

August – October 2019 Newsletter

“Aroha ki te tangata, ahakoa ko wai te tangata ”

Love people, in spite of who they are

The voice of those affected by brain injury
Te reo o ngaa taangata i paangia i te mate roro

Hope is the thing with feathers

By Emily Dickinson 1830-1886

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

Our mission

To raise awareness and promote prevention of brain injury. Brain Injury Waikato empowers people and families affected by brain injury through the provision of advocacy, support and education.



“Bringing together those in need with those who wish to give”

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Your contribution impacts lives

Research Report



Dr Kelly Jones,
Senior Research
Fellow, National
Institute of Stroke
and Applied
Neurosciences,
AUT University

Hi All

It is a bit of a short update from me this time around. Auckland University of Technology's new Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Network came into action with an online launch in May. The network already has over 200 members. I encourage you all to look at the opportunities to get involved by visiting <https://www.aut.ac.nz/traumatic-brain-injury-tbi-network>

If you use the following link, you can listen to a radio interview of Associate Professor Alice Theadom speaking about this exciting new initiative https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018695983

Remember, you can also keep up to date with latest Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) research in New Zealand and overseas by using Twitter to follow the TBI Network [@atheadom](#) and our Pediatric TBI Consortium [@kellyjonesNZ](#)

Our research team have been busy writing grants for planned new TBI research projects. These include a proposal to look at trends and patterns of brain injuries over

time. There is evidence that the number and types of injuries that people are sustaining may have changed over the past decade.

Overseas figures suggest that greater numbers of older people (aged 50-79 years) are experiencing falls (a leading cause of TBI), beyond changes expected due to an aging population. Other figures suggest that brain injuries due to road injuries have decreased by 16%.

Public hospital data in New Zealand also suggest that similar changes may be occurring in our country. Between 2010-2016, non-fatal car crashes reduced by 4% while falls increased by 8%. In addition, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) reported a 32% increase in concussion claims from 2010-2017. Together, these types of changes highlight the need for further research to examine trends and patterns of TBI over time.

Efforts also continue to maximize the value and impact of data collected from the Brain Injury Incidence and Outcomes New Zealand in the Community (BIONIC) study. Our current focus is on young children's (<8 years) cognitive and thinking skills over the four-years following TBI. We are particularly interested to find out whether

there are any changes in children's abilities over time. We will be sure to provide an update to you all when findings are available.

Also, very warm congratulations to Professor Nicola Starkey of Waikato



University who has secured \$1.1 million from the Health Research Council of New Zealand to find about more about how children and adolescents recover from concussion. We look forward to working with Nicola as co-investigators on this important project. You can find out more about this new study at <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/114036284/university-of-waikato-professors-mission-to-find-out-more-about-child-concussion>

And, last but certainly not least, if anyone has any thoughts around new areas of research into TBI, we are always happy to hear from you – please feel free to drop us a line anytime kelly.jones@aut.ac.nz

Best wishes, Kelly Jones

Report from Liaison Officer

by Marion

Greetings from Brain Injury Waikato headquarters I hope you have been coping with the chilly nights and mornings and enjoying some sun when it appears.

We are as busy as ever in our various roles both in the office and out in the community assisting our clients.

Gil Newburn gave a very informative talk on the Secondary effects of brain injury in July. Primary effects include the shearing and tearing of brain cell connections, bruising and bleeding, at time of a traumatic brain injury. The secondary effects are how this impacts on a person's functioning. These are also experienced in people with medical causes of brain injury (i.e. infection, stroke, aneurysm). The brain undergoes chemical, inflammatory and immune changes. Secondary effects are diverse and can continue for months and or years. These include physical symptoms (fatigue, headaches, noise intolerant) cognitive, emotional and behavioural changes (slower processing, memory, impulse control, anxiety and depression).

A key point was the role of a protein called Brain Derived

Neurotropic Factor which is vital in the formation of new brain cell pathways and the strengthening of connections between cells, known as neuroplasticity. It also plays a role in lowering the fight or flight response in our brains. This production of this protein or BDNF is reduced following a brain injury.

The good news is that we can increase the production of this factor through daily exercise for 15 minutes (he said 8 days a week). This needs to be aerobic exercise that increases heart rate but is low impact and does not cause exhaustion, as this is counterproductive.

Living with a Brain Injury Seminar for Services Providers & Health Professionals

This seminar will be held on **Friday, 18 October.** Information will be distributed once speakers have been finalised.

Kim Stedman from Paterson Burn Optometrists presented a fantastic talk on the effects of traumatic brain injury on vision. 45% of people will have visual difficulties following a traumatic brain injury. Our vision is a complex series of nerve pathways that send messages to the visual cortex in the brain. Injury can damage these pathways

resulting in common problems of blurring, tracking objects, double vision, light sensitivity, spatial and depth awareness, dizziness and headaches.

Visual Therapy or Behavioural Optometry can make a difference and a number of our clients have found this helpful. Not all Optometrists offer this treatment programme, so it is necessary to ask your Optometrist. You do not have to be a wearer of glasses to access it. As well as specific exercises they might also prescribe tints and prism lenses. ACC has been reluctant to provide this treatment, however, growing evidence of benefit will hopefully change this.

Please remember we would love you to become a member and make a \$10 contribution to our services. Ella will help you with this. Donations are also welcome.

We welcome your feedback. Those of you we have worked with in 2019 will receive a feedback form which we need to supply information to funders. Your co-operation is much appreciated.

Congratulations to Chris, who is the lucky winner of our mystery prize for financial members.

Best wishes for the remainder of the year.
Marion

Tips for making a comeback after brain injury

Stay positive - no one said this recovery process would be easy, but staying positive can only help. Brain changes can actually lead to decreases in motivation and goal-directed activity. The way you talk and think about your recovery affects the way you feel about it, so it's important to keep moving forward.

You are not alone - don't isolate yourself, a tendency that can come after a brain injury, and make sure the people you do spend time with treat you with dignity and respect.

Think like a detective - become Sherlock Holmes and start deducing what causes your symptoms and makes them better or worse, without over thinking them. If you can track it, you can change it.

Brain injuries are like fingerprints - each one is different. Your recovery will strongly depend on whether your injury is "mild, moderate, or severe. The time it takes to heal also depends on the number of brain injuries one has experienced in a lifetime, and other conditions that may exist.

Relaxation strategies promote the brain's readiness to learn and remember - relaxation strategies are very beneficial to people diagnosed with brain injury because stress literally causes changes in brain functioning, particularly memory and attention functioning. Anxiety, which interferes with attention and concentration after brain injury, will make symptoms related to any neurologic condition worse. Many people report that managing stress has improved memory and concentration!



Develop personal mottos or key words that cue you to stay on track or complete tasks - these mottos help trigger your memory about what you need to do. Some examples I have seen used are, "do it, write it, or forget it," "be here now," "stop, relax, refocus," and "KPW" (for keys, phone, and wallet, which I use personally when leaving the house).

You are not alone, don't isolate yourself, a tendency that can come after a brain injury

Keep your family and loved ones involved in your recovery process - Family members play a critical and often under-appreciated role in recovery after brain injury. Those close to you may also be going through a grief and acceptance process in coping with changes

Consider the benefits of cognitive rehabilitation - This is a treatment used to help individuals compensate for memory, attention, and other thinking problems.

Please remember you are not alone and there are so many resources and strategies to help you better understand and compensate for brain injury, and to aid you and your loved ones along the journey to recovery.

Soper, A. (2019, July 21). *Tips for Making a Comeback After Traumatic Brain Injury*. Retrieved from

<https://navymedicine.navylive.dodlive.mil/archives/4457> (adapted)

FEEDBACK / SUGGESTIONS

We welcome your suggestions or feedback. We want this organisation to work for you. Please forward feedback to Ella at admin@braininjurywaikato.org.nz

SAVE THE DATE: Annual General Meeting



Our Annual General Meeting is coming up in August. Please ensure you have renewed your membership or joined. Only financial members have voting rights.

When: Wednesday, 28 August

Time: 10:30am

Where: 11 Somerset Street, Frankton, Hamilton

Guest speaker: Prof Nicola Starkey (photo in Kelly's Research report)

Topic: Long-term outcomes from Brain Injury. This will include some of the findings from the 8-year outcomes from the BIONIC (Brain Injury Outcomes New Zealand in the Community) study.



Disclaimer

All care has been taken in the preparation of this newsletter. We disclaim any liability for information contained within. It is of a general nature and to be used as a guide only.

CLIENTS' CORNER Clients' advice to help in daily life

I have my keys on a dog clip attached to one end of handbag, with handbag always in pantry.

Little purse toolkit with chewing gum to assist my damaged filter, earplugs for shopping malls, medication, peppermint essence for headaches, tissues for tears, almonds for headache and distraction. Eye drops for dry eyes from chemist, which have a long life.

12 spoons theory - an attempt, to allocate my activities & ration my energy.

Buy more in bulk - fewer trips for supplies. Try to cook in bulk when well.

All loyalty cards/money cards etc labelled with sharpie for easy access.

Lower your expectations, does it really matter, is it life threatening? Prioritise, and reprioritise, and reprioritise.

Have any great tips or advice you want to share? Please email it to Ella at admin@braininjurywaikato.org.nz

RED ALERT
Send us your tips

Our SINCERE THANKS to all our funders, sponsors and supporters



TRUST WAIKATO
TE PUNA O WAIKATO



Sir John Logan Campbell
Residuary Estate

4Good NZ, A-Lectrics, C1 South, D.V. Bryant Trust, Donny Charitable Trust, Glenice & John Gallagher Foundation, Grassroots Trust, Hamilton City Council, Hinuera-Te Poi Lions Club, Jumble Around Inc Cambridge, Len Reynolds Trust, Ministry of Health, Nicholson United Autos Morrinsville, NZ Community Post, Oosh Cambridge, Page Charitable Trust, Suzuki NZ, The Norah Howell Charitable Trust, The Framing Workshop Cambridge, Waikato Lyceum Charitable Trust, Waikato Provincial Rural Women NZ, Waikato WDFW Karamu Trust. Thank you to everyone who has given a donation, but for privacy reasons cannot be named.

SUPPORT GROUPS



Cambridge

3rd Tuesday of each month at 10:30am at Cambridge Community House, 193 Shakespeare Street.

Kirikiri

Last Wednesday of each month at 10:30am at the office, 11 Somerset Street, Frankton, Hamilton

Tokoroa

2nd Thursday of each month at 10:30am at Tolloch House, Gate One, Maraetai Road, Tokoroa.

Morrinsville

Meetings are currently in recess due to funding restraints. We will keep you posted.

Yoga sessions at the office

Join James Fowlie, Yoga Teacher, for gentle yoga.
When: Every Thursday
Time: 10:30am or 11:30am
Where: 11 Somerset Street, Frankton, Hamilton (office)
 Go on the mailing list to get weekly reminders.

Education sessions with Healthcare Rehabilitation

Aug Wednesday, 14th

Topic: Hyperbaric treatment

A team member from Te Kohao Health will talk about the benefits of hyperbaric treatment and the cost involved in getting this treatment.

Sep Wednesday, 11th

Topic: Medication oversight

Helen from Pharmacy 547 will talk about the ongoing need for medications after brain injury. You will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Oct Wednesday, 9th

Topic: Your emergency journey

Helen Gavin, Nurse Educator & Jessie Prebble, OT, from the Emergency Department WDHB. They will talk about the journey when admitted to hospital after brain injury.

Waikato NeuroTones

Join the choir and enjoy the benefits of singing.

When: Every Tuesday

Where: Central Baptist Church, 33 Charlemont Street, Hamilton

Time: 10:30am

Entrance fee: \$3

Please contact the office if you want to join the choir.



Fundraising

Give a Little

We are registered with givealittle. Please support our work by donating at www.givealittle.co.nz/org/braininjuryw



Why not consider donating through payroll giving? Your employer deducts a set amount from your wages and pay it directly to us. My **sincere thanks** to people who are currently donating this way.

First Aid Kits



77 Piece first aid kit - \$39.95

You can still order your kit from the office today. We get \$12 for each kit sold. This 77 item kit has transparent fold-out compartments including a digital thermometer and instant ice pack. This kit is CE approved and follows Worksafe NZ guidelines. View this first aid kit at the office, or online at www.fundraisingfirstaid.co.nz

EVENTS AT THE OFFICE AND AWAY

Members present to HealthCare NZ

Five of our members (photos below), gave a presentation to HealthCare NZ on 19 June. They gave invaluable insight into their various journeys and challenges post brain injury. It was useful for the healthcare professionals to hear directly what was important and helped with recovery. The audience included service coordinators, OTs, nurses and other support workers. Staff really appreciated the opportunity for discussion following the talks. Our members also relish the chance to tell their stories to assist others and professionals working with them on their journeys.



William

Steve

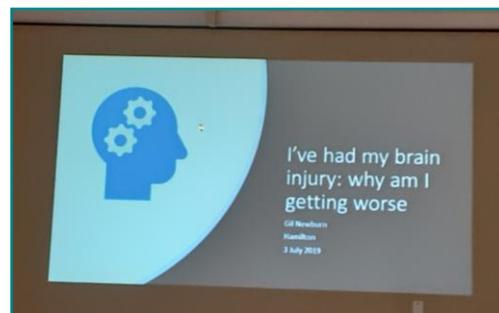
Rachel

Stefan

Nola



Kim Stedman, Optometrist



Dr Gil Newburn's presentation topic

Brain Injury Advocates

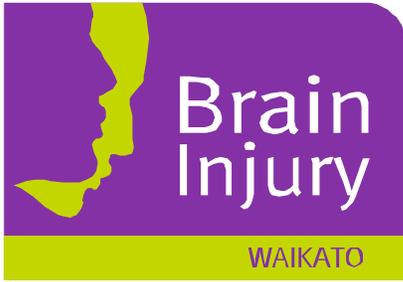
Staff members are advocates for clients. No one else can represent clients in an advocacy role or use the name of the organisation for other purposes not approved by the Board. Consultation with staff is recommended for any suggestions made by other brain injured people treatment of a brain injury.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Like us on Facebook and connect with like minded people from around the World!



BrainInjuryWaikato



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www.givealittle.co.nz/org/braininjuryw

CC 23785

NEW MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL

We encourage you to support our work

Brain Injury Waikato empowers people and families affected by brain injury through the provision of advocacy, support and education to make informed choices in ways that create a long-term and sustainable difference in their lives. We also raise awareness and promote prevention of brain injury in the community.

I wish to become a member \$ 10 (Students, beneficiaries, seniors)

I wish to become a member \$ 50 (individuals waged)

I wish to give a donation \$10 \$20 \$30 \$ ___ (other)

Payment by Direct Deposit into SBS bank account no 03-1355-0691730-00. Please use your name as reference. All donations over \$5, are tax deductible. You can claim 33% of all donations made. We provide help to complete the 'Tax credit claim form' at the end of the financial year.

Name:.....

Address:.....

Contact numbers:.....

Email address:.....

YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WE SUPPORT