



# ANNUAL REPORT **2015-16**

THE BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA (BIAT) IS THE PEAK BODY FORMED TO MONITOR AND SUPPORT THE LONG TERM NEEDS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH OR AFFECTED BY BRAIN INJURY IN TASMANIA.



# 2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT

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# ABOUT BIAT

The Brain Injury Association of Tasmania (BIAT) is the peak body formed to monitor and support the long term needs of people living with or affected by brain injury in Tasmania.

The Association has three key strategic objectives:

- raise community awareness of acquired brain injury (ABI) and its impacts;
- drive changes to improve the lives of people living with or affected by ABI; and
- build strategic partnerships and undertake collaborative work to provide a strong voice for people affected by ABI.

With our peak role and focus on ABI, we seek a society where: people affected by ABI feel understood, respected, and included; laws and systems are just and fair, and people with ABI access them without discrimination; health and community services for people with ABI are respectful, responsive, and meet demand; people with ABI participate fully in community life; and the incidence of ABI is much reduced. BIAT is also focused on ensuring that the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) truly reflects the lived experience of ABI, in all its disparateness and diversity.



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another year has passed and, from my report to you last year, I can only echo the uncertainty of how services provided by BIAT can be funded under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The lack of clarity around the future roles and opportunities that transition to the NDIS presents for BIAT continue to limit the Committee of Management's ability to map a longer term path for the organisation.

The significant slippage in timelines for release of the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Commissioning Framework now means there is less than eight months of support for BIAT from the State Government funding agreement left with no clear pathway to identify support that should be delivered through the NDIS.

The exploration of mergers between organisations within the sector has continued during the year. While the foreshadowed merger between TABIS and Headway rebuilding lives did not eventuate, the processes that BIAT contributed to has meant that these organisations have both sought new opportunities.

Through support from the Tasmanian Community Fund, (TCF) a pilot project grant to provide a community liaison role at the RHH supporting families of people with an acquired brain disorder, at the point of patient diagnosis through to post hospital discharge and into community care, was secured. Jenny Langley demonstrated in the time she was working in the role that it contributed strongly to better support and outcomes for people with an ABI and their families on leaving hospital.

The acceptance of the role within the RHH and the take up of the service has proven the research identifying this as an unmet need was correct and, through the generosity of the TCF, we are proud of contribution BIAT has made to address the problem. Regrettably, BIAT has not been able to further continue the service from internal resources; the challenge now is to secure permanent funding to continue the support now that the initial pilot has demonstrated its value.

Dominic Anastasio has continued his commitment to marketing BIAT through social media and our website. The quality of his creative input has leveraged BIAT's reach and objective of making information on ABI more widely accessible.

## FOLLOW BIAT

[biat.org.au](http://biat.org.au)

[facebook.com/  
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## President's Report continued

Our Executive Officer Deb Byrne continued her dedicated efforts in advocating and representing BIAT at the political level, within the NDIS consultations, and throughout the sector. Her passion for the work of BIAT remains exceptional.

The Committee of Management would like to thank the staff for their hard work during the year and in particular acknowledge the inspiration and leadership that Deb provides. I trust that the coming period will quickly see greater clarity emerge on how BIAT can operate in the new environment the NDIS has created and as a Committee we continue to seek opportunities to position BIAT.



DARIO TOMAT

BIAT President

# EO'S REPORT

The Brain Injury Association of Tasmania (BIAT) is driven by a collective desire to defend and promote the rights, interests and wellbeing of people living with brain injury.

The 2015-16 financial year has been a year with many rewarding moments as well as some challenges.

BIAT worked hard during the past year to consolidate its position as the public voice for all Tasmanians living with or affected by brain injury, and as the representative body for the brain injury sector across Tasmania. The solid reputation established by BIAT as a positive and well informed contributor to policy and program development continues to benefit Tasmanians living with brain injury.

For the past few years BIAT has been operating in an environment of major transformation. The not-for-profit sector in general has been subjected to changes in policy, and to changes in the nation's economic landscape.

These changes have intensified within the disability services sector by the introduction of the NDIS on 1 July 2016.

Change has also challenged us with the impact of funding cuts made by the State Government. BIAT shares the Government's commitment to improve accountability, is committed to embedding a culture of evaluation and accountability across the organisation, and is working collaboratively in making this strategic focus an organisational reality.

Through the experience of its extensive networks, BIAT has developed a thorough understanding of the need for consultation, building and developing sector capacity, disseminating information, performing research, raising awareness, and representing and advocating at both a state and national level.





## EO's Report continued

The one thing that is predictable about undertaking systemic advocacy however is that it is fundamentally unpredictable. Day to day operational demands constantly change simply due to the rapidly changing scale and complexity of the advocacy issues that are presented; this was certainly the case for 2015/2016. Despite the challenges, BIAT continued to deliver quality services, made measured progress and continued to build our organisation's strong reputation throughout Tasmania.

The advocacy work BIAT undertakes on a daily basis for our community is so important and cannot be taken for granted. Brain injury is NOT a disability – it is an event! It is the resulting, often devastating, impairments and problems that 'disable' a person; the lack of understanding in, and the need to label people by, our community that renders a person living with brain injury as 'disabled'. Whilst brain injury unfortunately happens to people, it should not define them, more importantly it should not define them as disabled.

In Tasmania this issue is often compounded by the fact that when brain injury isn't 'residing' in the (if you can't see it, it doesn't exist) too hard basket, it is integrated in the disability funding 'bucket'. This 'bucket' has never had enough resources in it to meet demand and the reality is people whose disability is most visible and/or most understood in our community receive the lion's share of dollars available. In theory full roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme from 1 July 2016 should change this however there is considerable work that needs to be done in this area, largely due to the acknowledged hidden nature of brain injury.

Further compounding the issue is the disparateness and diversity of brain injury. Like an octopus, it spreads its 'tentacles' to many other areas. This injury has a direct impact on the suicide rate, petty and major crime rates, drug addiction, alcoholism, violence in the family home, employment, and discrimination within the social welfare state, along with impacting on the social and political economy.

Changes in the external environment impact on the way we plan and deliver services; they do not however alter BIAT's aspirations to broaden the range and understanding of mainstream and specialist services to meet the variable needs of individuals living with brain injury, their families and carers in Tasmania. My hope for the future is that workers in the myriad of services (police, mental health, employment, drug and alcohol, family violence, disability, housing, health, education, counselling, child protection, criminal justice, transport) that people living with brain injury come into contact with, often on a daily basis, will seek to be better informed about the complexities surrounding, and far reaching consequences of brain injury, enabling them to respond with an enhanced understanding.

Moving forward BIAT's priority is to continue to lobby for services that are developed in response to the needs and aspirations expressed by the person with acquired brain injury (ABI), their families and carers, and are flexible in how they are planned and delivered.



## EO's Report continued

The landscape of disability services is changing forever and bringing with it new hope and opportunity for people living with or affected by brain injury. In the context of the NDIS, BIAT will continue to work to position the organisation to adapt to the changes that are being made in the disability services sector and respond to those changes in a manner that delivers the most sustainable outcomes for people living with or affected by brain injury.



DEBORAH BYRNE

BIAT Executive Officer

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

01

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

Community-driven public policy change realised



02

## PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Active broad workforce understanding of ABI

03

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE

A community that is informed about ABI

04

## ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Strengthen our infrastructure, and build our resource base and skills, to deliver on BIAT's purpose

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Acquired Brain Disorder Community Liaison Project

There has long been concern by hospital and primary health clinicians that people with ABI are at high risk of being lost in the system due to physical and cognitive impairments. Likewise, families and carers may be overwhelmed by stress and the complexity of the health system and may not always absorb the information given to them by treating clinicians.

In last year's Annual Report BIAT acknowledged the foresight shown by the Tasmanian Community Fund to fund, for 12 months, a community liaison officer (CLO) working 3 days per week from the neurosurgical unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital to support families at the point of patient diagnosis through to post hospital discharge and into community care. Jenny Langley was appointed to the position and commenced at the beginning of May 2015.

Bridging the gap between the acute (hospital) sector and the highly complicated community care sector, Jenny was able to ensure families were provided with information and referrals specific to their condition and region enabling them to seek immediate support post hospital care.

In late January 2016, feedback letters were mailed to 52 families with responses received incorporated into an Interim Report. With Jenny working on the neurosurgical ward in a nursing capacity, and to extend the project timeframe, it was agreed, at that time, to reduce the position to 15 hours per week. As at the end of April this year Jenny had met with 76 families and delivered a number of in-service ABI training sessions.

Unfortunately, Jenny became unwell in early May and was unable to continue meeting with families.

BIAT is currently in the process of preparing a detailed final report for the Tasmanian Community Fund, and is exploring funding options to ensure the continuation of this project. As indicated in the President's Report, the initial pilot has proven the research identifying this service as an unmet need was correct, and the hope is the Tasmanian Government will show the same foresight as the Tasmanian Community Fund and continue to fund this position.

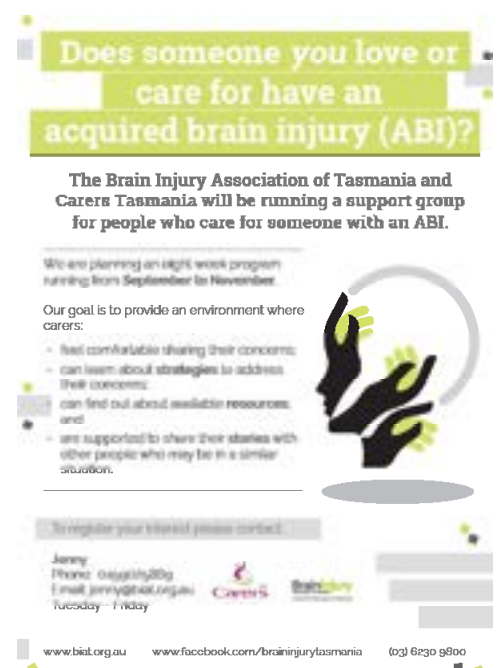


Image: BIAT advertised a support group, led by Jenny under the CLO project.

Following is an email BIAT received in relation to the Community Liaison position and subsequent support from Tasmanian Acquired Brain Injury Services (TABIS):-

*"I wanted to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for your help when we were in Hobart and follow up post discharge. The care and understanding that came from you was of great support to me at the time and I'd like to give you some feedback - which I imagine is important in keeping organisations like BIAT and TABIS going in our community.*

*I'd like to pass on a glowing reference for any of your future clients about Paul Mansfield here in Launceston from TABIS. Paul has from day one of our contact been a true advocate and pure professional in his role at TABIS. His care for John\* as a client has provided a wealth of knowledge and know-how, all from experience on the front line no doubt post discharge for brain injured patients. This is invaluable. I acknowledge we're only a few weeks down the track since coming home - but I already know how much he has helped getting us on track and pushing to keep us on track on the long path of rehabilitation for John.*

*It is human nature not to give much thought to issues in our community until we find ourselves swamped in the depths of it either directly or indirectly.*

*John presents so well physically and cognitively - had I not been informed along the way (of frontal lobe injuries) - I could have easily thought what a great recovery he has made and have an expectation of him in getting over it and on with it. I'm aware of how different each and every case must present - in his - I'm sure most would think there is nothing wrong with him unless of course they had to live or work with him.*

*I consider myself one of the lucky ones, in that I have good relationships here in Launceston, good support from people around me personally and work wise. It breaks my heart to think of people going through this situation and trying to navigate a path if they are socially/emotionally not supported, not to mention financially. So I truly believe the work you guys do is above and beyond, I intend - when I find myself able to do so - to support others who tragically find themselves in this situation, if nothing else but to give them hope.... Hope all is well in your world and again I send my thanks for your intervention and genuine care just at the right time."*

## NDIS - Information, Linkages and Capacity Building

The ILC Policy Framework was endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Disability Ministers in August 2015. As the Policy Framework only provides general guidance on how ILC might be put into practice, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) invited over 100 disability sector and community organisations to assist with the co-design process by leading workshops with their members on key elements of the Commissioning Framework. BIAT was one of the organisations invited and, in addition to attending the workshop lead by MS Tasmania, facilitated two workshops – one in Launceston and one in Hobart.

In each of the workshops, participants were asked the question “can you think of any services (existing or future) that are worthy of funding but don’t seem to fit into any funding category?”

Responses received included: -

- ILC funded NDIS pre-planning was seen as critical particularly for people with acquired disabilities;
- Dedicated family/carer support that provides practical assistance was also seen as essential particularly for acquired disabilities;
- Systemic advocacy was seen as a real gap with participants providing numerous examples of where systemic advocacy would be needed;
- Hospital liaison services such as those currently provide by BIAT and BrainLink in Victoria;
- Community based prevention activities; if thinking about the NDIS in an insurance context it makes very good sense that dollars are invested in “prevention rather than payouts.”
- Services which support people to transition to mainstream – people with acquired disability may be socially isolate and for them to move straight to a mainstream service in their community may be too big a stretch from where they are now and prove to be detrimental. A small group to build social competence in a non-threatening environment could address this.

All workshop participants agreed there is a very real risk that ILC funding will be spread too thin, resulting in people being offered or only receiving a ‘bandaid’ service. The number one priority for all workshop participants was the need for continued funding for services with specialist knowledge of acquired brain injury and degenerative neurological conditions.

An Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Commissioning Framework – Consultation Draft was released at the beginning of December. In the context of ABI, provided a comprehensive response to the Consultation Draft. Other than a Summary of all feedback received, the NDIA have not released anything further in relation to the Commissioning of the ILC. We do know that ILC will be outcomes based purchasing based on evidence of demand however it appears the Outcomes are still being defined. It is reassuring to note that National Disability Services’ position is that existing social capital must be maintained, and that they are strongly resisting the push by some advocates against the funding of specialist areas.

## BIA Week 2015

National Brain Injury Awareness week in Tasmania was launched at Parliament House at a morning tea hosted by the Speaker of the House of Assembly, The Hon Elise Archer MP. The focus of BIA Week 2015 was on a neglected minority of survivors of traumatic brain injury - women - for whom assault is a much more common cause of brain injury than for men. Every year in Australia around 150 women are hospitalised with a brain injury due to an assault by their partner.

## ABI and Family Violence

BIAT assisted former ABC journalist Ginger Gorman with two articles for News.Com on the subject of brain injury and family violence. The first article 'The terrible injury often overlooked in domestic violence' was viewed by over 250,000 people and her second article 'The surprisingly common reason John hits his partner' had a similar readership.

On November 3, BIAT held a public panel on the issue of brain injury and family violence. Moderated by recently retired Chief Magistrate, Michael Hill, the panel included award winning, Canberra based journalist Ginger Gorman, neuropsychologist Dr Janine Martin, SHE (Support, Help, Empowerment) EO Alina Thomas and police prosecutor specialising in family violence, Elizabeth Avery. The panel was well received with the discussion recorded and uploaded to the BIAT website. Whilst in Hobart, Ginger was invited to speak on ABC radio on the afternoon of the panel and for a lengthier interview on the morning after the panel.

Because of BIAT's "work experience or research interests in the areas of violence against women living with disability...", BIAT's Executive Officer was invited to, and attended, a national roundtable to inform the development of the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan). The roundtable provided an opportunity to further test and refine key priorities and actions for the Third Action Plan.

BIAT's Executive Officer was invited to be a member of the Tasmanian Family Violence Consultative Group and has attended the 2 meetings/forums held during the reporting period. BIAT also worked with a researcher to produce a report on Understanding the Relationship between Brain Injury and Family Violence. The report, finalised in August of this year, has been sent to all Tasmanian state and federal politicians. It is a valuable lobbying tool for the organisation and BIAT will be urging decision makers to act on the recommendations contained within the report. A copy of the report can be found on BIAT's website.

## Neuro Muscular Alliance Tasmania (NMAT)

BIAT is a member of and, during the past year, regularly attended NMAT meetings. NMAT is an alliance of 9 not-for-profit organisations representing or supporting Tasmanians living with progressive neuromuscular or neurological conditions. The Alliance was established in recognition of similar issues affecting client needs across Tasmanian neurological and neuromuscular organisations.

NMAT works to improve the lives of people who have chronic progressive muscular or neurologic conditions by:

- working towards having a community, including health professionals, that is aware of, and more importantly understands, the implications of these condition for people who live with the, and for their families or carers'
- promoting active co-operation between the members which will lead to best practice; and
- attracting resources to enable the Alliance and the individual member organisation to meet their state aims in support of people who live with these conditions.

NMAT member organisations recognise they have many areas of complementary expertise, and that working together strengthens the voice of people living with or affected by progressive neuromuscular or neurological conditions.

## National Disability Services

The BIAT Executive Officer was re-elected for a further 3-year term to the Tasmanian NDS State Committee. BIAT's EO is a member of the NDS Tasmania Family Violence working group, represented NDS Tasmania at a Ministerial Roundtable on a Witness Intermediary Scheme and currently represents both BIAT and NDS on the Tasmanian Disability Justice Strategy Community Reference Group, and the Tasmanian Family Violence Consultative Group.

## Information and Referral

As a state peak organisation BIAT is often contacted by people who have a problem and who don't know where to turn. We provide referrals to members and non-member organisations and other relevant agencies. We plan to formalise this referral process with follow up and monitoring of the referral outcomes and work with organisations to improve their interagency referral processes.

Throughout the year BIAT has responded to numerous requests for information, and has actively disseminated government and sector information through a variety of methods, primarily to its membership base, but also to the community sector, other stakeholders and members of the public.





## ABI and Criminal Justice

In his text “Disability and the Criminal Justice System” Dan Toombs, former Chief Executive Officer at TASC (The Advocacy and Support Centre), reflected upon the systemic failures of a criminal justice system that imposes incarceration upon our disabled. No one should be punished because they have a disability; no one should go to gaol because they have a disability nor should their disability be criminalised. The matter of persons with intellectual disability, mental illness and acquired brain injury as defendants in the criminal justice system is both serious and complex, but that does not mean that deficiencies should not be addressed. BIAT has the will for legal and legislative reform in this area, and will continue to pursue it.

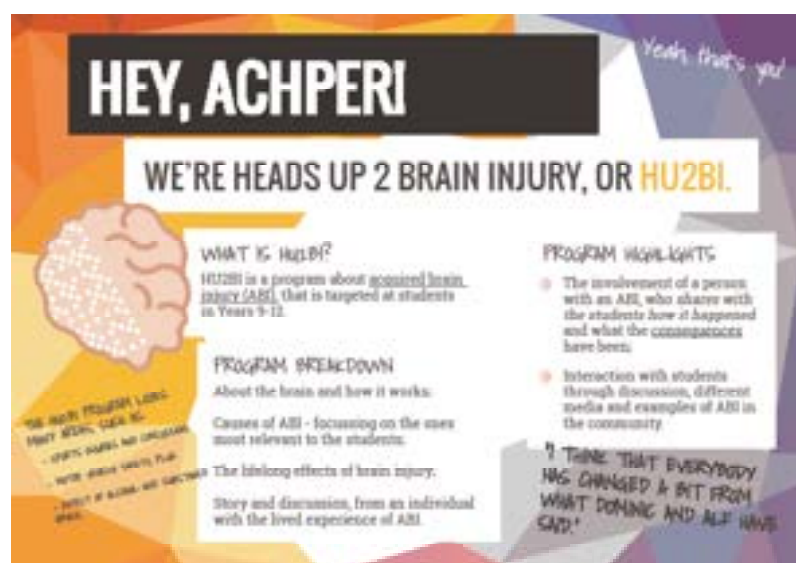
During the past year BIAT’s Executive Officer attended a one-day workshop at the Kirby Institute, Sydney, facilitated by Brain Injury Australia and the NHMRC Australian Centre of Research Excellence in Offender Health, devoted to the interaction between people with a brain injury and the criminal justice system; was invited by the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner to be a member of Tasmanian Disability Justice Strategy Community Reference Group; and attended a half-day workshop (The Hidden Disability: Acquired Brain Injury and the Victorian Justice System) and 2 day Reintegration Puzzle Conference in Geelong.

BIAT was invited to participate in Breaking the Cycle – A Safer Community: Strategies for Improving Throughcare for Offenders Consultation Forum for non-government organisations to identify opportunities to improve the management and delivery of Throughcare for offenders who have contact with the Tasmanian corrections system. BIAT was also invited to attend a pre-consultation Ministerial Roundtable on the feasibility of instituting a Witness Intermediary Scheme to improve measures to assist vulnerable people in giving evidence or appearing as a defendant in the adversarial criminal trial process.

## Newsletters

BIAT provided information to its members via e-bulletins, newsletters and the quarterly bridge magazine. BIAT newsletters and e-bulletins are also posted on the BIAT website.

Image: The BIAT HU2BI program was represented at the ACHPER conference in 2015.



## Social Media

Over the past year BIAT has strengthened its social media presence, using Facebook to connect with member organisations, people with brain injury, other stakeholders and members of the public.

## BIAT Website

BIAT's website was frequently updated to incorporate BIAT newsletters, position statements, submissions and any events or news of interest.

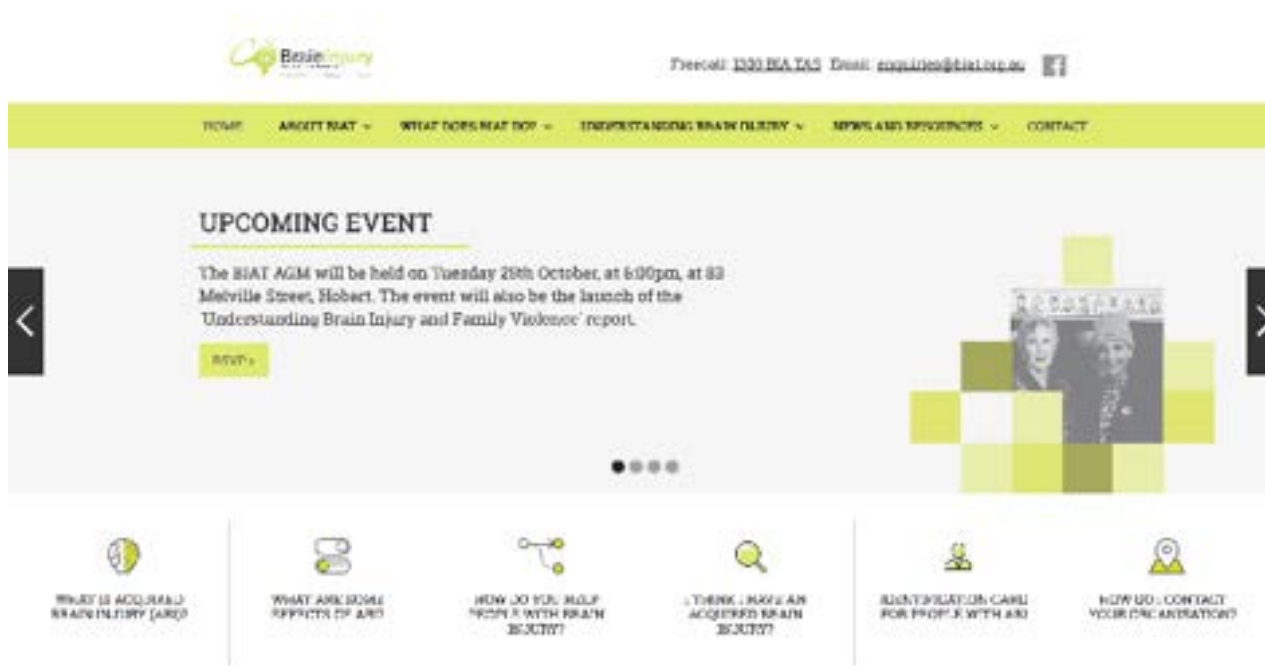


Image: The BIAT website has seen continued updates based on analytical data and the way visitors use the website.

## Training and Education

BIAT's Executive Officer attended a 4-day Level 1 Introduction to ABI Training in Sydney presented by Professor Barry Willer (Canada) and Associate Professor Duncan Babbage (New Zealand). Discussion have been held with Barry in regard to presenting workshops in Tasmania on concussion and on community integration when he is next in Australia.

## Rotary Youth Driver Awareness (RYDA)

Commencing in Huonville on the 28th of August 2015, 16 days of 'After the Crash' sessions were delivered at 3 sessions per day. The presenter 'load' was shared by Deb, Dominic and Jenny whilst Alf spoke at all 48 sessions. The following email was sent directly to BIAT by a High School teacher:

*"Dear Alf*

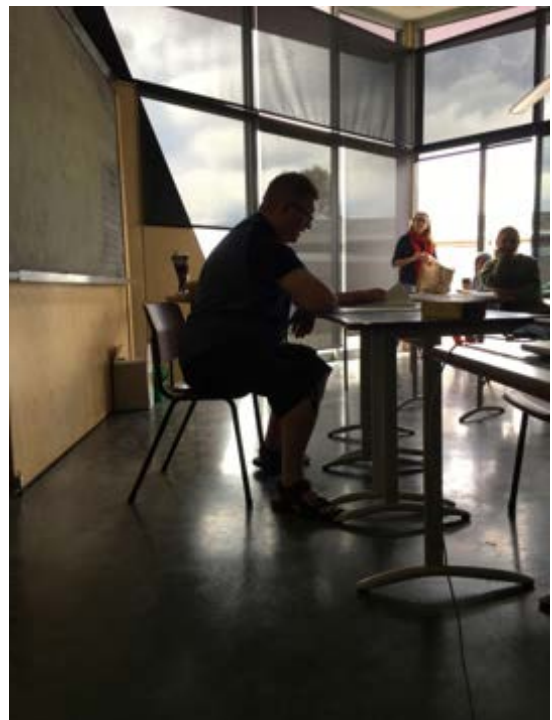
*I was chatting to a young girl from Fahan last night and wanted to pass on their comments. RYDA day was the best experience and in particular Alf – she recited Alf's story with such care and thought. Alf's experience made such an impact on her and my kids, who are 21 and 18, could also remember Alf so well. Keep up the magic work Alf – you are simply inspirational."*

In December the Chair of the RYDA Southern Committee, Marion Cooper, was invited by Road Safety education to attend a luncheon at Parliament House, NSW where she was presented with the BOC RYDA Champion Award for 2015. Marion advised RYDA program contributors, "This was a great result and acknowledgement of the hard work of all those involved in delivery of the program. RSE conducted an extensive survey of students and teachers and advised it was not an easy decision but the Southern Tasmanian program won the award. I thank each of you for your dedication to this valuable program."

## Custody for Life

BIAT continues to deliver the Custody for Life program, targeted at young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Five sessions were held during the year with varying levels of attendance. Whilst engaging with some participants is difficult, for the most part feedback received after each session is positive, with the majority of participants indicating the program made them think about the impact of their risk taking behaviour.

Image: Alf talking with Students at Tarremah High School for a HU2BI presentation.



## Heads up 2 Brain Injury (HU2BI)

The Heads Up 2 Brain Injury presentation and website were completely 'revamped' during the past year. Aspects that allow students to reflect on and discuss both the risks they take, and the aspirations they have, were well received. Introducing elements of Alf's story earlier throughout the presentation to further highlight the impact of 'that one decision' a specific effect of ABI, or to reiterate some of the key messages has resulted in increased engagement.

WIN TV footage from the re-launch of the 'new' program at New Town High School was uploaded to the HU2BI website and Facebook page. HU2BI sessions have been delivered to several schools during the past year with many schools requesting multiple sessions to cover all students in a particular year.



Image: Alf and Dominic presenting at Montagu Bay High School in 2015.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

I have pleasure in presenting the audited Financial Statements for the Brain Injury Association of Tasmania (BIAT) for the year 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, and in confirming the financial performance for the fiscal year was in accordance with the budget approved by the BIAT Committee of Management.

BIAT's operations for the year ended 30 June 2016 realised a deficit for the year of \$5 512.17. This compares favourably to the prior year deficit of \$23 831.26. BIAT has a strong equity position with net assets of \$193 143.03, affirming our financial position is still strong.

Total revenue for the year of \$224 040.13 included \$211 211.45 government and other grants. The majority of non-grant revenue came from donations, fundraising and interest income. BIAT acknowledges with appreciation the Grant funds provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Motor Accident Insurance Board (MAIB).

Expenses totalled \$229 552.30 with the majority of costs being employee and training expenses, administration, and rental expense.

## Financial Position

BIAT's total assets at 30 June were \$237 790.86, a decrease of \$52 049.02 on the prior year. This decrease is due to disbursement of the Tasmanian Community Fund Project Unexpended Grant. Liquidity remains strong with \$34 799.18 cash at bank and \$184 911.90 in term deposits. Total liabilities at the end of the financial year were \$44 647.83. The major portion of liabilities is grants received in advance (\$13 430.00) and employee leave entitlements (\$25 362.37).

The BIAT Committee of Management review the Association's financial statements at each committee meeting. Whilst it is the Treasurer's role to monitor spending against budget and to report to the Committee of Management on our financial position, BIAT's day to day financial administration continues to lie with the Executive Officer.

## Future Financial Position

The BIAT Committee of Management is conscious of their fiduciary duty in allocating the limited resources of the organisation.

The Brain Injury Association of Tasmania is in a stable financial position and I am confident that the accounts are in a fit state to enable us to meet the aims of the Association in the foreseeable future.

HELEN MULCAHY

BIAT Treasurer





**Braininjury**  
Association of Tasmania  
*A voice for brain injury in Tasmania*

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