

April 2022

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# BRAIN INJURY MATTERS

## NEWSLETTER

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### Meet Ermal Cenko

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

5 years ago.

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

Being able to walk and talk again.

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

I want to lose weight and have good health.

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

It is having a conversation with someone.

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

Anything spicy!!!!

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

*Rambo.*

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

Playing soccer.



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

Meet new people and have fun!

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

Be patient, do not give up and remember you are not alone!

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

Having friends that understand me and don't judge me.



# 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](mailto: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

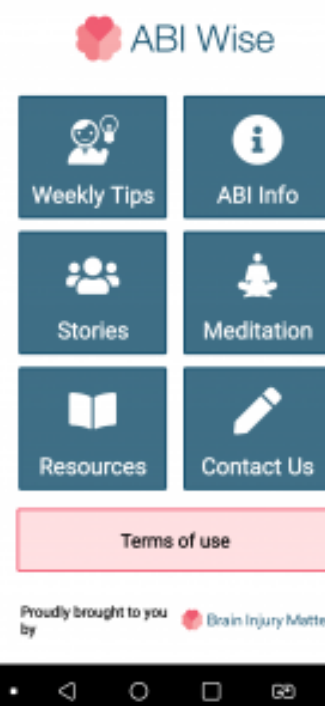
All groups are back meeting face to face following the end of lockdown. We are complying with the Victorian Government directions about how those catch ups take place.

Contact [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto: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



## **Updates**

# **PROJECT TEAM REPORT**

Greetings from the project team. The strengthening of the peer support groups (PSG) continues; with ever-increasing numbers of people joining; and the capacity of the groups to be more self-sufficient gaining momentum. For example, group members in some peer support groups are facilitating the groups, rather than project staff. Groups are becoming more self-directed, choosing activities and discussion topics. These include visiting the Melbourne Museum, bowling, and games day and discussion topics like personal relationships. As part of BIM's belief in the importance of PSG, we are gathering data. To that end, we will seek funds from the Melbourne Disability Institute and its community-based Research Scheme to investigate the impact of peer support groups on people with ABI.



## **COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

### **REPORT**

There are lots of things have been happening, but the main focus has been on funding the peer support groups. We have been seeking funding to ensure that these very important groups continue and remain well supported.

On behalf of the CoM, I want to thank those people who have contacted their State and Federal members of Parliament about the funding challenges that we face.

We are pleased that we will be meeting with the state Office of Disability about the work that BIM does and the need for core funding to be a voice for people with ABI and provide services and activities that build the skills and confidence of people with ABI to self-advocate. We are also pleased that the Department of Social Security is looking at its ILC program and project funding. All funding options continue to be explored.

BIM is determined that the peer support groups will continue to operate, as they have a network of over 130 people across the six groups.

Other activities include:

1. The continuing partnership with Cyber**AB**ility holding scamming workshops with Peer Support Groups to address on-line scams.
2. The launch of BIM's disaster preparedness checklist and video (see the article and photos in this newsletter).
3. Providing lived experience input to the Employ Me project which is developing on-line resources to assist people with disabilities gain employment,
4. and the finalisation of the Annual BIM Needs Survey, with results to come soon.



## Report from the Office - Lauren

The first half of the month I was on leave. I had a lovely Staycation in the Melbourne CBD. The Comedy festival was a highlight.

The second half of the month has been a time of working with BIM members and the BIM Committee of Management on their campaign to gain more funding for BIM.

As many of you know, the ILC team will have to finish up their employment with BIM unless there is an extension in funding for the ILC project.

There may be an impact on the running of the Peer Support Groups. BIM volunteers are stepping up to practice running the groups. The groups will not end, when the current ILC funding ends, however there could be changes. The Peer Support Groups are an essential part of BIM: everything possible is being done to minimize any disruption.

Many BIM members have written letters and visited their local MPs to gain support for more funding. On Thursday 21st of April, BIM COM secretary Nia and I attended a Webinar hosted by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing called **Inclusive Victoria - Co-design and disability**. Several of the speakers and the Victorian Minister for Disability spoke about how essential it is to employ people with disability in government and on projects.

Also, BIM Chairperson- Brent, Vice-Chair Col, and BIM staff met with senior members of DHHS to discuss how BIM needs to have a higher level of continuing funding. BIM needs this to continue to employ current staff with an ABI and to maintain the high level of services to members. There is a big demand to expand its services into regional Victoria. BIM is also keen to start working with people earlier: when they leave the hospital after their injury.

## Articles- Pandemic Pets



I currently have 3 pets: rescue dog 5 years old and 2 rescue cats, 17 years old.  
Animals are great company ... totally non-judgemental, offer no difference of opinion (unless food is late!) ...and always want to be close.  
For ABIs, they give they give another sense of responsibility and another thing to think about!

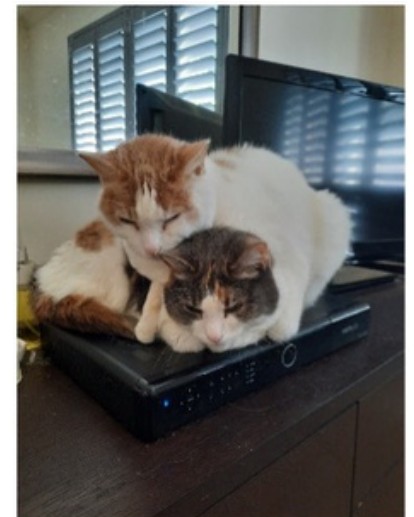
Move us beyond just us.

I take my dog to a nearby "off lead area" Everybody knows him and, by association, me!

I have made so many local friends through him!

I worry that, as "real life" returns, animal shelters will be overwhelmed. Many people got pets for company during lockdown. Pets are a lifetime commitment!

Many years ago, I taught at the Zoo, so know a bit about animals.



A local Wildlife Rescuer asked if I could rehome a Tropical Green Tree Frog - she was delightful.  
Unfortunately, she died of natural causes at the age of 26 ... she had been with me for 5 years ... broke my heart!!!

Companion animals are SO worthwhile if you're prepared to meet their needs and wants. Not as a toy or fix for loneliness!

Manda Laurence

# Articles-

## BIM Disaster Preparedness Project

### Being Better Prepared!

People with disability, including those with an ABI, are more badly affected by disasters such as fires, floods, and storms. Being better prepared can mean the impact of disasters is reduced or avoided. Thinking ahead of time and having a plan, means you know what you are going to do without having to think about it.

With assistance of the NAB Foundation, Brain Injury Matters has produced a film of people with ABI who have experienced natural disasters and developed a checklist to help people with ABI be better prepared for a disaster. The video and checklist were launched by the BIM chairperson, Brent Alford at a workshop on 11th April. For more information go to the BIM website





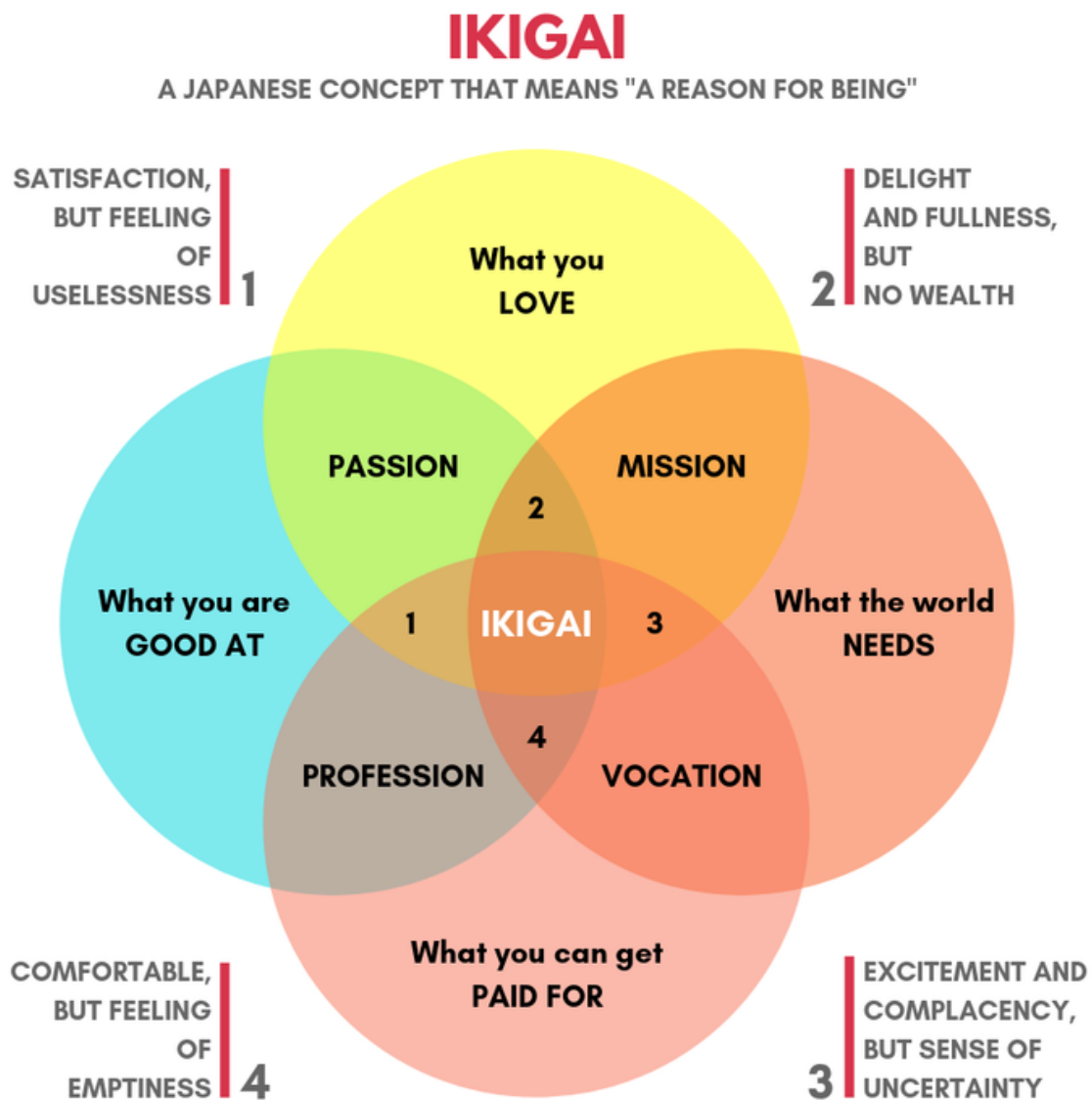


*Some pictures from the workshop*



# Newsletter contribution from Adrian Jones

Many people are searching for meaning in life. There are many ways of finding it, but this is my favourite;



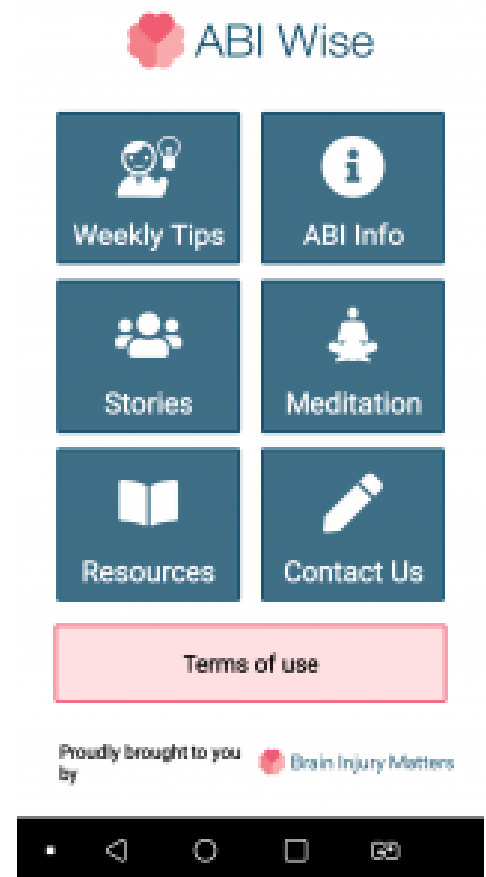
## Information about BIM Wise App

Don't have the app on your smartphone? Well, it is about time you did, as the next update is about to be released. With that will be fixes and a new module. Cyber**AB**ility will be on the app and will be provide information on how to be wary of the problems of romance scams, as well as others.

To download the ABI Wise app click on the link below for your smartphone.

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/abi-wise/id1453507116>

Google <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.braininjurymatters.abiwise>





## Photos from various Group Outings



*Brain Injury Friends -  
BBQ at Frankston Pier*



*Brainstormers -  
making chocolate balls  
and playing chess*

## Photos from various Group Outings continued



*Brainstormers - Ten Pin Bowling*



## Photos from various Group Outings continued



*Western suburbs peer  
support group games day at  
the West Footscray  
Neighbourhood House*



## 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](http://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](http://www.nationalassistancecard.com.au/frequently-asked-questions)
- Contact the National Assistance Card Team via:
  - Email: [info@nationalassistancecard.com.au](mailto: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](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org)

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