

BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

MEET ROSS GREENHORN



1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?

I crashed my motorbike racing in May 2021.

2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?

Learning to walk and talk and feel human again

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

I want to be able to be more independent and work again

4. What do you find your biggest challenge?

My lack of vision

5. What is your favourite food?

A chicken avocado focaccia

6. What is your favourite movie?

The Blues Brothers

7. What is your favourite hobby?

Spending time with family

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

Coming to Peer Support Group is improving my ability to communicate with people and I'm making friends.

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

Join a peer support group. There are other people who understand and can point you in the right direction.

10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?

I appreciate speaking to others about what I'm going through. I am especially thankful for others further down the track. Our Peer Support Group gets me out of the house and out of my head.

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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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Brain Injury Matters
Self-advocacy and community education run by and for people with an acquired brain injury
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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

Hi BIM cats!

Time motors on and the end of the year is almost here. I wanted to bring you up to date on some key developments.

We have appointed a new BIM coordinator. Her name is Georgia Tracy and we are very happy to have her on board. Georgia is starting late this month. I wanted to say many thanks to our past coordinator, Lauren Howe, for her amazing contribution over the past 3 years.

And we are working very hard on a submission for continued funding to support the current, and add some new, peer support groups. This is for three years funding. The closing date is 30 November and our submission writing team is working hard, liaising with the Committee of Management, to develop a project full of activities that meet the needs of people with an ABI!

Our Annual General Meeting has been held. You will see a separate report elsewhere in the newsletter, but I wanted to acknowledge all the hard work of the Committee of Management, our newsletter team, the project staff and facilitators over the past year. We are doing some amazing things – the peer support groups, the Relationships Workshops, our newly developed “Lived Experience Training” for service providers, our research with Melbourne University on the impact of peer groups...the list goes on!

So until next month, take care.

Brent Alford
Chairperson, Brain Injury Matters



ILC PROJECT REPORT

The relationship workshops on the topics of friendship, intimate relationships, and family relationships have been delivered to all four face-to-face groups in Melbourne. We will deliver a final pilot to the online group on Wednesday, before we consolidate the feedback and adjust the workshops accordingly. We plan to run the workshops in 2022 on two occasions.

The reach of the Brain Injury Matters peer support groups continues to grow and they have continued to do interesting activities like the Sports Museum, the Zoo, and Chesterfield Farm; and talk about topics like planning a holiday.

And we are very pleased that two more groups – Ringwood and Frankston – will have former group members stepping up into facilitator roles. More on that next month.

Cheers for now,

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

PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

NORTH METRO PSG Melbourne Zoo



***EAST METRO PSG
Visits to Chesterfield Farm, Scoresby***



THE FARM

Chesterfield Farm is more than just a farm - it is a home for many creatures.
Visitors may walk and explore and learn about the animals and birds,
Who all have their roles and their needs.
They give us - meat, milk, wool, eggs and love -
Farms are a gift that we should all cherish.

-Scott Jefferies



EAST METRO PSG Painting Day





Footscray/West group

Peter Lester

The Footscray/West squad is on a java-fueled roll!
Our love for coffee and gab sessions at the house are going strong. This month we upped our game with a fun tournament and everyone brought their A-game. We also took bets on the Melbourne Cup, but let's just say fortune-telling isn't our strongest suit.

I even dug up some old ads that had us cracking up, like when school lunch cost just 50 cents. Yikes, I'm starting to feel ancient! Feast your eyes on us, bright and early, at The Boathouse on a Thursday morning. Coffee or bust!



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUMMARY

Part 1

The Annual General Meeting held at Ross House was a resounding success, with Nia Giddings serving as our MC for the morning. The executive committee election results are as follows:

- President: Brent Alford
- Vice President: Col Brokenshire
- Secretary: Virginia Giddings
- Treasurer: Roger Astell

Brent delivered the opening address, emphasizing the growth of our peer group program. Currently, we have over ten peer groups, including eight in metropolitan Melbourne, two online, and two in regional Victoria. Our peer groups boast over 170 participants, with Albury Wodonga and Bendigo hosting peer support groups in regional Victoria.

Over the past year, we have initiated a collaborative research project with the University of Melbourne. While we have seen significant positive outcomes from our peer groups, we are excited to objectively study their impact through this research. Currently, we are conducting interviews with peer group members to understand the effect of these groups on their lives, and we look forward to sharing the results.

Another notable project was the relationships workshop, funded by the Transport Accident Commission, aimed at developing three workshops on relationships. Members have shared that relationships after an ABI can be challenging, so in partnership with Monash University, we co-designed workshops focused on family, friends, and intimate relationships.

Continued below

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUMMARY

Part 2

These workshops are all about the lived experience. They will be piloted with five peer groups, evaluated, and then delivered annually. People with ABI are facilitating.

Roger opened his report sharing his own story of how his motorbike accident led to his brain injury. Prior to his brain injury, Roger had a career in finance and managed a team of people. We appreciate the breadth of knowledge Roger brings to this role.

In the treasurer's report, Roger highlighted the increase in spending at Brain Injury Matters. This is largely due to the growth in the peer groups project. Roger highlighted that while it appeared we were in the red in some areas, it was a reflection of the increase in ILC funding from the Federal Government.

The highlight of the day was the guest speech from Shaun Smith. Shaun is a former AFL player who has had over 8 concussions. He is also an advocate for change in concussion protocols in the AFL. In his speech, Shaun told us about his own struggles with anger and binge drinking. Shaun shared his own journey to managing his ABI and how he has surrounded himself with good people to support his recovery.

MARIA GETS TO GO IN THE SEA!

BIM member, Maria Bardsley, was very excited recently when she got to have a dip in the ocean. Maria hasn't been in the water since her brain injury. On a recent holiday, she was able to enter the water in the life-savers' beach wheelchair. Maria wanted other BIM members to see what is available.

You can hire wheelchairs at a number of accessible beaches via council websites. Check out these:

- Mornington Peninsula Accessible Beaches
- Surf Coast Accessible Beaches
- Port Phillip Accessible Beaches

You can also hire beach wheelchairs from Parks Victoria:

- Wilsons Promontory National Park Information Centre
- Coolart Historic Area Park Office
- Point Nepean National Park Information Centre



JOE THE DESIGN ENGINEER

I was a VLine Coach driver for 11 years and totally loved my job. I was on the Southern Cross to Gippsland Run.

I woke up one morning for my shift and I had a very sore throat. It lasted for a few days so I decided to make a doctor's appointment to see what was going on. After visiting my GP, he told me that it was Tonsillitis and that it looked very severe and referred me to an ear, nose and throat specialist. I attended my appointment and upon examination, the specialist kept probing, Putting cameras in the nasal passage and down to my throat. Without warning he then put an instrument into my nose and tore off a chunk of something for testing. It HURT!! I bled severely and was told just to hold a towel over my nose for a while.

I was called back into the specialists office 7 days later and was told the results showed I had Severe Nasopharynx Cancer. I was admitted to hospital in Gippsland and after a head scan MRI, I was told that the cancer had spread to my brain stem and with the severity of it, I had to be transported to St Vincent's ICU, as they could not keep me alive in a country hospital.

I was in ICU and was very very ill and was told that I had no longer than 3 - 5 months to live, without specialist treatment. I was introduced to a Radiation Oncologist and started radiation daily for 3 months and chemotherapy treatment every 3 weeks. I was fed through a tube for 6 months and was left with head, hearing, dental, sight and balance issues, seizures, mini strokes and other health matters due to brain injury from radiation treatment.

The pain and suffering I went through for months and months, I would not wish upon my worst enemy. The hospital staff, especially the nurses, do the hard work and are the most amazing people in the world. I have no complaints. They saved my life and I'm still alive. Yes, I have become a disabled person but I am grateful that I am still alive. Every time I go to my appointments at St Vincent's I always leave by thanking the Radiation Oncologist and the Head of Neurology for saving my life.

JOE THE DESIGN ENGINEER CONTINUED...

After a long stay in the hospital, I had to stop working and was left very disabled upon discharge. I needed a parking permit for my caregiver to take me to my medical appointments and other outings, as I use a wheel walker on my better days, an electric scooter on my bad days, and cannot walk far distances.

I received my parking permit from the council after applying for it with my GP. It had no holder. I kept using Blue Tac and it kept falling off. It was also blowing all over the dash in the wind when the window was open. It even flew out the window a few times. So I went online to buy a holder and I couldn't find them anywhere.

So I decided to design and make one from scratch. It took over the whole kitchen table and I kept making messes for my poor full-time caregiver to clean up. Finally, I got to the prototype stage and it worked very well. It kept the permit secure, visible, in brand new condition, and away from the Australian harsh elements.

I went a step further and decided to put a design patent on it as I wasn't allowed to patent the perspex that the holder was made from. I got all the measurements of all the permits Australia wide and started making holders to suit all Australian permits. I sell them on eBay with an industrial suction cup and the feedback speaks for itself. People love them and boast how great they are. It makes me happy and gives me something to do on my good days, when I am able to get up and about, and a sense of making a difference. I also give all profits to the hospital charity, as a thank you for me still being alive.

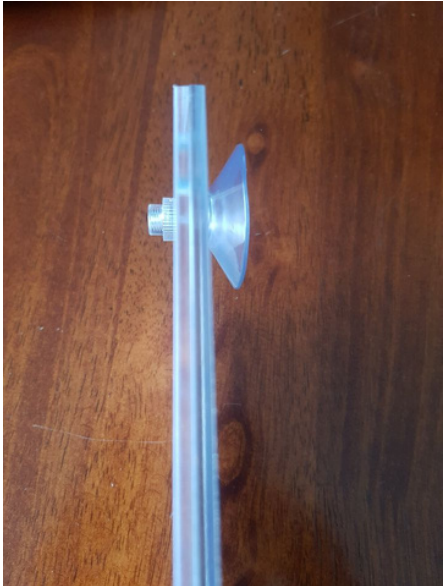
The eBay link to the holders is <https://www.ebay.com.au/itm/294996182752>

The next page has some photos of the holders. I hope you like them.

Thank you all for listening to my story. I very much appreciate it. I'm sure a lot of you can relate to it.

Joe Y.

JOE THE DESIGN ENGINEER CONTINUED...



All BIM women are invited to a Christmas Morning Tea.



Monday 4th December
11am-12.30pm
Hayden Rae Smith Room
Level 4



Ross House
247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne



Any questions, contact Poppy at
poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org
or call 0405-359-622.

ADRIAN'S BLOG



In My Opinion...

I turned 50 a few weeks ago. Many people are sensitive about their age, but I think it's just a number.

What matters is what you do with your life, and how you treat other people.

There are some things that can be controlled, and that is what I focus on.

I don't worry about what I can't control; it makes life much more pleasant!

Wayne Dyer once said, "I can't always control what goes on outside, but I can control what goes on inside."

Joke of the Month:

A grasshopper walked into a bar. The bartender said, "We have a drink named after you."

"Really?" said the grasshopper, "one called Kevin?"

1. *B.I. – Always Be Improving!!*

If you would like me to add anything to this page, please email me at adie3@hotmail.com.

WAR & PEACE HAIKU

Warriors in blood,
Fighting for their beliefs -
But peace is within.

*Haiku is a type of Japanese poem. The first line is five syllables. The second line is seven syllables. The third line is five syllables.

-Scott Jefferies

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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