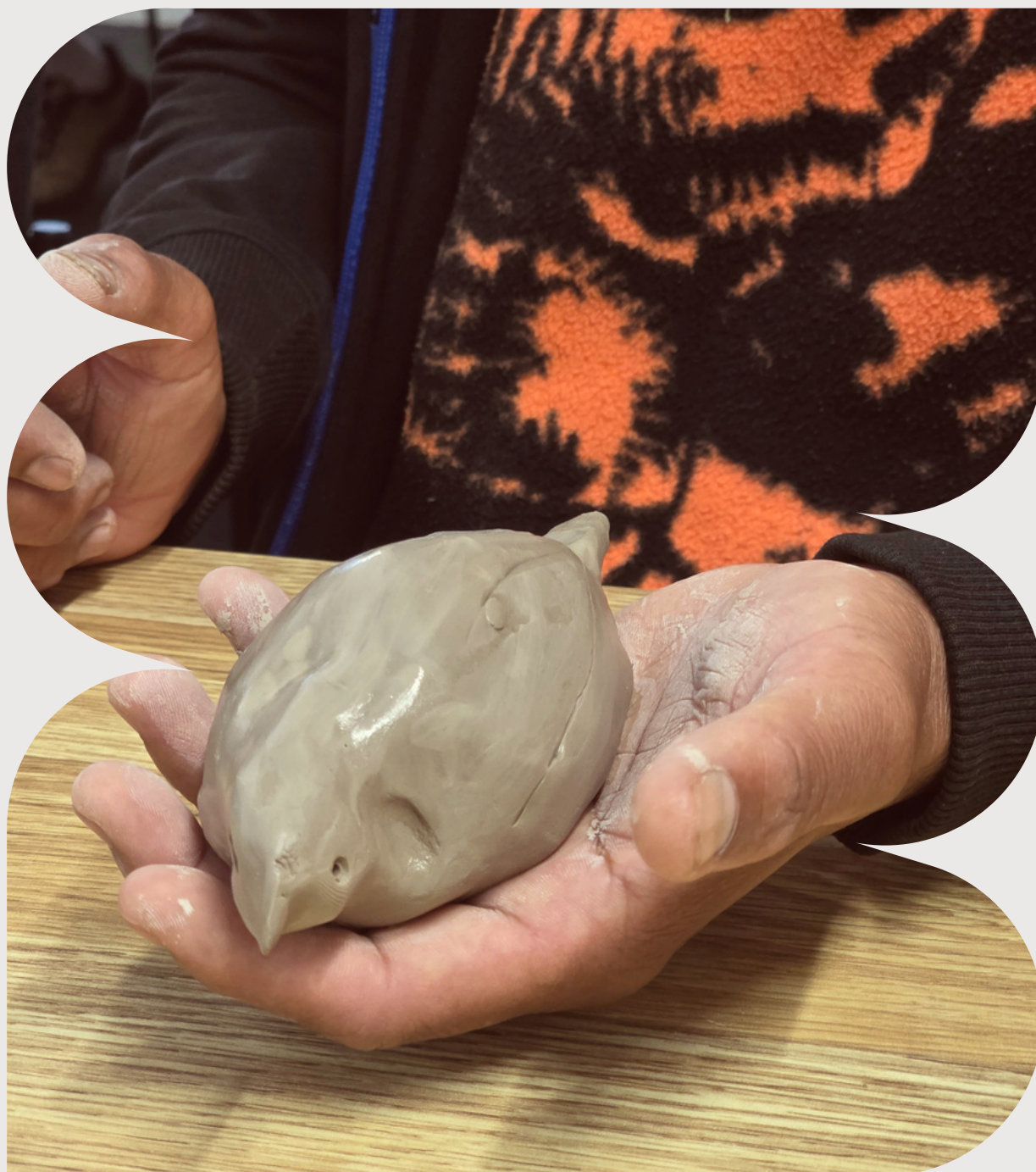


NEWSLETTER

Spring Edition 2026



NAVIGATION

Wayfinders

EDUCATION

Plenty to offer

SEMINAR

And so much more!

Kia ora,

Brain Injury Waikato is a non-clinical charity. We offer navigation support, community groups and brain injury awareness training.

If you live with brain injury, or work in an organisation that supports people who do, and would like to connect, please get in touch with us. We would love to hear from you.

Email: support@biw.org.nz

Phone: (07) 839 1191

Website: www.biw.org.nz

Ngaa mihi nui,

The Brain Injury Waikato team.



In this edition

Update from the manager

The BIW team has been busy. Check out the latest! 1.

Navigation

A short introduction to the Wayfinders service from our Navigator, Dayna Rose. 2.

“Plenty to offer”

Reflecting on lived experiences from our health educator, Josiah Ploeg. 3.

Small Steps

An upcoming online workshop. 4.

Brain Seminar 2026

Our annual brain seminar is not far away! Amazing guest speakers at the front line of brain injury research. 5, 6.

AGM 2026 7.

Pathways to participation 8.

Supporting our work 9, 10.

Printable Calendar 11.

Manager's Update

A warm welcome to Spring from the Brain Injury Waikato team.

From pottery to politicians, what a quarter it has been for Brain Injury Waikato! I am proud of the work our team continues to do in service of our mission: creating stronger communities for better lives.

Brain injury remains an important health challenge for many, and there is still plenty of work to do to strengthen awareness, support and connection throughout our Waikato communities, at every level.

I would also like to thank the funders who continue to back us. Your support helps make this work possible, and we are grateful to have you alongside us.

Our September AGM was a great reflection of who we are, combining governance with connection, learning and a bit of fun. Concussion goggles, rubber brains, quizzes and plenty of chocolate made for a memorable morning!

Our Pathways to Participation workshop was another highlight, with 41 health and service providers attending. We were thrilled with the response and will be running another workshop in February 2027.

Don't miss our Brain Seminar on Wednesday 11 November at Hamilton Gardens Pavilion, featuring brain researchers and experienced speakers including Mangor Pederson, Helen Murray and Gil Newburn. It's a great chance to learn about current research, connect with others in the field and strengthen your professional practice.

We're also developing new online workshops, with some brilliant speakers lined up. Keep an eye out for upcoming dates!

We will close from mid-December to early January while we prepare our programme for 2027.

We wish you all a happy, safe and recharging summer break, and hope to see you at the Brain Seminar!

P.S. Follow us on Facebook to keep up with our mahi and what's happening in the community.

Brain Injury Waikato Manager, Fiona George





Wayfinders

In August, we had the pleasure of hosting Wayfinders at our Cambridge and Hamilton support groups.

They shared information about their independent service and the work they do with people navigating active ACC claims, as well as those wondering whether their injury or circumstances may be covered by ACC.



Wayfinders support people to better understand and navigate the ACC system, helping them make informed decisions about their claims and understand what support may be available. For people living with brain injury, ACC can sometimes feel complex and overwhelming, particularly when questions arise about eligibility, entitlements, assessments, rehabilitation or what happens when a claim does not go as expected.

Our groups asked some thoughtful and challenging questions, including about situations where the answers were not straightforward. The Wayfinders team worked through these clearly, respectfully and in a way that was easy to understand. They created space for people to feel heard, validated and supported.

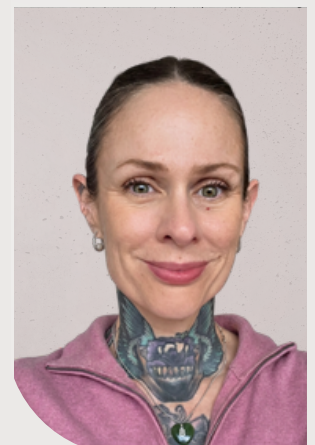
An important part of Wayfinders' approach is helping people understand their claims and their options, rather than telling them what to do. Almost all of their 25 staff have previously worked for ACC, giving them valuable first-hand knowledge of how the system operates.

As an independent service, they can use this knowledge to help people understand the ACC process and make informed decisions about their own circumstances.

If you or someone you support has questions about navigating ACC, Wayfinders may be able to help.

Find out more at www.wayfinders.org.nz or call 0800 273 030.

Thank you to the Wayfinders team for joining us and supporting our community.



Brain Injury Waikato Navigator, Dayna Rose

“Plenty to offer”

Lived experience is a real strength. I feel privileged to work alongside so many in our groups across Waikato, and am often humbled by the experiences, wisdom, and encouragement people share.

At one recent support group, someone introduced something they called the Brain Fade Award.

They had been thinking about the everyday mix-ups that can happen after a brain injury. Things like forgetting something, getting words mixed up or making a wrong turn. Their idea was to look at these experiences differently, because, in their own words: “The new you still has plenty to offer.”

They shared one of their own ‘brain fades’. While organising repairs for their car, they meant to call the mechanic and ask for the parts department. Instead, they accidentally called the funeral home and asked for the parts department! Their story brought plenty of laughter, but it also brought recognition.

The award was passed around the group, giving people the chance to share their own ‘brain fades’ if they wanted to.

What happened next went beyond funny stories. People began reflecting on what these moments represented. An embarrassing mix-up became evidence of having tried something new. A mistake became part of learning how to do things differently. Something that could have been seen as failure became a small step on a bigger journey.

This matters because finding a way forward after brain injury can be hard work. Trying new things, getting involved again, finding purpose and learning to live with change all take courage. One group member shared that hearing these stories had given them renewed hope and courage to keep trying.

I think this is what made the Brain Fade Award so meaningful. It offered another way to see difficult moments.

And sometimes, that change in perspective can make a difference when taking the next step.

Community Education and Support Officer, Josiah Ploeg





Building up, not burning out.

This workshop looks at how to gradually build up physical activities, thinking tasks and everyday activities while allowing time for rest and recovery.

All are welcome!



Guest Speaker: Brenna Wynn



When: Wednesday, October 28th



Where: Online. Please email us for a link.



Time: 10am till 11am



admin@biw.org.nz



Brenna Wynn
Guest Speaker



Dayna Rose from
Brain Injury Waikato



Josiah Ploeg from
Brain Injury Waikato

Brain Injury Waikato 2026 Brain Seminar – Save the Date!

Brain Injury Waikato is excited to announce the return of our annual Brain Seminar, taking place on **Wednesday, 11 November 2026 in Hamilton.**

Tickets available at biw.org.nz or by email at admin@biw.org.nz

This much-anticipated event brings together leading researchers, clinicians, and experts from across neurological fields to share the latest insights, evidence, and practical approaches that support improved outcomes for people living with traumatic brain injury.

Each year, the seminar creates a unique space where research meets real-world application.

Presenters explore not only what the latest findings are, but importantly how this knowledge can be translated into meaningful goals, rehabilitation strategies, and everyday support for individuals and their whaanau.

The Brain Seminar continues to grow in popularity among Allied Health professionals, service providers, and those working across the brain injury and disability sectors. It offers a valuable opportunity to step away from day-to-day demands and invest in professional development that is both relevant and impactful.

Beyond the presentations, the day is equally about connection. Attendees consistently value the opportunity to reconnect with peers, build new relationships, and strengthen collaboration across the sector.

What to expect in 2026:

- Engaging presentations from experts in neurological research and practice
- Practical insights you can apply immediately in your work
- Opportunities for discussion, reflection, and shared learning
- A supportive environment focused on collaboration and growth
- Dedicated Networking opportunities
- Stands to display your brochures and contact details

We look forward to bringing the sector together again for another inspiring and impactful event!



Tickets
NOW AVAILABLE!

BRAIN SEMINAR 2026
ADVANCING BRAIN INJURY
RESEARCH & REHABILITATION



**WEDNESDAY**
11 NOVEMBER 2026

**HAMILTON GARDENS
PAVILION**

WHAT TO EXPECT



3 EXPERT SPEAKERS
Hear from leading voices in the brain injury field:

- Mangor Pederson
- Helen Murray
- Gil Newburn



CONNECT & COLLABORATE
Two networking sessions to build relationships, share ideas and strengthen our sector.



PANEL DISCUSSION
Engage in a thought-provoking panel discussion with our expert speakers.



LEARN & GROW
Stay up to date with the latest research, practical strategies and tools to improve outcomes.

**Morning tea and lunch provided**

EARLY BIRD TICKETS AVAILABLE UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

 **\$250**

STANDARD TICKETS

\$339

FROM 1 OCTOBER 2026

TICKETS ARE LIMITED!
Book early to secure your place!



BOOK YOUR TICKET TODAY!
Tickets available at:
www.biw.org.nz



CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE
Email admin@biw.org.nz
Please advise of any dietary requirements.



MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON
Details about speakers, programme and logistics will follow by email and on our Facebook page.



WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

— ADVANCING BRAIN INJURY RESEARCH & REHABILITATION —

Our AGM this year was definitely not your typical AGM!

We wanted to combine the important governance requirements with some fun, connection and a little learning, so we started the morning with concussion goggles and the challenge of throwing small rubber brains into a basket.

It sounds easy, but when you can't see straight, it becomes a whole different story!

We then put everyone's knowledge of Brain Injury Waikato to the test with a quiz, complete with chocolate prizes and some surprisingly competitive participants!

After a Christmas morning tea and plenty of time to catch up, we moved into the formal AGM and confirmed our Board for the 2026/27 year.

We were also really pleased to have three potential new Board members join us.

It was lovely to see so many people taking part and sharing the morning with us.

A big thank you to everyone who came along and helped make our AGM such a positive and enjoyable event.

It was a great reminder that while governance is important, connection, people and having a bit of fun are important too!



Some of our board members, guests, and local politicians at the 2026 AGM.

Pathways to Participation

What a great day at Hamilton Gardens!

We were pleased to welcome 41 health and service providers to our half-day Pathways to Participation workshop, led by Occupational Therapist Donelle Dewar.

This was a workshop for allied health professionals and service providers.



Donelle Dewar

Donelle took us through participation following brain injury, sharing practical ideas and creating plenty of opportunities to think about how we can better support people in their everyday lives.

A big thank you to Donelle for sharing her knowledge and experience with us. The feedback from the day was really positive, and it was great to see such a strong interest in learning more about brain injury across our health and disability services.

The morning also provided a good opportunity to connect with others working in the field, share experiences and build new relationships. Hamilton Gardens was a great setting, and the catering certainly helped keep everyone going!

The response was so positive that we're pleased to announce another Pathways to Participation workshop will be held in February 2027.

We look forward to bringing people together again next year. Watch this space!



Thank you!

We are deeply grateful to the organisations whose generosity enables Brain Injury Waikato to continue supporting people and whaanau impacted by brain injury across the greater Waikato region.

As new funding is confirmed throughout the year, we will update our supporter logos to acknowledge and thank our funders in a timely way.

Our Generous Funders

Waikato Karamu Trust



Tidd Foundation



Businesses who support our work



Donations

We are a not-for-profit organisation and it is through your support and the support of our funders we can continue to provide our services.

If you would like to support our work and want to donate, please see the information below.

We can only do what we do thanks to the amazing people who choose to support the mahi we do.

Ways to donate:

Bank Deposit: Please note that we have updated our bank account which is now with ANZ:

Brain Injury Waikato Inc. 06-0433-0700045-00

Please use your name as a reference

Via our website:

www.biw.org.nz/donate

Please email: admin@biw.org.nz to request a receipt with your name, address, and contact details

Thank you for your generosity. It means the world to us and those we support.

Upcoming Groups

OCTOBER						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Cambridge Education Group
1st Tuesday of the Month
Cambridge support Group
3rd Tuesday of the month
10am
Cambridge Community Centre
193 Shakespeare Street, Cambridge

Hamilton Education Group
2nd Thursday of the month
Hamilton Support Group
4th Thursday of the month
10am
Western Community Centre
46 Hyde Avenue, Nawton

Te Awamutu Support Group
4th Monday of the Month
10am
St Johns Rooms, 31 Palmer Street

Taupo Support/Education group
1st Thursday of the month
10:30
Taupo Women's Club
2/12 Storey Avenue, Taupo

Online Workshop
4th Wednesday of the month
10am-11am
Email admin@biw.org.nz for link.