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“E mahi tahi ana ki nga oranga pai ake”  
Working together to better lives

07 572 4547 | 027 926 1881 | [liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz](mailto:liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz)  
[www.braininjurybop.org.nz](http://www.braininjurybop.org.nz)

## SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

### A Carers Point of View

Life sure does change rapidly for not only the person with a brain injury, but also for their partner and family. Injured people who live on their own will obviously have a huge disadvantage without having anyone to share their burden, give them daily encouragement, help improve their outlook and look after them – organising medications, outings, daily household chores, arranging appointments and everything else!

Maybe the hardest part is that a spouse in a great loving partnership may now become ‘just’ a caregiver. If the brain injured persons brain has lost the ability to be a loving person because of their injury – especially in the early days of the injury – it can be simply devastating for the spouse, friend or family member. Everyone has to make huge changes and have an acceptance now that life has changed dramatically for all.

Family and friends don’t always understand how the abilities or very nature of the brain injured person may have changed, and they can’t possibly understand, no matter how much we try to explain – even our own G.P cannot really understand, sadly they are too busy. When family visit, they see a lively talkative person because they are seeing a person who is excited by conversation or comments. They don’t see the sad and downcast times when the person feels lost and bewildered.

The joy in life is lost to us all. What about me?? When we lose our mate or family member to brain injury, the mood in the home can become very sad and lonely, and it is hard sometimes to find the motivation to carry on being that support person – we get sad and lonely too!

Planning events and outings can be hard as sometimes your person does not want to venture out amongst people they don't know, or there is too much bright light, too hot, too cold – so you have to change your plans. Even at home watching T.V, it often has to suit their likes and dislikes, you can't watch shows that cause a disturbance or upset, panic attacks or plain worry. Pleasing our person with brain injury and catering to their needs often means the carer misses out on their favourite hobbies or their own needs get neglected.

With constant mood changes, stress, feelings of hopelessness, frustration, bad headaches and fatigue, the quality of our lives get lost and it is hard to overcome and be the person they feel they used to be. Add further health challenges and there is almost too much to cope with.

Thank goodness Headway is here – so the brain injured person and their families can meet others with the same life challenges and find some comfort and support.

**By Bev Guddop**

## CARER SUPPORT

If you are a partner or parent, brother or sister or friend of someone who has sustained a brain injury, you will know that this type of injury has a profound effect not only on the person who has the injury, but also on everyone around them. Dynamics and roles change through necessity and sweep you along regardless of whether you are prepared, ready or willing. Your role often becomes one of every day organiser, advocate, minder, connector to services and navigator through the minefield of services and entitlements while maintaining relationships within the family and outside friendships.

This is often an invisible role as people around you may not notice. Brain injury is a hidden injury; it is not as easily identifiable as say, a broken leg. There is no cast, limp or wheelchair so you and your family member will often go unnoticed. It is equally fair to say that your person – partner, child, friend – would not be coping or participating at the level they are if it was not for your care, loyalty, understanding and commitment.

If you feel your situation needs reassessing and more specific care is required, you can ask your doctor for a new needs assessment. If you have an ACC claim, it can be done under this.

The [Carers Support NZ website](#): has a lot of useful information on there that you may find helpful. There are stories of other people's experiences that may resonate visit [www.wecare.nz/wendy-slieker-story](http://www.wecare.nz/wendy-slieker-story). Websites such as these can be so helpful, they validate the work you do while acknowledging the toll it can take. One tip they give is to start by giving yourself 5 minutes a day to yourself. I

suggest you use that time to browse the website – there are links for reading and discussions through-out.

For any of you interested in sharing your carer stories and in so doing, helping others feel less alone, please get in touch, we are happy to include your stories in the monthly newsletters. Another option is to hold a carers morning or afternoon every month, have a cuppa and relax for an hour, let me know if this interests you so I have an idea of numbers.

Want to drop in any time? Give me a call to make sure I am here and please feel free to drop in. Free tea and biscuits!

**Diane Hurdsfield - Liaison Officer**

You can contact Diane by email at [liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz](mailto:liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz) or phone 07 572 4547

## Lets talk about Concussion



The neurological foundation of NZ has a library of events that is well worth looking at. Last week there was a webinar presentation called “**Falls, crashes & smashes: Who's at risk of brain injury off the field?**” you can find this presentation by [clicking here](#), scroll down to **Events** and click onto the **Lecture Library**.

The presenter was Alice Theadom who is the 'Concussion Professor': Director of the TBI Network, Auckland University of Technology. Alice is a Professor of Brain Health and Director of the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Network which aims to facilitate collaboration

It is hard for people to find accurate information and so are not understanding what is happening to their brain and how the recovery process may be supported.

There is always uncertainty about recovery time and not always a match between services and needs.

### **Risk Factors to Poor Recovery**

Symptom burden – you may have a lot of symptoms: fatigue, poor memory, dizziness and vision disturbance

Previous TBI's – the cumulative effect of multiple TBI's can cause prolonged

between clinicians, academics, policymakers and the community to do the research that makes a difference. Alice is an international leader in the field of mild traumatic brain injury (including concussion). She is a Registered Psychologist with expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research methods including clinical trials, large observational studies, implementation science and service evaluation projects.

Alice describes TBI as an external force injury. The brain is shaken and lots of the areas of the brain may be affected. Even a mild concussion can cause major problems.

### Who is at Risk?



Everyone!! The incidence of TBI is increasing at a higher rate than our population growth. This could be because there is more awareness, so more reporting as well as the incidence of injury is not decreasing. After a mild TBI, research has found that after 1 year, nearly half of all those researched had symptoms.

- 36% reported headaches
- 41% experienced fatigue
- 32% were more irritable
- 28% reported dizziness
- 41% had memory loss
- 29% had anxiety
- 41% cognitive difficulties – longer thought processing

recovery.

History of migraine and poor mental health may impede recovery.

Someone may have fewer symptoms, but the symptoms they have may be severe. Alice cautions people against trying to return to work too early.

### Recovery Tips



Re-charging activities: Have a daytime nap, meditation, breathing techniques to relax and calm, baking and listening to music.

Do activities that nudge the brain into being challenged, but not exhausted, retrain your brain gently to encourage recovery.

Draining activities: Screen time, reading, puzzles, work/study, computer games.

### Advances on the Horizon

There is a simple blood test to check for a concussion. It may detect a build up of proteins 24 hours after an injury.

Doctors may have access to a digital measure of concussion and people may get a direct referral to concussion services.

Women often have a longer recovery process. Studies are looking at the role of hormones in recovery.

- 28% more sensitive to noise.

4 Years after injury, 17% of those researched had either left their jobs or had reduced hours. Lower community involvement was noted (due to noise and being overwhelmed) and relationships were strained due to the length of recovery time and lack of understanding.

Alice referred to the “Recovery Jungle”.

## Conclusions

Mild TBI is very complex.  
Recovery is very individual

Strong social and family support can make a huge difference. Organisations such as Headway can provide this support.

**Peer mentoring can be helpful – be brave and ask for help!**

## HEADWAY BRAIN INJURY ASSN BOP INC 30TH Annual General Meeting 2025



**Wednesday 24 September 2025**

**10.30am for start at 10.45am**

Tauranga Citizens Club, Thirteenth Ave / Cameron Road – Upstairs Restaurant  
Lunch at 11.45am (order and pay for own at the Bistro Bar downstairs before start of the meeting.)

A quorum of twelve financial members is required to hold Annual General Meeting so please attend if you can.

**This is our 30th AGM, which is quite something, and we invite all members to attend to mark this milestone with us.**

## IN MEMORY OF

### Valerie Scott

It is with great sadness that we let you know of the passing of Valerie Scott. Valerie was a Foundation Member and former Committee Member of Headway BOP.

We have expressed our heart felt condolences to her husband Peter Scott, former Headway President and daughter Fiona.

A Celebration of Life was held for Valerie on Monday 18th August and was attended by several longstanding members of Headway.

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## Shane Christie

Shane Christie died at his home last week. He was a former Maori All Black, played for Otago Highlanders, the Canterbury Crusaders and the All Black Sevens team.

Shane was 39 years old and had campaigned for greater awareness in rugby of repeated blows to the head. After retiring in 2017, Shane suffered from headaches, memory loss, speech problems, depression and mood swings consistent with Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE).

Shane helped set up the Billy Guyton Foundation with the aim of further understanding the effects of concussion on players after the death of his team mate in 2023. Guyton was the first N.Z rugby player to be diagnosed with CTE. As diagnosis can only be verified after death, Shane had asked for his brain to be studied also.

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## Mt New World \$15.00 Voucher August 2025

The lucky winner was Pat Sale

*Big thanks to owner Alan Rudkin for supporting Headway.*

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## Need to get in touch? Want to have a chat?

Phone Diane and make a time to visit the office at 53 Fraser Street, Tauranga

**Phone: 027 926 1881**

**If you have any writing you would like to share in our monthly newsletter, please send to Diane at [liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz](mailto:liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz)**

## BRAIN INJURY ID CARD

Our Brain Injury ID cards help explain your condition in situations where others may not understand. Carry one for a discreet way to communicate your needs and ensure better support.

This card is free thanks to Drake Meddox!



## I have experienced a brain injury Please be patient



NAME:

Proudly sponsored by **DRAKE medox** 50 YEARS

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION IDENTIFICATION  
PH: 04 473 5004

### I may have -

Cognitive difficulties - e.g. difficulty with thinking clearly, maintaining concentration, tiredness, solving problems, planning and completing a project, short-term memory problems

Physical problems - e.g. reduced balance, slower reflexes, headaches and reduced stamina

Sensory difficulties - e.g. impaired sight, smell, hearing, and taste  
Difficulty with expressing oneself or understanding others

Personality changes - e.g. irritability, intolerance, depression, anxiety, socially inappropriate behaviour, mood swings.

Difficulty in learning and remembering new information

Proudly sponsored by **DRAKE medox** 50 YEARS

## HOW TO APPLY

If you would like a card please contact  
Diane at [liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz](mailto:liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz)

## HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?

Please let us know if your address, email or phone number have changed by emailing [admin.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz](mailto:admin.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz) with your new details.

## SEPTEMBER DATES FOR YOUR FRIDGE

### Fri 5th Sept – 1pm – KATIKATI GROUP

This is a new group that will meet in the Taupiro Room of the Digital Hub next to Katikati Library. Afternoon tea at 2pm. Gold coin donation. ALL WELCOME

### 12th and 26th Sept – FRIDAY MORNING COFFEE GROUP – 10am

Meets at 53 Fraser Street. Gold coin donation, refreshments provided

### Wed 17th and 24th Sept – BRAINWAVE SINGERS 9.45am

Brainwaves singing group welcomes anyone who would like to sing and share morning tea. Citz Hall at the end of Maitland Street. \$3 includes morning tea.

### Wed 24th Sept – HEADWAY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Starting 10.45am upstairs at the Tauranga Citizens Club. Lunch 11.45am

### Thurs 25th Sept – LUNCH AT THE CITZ CLUB – 12.00 noon

Please let Diane know if you are attending.

Please let Diane know via email if you would like to attend any of these outings [Liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz](mailto:Liaison.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz)

## SUBS & DONATIONS

### MEMBERSHIP SUBS NOW DUE FOR

**1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026**

**Headway bank account number: 03-0445-0195410-00**

Please include your name as reference.

**THE MORE FINANCIAL MEMBERS WE HAVE, THE MORE GRANTS WE RECEIVE FROM FUNDING TRUSTS, AND THE MORE WE CAN DO. SO IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY A MEMBER, WHY NOT JOIN TODAY!**

To become a member of Headway BOP please complete the form below and send back to [admin.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz](mailto:admin.headwaybop@brain-injury.org.nz) or mail to 53 Fraser St, Tauranga 3112.

Name/s .....

Address .....

Phone .....

Email/s .....

Subscription: Individual \$5 or \$10 Family (please circle one)

I consent to the collection and retention of the above information by Headway Brain Injury Assn BOP Inc for purpose of membership records in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

**Headway gratefully accepts donations direct to our  
Account 030445 0195410 00**

Contact Headway office on 07 572 4547 or Gill 021 333 900 or click below to donate via our Give a Little page.

**DONATE**

**Headway acknowledges support and funding assistance from Lottery Grants, COGS, Lion Foundation, NZ Community Trust, Pub Charity, WBOP Disability Support Trust, Mt RSA, and Ministry of Health. Lions Papamoa, Lions Greerton, Lions Harbour City, Lions Katikati, Tauranga Rotary Trust; Good OP Shop Presbyterian, TECT, St George Centrepoint, Endeavour, Legacy Trust.**

**Thank you to the many retailers allowing donation boxes on their counters.**

**COMMITTEE**

S. Rutherford, P. Taylor, J. Simpson  
A. Anderson, G. Gardner, M. Bindon

**PERSONNEL**

Liaison Officer - Diane Hurdsfield  
Services Coordinator - Gill Gardner  
Admin Officer - Jan Simpson



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**Headway Brain Injury Assn BOP Inc**

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