

BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

MEET GEOFF TOOMEY



1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?

I've had my brain injury since 2015, when I had a brain aneurism at a Bush Doof (Psytrance Festival).

2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?

My greatest achievement is completing a triathlon. For the run, I walked with a stick, for the bike ride, I pushed my wheelchair and I swam the 300m swim leg.

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

I want to work at being able to walk independently.

4. What do you find your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge is getting time alone because I have 24/7 care.

5. What is your favourite food?

I love dumplings and most Asian food.

6. What is your favourite movie?

Cheech and Chong's *Up In Smoke* (1978)

7. What is your favourite hobby?

I've been fire twirling for 28 years.

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

Friendship.

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

Never give up.

10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?

It means that brain injury matters!



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REGULAR THINGS HAPPENING AT BIM

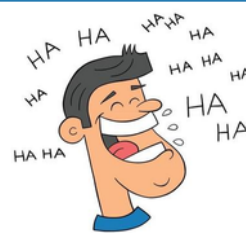
ONLINE COFFEE MORNINGS

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

- **Northcote** - Tuesdays, 10am
- **Frankston** - Tuesdays, 10am
- **Online only** - Wednesdays, 10am
- **Ringwood** - Thursdays, 10:30am
- **Footscray** - Thursdays at 10am
- **Gisborne** - Last Wednesday of the month
- **AWSABI (Albury-Wodonga Stroke & Brain Injury Inc)**
- 4th Thursday of the month, 10:30am
- **Bendigo** - Fortnightly on Thursdays, 11:30am (May 18, June 1 etc)
- **Melbourne CBD Women's Support** - 1st Monday of the month, 11am




Contact 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 App Store



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737 likes • 853 followers

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183 posts 2,381 followers 2,301 following

Brain Injury Matters
Self-advocacy and community education run by and for people with an acquired brain injury
braininjurymatters.org

ABI Wise

Weekly Tips	ABI Info
Stories	Meditation
Resources	Contact Us

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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

Hello Everyone

The past four weeks have been a busy time. Our secretary, Nia Giddings, was one of a number of self-advocates who met with Rebecca Falkingham, the CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency. The topic was the future of self-advocacy and the need for financial support to this. Nia pressed the case for BIM to get funding and she said they all received a good hearing.

I went up to Albury to meet with the Albury Wodonga Stroke and Brain Injury (AWSABI) group. We signed a letter of agreement, so that BIM can support them to run their peer support group.

The peer support group program, the TAC relationships project and the research project with Melbourne University on the impact of the peer support groups, all continue to make good progress.

We are also exploring other options to expand the peer support program and I will let you of developments as they occur.

That's it for now. Talk with you next month. In the meantime, stay warm and stay well.

Brent Alford

Chairperson
Brain Injury Matters



LAUREN'S OFFICE REPORT

A great month for BIM, with one hiccup: our office at Flinders Lane was broken into and left in a sorry state. Luckily, no real damage and nothing stolen. A clean up took place, with our Assistant Treasurer, Carol, putting in hours of work to get it back to (better) than normal. A further deeper tidy up in draws, bookcase and filing cabinets will happen soon.

I have been occupied by the TAC project. A joint press release with Monash will be released soon. BIM has been granted \$50,000 to develop and deliver workshops, to be held at the Peer Support Groups, with the topic of Relationships and ABI. BIM's annual survey confirmed this is an area of concern for members. There will be three topics: Family, Friends and Intimate Relationships. The workshops were co-designed by BIM members and Monash University. The partnerships will continue, with BIM members and Monash being the facilitators of the workshops. July to November is the roll-out. Please contact me if you would like to find out more.

We had some great candidates short listed from applications for Co-Facilitator jobs. Interviews have been offered to job candidates and interviews are over the next two weeks: next Monday 15th and following Monday 22nd. Yannick, myself and Fiona (supported by Sally) will conduct the interviews and the workshop team will be appointed in early June.

Answering phone calls, emails, co-ordination, planning and support went on as usual.

There was a great Committee of Management meeting this month. It is very rare for any of the eight COM members to miss a meeting. They were all in attendance this Tuesday, most in person and some on Zoom. The COM voted to ratify the new BIM Strategic Direction which will guide our work in the coming years. The amendments suggested by members were all accepted. You will see a copy on our website soon.

At the COM meeting, Poppy attended for the first time, Poppy is the new ILC co-manager. The COM and staff went out with Poppy afterwards to get to know her better. She is a great addition to the BIM team.



ILC PROJECT REPORT

The past month saw the Peer Support Groups continue with their weekly, fortnightly or monthly catchups. Fun things happened in the past 4 weeks or so.

Group activities and discussion topics have included bowling, karaoke, what neighbourhood houses offer, mental health awareness week, soapmaking, talking about acceptance, looking at helpful apps and drinking lots of coffee!

The reach of the groups continues. There are of course the new groups in Bendigo and Albury-Wodonga, but 25 new people have joined the existing groups in the past three months. There is a weekly average of 62 people each week attending the groups, since the start of the year. In June, we will begin a new women's peer support group.

And last but by no means least, the project team is very pleased to welcome Poppy Egan. Poppy joins as co-manager. She plans to visit all the peer groups in the near future.

Cheers

Andrew, Fiona, Fraser, Nick, Peter L, Peter P, Poppy, Ryan, Sally and Yannick

WELCOME, POPPY!

On the 9th of April, a number of Committee of Management members and staff met for lunch to welcome Poppy Egan to the role of ILC Project Co-Manager. We are very excited to have Poppy on board!

(From left to right: Poppy, Fiona, Vicky, Sally, Peter, Col, Brent, Adrian, Yannick, Nia & Fraser)





Brain Injury Matters

Women's Peer Support

*Please join us to celebrate with coffee and cake,
the first meeting of the
Women's Peer Support Group,
Monday 1st June from 11am-12.30pm,
Ross House,
Level 3 In the Jenny Florence Room .*

*We will be meeting monthly on the first Monday
of the month.*

*Come along, make some new friends, and help us plan
some fun activities.*

*For further information please contact
Poppy Egan poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org
or call 0405359622.*

PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

BENDIGO NEIGHBOURHOOD HUB PSG

First Catch Up!



ALBURY-WODONGA STROKE & BRAIN INJURY INC

BIM & AWSABI signing letter of agreement



NORTH METRO PSG - Northcote ***Bowling and Soap Making***



EAST METRO PSG - Ringwood

Bowling and Karaoke on May the 4th



***EAST METRO PSG - Ringwood
BBQ at the Park***



***WEST METRO PSG - Footscray
Meeting with West Footscray Neighbourhood House staff to
see what other activities are on offer***



CONTRIBUTION FROM ADRIAN

In My Opinion...

What have I been doing?

A BLOODY SHORT BLOG ABOUT THE BLOODY LONG WALK!

<https://www.bloodylongwalk.com.au/lp/mornington-peninsula/>

This blog is all about ME, ME, ME!!

I want to explain what I'm attempting to do. My aim is to walk 35 km along the Mornington Peninsula. I call it my 'aim' because that is what I'm attempting. The longest I've ever walked was about 20 km. This is nearly double. I'm not sure if I can do it, but that's what ABI is all about- Always Be Improving. I try to set my AIMS (Always Improve Measurable Standards) above what I have done before, although not too far above where I am.

To achieve these AIMS, I will break it down into smaller challenges- regular goals that will improve my current level of fitness- not big changes. They need to be attainable. I'll have some challenges. I have a sore foot, so I've been to the podiatrist and he's given me some resistance bands that I can help strengthen it. Also, I haven't been looking after my health very well for many years, so I want to improve that as well.

One factor that I do have in my favour, (I always try to look for positives to overcome my challenges), is my resilience. I try very hard to overcome my challenges to complete my aims. This is why I have set goals (like going to the gym, going for walks and riding my stationery exercise bike). I haven't been recording all my walks over the last 2 weeks, but I've recorded about 40 km. I've done more than that (as well as 20 km on my stationery bike), but this is what I've done so far this month. Resilience needs to be built through setting and kicking goals.

MOTHER'S DAY

In life, family is very important. We all have mothers. They have been with us through thick and thin, trials and tribulations and the many successes of life. My mother passed away when I was very young, but I still think about her.

The second Sunday in May is what I consider to be, a very important day. It's a day we give recognition to a very important person in our lives. Mother's day is very important and I'm glad it happens annually.

A.B.I.- Always Be Improving!

CALLING ALL INDIVIDUALS WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

- help us develop a tool to assess cyber risk and safety.

Why is this study being done?

Researchers at Monash University have been investigating people with acquired brain injury's (ABI) experiences of cyberscams (being cheated or ripped off online). Anyone can be scammed, but people with ABI might be more vulnerable, due to impairments and life changes commonly experienced post-injury. Our team has been testing a survey called The CyberABlility Scale. This survey is still being developed. We are inviting people with and without brain injury, who have and have not been scammed, to complete The CyberABlility scale. We will use responses to further refine the scale, see how effective it is in measuring scam vulnerability and identify risk factors to being scammed.

Who is conducting this research?

The Monash-Epworth Rehabilitation Research Centre and Monash University.

What does the study involve?

This research involves an online survey, which we estimate will take 30 minutes to complete. We would ask that you complete the survey within one week. We will also ask you to complete part of the same survey again about 2 weeks later, which will take 10-15 minutes. The survey will mainly ask about your online activities, thoughts and behaviours.

To thank you for your time, you will receive a \$20 gift voucher (e.g., Coles), sent to you via email after completing the second survey.

Interested in taking part?

Contact us via cyberability@monash.edu for further information.



A GOOD NEWS STORY!



Scott Jefferies is a valued peer at our Online Coffee Morning and the Ringwood Peer Support Group. He has been on dialysis and waiting for a kidney donor for a long time. On Monday 15th May, Scott finally got a call to say that a donor had been found. The surgery went well and we wish him a speedy recovery. We look forward to hearing many more bad jokes from Scott at Coffee Morning!

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

Brain Injury Matters is a self-advocacy organisation and we welcome all members having a voice. However, please note that opinion pieces published in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the position of Brain Injury Matters.

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