

March 2022



BRAIN INJURY MATTERS

NEWSLETTER

Meet Mark Thompson

1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?

27 years ago.

2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?

Lots... I was Disabled Sailor of the Year in 2002 and I was a Commonwealth Baton Runner in a wheelchair for the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

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

To find true love, or a job.

4. What do you find your biggest challenge?

Buttons and zippers, or anything to do with my left side, but I still drive a car, a boat and a jet ski!!!!

5. What is your favourite food?

Pasta.

6. What is your favourite movie?

The Perfect Storm as I drowned for 14 minutes. (Please note we will be including a longer article on Mark's amazing story in a future newsletter)

7. What is your favourite hobby?

Ocean Swimming (see my photo below getting my wetsuit on)

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

To learn something.

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

Try and join groups that suit you. You are going to hear a lot of new jargon.

10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?

It's a way to catch up with the same people each week.

Apology

In the BIM February newsletter, a mistake was made in the spelling of our February interview person's name. We apologise to Bernadette Cheesman for this error.

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

Small groups of people with brain injury meet weekly to catch up, learn from each other and have some fun.

Current groups:

- Northcote - Tuesdays at 10am
- Frankston - Tuesday at 10am
- Online only - Wednesdays at 10am
- Ringwood - Thursdays at 10:30am
- Footscray - Thursdays at 10am

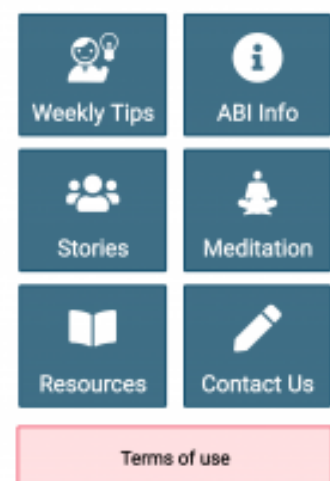
All groups are back meeting face to face following the end of lockdown. We are complying with the Victorian Government directions about how those catch ups take place.

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

Check out our Website, ABI Wise App, Facebook and Instagram

<https://www.braininjurymatters.org>

ABIWise App is free to download from GooglePlay and the App Store



Proudly brought to you by  Brain Injury Matters



Updates

PROJECT TEAM REPORT

The growth in our peer support groups continues. It is great to hear from new people joining these groups, the impact it has had on their lives in a short period of time. The fact that the groups meet weekly is one factor that group members highlight and is something they look forward to each week. All face-to-face peer support groups continue to do just that: meeting either for a discussion session, an outing, or activity (including movies and mini golf) or a social catch-up at local cafes. These decisions are made by the groups. We will also have a focus over the next months on group sustainability, supporting group members to assume the facilitating and organising roles. The project and BIM is so pleased to have Neil Cameron and Peta Ferguson drawing on their vast experience and expertise to mentor a number of the peer support groups.

Fiona, Fraser, Peter, Sally, Sonia, and Yannick



COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

REPORT

The Committee of Management is working hard to secure funding for our amazing peer support groups. This is our top priority and we developed contingency plans to maximise the sustainability of the six peer support groups that connect over one hundred people with ABI: a number that continues to grow each month. We are exploring all options.

I would like to welcome Carol Franklin onto the COM. Carol was elected at our March meeting to fill the vacancy on the committee. It is great to have her on board.

It is your last chance to provide your views on the issues that are important to you, by completing our 3rd Annual Needs Survey. Please fill in the survey. Your views and feedback help guide the work of BIM.

Cheers for now



Brent Alford
Chairperson

March 2022



BRAIN INJURY MATTERS 2022

ANNUAL SURVEY

For the past 2 years, BIM has surveyed our members and friends, to find out what their key issues are, and what BIM should focus on in the coming year. This information will also be used to support our applications for funds to operate services like our peer support groups. The survey will ask you what you think are the important issues for people living with brain injury. Your responses will be anonymous. We have used the results from previous surveys to develop strategic plans for Brain Injury Matters and to help gain funding for our Peer Support Groups project. We now have 6 peer support groups running, with plans to start others.

By completing BIM's Annual Needs Survey, you will help shape the direction of BIM and strengthen our future funding submissions, as we work together to improve the lives of people with brain injury. We would greatly appreciate you taking the time to share your opinions by doing the survey.

If you have any questions about the online survey, please email office@braininjurymatters.org

Kind regards,

Click this link to start the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WXRZN29>

Lauren's Report from the BIM OFFICE

It is hard to believe it is March already. Walking around Melbourne, at first glance the city seems to be returning to pre-Covid vitality. The rowers on the beautiful Yarra River, people flocking to the National Gallery of Victoria, flags flying along Swanston Street to promote Moomba. Sadly however, there are closed shops and more than one café closed. Degraes Street near our office is much quieter. The Big Issue seller is absent, six coffee shops not doing much business and the buzz is down to a hum.

However, in the BIM office and at the monthly Committee of Management meeting things are buzzing. Even with several staff on leave and some COM members unable to attend due to representing BIM at an International Women's Day event, seeking paid employment, or one lucky person enjoying the sun in Queensland, all current business has been attended to by the COM. We had quorum, so were able to confirm Carol Franklin as a new member of the BIM COM. Congratulations Carol. We are looking forward to working with you. Look out for Carol's bio coming soon on the BIM website.

It was very auspicious that Carol became a member of the COM on the 8th of March; 'International Women's Day'. Her appointment has created gender equity on the COM for the first time in a long time – four women and four men.

BIM's membership has almost reached the three hundred mark. Two hundred new members have joined since I began working at BIM two and a half years ago. I have enjoyed talking to a lot of you by phone; letting you know about our Peer Support Groups and other BIM services and opportunities. The feedback at staff meetings is that the Peer Support Groups are well attended and a dynamic mix of meetings and outings. BIM's strength is its members – YOU are BIM.

Phone (03) 9639 7222 anytime to speak to me:

Lauren Howe - Support and Coordination Worker (Tuesday and Wednesday 9-5)

Newsletter contribution from Adrian Jones

FOLLOWING THROUGH

In our previous chat regarding goals or vision (whatever terminology you like), we spoke about setting them. Now we can chat about following them through! Setting goals is one thing. It takes vision and knowing your priorities. Following through on them takes persistence and tenacity. People aren't naturally born with these skills, but they are developed (like a muscle).

Baby steps is the way to develop these skills- start small and, with consistency, you will achieve whatever you want.

Like eating an apple.... It would be hard to eat it all in one bite- one bite at a time is much more effective. And don't be scared about making mistakes. I make mistakes every day- I call them 'learning opportunities'

For a real life example, look at this newsletter. When I first came to Brain Injury Matters, they didn't have one. I had never started a newsletter before but, as I tried new things and made mistakes (I mean I was presented with 'learning opportunities'), I overcame these issues.

Now, we have a whole team running it- I'm just one 'spoke in the wheel'. Now it runs smoothly every month. This is a real example of how, with belief in yourself and the help of others, anything is possible. This is why I do not like the word 'cannot', as it limits belief in yourself and limits anything that others can do to help. Even using 'can't yet' is just as limiting (because it starts with can't). I think it's far better to say 'can' and 'will'. And if you are having trouble, it is far more open-minded to think 'how can I?'. This opens your mind to possibilities and allows others to help.

All it takes is practice, resilience, and an unshakable belief that you can do it. Think of this like going to the gym- for your mind.

Luck, in my opinion, is like the wind. Sometimes it goes in your favour, sometimes not. One thing that is for certain is that it'll always change.

And, believe me, we all need a little (or a lot!) of help.

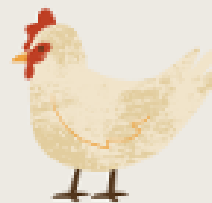
I am here for you. I do appreciate your feedback. Please email constructive criticism to adie3@hotmail.com

COOKING WITH CHEF ADRIAN

Chicken Korma

Ingredients

- 1 bottle of Korma paste,
- 4 chicken thighs,
- 1 tin coconut milk,
- 1 tin coconut cream,
- 4 potatoes,
- 2 cups of rice,
- Onion,
- Garlic



Optional: yoghurt and broccoli

1. Boil water
2. Chop onions and garlic,
3. Dice chicken and potatoes,
4. Brown chicken thighs,
5. Once water boils, cook rice for 10-15 minutes,
6. Add garlic and onion to chicken
7. Add Korma paste, simmer for 2-3 minutes,
8. Add coconut milk, cream and potatoes
9. Simmer on stove for 20 minutes / potatoes are soft
(add broccoli with 5 minutes to go)
10. Add yoghurt if too spicy. Enjoy!

Congratulations to Dylan Alcott, 2022 Australian of The Year
“My purpose is changing perceptions so people with disability, people like me, can get out there and live the lives that they deserve to live.”

Dylan Alcott, disability advocate and sportsperson, was named 2022 Australian of the Year at a ceremony in Canberra on 25 January. After the excitement of the event, Alcott did countless media interviews and backed it up by playing in the Australian Open men’s wheelchair tennis singles final.

Dylan’s sporting achievements include:

- Paralympic gold medallist in wheelchair basketball 2008,
- 15 singles tennis grand slams,
- 3 Paralympic gold medals in tennis and completing the “golden slam” in 2021 (4 grand slam titles and a gold medal in a calendar year).



Alcott’s activities off the court are just as spectacular as his sporting achievements.

After completing a Commerce degree, he now works as a motivational speaker and radio host. He has published a book “Able: Gold Medals, Grand Slams and Smashing Glass Ceilings”. He hosts a podcast “ListenABLE” and appears frequently in traditional media. He also set up the Dylan Alcott Foundation, which supports young people with disabilities to participate in sport and study, and AbilityFest, Australia’s first and only accessible music festival.

Dylan says he now has the best life, but he didn't always feel this way. After surgery to remove a tumour, wrapped around his spinal cord at birth, left him with paraplegia, Dylan says that he spent his childhood and adolescence hating himself and his disability.

He expresses gratitude for the support of family and friends during those difficult years. Inspired by disability advocates like Stella Young and paralympic athletes like Kurt Fearnley, Louise Sauvage and Danni Di Toro, he began to develop a positive attitude towards his life.

Dylan aims to use his platform as Australian of the Year to improve inclusiveness for Australians with disability in every area of life.

“We have to have greater representation of people with disabilities absolutely everywhere. In our board rooms, in our parliaments, in our mainstream schools, on our dating apps, on our sporting fields, in our universities, so that we get to live our lives just like everybody else. I promise you; you won't just enrich the lives of us, but also yourselves in the process”.

What a legend.

By Fiona

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2022!!!!!!!!!!

On the day, I participated in a zoom with SARU with maybe 8 other female advocates!!

It was really good company, good energy without ego & very supportive, as women towards other women should be. We shared stories & encouragement, which I've not witnessed in any other group I've participated in.

Larissa's MacFarlane's contribution in Hosier Lane for the International Woman's Day was discussed and you can read about Lesley Hall.

It's always great to be inspired by other strong women!

I find in everyday life women are undervalued & our voices are not heard or if they are, we are not respected. When we are older, our value to society is undervalued. And once we have disabilities, men no longer see us of value at all.



If men don't understand, they don't care to ask or learn. In the future I would love to do more projects with women.

Larissa is an artist and disability pride advocate, and the work celebrates late disability activist Lesley Hall.

To see Larissa's contribution for International Women's Day, check out this link- <https://www.wdv.org.au/international-womens-day-2022/>

To learn more about Lesley Hall visit this link- <https://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE6636b.htm>

By Helen

New Resources

The National Assistance Card

The National Assistance Card is now available for people in Australia living with brain injury.

The National Assistance Card Service hope that, in the future, the National Assistance Card will be available to all Australian's living with disability and/or health conditions.

To apply for a National Assistance Card please visit:

www.nationalassistancecard.com.au/apply

Click on the **Apply Online Now** button to access the online application.

To help you with your application we recommend you:

- Read one of the How to Apply Guides available at the link above.
You can refer to these Guides while you complete your application.
- Watch the 'How to' videos included in the application, such as the overview video. Here is the link- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZW4DmfiDwEo&t=8s>
- Ask a family member, friend or support worker to help you.

If you have any questions about the National Assistance Card, please:

- Visit the National Assistance Card Website, you may find the answer you need on the Frequently Asked Questions page:
www.nationalassistancecard.com.au/frequently-asked-questions
- Contact the National Assistance Card Team via:
 - Email: info@nationalassistancecard.com.au or
 - Phone: freecall 1300 242 827

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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

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