



BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

MEET FIONA HOPPER



1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?

I got a brain injury and lost my eyesight in the year 2000.

2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?

Learning to live as a blind person, including working with my guide dog, Ozrik, and using adaptive technology.

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

I want to continue to improve my adaptive technology skills and work on my cardiovascular fitness.

4. What do you find your biggest challenge?

Staying calm when things go wrong!

5. What is your favourite food?

White chocolate.

6. What is your favourite movie?

I don't really watch movies - I prefer audiobooks!

7. What is your favourite hobby?

Listening to audio books and going to the gym.

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

I want to connect and empower people with brain injury to live their best lives.

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

Hang in there! You will learn ways to live better with brain injury.

10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?

I love Brain Injury Matters. I love how BIM brings lots of different people together and the way we can support each other as we share the journey of brain injury.

Fiona is on staff at Brain Injury Matters as a Peer Project Coordinator

Table of Contents

Meet a BIM Member.....	1
Regular things happening at BIM.....	3
Committee of Management Report.....	4
Staff Update - Introducing Georgia.....	5
ILC Project Report.....	6
Photos from PSGs.....	7-10
Women's Group.....	11
A Mission Necessary.....	12
Adrian's Blog	13
My School Presentations	14

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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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

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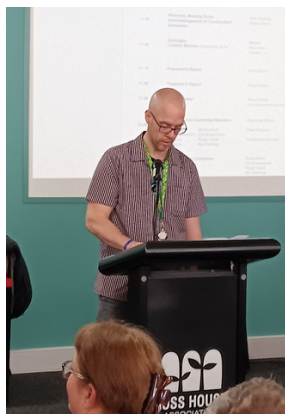
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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

HELLO BIMCATS!

It is our last newsletter for 2024... hard to believe. We have had another fantastic year with strengthening our connections across the state and completing our submission to continue our successful ILC program. Thanks to all who have been part of this process and to the staff who have helped create the peer experience. We are asking for funds to add some new peer support groups and look to consolidate the sustainability of our current groups. This is for three years funding. We will find out around March/April 2024. Fingers crossed.

A quick recap on our AGM in November. It was exceptionally well attended – over 50 in person and on-line! Our guest speaker, Shaun Smith, talked about his own journey with concussion and brain injury.



Our new coordinator, Georgia Tracy, started late in November and it's great to have her with BIM. Georgia introduces herself elsewhere in the newsletter.

The peer groups are having, or have had, their individual Christmas gatherings, as did the Committee of management and the project team. It was a nice way to round off a busy, but positive, year.

So, thank you to everyone for contributing to our amazing organisation - you have all individually risen to the occasion, especially our peer group leaders. So Merry Christmas and a happy new year. Until next year, take care.

Brent Alford
Chairperson, Brain Injury Matters



STAFF UPDATE - INTRODUCING GEORGIA

Hello Everyone,

My name is Georgia Tracy and I am brand new to the role of Coordination Support Worker at Brain Injury Matters.

I come to BIM having worked for a disability service and NDIS Provider for the last ten years. My most recent role was Marketing & Fundraising Manager. Prior to that, I worked in a support worker role, delivering therapeutic horticulture programs to people with a range of physical and cognitive disabilities. I continue to be very interested in the impacts of nature and gardening on human health and wellbeing.

As well as working, I am currently studying part-time towards a Bachelor of Arts (psychology major) which I am really enjoying. I have two teenage sons, who love gaming and basketball, and in my spare time I do a fair bit of cooking, gardening and distance running. At the moment, I am training for my first trail run - a fundraiser for the Bob Brown Foundation, to help save Tasmania's Tarkine forest.

My days at BIM will be Tuesdays and Thursdays in the office at Ross House. I am absolutely thrilled to join the BIM team and can already see that my colleagues are doing great work to both connect people with brain injuries to supports and inform the wider community about the impacts of living with brain injury. As well as undertaking some of the administrative functions, I am excited to do whatever I can to support the BIM mission.



ILC PROJECT REPORT

Firstly, a big welcome to Troy and Scott stepping up into facilitators roles, at the Frankston and Ringwood groups respectively. Our team is growing and it shows our approach of supporting people into leadership roles is working. Early in 2024, we will provide information of the findings of the research, conducted by the University of Melbourne, on the impact of peer support groups on the lives of people.

The relationships workshops on the topics of friendship, intimate relationships and family relationships have been delivered to all four face-to-face groups in Melbourne. Now a final pilot to the on-line group. Monash University are consolidating the feedback, so we can adjust the workshops accordingly. We plan to run the workshops again in 2024.

The groups have been involved in interesting activities like the Triennial at the NGV, a visit to the Abbotsford Convent, an 'Our Peer Group's Got Talent' day, making gingerbread men and discussions about topics like planning goals for 2024.

All the best for a safe and restful break. See you in 2024.

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



PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

WEST METRO PSG Christmas Party & Wrap Up



Another wonderful year for the group, with a steady flow of members coming along to the community centre and the various outings. We finished off the year with our Christmas BBQ. Thanks to BIM helping out with \$100.

Poppy is fantastic, coming along supporting the group, and is always easily contacted during the week. Andrew is so good researching places to go and does all of the bookings for us. We have had some great discussions on our topic mornings with everybody getting involved. We recently had Trang leading a comedy morning, which was a lot of fun.

We look forward to another great year with the group in 2024.

Peter Lester (Peer facilitator at West Metro PSG)

PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

SOUTH METRO PSG Christmas Party & Gingerbread Decorating



PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

EAST METRO PSG

'Brainstormers have got talent!!!!'

We had an exciting day on 7th December, when various members of the group volunteered to show us one of their talents. Ivan, Stephen and Abbey sang for us; Stephen did an improve motivational speech; Corey read a short biography and spun a basketball on his finger; Rob showed us photos of a surf rod he had made; Geoff demonstrated his fire-twirling skills (thankfully with a rod with LED lights!); Fiona read us a poem; Neil did a card trick; and Kath showed us photos of her indoor sky diving!!! A very talented group of people.

On Thursday, 14th December, the group went to Jells Park to Madeline's cafe and for a walk.



PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

EAST METRO PSG

Jells Park



BENDIGO PSG

Christmas Coffee Catchup



WOMEN'S GROUP

We had a great end of year celebration at Ross house on the 4th December. It was lovely to see so many of you return to the Women's group. In our discussion, we shared what we enjoyed about Christmas and what we find challenging about Christmas. Christmas can be a time of celebration but also solitude as many of us live alone and are not in contact with family.

What a delicious spread for morning tea! My kids enjoyed the leftover cakes in their school lunches. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Brain Injury Matters will reopen on Monday 8 January. Our first meeting for the New Year will be on **Monday 5 February 2024**. We will be celebrating the Lunar New Year and chatting about our hopes, dreams and goals for 2024.

At the beginning of our time together, we will have a singing warm up. One of our members has experience conducting a choir and believes that everyone can sing. Singing is also great for the brain, as it can help improve mental alertness, memory and concentration, as it involves focusing on multiple things at once, engaging many areas of the brain in the process. All women are welcome, it is not compulsory to take part in the singing. Come along, have a chat and make some new friends.



A MISSION NECESSARY

By Scott Jefferies

Scott shared this at our recent AGM

In the heart of our community- there's a force that quietly shines
- for those with Brain Injuries in the face of challenging times.

They lift us up -those in need – in a world that's not always fair
- challenging all with Brain Injuries to come along and share.

There are online Coffee Mornings on Zoom – with jokes and fun and Q&A
- at 11 am, relax and enjoy - every Monday.

And weekly activities in Peer Support Groups - BBQs and bowling, movies and
snacks – and steaming hot coffee, right near you.

As well – the BIM Online Chat groups – the BIM website
– and the ABI Wise app, with tools and tips open to all.

And not to forget : all the free classes and forums and webinars
– Run out of Ross House by ABI advocates.

Thank you to Brain Injury Matters!

Thank you to President Brent and the organisation!
You help us bear the burdens-that we alone cannot carry.
Your work is more than a job - it is a mission necessary!

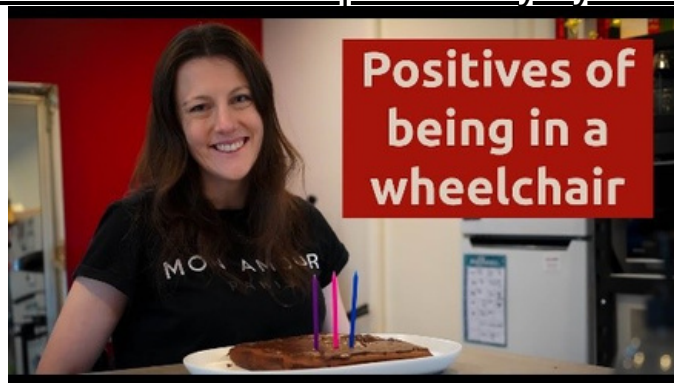
ADRIAN'S BLOG

In My Opinion...

It's now December and I'd like to show what I'm grateful for. Things that have happened in 2023. First and foremost, I'm grateful for this newsletter. I love that everyone is contributing so much. I'm also grateful for being on the board of Brain Injury Matters, being able to contribute to the community. And I'm grateful for having Graeme Alford coming and articulating what his extraordinary life has been like, what it means to him and, most importantly, what he has learnt from it.

Here is someone else, showing what she's grateful for....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUMF0ke2HIs&list=PLhNeRwBqkeSUtTmylbyR9XStAM7Sjy8WC>



(Click the link above to see Em Quattrocchi's vlog about the positives about being in a wheelchair that she focuses on)

And finally, I'd like to wish all of you a very happy festive season. Share lots of love with those who are special. And most importantly, remain safe!!

Joke of the Month

What's the difference between Santa's reindeer and a knight?
One slays the dragon, and the other's draggin' the sleigh



A.B.I. – Always Be Improving!!

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

MY SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

As do many other people who have had traumatic brain injuries, I adore to talk about myself! Getting paid to do so, while giving people some tips about how to drive... or not to drive... is really ideal!

It's great to hear positive feedback after making presentations to students. I hope to be able to continue doing this for a long time.

by ANAT BIGOS



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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