

BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

MEET JOSH TAYLOR



1. How long ago did you acquire your injury?

18 years ago I had a serious car crash.

2. What is your greatest achievement since your injury?

Managing to purchase my own place.

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

I want to win a lawn bowls final!

4. What do you find your biggest challenge?

Socialising.

5. What is your favourite food?

I eat anything!

6. What is your favourite movie?

Swordfish and Sleepless in Seattle.

7. What is your favourite hobby?

Lawn bowls and ballroom dancing.

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

To meet people and make new friends.

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

It's hard. Talking to people helped a lot. My neuropsychologist has been really helpful. It does get easier over time.

10. What does Brain Injury Matters mean to you?

It's great that like minded people get to catch up.

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REGULAR THINGS HAPPENING AT BIM

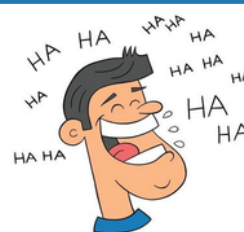
ONLINE COFFEE MORNINGS

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
- **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



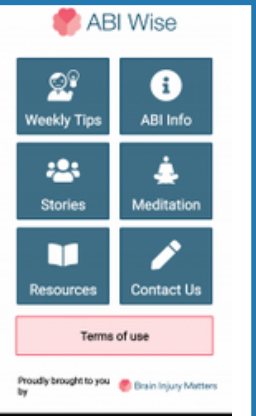
Brain Injury Matters
737 likes · 853 followers

Instagram

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://www.braininjurymatters.org)



ABI Wise

- Weekly Tips
- ABI Info
- Stories
- Meditation
- Resources
- Contact Us

Terms of use

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COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

Gidday, BIM members and friends,

As I told you last time, we had expected to hear the outcome of our submission to the Department of Social Services for funds to continue the peer support group program. This is for three years funding. Unfortunately, the announcement has been delayed but we remain hopeful of good news.

In other news, the Annual Brain Injury Matters Needs Survey has closed. We were very happy with response rate, with 73 people completing the survey. A big thank you to all of those people. An analysis of the feedback will be starting soon and will be distributed in the near future. The survey tells us what is important to people with ABI. One example is that relationships always comes up as an issue. We therefore sought and got funding from the TAC to do something about it.

The Relationships Project is in its final stages, with Monash University completing its review. BIM intends to conduct the three workshops covering Friends, Families and Intimate Relationships on a regular basis, with the content being available for other groups, or organisations.

I'm pleased to announce that Peter Lester, who has been involved in the Western suburbs peer group for the past couple of years and taken on a role as one of the group facilitators, has filled a vacancy on the BIM Committee of Management. Peter has a background in local government, experience in submission writing and I.T.. So, a very warm welcome, Peter.

Finally, I attended a celebration of the great work by Voices for Change, the self-advocacy group of people with ABI who have been in the criminal justice system. It was amazing to hear their journeys and of the work they are undertaking. Here is the weblink if you want to find out more: <https://voices-for-change.org/>

Feel free to get in touch with me. Email: chairperson@braininjurymatters.org

Col Brokenshire
Chair (Acting), Brain Injury Matters

RESULTS OF ANNUAL NEEDS SURVEY

Thank you to all those who completed our BIM Annual Needs Survey and congratulations to Ebony Hanson (Bendigo PSG) and Robyn Williams (South Metro PSG) who won the Bunnings vouchers!

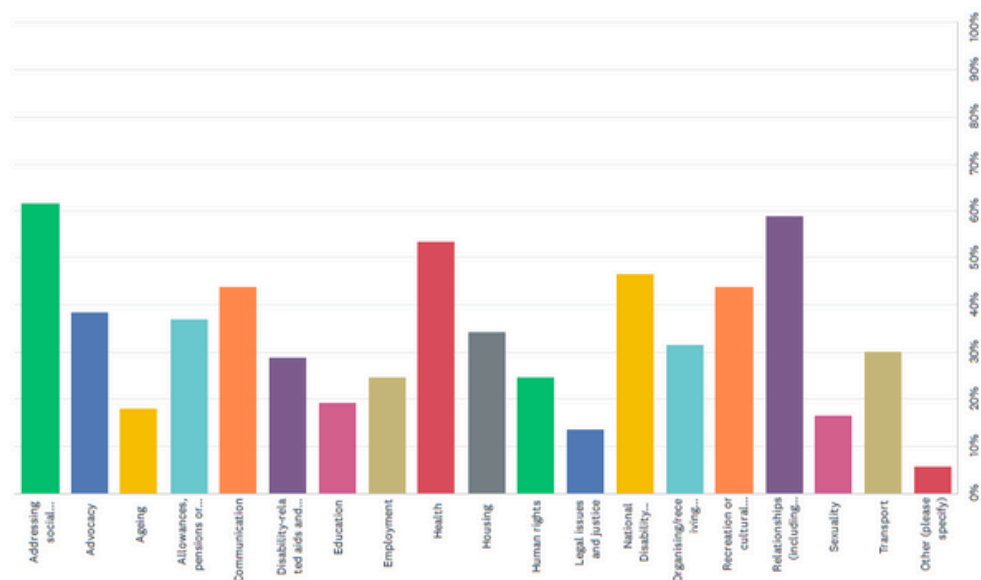
The survey provides the opportunity for our members to tell us what is on their minds and what is important to them. Here are some key findings. We will spend more time looking at the feedback and send out our analysis soon.

For the fifth survey in a row, 'social isolation' (62%) remains the biggest issue. 'Health' and 'the NDIS' round out the top 3.

The three biggest barriers to participating in community are: 'lack of confidence,' 'lack of knowledge' and 'poor community attitudes.'

People told us that the focus for BIM, should be 'support to reduce isolation,' 'peer groups,' 'raising awareness' and 'providing information.'

We are pleased that 93% of people who attended a peer support group (PSG), said their PSG has had a positive, or very positive, impact on them.



OFFICE REPORT

This month we welcomed long-term BIM Member, Peter Lester, to the BIM Committee of Management as a regular member. Peter is well-known to many of you as a facilitator of the Footscray PSG and regular attendee of Brainwave, our online group. A warm welcome to Peter. We thank him for taking up the position on our CoM. This is also a good opportunity to say a huge thank you to all members of the BIM Committee for the work they do running BIM and working tirelessly to advocate for people with brain injuries. Sincere thanks for your time and dedication.

BIM is eagerly awaiting news about changes to our federal government funding which will hopefully be announced by the end of April. In the meantime, we have applied for some smaller grants which, if successful, will cover the costs of a new BIM brochure, so we can get the word out about BIM and our peer support groups. We're also seeking some funding for a project to develop some training resources for different topics which will be useful for people with ABI, so watch this space.

We are so grateful to everyone who took the time to complete the BIM Annual Needs Survey. The survey results will provide us with information about what you think BIM should be working on and how we can best support you, our members. If anyone missed the survey but has an idea for BIM, please let me know by sending an email to office@braininjurymatters.org If you attend a peer support group, you can also discuss ideas with group members and we can see if any funding opportunities are out there. Think big! What ideas do you have that would help you and other BIM members to live more independently and participate fully in the community? Let us know!

This month we have attended meetings with Courts Vic, NDIS Taskforce on worker registration, DRC and SARU and we have a number of consultations underway with different groups who are working to improve accessibility and systems reform to help people with ABI.



OFFICE REPORT cont...

Finally, we are really excited to be taking part in the VSAN (Victorian Self Advocacy Network) event next month on Tuesday, 14th, May at 11.30am at Ross House. It would be great to see lots of BIM Members there if you can come! The event will be captured on video and will provide everyone with the opportunity to speak up about the issues that are relevant to you and why you think self-advocacy is important.

Go well everyone.
Cheers,
Georgia



Victorian Self Advocacy Network

A VSAN EVENT

VSAN

You are invited!

**Self Advocacy:
power & money to people
with disability!**

The foundation and starting point of Self Advocacy is **human rights**.

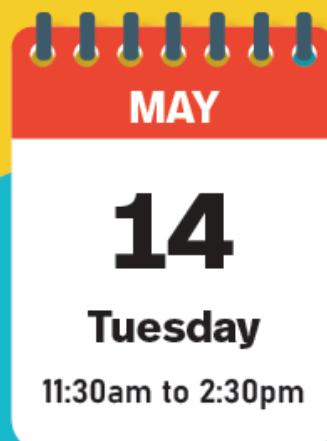
Self Advocacy groups are a way for people with disability to **take action together**.

This is a call to action for Self Advocacy to have ongoing funding.

Your group can tell the decision makers what would happen if funding stops?

Be in the video filmed at the event.

Lets be a big voice together!



MAY

14

Tuesday

11:30am to 2:30pm

Where?

Hayden Ray Smith Room 4th floor

Ross House
247/251 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne VIC 3000

SARU releases The Self Advocate Newsletter every 2 months. If you would like to receive the newsletter email jessica@saru.net.au or call 9639 6856

ILC PROJECT REPORT

Col, as the new chairperson, accompanied by Poppy from the project team, will visit the Bendigo and Albury-Wodonga peer groups in the next month or so. There will be a focus on recruitment, as well as hearing what assistance these groups need from BIM.

The Peer Support Group network now connects over 185 people. The size of the weekly attendances goes up and down, depending on the activity, as some people prefer discussion sessions only, while others prefer activities. We also held our first catch-up/training session of the peer group facilitators, where we discussed some real-life situations that had occurred in peer groups. This catchup will be held on a quarterly basis.

The research by University of Melbourne (UoM), into the impact of peer support groups, is in the write-up stage. Pleasingly, BIM and UoM will present three papers at the Brain Injury Australia Conference in Adelaide in September.

Finally, we are pleased to tell you about a new area of work for BIM in collaboration with the Epworth Hospital. The new program aims to include Lived Experience in the journey out of hospital for people with a newly acquired ABI. Nick Waters, who has been through that journey, is volunteering at the Epworth Transitional Living house on a fortnightly basis.

See some photos from our Peer Support Groups below.

Cheers

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



PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

WEST METRO PSG

Lunch at cafe



MONDAY ONLINE COFFEE MORNING

Photo taken after joke session!



PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

EAST METRO PSG BBQ at Jells Park



Singing our favourite songs



PEER SUPPORT GROUPS cont...

SOUTH METRO PSG 10 Pin Bowling





VALE JESS (JEFF) SHAW

Brain Injury Matters pays tribute to Jess (Jeff) Shaw, a previous BIM member, who served on the Committee.

We thank Eva Sifis for giving us permission to publish her words:

Mahatma Ghandi once said "Strength does not come from physical capacity, it comes from an indomitable will". And this was demonstrated by Give a Care's founder and manager Jess Shaw. Her resilience and self-belief, added to an empathic nature, continues to positively affect the many people Give a Care assists and employs.

A professional plasterer and carpenter, as well as devoted parent, this tenacity was passed to a growing son to whom she was devoted.

After a catastrophic stroke in 2007, Jeff experienced many months first in hospital, then in the only bed that could be found, in a retirement facility. Eventually placed in a supported housing facility, their frustrating experience of not being listened to, instead having to bend to ideas belonging to others, brought a conviction to provide disabled clients with a service only someone with their perspective could. They founded the social enterprise Give a Care to enable people with disability the same choice and support insisted upon by Jeff.

It is now one of Victoria's fastest growing disability support services. So many people privileged to work and know them also supported and respected their transgender journey to being their true self as Jess Shaw. Jess Shaw passed on the 12th of March 2024 when cancer took her. She leaves a team of sector and lived experience professionals continuing with Give a Care to assist in crafting an empowered disabled life.

Remembering a remarkable being.

WOMEN'S PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Meeting on the first Monday of the month

Our topic this month is:

**What strategies do you use to manage your fatigue?
What do you do to refill your cup when you are depleted?**



Come along and share morning tea and stories.

DATE: Monday, 6th May 2024

TIME: 11am-12:30

PLACE: Rainbow Room, Level 4 Ross House

ADDRESS: 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

RSVP: poppy.egan@braininjurymatters.org

POEM

So here's to the beautiful, strong willed women of BIM--
The architects of resilience.
May their fire burn eternal,
And their grace illuminate the world.

-Scott Jefferies



INVITATION FROM VICTIMS OF CRIME COMMISSIONER

Seeking Expressions of Interest: VOCC Lived Experience Pilot Program

The Victims of Crime Commissioner works to advocate for the respect, participation, recognition and inclusion of victims of crime in the justice system.

The Commissioner is commencing an exciting new program aimed at embedding victims' lived experience expertise into her work.

They are now calling for expressions of interest from people with Lived Experience as a victim of crime. They would be keen to hear from any BIM members, who have been victims of crime, who might be interested in joining them. They are happy to answer any questions and can provide support to apply.

[Click here](#) to view information about the Lived Experience program, who is eligible to apply and how to apply. If you need assistance, please contact office@braininjurymatters.org



[Agencies](#) [Resources](#) [Media](#) [Contact](#)

[About](#) [Victims of crime](#) [Making a complaint](#) [Recent activity](#) [Support services](#)



Lived Experience program



HELP WITH VCAT GUARDIANSHIP & ADMINISTRATION HEARINGS

**Do you, or someone you know, have communication difficulties?
Could you use some help having your voice heard at VCAT?**

VCAT is now running a **communication facilitation pilot** that could assist you. You can be supported by an experienced speech therapist, so that your voice can be heard in the management of your affairs.



If this is you, or someone you know, please contact:

Miranda Bain 0431-114-539

or email Miranda.L.Bain@courts.vic.gov.au

cc anna.kricker@courts.vic.gov.au

VCAT is the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. VCAT was created to be a fair, low cost, efficient way of resolving disputes without going to a formal court. If you are under guardianship, or administration, orders that you believe are unnecessary, you can apply to VCAT to have the orders changed or overturned.

VOICES FOR CHANGE

Voices for Change is a self-advocacy group for people with acquired brain injury and experience of the justice system.

Voices for Change support people with ABI and justice system experience to develop confidence and skills to speak up and have their voices heard.

42% of men and 33% of women in Victoria's prisons have an acquired brain injury. That is compared to 2% in the general Australian community.

Voices for Change have just had a celebration of their achievements over the last 4 years. You can read more about Voices for Change [here](#).



HAVE YOU BEEN SCAMMED?

Do you want help in coping with the loss of money or feelings of anger, shame, confusion or disbelief?

Have your relationships or lifestyle been affected?

We are trialling a new program to help scam survivors, called Smooth Sailing After Scams.

Find out more information about the program go to <http://www.cyberability.org.au> or email cyberability@monash.edu



CYBERABILITY

NDIS INFORMATION SESSIONS

Have you considered applying for the NDIS but don't know where to start?

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is running face to face information sessions about how to apply for the NDIS, create an NDIS plan, use an NDIS plan and change an NDIS plan.

Date: 7 May 2024

Location: Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

For more information and to register, click [here](#).



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



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.

ADRIAN'S BLOG

In My Opinion...

Everyday, I think about what I've done during the day and I try to improve. I don't always do better (sometimes I do worse!), but I always think what can I do better next time. This has become almost a ritual for me most nights and when I get a chance during the day. I understand that there will always be some damage to my brain, but I can learn to limit how much that affects my life. For example, I am consciously typing this by using both my left and right hands. My left hand isn't as controlled. I'm in the habit of cleaning my teeth with my left hand. I have developed a habit of taking my medication and checking that my doors are locked when I clean my teeth.

In the kitchen at meal times (where I definitely need all the help I can get), I have a certain ways of preparing different meals that work for me. Everyone is different, so everyone needs to develop their certain ways for themselves.

There are many things that I do during most days to help me improve. They are very small, and don't require much attention, but over time it can be effective. Especially since, over time, these habits become easier to implement and become more 'automated' (for lack of a better term- what I mean is less conscious thought/planning required).

The bottom line is that there is definitely always room for improvement!!!

Joke of the Month

What do you call cheese that doesn't belong to you?
Nacho cheese



A.B.I. – Always Be Improving!!

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

MEMBERS' PETS/ ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

Meet Peter Lester's dog, Sydney!



Sydney, which was the name of the first Fox Terrier to come to Australia, was born in September last year. He is our mate at home and an important family member. He obviously helps me forget stroke and brain injury, doing fun things like ripping up phone cables to my iPhone and Apple Watch, eating my lunch and burying my clothes in the backyard. We meet up with other owners and about 20-30 foxies once a month. Sydney always looks forward to support workers coming and catching up with the neighbours.

If you have a pet or assistance animal, we'd love to feature you in our newsletter! Please send us a photo and short blurb about why you love your pet or assistance animal

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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