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# BRAIN INJURY MATTERS

## NEWSLETTER

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### Meet Neil Cameron

Neil Cameron is one of the pioneers of the self advocacy movement for people with ABI In Victoria. He was actively involved in BIM for many years and was part of the Committee of Management. Neil continues to be part of BIM, as a mentor for one of the new peer support groups.

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

I acquired my recent injury 40 years ago in June 1980.

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

I don't know what the greatest achievement is, one of my achievements is meeting people and sharing stories.

#### **3. What do you find your biggest challenge?**

Bad memory. Makes me question my future with dementia possibility.

#### **4. What is your favourite food?**

I hate eggs, don't like chicken, will eat most other food. I don't have any particular favourite.

#### **5. What is your favourite hobby?**

I enjoy many things from veteran/ vintage cars to horticulture with Australian plants.

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

I have achieved many things that would take pages to explain from my involvement with BIM.

#### **7. What advice would you give to a person with a new brain injury?**

Your life is going to be different. It will be an exciting adventure. Don't give up hope.

#### **8. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?**

A unity of peers supporting each other.





## Quiz Questions

See if you learn something from these Coffee Morning quiz questions!

1. What color is the 'black box' in an aeroplane?
2. Where would you find the world's most ancient forest?
3. What is the capital city of Spain?
4. What is the capital city of Australia?
5. What is the capital city of Kenya?
6. The failure of which crop caused famine in Ireland in 1845?
7. What was the nickname of the World War I German aviator Manfred von Richthofen?
8. Operation Desert Shield was the code name of the build-up to action in what country?
9. What letter of the alphabet is the oldest?
10. What are you afraid of if you have siderodromophobia?
11. How many eggs does the average chicken lay per year?
12. What is the drug Aceta-minophen better known as?
13. True or False All of the planets in the solar system can fit between Earth and the Moon.

## Jokes/Riddles



- a) I found I have been happier since I changed from coffee in the morning to orange juice.
- b) What can you hold without touching it at all?

## Quiz - Answers

1. Orange
2. Daintree Forest North of Cairns, Australia
3. Madrid
4. Canberra
5. Nairobi
6. Potatoes
7. The Red Baron
8. Iraq
9. O- it's existed for more than 3,000 years
10. Trains
11. 260
12. Paracetamol
13. True- 8030km or so to spare

## Jokes/Riddles - Answers

a) My doctor explained that it's the vitamin C and natural sugars , but I really think it's the Vodka

b) A conversation

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## Updates

### **Lauren BIM Update**

Lauren has been on leave for the first three weeks of August, so her report is brief:

I took some leave to do some work around my house. I filled a four-metre skip – mission not quite accomplished, but on the way to more space and organisation. I know lockdown has been very difficult for many people. I have found I feel better on the days I have something to do. Also walks and my cat are boosts to my mood. Here is a photo of Minee, my cat companion.

I am back on board at BIM on Tuesday 24th August.



## Updates continued...

### From the BIM ILC Project

The Peer Support Groups, the focus of our 18-month project, continue to consolidate. The groups have a combined total of 118 to date. Of these, 40% attend one group only and 60% attend two. The 4 peer support groups that have been set up – which meet face-to-face or ZOOM or both – have developed organically. Groups have different programs – one has a weekly activity, the second group alternates between a discussion session and social catch-up, the third is “fun” ZOOM catchup and the fourth is mainly discussion based, held on ZOOM. Two more groups are starting in August – one in the Southern suburbs (at the Frankston Neighbourhood House on a Tuesday morning) and one in the Western suburbs (at the West Footscray Neighbourhood House on Thursday morning). Please get in contact if you want to come along! They provide a chance to share information, ideas and experiences and discuss practical ways to live with brain injury. As one group member said, “they are a game changer”.

We are also working with several other self-advocacy groups on issues like cyber-scamming and contact with the criminal justice system. Our collaboration with VALID is also strengthening with BIM members being involved in VALID activities.

Please get in contact if you have any questions or would just like a chat.

**Fiona, Yannick, Sonia, Fraser, Sally and Peter**  
**Project Team**

## **Updates continued...**

### **From the Committee of Management**

In July, the BIM Committee of Management (CoM) met in person with other Committee Members attending by ZOOM, beating the lockdown by a couple of days. Coming out of the State's 5th lockdown there is no doubt of the impact of COVID19 on us as people with ABI. But we are resilient – we have overcome many hurdles on our ABI journeys. But please get in touch with us if things are tough for you at the moment.

As I mentioned last month, our membership and social media followers are growing significantly. Our membership numbers over the past 12 months have increased from 152 in August 2020 to 217 in July 2021, a 43% increase! And the new website is proving itself – we had 300 visitors last month.

The Brain Injury Australia conference in Sydney, which was scheduled for late July, will now be held in November. Our paper will focus on our first peer support group. All our feedback from the people in our peer support groups is overwhelmingly positive – they are an important support for people with brain injury.

Importantly the Federal Government and the NDIA has dropped the idea of independent assessments of people with disability in the National Disability Insurance Scheme in response to the concerns by the disability sector. The combined efforts of many disability groups, advocates and supporters won the day.

We are putting a lot of effort into seeking funds to expand the range of resources and activities that BIM provides. I will keep you updated. For now, take care and stay safe.

**Brent Alford, Chairperson**

**3353**

Members and Followers

**21**

Years of Operation

**15**

Projects Completed

**858**

Our App Downloads



## **Updates continued...**

### **Coffee Mornings**

Popular coffee morning has been going strong with numbers in the teens and above each week. We rotate between quiz week and question and answer session with a bad joke thrown in. Hosted by Yannick Goodsir for the quiz and Brent Alford for the question and answer, there are plenty of laughs and conversations for all.

## **Peer Support Groups**

All our peer support groups have had to move online during Melbourne's lockdown. We have been discussing various topics and playing lots of games. It's been a place for group members to share how they're going in lockdown and offer support to each other.

For Brain Injury Awareness week, August 16-22, each group have done a quiz about brain injury and watched a video of people sharing their lived experience of brain injury.

### **Get-A-Head (Tuesdays 10am)**

The group filmed a short video talking about what the Get-A-Head means to them...we snuck this in prior to the latest lockdown. The group continues to catch-up by ZOOM.

### **Brainwave (Wednesdays 10am)**

In recent weeks, Brainwave have been discussing what it's like to live with multiple disabilities. We have also played 'Hangman' and 'Scattergories'.

### **Brainstormers (Thursdays 10:30am)**

Prior to lockdown Brainstormers had a mini olympics. Activities included javelin with plastic straws, mini golf, balloon boxing, cup stack and ping pong basketball. Much fun was had by all. We also had a trip to a café some delicious treats just before lockdown was announced.

## Brain Injury Friends (BIF) (Tuesdays 10am)

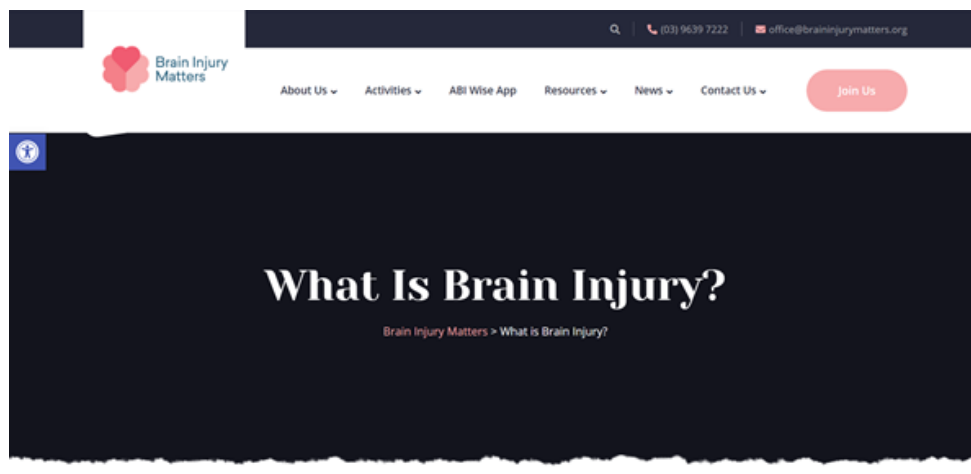
The new southern metro peer support group had our first meeting on August 3rd person at the Orwil St Community House in Frankston.

Since then we have met online and discussed how brain injury affects communication and played 'Scattergories' and 'Word Tennis'.



## Website Update

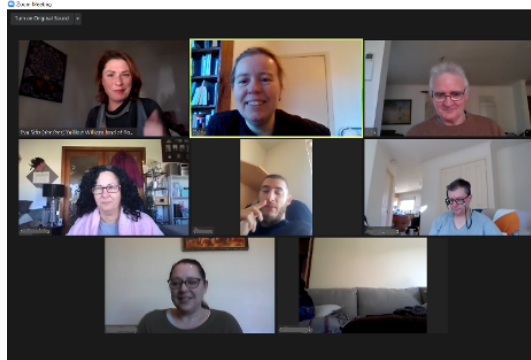
The new updated BIM Website is attracting attention. We had 313 visitors in July. We are hoping to add new content in the near future





## By Accident

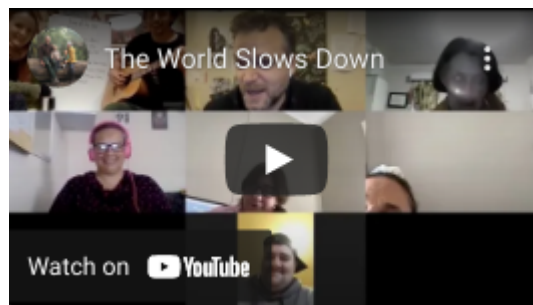
The recent By Accident workshops run by Eva Sifis in July were very well attended with 7 participants. It's always amazing to be part of a group where people with brain injury share their journeys.



## The world slows down (lockdown song)

Here is a little song that some of VALID'S Peer Action Members have been working on over our last two lockdowns. Here is the link as the video is unlisted on Youtube.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AOtz3v\\_NkY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AOtz3v_NkY)



## 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](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org)

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