

# BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

## MEET DANIEL BLAKSTON



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

Two and a half years ago, I was riding a push bike and had an accident.

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

I had balance issues, so getting back on a bus by myself was a big achievement for me.

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

I want to join more groups, so I can make more friends.

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

Making friends at this age.

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

Spaghetti bolognaise.

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

*Training Day* with Ethan Hawke and Denzel Washington

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

Swimming at the Frankston pier.

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

Making friends.

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

Come to the groups, so that you can meet others who've been through similar experiences.

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

It's good to have an organisation that gets people with brain injury together.

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# REGULAR THINGS HAPPENING AT BIM

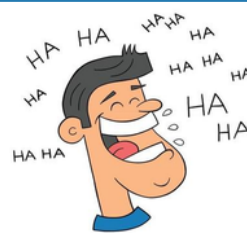
## ONLINE COFFEE MORNINGS

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](mailto: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](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 App Store



**Brain Injury Matters**  
737 likes • 853 followers

Message Like Search

Instagram

Search







Log In Sign Up

braininjurymatters Follow Message


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](https://braininjurymatters.org)

ABI Wise

 Weekly Tips	 ABI Info
 Stories	 Meditation
 Resources	 Contact Us

Terms of use

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February 2024



## CHANCE TO WIN A \$100 BUNNINGS VOUCHER!!

Our **Brain Injury Matters Annual Needs Survey** is on again and we REALLY need your help to fill it out! Click the link or scan the QR code below to do our survey and be in the running to win a \$100 Bunnings voucher.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VR5BQ9M>



The survey helps us give feedback to government and others about what's important to people with brain injury, so that we can lead dignified and meaningful lives in an inclusive community.

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## DO YOU WISH YOUR CARERGIVERS UNDERSTOOD BRAIN INJURY BETTER?

Encourage people in your life to sign up for our:

### **ABI LIVED EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP**

Facilitated by people with lived experience, this workshop aims to help support workers, support coordinators, caregivers, or anyone interested, to better understand what it's like to live with a brain injury.



Topics will include:

- \* **What is an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)?**
- \* **Causes of ABI**
- \* **Physical, cognitive and emotional challenges of ABI**
- \* **Tips and strategies for working with people with ABI**

DATE: Thursday 14 March 2024

TIME: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

LOCATION: Ross House - Hayden Raysmith Room  
Level 4, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne Victoria 3000

COST: \$50

TO REGISTER GO TO: <https://www.trybooking.com/COSLV>



# COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

HELLO BIMCATS!

A New Year has begun...we are in February. The holiday period can be challenging. We hope you are doing well. And it was Chinese NY. Happy Year of the Dragon!

At BIM, we took advantage of the summer break to get our house in better order, thanks to our new coordinator, Georgia Tracy. So updating and reviewing our policies and processes has been a focus.

The peer support groups had a short break and resumed catching up early in January. The numbers of people attending have been solid.

We await advice from the Federal Department of Social Services about our submission to continue the peer support group program. This is for three years funding. We will find out around April.

Given it is February, we will be undertaking the Annual Brain Injury Matters Needs Survey. This is a chance for you, as members of BIM, to tell us what is important to you and what BIM should be focusing on! We will be in touch soon. Please complete the survey to have your say!

Take care till next month.

Brent Alford  
Chairperson



## BIM OFFICE UPDATE

The year has started well and I'm starting to find my feet in the role of Coordination Support Worker at BIM! Flinders Lane is a bit of a construction zone at the moment, so anyone visiting Ross House, please be aware that there are works happening and road closures over the next few months.

The office has received a steady stream of enquiries both from people with brain injuries, as well as support workers & health professionals, who are keen to know more about our Peer Support Groups. I've been trying to steer people in the right direction and learning along the way too! I've learned that the BIM website has a great deal of information, not only about BIM, but also about other organisations and services which might be really helpful for our members. I know some of the groups are currently discussing exactly what resources we have on the website and how to access them. This is great because we can all help each other to upskill on what information, services and supports are out there!

I have been working with the BIM Committee of Management to update BIM's policies & procedures which will be rolled out over the course of 2024. When approved, updated policies will be added to the BIM website.

In other news, colleagues and I will soon meet with the Office for Disability to discuss core funding for BIM.

There are a bunch of other admin. tasks I'm working on, but I won't bore you with that list here!

Enjoy the rest of the summer and I hope to meet more of you over the coming months.

Best wishes,  
Georgia





# ILC PROJECT REPORT

Peer support groups resumed in early January. In peer groups, we have been celebrating birthdays of our peers across Melbourne with monthly cake days. Let your peer group facilitators know when your birthday month is so we can celebrate you!

The **Footscray** group has continued to explore the coffee shops of Melbourne. A highlight was a visit to Brimbank Park. **Ringwood** has also been exploring coffee shops and visited a café where they treated themselves to oversized sundaes. **Frankston** has enjoyed a BBQ by the pier. **Northcote** went to Bundoora Park Farm and enjoyed exploring the historic buildings within the farm.

Our online peer support groups also continue to meet weekly. **Brainwave** watched Crip Camp a film produced by Michele and Barak Obama that explore the disability advocacy movement in the 1960's. Many of our groups have also been looking at the various cards and concessions available.

Please check out the Resources Tab on our BIM website [www.braininjurymatters.org](http://www.braininjurymatters.org) including:

- Companion card,
- Access travel pass
- National assistance Card
- Taxi Card
- Disability Access Key
- The Hidden disability Sunflower lanyard



We will be distributing the Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyard to peer support group members once we receive them. If you are not in a peer support group and would like one, please email the office.

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



# PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

## ***WEST METRO PSG Fish n chips in Williamstown***





# PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

## ***SOUTH METRO PSG***

### ***BBQ at Frankston Pier & Picnic at Mothers Beach Mornington***





# PHOTOS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

## ***EAST METRO PSG Sugar Buns Cafe, Knox***



The MEGA shake!

## ***NORTH METRO PSG Visit to Bundoora Park***

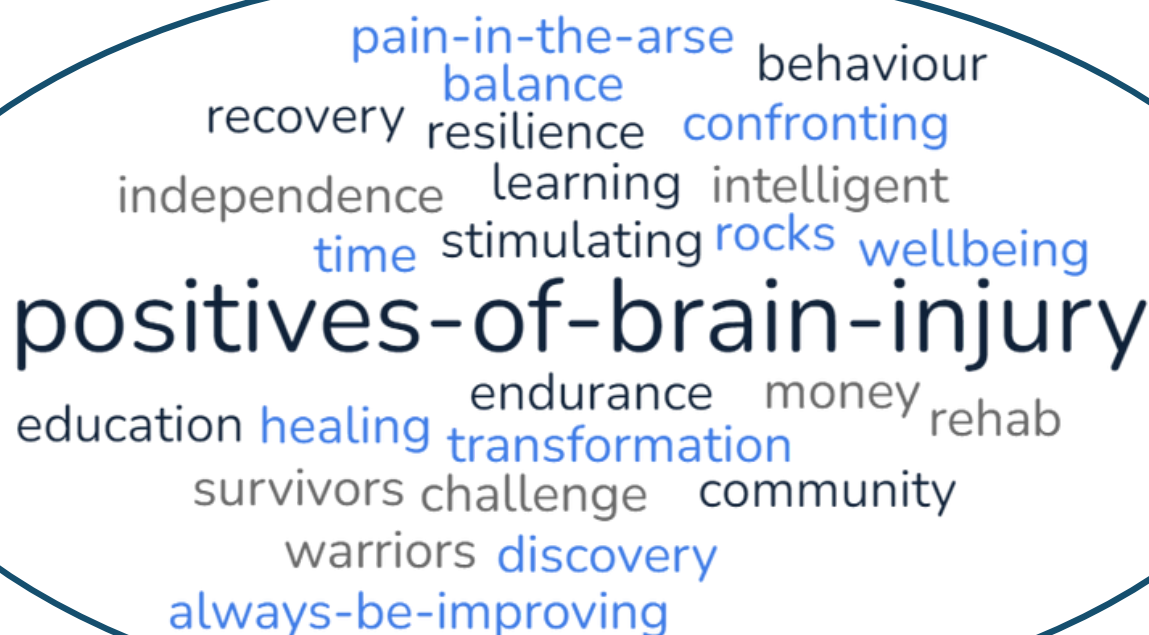


# PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

## **BRAINWAVE ONLINE PSG**

### **Word Cloud**

At our Wednesday online peer support group, we each had a go at coming up with a word that described something positive about brain injury. Here's our word cloud:



A word cloud enclosed in a dark blue oval. The central text is "positives-of-brain-injury" in a large, dark blue font. Surrounding it are various words in different sizes and shades of blue. The words include: "pain-in-the-arse", "behaviour", "balance", "recovery", "resilience", "confronting", "independence", "learning", "intelligent", "time", "stimulating", "rocks", "wellbeing", "education", "healing", "endurance", "money", "rehab", "survivors", "challenge", "community", "warriors", "discovery", and "always-be-improving".

### **Who inspires you?**

We're also taking it in turns to share about someone that inspires us. Last week it was Josh's turn. Here's what he said:

**"I'm inspired by my Pop 'cause he loves me so much,  
He raised me and all my brothers and sister,  
He is still inspiring 'cause he's 87 and still does so much for all of us,  
He pays for my 4 Boost juices every week,  
He has me stay with him every second weekend even though I'm often a  
pain in the arse!**

**My Pop inspires and supports me, he's a true legend."**

Josh W.

# WOMEN'S PEER SUPPORT GROUP

## Celebrating International Women's Day

This month we're celebrating International Women's day  
(albeit 4 days early!)



Come along and share a story about a woman who inspires you.

**The first 4 women to RSVP will receive a personal hygiene goodie bag from Pinchapoo!**

DATE: Monday 4th March

TIME: 11am-12:30

PLACE: Rainbow Room, Level 4 Ross House

ADDRESS: 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

RSVP: to [poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org)

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## SENSORY FRIENDLY SPACE AT THE MCG

For people who go to watch sport at the MCG, there is quiet space if the crowd and noise gets too much. The space has a screen which broadcasts the game.

The space is located within the Australian Sports Museum on Level 1 (inside Gate 3, behind bay M51).



Check out the link to the sensory space at the MCG:

**<https://mcg.org.au/the-stadium/access-and-inclusion/sensory-friendly-space>**



# TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



## Voice At The Table

### Stronger Voices Training



You are invited to our FREE Training about:  
**How To Speak Up in a Big Way!**

This is a 2 day training.

1

Day 1:

We will:

- Chat about what is important to you and what you want to speak up about.
- Chat about why it is good to speak up
- Do activities



2

Day 2:

We will:

- Try speaking up about something we care about.
- Learn about ways you can have a voice in services.
- Do activities



This training is for people with Intellectual Disability or an  
Acquired Brain Injury.



## TRAINING OPPORTUNITY cont...



Dates for people with an Intellectual Disability

Day 1: Wednesday 10th April 2024

Day 2: Wednesday 17th April 2024



Dates for people with an Acquired Brain Injury

Day 1: Thursday 9th May 2024

Day 2: Thursday 16th May 2024



Time: 10:30am - 3pm



Where: Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne



We will provide lunch!



How to contact us:



Email: [training@voiceatthetable.com.au](mailto:training@voiceatthetable.com.au)



Phone: 0493 700 734 or 03 9070 9070



This training is co-designed and co-delivered by trainers with Intellectual Disability and an Acquired Brain Injury.

# **STUDY INTO SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY PEOPLE WITH ABI**

We are a team of researchers from the University of Sydney. We are developing an online social media assessment tool for people with ABI. This will help clinicians work with people after their injury to find out what their goals are for better communication and connection on social media.

To help develop this tool, we would like to hear more from people who:

1. have an ABI;
2. family/friends of people with an ABI; and
3. researchers/clinicians who are involved with people who have an ABI.

The research will be conducted online and would involve the following:

1. completion of a short online form. (Up to 30 minutes);
2. participating in an online group discussion via zoom. (Up to 1 hour);
3. providing feedback on the social media assessment tool via online surveys. (1 survey/month, up to 30 minutes/survey, we anticipate 3 surveys and up to 1.5 hours in total).

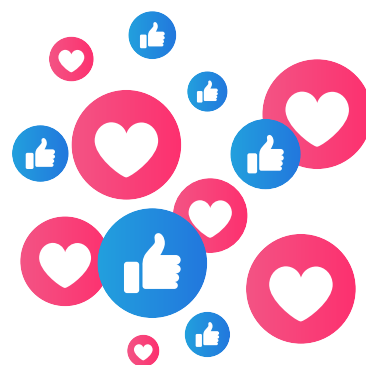
Participation is voluntary. If you are interested, please click on the link below to access an information sheet to find out more, provide consent and complete a short online form.

[https://sydney.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6fCbqOXRDgfkHk](https://sydney.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6fCbqOXRDgfkHk)

We would also encourage you to pass this information on to others you know who you think might be appropriate to participate.

For more information, please contact Melissa Brunner, Head Researcher, via:

- Phone: +61 2 8627 9866
- Email: [melissa.brunner@sydney.edu.au](mailto:melissa.brunner@sydney.edu.au)



Come along and join ...

# Chat n' Chuckle

A fortnightly discussion group for anyone with an acquired brain injury to meet others, share news and views, discuss ideas and have fun. You don't have to live in Glen Eira.

For further information or to register, contact Council's Service Centre on **9524 3333** or email [accessandinclusion@gleneira.vic.gov.au](mailto:accessandinclusion@gleneira.vic.gov.au)

## Location:

Online or Godfrey Street Community House, 9 Godfrey Street, Bentleigh

## When: 2024

Meetings are held on Fridays (during school term) from 11am to 12.30pm

- |                       |                  |            |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------|
| • 9 & 23 February     | 8 and 22 March   | 19 April   |
| • 3, 17 & 31 May      | 14 & 28 June     | 26 July    |
| • 9 & 23 August       | 6 & 20 September | 18 October |
| • 1, 15 & 29 November | 13 December      |            |

Do you enjoy  
discussions, books  
and movies?

Do you enjoy talking  
about news and  
current issues?

Keen to  
meet  
others  
who feel  
the same?

Interested  
in great  
conversations  
and friendships?



## ADRIAN'S BLOG

### *In My Opinion...*

Welcome back everyone! It's the start of a new year- 2024.

This will be the year I'm going to strive for more! Here are a few of the objectives I'm chasing...

I'm in the process of developing a website, which will be out in a few months.

I'm developing strategies to improve my health- through diet and exercise.

And working on my garden...

What are your objectives for 2024? What are your priorities?

What's important to you?

I think that's the best place to start....

### **Joke of the Month**

What do you call a factory that produces okay products?

A satisfactory!



*A.B.I. – Always Be Improving!!*

*Coming soon... <http://www.alwaysbeimproving.net>*

## SCOTT'S POEM

*BIG YEAR 2024*

*Coming back stronger--*

*With support and resilience,*

*Brain Injury Matters...*

*Scott Jefferies*

*5-7-5 syllables for lines*

## ***THE GREEN NOODLE - By Anat Bigos***

I have heard from many people around me - some are carers who are trying to lose weight - that a great technique is swimming in the pool!

Today in my swimming session, I was sweetly given a green pool noodle. It's true that green is my favourite colour, which minimally helped my motivation to use it.

I had previously always seen that using a pool noodle could be really helpful for people with balance problems. So, I was convinced that I probably wouldn't need to use one. However, I was shown that life can 'give'/present us/show us nasty surprises!

Due to an unexpected, serious car accident, I currently can't walk on land and find balancing quite difficult. Currently for me, swimming serves as great physiotherapy. I'm additionally lucky that it's an activity that I greatly enjoy! I still happily remember that my father and his parents used to call me a 'tuna fish', in my younger years.

This is despite the fact that often when I'm swimming, I manage to swallow a lot of the pool's water!

It's extremely pleasing to be able to use certain equipment that many other people around me, also often use.

I often feel that the pool is quite a magical place, since when in the water I feel quite mobile, as opposed to regularly! So, for me, the water is magically holding me upright, completely ignoring my disability! This is completely relieving! In the water, I feel extremely capable, as if I could run a marathon... momentarily forgetting my factual immobility! I adore the feeling of freedom and once again, feeling unencumbered.

While I truthfully do adore the taste of many Asian noodle dishes, I'm quite upset that this pool noodle, isn't extremely tasty or nutritious!

It's quite an amazing feeling, to once again have complete mobility! I've always found water really liberating, however I never realised just how useful it could be!





# TRY AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations, also called self-affirmations, are thoughts you intentionally come up with to support, encourage, and calm your brain and body. They typically consist of positive statements used to challenge negative, depressing, or anxiety-producing thoughts. Try using some of these affirmations to help you stay positive:

- I am strong.
- I am enough.
- I have faith in my abilities.
- I am grateful for what I can do.
- I am happy to be me.
- I am on the right path for me.
- I will turn negative thoughts into positive ones.
- I honor my body by trusting the signals that it sends me.
- Though these times are difficult, they are part of the journey of life.
- One step at a time, one day at a time is progress.

Suggested by Rhino, a BIM member

Source: <https://www.biausa.org/public-affairs/media/taking-care-of-your-mental-health>

## 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)

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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