

Working to improve the lives of people with traumatic brain injury



**Annual Report
2022 - 2023**

Snapshot

Up to 35% of people may still be affected by their concussion 10 years on¹



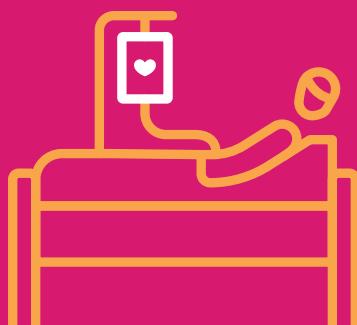
90% of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness²



Up to 80% of people in the criminal justice system have had one or more Traumatic Brain Injury³



Indigenous women are 69 times more likely to be admitted to hospital for a head injury due to assault than non-indigenous women⁴



It's estimated that there are almost 200,000 Traumatic Brain Injuries in Australia each year, with 170,000 of those concussions⁵

New cases of moderate and severe TBI add more than \$2 billion in lifetime costs to the Australian healthcare system each year⁶

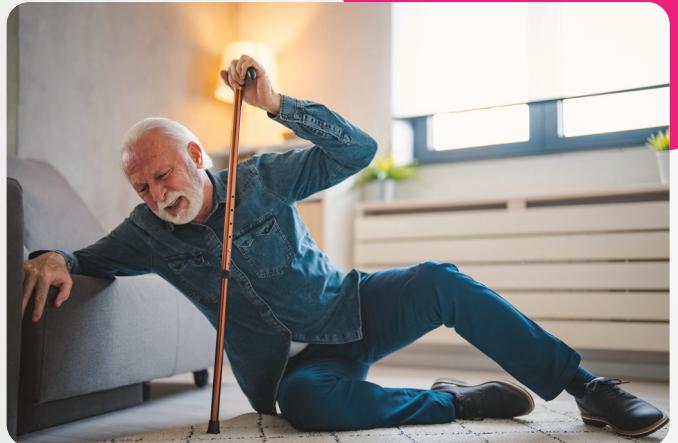
Severe TBI has a high mortality of 30-40%, and a very high rate of long-term disability



SOURCES:

1. Theadom, A. et al. Symptoms and engagement in anti-social behaviour 10 years following mild traumatic brain injury within a community civilian sample: a prospective cohort study with age-sex matched control group. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil* (2023) doi:10.1016/J.APMR.2023.07.016.
2. Ellemborg D, Henry LC, Macciocchi SN, Guskiewicz KM, Broglio SP. Advances in sport concussion assessment: from behavioral to brain imaging measures. *J Neurotrauma*. 2009 Dec;26(12):2365-82.
3. Rushworth, N.R., Out of Sight, Out of Mind: People with an Acquired Brain Injury and the Criminal Justice System. 2011. Prepared for the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
4. Jamieson, L. M., Harrison, J. E. & Berry, J. G. Hospitalisation for head injury due to assault among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, July 1999 - June 2005. *Med J Aust* 188, 576-579 (2008).
5. Thomas E, Fitzgerald M, Cowen G. Post-concussion states: How do we improve our patients' outcomes? An Australian perspective. *Journal of Concussion*. 2020;4. doi:10.1177/2059700220960313
6. The economic cost of spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury in Australia. Report by Access Economics Pty Ltd for the Victorian Neurotrauma Initiative. . Access Economics: A Report to the Victorian Neurotrauma Initiative (2009).

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

Connectivity acknowledges and respects the Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Custodians / Owners of the land on which we work, live and build our lives, families and communities. We pay our respects to the First Peoples of this country, their cultures and Elders past, present and emerging.

Message from the Chair

The past year has seen Connectivity shift its focus to deliver on its strategic priorities.

The past year has seen Connectivity shift its focus to deliver on its strategic priorities, with the management team doing an exceptional job under the leadership of our CEO, Prof. Melinda Fitzgerald. In addition to supporting Prof. Fitzgerald and her team, the Board continues to work on positioning Connectivity as a traumatic brain injury (TBI) point of reference in Australia as well as a facilitator of communication between all TBI stakeholders.

BOARD CHANGES

With the first term of Board Directors expiring at the end of 2022, I was delighted to see that all Directors were willing to serve another term. Having set the governance framework for Connectivity in their first term, their willingness to again donate their time and expertise to Connectivity speaks to their dedication to the Connectivity mission. The focus of the Board during the next term will be to build a path towards future sustainability as an organisation. I was personally honoured to be asked to continue as Chair for another term which I enthusiastically accepted.

The Board is always looking to expand its expertise and I am delighted to report that Ms Jamie Shine joined the Board as our seventh Director. Jamie is a lawyer with a passionate interest in improving delivery of services to victims of TBI. She brings a wealth of relevant governance experience to the Connectivity Board and will be a point of liaison to the Concussion Legacy Foundation Australia, on whose Board she also sits. Welcome Jamie!

STRATEGIC PLAN DELIVERABLES

There has been ongoing progress in the delivery of the six key areas outlined in the strategic plan, with raising awareness being a notable priority over the 12 months. Of note, the Connectivity team developed and launched the Sport-Related Concussion Short Course that specifically targets coaches, umpires, staff, volunteers, parents and other interested parties to recognise and manage sport-related concussion. Being specifically focussed on sport, and accordingly shorter in duration than the existing Concussion course, it is hoped that this free course will be popular amongst those new to the concept of sport-related concussion and want to know the basics. I would encourage all members to promote the course amongst their networks, particularly schools and amateur sporting codes.

As members would be aware, there was a Senate Inquiry into concussion with public submissions called in early 2023. Connectivity did present a formal submission to the Senate Committee, as did some of the Board Directors as personal submissions. These will be accessible to all members, as well as to the general public, as part of the Senate findings once they are released. We certainly look forward to the recommendations in the hope that they will facilitate further research and education about concussion in the community.

COLLABORATION

I had the pleasure of meeting with representatives of the Concussion Legacy Foundation (CLF) who were here for the CLF Australia launch, including its current Board Chair, Mr Matthew Collier and current CEO and co-founder, Dr Chris Nowinski. While there were some initial concerns about overlap in objectives of the two organisations, CLF clearly focusses on sport and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) while the goals of Connectivity are much broader. Even with respect to concussion alone, Connectivity is interested in all sources of mild TBI including domestic violence, falls, and assault, just to name a few. We agreed to stay in close communication in the hope that our collaboration will not only promote and share resources but will accelerate the progress of each organisation to our complementary goals.

BOARD STRATEGY MEETING

The second Board strategy meeting was held in Perth in March, 2023. In addition to facilitating face-to-face discussion of several strategic issues, it also allowed the Board to meet and interact with the entire management team whose offices are based in Perth. Much of the day's discussion focussed on the challenges faced by Connectivity in what is becoming an increasingly crowded landscape, and our identity and role in that changing landscape. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm of the management team with respect to the organisation's mission, and to listen to their perspectives on challenges and opportunities. The Board was

convinced that we have exactly the right team in place to implement the strategic plan.

THANKS

My sincere thanks to the Directors on the Board who continue to donate their time to Connectivity and enthusiastically support its mission. Your support gives me great confidence in the sustainable future of Connectivity. I also thank Mr Dennis Goldner for his continued support as the highly experienced independent Chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, and Mr Martin Wandmaker for his invaluable advice as part of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee. I would also like to sincerely thank Prof. Peter Reilly who continues to adroitly serve as the Chair of the Expert Committee.



**Professor Robert Vink AM, FAHMS
Chair of the Board**



Message from the CEO

A core focus of Connectivity Traumatic Brain Injury Australia throughout 2022-2023 was raising awareness of best-practice, evidence-based care of concussion.

Recognising the opportunity to play a vital role in community education, our efforts were pivoted and prioritised against our strategic deliverables during this year.

The organisation continued to deliver impact in several of its key strategic priorities.

RAISING AWARENESS AND EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY

In May 2023, we launched our second educational online offering, our Sport-Related Concussion Short Course.

Alongside our signature Concussion Short Course, we have **helped to educate more than 5,100 participants** on the signs, symptoms, management and recovery of concussion.

The Connectivity website continued to provide valuable content for those seeking information on traumatic brain injuries, with regularly updated best-practice advice, information and downloadable content. **Visits to our website grew by 222%** over the year, with **55,000 people** learning more about traumatic brain injury.

We strengthened our connection to the West Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the facilitation of a weekly Elders group in Perth. This enabled our team to develop a

greater understanding of how to best meet the needs of educating this community on traumatic brain injury. Consultations and development of new resources are underway. Our three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concussion education campaigns raising awareness of the need to seek medical care after a concussion continued to be well and widely received, proving the need for increased education for this community group.

Through the support of the Arcare Family Foundation, we created an additional online short course to educate both residential and community-based aged care workers on the best way to assist an older person who has experienced a concussion. The course has been finalised for distribution and we look forward to its impact in 2023-2024.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Researchers are key stakeholders for Connectivity. We are proud to provide a platform to support researchers disseminate and promote their work, as well as assist with recruitment of participants for research.

Continuing to grow our presence in the Australian community, we engaged with multiple national stakeholders within health and allied care, government and broader communities to further explore cross-promotion and education opportunities. We work wherever possible, to connect our TBI community.

Connectivity supported its first Local Area Network Groups in their endeavours to gather communities of researchers, clinicians and people with lived experience of TBI to share best-practice knowledge and collaborate on new ideas for research projects.

SUPPORTERS

We are extremely grateful for the loyal support we have received from our Founding Supporters Curtin University and Monash University, and from Supporters the Perron Institute and the Transport Accident Commission of Victoria. We are delighted to be working together to improve the lives of people who experience a traumatic brain injury.

We are proud to have been appointed as a trusted Information Partner of the Australian Government's Healthdirect Australia, recognising the need for this important health information to be further accessible to all.

WITH THANKS

I wish to thank the Board and Committees of Connectivity. Your guidance, governance, time and consideration is helping to shape and strengthen our organisation toward future growth and success.

Finally, to the Connectivity Business, Marketing and Communications, Research and Support teams. Thank you for your dedication and desire to seek improved

outcomes for traumatic brain injury sufferers. The delivery, quality, and output from such a small team is outstanding.

We look forward to continuing to improve the lives of people with traumatic brain injury in 2023-2024.



Professor Melinda Fitzgerald
Connectivity CEO





Connectivity Traumatic Brain Injury Australia

ABOUT US

Connectivity Traumatic Brain Injury Australia (Connectivity), is an Australian-wide not-for-profit organisation working to raise awareness of traumatic brain injury (TBI) including concussion in the community.

A TBI can range in severity from mild, to moderate to severe. Symptoms can be quite mild and quickly resolving or debilitating and life-changing. As such, a TBI can dramatically impact the lives of both the person involved and the people around them.

OUR GOAL

The core goal of Connectivity is to improve the lives of people and their families following TBI of all severities, including concussion.

OUR PURPOSE

To promote the prevention and control of diseases and disease processes experienced by people with TBI, including from a physical, mental, neurological and functional perspective.

WHAT WE DO

Connectivity links together people with lived experience, carers, researchers, clinicians and health care providers to build the evidence base and improve outcomes for people following TBI of all severities.

By supporting research and translating outcomes, Connectivity provides relevant and evidence-based information to people with TBI, their carers and clinicians to help improve the lives of people with TBI.

OUR GOVERNANCE

Connectivity is incorporated as an Australian Public company limited by guarantee, and is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Connectivity is governed by an independent Board of Directors who provide the experience and skill sets required to deliver the needs of the organisation and its governance.

The Executive of Connectivity is the Chief Executive Officer, the Business Manager, the Executive Officer and the Marketing & Communications Manager.

The following committees also contribute to the successful running of Connectivity:

- The Expert Committee
- The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee
- The Nominations and Remunerations Committee.

The company is independently audited by:

**Hall Chadwick WA Audit Pty
Ltd**

Who we are

OUR TEAM



Prof. Melinda Fitzgerald
Chief Executive Officer



Naomi Fuller
Executive Officer



Holly MacNeil
Marketing & Communications Manager



Julie Tomas
Business Manager



Aleksandra Gozt
Research Associate



Shenane Hogg
Business Support Officer



OUR BOARD



Prof. Robert Vink AM
Chair of the Board



Judi Moylan AO
Deputy-Chair of the Board



Dr. Anthony Filippis
Board Member



John Higgins AO
Board Member



Prof. Elizabeth Kendall
Board Member



Jamie Shine
Board Member



Prof. Jeffrey Rosenfeld AC OBE
Board Member

Our Strategic Deliverables

Raising Awareness

We work to raise awareness of TBI of all severities in the community.

Improving Outcomes

We source and disseminate best-practice advice to clinicians and health care workers caring for people with TBI.

Connecting Community

We connect researchers, people with TBI and their carers to improve study recruitment, enable co-design and empower people with TBI.



Standardised Care

Promote best-practice management of mild TBI through recommended practices for clinics.

Supporting People

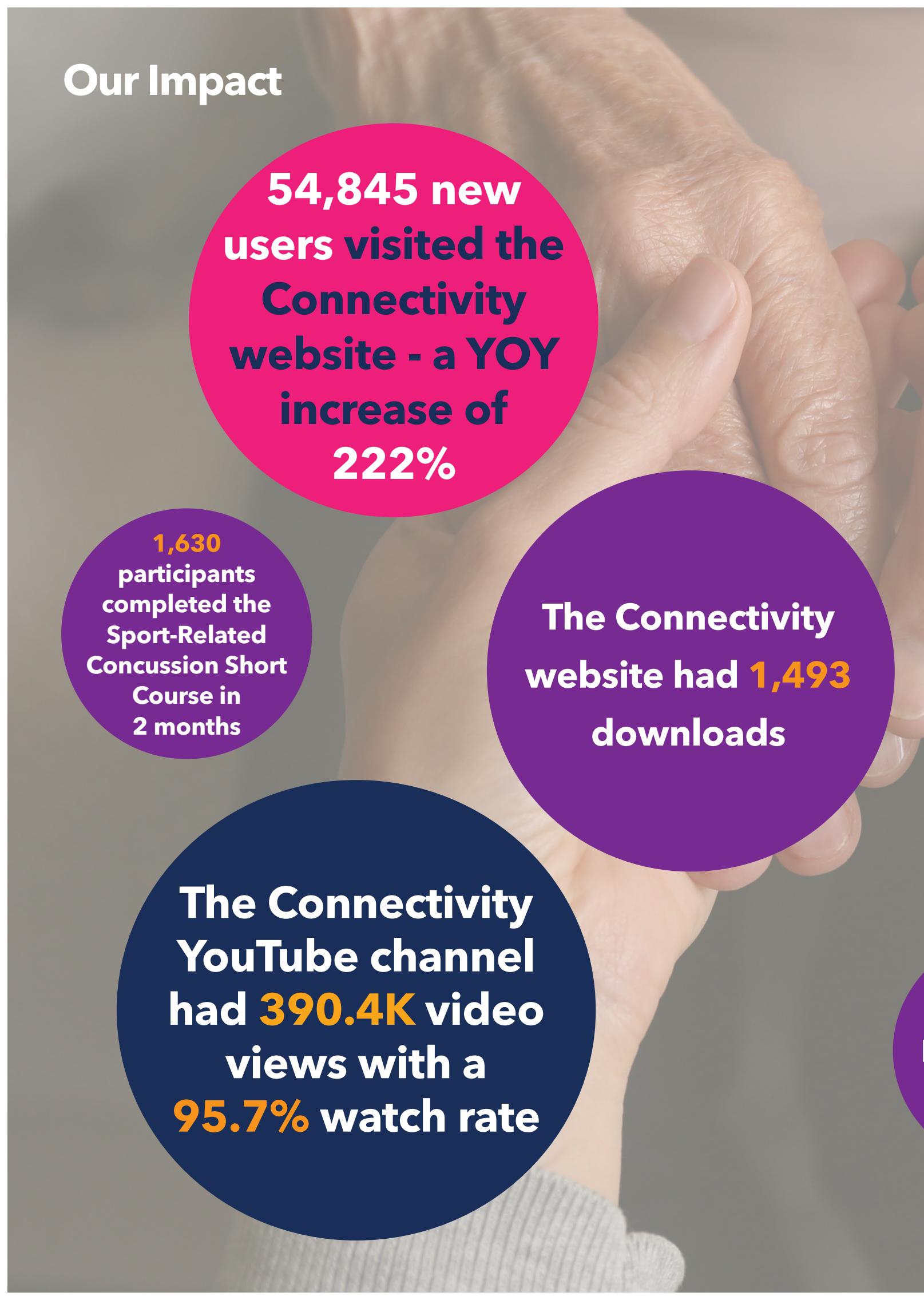
We source and disseminate information designed for people with TBI and their carers.

Sustainable Research

Develop a financial structure that ensures the capacity for long-term research and improved understanding of the consequences of TBI.



Our Impact

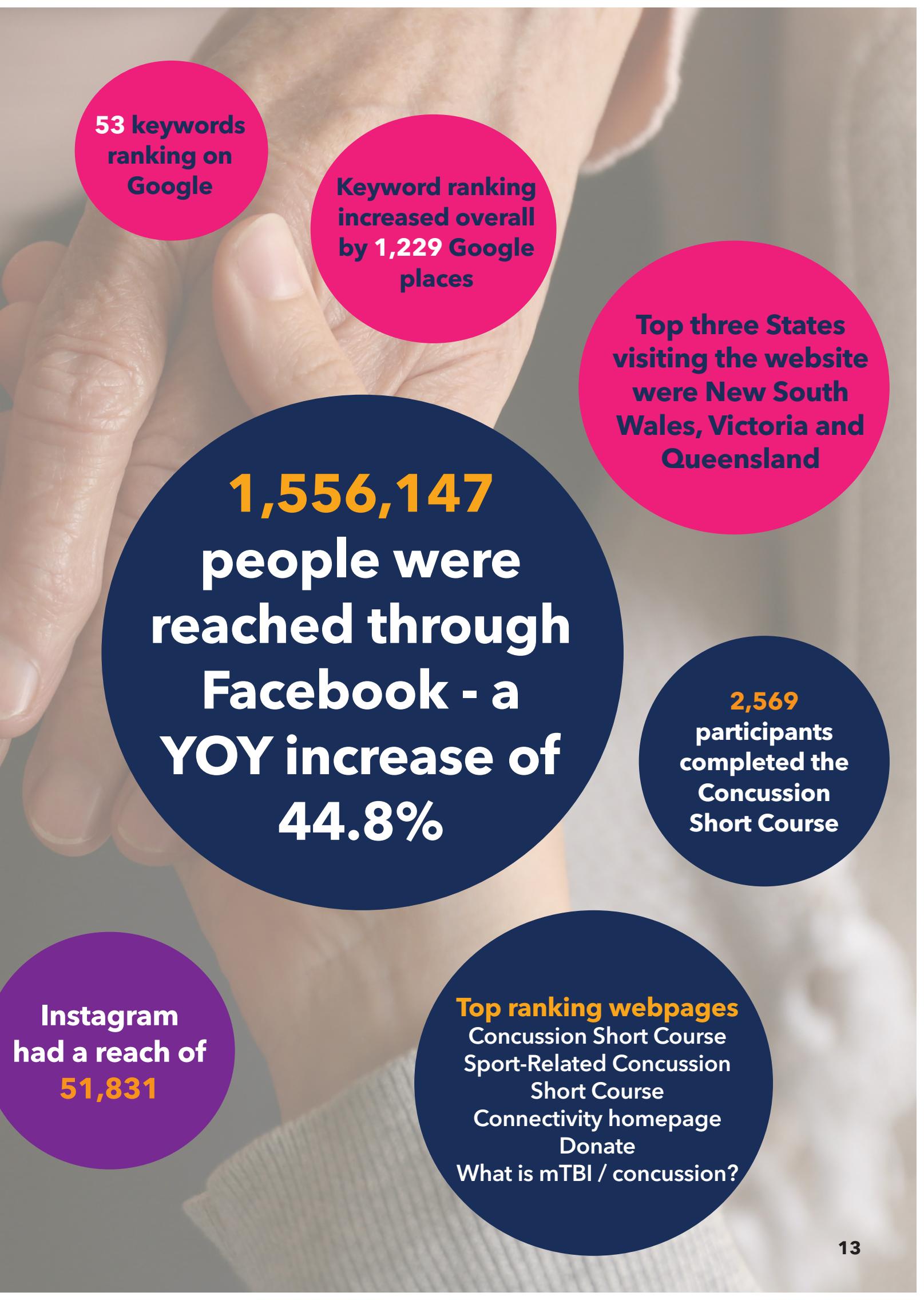


54,845 new users visited the Connectivity website - a YOY increase of 222%

1,630 participants completed the Sport-Related Concussion Short Course in 2 months

The Connectivity website had 1,493 downloads

The Connectivity YouTube channel had 390.4K video views with a 95.7% watch rate



53 keywords ranking on Google

Keyword ranking increased overall by 1,229 Google places

Top three States visiting the website were New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland

1,556,147
people were reached through Facebook - a YOY increase of **44.8%**

2,569 participants completed the Concussion Short Course

Instagram had a reach of **51,831**

Top ranking webpages
Concussion Short Course
Sport-Related Concussion Short Course
Connectivity homepage
Donate
What is mTBI / concussion?

Raising Awareness

The key strategic deliverable to which most efforts were directed, was Raising Awareness. With a specific focus on concussion, the team managed multiple projects and marketing initiatives to raise the profile of Connectivity and create heightened awareness of concussion.

To improve accessibility of information, upgrades were made to Connectivity's website including the landing home page with the most viewed content now easier to access. Website content was reviewed for accuracy and consideration of additional content. Work on the inclusion of new material continues with regular review.

We continued to use social media as the main marketing and advertising platform throughout the year, running a mixture of targeted messaging that promoted general concussion awareness and more specific content promoting both our concussion courses.

Direct advertising on concussion, sport-related, and family-based podcasts, and investment in buyout banner advertising of key focus words and concussion phrases **through NewsCorp**, were successful. Combined impressions of **these initiatives reached 1,148,802**, directly driving consumers to our website and participants to our courses.

On limited budgets, our year-to-date results have been exceptional and include:

- **55,000 people learning more about concussion and TBIs through accessing Connectivity's website.**
- A combined social media reach of **1,738,911** people who saw one of Connectivity's posts on concussion and TBI.
- **390,400 views** of our concussion and TBI videos on YouTube.

Connectivity applied for and received a Google Ads Grant, with \$16,951 spent on free advertising amounting to 20,298 impressions and 3,667 click throughs.

By invitation, Connectivity became an **Information Partner of Healthdirect Australia**, which shares more than 26 pages of our content across the government website platforms healthdirect.gov.au and pregnancybirthbaby.org.au.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

Our three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focussed concussion education campaigns delivered outstanding viewership throughout the year, having now amassed 120,000 views on YouTube.

Between **November 2022 and May 2023**, Connectivity facilitated weekly meetings with **Aboriginal Elders in the City of Belmont, WA**. Primarily, the focus of this group was on community, health and education. Through the efforts of our Torres Strait Islander team member Shenane Hogg, Connectivity developed an important platform to help raise awareness of TBI and concussion within this community.

This opportunity has led to the enablement and development of significant relationships with multiple Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We have commenced consultation with various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and representatives to further understand the needs of these communities, with respect to TBI and concussion education.

We are seeking funding to support our work in this area, and look forward to this work being a feature for Connectivity in the coming year/s.



Concussion Courses

Sport-Related Concussion Short Course

In May, we released our **15-minute free online Sport-Related Concussion Short Course (SRCSC)** to educate coaches, umpires, staff, volunteers, parents and anyone interested in learning how to recognise and manage a sport-related concussion injury.

The SRCSC includes a range of downloadable fact sheets, guidance on return to learn/work/sport, as well as concussion assessment and reporting documents.

A range of marketing materials and assets were designed to promote the course across digital and social media channels, as well as through direct electronic marketing to individual sporting clubs and communities across the country. Promotion of the course will continue, with targeted activity linked to the sporting calendars.

Connectivity is exploring all avenues to make our course the go-to, independent and trusted source of concussion education. We commenced discussions with leading sporting codes and bodies to assist in the promotion and uptake of our SRCSC.

In the **two months** since its release, the SRCSC reach as at 30 June 2023 was:

**1,630 Participants
228 Certificate Purchases**



Concussion Short Course

Our flagship course - **the Concussion Short Course**, continued to gain momentum throughout the year. Course numbers as at 30 June 2023 were:

**3,539 Participants
457 Certificate Purchases**



Concussion in Older Adults Short Course

We created our first sector-specific concussion education course for aged care providers - the Concussion in Older Adults Short Course (COASC), designed to provide individuals working within the aged care sector with the information they need to take an evidence-based approach when responding to and managing, concussion injuries. Release of this course is scheduled for late 2023. We are grateful for the support of this project through the Arcare Family Foundation.

Testimonials

I have completed myself this morning and think it is a fantastic resource for our sporting clubs and volunteers to complete.

Especially being in a regional location, accessing some of this information can prove challenging.

- Charlotte

Thank you so much for this wonderful resource, I have shared it with my Defence colleagues who are responsible for all Defence sport. I completed the course and consider it an amazing resource. Well done for developing this product.

I am making your course compulsory for all our association coaches and managers.

- Jacqui

Thanks for the free training course you have on offer.

This is a great opportunity to upskill our community and as such, we will promote to our sport and leisure clubs.

- Dayna

Thank you for sharing this amazing opportunity - refreshing to see the continued priority and resourcing provided to informing and understanding concussion.

- Kate

Supporting People

Another key area of impact for the Connectivity team is Supporting People. Updating Connectivity's website content throughout this year has been a priority.

Fact Sheets

We commenced our review and updating process for our current fact sheets, which are still underway.

A suite of new fact sheets were created and released for the SRCSC. All are available for download on Connectivity's website. These include:

Sport-Related Concussion

Persistent Post-Concussion Symptoms following Sport-Related Concussion

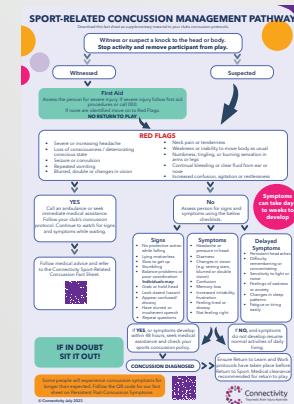
Sport-Related Concussion Management Pathway

Return to Sport

Return to Learn

Return to Work

Signs and Symptoms



An additional suite of fact sheets to support the COASC are being finalised.

Through the support of ISHAR, a West Australian multicultural women's group, we are in the process of translating fact sheets on concussion with specific reference to Domestic Violence and Falls into the following languages. These will be released later in 2023.

Arabic

Nepali

Farsi

Sinhalese

Hakha Chin

Tagalog

Hindi

Traditional Chinese

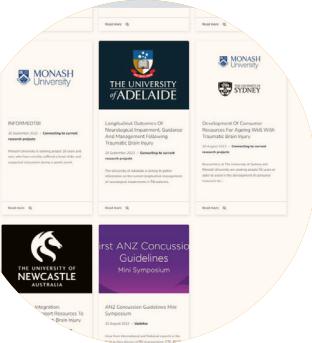
Karen

Vietnamese



Connecting Community

Connecting Community remains a core focus of Connectivity. Throughout the year we continued to provide support to the Australian TBI research community via the promotion of nationwide research projects through our website and social media platforms, as well as to subscribers on our database.



We assisted more than 12 new and on-going research projects to connect with people with TBI lived experience, including members of our Lived Experience Advisory Group, thus enabling improved research recruitment and co-design.

Via our Local Area Network Grants, Connectivity supported the Australasian Neurotrauma Network - Victorian Node and the Queensland Brain Injury Collaborative with funds to assist in the delivery of national TBI workshops and events.



Sustainable Research

Connectivity's Board Strategy Day was held in March 2023. Planning for fundraising and securing additional funding sources was addressed as an area of need.

We ran our first end-of-financial-year fundraising campaign. Overall general website donations and end-of-year fundraising totalled \$1,318.

Our first peer-to-peer fundraising event was held with a community member (with lived experience of concussion) completing a half ironman to fundraise for our organisation, raising \$1,670.



Purchase of certificates of completion for both the CSC and the SRCSC remains a small, but constant stream of additional income, providing \$5,591 this financial year.

Connectivity and two of its Board members Robert Vink and Jaime Shine submitted submissions to the Senate Inquiry into Concussions and Repeated Head Trauma in Contact Sport. The expertise of CEO Melinda Fitzgerald and Jaime Shine was called upon as part of the Senate Inquiry hearing process. As at 30 June 2023 the findings are yet to be released, but is anticipated there will be a focus on further research and education, to which Connectivity aims to be a valuable contributor.



Standardised Care

Work in this area is in the early stages, with Connectivity facilitating conversations and introductions between various stakeholders nationally.

Financial Summary 2023

Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Revenue	620,928	926,214
Other income	-	8,024
Employee benefits expense	(392,683)	(265,949)
Consulting expenses	(7,449)	(89,469)
Marketing expenses	(252,608)	(155,960)
Research services	-	(50,472)
Other expenses	(52,783)	(31,352)
Grants made and funding granted	(4,500)	(189)
Current year surplus before income tax	(89,095)	340,847
Income tax expense	-	-
Net current year surplus/(deficit)	<u>(89,095)</u>	<u>340,847</u>
<i>Other comprehensive income</i>	-	-
Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	<u>(89,095)</u>	<u>340,847</u>



Financial Summary 2023

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	592,948	684,729
Trade and other receivables	12,650	16,988
Total current assets	<u>605,598</u>	<u>701,717</u>
Non- current assets		
Computer equipment	6,981	3,220
Total non-current assets	<u>6,981</u>	<u>3,220</u>
Total assets	<u>612,579</u>	<u>704,937</u>
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	24,976	33,763
Employee benefits	18,360	12,836
Total current liabilities	<u>43,336</u>	<u>46,599</u>
Total liabilities	<u>43,336</u>	<u>46,599</u>
Net assets	<u>569,243</u>	<u>658,338</u>
Equity		
Retained surplus	569,243	658,338
Total equity	<u>569,243</u>	<u>658,338</u>

Our supporters

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CONNECTIVITY

Sarich Neuroscience Research Institute
3/8 Verdun Street Nedlands, WA 6009

E: connect@connectivity.org.au



connectivity.org.au



Connectivity
Traumatic Brain Injury Australia