



Making his Mark

Meet a man who finds himself through his artwork. Feature article Pg 6

Your Stories



People's Pets (Pt2)



festive fun at the HQ BBQ!

The Headstart Acquired Brain Injury Services commenced in 1987 and is recognised as a premier provider of specialist services for people with an ABI in the Hunter and Central Coast region. Headstart provides individually tailored services across community access, in home support, life skills, social, leisure and recreational services, case co-ordination, and community information and education.

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 Headstart ABI Services is a registered provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Our Vision

For people living with brain injury to have opportunities that strengthen and enrich their lives.

Our Purpose

To make a difference in the lives of people touched by brain injury by providing opportunities and inspiring hope.

Executive Staff

Executive Director:	Sue McHattie
Manager Service and Supports:	Kesley Skippen
Finance & Admin Manager:	Therese Paksi
HR Lead:	Kathryn Fitzgerald
Quality Lead:	Bronwyn Doherty
Marketing Lead:	Andy Meier



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What stories or information would you like to see in future NewsLinks? Do you have some great stories or photos? We'd love to hear from you! Email Andy at our office: comms@headstart-abi.com.au

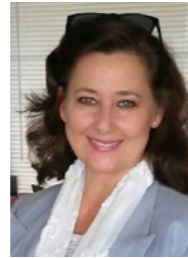
Nominate a staff member for outstanding achievement

We continue to recognise the work of our staff who have gone above and beyond in any capacity to support our consumers in their daily lives. Please help us thank and encourage our support workers! To make a nomination please contact your Co-worker or email: info@headstart.com.au

Have you checked us out on Facebook recently? Catch all the latest news, stories and rec activities.



From the ED's Desk



As 2020 draws to a close, I think we would all agree that it was a year like no other. As we are zooming closer to Christmas (no pun intended), we know that life has changed in ways none of us anticipated. One of the positives to come out of this past year has been appreciating the little things in life as well as the relationships and connections with people that make life feel good. In recent weeks with Covid guidelines relaxing it has been absolutely wonderful to see so many more people – consumers, and staff alike – we have missed each and every one of you.

This issue of NewsLink is powerpacked with information, introductions and heaps of photos from throughout the year, and more amazing stories of achievement. Whilst events in our calendar didn't work out as we had expected, we now look forward to focussing on new and exciting events in 2021... so stay tuned.

The Christmas and holiday season can also sometimes be a lonely time for many people. Please look out for those around you, reach out to them and let them know they are thought about.



Our thanks to our frontline workers for their resilience in difficult times, the co-workers for dealing with the challenges, and our admin staff for all the moving parts behind the scenes. Over the past year kindness and respect has come to the fore as we were all challenged by change and adversity.

On behalf of the Headstart Board of management and team of staff we wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas and a year ahead full of kindness, fun and kicking goals!

See you in 2021!!
 Sue



Meet our new receptionist, Amy, who works Mondays and Tuesdays.



Amy fronts up for Headstart

I was involved in Australian Navy cadets for close to 9 years. I spent 7 as a cadet and almost 2 as a staff member helping instruct. I love reading, travelling and rainy days. I am an avid gamer; I spend a lot of my free time trying out new games or reading new books especially if they're fantasy or science fiction. I also love ancient and medieval history; but Ancient Greece intrigues and excites me the most!

Get to know Amy

Favourite food: Garlic Pizza!

Favourite movie:

James Cameron's Avatar

Favourite band/music:

Rock or punk rock. Green Day.

Favourite sport/team: I don't really follow sports.

Favourite cartoon character:

Po from Kung Fu Panda.

Favourite hobby:

Gaming or reading. It's a tie.

Favourite place on earth:

London – though I would happily say Europe in general.

If you could be any animal?

A big cat, like a panther or a jaguar.

If you could meet someone famous?

Carrie Fischer.

Craziest/silliest thing you've done:

Went swimming with crocodile!

Three words to describe you:

Nerdy. Friendly. Animal-lover.

Describe your first month at Headstart

My first month has been fantastic and has flown by! I look forward to working with all of these wonderful people.

Health & Safety Update

COVID-19

At Headstart we continue to follow best practice health and safety guidelines and staff have undergone training aligned with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework.

We are carefully monitoring and adhere to advice from the government and relevant health authorities.

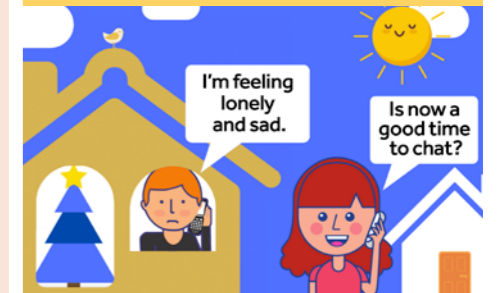
If you're concerned then call the Government Coronavirus Health Information Line for advice:
1800 020 080 (24/7)

Strong protections for NDIS participants all across Australia

From 1 December, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission started managing the quality and safeguards of NDIS supports and services in Western Australia. The NDIS Commission commenced in NSW on 1 July 2018 and is now operating in every state and territory. It means that:

- the NDIS Code of Conduct applies to all providers and workers across Australia.
- registered providers need to meet NDIS Practice Standards, report certain types of incidents, report restrictive practices, and have a strong complaints system
- NDIS participants can contact the NDIS Commission to raise a concern or make a complaint no matter where they live in Australia. For more info visit: www.ndiscommission.gov.au

Feeling isolated, lonely or anxious?



At Headstart we know that Christmas can be a difficult time for some. You may like to know about a new Hunter-based service.

A free friendly chat

Volunteers are available for a friendly chat. They are not health professionals or counsellors but they have time to listen. If you need specialist help they will assist you in finding that help.

Hello Hunter also offer free delivery of essential food or medicine if a temporary situation means you can't get to the shops.

Hello Hunter Need Help?

4948 6837



WWW.HELLOHUNTER.ORG.AU
 Hello Hunter is not a crisis or emergency number. If you are in immediate risk of harm please call one of the following numbers.
For EMERGENCY call triple zero 000 or LIFELINE 13 11 14

Christmas BBQ's

Check out the videos by scanning the QR codes with your smartphone camera.



BBQ 1 Video
(Tues 15 Dec)



BBQ 2 Video
(Weds 16 Dec)

We hosted two Christmas parties this year to be COVID safe. Thanks for the awesome photos Gary Luke. Top job Ben for organising the BBQ's!

Videos highlights are also on our website news and Facebook pages... see if you can spot yourself! Thanks Stef for the video background music.



Dayne



Dom



Fusayo and Nathaniel



Brook and Lyn



Andy and Mel



Leah and Kylie



Col



Romeo



Pete



Paris and Darren



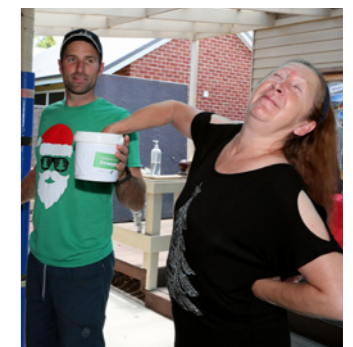
Nev and Peter



Carol and Kate



Paris, Renai and Jon



Ben and Angie



Johanna



Gary



Neil and Jon



Sylvia and Bronwyn



Ben and Sharyn



Kynan



Shaun



Joe and Jamie



Jake



Dave and friends



Ian



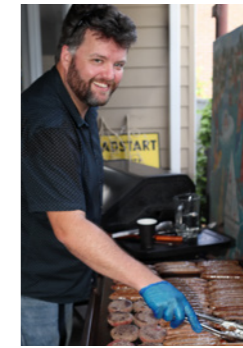
Trae and Ben



Kristy and Lyn



Chris and Robert



Mark



Marika and Danielle



Sue and Jason



Mark and Jasmine



Dayne and Corista



Ben and Neil



Jason



Pete, Jo, Wayne and Paula



John



Mark goes with the flow

A workplace injury three and a half years ago resulted in a bleed to Mark's brain, causing loss of sight and hearing on his right side. Mark's memory is also affected and so he could no longer work as a manager of security. While he admits that there have been some dark times, Mark's journey has just taken a colourful turn.

I sometimes get headaches and I've had some very depressing times and even suicidal thoughts. I'm seeing a psychologist about that still, and some days are up and down. I've also started to do things like growing veggies and restoring furniture, which I'm really enjoying.

I like to keep busy and Headstart helps me the opportunity to get out, go to rec group sometimes, op shops and garage sales, go for a drive, walks in mother nature and so on. I go to the pool and the gym as often as I can. I can't swim, I sink. My brain won't allow me to float. So I exercise in the pool.

Now, I love art. I look forward to it every time and I come to Sophie's class every two weeks. It's a way of releasing the headache from my head.

Before my injury I couldn't paint or draw. Now I can! So something's come good out of it. I can also build and restore things which I couldn't do before. So I've lost a lot of things but I've adapted well I think.

I'm fine when I touch canvas with paint, but if I do my signature with a pen and paper it's all over the place. That's weird but that's how it is.

I love this painting. I'm in it. I feel like I flow into the picture, it's got a really nice feeling about it. Painting just soothes me down. Everything eases. It feels like I'm in a different place.

I've even got one of my support workers, Alex, involved in art and painting again. She hadn't done it for years, now she's painting at home and after canvases like I am. I pick up old canvases at op shops and repaint them. I barter mind you, I tell them this is how much money I've got, and that's it. Alex is also restoring and planting veggies now.

My daughter said "I've got to buy this before you're famous, or it'll cost me more!" I said "of course you will!" Even if she's family they've got to pay the right amount, maybe a slight discount but nothing more! Although my granddaughter did take one of my paintings without me knowing and sent me a photo. There it was hanging in my great grandson's bedroom. I wondered where that one went. But I really love doing it for them.

Through my photos on Headstart's Facebook page I ended up getting commissioned to do three paintings. I asked my mate "what's a commission?" He said "that's when they pay you for it!" I said yes! So now I've got to start those, and better ask Sophie what to charge. No cheques, just cash of course.

I like to plan my painting and take my time. It relaxes me so it's not about rushing to finish it. I just love it!

Sophie Mill is Mark's art tutor, an accomplished artist based at her beautiful Hamilton studio.

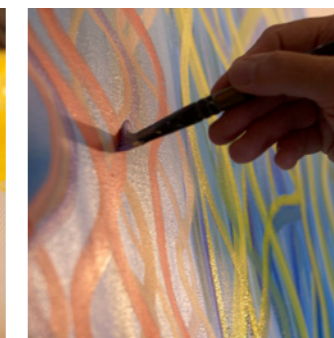
I feel very honoured. I started off painting, obviously, and along the way I've brought all sorts of people along with me. There's all sorts of reasons why people love to paint, and I really like the one-on-one. Mark and I have had a lot of interesting conversations. We've laughed and discussed other people's works.

It's also not just about this picture. Mark's also working on the bigger picture. He's got a great 'discussion' now and story now, a connection with his daughter. He's making decisions, he's learned to barter well and improve his negotiation skills in starting to sell his work.

There's many times Mark's turned up with a migraine, and as soon as the brush touches the canvas it's gone because he's not focusing on himself.

With this artwork, Mark is doing an abstraction of the sea and the sky. He's really found his confidence since beginning this one. His hand-eye coordination is great and he's making it a real abstraction and I think it's fantastic. He started with acrylics to move the paints around, but they dry too quickly so he's working with oils now to get that gorgeous luminous colour. This is his first oil and it's very 'kind' as a medium.

Sometimes people are scared to make a mistake. I tell them 'don't forget it's paint! It's not skydiving'. And it's turning out great. As you can see Mark's work is mature, confident and very kind to the eye.



I normally go to someone's place on Christmas morning. To be honest, I don't like too much noise. So this time my kids are welcome to come over but I'm planning on staying home and relaxing for a change.

Christmas means family and friendship. I've got grandkids and even a great grandchild now. That's what it's about!

And for 2021 family is a priority, I'm a big family man. I also want to do some fishing and I want to visit the Maitland art gallery. I'm looking forward to travelling more as long as COVID improves as I like to get out and about to see people and places.

- Mark



Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera to watch an inspiring video of Mark with art tutor Sophie Mill.



Ottawa's Parliament Hill building

Christmas was my mother's favourite time of year. She'd been brought up in a very strict home and they didn't spend a lot of time thinking about Christmas. But once she had her own family she could go nuts, and she did! She loved the whole Santa Claus idea and the spirit of giving. She would usually start her Christmas shopping in January. I'm not kidding! She also had a book of Christmas gifts each year going back decades, so nobody ever got the same thing twice.

Mum was also a very frugal shopper. In our stockings we'd get new toothbrushes and even bars of soap. But also a bar of chocolate or two and I'd get a Dinky toy car. My dad was the one who would go out and buy an electric train set. Then he'd be the one that would play with us with the gifts that he liked.

Every Christmas my brother and I would get a Tintin book from my aunt. I collected all the books and I've still got most of them. Explorers on the Moon was my favourite.

Let's fast forward from my youth in Canada to what brought me to live in Australia. It's quite simple really.

I married an Australian woman that I'd met once and spent a total of 24 hours together with.

The story is that we were on the train from the west coast to Ottawa and Trish was going further and then on her way to Europe after that. But we stayed in touch, and then at one point we decided we would get married I proposed to her over the phone and she got on a plane and came to Ottawa. We were married 32 years and we came over to Australia after 16 years together which was a big adventure for me.

I've been in Australia for 16 years in total now and Trish and I had a wonderful life together. Sadly my wife passed away from leukemia a year ago after we'd been living in Lake Macquarie for five years. Previously we'd lived in Canberra where I worked for the Government.



My main role was as communications manager for Emergency Services, like the fire and ambulance service. I enjoyed it very much. So if we had a bushfire it was my job to help write up the latest updates for the head of the organization to read - or edit. The other side of it was developing communications tools and so on.

I am told my brain injury is the result of having a seizure. This caused damage to the back of my brain and affects my short-term memory. I live alone and enjoy my independence. I really don't want to give that up.

Something I'm still trying to get used to is not having a vehicle. I can't drive anymore and that's something that won't ever change. So now I walk or take taxis.

I find Headstart very understanding and I've been very open with them. I feel that if I don't take responsibility for my own life and taking care of myself then I'm going to lose some of my skills.

My support workers do a great job and they understand what I'm looking for from them. And that's mainly the social interaction and companionship. So I've got to keep active, keep doing my own dishes, doing the vacuuming.

Being active means that I've got to keep planting plants. I just haven't figured out how to keep them alive yet. I think, water and fertilizer has something to do with it but still working on that!

I'm just committed to staying competent for as long as I possibly can. I've got to use it or lose it, and I don't want to lose it too soon. I don't expect that my epilepsy will ever go away so it's doing the best I can. I look for ways to compensate and cope with the forgetfulness. And if that means writing things down, God knows I love to write. To the extent I can, I like the idea of at least practicing using my memory - even if it just makes me feel better about myself I'm happy with that.

I love chess. Some of Headstart's people are getting too good. I'm kidding, frankly I need the competition! Support workers also help me with medication and meal preparation. I do a variety of exercises and stretching I do with my support workers to make sure my muscles don't atrophy. I do them on my balcony or outside, and I often go for a walk around the block or down on the Fernleigh Track. I also like to visit the library to see if there's anything worth reading.

Intelligence is important to me and so I want to keep my brain ticking for as long as I can. I read a lot and I read anything. I've got 345 books on my book case and I'm still reading some of them. So I don't need to go to the library but I do still pop in to see what grabs me.

I love writing. My writing is another way that I work on my memory. I used to visit Redhead Library to attend 'University of the Third Age' (U3A) which started in France. Their slogan is 'to keep the marbles rolling' and the idea is that it gives retired people the opportunity to stretch the mind and body. You can do anything from Tai-chi to creative writing - which I do.

There are walks and many different things. Some of that's stopped because of COVID and it went online. I'd like to get back to that soon. I'm also a member of Probus which meets at Belmont 16's and gives retired people like me a place to socialise and do like-minded activities.

This Christmas Day I'll likely be with my niece at Wamberal on the Central Coast. We did that last year too. I'll stay the night, have Christmas dinner and then get a ride home.

I have other family in Brisbane, Sydney and Victoria. I still have friends in Canada who I used to play baseball when I was younger. I still talk some of the team on Zoom (video call). The problem is, I've got to get up at one o'clock in the morning to talk to them because of time zones. So that's a pain!

I don't really have any resolutions for 2021 other than to keep on top of my health and improve my memory.

I'm looking forward to the time when the coronavirus gets integrated into our system and we gradually become immune, which I think is going to happen before they find a cure. As far as corona is concerned there are some things you can't do much about other than take the usual precautions. So I'll be doing that. ■



Среќен Божиќ и Среќна Нова Година

Sreken Božik i Srekna Nova Godina
(Translation: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year)

While she grew up in Europe and speaks with a strong accent, Zaklina calls Australia home. A warm Aussie Christmas is just what Zaklina wants, as she reminisces about colder climes.

I like Christmas but I think that it's more for kids. They want presents and my kids wanted money especially.

My home was Macedonia which is where I met an Australian man. We were married and came over here. I became pregnant as soon as I arrived in Australia.

I have daughter who is 18 and a son who is 16. I see her once a week but I don't see my son at all. It makes me sad. They live with my ex-husband.

Every week I still talk to my family on Macedonia. My mother is still in Macedonia in a nursing home, and I like to help her out with money as the situation there isn't very good. My father is here in Australia.

It snows and is very cold in Macedonia in winter. I really don't like the snow and the cold very much. I like Christmas to be a happy time for people, that's what it should be. In Macedonia the traditional meal is pork. We eat lots of pork! I like it a lot.

I don't remember anything about my injury, but I was in a three month coma. My son said "mum you've been in a big accident, but I remember nothing. My memory is not good after my car accident, so my goal is to have a better memory.

My memory is my main problem. I don't have too much pain but walking is difficult and I do have a sore leg.

I'm happy because I'm alive. Everybody has something to deal with. Difficult things happen. Being strong is important, it's not easy living sometimes.

I like to go to the gym two days a week. It's good for me. I have a program for exercising and Headstart help drive me there. They also help with cooking and shopping for clothes and makeup.

One of my favourite things is watching movies on TV. We have a lot of DVD's here and I like lots of them. I don't have a favourite movie really. ■

Skopje, Macedonia in the winter... and summer.



CSW Stephanie has some exciting things to look forward to in 2021, which means we say goodbye (but not farewell). She is also part of new children's music group 'The Quokkas', so if you have kids or grandkids be sure to look them up. Watch out the Wiggles!

Stef has just finished her masters of music therapy with the University of Melbourne. She's excited about starting a new full time job as a music therapist at the start of the new year. Stef will assisting children with autism, disabilities or developmental delays.

At the same time Stef is sad to be saying goodbye to the many consumers she has worked with as a support worker with Headstart over the past couple of years.

"I'm really grateful to have had the support worker job while I was studying. To be honest I totally underestimated how much I'd love it!"

Over the time Stef has built some wonderful relationships. "I care a lot about helping people to do rehab exercises at home. Generally speaking you can't do too many reps. An hour with a physio once or twice a week isn't enough. So helping Scotty, for example, in this way has been rewarding".

Stef has also recently taken on the role of conductor of Brainwaves Choir (for stroke survivors) after volunteering with them for a number of years. Several Headstart consumers are part of the choir that will continue on Saturdays.

"I want to let everyone know that I've loved every, every minute of it and hope to see some of you down the track as a music therapist. I'll have these memories for a really long time it's been quite a life changing job but in a very beautiful way". ■

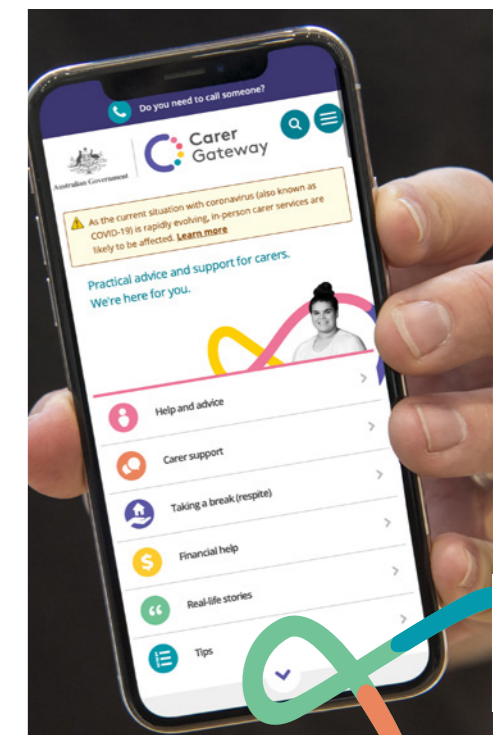
Giving back to carers.

Carer Gateway is free to access if you are looking after a family member or friend living with a disability or long term medical condition.

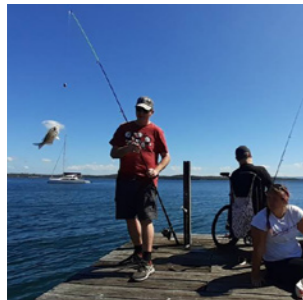
- 1. Carer support planning** - helping you identify the areas affecting your quality of life and wellbeing, supporting you to be effective in your caring role
- 2. Peer support** - providing you with an opportunity to meet other carers in similar situations to you, where you can share experiences and knowledge
- 3. Counselling** - giving you support through one-to-one sessions with a professional counsellor
- 4. Carer directed support packages** - one off amounts or packages to be used for practical supports incl. cleaning, respite, cooking and transport
- 5. Emergency respite care** - providing care in case of something urgent or unplanned arising, ensuring that the person you care for is well looked after.



More information at www.carergateway.gov.au or call 1800 422 737



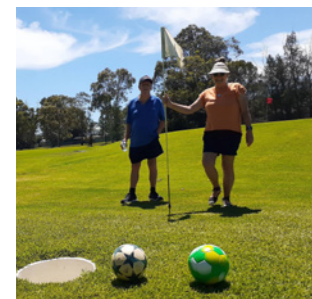
Rec roundup



Fishing at Murray's Beach



Australian Open action



Footgolf, Beresfield Golf Club



Kayaking at Cams Wharf



Abseiling at Glenrock



Earthen Rhythms drumming

Besides the usual bushwalks and bowling, there's a wide range of activities on offer at rec. Some amazing stories too! Here are a few snippets from the 2020 rec diary.

Bang on target

Just an update on yesterday's archery session at Feral Archery on the Central Coast. Massive success. Dale K was a born natural archer; despite his vision impairment, I don't think an arrow strayed from the target for the whole session. Dale was very reserved and hard to crack the exterior and have a chat, but I think he thoroughly enjoyed himself and really had some success. The instructor Craig was genuinely amazed at his ability as a first-timer.

On arrival, Rodney B was literally shaking with nerves. Stepping into the archery centre and opening himself up to a new activity was a real challenge, and Rod managed his nerves by stepping back and sipping on his water. The first several rounds, he couldn't get the motion down properly, and all his arrows fell well short of the targets. Although a little dejected and embarrassed, he didn't give up.

After 2 full hours later of non-stop practice, Rodney was landing all 4 arrows on the target each round, at full distance. Amazing perseverance and he was stoked with himself!



Dale and Rodney take aim

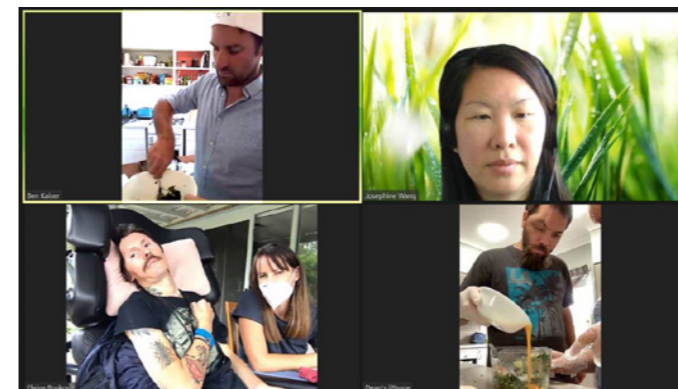
Zoom cooking class

I hosted this zoom cooking class from my own kitchen at home, to meet the need of some of our consumers who may be isolated at home due to Covid restrictions of their residence, or mobility issues. The class was free, besides the cost of some ingredients (\$10) which they obviously end up eating anyway!

I set up like a little TV studio in my kitchen, with my ingredients all lined up on the bench, and did my best Huey impersonation, hosting the two fellas and their support workers, plus Co-worker Jo who joined in.

Nathaniel was very excited and went full steam ahead, following along with the steps as I talked through and demonstrated the method for making spinach and feta pastries. Kitchen implements were improvised- no brush, no worries! Just use a spoon! And before we knew it, we had a delicious treat in the oven.

Dom and Elaine followed along throughout and I'm sure appreciated the social interaction and some external stimulus.



Nathaniel about to dig into his hard work

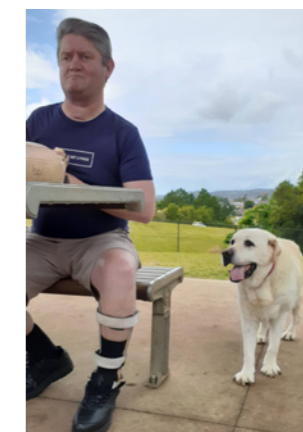


Ben, our Rec Activities Co-ordinator

A dog's life

Dog parks are a pretty social place- and not just for the dogs! For many people, animals can provide a welcome focal point which removes the pressure and allows us to strike up conversation with new people and connect with them on a common interest.

It's also a chance to get outside, get some fresh air and maybe even some exercise ourselves as we throw a ball for our dogs!



Get in touch for more information about our rec. ■



The Catventurer

James is affected by what's described as an 'invisible' or hidden disability. He is not alone. Many of our consumers have had brain injuries resulting in disabilities that are not physical or immediately apparent.

What caused your brain injury?

It was from loss of oxygen to my brain and I have no memory of any of that time. I was in the John Hunter for two weeks and RPA for

a while. It is pretty much a mind wipe of about two years. That was a couple of years before I started coming to Headstart.

What changed after your injury?

Well I can't remember a lot of the stuff that was really getting me down. That's actually a positive thing. So I was happier and more carefree afterwards. Now I'm not as stressed out as I was before, or so I'm told.

What's been your biggest challenge since your brain injury?

Remembering is a challenge. I lost independence to start off with, but I have regained a lot of it.

How do you feel about not being able to remember much from your life before ABI?

Well, from what my mum has said some of the stuff I probably don't want to remember. Yeah, so it's probably a good thing as it was a negative time for me.

Have you got any physical challenges or limitations?

Not knowing when I should go to bed (ha ha). No I'm pretty good with sleep actually. I can do everything physically really.

What do you want to achieve in the future?

One of the goals for the future is to go back to Movie World. This was in my goals for the NDIS.

How is Headstart helping you to achieve goals in general?

Being there to support me which is good. I was nervous to start off, because I'm not really a social butterfly. But it's been very good.



Did you know that despite formerly being a chef, James' favourite food is hot chips! James has occasionally made some delicious sweet treats for the Headstart office staff for special occasions. Amazing!

What have you done that you're most proud of?

I got my licence back, it hasn't really impacted me that much because I don't have a car, but it's been good. Because when we've been driving when mum drives, I'm able to drive if she gets tired and even drive home from bowling.

What do your support workers mean to you?

They give me someone to talk to, help me out with cleaning the house up a fair bit. Also food shopping on Thursdays.

Without them I probably would be... struggling a little bit. I find it hard to motivate myself because I'm quite happy to sit at home and get tied up doing but watching TV. It helps to get out and socialize.

You've been a regular at Headstart Rec. What's your favourite activity?

Yes I do enjoy rec. I would say the movies but that's just because I like movies, but I do enjoy coffee club, bowling and all the rest. There have been a few favourite outings, the reptile park was a favourite outing.

I really enjoy the social side of it and being able to talk to people.

Tell us about your feline friend

My cat Lara is very annoying at the moment because she's flat old! She's continuously wanting food. She's very sociable at the moment and still inquisitive like a kitten. She's been in our family since she was a kitten, when my brother bought her. When we were living down in Richmond he moved out one day and left his cats with me.

I used to have a few cats but I've just got Lara now. She's about eighteen years old now. I like cats because they don't need much attention and you can just let them be... as long as they get their food! She's pretty low maintenance. She also doesn't mind cuddles and she realises she can't escape them now.

What three words would you use to describe yourself James?

Kind, caring and compassionate. ■



I don't look forward to Christmas as much as when I was a kid. It's lost its magic I suppose. In recent years Mum will come over for Christmas lunch and I'll put on a big spread for the two of us. Each year I make something different, last year it was lobster I think!

James is also a bit of an adventurer and always joins in on our rec including kayaking and abseiling at Glenrock. James has also been skydiving!





A yarn with David

"When you have a snake you keep your hands clean. Don't put your hand in after you've patted a dog or cat or anything - if it smells like them and is the same temperature you're going to get bitten."

David (or we could call him Dr. Dolittle) is at home with all living creatures, especially reptiles. His love for talking to people led him to recently join our Community Education Team (CET), which we are excited about. Meet David!

I was born in New Zealand, adopted by Australian parents, and lived there until I was about ten. When my father passed away my mother brought us back to Australia where she had family to help support us. I actually met my biological parents a couple of years ago, unbelievably. I'm still in contact with them which is really cool.

In 2003 I had my accident. I drove into a telegraph pole at 180 k's, rolled the car and the roof came off so my head smashed around on the road. My injury was really bad, and for a while I still had blood on my brain and they had to drill a hole in my head to take the pressure off the brain. It was all confusing at the time. I thought I had killed my son, but thankfully there was non-one else involved in the accident, just me.

pulled all the tubes out in hospital, tried to eat people and thought I had a pet monkey that lived under my bed. I thought that my family were landing in a plane from New Zealand in the car park. I was very confused for a long long time. My kids still laugh about it.

I was a concreter in construction at the time and building a hospital. It was a terrible and emotional time. My missus ran off, I lost my house, absolutely everything. My whole life collapsed all at once. Before my life had been fast cars, fast motorbikes, scuba diving, bungee jumping. At first I did suffer from depression. It was tough, but stuff happens.

But today I've still got good things in my life. I've got a house again and a girlfriend. I see my three kids who are all growing up and getting married and even having their own kids now. So I'm pretty happy really.

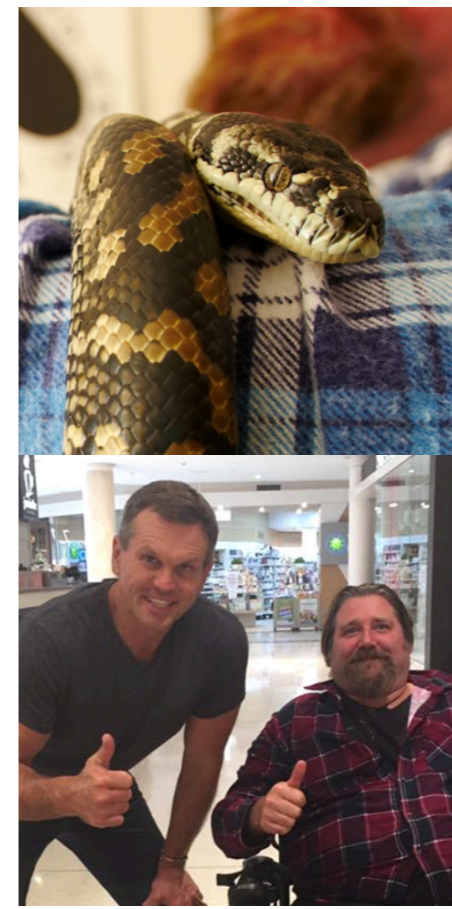
Physically, I'm T4 Complete (a thoracic spinal cord injury) so I'm permanently in a chair and can't walk. I've got seating problems and

chair I've lost the top of my femur with osteomyelitis (bone infection).

Most people who see you in a wheelchair think you have a severe brain injury anyway. They come up and talk to you loud and slow. I just do it back to them. Then they realise oh S#!* I've made a mistake!

With my brain injury now I forget people's names, but I always remember a face. If I'm going shopping I write a list otherwise I will forget things. I write important appointments on my phone.

COVID-19 hasn't changed things too much for me but I have had to be careful. Earlier in the year the doctor at the hospital in charge of infectious diseases told me "Do not come to the hospital, it's too dangerous. Doesn't matter what it is, do not come to the hospital." So even for getting medication I had to send people for me because my immunity is low and because I don't control my diaphragm. The doc told me if I get coronavirus it's a death sentence.



My goal is to get healed up with my seating and pressure sores and overcome that so I'm not in pain. Then I'd love to get into some sort of disability help or something like that. Some sort of paid work would be good. There's no way I could be a concreter again, but maybe look at the planning and steel costs. I've managed wholesale nurseries but I can't get onto the gravel and dirt with my wheelchair.

When I was in hospital years ago the nurses used to get me to talk to people who were in really bad depression after an accident. Nothing professional but I'd just go and yak on and that was really good. Especially for younger people. I've got experience to share that's close to what they're going through which not everyone else has as disability support workers.

I was a registered reptile keeper before the accident. I used to train and swop them before but not after that, they tended to get caught in the wheel of the wheelchair.

But then one day my son turned up with a snake in a cage and dumped it on me, so now I've got a pet snake again. A Queensland coastal python. Some of my support workers are a bit nervous but others are happy to hold it. It's normally kept in a cage of course. People think they're difficult to look after but they're not really. Keep them well fed and check them for ticks if you're near an aviary. You've got to just get used to getting bitten every now and then.

I love animals. Years ago I had a property at Wye with a couple of acres. I had aviaries outside, cages inside with snakes, lizards, birds, two goats, a ram, chickens, ducks, fish, dogs and rabbits.

I bred rats for the snakes. All wonderful things. But once I became wheelchair bound I gave it all away because I was in and out of hospital.

Otherwise I'm a keen photographer. It's a great way to capture moments of life. I love landscapes, scenery, people, smiles. It's absolutely beautiful. We've got some of the nicest beaches here in Newcastle. I love photographing the girls on the beach. Peter (support worker) doesn't know what to do when I ask a girl if I can take their photo and they do a pose for me. The stuff you can get away with in a wheelchair!

Kate is doing my plan has been really helpful with that, placing orders for catheters and things, and she's making sure everything works smoothly. I used to do the plan myself, never had a worry with that, but then other people all meant well but complicated things for me. A big thank you to Headstart!

I still do a lot for myself, sometimes my girlfriend stays, but most days I'll have home carers come look after me for a couple of hours at a time.

I started with Headstart because they had a wheelchair accessible

vehicle and nobody else did at the time. One of my main supports is for grocery shopping, I used to do the shopping with a backpack on my chair and do it all that way, but with a support worker now helping I can get a whole trolley full. But I do my own cooking which I can manage. Headstart also help me with transport stuff like getting out and about to the beach or coffee shop.

On the whole life's pretty good. I've always been positive. There's no point sitting around wondering why or moping about it, you've got on with it. ■

I like to spend Christmas day with my children. That's the best part for me. And my girlfriend because she's got Christmas day and boxing day off this year so we can spend some time together. I may go to Brunkerville to my in-laws, otherwise I'll just stay here at home and my kids will come here on Christmas day or the next day. They've got partners to go and see too.



My hopes for the new year are for no more pressure sores or bone rot. I want my body to stay together. I just want all the kids to be healthy and happy too. I want to stay positive.

Always colourful



Lyn has been with Headstart for 16 years since a stroke rocked her world. And she's certainly rocked ours (in a good way!) as her wicked sense of humour keeps us smiling. We caught up with Lyn and her husband Wayne, also Lyn's carer.

Lyn: I had an aneurysm which was a bleed to the brain and also a stroke. I can't remember any of it. Thank God.

It did change my lifestyle, the things I do with the grandchildren and what my husband Wayne's got to put up with me, you know, caring for me like this.

I used to manage a pharmacy and I can't do that anymore. It'd be dangerous to put me in that – they'd probably want pimple cream and I'd give them an enema or something.

I've been married to Wayne for 40 years. You don't even get that for murder!

Wayne: When we've been out walking some people that we've known for years have seen us

coming and gone the other way. Perhaps they don't want to speak or they're a bit embarrassed. I don't know. People brain injuries are still people. We may not have the same communication with Lyn as we used to have, but it still upsets you, because these people are your friends.

Lyn: At least he's still here with me. A lot of people would have just shot through or put me into a nursing home. So thank God they didn't do that to me.

Wayne: One thing's for sure, Lyn will never go to a nursing home. Not with the close family she's got.

I still work cleaning casually. But you just adapt. I look after Lyn and she comes first. I get her up organized in the morning. The support workers come in and take her out for the day that's when I get my break. I get to recharge.

If you didn't have Headstart, or the NDIS that can find, it would certainly knock you around because you need it. You need these breaks. I've never experienced anyone with a brain

injury until Lyn and really, it can get you down.

We're still paying these house off. It's just it's a struggle all the time, especially money-wise. We stay home most of the time and it's just one of those things that we've had to deal with in the last 16 years. We've had to acclimatise to this. We were very social you know, tied up with football clubs and netball and nippers. We were always out but now we just stay at home.

Lyn: We did everything with the kids: nippers, sport.

Wayne: Yeah, just the kids that we all were very much affected. Kylie was just pregnant with Lily at the time and it happened. Her mother (Lyn) did everything for her before that and bought stuff like cots and whatever. So it does affect them, for sure.

Headstart are the best, there's a few of the support workers, especially Adrienne. She's been the backbone and she's great. There's not a problem, you ring up and everything's solved quickly.

Lyn: All the support workers are good. They'll all be getting long service out of me now, wouldn't they? They reckon I'm better now than what I was. I'd hate to know what I was like before. I don't remember any of it (my accident), thank God.

Wayne: The first three or four years - until medication kicked in - she cried all the time. She still has her off days though. Lyn has different phases where it's exactly the same as the day before. So some things she'll just repeat over and over. At the moment it's about the bathroom.

The NDIS have helped us with a new bathroom and that's a big help. It was a very confined space in there. She's fallen a lot in the past, gone through the glass and nearly lost a finger. So it's time that happened.

Lyn: I feel really good and confident having a shower without falling. One thing I miss is not being able to have a bath because Wayne can't lift me in.

I love doing mosaics. You know, at least it's something that I can do with one arm. One of my support workers from Headstart cuts all the tiles for me 'cos with one arm I can't hold them or cut them. So she does all that for me. And then we both normally grout together. That's a nasty job. The support workers come up with their patterns and then I come up with my patterns.

I'm getting very trendy now. I got second prize in the Newcastle Show! So it'll kill me to get first prize now.

People get a shock because my mother's 80th birthday I did her a big flower and then one of my other aunties was 80 and I did her a pot. So I think things like that you know, that are made for people compared to buying you know, they get more of a thrill to think I'm the one with one arm and the brain injury.

Wayne: Lyn's mosaic's have been a saviour for her and the more she does it the better she is. It's helped a hell of a lot.

That and just getting out and about. She loves to be out, hates being at home. Like Lyn can spend Sunday with a support worker from 8am until 4pm. She'll come home at 4pm and want to go out again! ■

Lyn: Christmas is about family and grandchildren. But I won't be gifting my mosaics for Christmas. I need the money for gifts (\$20 each or 3 for \$50!)



My New Years resolution is to just to do the best I can. I'm looking forward to this year being over with COVID.

Wayne: Christmas is a big day for me. I do everything. From the time I wake up until I go to bed it's cooking and washing up, cooking and washing up!





Kynan likes to spend time outside in his garden.

Get to know Kynan:

Favourite food:

Food in general! Pasta probably.

Favourite sport/team:

St George. I've supported them since I was a kid. I lived in Sydney when I was younger.

Favourite hobby:

I like the radio or listening to music.

Favourite band/music:

I like a bit of everything. I like the old AC/DC.

Three words to describe you:

I'm just myself. That's for other people to decide.



Family pet dog Macy



"Christmas is whatever you want it to be! To me it's a time when family and friends get together and have a good time. I don't know what I'll be doing this year but last Christmas we went up to my sister's place near Lismore.

New years is really just another day, so no resolutions for me. I just want to be the best person I can possibly be. That's it!"



Exercise time! You'll often see Kynan at the beach



Until you've lived in someone else's shoes you don't really understand brain injury.

Everybody has a different story, everybody is different. Just be yourself!

What do you want to achieve?

Just be myself. I just enjoy life itself, whatever it may be.

How long have you been with Headstart?

I don't know but it's been many years! I've dealt with many people during that time. With the groups that I've been around they are the best, that's why I stay with Headstart.

What do your support workers mean to you?

They mean a lot! They help me with whatever circumstances that I need help. I'm very thankful for any assistance that I get.

My family are also a good support to me. I couldn't find anyone better than my mum. I wouldn't swap her! I have my two sisters too. Any family you have are good to hold on to, because you only get one family. ■

Ed: we agree Kynan, we love your mum too!

How has COVID-19 affected you in 2020?

I haven't been too worried about COVID. I just get on with whatever's happening from day to day. I don't worry about too many things, unless it's worth worrying about. You just deal with the circumstances. I've always been like that. You can't have everything and that's just the way life is. But I am looking forward to COVID being over and I'm not the only one!

What do you enjoy doing?

I have missed some of the social activities (due to coronavirus) but you have to just deal with the situations. Some of my favourite activities are just going out because I like being active. I like to go to the gym or just go for a walk. Or a coffee or two. I like to go to the beach or the waterfront for a walk with my support workers. I like to have a swim too. We just talk about what's going on, it doesn't have to be any particular subject. I just go with the flow.

What caused your brain injury?

I had a brain tumour at the stem of my brain when I was a kid. I was seven and a half. I had surgery at a kids hospital in Sydney. I had to have ray therapy and chemotherapy. So I started losing my sight. Some if it through the brain tumour and then more as I got older. I still went to year 11 at school. But by around nineteen years old I had lost most of my vision. I don't have any pain, thankfully. I used to have a shunt system to drain the fluid from my brain but I don't have that problem any more. I can basically tell light from dark but can't tell colours apart.

What's it like living with impaired vision?

I just live with what I've got. It's like everything – everybody has a good day or a bad day. You just deal with the circumstances you have. Because you don't have sight I rely on my other senses like listening or smelling. If I need help I'll ask, if someone's around. Normally I'm with someone if I go out like a support worker. If I'm walking outside I use my cane but I really need support.



Margaret (Mum), Monique and Jon (Co-Worker)



Wags

Independence Day

Monique's brain injury was caused by stroke four years ago. This resulted in the loss eyesight on her right hand side and she is also unable to use her right arm. Extreme sensitivity across all of the right side of her whole body. But by working hard with different carers and therapists Monique has come a long way.

Monique's mum Margaret says she found it tough for her daughter to move out of home, but it's the best thing for her. Making the recent move from home to an independent living home in Wallsend has been a big and brave step for Monique, but an important one.

Margaret shares with us "Monique is a lot happier and needs to have a life of her own. It's been life-saver for me. I'd just lost my husband, and with Monique's brother having her own medical problems, this way she's settling into her own home, with other people, and that's a big change for Monique and it's a big thing for me to let go but it's the best thing."

Monique adds "Moved in! Yohoo! I feel good! It's good to have housemates and company. I'm not bored because I've got people around me."

Monique has the main bedroom of the house, with an ensuite and walk in wardrobe. "Big bedroom, big bed, yeahay!" Monique is with two other girls with disabilities.

What does Monique like about being in her own home? "I love cooking!"

Support worker Lara has been working with Monique for 3 years now, one day a week (Monique has three days of support with Headstart each week).

"We attend the Aphasia group on Fridays from 10am till 12pm. They have a speech therapist there every second week, otherwise we run our own sessions."

Aphasia is a communication disorder that results from damage or injury to the language parts of the brain, a fairly common result of stroke. Aphasia can impact the

way a person uses or understands words. People who have aphasia may have difficulty speaking and finding the "right" words to complete their thoughts. They may also have problems understanding conversation, reading and comprehending written words, writing words and using numbers.

Lara continues "It's amazing the difference I see in Monique, waking up early, not feeling tired during the day. We do exercises at home and walking around the backyard."

"I do standing and sitting exercises, squats, calf raises," says Monique, "I used to exercises on the internet with Margot (from HRMI) but now I can do them by myself."

Support worker Lara says: "On Wednesdays (before COVID) we had women's rec and she enjoys that, otherwise Monique enjoys other rec activities. Monique was also doing a cooking course that she loved and singing group. We record songs for her to sing while Monique does her hand exercises."



Rummikub challenge against Mum



With occupational therapist Sophie

Monique is a big fan of music. "I like singing Pink!"

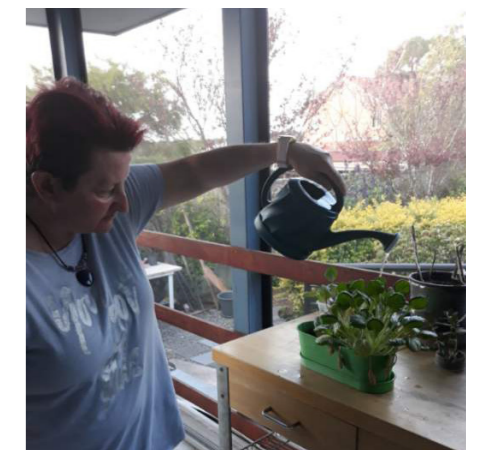
We asked Monique about her plans for the future.

"I want to have a conversation easier. I want to be able to read without interruptions. A huge goal moving into my own place."

Margaret continues "Monique can read now but she has interruptions. She can talk but the aphasia makes a flowing conversation very hard. Monique didn't know her colours or numbers, but she has come a long way."

Friendships are important to Monique and has always been an important goal. Being in shared accommodation she is making steps forward there too. She shares that unfortunately most of her friends don't contact her anymore which has been really tough.

Monique engaging with staff and building independence at her new independent living home



Monique loves animals and one day hopes to work in an animal shelter with RSPCA. She's a horse riding fan too.

Prior to moving out of her family home, Monique's dog Wags (a Maltese Shitsu cross) was a constant companion.

Margaret says that "Wags came from Lightning Ridge and was five weeks old when we got him about twelve years ago. When Monique saw him the first thing she noticed was his tail so she called him Wags because it stuck up like a feather duster. If he slept at the bottom of the bed all was well. But if Monique wasn't well or a seizure was going to happen he'd sleep near her shoulder. And that way we knew to keep an eye on her because she would have a seizure later on. Wags has just been wonderful. They're very smart little animals!"

When Monique comes home once a week Wags is waiting for her, he knows exactly when Mummy's coming home. He has his special pillow that he sleeps on right next to her bed because he's a bit old to jump onto the bed now."

Monique loves Rummikub. Her mum Margaret says "That's what's brought back her sense of numbers and numerals, and at the moment we're doing additions and even multiplication is coming back. It's a brilliant game for anybody with brain injury. It's got four different colours, so they learn colours. It's got numeral patterns and is wonderful for Monique. We always like to have a few games when she comes home once a week now to keep it up." ■



The titanium skull replacement – 14 months after the occurrence

Acquired Brain Injury 'The unheralded'

Peter Mulroy has been involved with Headstart for many years after his ABI, the result of a brutal assault in 2002. Peter has co-ordinated Headstart's Community Education Team (CET) and we greatly appreciate his contribution. Peter's commitment to helping others is demonstrated in involvement with the Victims of Crime Assistance League (VOCAL) and the Criminal Justice Support Network which support people with intellectual disability in criminal matters.

Peter recently sent us this article for publication.

Few of us predict life-events shrouded within unforeseen downfalls. To us it is apparent that infancy inclines us to seek fruitful outcomes... anchored to most moments of our 'being'. Assumptions during those times are often tailored to a broad arena of adventurous, exploratory aspects of 'our' wondrous life.

It is essential that I place before you that I have no attachment to the medical profession - if anything I may qualify as the 'impatient patient'. That said, I too have suffered the damage in a manner that altered my life into an order that is inexplicable. In January 2002 I witnessed a couple being savagely attacked with knives by a group of three offenders; within my attempt to break the ferocity by 'stepping in' I was struck in the skull with a pick-axe handle. That weapon didn't crack or fracture my skull – it smashed the entirety of the temporal portion. Having gone into an instantaneous coma and haemorrhage, I was rushed by 'CareFlight' Rescue Helicopter Services from an island location to a principal mainland hospital.

That comatose state continued for twenty six days whilst remaining in Intensive Care for months beyond - being the recipient of continuous blood transfusions. That being entwined with persistent surgery required for 'dead-brain' removal.

My devoted 'Ma' and family travelled interstate to be alongside me and were counselled that survival would be unlikely. It was also pointed out that were I to come out of that purgatorial coma – the likelihood of my knowing those loved-ones and myself would be improbable.

At the expiry of 'coma day 26' I was drawn from that seemingly inescapable state into an unfamiliar world - I had not predicted the initial event, nor had I the mental ability to foresee recovery. To be forthright in description of that 'comatose state exit' is awkward to present in comprehensible fashion from countless victims and myself. There are distinct similarities, and indeed perplexing dissimilarities that affect many recipients of the deplorable ABI.

It is my principal intent to place these words before you, the loved-ones and carers of others that have that have encountered similar injury. Recognition of loved-ones and oneself can be outside the perimeter of our 'mental state', the mind becoming somewhat affixed to neutral transmission – denying *forward* progress. That hits-home with rasping damage, causing fortitude and feasible escape routes into the zone of recovery to feel ostensibly unlikely; and from my perception back then - somewhat *unwanted*.

For members of the gifted medical team and loved ones, that return to a state of consciousness generated joyous responses to their prayers and hopes – not so to this victim. As wakefulness began to arrive in terms of self-recognition, the horrific fears and trauma began to deepen – and deepen they did.



Television interview at NBN subsequent to recovery

That awareness of *who* those devoted people were took time; as it took an elongated phase for this victim to become aware of whom he was, where he was – and *why*. In the attempt to buoy-up my entrenched feelings I would be told that 'someday' recovery would arrive, allowing me to return to my island home - the devoted attempts of inspiration being delivered. In spite of that conveyance, I had *no* mental recognition of my home nor the whereabouts of the 'island' referred to. It was devastatingly apparent that my mind had neared the 'no-exit' point of its dead-end corridor.

Recognition of the nature of our condition begins to confront us in the most abysmal manner; albeit defined as 'acquired' – it's an acquisition that we did not seek.

From a personal angle numerous defects became apparent; initially my left eye was found to be permanently blind along with necessity of wheelchair mobility for 7 months, and loss of speech. Additionally, I had neither bladder control nor the ability to swallow – that latter requiring a personal 'countdown' to swallow my own spittle for many months into the tapered pathway before me.

For three and a half months my treasured 'Ma' sat by me in the hospital ward, residing in a nearby hostel some 1,000km from her own home. Alongside my 'Ma' were the loved-ones that I shan't ever overlook, their presence providing the rebuild of inner-grit desperately required.

The nature of that unsolicited groundwork presented through devoted dedication came into play within a diminutive flicker of time. That said, traumatic conditions are inexplicable - tending to generate an inclination for me to have sought an improper 'escape route'; were it not for eventual awareness of their

devotion - my weaknesses would have departed their mental closets - surely leading to an 'end-of-tether' act of submission.

The Ward in which I was kept was designed in a way that wouldn't allow of its patient's permission to exit because of the condition we were in. Repeatedly I would ask staff members (...as best I could) when 'departure' might arise, the usual response being served in a blend of hazy ambiguity. Occasionally, that requested response would deepen the state of depression with indications that it *may* (with a frequently repeated 'maybe!') occur in the pending 12-18 month period.

It was becoming more perceptible to me that I would not have been a steadfast seaman on-board Captain Cook's 'Endeavour' – my intent being to flee the 'Ward vessel' and step ashore; that being the launch of my sombre mistake. My weaknesses had overpoweringly surfaced with no perceptible aptitude of self-correction...dignity being about to drain through that unpardonable sewerage gurgler.

Was it not for 14 months of therapy at the insightful 'B.I.S.' in Newcastle culminated by the enlightening, unwavering nature of *Manager Sue McHattie & Staff at Headstart ABI Service, Newcastle* that trait of recovery would have unquestionably been foreign.

Among us we recognize that 'Kingston Town' was a resolute racehorse – one who could be rebuffed to last in an event and appear defeated.

Inner-determination provided him with the means of propelling home to attain accomplishment.

Each of us can enhance with help and determination if feeling 'conquered'...though that 'winning-post' may be visioned as distant just now, OUR 'starting gates' are well-astern!

**Peter Mulroy
AFAIM MAITD ■**

Community education continues

With my first full year at Headstart as the Community Education Team Coordinator coming to a close it's a great time to reflect on the teams achievements.

2020 brought some challenges not seen in our lifetime with the COVID pandemic and I just wanted to thank all the presenters and the CSW's for their flexibility and understanding.

Early in March 2020 we had just finished a special event at Kurri Kurri High School where the presenters spoke to year 7 and 8 students to give them some insight on the consequences of decisions. I went with the guys and we did an interview style presentation and I was blown away by the presenters stories and how the audience was captivated and so well behaved!! It was a highlight for me and a really good feeling to know that we made such a big impact that day. Not long after this the COVID pandemic hit and I had to cancel all events and monitor the situation as it unfolded.

The CET events did not restart until August and we had to make sure we could continue our work safely, we were able to implement social distancing and PPE measures to do this and we started up again.

It was a great feeling to get CET back up and running in the community and I can see that the presenters get a lot of satisfaction in being able to help others. Since then we have welcomed David E, Trae D and Brenden Q to the team and I am excited to continue to grow our presenters. I looked forward to a big 2021 and just really want to thank everyone that has been involved this year and wish them a happy and safe Christmas!

- Jon, CET Coordinator ■



CET Coordinator Jon (left) holds the tongs at a recent BBQ for presenters to get to know each other.

Women's Group is back on

It is great news that we have Women's Group back up and running regularly on a Wednesday, from 10am-3pm. After many years of dedicated service, Pat T has stepped back from leading Women's Group.

We would like to thank Pat for the care, effort, and enthusiasm she has put in! For the next few months, we will have some special guest Women's group leaders- This will be a great opportunity to meet some new workers and try some new things!



Bag a new bag

These attractive and durable hessian jute bags are perfect for all your shopping and gift carrying needs. Size 35cm H x 40cm W x 20cm D, with double 17 inch handles.

Contact us or pop into the office to buy one: **\$7 each, OR \$6 each if you buy 2 or more.**



Wayne's World!

Wayne P loves his bikes and when he can takes a visit to check them out with his support workers. "I am thinking about flying the coop....catch me if you can!"



Have you checked us out on Facebook recently?

Catch even more of the latest news, stories and rec activities.



Lauren makes a come back.



I'm back! Having previously been a co-worker at Headstart I left to live and work (snowboard and eat gyozas) in Japan for 18 months. This was cut short after 5 months due to COVID-19, so I returned to Headstart as a CSW for 6 months and supported some wonderful people, before returning as a co-worker. My background is in Occupational Therapy, but after working in the field I realised I preferred working in other roles in the disability sector.

Get to know Lauren... again!

Favourite food: Nachos

Favourite movie: The Mighty Ducks

Favourite band/music: A bit of everything

Favourite sport/team: Hawthorn Hawks

Favourite cartoon character: Rex (Toy-Story)

Favourite hobby: Snowboarding

Favourite place on earth: Canada

If you could be any animal? Sloth

If you could meet someone famous? David Attenborough

Craziest/silliest thing you've done: Hiked/camped on a volcano in Guatemala

Three words to describe you: Adventurous, excitable and caring

Describe your first month at Headstart Good! I feel like I never left and just moved into the opposite corner of the office.

Life after brain injury... make it happen

"I love the water I absolutely love it!"

No couch surfing for Mark. Despite having low vision, Mark still gets to pursue his passion for bodyboarding as we help him to 'make it happen'.

Mark calls his support worker Abbey 'lil' sis' as they take to the waves each week, sometimes driving out of town for a surf when they have a longer shift. Mark also hits the waves with a couple of other Headstart CSW's. Awesome Mark!



NewsLink

If you would like to continue receiving NewsLink, become a member by contacting us on 4965 4420 for a membership application.

Our membership year starts from the 1st July. Your contributions to the newsletter are welcomed, and we will keep you up to date on all the issues, activities and the developments in services.

Making a Complaint

You have the right to complain under the Community Services (Complaints, review and monitoring) Act 1993. If you have a complaint there are steps to take. At each step, every effort will be made to resolve your complaint before going to the next step.

Step 1: Talk with the person concerned

Step 2: Talk with Co-worker/staff member

Step 3: Talk with Director

Step 4: Talk with Chairperson

Step 5: Talk with Committee

Step 6: Talk with an outside service

At each step you have the right to have someone else present if you wish. This person is called an advocate and may be your friend, family member, staff member, paid advocate or someone else. If you wish Headstart can help you locate an independent advocate.

Wishing you a very happy 2021!



NewsLink is produced by many people at Headstart ABI Services.

We welcome contributions from everyone: an article, letter, photograph, poetry, etc. We also welcome suggestions as to articles that we could write about for future issues.

We appreciate feedback on things like the kind of stories, size of our typeface, layout and general appearance of our newsletter.

HAVE YOUR SAY on these, or any other issues by writing to us at:
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or email: comms@headstart-abi.com.au

