



# Annual Report

Headway | Brain Injury Auckland  
2023-24



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*Ma te kōrero, ka mōhio,  
Ma te mōhio, ka mārama,  
Ma te mārama, ka mātau,  
Ma te mātau, ka ora!*

*Through discussion comes awareness,  
through awareness comes understanding,  
through understanding comes knowledge,  
through knowledge comes wellbeing!*

Headway Brain Injury Auckland is here to support everyone impacted by brain injury to thrive in an inclusive and understanding community.

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# Executive Summary

## A Year of Growth and Connection

This year has been a transformative period of growth and development for Headway – Brain Injury Auckland. Through consultation with our community—especially those with lived experience, whānau, and professionals— a pressing need to extend support to more individuals across Auckland was identified. Brain injury remains one of the leading causes of long-term disability in New Zealand, particularly affecting young people, and it impacts the lives of so many in our city.

## Expanding Our Reach and Programme

We are proud to announce that our expanded services now reach across 6 locations, a change that allows us to support more people while addressing the inequity that existed when we operated from a single location. Delivering services from local venues has not only increased our reach but has deepened our connection with the communities we serve, reducing isolation and fostering participation.

In collaboration with our community and researchers, we have redeveloped the Peer Support Programme to better enable those we support to live their best lives. Embedding the principles of Te Whare Tapa Whā has been central to this work. The focus remains on equipping individuals with the knowledge and strategies to manage their brain injury while building meaningful support networks and fostering genuine connections within their communities for ongoing support and active participation.

Our Navigation services have expanded to ensure that everyone seeking information or advice is effectively supported, both with immediate resources and connections to community groups and organisations that can assist them on their journey.

## Focus on Education and Collaboration

Education has been a key focus this year, reflecting our belief, backed by research, that “education is the foundation of recovery” and crucial to creating an inclusive society. In addition to educating our immediate community, we’ve reached out to wider audiences, including community groups, businesses, medical providers, and residential care facilities, fostering a broader understanding of brain injury and its impact.

We elevated the voices of those living with brain injuries, advocating on their behalf in consultation panels with ACC and government departments, as well as research panels. The successful Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Symposium, which we co-presented with AUT and The Neurological Foundation of New Zealand, was another platform where the voices of ‘experts by experience’ were heard, leading to meaningful dialogue and connections.

## Strengthened Governance

In line with our commitment to excellence, we continue to strengthen our governance practices, ensuring transparency, integrity, and accountability in all that is done. The current environment for charitable and for-purpose organisations remains challenging, but our prudent governance and sustainable funding strategy put us in a strong position. We are delighted to welcome two new board members, Peta Fraser and Nick Paterson, whose extensive experience in business and governance will help steer Headway towards continued success.

## Commitment to Values and Future Focus

Throughout the year, we have remained true to our organisational values: inclusivity, courage, and collaboration. These values, along with our focus on amplifying lived experience, will continue to guide us as we move forward with our strategy.

Looking ahead, we are committed to further developing our cultural competency and upholding our responsibilities as good Te Tiriti partners. A continued commitment to building strategic relationships with researchers, providers, and other organisations will ensure that our services are evidence-based and effective.

Areas of particular focus in the coming year include concussion (mTBI), youth, and whānau—these are areas of need that will continue to be investigated and consulted on. Additionally, we will build on the strong foundations of our education efforts, which we believe are key to creating a supportive and inclusive society where the brain injury community can thrive.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our supporters, volunteers, funders, researchers, and community members for their contributions over the past year. We look forward to continuing this journey together, creating lasting impact and making a real difference in the lives of those we support

# The Headway Board

## Ruth Hamilton - Chairperson



Ruth brings a broad range of organisational and management skills and experience to the Headway Board. As a teacher and Deputy Principal she honed her organisational and management skills. As the founder of a small business, she needed vision, determination

and resilience. Ruth is proud to have contributed to a strong team that engages professionals and service providers, enhancing support for those affected by brain injury.

## Stacey Mowbray - CEO



Stacey Mowbray brings a deep commitment to prioritising collaboration as an essential tool to enhance our strategic vision. She is dedicated to positioning our organisation as the leading resource for brain injury support

and education. Her leadership style drives growth and innovation, ensuring we meet the needs of those affected by brain injuries.

## Agnes Wong



Agnes brings experience of public health, community engagement and youth development in both New Zealand and London, UK, working in charity, emergency

management and health sector organisations with diverse communities, young people and volunteers. She has had a personal experience of head injury.

## Wenda Morton



Wenda brings a diverse range of skills, experiences, and a personal understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with brain injuries. Her past careers as a lawyer and cognitive behavioural therapist makes her a good navigator of complex, psychological, and regulatory matters that may arise within the organisation.

## Michael Helps



Michael's family' experience has given him a deep understanding of the challenges facing those impacted by brain injury. He brings a wealth of business expertise and

vision to keep Headway effective and relevant in the changing brain injury landscape.

## Nick Paterson



Nick brings governance and finance experience from a career in regulation and integrity. He is a strong advocate of the importance of education as the best form of support and prevention. He is the former Chief Executive of Drug Free Sport New Zealand, a chartered accountant and a member of the Institute of Directors.

## Peta Fraser



Peta holds over 20 years commercial experience working with many different industries here in NZ, and overseas. Her expertise is in strategy, governance and government relations. She works for the New Zealand Government's trade agency and is a NZ qualified lawyer.

## Farewell Board Members

After many years of support and involvement it is time to bid farewell to two members of our Board: **Maggie Polotu** and **Bryony Greenhalgh**.

Maggie has provided unwavering support and invaluable insights throughout her tenure. Although she will be stepping down from her formal role, we are grateful that she will remain connected with us as an advisor.

Bryony has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to Headway over the last five years. As she embarks on a new adventure abroad, we celebrate the impact she has had on our organisation.

# Strategy 2024-27

## Headway Three-Year Strategy: Focus For Our Future

### Our Vision

Everyone impacted by brain injury thrives in an inclusive and understanding community.

### Our Mission

We honour the agency of people impacted by brain injury and support them to live their best possible lives.

### Our Guiding Values



**Collaborative**



**Courageous**



**Inclusive**

### Overarching Focus

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** We give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in all the work we do.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Recognising and valuing cultural diversity, whilst being mindful of personal biases. Ability to work together with all communities towards a shared purpose.
- **Equity:** Striving to achieve equitable outcomes for all.



# A Year in Review

## DIGITAL IMPACT

[www.headway.org.nz](http://www.headway.org.nz)

Website views

**41,000+**

**118.8%**

↑ Increase



Our social media channels help us raise awareness of brain injury. You can help by following us and liking and sharing our posts.



LINKEDIN:

INSTAGRAM:

FACEBOOK:



↑ **65%**

↑ **100%**

↑ **181%**

## NAVIGATION

PROVIDED Individualised navigation, information and advice:

HELPING  
**1512**  
PEOPLE



## SUPPORT

DELIVERED **265** peer support sessions

TO **1883** ATTENDEES

**6** locations auckland wide and online



## EDUCATION

PARTICIPATED IN

**14**

Education and Public Awareness Events in the Broader Community.



# Our People Say

"I don't know where on earth I would be in life without this group, Headway is amazing, it is literally the best thing I have been involved with since I had my injury."

"When I'm in the groups I realise that it's all about helping each other .... Friday's a really neat social group to go to and a lot of people turn up so you get connected with other people in the community. I find coming to Headway and just learning things from other people and social things you realise other people are struggling as well, so there's a lot of sympathy and empathy and willingness to help others out."

"Headway's been amazing, like a map and a compass, the people have been very positive and also offered a lot of practical suggestions."

"I told my friends and family members that I was in a room full of 'me's' - .. because I could relate to everything each person said."

"Headway's been fantastic for me, all my friends and family they're really good for me but they don't know exactly what it feels like to have a brain injury. But everyone here, they've all had brain injuries so it's really great to be with a group of people that had the same thing and feel the same way."

"Your presentation generated a great deal of interest by our members and your understanding of what some of the challenges facing some families resonated with many."

(He) "loves attending ... and I hear he even felt comfortable enough a few weeks back to share a little of his musical/drumming knowledge to the group in Epsom.  
He came home with the biggest smiles that day!  
(We) are so thankful he has a safe community to connect into; one that understands his challenges and accepts him as he works through his head injury."





# Key Highlights

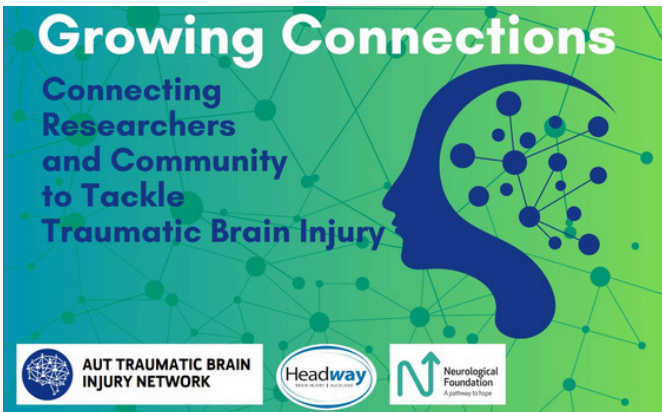


## Brain Days, March 2024

3 locations – creating opportunities to  
**LEARN, MOVE, GROW, CREATE, CONNECT**



## Growing Connections, April 2024



# Expo's & Community Events



- ATSNZ – Disability Expo, North Shore
- Show Your Ability Expo, Manukau
- Albert- Eden Local Board Networking Event
- Gardens For Health – Networking event

Education Delivery to: Health Hub, Lions Clubs, Dunstan Hospital, U3A Community Groups, Rotary Clubs, Real World Living, TLC4U Respite Resort

# Lived Experience Series, Filming



Through a series of videos, people living with a range of brain injury conditions share their experiences and offer tips and ideas on living a fulfilling life. The videos cover a range of day-to-day ideas and provide practical suggestions for them, their whānau, friends and carers.



- Advice to friends and family
- Benefits of Exercise
- Benefits of Tai Chi
- Fatigue Management
- Going Back to Work after Brain Injury
- Regaining Independence
- Derek's Story, Kelly's Story, Michelle's Story
- When & How to Seek Medical Advice

# Peer Support

## LEARN • MOVE • GROW • CREATE • CONNECT

The peer support model is grounded in the belief that those who share similar experiences or challenges can provide mutual support, empathy, and empowerment to each other. Headway runs peer support groups through the mediums of learn, move, grow, create, and connect.

In 2023 Headway adopted the Peer Support model and increased opportunities to the wider community across 6 locations Auckland wide.

### MOVE – Tai Chi



### CREATE – Art



### CREATE – Music



## GROW – Headway Community Garden



## CONNECT – Headway Social Opportunities



# Thank You

The work at Headway Brain Injury Auckland is made possible by the generosity of funding partners, grants, foundations, community groups and donors.



**The Headway Community are so grateful!**

Your contributions have been vital in keeping our charity operational throughout the year, enabling us to make a meaningful impact in the community. Because of your support, we can continue to provide essential services and resources to those in need.

Thank you for believing in our cause and for being a crucial part of our journey.