

# BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

## MEET ANDREW HUYNH



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

My name is Andrew Huynh. I sustained my Acquired Brain Injury 8 years ago. I was involved in a motorcycle accident involving a truck, so I can tell you the injuries I obtained were quite severe. I was a sensible rider, wearing full motorcycle gear, but strangely enough the collision with the truck sent my helmet to fly off my head, resulting in me sustaining an ABI.

I must thank the team of doctors and many therapists at Epworth Healthcare for treating me during my 3 years of rehabilitation following my accident. I must say without the support and guidance of Epworth I would not be here today to tell my story.

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

I was unable to drive for 4 years after my injuries, as sustaining an ABI and also having various mobility issues limited my ability to drive safely on road and I had lost my full driver's license. After 4 years I was able to get the Doctor to approve me to undergo a full driving rehabilitation program. I was able to drive safely and I passed all the driving requirements to get my automatic license back.

Following 1 year of driving an automatic car, I became aware and familiar with

obstacles drivers may be faced with everyday on road. The doctor felt confident I was safe enough to drive on road and allowed me to undergo a manual driver license examination. The greatest achievement I've made post-accident is being able to restore my full driver's license.

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

I would like to travel to Germany with my Family to visit my Uncle and Aunty. I would like to see what the culture and life is like in another country, as I've never been to Europe before. I feel it's something I need to do in my lifetime, so I've been steadily saving up for the past 2 years.

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

Life itself is a challenge, even more when you sustained an ABI and have post – accident injuries that limit you, never the less I do not like to use them as excuses in my everyday life. I take every day as it comes, challenging myself to achieve new goals, big or small, and achieve them daily.

**What is your favourite food?**

There are too many to list. Every culture has an exquisite delicacy that must be eaten. If I had to choose one favourite, it would have to be a delicious bag of jam donuts at American Donut Kitchen on the weekend at Queen Victoria Market.

**What is your favourite movie?**

I'm a fan of the John Wick series: some fantastic stunt work, bullets shooting and well-choreographed martial arts fight scenes always makes for a relaxing Friday night movie.

**What is your favourite hobby?**

I like to go for the occasional long distance walk in the big city of Melbourne. There are so many attractions and restaurants to visit. I usually catch the train and get off at North Melbourne station and start my walk to Lygon Street, Melbourne University, Carlton Gardens, Collins Street, Melbourne Central/Emporium, Flinders street, Crown Casino and finish at Docklands/Costco.

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

I like to meet and make new friends with others who have had to endure the life difficulties similar to me, and to learn and understand how they go through life with these limiting factors.

# 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
- **Albury/Wodonga** - Last Thursday of the month 10:30am



Contact [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org) if you are interested in joining a group.

## CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE, ABI WISE APP, FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM

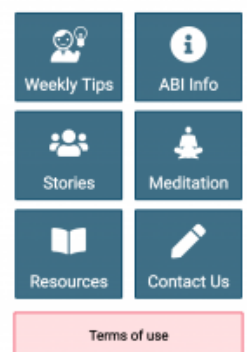
<https://www.braininjurymatters.org>

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



## **WANTED - TECH SAVVY VOLUNTEERS**

If you have time and tech skills, we are looking for people to volunteer to help keep our website and ABI Wise app updated. Please contact [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org) if you are interested.



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# COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

Hello Everyone

Hopefully you have had a bit of downtime over summer.

The Committee are looking forward to 2023 with lots of things happening, both new and old.

We are about to conduct our **Annual Needs Survey** for the fourth year. The survey gives you as members, to tell us about your priorities as someone with an ABI. The survey also asks what BIM should focus on in the coming year. Last year's survey identified "relationships" as an important issue. This prompted BIM to apply for and succeed in getting funding to develop workshops to assist people with ABI in this area.

Of course, we remain excited about our **Peer Support Group Program**, following a further 18-months funding from the NDIS. And there will be new peer support groups in regional areas. More details will follow. We are also getting into our teeth into the collaborative research with the University of Melbourne, which is looking at the impact of peer support groups on people with ABI. The aim is for the research to be completed by end of this year.

Following the State election late last year, Lizzie Blandthorn has been appointed as the new **Minister for Disability Services**. We congratulate Minister Blandthorn on her appointment and have written to her outlining some of the challenges of acquired brain injury, and some solutions.

Talk with you next month. In the meantime, stay well.

Brent Alford  
Chairperson



# ILC PROJECT REPORT

Happy New Year everyone.

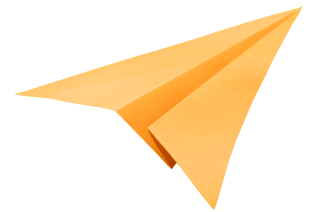
The Peer Support Group project team has started 2023 refreshed and looking forward to continuing our support of the seven peer support groups. The project team is also looking forward to the regional peer support groups being developed and/or supported by BIM.

The peer groups had a short break over the Christmas/New Year period and started back in early January. Group activities have included BBQs, boardgame days, sharing food from people's cultural heritage, a visit to the Zoo, fish and chips in Williamstown, a visit to Jells Park, paper plane making, a picnic at Cruden Farm and pancake making to name a few!

It is a sign of the maturity of the groups, and increasing confidence and skills of individual group members, that four of those group members are now taking a facilitating role in three of the peer support groups.

Cheers

Andrew, Fiona, Fraser, Nick, Peter, Peter, Ryan and Yannick



## ***JOB VACANCY***

**Brain Injury Matters is looking for a dynamic person to co-lead our peer support group program. As a self-advocacy organisation run by and for, people with an ABI, this role is open only to a person with ABI. The job is posted on Ethical Jobs.**

**Applications close on the 5th of March 2023.**

**To apply go to:**

**<https://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/>**





# LAUREN'S OFFICE REPORT

Hi Everyone

I hope you all had a great holiday break. BIM has been up and running this year since early January, however this is the first newsletter for the year.

A lot has happened in the last two months.

A new project has been taking up a lot of my time. I am employed half a day more a week by the project, on Wednesdays. I am available to answer general office enquires on Monday and Tuesday, but Wednesday I am only doing project work.

The funding body will do a public announcement about the project soon. I will provide you with more information on the project next month.

Other things that have been great -

## Networking

- I went with Brent and Nia to connect with **Peninsula Community Legal Centre** (PCLC) <https://pclc.org.au/> at Frankston. It was arranged for the legal centre to do training for BIM at PSG meetings. The first one is on housing legal issues.
- On the same day, I went with members of BIF - Frankston PSG, and members of the COM to **Willum Warrain** Aboriginal gathering place in Hastings. <https://www.willumwarrain.org.au/> We had a cultural immersion tour and spoke to Peter, the CEO, about Aboriginal people who come to Willum Warrain who have an ABI. Peter said people with ABI are given a culturally safe place at their organisation. Peter said he felt there were many ways of working, in both our organisations, that we shared.



*Visit to Willum Warrain Aboriginal Gathering Place in Hastings with BIM Members*

# LAUREN'S OFFICE REPORT CONTINUED...

## Networking continued...

- Nia and I went to Footscray and met with Jacques Boulet from **Borderlands**. [www.borderlands.org.au](http://www.borderlands.org.au) Nia and I gave a presentation to five Victoria University third year- Social Work students, about working with people with ABI and BIM, they were on student placement at Borderlands. Jacques gave us a tour and said he wants to work with BIM in future, on mutual projects.

## Some of the usual stuff that has happened

Reports done:

- Charities Commission report;
- DFFH yearly report on AGM, COM appointments and finances; and
- DFFH monthly report for February.

## Great news - Employment of new staff

BIM employed a worker to support the Project Reference Group on a new project. She is a very experienced worker, who has the right skills to work on this project.

Cheers

From Lauren

## ***BRAIN INJURY MATTERS - NEEDS SURVEY 2023 COMING SOON***

**In the next few weeks you will receive an email inviting you to participate in the Brain Injury Matters Annual Needs Survey.**

**We encourage everyone to take part because it helps us focus our activities on what's important to our members and also helps us to gain much needed funding.**

# PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

## Brainstormers PSG - Ringwood



At Brainstormers we had a taste test challenge!

We compared the look and taste of Woolworths brands versus more expensive brands of crinkle cut chips, sultanas, licorice, choc-chip cookies and rice crackers. We also had a go at distinguishing between the tastes of Coke, Pepsi and Coke Zero. It was a lot of fun!



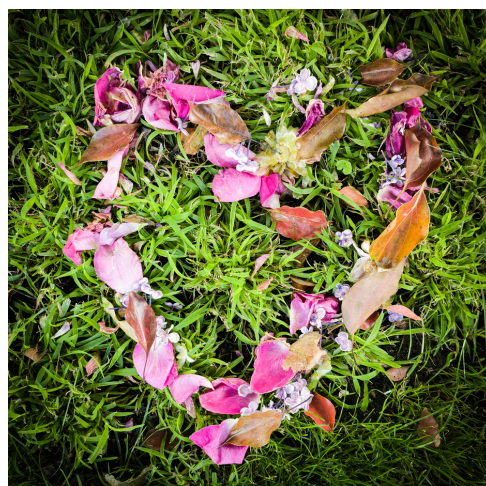
Brainstormers also had a great time at Jells Park. We went to the cafe and then had a wander down to the lake



## Brain Injury Friends PSG - Frankston



Brain Injury Friends had a great visit to Cruden Farm, former home of Dame Elizabeth Murdoch.





**Get-Ahead PSG - Northcote**



Board Games  
Day at  
Jika Jika  
Community  
Centre





## Think-Alike PSG - Footscray



Think Alike recently had a trip to the Pancake Palour and a Cultural Day at West Footscray Neighbourhood House. In the group we have people from 8 different cultures - China, Australia, Italy, Sweden, Vietnam, Ireland, Poland and Ethiopia



# RESOURCES - AUDIO BOOKS

There are ways to access audio books, podcasts, and books on-line at no cost. Here are some resources that the Jika Jika Community Centre told us about.

## **Vision Australia Library**

The Vision Australia Library opens up a world of audio and braille books, newspapers, magazines and podcasts for people who are blind, have low vision or live with a print disability.

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/library/>

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/library/collection>

## **Librivox**

This, like the other sites, is free and to get access to the greatest number of books, a search engine like Google could be set to .com rather than to com.au because the site is set up for US copyright.

<https://librivox.org/>

## **Project Gutenberg**

Project Gutenberg has started to add audiobooks but in the past added mp3 files for many books along with other file formats including OCR (Optical Character Recognition). Pdfs that could be read by software on most laptops & possibly phones.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/>

[https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/search/?query=audiobooks&submit\\_search=Go%21](https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/search/?query=audiobooks&submit_search=Go%21)

<http://self.gutenberg.org/> - a rather eclectic collection of mostly self-published recent books

## **The Internet Archive**

<https://archive.org>

[https://archive.org/details/audio\\_bookspoetry](https://archive.org/details/audio_bookspoetry)

<https://archive.org/details/podcasts?tab=collection> - A truly amazing array of podcasts

**State Library of Victoria** with their NAXOS collection

## **Naxos Spoken Word Library**

Access from home with State Library membership





# CONTRIBUTION FROM ADRIAN

## *In My Opinion...*

### **New Year, new format...**

This is the first blog of the year. 2022 was 'all about you'- 2023 will be 'all about me'! I will keep this blog focussed on me...Not what I've done, but how I've done over the last 35 years. Not in an egotistical way, but rather an informative way.

Hopefully you can take something away...

Perspective is important. A.B.I.- Always Be Improving. Always be kicking goals- not just having them. Momentum is created after a few goals have been kicked. My goal at the moment is to finish this blog. Once this goal is kicked, I'll find another one. I try to keep kicking goals, and keeping up momentum. Everyday. From first thing in the morning, every morning, I'm thinking how I can improve. It doesn't always work, but I keep trying.

I find that the hardest part is starting. The first couple of goals are always the hardest, but they are the ones that create momentum.

An example is this newsletter. When I started, I was doing a few articles. But it was all by myself. I was putting it out a few times a year- but people wanted it every month! I found it challenging to do that by myself (note that I said 'challenging' and not 'impossible')- so the lovely volunteers at BIM were there to help. There is always someone there to help. Independence is doing things by yourself. Interdependence is getting things done with others.

I have just joined a new gym. It's a very good place- so many things that it's challenging to get everything done. But it is in getting everything done that is the challenge: my goal is to go 3 times (at least) every week. It's going to be difficult, but each time I go creates momentum- so that the next time will be easier. I may not go 3 times each week, but I will always try.

Over the last 12 months, I've been recording my expenses. I wrote a budget and have been able to stick to it. And I've been able to show that I can manage my expenses and therefore have more control over my finances.

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

# ADRIAN'S RECIPE

## CHICKEN KORMA (makes about 5 meals)

### 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  
Broccoli  
Yoghurt



### METHOD

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 or until potatoes are soft.  
(Add broccoli with 5 minutes to go.)
10. Add yoghurt if too spicy. Enjoy!

# MY HOLIDAY AT HOME

## BY ANAT BIGOS

Often when holidays are nearing, everyone excitedly discusses their upcoming holiday plans. The mere act of speaking about that may often be more exciting than the holiday itself! I know that from my experience.

On the other hand, hearing all about other people's upcoming plans can be quite irritating, especially when I don't have any!

I have discovered that it's possible to enjoy one's holiday, without going away. I never believed this, previously thinking that it is extremely dreary to spend the entire holiday at home. However, nowadays, I can see that this is completely not the case!

While various members of my family were travelling overseas these holidays, I remained in Melbourne.

Meeting up at the beach with friends was one of my highlights. Being in a relaxing place, while spending time with some interesting people, in brilliant weather, next to the calming waves, was an awesome experience for me!

Luckily, there were skydiving sessions at this time & I really enjoyed this scene, since I could simultaneously feel the thrills of the sky divers while I was safe on land!

Another highlight for me, was the time I spent while cooking for a dinner party. Since I was in such a good mood, this included my spontaneous dance moves while cutting the veggies for the lasagna I prepared.

Also, as there were some gorgeous sunny mornings in Melbourne, I enjoyed riding my recumbent bike really often, ideally in the morning sunshine while bumping into many familiar faces.

The feeling that I am doing something that I enjoy so much, while it is great for my body and mind, is perfect.

As there was plenty of spare time during this summer break, I was glad to fill up my time by seeing some movies, going to the pool and meeting some people in restaurants and cafés for scrumptious lunches and dinners.

Meanwhile I was 'minding the home base', it felt awesome to hear about all of the activities that my family were up to overseas. When people around me asked if I was jealous that I wasn't there too, it amazed them to hear that, while sometimes I did experience some jealousy, in no way would I choose to be elsewhere from home.

Overall, I can promise that you can also have a great holiday even without going anywhere!



## 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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