

# BRAIN INJURY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

## MEET YANNICK



*Yannick is one of our peer program coordinators. He facilitates the online coffee morning and Ringwood Peer Support Group. He is also one of BIM's I.T. gurus.*

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

December 29th, 2010 - bit over 13 years ago now.

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

Every day since that day.

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

I've been lucky enough to give something back and help and watch those on their own journeys and be inspired to keep mine going. Never stop achieving or trying.

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

Myself. I am my own road block.

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

Currently Mexican, give me a Tamale, Birria or Chile Verde any day.

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

*The Shawshank Redemption.*

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

Learning in general - space, archaeology, mycology, history and the list goes on.

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

As someone who didn't have this type of support in my journey of recovery, I've always wanted to see something like this be included, just like physio and other supports offered.

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

Have a way to look back as you move forward, every millimetre of success becomes kilometres and can be hard to see.

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

Inclusion, safe place and community.



## **BIM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Thursday 21 November at 11am**

**Ross House, Hayden Raysmith Room, Level 4, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.**

**All welcome. Free lunch!**

**Please RSVP to [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org)**

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# REGULAR THINGS HAPPENING AT BIM

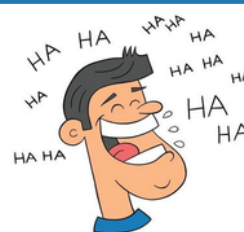
## ONLINE COFFEE MORNINGS

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
- **AWSABI (Albury-Wodonga Stroke & Brain Injury Inc)**  
- 4th Thursday of the month, 10:30am
- **Bendigo** - Fortnightly on Thursdays, 11:30am
- **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

Instagram

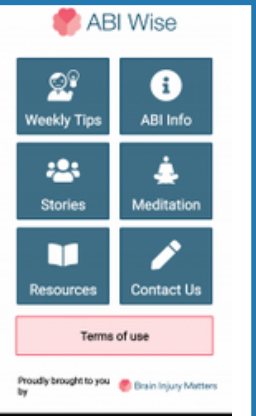
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183 posts 2,381 followers 2,301 following

Brain Injury Matters  
Self-advocacy and community education run by and for people with an acquired brain injury  
[braininjurymatters.org](https://www.braininjurymatters.org)



ABI Wise

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

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# COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

Giddy Everyone,

Well, I am sad to say that as at the time of writing this, we still haven't heard about the funding that was meant to be announced some time ago. BIM is very frustrated with this, as we are ready to commence with new peer support groups. As soon as we hear if we have, or have not, been successful, we shall let you know.

The Peer Support Groups are steaming along with the numbers of attendees growing and showing that this sort of structure is required, as it provides people with an opportunity to learn from and provide one another with support.

I'd like to take this opportunity to announce the appointment of Peter Lester to the role of BIM Secretary and extend an official, warm welcome to Peter on joining the BIM Executive. I'd also like to offer our sincere thanks to Peter for taking on this important role in the organisation. Peter takes over the role from Virginia Giddings (Nia) who has done an outstanding job as BIM Secretary for the last two terms. Fortunately for Brain Injury Matters, Nia is just taking a sideways step into the role of Vice Chair, so she is not going too far and we are delighted to still have Nia's skills and experience as part of the team.

The BIM AGM is fast approaching and I hope that you have received your invitation and have responded early to reserve your seat, or have even nominated yourself for a position on the committee.

I will be attending an information session this Thursday on the Foundational Supports NDIS program that will be made available to individuals and organisations soon. You may or may not have heard about Foundational Supports, but they are a large amount of funding to be delivered to the disability community. Stay tuned for more information soon.

Cheers for now,  
Col Brokenshire  
Chairperson



# BIM OFFICE REPORT

As always, there are many things happening in the BIM Office – especially as we get into the final months of the year and approach the AGM, which is taking place next month on **Thursday, 21st November, 11am at Ross House, Hayden Raysmith Room, Level 4, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne**. We are delighted that Nia Giddings and Nat Linke will join us at the AGM as our Guest Speakers. They will talk about the benefits of Peer Support Groups and the research undertaken by The University of Melbourne, co-designed with BIM. Nia and Nat recently presented to the national Brain Injury Australia conference in Adelaide, so it will be great to have them deliver the presentation for BIM Members and guests at our AGM. If you would like to attend the AGM, **please RSVP by Monday, 11th November by email to [office@braininjurymatters.org](mailto:office@braininjurymatters.org)** ALL WELCOME!

Over the coming weeks I look forward to meeting those of you in our Melbourne PSGs to talk about therapeutic horticulture. The weather has definitely improved here in Melbourne and I hope with my visit to the groups, I can encourage some of you to get out and enjoy some of the benefits of time spent in the garden.

Last week, we said farewell to our Monash placement students, Hannah and Deana. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for the time they spent working with BIM and assisting with many projects, such as this newsletter and the video we will share for International Day of People with Disability, in early December. I know they really valued their time with us and enjoyed meeting members of the Ringwood and Footscray groups. I wish them all the very best with their future studies.

See you at the AGM!  
Georgia Tracy  
Coordination Support Worker



# PSG PROGRAM REPORT

As always, lots has been happening in our peer support groups in September/October. Read on for some anecdotes.

During the last month, many of the peer support groups have been revisiting what it means to create a **safe space** for everyone. Here's a list of words some groups came up with:

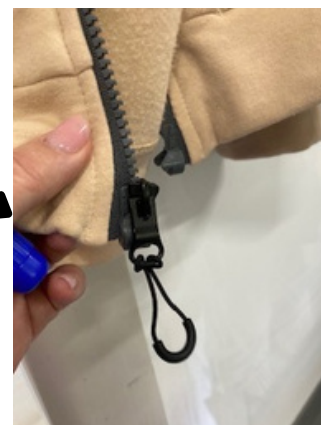
**Belonging**  
 Patient Kindness Listening  
 Polite Friendly  
**Creating a Safe Space**  
 Understanding  
 Supportive  
 Welcoming  
 Respect

A member of the East Metro peer support group led a great session about **adaptive clothing**. Did you know that you can get shirts that use magnets instead of buttons or zips? She suggested some great websites to check out: [jamthelabel.com](http://jamthelabel.com); [christinastephens.com.au](http://christinastephens.com.au); [everyhuman.com.au](http://everyhuman.com.au)



Magnetic zip connection on hoodie

A shoe with a zip at the back and velcro strap to allow easy entry of Ankle Foot Othoses



For October's activity, the Women's peer support group had an enjoyable morning at the NGV International. The art was great, but the **connections** were even better. One member said, *"I am always busy but I will rearrange my schedule so that I can attend the women's group."* Another member said, *"What I enjoy most about the Women's group is being able to be with other women who understand my experience. We can all have a laugh."*

**Other exciting PSG activities** have included trips to the Melbourne Zoo, Ceres, SkyHigh, Pure Peninsula Honey and Fish'n'Chips in Williamstown.

Lastly, five of our amazing members, **Adrian, Nat, Nia, Tanya and Ebony**, went to the Brain Injury Australia Conference in Adelaide. On the next few pages, Nat has shared their highlights of the conference.

Until next month,  
Sally (on behalf of all the PSG Team Leaders)



East Metro PSG Members at SkyHigh



Bendigo Peer Support Group meeting up for coffee



# BRAIN INJURY AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE



*BIM Members facing forward from left: Ebony, Tanya, Nia, Nat and Adrian*

*The Brain Injury Australia Conference was held in September 2024 at Adelaide Oval. There were talks from brain injury survivors, clinicians, researchers and politicians. Presentations highlighted people who have a brain injury and new brain injury research.*

*There were familiar faces from the extended BIM community. These included people from Brain Injury Australia, Heads Together, Monash University, The University of Melbourne and The University of Sydney.*



*Presenters from left: Liss Brunner, Kate Gould, Mark Bayley, Jennie Ponsford and Nick Rushworth*



# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



## PEER SUPPORT

Nia (BIM) and Lauren (University of Melbourne) presented “Lived experience of the impacts of peer support groups for adults with an Acquired Brain Injury”. 31 BIM members were involved in the research and this is the first the results were made public.

## CO-DESIGN

Nia (BIM) and Nat (BIM) presented “Boosting research impact through co-design”. Everyone benefits when brain injury survivors are involved in research design. This talk highlighted the authentic partnership between the University of Melbourne and BIM (Peter, Brent, Nia, Nat and Peer Support Attendees).



## TURNING THE SKY AROUND

Eva (BIM) spoke about shoring up return to employment in our ‘back to the future’ National Disability Insurance Scheme world’. Eva was also filming for her new television program ‘A New You’ on Channel 31 during the conference.

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



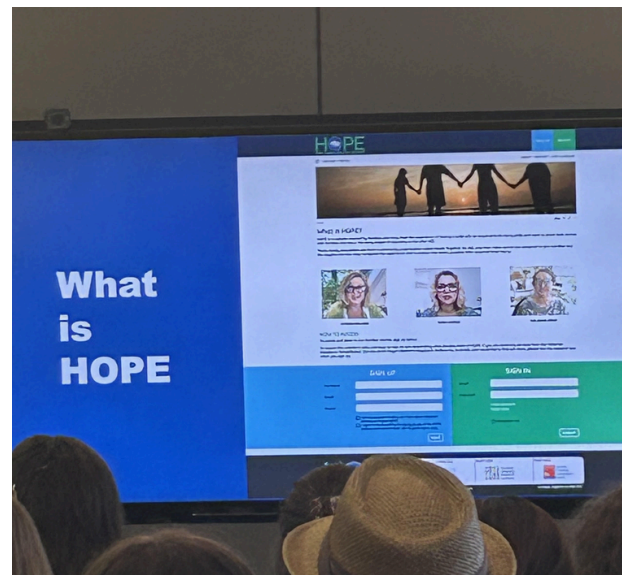
## CHILDHOOD STROKE PROJECT

Sadly 600 children per year have a stroke, sometimes this is not diagnosed. There are new resources available to support survivors and their families.

<https://ncreview.com.au/2022/02/01/wallan-stroke-survivor-making-a-difference/>

## THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE

In 2025 there will be a new Heads Together website that will follow the stories of ABI survivors. This will provide information on the journey from hospital to rehab and into the community after an ABI.



## ORTHOPTICS

The majority of people who sustain a brain injury experience visual complications such as blurred vision, double vision, decreased peripheral vision and sensitivity to light. Sue-Ellen Drew shared her story of double vision after suffering a mild traumatic brain injury. Orthoptics help

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



## RETURN TO WORK

In July 2024 a guide to returning to work after traumatic injury was launched.

[https://www.monash.edu/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/3440666/Intervention-Manual\\_final\\_July2024.pdf](https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/3440666/Intervention-Manual_final_July2024.pdf)

## TOOLS FOR AGEING WELL WITH TBI

In September 2024 Australia launched tips on ageing with a TBI.

[https://www.connectivity.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Tools\\_for\\_ageing\\_well\\_with\\_traumatic\\_brain\\_injury.pdf](https://www.connectivity.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Tools_for_ageing_well_with_traumatic_brain_injury.pdf)



*Same same but different*



## ADELAIDE

The conference was at Adelaide Oval. This meant that brain breaks or naps were spent in a corporate box!

We enjoyed the comforts of Adelaide and looking out at wineries, gardens and picturesque scenery.

The next Brain Injury Australia conference will be held in 2026.  
We look forward to seeing you there!

## *In My Opinion...*

I was at the Brain Injury Australia conference in Adelaide last month. It was wonderful to see so many experts live on stage, discussing brain injury and what can be done about it. People's understanding of the brain has come so far in the last 30 years (since I had my injury), it's amazing how much has been discovered. There's still more to discover about the brain and how resilient it is.

It's amazing how popular the Brain Injury Australia seminars are. I've been to the last 3 and they get better each time. I've spoken to various people in the industry and they all respect what Nick Rushworth has done. For those who do not know Nick, Nick Rushworth suffered a brain injury after he was involved in a bicycle accident in 1996. I think he has categorically shown just how much the brain can 're-wire' itself, adapt to changing situations and thrive, not just survive!

And, speaking of thriving, there were many, many great speakers there. But my favourite was Kate Gould- coming all the way over from Melbourne! She spoke about PBS+PLUS – an introduction to Positive Behaviour Support for 'challenging behaviours. She also introduced me to the Relentless Optimism podcast, which focusses on the challenges of ABI.

It was held at the Adelaide Oval and I had 3 great days there (especially since I'd never been to Adelaide before!!). It really is a beautiful city! In my opinion, Adelaide is a gateway to some of Australia's best wine country and has some really great restaurants, hotels and beaches. Have you ever been to Adelaide?

In order to help me with my aim of losing weight, I'd like to restart going to the gym weekly and playing golf monthly. It's been a few years since I've regularly gone to a gym, and much, much longer since I've regularly played golf!! But I'm sticking with my mantra and it never too late to keep improving!!

What has everybody else started/restarted in order to improve? Let's all start kicking goals with the aim of improving ourselves!!

***A.B.I. – Always Be Improving!!***

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

# WOMEN'S PEER SUPPORT GROUP

**When:** Monday 4 November

**Time:** 11am -12.30pm

**What:** Melbourne Cup lunch

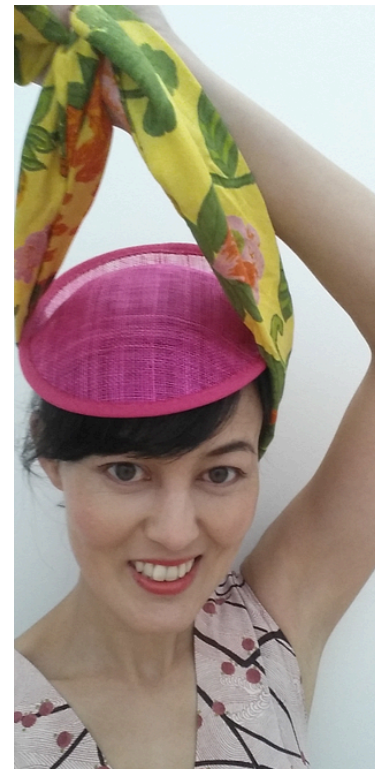
**Where:** New Rainbow Room level 4  
251-253 Flinders lane Melbourne



**What:** Come in your favorite hat, it can be a silly hat or one you would wear to the races.

Please bring a plate of food to share for lunch if you can.

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





## Free Webinar: Australian Digital Health Technologies Overview

Wednesday 30 October  
12.30pm - 1.30pm (AEDT)



Join People with Disability Australia (PWDA) for a free webinar exploring Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) digital health tools and how you can use them.

The webinar will give an overview on the following digital health tools

- My Health Record
- My Health App
- Electronic prescriptions
- 

When: Wednesday 30 October 2024, 12.30pm – 1.30pm AEDT

This event will have live captioning and Auslan interpretation. Attendees can advise of other access requirements when you register.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please [contact PWDA](#) or call 1800 422 015.

**REGISTER HERE:** <https://forms.pwd.org.au/civicrm/event/register/?reset=1&id=21>

# THE LIFE OF A LIFELESS SHOE



*by Anat Bigos*

*(Anat is a member of our Committee of Management & attends a number of peer support groups. She says this is her first attempt at fiction. If you enjoy writing, consider sending a piece in for our newsletter.)*

I'm feeling quite sick at the moment & it's completely stuffy in here! In actual fact, I find it so disgusting when that smelly man enters inside me and I can feel every kilogram that he carries! I realise that many people stink out this place, and if there was a smell test, I doubt that I'd pass!

It can get especially smelly, when a sock is bunched up under the ball of his foot. I don't feel like complaining so much, but I have never realised that when someone spends so many hours inside me, it would be this tiring!

I used to be a hip young Adidas, now my 3 stripes are wrinkled and I'm looking worse for wear, so I guess I need to cease being adorned with brand names!

Actually, the worst feeling is when he drags his feet around and I can feel the textures of the ground through my thin, worn soles. It's true that this man has an odd walking style, but I feel such a huge potential in being an aid for him, but the worst feeling that I could have is when this bear of a man decides to dance!

If I was an unmatched pair supporting his two left feet, perhaps he would finally grasp the dance moves.

Sometimes he drags his feet lazily, although I don't let him know that this style hurts me quite a bit. I figure that letting him know the complete truth wouldn't help the situation, so I've decided to keep quiet.

Feeling his thumping steps beside that skinny girlfriend of his is making me extremely jealous of those delicate boots!

# THE LIFE OF A LIFELESS SHOE cont...

*by Anat Bigos*

Those high heeled red stilettos are not intimidating me and I recognise that petite lady wearing them. I have a feeling that she was one of my dancing partners last week! I can faintly hear the sound of the screeching across the hall while she's dancing and I'm determined not to experience that pain although I'm compassionate towards the feeling that they may be undergoing! I pride myself on my empathy, but they're definitely not two shoes that I want to step into!

Even though my role is to give support, I constantly feel that someone else is in charge of me and I've lost some of my independence.

Sometimes, I secretly wish that his skinny girlfriend would mistakenly put her feet inside me! This life is completely unfair! Where's the justice in this matter?

What made me excited, was that he bought me bright new laces the other day. It felt like I have received a face lift.

When he cleans my soles, I feel that my soul is complete!

Many people take for granted all of the support and comfort that I provide. However to be completely honest, I simply enjoy being the base of peoples' self-fulfilment! Perhaps I should feel honoured that he doesn't want to part with me, since he has worn me to death!







**Live with  
disability and  
want to study?  
Work in the disability sector  
providing support to others.**

**Scan the QR code  
to register for an  
information session**



### **Gain a vocational qualification**



Support and adjustments to help you study and manage your disability provided by the Disability Employment Catalyst



Funded spots available



Learn new skills and gain a CHC33021 in Individual Support (Disability)



Your lived experience of disability will be valued



Introductions to large disability service providers

## SEEKING INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ABI & SUBSTANCE USE

- Griffith University are interested in conducting an informal interviews with people about their lived experience of ABI and substance use
- This will help them with a grant application which Dr Kate Gould and Prof Jennie Ponsford at Monash University are also involved with.
- They want to speak with people who used substances when young adults (aged 14-24 years)
- You do not need to be aged 14-24 now so long as you have lived experience of substance use and/or ABI during this age period.
- The ABI does not need to have been caused by substance use.
- The interview can be done via video call or phone call.
- It will take about an hour
- They will send the questions in advance so that you have time to prepare.
- In total, it usually takes about 2 hours
- You will get remuneration of \$50/hour in the form of cash (direct transfer) or Coles gift voucher.
- If you are interested, please contact Hannah: [h.lindsay@griffith.edu.au](mailto:h.lindsay@griffith.edu.au)

## 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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