.voices-for-change.org)

Look out for a new podcast they are creating that will be launched in April!



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## Voice at the Table - Free Training



You are invited to our FREE training about:  
**How to be in Advisory Groups!**



**We will talk about:**

- What is an Advisory Group?
- How do I decide which Advisory Group I want to join?
- Tips to get ready for Advisory Group Meetings
- Tips for when you are in Advisory Group Meetings



This training is 1 day long and we will:

- Chat together
- Do activities



The training is for people with an Intellectual Disability or Acquired Brain Injury but anyone with disability is welcome to join us!





### Training dates you can choose:



Monday 5th May

**Time:** 10am - 3pm

Friday 23rd May

Tuesday 3rd June



**Where:** 247/251 Flinders Ln, Melbourne VIC 3000



Lunch will be provided



You do **not** have to be good at reading or writing.

There will be **no** tests.



This training is co-designed and co-delivered by trainers with Intellectual Disability or an Acquired Brain Injury.



### How do I sign up for the training?

**Email:** [training@voiceatthetable.com.au](mailto:training@voiceatthetable.com.au)

**Phone:** 0490517148

**Website** [www.voiceatthetable.com.au](http://www.voiceatthetable.com.au)





# Heathy Discussions - Office of the Public Advocate



Office of the Public Advocate

Safeguarding the rights and interests of people with disability

## Healthy Discussions: Your right to have a say in your health decisions



Everyone has the right to have a say in their own decisions, including people with disability.

Learn about your rights in health appointments to get the support you need to make your own health decisions including:

- having information explained to you in a way you can understand
- having time and not feeling rushed
- being treated with respect.

### **More information:**

This session is presented by the Healthy Discussions Team from the Office of the Public Advocate.

It will include an:

- interactive presentation
- short video
- time for questions and answers

Please allow up to 1 hour for the presentation including discussion time. It can be delivered in person or online.

### **To book an information session:**

Email: [opa-projects@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:opa-projects@justice.vic.gov.au)

For more information: <https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/opa-s-work/healthy-discussions-project>

# Adrian's Blog

## **In My Opinion**

A metaphor is a way of describing a complex idea, by using everyday items. For example, your *mind* is very complex, so you could describe your mind as a garden. Garden of your mind. An *idea* is similar to planting a seed in a garden. A seed takes nurturing and care for it to mature into a plant. Similarly with an idea. An idea takes nurturing and care to make it become reality.

Many years ago, after my accident, I had a great deal of trouble moving my left hand. The Physio planted the idea (or sowed the seed) that if I practised using my left hand, it would improve, along with my co-ordination in general. I have nurtured this idea/seed over many years and I am currently seeing results. I will continue to do this everyday, for the rest of my life.

I want to always be improving by focusing on positive life rituals (habits), similar to a gardener nurturing and taking care of a plant. This is one example, but this concept can be related to any other idea you may have, or want to improve, or want to grow...

## **A.B.I. Always Be Improving!**

# Buddha's Bowl

## **Ingredients**

- Basmati rice;
- Medium bag spinach;
- Green beans;
- 4 Sweet potatoes;
- 3 carrots;
- A handful sultanas;
- 1 egg;
- 1 capsicum;
- A couple of handfuls mushrooms;
- 1 Broccoli;
- Salt & Pepper;
- Salmon (optional)

## **Sauce:**

- ABC sauce;
- Soy sauce;
- Oyster sauce;
- Honey



### Joke of the Month

We don't know any vegetable jokes.  
If you know any, please lettuce know!

### Directions

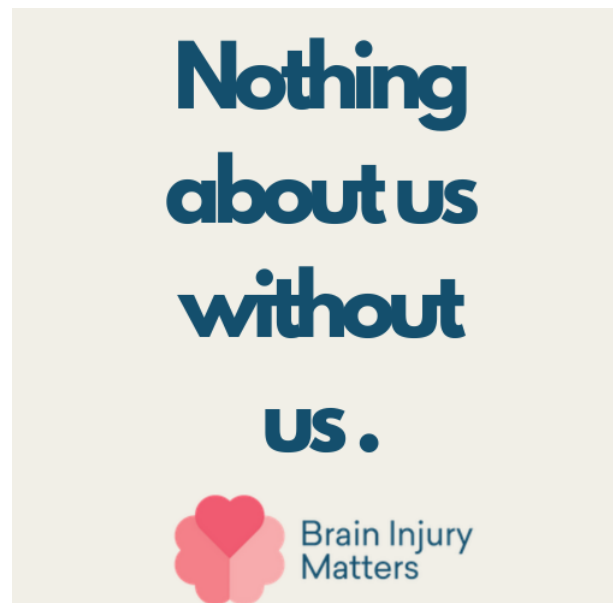
1. Cook rice.
2. Dice potatoes, add oil and S&P; put in oven tray and cook for 10 min at 180 degrees.
3. Fry egg and place aside.
4. Fry olive oil, garlic and diced onions in pan.
5. Add broccoli & carrots.
6. Add potatoes (once cooked) & rice (once cooked).
7. Add fried egg & sauce.

## Newsletter Contributions

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](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org)

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





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