



Brain Injury
SA.



Annual Report 2024

Our Vision

Embrace life after brain injury

Our Values

We work with

Empathy

We work humbly alongside our clients with appreciation of their viewpoint and their ownership of their lives.

Respect

We listen to understand, give value to the choices of clients and create dignity in the provision and receipt of assistance.

Empowerment

We engage our clients in addressing the needs they define, encouraging, supporting and growing their confidence to drive the changes they seek.

Accountability

We are committed to creating trust in our service provision through honesty, transparency and inclusion in decision making and integrity in our practices.

Drive

To be innovative and work efficiently, striving for continuous improvement with positive impact for our clients with a quest to continuously improve our services.

Collaboration

We recognise that working together and with others achieves more than working alone.

Our Purpose

As a Peak Body and a Service Provider, Brain Injury SA works with and for the ABI community to:

- **Empower** people to determine and work towards their goals.
- **Provide** tailored and accessible therapy services to maximise quality of life.
- **Assist** in addressing barriers and issues arising from living with disabilities.
- **Support** families and carers.
- **Advocate** for and work to deliver increased community and government awareness, inclusion and assistance for people living with ABI.
- **Continuously improve** the value and quality of services through research, evaluation and development.

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Adelaide region - the Kurna people. We pay our respects to elders past and present.

Shane Cheek

CHAIR REPORT

Community needs and expectations inevitably move with the times, and it is no different for the institutions and organisations that serve them. Like anything that stays static, without change an organisation will inevitably become “out of date” at best, with the potential to become ineffective and irrelevant if it does not embrace renewal and inevitable change.

During my time on the Board of Brain Injury SA I have been pleased to be involved with, and support, a strategy of significant change, identifying opportunities for growth under the establishment of the NDIS, and make bold steps to reach more people who experience brain injury through service expansion, whilst being committed to pursuit of best practice as a contemporary charity in its governance, integrity, and quality of practice.

At a Board level, this year heralded some significant periodic change, with the departure of Vladimir Malcik as chair of the Board of Brain Injury SA. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Vladimir for his tenure in this role of over seven years, a period of which has overseen both the evolution of the organisation under the NDIS, rapid and notable expansion of BISA's footprint in SA, and navigation of service delivery during the three year plus COVID pandemic. Under his leadership, we also enjoyed the support of long-standing Board members Nadia Moffatt and Brendan Williams, both of which have also left the Board this year, after a combined service period of over twenty years. I am pleased to acknowledge the significant contributions of these and two other Board members, Katherine Hawker and Paola Niscioli, whose completion of their three-year terms has driven a quest for appropriate Board renewal. During the last year, we are very pleased to have successfully transitioned to both a new and expanded Board that are committed and skilled to drive the organisation forward in this environment of review and change.

Our CEO, Liz Forsyth, has also recently announced that she will be stepping down from BISA and transitioning to retirement. The Board and I would like to acknowledge the impact that Liz has had within BISA over the last six years and the contributions she has made to our organisation and the ABI community in South Australia. Liz has steered the organisation through a period of significant growth and evolution while navigating the challenges of the COVID pandemic and an ongoing pricing freeze from the NDIA and we sincerely thank her for her leadership during this time.



The Board is pleased to support our fellow director, Tanya Lancaster, who will serve as Interim CEO while we undertake a thorough process to identify and recruit a new CEO for the organisation to lead it through the coming years and build on the foundation that Liz has established.

The findings of the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS review undertaken in parallel to this, have brought into sharp focus the importance of organisations whose purpose is clear, who hold high standards of integrity and carry a staff team committed to achieving the best outcomes for its service users within the resources available. I am pleased to be leading an organisation that continues to strive for contemporary excellence, look towards emerging opportunities, and stay true to its original mission to meet the needs of people living with brain injury. The last year of operation for BISA has continued to deliver on its mission, continuing to provide its rich mix of services in therapy and advocacy, and adding additional dimensions through the BISA Connect Student Clinic, and the development of Peer Support and services for Carers. We have seen an enrichment of our working relationships with existing and new stakeholders, and the Board is very supportive of BISA's growing partnerships with other organisations within the community. Thank you to our sponsors and partners for their continued or new support and generosity towards our work. We understand the value of collaboration for community service benefit and look forward to achieving more in this area in the coming year. The Disability Service sector is currently challenged with the quest of the NDIA to contain spending, which in turn has not acknowledged the inflationary environment in which we all have been operating. Like many other not for profit NDIS service providers, this is creating pressure points for BISA and has delivered a less than desirable financial result for the year. The Board is committed to supporting BISA through these challenges, to ensure that it continues to deliver the excellent services it provides and strive to do more.

I hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report and look forward to sharing with you the coming year of services and events that support people to embrace life after brain injury.

Shane Cheek
Board Chair

Liz Forsyth

CEO REPORT

The end of the financial year is a point of reflection for an organisation, and this is no different at the end of 2024. For much of the year we have operated with an anticipation of change following the release of the Disability Royal Commission report and the findings of the NDIS review whilst recognising the importance of continuity in delivery of the services we provide.

The year has many markers, not least the launch of Brain Injury Awareness week in August, which has become such an important point of connection between people living with brain injury, their families and other stakeholders. As with so many things we do, the event has evolved this year to include some “lunch and learn” educational sessions, extending the reach of the week to a broader audience.

We have been pleased to achieve a greater awareness within the community of Brain Injury SA and the importance of a brain injury specialist organisation to meet the needs of the brain injury community. Important in this has been finding ways to offer more services particularly for those who may not immediately have access to funding, or have needs that are not met by the funding available. Enabled by our collaboration with Flinders University, this year has seen our Allied Health student led clinic, BISA Connect, develop and thrive, offering some opportunity for assessment and assistance that can support people to find a pathway forward in addressing their unmet needs. Additionally, we have much appreciated the support provided by the Lifetime Support Authority in refunding the next stage of development of our Peer Support Program, and the Be Well for Carers project, both of which have been addressing significant gaps in services available.

BISA continues to recognise the importance for people living with brain injury to be able to access specialist therapy services, and this year our Rewire Therapy service has seen strong development, including the commencement of a specialist Positive Behaviour Support program for people with brain injury, and growth in our Psychological Services team. Our interdisciplinary model of therapeutic services provides important assistance for people in achieving their goals and addressing their challenges, which may vary over time and periodically be required more intensively. It is important we continue to advocate for this availability to people within the funding provided.



As the community strives to become more inclusive for people living with disabilities, Brain Injury SA is committed to enabling the community we serve to both inform and influence the decisions we take on organisational direction. The success of our Board traineeship to extend opportunities for people with lived experience to contribute to key decision-making processes, and the progressive implementation of our Disability Access and Inclusion plan, are ways the organisation strives to be valuable and relevant to the brain injury community, create broader opportunities for them and be well informed of community needs for its advocacy activity. We see this as being true to the roots of the organisation, whilst developing our capacity to deliver services in a contemporary world of choice and control by service recipients. We hope this year's completion of a Reconciliation Action Plan will support us to reach out more to the diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and provide assistance in managing the impact of brain injury for individuals and their families.

This will be my last CEO report, due to my upcoming retirement at Christmas 2024. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have assisted me and provided their support to BISA over its last six years of development. It has been a privilege to lead this organisation through this period and work with its many stakeholders, in particular our clients. Whilst we know that change is an inevitable part of disability service provision, I will be sad to say goodbye but know I leave the organisation in very capable hands, with the team committed to maintaining the highest standard of service delivery we can achieve, and continuing to build on our history as a specialist organisation for everyone impacted by brain injury.

Please enjoy reading more fully about our year in review within this report.

Liz Forsyth
CEO

Our Services

Our Services Continued

Rewire Interdisciplinary Therapy Team Goal Setting for Supporting Positive Rehabilitation Outcomes



Following on from the implementation of interdisciplinary working and training in the use of the Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) the Rewire therapy team has been focused on increasing the number of clients where we can measure the impact of the therapy that we provide on their achievement of goals.

Research shows us that setting goals with clients is a fundamental component of rehabilitation, which promotes engagement and can improve functional outcomes. The GAS supports people to set their own, individual goals which can then be measured in a standardised way. It has a five-point rating scale with current level of function/achievement set at baseline (-1). When GAS is being used effectively with SMART goals, most clients should be in the 'as expected' outcome.

Goals are set with clients and are based, where possible, on what is important to them. Therapists are often involved in breaking the goal down into smaller, achievable steps, where the achievement of the goal is far from the current level of function. This supports people to maintain hope and motivation to achieve their long-term goals.

Goals are set on an individual basis and reviewed anywhere between 3 and 12 months, dependent on the goal.

Data from those reviewed within Q3 2023/24 showed 76% of clients were making progress as expected or more.

Clients living in the community are living with the pressures of everyday life and not all clients make progress and sometimes a client's function can deteriorate. This might be because of issues such as ill health (physical and mental), financial barriers, social factors, difficulties with relationships and in some cases discrimination.

Our staff have also had access to a number of relevant professional development opportunities through our Rewire in-services. These have included understanding and working with sexual intimacy issues after ABI, supporting clients to return to work, understanding alcohol and other drugs and the role of the orthoptist in ABI.

We also had a really informative and helpful session on trauma informed practice, supporting staff to develop their competence in understanding the impact of trauma on people and how to better support them.

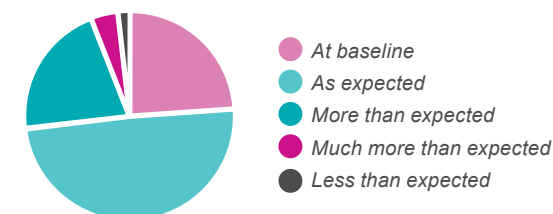
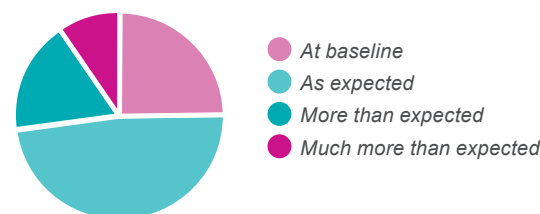
This year has also seen an increase in staffing in our psychological services team, with the addition of another psychology position and a second counselling position.

We have further introduced competency checklists for new staff joining our team in speech, allied health assistants and occupational therapy to ensure they are competent in all the different areas of practice that these professions can support with.

Groups have continued to be an important part of therapy, and this has led to an increase in the number of groups available across our hubs. Following on from the huge success of our Northern bowling group, which is ongoing, we introduced a joint bowling group for our city and southern clients. We also offered a fatigue management group in the city and a balance group in the South. Our Southern 5G's group produced some wonderful furniture for use within our newly developed garden area at the Southern hub.

We have more groups in the planning for rollout in 2025.

As dialogue in the community continues to increase around concussion, we have also seen an increase in the number of clients with persistent post-concussion symptoms/mild TBI leading to a number of our staff upskilling on the latest evidence for interventions in this space. In the coming year we will be offering further training for all staff to support this growing area of need.



Growing the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Service



Over the past year we have worked to increase the number of staff who are registered as positive behaviour support practitioners. We now have three staff who have gone through the registration process and are actively working in the positive behaviour support space. One member of staff has also worked to gain proficient status, enabling supervision of the team.

The aim of PBS is to help people to understand the function behind behaviours which might cause concern, as well as the triggers, and to provide strategies to support them to maintain or improve their relationships.

For people who have acquired an injury there can be a lot of grief and difficulties adjusting to the injury and the challenges that they face. In addition to difficulties with processing information and expressing feelings, injury to different parts of the brain can cause issues with impulsivity, emotional regulation, memory, decision making and many more. This can lead to a range of responses and reactions which can be difficult for those involved in supporting the person. Positive behaviour support provided by clinicians who have experience and in-depth knowledge of working with people with an ABI can support effective changes in the environment around the person to reduce the frequency of behaviours of concern and improve the quality of life of those involved.

Going forward we will be expanding the team again to bring in our fourth practitioner as we work with an increased number of people from the brain injury community. We are also excited to announce that we will be partnering with Monash University to train more staff in the PBS+PLUS model (an evidenced based approach specifically for people with an ABI) over 2025 and beyond, meaning that we can support more people in the ABI community who may be struggling with adjusting to their injury.

Navigating Pathways and Supporting People to Adjust to Life Post ABI



Pathways was defined as a new service offering for BISA to complement our Rewire Service, that encapsulates the work of a team of highly skilled and experienced case managers who provide a holistic service to help clients meet their needs, achieve goals and make informed choices. This service varies from short-term support to complete a specific task such as a DSP application, or long-term case management services for complex circumstances that can occur over several years.

The introduction of this service has broadened the depth of service offering at BISA, creating new opportunities to support people who may not be looking for therapeutic input, but require support in navigating their life post brain injury. As a team, their strength lies in communication and collaboration whilst working with a wide range of providers, such as therapy teams, support worker agencies, medical specialists and mainstream services - including housing and Centrelink - and assisting people to navigate, at times, complex situations and service systems to get the best outcome for them.

Support to secure suitable housing in South Australia has been seen to be an area of demand for the Pathways Team, with some positive outcomes achieved in this year for people with long term housing instability. Additionally, the team has also been a key player in assisting people with discharge planning and linking them with much needed supports and establishing home routines to increase long term independence.

The Pathways Service continues to evolve, and through the exploration of new partnerships and referral opportunities we are well positioned to expand how we may meet the varied needs of those impacted by brain injury in navigating their journey post ABI.

Building Skills and Growing Friendships



Our first gardening group started in November 2023 with a total of 4 participants and a partnership with Bunnings Noarlunga. The group was developed with the aim to:

- Provide the opportunity for purposeful engagement to support people to take part in a meaningful activity and promote their sense of well-being.
- Provide the opportunity for social interactions in a supportive environment with others who have an ABI, to reduce social isolation.
- Provide participants with an opportunity to be involved in projects related to building a garden space at BISA for use for connecting with others in an outdoor environment.
- Develop confidence, knowledge, and physical and cognitive skills to engage safely and successfully in a purposeful activity.

Our first project was building 2 raised garden beds that were generously donated by Bunnings.

The group decided they wanted to branch out into building as well as gardening, and led by those in the group, the group name was changed to “The 5 G’s” (Guys and Gals Gardening and Garage Group). After a planning session, the group decided that the second project would be to build an outdoor table that would sit at the Southern Hub for anyone to use in the garden space.

With the success of the first two projects our group expanded to included 7 participants and again in a planning session, it was agreed that we would build two bench seats to go with the table that was built in the previous group.

All the members of the group have expressed an interest to keep going with the group now that we have our fence up at the Southern Hub enclosing the back garden area. We can’t wait to see what the group decides to create next!



Employ Me. Empower Me.



Mark Carter
Employ Me Participant
and conference presenter.



Bill Fulton
Brain Injury Association Tasmania,
Employ Me Project Manager
and conference presenter

2024 saw the completion of the Employ Me Project, concluding with some innovative adaptations of the project and a well-received conference presentation.

Brain Injury SA has partnered with Brain Injury Association Tasmania from early 2022 to deliver their Employ Me project to people living with brain injury in South Australia. The project was well received with overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, particularly with regards to identifying strengths and exploring employment goals post brain injury. Participants appreciated the one-on-one time spent with the project officer and that the process was person-centred and self-paced. Several participants obtained paid employment since completing the project and said that the exploration phase of the project prepared them for similar questions asked in their job interview.

In the final 6-months of the project, Brain Injury SA adapted the process to film personalised videos under the banner of “Empower Me”. These videos were filmed by people who were not yet ready to consider employment but wanted to film a video for support staff to understand their goals, strengths and support needs. The videos were powerful and gave the participants the opportunity to voice what was important for people to know about them. Feedback about these videos was very positive from both participants and their families, with those involved using their video when inducting new staff to their support team with positive results.

Brain Injury SA staff have been invited to co-present with the Brain Injury Association of Tasmania at the upcoming Brain Injury Conference in Adelaide. Joining us will be participant Mark Carter who was one of the first people to complete the Employ Me program, speaking about his increased confidence since completing the program and his goals for future employment.

Expanding our BISA Connect Student Clinic Program

Tammy and students from the Student Clinic Program



BISA Connect provides a range of free services for people with an ABI who are unable to access services required due to inadequate or non-existent funding. It also aims to enhance student understanding of interdisciplinary work, the NDIS as a funding body, and the needs of people with an ABI. It also supports the development of their report writing skills as they prepare for their first Allied Health Professional (AHP) jobs. As part of the involvement in the clinic, students are provided with interdisciplinary supervision as well as opportunities to participate in sessions facilitated by their own discipline supervisor.

Over the financial year we delivered four blocks of BISA Connect, across 26 weeks, with 28 AHP students from physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology taking part in the program. Between them, 22 functional reports to support access to the NDIS were completed. As access requests can take several months to be processed, work is currently being undertaken to follow-up on the success rate.

On completion of the program, we asked the students what were the three top skills they learnt, and their comments included:

- Ability to adapt communication skills with people with different communication needs.
- Report writing knowledge, skills, and confidence.
- Better understanding of speech and physio and how they can complement OT and vice versa.
- Report writing, conducting assessments, IDT collaboration.
- Improved report writing, knowledge of NDIS, interdisciplinary communication skills.

In addition to the BISA Connect program we also saw an increase in Allied Health Assistant student placements across all hubs and were specifically able to offer two students with lived experience of ABI a placement.

In partnership with Flinders University, we have successfully secured a research grant to develop a toolkit to help prepare staff for working within a less traditional placement model. This is due to be completed by December 2025 and is currently in the literature scoping phase.

What our Students have said about BISA Connect



“I LOVED the community aspect of this placement; it really helped me to understand different aspects of speech pathology service. I also found the setup of the BISA Connect really interesting and beneficial. Whilst at times was a little challenging, I found that it really made me critically think about the service I was providing. It also allowed me to strengthen my ability to clinically reason and justify why / how I was doing things. I also really appreciated the level of support I was provided with by my supervisor, she was very helpful, and I have learnt so much from her.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed being part of BISA Connect and having the opportunity to challenge and expand my clinical skills in practice. I enjoyed the relative autonomy of BISA Connect and the ability to work one on one with clients. It was great to feel respected enough as a student to have this autonomy, whilst also feeling supported by the IDT team to seek guidance and feedback on clinical reasoning as needed.”

“The opportunity to see how functional and holistic treatment is conducted for clients. It completely changed my approach to assessment and treatment for clients as I progressed and met my client's week to week. It was also a great opportunity to talk to other allied health professionals and students and gather strategies about how I can make my sessions functional and even work on joint goals with other disciplines. Most importantly, getting to connect with my clients and see how my interventions were benefitting their recovery was very rewarding to be a part of.”

NDIS Appeals Service

100 People assisted
56 New applicants

The last 12 months has seen a great deal of change in the NDIS and Appeals space, with our service receiving a large number of enquiries and requests for assistance in navigating the NDIS Appeals process.

Over the last financial year, the NDIS Appeals team have supported approximately 100 applicants seeking an external merits review at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (now the Administrative Review Tribunal). Of these, 56 were new applicants. Most of these matters related to the Statement of Participant Supports, which is generally in relation to the amount of funding in the Participant's NDIS Plan. The remaining matters related to seeking access to the NDIS.

We supported our clients to demonstrate how their supports met the reasonable and necessary criteria, and for those clients seeking access to the NDIS, we supported them to demonstrate how their impairments met the disability or early intervention criteria. Key themes we observed this period were:

- Applicants appealing the Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding ratio they received, which was not suitable for their needs (i.e. a higher number of participants per support worker).
- NDIA refusal to fund a support due to the Participant's NDIS recorded diagnosis not relating to the requested support; and a high volume of access appeals sought as the applicant was unable to fund reports to show they have a substantial reduction in functional capacity.

All appeals related to the statement of participant supports achieved a positive outcome, and most access matters resulted in the applicant becoming a participant of the NDIS. The Appeals team also provided support to several participants and their families in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory. One of these matters, which went before the AAT was in relation to access where the applicant did not have access to sufficient medical evidence to demonstrate that their impairment was permanent. Working closely with NT Legal Aid, evidence was gathered to support the argument for permanence and substantially reduced functional capacity, and access was granted. This will result in much needed supports being funded for this individual – a great outcome. The participant was also linked in with DAS in the Northern Territory to provide advocacy to support the planning stage.

In addition to this, the Appeals team provided information and advice to over 100 applicants seeking support, including 87 who started on our waitlist during that time. Fortnightly online interactive information sessions were delivered during the day and after hours to families and informal supports of applicants throughout metropolitan and regional areas. These information sessions assist families with understanding what the Tribunal process involves, what to expect at their first case conference, and how to apply for legal assistance.

The Appeals team were also involved in systemic work. The team attended monthly systemic meetings consisting of the appeals agencies across the country in which we were able to raise and address systemic and individual issues directly with the NDIA.

The NDIS review occurred in this period. The Appeals team prepared and wrote a submission to the NDIS Review in August of 2023. After the proposed amendments to the NDIS Act were re-leased, the Appeals team responded to these in May of 2024 outlining areas of concern.

Looking forward, we will see many changes in the appeals space as the NDIS Act has now been amended. Notably:

- Participants can only be funded for support related to the impairment/s for which they gained access.
- 'NDIS Supports' were introduced, currently dictated by the "in" and "out" lists and later to be negotiated between the States and Commonwealth.
- Needs Assessment were introduced which will dictate how much funding someone will receive, however the assessment itself is yet to be conceived.
- The Administrative Appeals Tribunal has now transitioned to the Administrative Review Tribunal.

We will continue to keep abreast of all changes to assist people navigate the appeals process with the most up to date information.

National Disability Advocacy Program

Brain Injury SA provides a state-wide Advocacy Service to people with acquired brain injuries that promotes the individual's right to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making.

Our Advocates work on behalf of a person with ABI to help them speak out and defend their rights and interests and support them to seek the best available outcome of their complaint or issue.

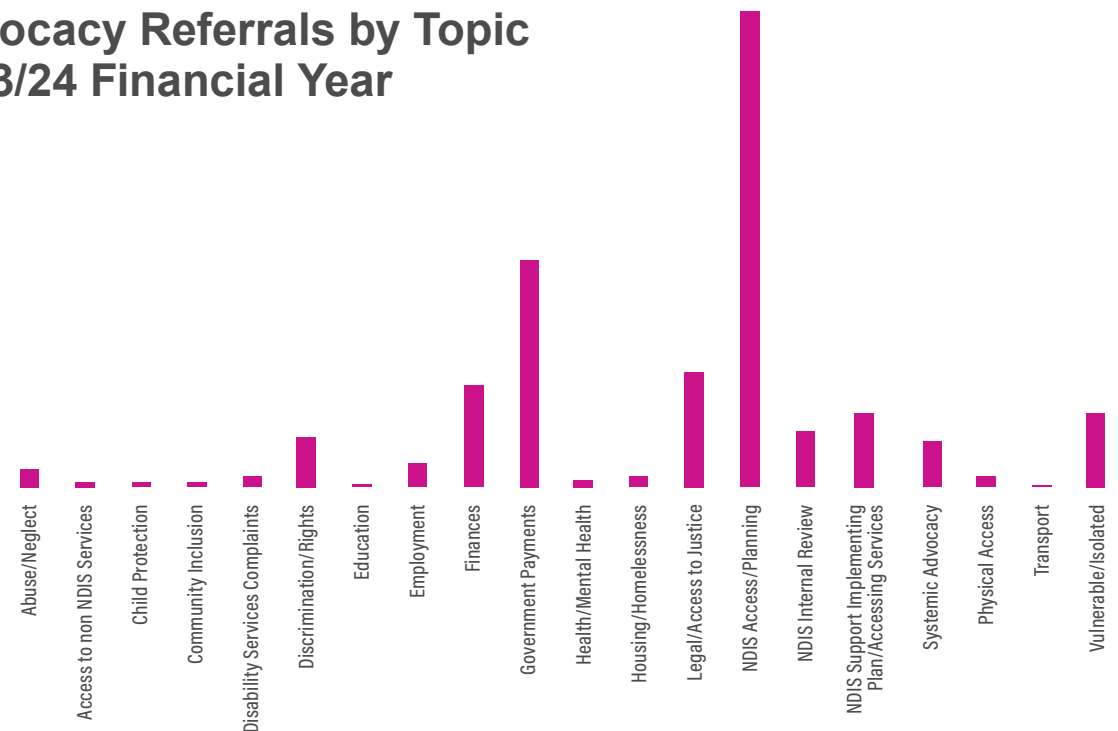
During the 2023-24 financial year, NDIS issues continued to dominate the referrals coming through to Advocacy with a large volume of people seeking support and struggling to access NDIS. Barriers included, not having a clear or recent diagnosis of their brain injury, nor having evidence to demonstrate severity, permanence or impact on functional capacity. In addition to referrals from individuals with brain injury, we received enquiries from family members and Local Area Coordinators seeking help with Access Requests. The BISA free Student Clinic - BISA Connect - was the only avenue available to many people who could not afford to source functional assessments elsewhere. These barriers also informed our decision to provide a free education session to GPs explaining the process of applying to the NDIS and how GPs can assist their patients with ABI, which will be delivered in the next financial year.

Another area where we received many referrals was navigating Centrelink payments and debts, with people struggling to apply for the correct payment and/or gather the required evidence. They also found reporting difficult, some could not manage online services without support and others were getting nowhere trying to address issues by phone or in person. Several matters involving DSP rejections and debts were appealed at the Tribunal with successful results.

We successfully resolved issues and complaints involving neighbours, employers and service providers by utilising complaints pathways and legal avenues. By listening to people's concerns, providing information, advice and referrals on to appropriate services, most matters can be resolved with a positive outcome, leaving people with ABI feeling well supported and their voices heard.

Whilst we have maintained a waiting list throughout the year, people have had regular contact from an advocate to ensure they had the information they needed to ensure their matter progressed while they were waiting for more intensive support. Matters are triaged based on the urgency of the issue, access to other supports and their ability to self-advocate with information and advice provided.

Advocacy Referrals by Topic 2023/24 Financial Year



Building Connections

Embedding the Peer Support Program across BISA

After a very successful first year of delivery, we were very excited to receive renewed funding for this important program from Lifetime Support Authority, enabling us to embark on the next three years of its delivery. Important in this has been building the support structure for the team of Peer Mentors to ensure the program can thrive. This has included expanding the role of the Program Manager to attend to all the operational detail this program requires, whilst using the Psychology resource wisely to support the Peer Mentor team well when needed.

The program has been progressively bedding itself down over the year, with the input of its founding Psychologist, Eliza Kavenagh, and our counsellor Nathan Adams. This program provides a five-week program of one-to-one Peer Support to people who have experienced brain injury and would like to spend time with, and learn from, someone who has also experienced the impact of brain injury. Peer Mentors are trained for this role and fully supported in their work to deliver a valuable experience to all those involved. Mentoring matches are made with care to help people connect with someone more easily and feel comfortable with the process.

With the appointment of an ongoing Program Manager, Sophie Blewitt we look forward to seeing this program continue its growth and contribution to the brain injury community.

Connection and Education after Brain Injury

The Reconnect Transition Program (RTP) has had another very successful year. Funded by the Lifetime Support Authority, RTP provides a range of groups for people living with acquired brain injury. In essence, the RTP provides opportunities for people with a shared experience of brain injury to come together, connect, learn useful information, and share tips and strategies for making a healthy adjustment to life after a brain injury.

Mentors with lived experience of brain injury are at the heart of the RTP and we are fortunate to have an incredible group of mentors who work alongside facilitators Ed Weaver and Rowena Holmes to deliver meaningful group sessions.

In this year we held:

- Three 10-week standard RTPs.
- One 10-week youth RTP (yRTP) for younger people.
- Monthly online eRTP sessions for people living in the South East.
- Monthly Brain Injury Support and Education (BISE) Group sessions across a range of hub and community locations.

The RTP continues to evolve and this year saw our first ever program held at our Northern Hub in Elizabeth. This was a huge success, with new mentors Tammy Honow and Sue-Ellen Drew joining long-time mentor Colin Winsor to deliver a great program. Given fatigue is a major challenge for many with ABI, the local location was a major benefit for those living in the northern suburbs. An equivalent southern RTP is already planned for the coming year. We also welcomed Senior Clinical Psychologist Rowena Holmes to the program as a facilitator this year. Rowena led the youth RTP in the city and is looking forward to facilitating further programs in the future.

The RTP continues to receive excellent feedback, with the main theme being the immense value of coming together with other people who know about brain injury first-hand. Year after year, participants report that the RTP helps them to feel more supported, less isolated, and more connected to their community. Such feedback underlines the value of this important program.

We thank RTP mentors Lachlan Miller, Sophie Blewett, Lauren Spear, Tammy Honow, Laura McMahon, Dave Wilson, Sue-Ellen Drew, Colin Winsor and David Lee for all their wonderful input. A big thank you also to Jess Clark, who has provided education on nutrition and delicious catering to RTP groups this year.

Supporting our Carers

Over the course of the financial year, BISA delivered three Be Well Plans for families and carers of people with a brain injury, through a mixture of in-person sessions and on-line courses, enabling a variety of people to attend. Across the sessions, 21 people registered to attend the program, with 9 people completing the full course.

Participant feedback included:

- 50% rated it as either important or very important to have other carers present who understood their experience.
- 100% rated it as important or very important to be able to share their experiences with others.
- 83% felt that they had been able to help others by sharing their own experience.
- 100% found the materials to be helpful or extremely helpful.
- 83% found the activities and strategies to be helpful or extremely helpful.
- 100% felt that the facilitators were:
 - Genuinely interested in their wellbeing.
 - Approachable.
 - Trustworthy.
 - Knowledgeable about the content of the Be Well Plan, strategies and recommendations.
 - Knowledgeable about brain injury.
 - Understood their situation.

Lifetime
S U P P O R T

As part of our commitment to further understanding the needs of carers we secured funding through a Lifetime Support Authority (LSA) grant to complete a piece of research to help us to further develop carers services.

We employed a research assistant who completed a scoping review of the literature which found that carers' lives are impacted by their role in a range of areas, particularly during times of change and transition. The results of the literature were used to design a survey which was widely circulated to the brain injury community. 39 respondents participated in the survey on the wellbeing and mental health of carers of people with ABI, with the survey asking people to rank areas they would consider needing additional support for. The results of the survey were used to form questions for focus groups to support deeper insights into the top issues and to help form a plan for the development of a carers service. The top areas were transition periods, physical health and mental health. Focus groups are scheduled for August 2024.

BISA will be delivering an additional three Be Well plans over the next 12 months, and an introduction of Be Well masterclasses. Additionally, we have been successfully awarded a grant to be able to employ a carers service lead to develop comprehensive carers support services as part of the next stage. We look forward to continuing to develop this vital program for carers into the new year.

100% Genuine, Approachable & Trustworthy



Community/Industry Education

Brain Injury Awareness Week (BIAW) 2023 - My Journey



No two Journeys are the Same

Working with a committee made up of BISA staff and 3 client representatives with lived-experience of brain injury, our much-loved BIAW grew from a single event to launch the week, to expanding the week with new and additional opportunities to spread the reach of our message.

The theme, My Journey, was chosen to extend the theme from the previous year (No two Brain Injuries are the Same) and highlight that every single person that experiences a brain injury will have a journey post-injury that is uniquely theirs.

To launch the week, commencing on Monday 21 August, we kicked off with our annual event at a new location, The Adelaide Convention Centre, with two incredible guest speakers that shared their stories with an audience of more than 250 people in person and online, in a conversational format hosted by our new emcee, Isabel Dayman.

Our first speaker, Damian DeWit, acquired his traumatic brain injury during the mid-2000's as a result of being a target of a rock throwing incident whilst he was driving in the Southern Suburbs of Adelaide. Damian spoke about his journey from that day, including the challenges he faced throughout his recovery, the people who helped him the most, the love of becoming a father, and his hopes for the future.

Our second key speaker was ex-AFL legend, John Platten, talking about his journey across his football career and the concussions he experienced across his long-playing history. He spoke honestly and openly about the known and unknown damage to his brain from his career, and what the journey looks like for him now with the impact of those concussions becoming more apparent each and every day.

These two conversations were followed by two special client guests, who shared their own stories and recovery journeys after ABI. We thank them both for sharing such personal stories with everyone present.

Overall feedback from the day indicated that the format was well received, the speakers were on point, with the entire event receiving a Net Promoter Score of 75%.

Other activities held throughout the week included:

- A lived-experience Artist Gallery as a key feature of the BIAW Launch event at the Adelaide Convention Centre, with 15 exhibitors.
- An invitation to present as part of a panel at the ASSBI - Australasian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment, on the topic, Addressing the challenges of brain impairment for higher education: Unlocking your potential.
- Delivering presentations in the north, south and east of Adelaide, providing a general overview of brain injury, our BISA Connect Student Clinic, and what services and supports are available to access as part of someone's journey post brain injury.
- Proudly launching a new initiative, our Free Lunch and Learn Series, hosted as lunchtime webinars that could be accessed by anyone that was interested in learning about different topics of Brain Injury over their lunch time. Thank you to the National Assistance Card and Jigsaw Australia for participating in the Lunch and Learn series.
- Sharing lived-experience stories as part of a social digital campaign to broaden and strengthen our messaging of the theme of the week, No two Journeys are the Same.
- Running a radio campaign across 5AA to connect with people across different ages, demographics and locations within Adelaide and increase South Australian community understanding of the frequency and hidden nature of brain injury, highlighting the significance of Brain Injury Awareness Week.

Thanks to our partners who supported the BIAW Activities:

- **Lifetime Support Authority**
- **Interact Australia**
- **Medimart**
- **Mellor Olsson**
- **Brain Body Fitness Studio**
- **National Assistance Card**
- **Jigsaw Australia.**



Increasing Knowledge and Understanding Through Upskilling the Sector

Kathryn presenting at the Disability, Aging and Lifestyle Expo 2023



Aiding Research in the Field of ABI

Kathryn Ayles & Michelle Bellen presenting at ASSBI event.



In the past financial year we have continued to deliver 'Understanding Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)' training sessions, which have been designed for delivery to people who are working with someone who has an ABI, with the aim to improve their overall understanding. The training includes an overview of acquired brain injury, common challenges someone may face after an ABI and offers some helpful tips for support. These small group sessions are designed to be interactive in nature to allow for discussion, and most importantly these sessions also include a question-and-answer time with a person with lived experience - which has always been well received.

Over the last financial year, we conducted 5 of these training sessions in total. 3 were held onsite in our City Hub and 2 were delivered in the community for different organisations (Hindmarsh & Ridgehaven). In addition to these full-length trainings, a shorter presentation was delivered at the Disability, Aging and Lifestyle (DAL) Expo to attendees, and another tailored presentation on ABI and Rehabilitation was delivered to lecturing staff at TAFE SA. As a part of our service development, we always ensure to seek feedback and, overall, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Feedback received included:

- Trainer explained topics clearly
- Was a great session
- Fabulous
- Quite useful information
- Excellent & relevant information & delivery. Bruce was extremely useful.
- Frances got a very good knowledge and insight on the topic and good presentation skill. Well done
- Frances' presentation was very good and informative. Covering a lot in a short space of time. Would definitely have liked a more comprehensive longer session. Bruce was amazing and absolutely inspiring. Thank you.

Delivery of and participation in research projects is an important part of working with our clients and ensuring that we are implementing the most up-to-date evidence informed practice, as well as ensuring that people with lived experience are involved in the evolution of service changes. Across the 2023-2024 financial year, we were involved in a number of different research activities. These included:

Research conducted by BISA:

- Research into the needs of carers in the community – which was LSA grant funded. Paper to be finalised by 02.10.24.
- Awarded a Nexus Grant, jointly with Flinders University for developing a toolkit for clinical educators for interdisciplinary placements. This research will run from July 2024 to Dec 2025.

Participation in research conducted by other organisations:

- SAHMRI NDIS ILC grant - Delivering Be Well within NDIS services.
- Employ Me - BIAT ILC grant.
- Brain Connect - LSA grant funded research for the development of age-appropriate educational technology to support and educate children and families after brain injury. One of our speech pathologists is representing BISA on the steering group.

Research activities that staff and clients have participated in:

- Modernising Mirror Therapy - can adding music and VR improve outcomes - Flinders PhD student - recruitment of staff and clients to participate in co-design and trials (2024).
- RehabChat project - support with recruitment of participants to trial goal setting technology (2024).
- Experiences of working as an OT and PBSP with people with ABI in the NDIS - Monash University project Libby Callaway - staff interview for research (2024).
- AUS-mTBI - Curtin University Prof Lindy Fitzgerald - dissemination of information on the study to increase recruitment of participants (2024).
- Understanding the healthcare experiences of people with TBIs in Australia - Government grant through Deakin University - Dr Ann Livingstone - recruitment of person with lived experience for lived experience panel (2024).
- Healthcare service experiences of young adults with stroke - Monash University Prof Natasha Lannin - service mapping of services in Vic and SA for young people who have experienced a stroke (2023).
- SALHN Local Area Needs assessment - supporting the consultation process by hosting a consultation group as part of the research phase.

Governance



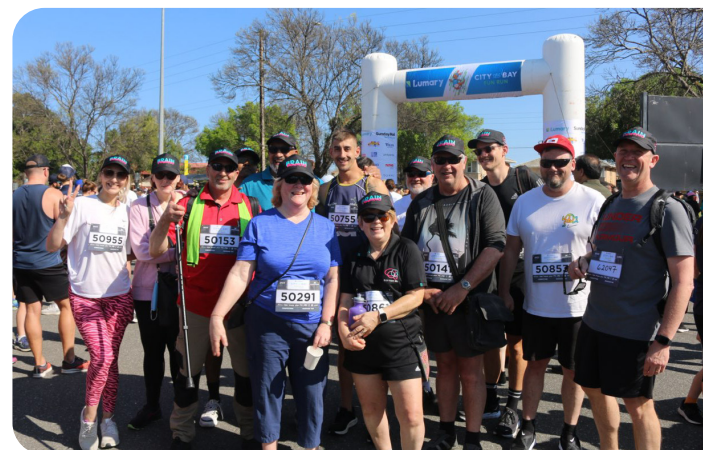
Client
Christmas
Party 2023

Building the BISA Brand Through Community Connection

With a goal to connect with more people to build a strong BISA Community across 2023/2024 we:

- Reached more than 400,000 people across both traditional and digital channels throughout the year.
- Continued to grow our online social community, we saw an increase of more than 13% in connections across all social media channels, with LinkedIn professionals contributing the most growth at 49%.
- Shared over 360 posts on social media, and more than 20 client stories of success, achievement and inspiration across our digital channels.
- Were featured in the Sunday Mail in an article about our City to Bay Relay team initiative, where we worked with the team at City to Bay to facilitate a small group of people to participate in the official event in a relay style format, with great success.
- Attended 44 industry events and expos, including hosting our own Northern Networking Event and Careers Info Night; connecting with close to 2500 people face to face.
- Hosted our much-loved Client Xmas Party with over 120 guests in attendance at the U-City Function Centre.


360
Posts on Social Media



Our Board

- Shane Cheek (Chairperson)
- Julie Moralee
- Doug Hicks
- Ian Byrne
- Matthew Williams
- Tanya Lancaster
- Ian Clayfield
- Mia Formichella
(from Trainee to Board Member)
- Richard Jones
(new Board Trainee)

Thank you to the following Board Members who finished up with Brain Injury SA during the 2023/2024 financial year:

- Vladimir Malcik
- Brendan Williams
- Nadia Moffatt
- Paola Niscioli
- Katherine Hawker

Financial Report

Annual Statements Give True and Fair View of Financial Position and Performance of Association

The Board has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Board and in accordance with section 35(2)(c) of the Associations Incorporations Act (SA) 1985 the financial report as set out on the following pages:

1. present fairly the results of the operations of the Association and the state of affairs of the Association at the end of the financial year.
2. has reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

And; the Board states that in accordance with section 35(5) of the Associations Incorporations Act (SA) 1985 that during the financial year ending 30 June 2024:

3. No officer of the Association, a firm of which an officer is a member, or a body corporate in which an officer has a substantial financial interest has received or become entitled to receive a benefit as a result of a contract between the officer, a firm of which the officer is a member or a body corporate in which the officer has a substantial financial interest and the Association; and

4. No officer of the Association has received directly or indirectly from the Association any payment or other benefit of a pecuniary value other than in the ordinary course of business.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Chairperson – Shane Cheek
Board Member – Ian Clayfield

Dated this 30th day of October 2024

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$000	2023 \$000
INCOME			
Grant Income	3	1,104,003	1,412,665
Fee for Service Income	4	3,789,009	3,502,398
Donations & Sponsorship		14,168	27,206
Interest		16,881	12,958
Other Income		(15,027)	11,777
Total Income		4,939,088	4,967,004
EXPENDITURE			
Administration Costs	5	327,190	386,176
Direct Service Costs	6	557,989	533,931
Operating Costs	7	126,448	124,287
Salaries & Wages		4,180,451	3,993,131
Total Expenditure		5,192,078	5,037,526
Deficit for the year		(252,990)	(70,521)

Assets and Liabilities Statement for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$000	2023 \$000
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash & Cash Equivalents	8	973,949	994,071
Debtors & Other Receivables	9	200,114	249,023
Prepayments		33,873	24,154
Total Current Assets		1,207,936	1,267,248
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Plant & Equipment	10	96,513	127,845
Leasehold Improvements	10	123,903	135,644
Motor Vehicles	10	7,178	9,262
Furniture & Fittings	10	5,037	6,240
Total Non-Current Assets		232,631	278,991
TOTAL ASSETS		1,440,567	1,546,239
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Grants Received in Advance	11	48,967	24,417
Trade Creditors		35,798	28,646
Other Creditors & Accruals		259,695	258,851
Employee Benefits	12	278,715	237,155
Total Current Liabilities		623,175	549,069
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee Benefits	12	168,707	95,495
Total Non-Current Liabilities		168,707	95,495
TOTAL LIABILITIES		791,882	644,564
NET ASSETS		648,685	901,675
EQUITY			
Retained Surpluses		648,685	901,675
TOTAL EQUITY		648,685	901,675

In Memory

We would like to remember and acknowledge the following people from our community that passed away during the past 12 months.

Richard Johnston	31/8/2023
Bruce Dodd	25/9/2023
Andrew Bohner	Oct/Nov 2023
Johnny Ruffo	10/11/2023
Russell Craggs	28/11/2023
Graham Porteous	27/1/2024
James Reid	25/2/2024
Christopher Ward	March 2024
Daryl Britton	April 2024
Stephen Stott	April 2024
Jason Taylor	28 June 2024

Recognising the Incredible Staff of BISA!



Thank you to our Sponsors, Partners and Supporters

Thank You

Our staff are the backbone of the organisation, with each person on our team contributing to improving the lives of people with an acquired brain injury. To support each other in what can be challenging work it is important for the team to connect with others, share knowledge and recognise the work of our team as often as possible.

Across the year, 3 all staff days were held, bringing our various teams together to learn from each other, explore new ideas, and connect socially as one team.

One of the key events in the calendar is our much-enjoyed staff Xmas party of which a highlight is our staff awards, where 3 awards are presented to staff members who have been nominated by others for their outstanding work and service to BISA.

In 2023 more than 55 nominations were submitted across the 3 categories, with the following staff the recipients of the awards:

- **The Customer Service Award**
(nominations by clients only)
Nikki Cooke.
- **The Business Initiative Award**
(nominated by Management team)
Kathryn Ayles
- **The Team Player Award**
(nominated by BISA staff)
Sonia Crocos

Congratulations to these team members, and to the wider BISA team for their incredible efforts this year!

Our sponsors, partners and supporters are integral in helping us achieve our vision to assist people to Embrace Life After Brain Injury. From all of us at BISA; our staff, management and clients alike; we want to share our appreciation for your support in helping us to continuously improve our services and deliver more for people with an ABI. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of so many people.

- Lifetime Support Authority
- Department of Social Services
- Flinders University
- NDIA
- Perpetual
- Uni of SA
- Brain Injury Association of Tasmania
- Equity Trustees
- Comunet
- Lucent Advisory
- My Plan Manager
- Grants SA
- SA Power Networks Community Grants
- PKF
- CPA
- Bunnings - Noarlunga
- Medimart
- Mellor Olsson Lawyers
- Brain, Body Fitness Studio – A Service of the Hospital Research Foundation
- Interact Australia
- Jigsaw Australia
- National Assistance Card

The Year at a Glance:

OFFERED
4 BISA Connect Clinic Blocks.

WORKED WITH OVER
500

clients with ABI during 2023-2024.

100% of people who participated in the **Be Well for Carers** program found the course materials to be **helpful** or **extremely helpful**.

100% rating that facilitators were **genuinely interested, approachable** and **trustworthy**.

HOSTED
28

allied health practitioner placement students across **26 weeks**.

DELIVERED
5 Understanding ABI trainings.

ALL appeals related to the statement of participant supports **achieved a positive outcome** and most access matters resulted in the applicant becoming a participant of the NDIS.

CREATED MORE THAN

360

pieces of content for social media, and reached more than

400k

PEOPLE across our digital channels.

76%

of BISA clients **achieved or exceeded** their rehabilitation goals.

Staff and clients participated in:

10 research activities from external organisations, and conducted **2 research projects** of our own.

MORE THAN
250

PEOPLE attended our **Brain Injury Awareness Week** launch event in person and online.

NDIS access and planning was the most sought after advocacy support.

BISA Connect Clinic completed

22

functional reports to support with NDIS applications.

BISA
100%

COMPLIANT with **NDIS standards** on full registration review including **recognition for best practice** in creating opportunities for people with disability in governance.



Brain Injury **SA.**

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