

Headway News - April 2025

Kia ora koutou,

What a positive start to the year it's been—full of connection, collaboration, and shared purpose across our amazing brain injury/concussion community.

We've been excited to see growing momentum through initiatives like Making Headway, Concussion in Schools, and our Community Capacity Building work—all receiving fantastic feedback. It was also a privilege to support the launch of *Diary of a Head Injury*, helping spark more honest conversations about concussion during Brain Awareness Month.

Our move into a new collaborative office hub is another step towards sustainable resourcing and deeper partnerships—because we know the best outcomes happen when we work together.

Highlights of Brain Injury Awareness Month

Diary of a Head Injury

Diary of a Head Injury is an award-winning documentary short written by Nick Worthington and directed by Jonny Kofoed, released during Brain Awareness Month in partnership with Headway. The film aims to inspire others to share their stories and raise awareness of concussion.

We are thrilled and grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Nick and his team during the month:

- Headway links at the end of the film
- An opportunity to speak at the screening event

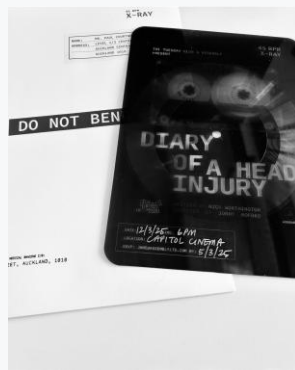
- Nick speaking at a [RNZ interview](#) and TVNZ Breakfast where he highlighted the support Headway offers.

This film beautifully captures the struggles, frustrations, and, importantly, the hope that we hear from our community every day. We hope it sparks more open conversations about concussion. No one should face this journey alone, and this film serves as a reminder that support is available.

We encourage you to [watch and share](#) this incredible short film.

A huge thank you to Nick, and the teams at The Tuesday Club and Assembly LTD.

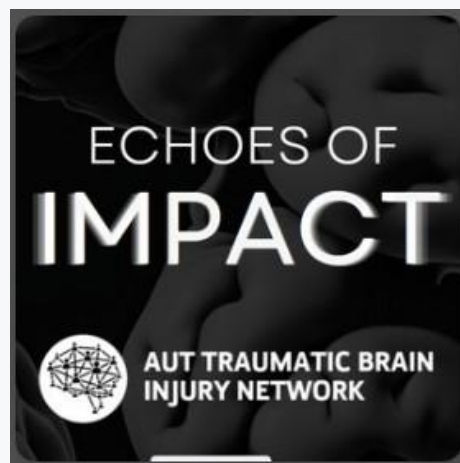
Photo credit: Paul @aostudiosnz for the fantastic images from the screening at Capitol Cinemas.



AUT Podcast

Echoes of Impact is a new podcast where journalist Ali Mau speaks with AUT academics and former All Blacks about concussions as well as the risks and benefits of playing contact sports.

Dr Mangor shares in the first episode, "We introduce the issue



of concussions and the difficulty of recognising their signs and symptoms.”

[LISTEN NOW](#)

In upcoming episodes, listeners will hear from doctors, scientists, and former rugby players as they explore the risks and benefits of contact sports, along with clinical insights into concussion and the science behind why some individuals are more susceptible to long-term consequences, including dementia.

We encourage everyone to listen for an informative and balanced discussion around concussion in sports.

Concussion in Schools

PJ has recently had the pleasure of visiting schools across South Auckland to have real conversations about concussion.

We’re working to shift the culture — helping people recognise the signs, feel confident to speak up, and make smarter decisions that protect our players.



As a coach, a parent, and someone who’s experienced the impact of concussion in sport, he’s passionate about educating and keeping athletes safe. He runs short, practical sessions that give coaches, teachers, athletes, and whānau the tools to recognise concussion and support a safe return to school and sport.

If you'd like PJ to speak at your school, club, or meeting—reach out.
Always happy to help pj@headway.org.nz

Concussion in the workplace

Concussions are more common than we realise, yet they're rarely discussed - especially in the workplace. It's time to start the conversation.

One of the biggest challenges people face after a concussion is returning to or staying in work. Despite the best intentions, many workplaces lack the knowledge and systems to provide the proper support. We want to change that.

Headway is developing a **Concussion Capacity Building programme for Workplaces** to equip them with the tools and understanding needed to support employees recovering from a concussion.

Your insights are invaluable. By sharing your experiences and ideas, you'll help us create a resource that truly addresses the needs of those affected.

Thank you for taking a moment to contribute—you're helping make workplaces safer and more supportive for all New Zealanders.

[SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE](#)

New Collaborative Hub

We're excited to announce that we've moved into our new office as part of the **LFT Neuro and Spinal Hub**! Alongside the teams from the Laura Fergusson Trust and Catwalk Spinal Trust, you can now find us at:

Brother Building, Level 3, 52 Symonds St, Auckland City.

Joining the Hub offers incredible opportunities for collaboration, resource-sharing, and innovative problem-solving. It's a great way to navigate an increasingly challenging landscape while keeping costs low and impact high.

We're looking forward to working more closely with our networks in this new space!



Making Headway Programme

The Making Headway 10-week programme for Term 1 is almost finished. Three groups of clients from West, Central, and South Auckland have participated, gaining the opportunity to:

- Develop practical skills for living well with brain injury.
- Build meaningful, supportive relationships.
- Re-engage with their local community.

We have been thrilled by the feedback from this term's programme but more importantly by the skills practiced, community connections made and the natural support networks that have developed through the sessions. Some of the feedback received:

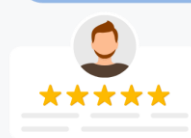
Overall, this programme has been a great resource for understanding and managing the effects of a concussion. The information provided is practical and easy to apply. I appreciate the supportive environment

and the dedication of the team. Thank you for offering such a valuable service to those in recovery.

*"I am grateful
for this safe
space to share
and feel
understood."*



*"Coming here
has been the
best thing I
have done for
myself."*



*"It has come at the right time and will sit with me my whole life.
Also, it has helped me celebrate my new me and greatly
enriched my relationships."*

Connect Groups

Connect with others living with brain injury in your local community for support and understanding.

Contact the Headway navigator in your area to see if one of these groups will suit you:

NORTH
Connect with
Tash

SOUTH
Connect with
PJ

WEST
Connect with
Nicola

CENTRAL
Connect with
Stacey

Upcoming Events

Brain Fit

Moving your body is not only great for your fitness but also for your brain!

Join us for a taster session of physical activities from local communities across Auckland.

An opportunity to move, have fun, and connect with others.

Date: Wednesday, 23rd April

Time: 10 am-12 pm

Location: Jack Dickey
Community Hall,
174 Green Lane West, Epsom,
Auckland 1051

We look forward to seeing you there.





Friday Social Group

Our Friday social group remains a favourite for many—a great space to connect over boardgames, pétanque, or just a cuppa.

Important Dates:

- Friday 4th April & Friday 11th April: Last two Fridays at the Scout Hall, Griffin Ave
- **No group** on Good Friday and Anzac Day due to public holidays.

Thanks to valuable feedback from our community, we're excited to announce a new venue starting in May!

New Connect Group Venue

From Friday 2nd May 2025

Jack Dickey Community Hall
**174 Green Lane West, Epsom,
Auckland 1051**
10:30 am-12 pm

The new venue offers plenty of on-site parking, full accessibility, a kitchen, and a large space to socialise. We look forward to seeing you there.





Community Choir: Whangaparaoa

A new inclusive community choir, led by Emma, an experienced SLT, and supported by Headway.

Starting May 2025.

Email info@headway.org.nz to register your interest

ACC Navigation Services



The ACC Navigation Service was set up to give the public free, independent advice or guidance if they find the ACC system difficult to navigate. The system can be confusing at the best of times but with a brain injury, this can feel overwhelming.

Help is here – both with the National ACC Navigation Service, [Wayfinders](#), and the 5 [Te Ara Tūhono](#) providers in Auckland.

Te Ara Tūhono, the Kaupapa Maori Navigation Service, aims to improve the experiences of Māori and their whānau when they access ACC services and support. They give technically correct advice, delivered in a culturally appropriate way, through an easy to access and trusted provider.

If you need help or advice on accessing these services, reach out to the Headway team as we work with many of these organisations.

REACH OUT

Total Mobility - new online booking system

At Headway, we provide Total Mobility Assessments on behalf of Auckland Transport, as we believe that safe travel is a key part of living well after brain injury.

Please note, all appointments for Total Mobility Assessments are now booked through our online system.

Use the link to schedule an appointment.

Choose from one of four convenient locations: Greenlane, City, New Lynn, or Manukau.



[BOOK AN
APPOINTMENT](#)

Important Information:

- The Total Mobility card offers a 75% discount on taxi fares.
- To qualify for the card, you must have an impairment that prevents you from using public transport independently.

Research Corner

New Report Links Brain Injury and Intimate Partner Violence

Women's Refuge's March 2025 report highlights that for victims with a TBI "the risks and harms associated with IPV are amplified and extended." TBIs often go unnoticed. This is a powerful call to action for anyone working with IPV victims - assume there may be a TBI and ask. This is the first steps to getting the support they need.

New Research Links Brain Iron Levels to Concussion Symptoms

New research by AUT, the University of Auckland, Mātai Medical Research Institute and Duke University in the US highlights a possible link between iron levels in the brain and symptom severity. This could help lead to improved diagnosis and prognosis for mTBI and is

[READ FULL REPORT](#)

something we will be following closely.

[READ FULL PAPER](#)

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