

November 2022



---

# BRAIN INJURY MATTERS

## NEWSLETTER

---

### Meet Peter Lester



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

I had a stroke about 3 years ago at home. It was about 3 am in the morning ... legs didn't move. I just went back to bed and woke up in a hospital ward.

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

I think getting back into my hobbies and my community involvement. Also riding a push bike. I have trouble with pedals, but I have an electric bike. I also think being able to drive gives me the freedom to go places. It took me 8 months to get my licence back.

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

The big thing at the moment is model railways. With a couple of other guys, I am building a layout in the garage. It's been a weekend experience for a couple of months now. I will post a photo of my work.

---

Ross House, Level 4/247 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne, Vic. 3000  
email: [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org)  
[www.braininjurymatters.org](http://www.braininjurymatters.org) (03) 9639 7222



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

I think the biggest challenge is to be motivated to go places, especially during the winter months ... hmm keeping the place clean is a challenge, but I do employ a cleaner.

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

I like to try all food, but I like a Korean lunch at a local bakery which is nice and easy and very local just a bike ride.

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

I think I watched too much Netflix during the lockdown, but I have been watching Star Trek movies which I had never done before, not a movie, but I do like many of the Apple TV shows.

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

I love photography and model railways is a big hobby I get involved in.

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

I just enjoy meeting people and maybe get involved in the office side of things, or even helping in leading a group.

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

I think the one advice I'd give is not to give up and keep active as you can - whether that be a hobby, join a group, or even get involved in a Brain Injury Matters group. Like they are fantastic for members like myself.

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

I think it's about getting people together and sharing experiences and workers also sharing their experience. It's also about knowing what's available for people like myself in the community.

## 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:

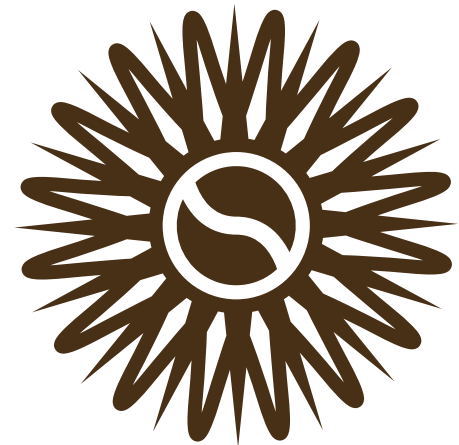
- **Northcote** - Tuesdays at 10am
- **Frankston** - Tuesday at 10am
- **Online only** - Wednesdays at 10am
- **Ringwood** - Thursdays at 10:30am
- **Footscray** - Thursdays at 10am
- **Gisborne** - Last Wednesday of the month

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

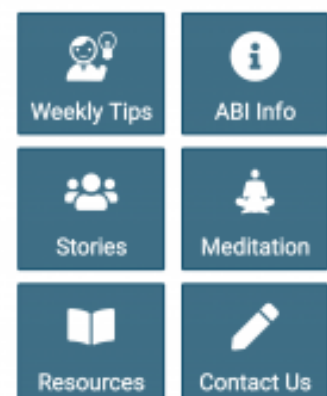
<https://www.braininjurymatters.org>

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



# MORNING COFFEE

 ABI Wise



Terms of use

Proudly brought to you by  Brain Injury Matters



## Updates

### **Committee of Management (CoM) Report**

With BIM being advised of an 18-month funding extension for our peer support groups, we are taking the opportunities to provide feedback to the Federal Government's review of ILC (where we receive peer group funding from). This funding is under the ILC funding, part of the NDIS.

There is a more detailed report on our Annual General Meeting, held on the 3rd of November, in the newsletter. But I wanted to say it was great to meet again at a face-to-face AGM. There was terrific vibe and really great to have Neil Cameron, a past president of BIM and legend in ABI self-advocacy, as our guest speaker. We were also very pleased that so many members (40!) took part in the election of the four Committee of Management members.

Finally, we continue to be proud and pleased with the number of people attending our peer support groups – new people continue to join. This reinforces the important role that peer support groups can play in peoples' lives. Peer groups are a real example of the importance of the lived experience of people with a disability.

So till next time.... continue to be the self-advocates I know you can be.

Talk soon

Brent

Brent Alford  
Chairperson

## Project Report

The peer support groups all continued to meet face-to-face and online during November. There was a wide range of activities – including a visit to Cranbourne Gardens, making a terrarium, a BBQ at the Studley Park Boathouse, fishing at a trout farm, and a coffee at a favourite café – and discussion topics – how to get the best out of a visit to the doctor, an object that brings you joy, family relationships and planning the 2023 calendar.

Always fun is Monday online Coffee Morning that has considered such burning questions as ‘is a hot dog a sandwich?’, ‘What tv show or movie you would recommend to watch?’ and “are you a spender or a saver?” The Peer Groups are also planning their end-of-year catchup for December.

We are also commencing the work with the Melbourne Disability Institute to investigate the impact of the peer support groups. A working group is meeting and working with the two academics from Melbourne University to plan the work which will run for the next 12 months or so.

Take care till next month.

Fiona, Fraser, Nick, Peter, Rhino, Sally, and Yannick



## **Lauren's report from the Office**

Members of the BIM Committee of Management and BIM staff, all attended a training day on Monday, 21st November. It was Mental Health Training by a company called Genu. Check out this link to their website <https://www.genutraining.org.au/>

The trainer's name was Nic and he was fantastic. It was an in-person event at Ross House. What a difference it makes to be in the same room and interact. We all feel a lot more competent to work with people at BIM who may be doing it tough. We are first-aiders, not mental health professionals, hopefully BIM members feel comfortable to chat to us about these issues.



A big day is coming up on December 6th – Planning Day. It will be the first step in developing a new 'Strategic Direction' document for BIM. The plan will set goals for the next 3-5 years. All Members will be involved once a draft is produced. If you want to be involved from the very beginning, please contact the office at [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org) for further details. Your input is valued and encouraged.

BIM has some exciting opportunities for people with ABI coming up in 2023. People will be asked to work with a project team on an exciting new project. People will be compensated financially for their time.

---

## **Lauren's report from the Office continued**

One of the leads on the project is Eli (Elinor). She is a clinical neuropsychologist, registrar working at Monash-Epworth Rehabilitation Research Centre, within the Turner Institute of Brain and Mental Health.

Eli is an early career researcher. She has recently completed her PhD in the area of traumatic brain injury and intimate relationships. She has strong academic and research knowledge in the area of ABI and relationships.

BIM have put together a project team that includes Col, Carol, Ryan, Peter, and me, together with Kate and Eli from Monash. We have started work and will announce all the details soon. Huge 'Thank You' to Bruce and the initial funding application writing team!

The BIM office will be closed over the Christmas break. Our last day is Thursday 22nd of December and we re-open on Thursday 5th January.

*Cheers Lauren*



## Helpful websites from Col

<https://www.thefield.jobs/Job/>

The Field is here to revolutionise employment.

We exist to knock down employment barriers and connect people with disability who want to work with organisations that want to hire more inclusively.

<https://cleanup.pictures/>

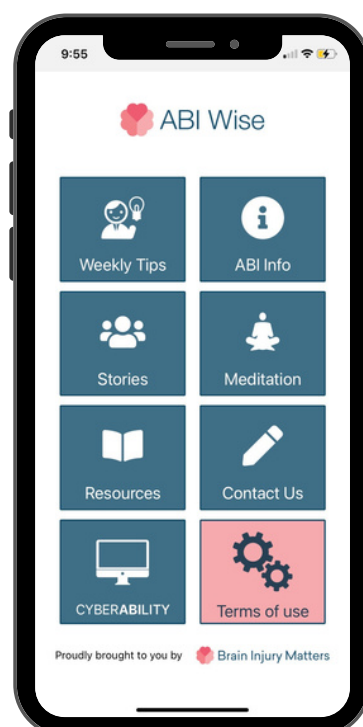
Remove objects, people, text and defects from any picture for free..try it, it's really cool...

## ABI Wise App

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>





## Contribution from Adrian

### HABITS, NOT JUST GOALS

It's very popular at the moment for people to set goals, however I think goals are overrated. It is important to have goals, but in order to achieve those goals, it's best not to focus on them. I focus on my daily routines. A routine, once I practice it becomes a habit. If I commit to a goal for 21 straight days, after three weeks the pursuit of that goal should become a habit. Once I've established the habit, you continue to do it for another 90 days. If I can keep something up for three weeks and then ninety days, it should become a permanent lifestyle change. I write my routine on a calendar. I have found that it is also a good idea to tell someone close to me (such as a carer) about it, so they keep me accountable.



---

# Contribution from Adrian

## Pasta salad recipe

### Ingredients- salad

- 3 cups uncooked pasta,
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes,
- 1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas (drained and rinsed)
- 2 cups arugula
- 1 cup cucumber
- 1 cup feta cheese,
- 1 cup basil leaves,
- ½ cup parsley,
- ½ cup mint,
- ¼ cup toasted pine nuts

### Ingredients- dressing

- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 tablespoon dried Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ¾ teaspoon sea salt

### Method

- Start by preparing the ingredients. Slice cucumbers into thin 'half moons' and halve cherry tomatoes.
- Tear basil leaves, mince parsley and chop mint.
- Crumble feta and mince garlic cloves.
- Toast pine nuts and in a fry pan until golden brown – approximately 2-5 minutes.
- Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil. Prepare pasta according to package directions.
- Meanwhile, make the dressing. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, mustard, garlic, herbs, red pepper flakes and salt.
- Drain the pasta, toss it with a little olive oil (so that it doesn't stick together) and let it cool to room temperature. Transfer to a large bowl with the tomatoes, chickpeas, arugula, cucumbers, feta cheese, basil, parsley, mint and pine nuts. Pour the dressing and toss to coat.

# Surviving the Festive Season

At Brainwave this week, we talked about the challenges and joys of Christmas time. Everyone had their own challenges, but some of the common themes were:

- getting tired and overwhelmed.
- feeling lonely.
- missing people who have passed away.
- dealing with family tensions.
- feeling like others don't understand our needs.

So we'd like to offer you this Christmas Survival Kit to help you!

## Christmas Survival Kit

Dear BIM Members,

Here are a few things to help this Christmas:

- **Crayons** - to colour your day bright and cheerful.
- **A Mirror** - to remind you how unique and special you are.
- **A Candy Cane** - to remind you that you have others to lean on.
- **Bubbles** - to blow your worries away.
- **A Kit Kat** - to remind you to 'take a break'.



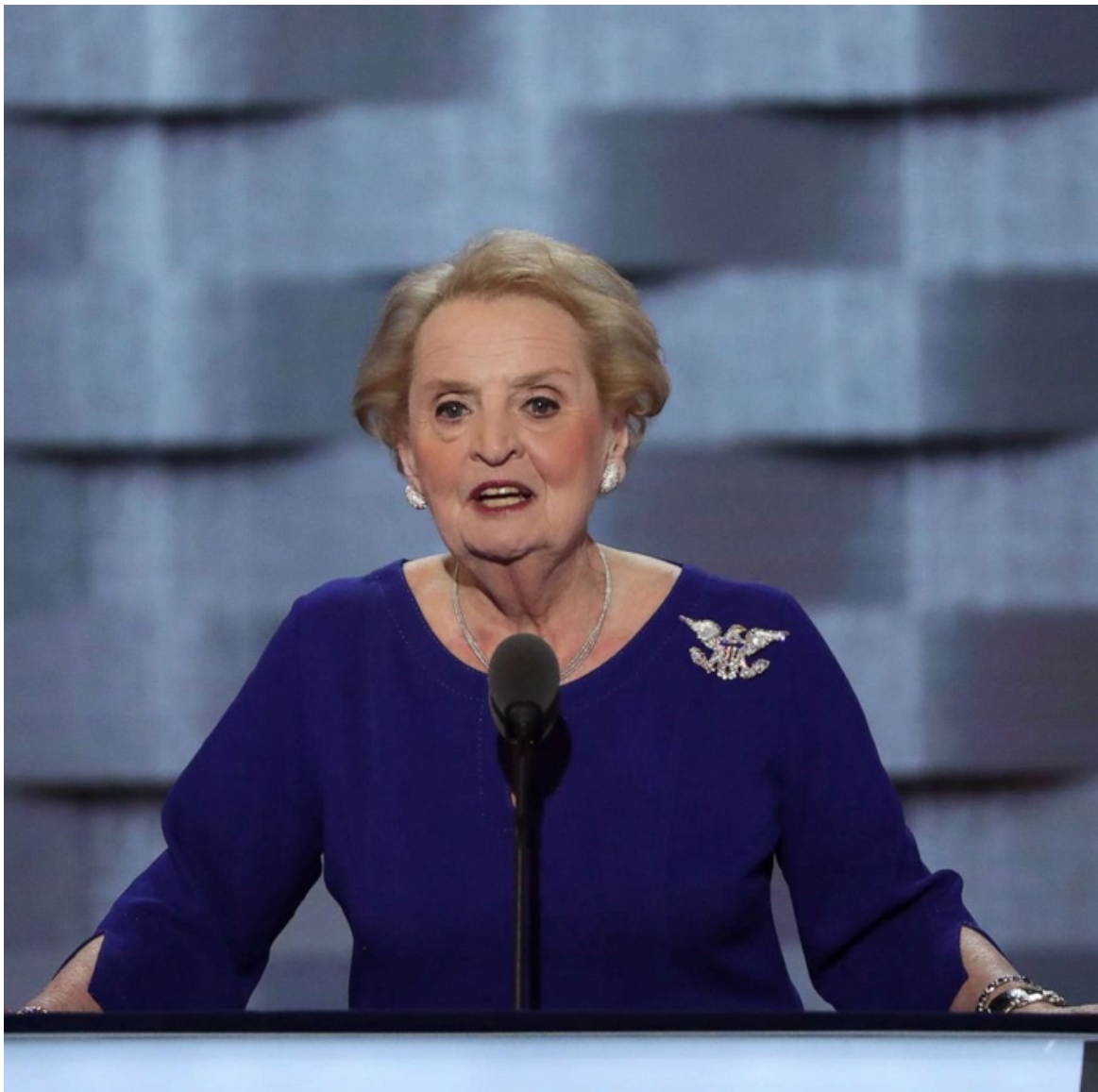
From Brainwave Peer Support Group

## Quote from Coffee Morning

Monday's coffee morning 21st November ended with a quote, which made an impact to those attended and led to great conversation with each voice having an impression in their space to be heard and listened to.

"It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent".

- Madeleine Albright



## Photos from various Peer Support Group outings

Here's some photos of the Brain Injury Friends (Frankston) Peer Support Group making terrariums.

The group also had a visit to the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens.



**Brainstormers**

Here's some photos of the Brainstormers Peer Support Group after going fishing at the Australian Rainbow Trout Farm in Macclesfield. It was a fun day out with everyone catching a fish!



# Photos from Northern Peer Support Group - BBQ at Studley Park



Nic and others  
around the BBQ



Carmela provided the  
meat and then did the  
cooking. Amazing!



Meredith and  
Kelly at Studley  
Park

November 2022



Hard to believe it was 14  
degrees but a lovely catchup



November 2022

# Northern Peer Support Group



A session that brings pure joy.  
These are Nic's light sabers -  
great fun!

November 2022

---

# Photos from Western Peer Support Group at West Footscray Neighbourhood House





John's birthday celebrated by  
the Western Peer Support  
Group

## My experience at BIM's AGM

I was invited to Brain Injury Matters AGM on the 3rd of November. This was a special occasion since this is the first in person AGM since 2019.

The meeting began with an acknowledgement of country from Aunty Jane.



Brent Alford (President) gave his report. He briefly discussed the success of the Peer Support Groups. Due to this success many people have formed connections. Confidence and skill levels have also increased due to peer support groups. There are currently 6 groups that meet weekly, 2 are online. There is a 7th group that meets in Gisborne that meets monthly led by BIM Committee member Carol Franklin.

Over the past year BIM has grown considerably. We have over 3000 members and followers. BIM has started delivering training to disability service providers based on a lived experience ABI point of view.

Roger Astell (Treasurer). He spoke about the ILC project finishing at the end of June. BIM was awarded an extension till the 31st of December.

Peter Persson (Project Manager) announced that the Committee of Management will be adding four members. Anat Bigos, Carol Franklin, Adrian Jones & Kelvin Lim.

Guest speaker Neil Cameron (past president of BIM) legend in ABI self-advocacy. Spoke about the history of United Brains.



The lunch provided was great. There was sushi, pizza, salad, apple crumble and cake.

The AGM provided a great opportunity to reconnect with others and even meet people for the first time in person.

For those who couldn't attend in person, they joined in on Zoom.

The first AGM I attended I was there in a volunteer capacity. This time I was there as a guest.

My overall experience at the AGM was a positive one. I think events like the AGM are essential as they provide guests with a good snapshot of what BIM does.

Written by Evan, BIM Newsletter Volunteer

---

## 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.

The National Assistance Card can:

- help cardholders communicate their unique areas of difficulty and the assistance they may need.
- give cardholders greater independence.
- assist cardholders to feel more confident in everyday social situations.
- provide peace of mind for families and carers.
- enhance community understanding of disability and health conditions.
- support positive community interaction with cardholders.

Every National Assistance Card is personalised.

The Card includes a cardholders:

- first and last name
- photo
- date of birth
- nominated contact person's name and phone number
- (A cardholder can choose if this person is contacted)

Also printed on the Card:

- up to five areas of difficulty chosen by the cardholder
- (for example: communication, fatigue, memory, processing information)
- a QR (Quick Response) Code providing access to additional written information (written or personalised video) that the cardholder has chosen to include.
- the Police Assistance Line phone number.

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>

[v=ZW4DmfiDwEo&t=8s](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:

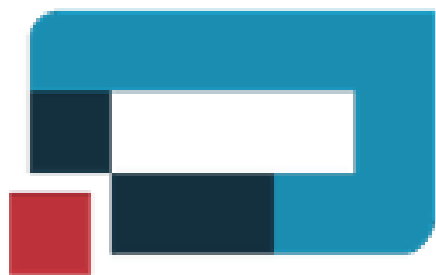
- Visit the National Assistance Card Website, you may find the answer you need on the Frequently Asked Questions page:

[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



**NATIONAL  
ASSISTANCE  
CARD**

## 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)

---

**Ross House, Level 4/247 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne, Vic. 3000  
email: [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org)  
[www.braininjurymatters.org](http://www.braininjurymatters.org) (03) 9639 7222**