



## ***Acquired Brain Injury*** **Fact Sheet**

- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) refers to damage to the brain that has occurred after birth.
- Common causes of ABI include accidents (motor vehicle crashes, falls, sporting), assault, stroke, lack of oxygen (i.e. drowning) and degenerative neurological diseases. ABI related disability can affect a person's cognitive, physical, emotional and independent functioning.
- People with ABI may experience a combination of difficulties with communication, thinking, physical functioning and control of their emotions and/or behaviour. They may also experience changes to their memory function, ability to concentrate, plan and solve problems. The person may tire easily, lack motivation, become self-centered and have a reduced tolerance to stress.
- The outcomes and effects of ABI are different for each person and often depend on the cause, nature and severity of the injury. Some effects of brain injury are only experienced in the short term, but many permanently impact on the person's ability to lead an independent life.
- Research indicates that one in 45 Australians have an ABI which has resulted in significant limitations for people's capacity to lead independent lives. The prevalence rates are higher for males than females and increase with age.
- Two thirds of the ABI population sustained their injury under the age of 25 years old. With a normal life expectancy this can lead to decades of consequences.
- A high percentage (up to 40%) of people with ABI also have a mental health (psychiatric) issue.
- In Tasmania it is estimated that each year 2,500 people acquire a brain injury. A significant proportion of these are young adults whose medical care and support issues are compounded by a lack of understanding within the broader community of brain injury and its impact on the lives of individuals, their families and carers.
- It was estimated by the Tasmanian Government that the cost of an 18 year old male with ABI (as a result of car crash) will be \$12 million in care, support and medical fees over the person's lifetime. This figure does not recognise the emotional and social costs for people with brain injury who are also more likely to experience breakdown in relationships (family, friends, and partners), drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness and criminal justice issues.
- The Brain Injury Association of Tasmania exists to assist people with brain injury, their families, carers and service providers within the community to understand and manage the impact of brain injury. You can contact them on FREE CALL 1300 242 827 or visit [www.biat.org.au](http://www.biat.org.au).