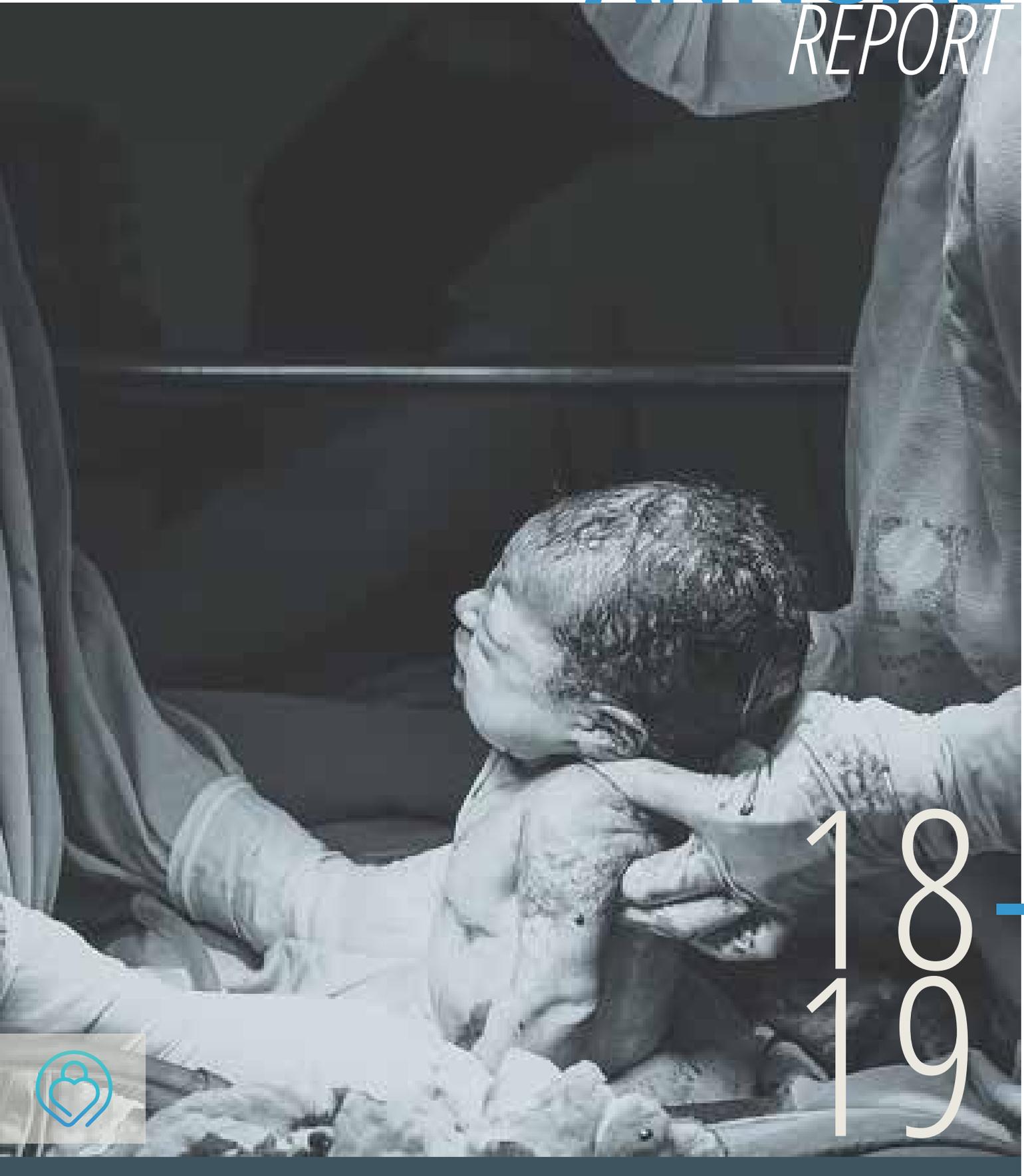


# ANNUAL *REPORT*



18-  
19



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18  
19

# AUSTRALASIAN BIRTH TRAUMA ASSOCIATION

## CORE VALUES

1  
To promote acknowledgement and understanding of birth trauma through advocacy, education and research

2  
To engage in active collaboration with health care providers, other perinatal service providers and consumers

3  
To lead with empathy, compassion and without judgement

4  
To contribute to better health outcomes for mothers, babies, families and health care providers

## BIRTH TRAUMA DEFINITION

Trauma means a wound, serious injury or damage; it can be physical or psychological (deeply disturbing and distressing).

The delivery of a baby can be a positive experience for some women, but for others it can be very negative, resulting in physical and/or psychological injuries (trauma). The psychological trauma may be the result of an extreme disconnect between a woman's expectations of what would happen and the shock of what actually occurred. It may also relate to feelings of loss of control, of not having a 'voice' in the face of authority, of unexplained interventions, as well as to the physical damage.

Thus, it is important to note that some women may have severe emotional distress after a traumatic birth, although they did not have physical birth injuries.

## VISION

ABTA's vision is to prepare every woman and healthcare professional with the tools, knowledge and power to have a trauma free birth and improve the quality of life for those affected.

## MISSION

ABTA's mission is to reduce the instances and impact of birth trauma whilst supporting affected women, families and healthcare professionals.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To advocate for birthing women in Australia and New Zealand with an emphasis on pre & postnatal psychological and physical well-being.
2. To expand partnerships with healthcare professionals and government bodies that will increase awareness of birth trauma and better coordinate prevention and treatment.
3. To support and promote research that is focused on proven approaches to identifying and handling birth trauma for the continued education of healthcare professionals.
4. To improve the long-term well-being of the mother and families of those affected by birth trauma. mother and families of those affected by birth trauma.



# AMY DAWES' OPENING ADDRESS

It seems like only yesterday that I submitted our 2018 annual report! And here I am reflecting on the whirlwind year that it's been. We have managed to continue driving conversations around birth trauma and the impact it has on the lives of women, their families and the wider community. Yet we must not forget that there are many people, including health professionals that still need to be convinced that birth trauma is actually a thing...

This year there's been more opportunities to speak at both national and international conferences to raise awareness of physical and psychological trauma from childbirth. It was an honour to meet the health professionals based in the UK that are working towards reducing the incidents of birth trauma and to be given an opportunity - alongside our board member, Dr Oliver Daly- to share the unique work that ABTA is doing here in Australia. Thank you to Dr Jan Smith for the invitation.

July 2018 saw us run our first Birth Trauma Awareness Week, with the primary goal of raising awareness of birth trauma and its many complexities. Throughout the week, we featured in a number of major news outlets including: The Project, ABC News, ABC Radio Nationwide and Life Matters on ABC Brisbane.

We also received hundreds upon hundreds of stories from women, many of whom were sharing their experiences for the very first time. Incredibly, our ABTA Facebook support group saw a 300% increase in member requests over that week. This further highlighted how crucial the role of peer support is for the healing journey after birth trauma.

In November 2018, ABTA was one of the stakeholders involved with the development of the National Strategic Approach to Maternity Services (NSAMS) to replace and build on the expired National Maternity Services Plan 2010- 2015. The purpose of this national approach is to develop a document that will guide maternity services policy across all jurisdictions.

The process involved asking stakeholders to review the 'Strategic Directions for Australian Maternity Services' consultation document. I was able to attend workshops in Melbourne and Brisbane and we helped facilitate a webinar specifically for families impacted by birth trauma. You can read our submission here.

*ABTA is the first, and only, charity in Australia & New Zealand solely dedicated to supporting families impacted by a traumatic birth experience.*

ABTA is the first, and only, charity in Australia & New Zealand solely dedicated to supporting families impacted by a traumatic birth experience. It was, therefore, an honour to be recognised for our advocacy work in this field with an invitation to attend a RANZCOG Birth Consent Round Table. The objective of this meeting, was to bring together a multidisciplinary group of motivated individuals to explore the issue of informed consent, with a view to developing a consensus statement.

Representatives included members from the Australian College of Midwives, RACGP, a RANZCOG trainee and a lawyer, among others. I am very much looking forward to seeing what we can develop together to reduce the incidence of birth trauma in Australia and New Zealand.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share some personal highlights.



AMY DAWES  
Co-Founder and Executive Director

1.

**NSAMS  
CONSULTATIONS**

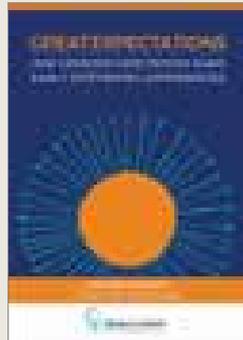


May - Dec 2018

Involved with the NSAMS Consultations - including the implementation of a consult specifically for women impacted by a traumatic birth.

2.

**WOMEN'S  
HEALTH VICTORIA**



June- Dec 18

In collaboration with our board member, Professor Bryanne Barnett we reviewed the Women's Health Victoria paper on motherhood and mothering expectations. Read the finished product here.

3.

**QUEENSLAND  
CLINICAL  
GUIDELINES**

July - Oct 2018

Involved in the working party for the Queensland Clinical guidelines for instrumental vaginal birth shortGuides.

4.

**CLINICAL  
EXCELLENCE  
QUEENSLAND**

March 2019

Involved with Clinical Excellence Queensland to test the 'My Maternity Decision Guide (MMDG)' website.

5.



**PTSD  
SCREENING TOOL**

June 2019

Consulted on PTSD Screening tool in collaboration with Metro North Perinatal Mental Health Service

**HOSPITAL TRAINING**

*June 2019*

I spoke to 50 midwives and doctors about birth trauma and ABTA's work at the Caboolture Hospital Maternity Unit Education day 'Maternity Matters'. The engagement and presentation inspired good discussion about informing women of the risks. Thank you to the team at Perinatal Metro North for inviting me along to represent the consumer.

# FOUNDERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## AMY DAWES

### *Co-Founder And Executive Director*

Amy is an effective advocate for bringing women, clinicians and researchers together to support women and families affected by birth trauma. In 2017, Amy launched the Australasian Birth Trauma Association (ABTA), she has established a not-for-profit organisation focused on the recognition and understanding of birth-related complications.

With a multi-disciplinary advisory group of midwives, physiotherapists, obstetricians, gynaecologists, perinatal psychiatrists and clinical researchers, she is working to develop the resources and strategies to prevent and effectively manage birth-related trauma.

One of the key goals of the ABTA is to ensure women and clinicians have a common understanding of the risks of childbirth and have the opportunity to minimize these risks and their impact.

Amy's vision is to break down the stigma attached to birth trauma, be it physical trauma or psychological trauma and empower women to feel comfortable speaking out, so to continue driving change in current maternity practices here in Australia.



## PROFESSOR HANS PETER DIETZ

### *Co-Founder and Board Member*

Professor Hans Peter Dietz is an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist and RANZCOG-certified subspecialist in Urogynaecology. He was born in Germany and graduated from Heidelberg University in 1988, obtaining an MD there in 1989.

After emigrating to New Zealand in 1990, he arrived in Australia in 1997 and completed FRANCOG (OB/ GYN) training in 1998. Between 1999 and 2002, he undertook urogynaecology subspecialty training in Sydney and obtained a PhD with the University of New South Wales. Since 2008 he is Professor in Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the Nepean campus of Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney.

Professor Dietz's academic work focuses on childbirth-related maternal pelvic floor trauma as well as antenatal and intrapartum consent. He is one of the editors of the journal *Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynaecology*. He has authored a book, 18 book chapters and over 300 peer-reviewed publications. His H index is 65 (Oct 2018).



## ELIZABETH MARY SKINNER

### *Co-Founder*

PhD candidate (submitted April 2019): Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney Nepean, New South Wales, Australia  
Thesis title: The link between psychological and somatic sequelae of traumatic vaginal birth  
Supervisor: Professor Hans Peter Dietz- urogynaecologist, pelvic floor expert

Awarded: Dr Albert McKern Scholarship 2015-2017 to investigate causes, prevention and treatment of mental, physical pain and distress during pregnancy, labour and the puerperium; in collaboration with Sydney, Edinburgh and Yale Universities.

Career background: Clinician, Lecturer in Bachelor of Nursing Degree and Postgraduate Midwifery Courses. Research Officer Faculty of Medicine UNSW - Australian Maternity Outcomes Surveillance Study; National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit  
Extensive clinical work as Registered Midwife and Registered Nurse in high acuity areas that include: Delivery Suite, Neonatal Intensive Care and Adult Intensive Care

Co-Founder of Australasian Birth Trauma Association (ABTA) - an outcome of this doctoral research.



## DR JUSTIN OLIVER DALY

### *Board Member*

Oliver joined the ABTA board in March 2018. He is a father of two daughters and married to the wonderful Kathryn. He is a RANZCOG-certified Urogynaecologist and Obstetrician, and clinical lead for Urogynaecology at Western Health in Melbourne. Through his training and ongoing care of women at the Royal Womens Hospital, Monash Medical Centre, Royal Prince Alfred, Gold Coast University Hospital, and now Western Health, he has persevered to raise the important issue of preventable obstetric pelvic floor trauma to improve the care of women.



## PROFESSOR (CONJOINT UNSW) BRYANNE BARNETT AM MBCHB, FRANZCP, MD

### *Board Member*

Bryanne is an ABTA founding board member. She is a child and family psychiatrist with a particular interest in prevention and early intervention in mental health. Her doctoral thesis concerned anxiety and its effects on mothers and their infants. Those studies included the first Attachment research in Australia. In subsequent research she has focused on translating research findings into relevant mental health initiatives, including in primary care.

Currently she holds a conjoint professorial appointment with the School of Psychiatry at the UNSW, where she previously held the first Chair of Perinatal and Infant Psychiatry, establishing services in Sydney's South West and with Karitane and then with St John of God Health Care, in Blacktown and Perth. She is a Foundation Board member of both Gidget Foundation Australia and the Australasian Birth Trauma Association (ABTA). Bryanne is a foundation member and past President of the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health, the Australian Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and both the International and Australasian Marce Societies.

In 2007 Bryanne was awarded Membership in the Order of Australia in recognition of her service to families and the profession. In 2016, she received a Citation from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, and in 2018 she was awarded the John Cox medal by the International Marce Society.



## DR JENNY KRUGER

### *Board Member*

Dr Jennifer is our New Zealand-based board member. She graduated with a BSc (Nursing & Midwifery) from University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She developed an interest in Sport and Exercise, being a recreational runner for many years and completing a few half and full marathons.

She completed her PhD in 2009 which investigated pelvic floor function in elite nulliparous athletes. Jennifer is now a Senior Research Fellow at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute, University of Auckland, where she leads a multi-disciplinary research team, the Pelvic floor Research group.

Her research is focused on pelvic floor muscle function and dysfunction in women; in particular how this relates to childbirth, urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse. The primary focus of her research is the development of a pressure sensor array (FemFit) in an effort to improve women's engagement with their pelvic floor health.

Jennifer enjoys the challenges of bringing 'clinician and engineer' together, realising the possibilities that bioengineering can add to clinical decision making and what clinicians really need from the bioengineer.



## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MAYA DRUM

### *Board Member*

Associate Professor Maya Drum holds a Bachelor of Health Science (nursing), Masters of Health Science (primary health care) and Masters of Health Services Management, is a Registered Nurse and Midwife, an Associate Lecturer at the Western Sydney University (Australia) School of Nursing and Midwifery and a qualified Mediator and Conciliator. Maya has extensive experience in senior executive managerial and leadership positions in both public and private health services and she is currently the Manager, Raphael Services in Blacktown (NSW) for St John of God Health Care. Maya is a passionate advocate for women's and children's health and has worked on many New South Wales (Australia) State committees to improve relevant services for families.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## AUSTRALASIAN BIRTH TRAUMA ASSOCIATION LTD

### STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>Income</b>			
Donations		28,784	28,411
Fundraising		80	-
Interest		11	6
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>28,864</b>	<b>28,417</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Accounting fees		880	-
Computer & Web Hosting		508	4,774
Conferences & Training		1,972	483
Depreciation Expense		627	52
Filing Fees		378	48
Insurance		1,424	-
Legal Fees		47	1,216
Office Supplies		-	585
Postage & Courier		487	603
Printing & Stationery		304	1,313
Rent		-	100
Subscriptions & Memberships		598	53
Sundry		30	-
Superannuation Expense		1,543	-
Travel & Accommodation		6,567	4,282
Wages & Salaries		16,240	560
Work Cover Insurance		201	50
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>31,801</b>	<b>14,119</b>
<b>Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		<b>(2,927)</b>	<b>14,298</b>

AUSTRALASIAN BIRTH TRAUMA ASSOCIATION LTD

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 JUNE 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash & Cash Equivalents		13,592	15,667
Accounts Receivable		429	-
Total Current Assets		<u>14,021</u>	<u>15,667</u>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	2	<u>1,221</u>	<u>1,847</u>
Total Non-Current Assets		<u>1,221</u>	<u>1,847</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u>15,242</u>	<u>17,514</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	3	<u>833</u>	<u>179</u>
Total Current Liabilities		<u>833</u>	<u>179</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<u>833</u>	<u>179</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<u>14,409</u>	<u>17,336</u>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained Surplus		<u>14,409</u>	<u>17,336</u>

# CONFERENCES *AND TRAINING*

## 'BREAK THE SILENCE' FORUM WITH ROTARY HAWTHORN

July 2018



We facilitated our first event 'Birth Trauma - Breaking the Silence' Forum which took place in Melbourne. With special thanks to the President, Ian Bentley from the Rotary club of Hawthorn for recognising the value of our cause and helping to make the event happen. To our speakers Dr Oliver Daly, Dr Jessica Caudwell-Hall, Lana Sussman, Rachel Haywood and to April Hagan for sharing her story.

President Ian Bentley commented: "After listening to the personal experiences of young mothers, it would be hard to argue that there is not a need in our community to provide more support for women through the process of pregnancy and birth and especially to those who carry physical or psychological damage into life after the birth of their children. The antenatal, clinical and postnatal issues are complex and there are no 'one size fits all' solution. There is, however, room for improvement in many areas and is important that we do what we can to encourage those trying to make a difference whether it is minimising birth trauma or maximising support if it is sustained."



**LINK:** <https://hawthornrotary.org.au/Stories/the-australasian-birth-trauma-association>



*Photo top*

*Amy Dawes and Ian Bentley from Rotary Club Hawthorn*

*Photo right*

*Speakers speakers Dr Jessica Caudwell-Hall,  
Dr Oliver Daly, Amy Dawes, Rachel Haywood  
Lana Sussman, and April Hogan*





August 2018

## AGES XIX PELVIC FLOOR SYMPOSIUM

**DR KELLIE TATHEM, OBSTETRICIAN AND GYNAECOLOGIST (FRANZCOG).**

I had the incredible opportunity to speak at the Australasian Gynaecological Endoscopy & Surgery Society conference. Sharing my real experience of physical birth trauma and the impact these injuries have had on my life with an audience of Urogynaecologists, OB/GYN's, General practitioners and physiotherapists. I absolutely loved listening to Dr. Harsha Ananthram's presentation on respecting women's need for informed consent with childbirth and Professor Don Wilson highlighting how pelvic floor dysfunction is at 'epidemic proportions in later life' and how the prevention of PFD should be a priority in women's health.

*"Amy Dawes delivered a very engaging presentation about her personal patient experiences. She captivated the large audience of healthcare professionals, and both her story and her challenge to the audience for change, resonated with many."*

Our Birth Trauma Support Leaflets are now available in hundreds of clinics nationwide, including hospitals, physiotherapists and perinatal mental health clinics.

With thanks to our board, ABTA has also featured at dozens of national and international O/G meetings and a number of mental health conferences.

September 2018



## 'STANDING TOGETHER' CONFERENCE, BARNESLEY, UK

**DR JAN SMITH – HEALTHY YOU, UK**

"Amy has such an engaging presence. She was able to strike a balance of providing the 'real' impact of birth trauma, whilst conveying succinctly the ways we need to work collaboratively to raise awareness, prevent and treat physical injuries sustained at birth."



10 & 11th November, Grand Hyatt, Melbourne

November 2019

## WOMEN'S HEALTH AND FITNESS SUMMIT

AMY DAWES KEYNOTE SPEAKER

This was the first year it was open to the public as well as fitness professionals. Amy's story covered the opportunities that a compromised quality of life gave her and the change-maker she has become.

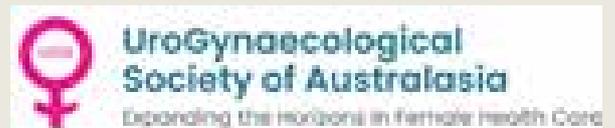
November 2018

## CAPEA TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT DAY

JACQUI GILLIAN –  
VICE PRESIDENT CAPEA NSW

Amy was invited to speak upon recommendation at the Childbirth and Parenting Educators Association Inc. (CAPEA) conference in November 2018. The theme of the day was "generating connectedness through childbirth and parenting education". Amy was truly inspiring and engaged the audience very quickly. The words she spoke of her own story were factual and elicited an emotional response from the audience. But Amy was in charge of this the whole time. She addressed the theme of the day with stories from her website. In all, Amy reached a new audience with candour and professionalism and she represented the women of birth trauma with integrity. Amy is a valuable asset to all conferences that include women's health.

March 2019



## UROGynaecological SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA MEETING

AMY DAWES AND DR OLIVER DALY

Sharing the lived experience message alongside our board member Dr Oliver Daly who ran a pelvic anatomy workshop.

2019



## 'CHANGE THE WORLD' EVENT

Amy & Christine attended the 'Change the World' event hosted by Hancock Creative, Amy had the opportunity to make a 60 second pitch up on the spot for ABTA alongside 3 other charities to the 300 attendees of this event, Amy presented the winning pitch.

2018

## AUSMUMPRENEUR AWARDS

2018

Winning silver in the Making a Difference (Non Profit) category!



2019



## PEACH TREE PERINATAL WELLNESS

HOSTED ELLY TAYLOR AUTHOR OF THE BOOK 'BECOMING US'

It was wonderful to hear about the incredible work she is doing to support families. Elly has since launched the second edition with new information relating to birth trauma.

2018



## WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE AUSTRALASIA - SAFETY & QUALITY IN MATERNITY CARE.

ATTENDED BY AMY DAWES AND CHRISTINE PERCY

I was fortunate enough to hear the results from the Perineal Bundle, and it's aim to prevent third and fourth degree tears. The Perineal Protection Bundle® was developed by an Expert Panel formed with representation from around Australia including midwives, obstetricians, urogynaecologists and consumer representatives.

The varied perspectives allowed for a diverse cross section of stakeholder issues to be taken into account. From a consumer perspective



is was wonderful to hear of successful collaborations between clinicians and most importantly it ensured conversations happened with women long before they are in the delivery room - this really is a positive as many women that we support, believe that had they known of the risks, they would have been better prepared for adverse outcomes.

MORE HERE [↗](#)

2018

## PANDA TRAUMA CONFERENCE



A workshop for midwives, MCH nurses and other health professionals on birth trauma prevention and debriefing, trauma as a risk factor for perinatal anxiety and depression, and working with clients with prior trauma experiences.

2019

## AUSTRALIAN PATIENT ORGANISATION INAUGURAL CONFERENCE

The Australian Patient Organisation Network Annual Conference is being convened to support the health charity sector and strengthen its impact through collaboration. All patient organisations will receive an invitation to register for the conference.

June 2019



## HEALTH CONSUMERS QUEENSLAND ANNUAL FORUM

ATTENDED BY CHRISTINE PERCY - CAIRNS

This annual forum brings together representatives from the Department of Health, the various Hospital and Health Services around Queensland, consumers

and carers to further the engagement of consumer voices in health care provision.

May 2019



## PEERZONE WELLBEING PROGRAM

PEACH TREE PERINATAL WELLNESS



Christine, along with one of our Peer2Peer Mentors, Phoebe, attended the PeerZone Wellbeing program offered at Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness for the purposes of expanding their understanding of mental health along with experiencing the benefits of these type of peer-led programs

PeerZone is a free peer-led 6 week series of workshops providing resources and strategies to benefit others experiencing mental health distress.

Facilitated by licensed Peach Tree PeerZone educators with their own lived experience, each group uses discussion and activities to explore mental health and find strategies to help manage day to day life.

The learnings from Christine's participation in this workshop series will contribute to the development of a birth trauma specific peer-led program to be developed by ABTA in the future.

# BUILDING AWARENESS

Birth Trauma Awareness Week 2018

## BIRTH TRAUMA AWARENESS WEEK 2018 #YOURSTORYMATTERS

For our first Awareness Week, we asked our the mothers in our private support group to send us their stories of birth trauma and the impact it has had on them and their families.

We created a promotional piece that shared the stories of these women and highlighted the fact that birth trauma has many faces and what can look like a uneventful birth to some, can be deeply traumatising for others, and how important it is to start these conversations so that families can seek the help and support that they need.

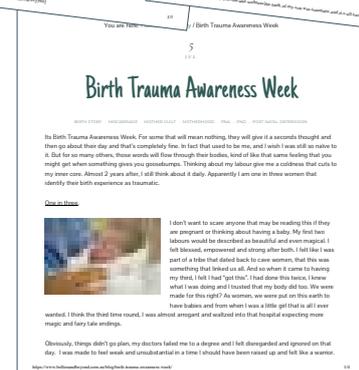
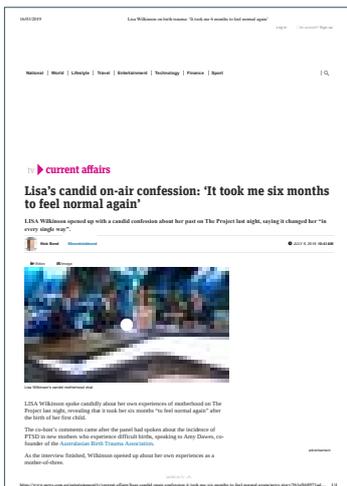
We had some amazing media coverage and support including, features on; Channel 10's The Project, ABC News & ABC Radio Nationwide, Life Matters on ABC Brisbane, The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Telegraph.

### MEDIA

Post-traumatic stress disorder from childbirth. ABC

The birth of my son was traumatic and its all too common.

<https://bit.ly/2ut6hqe>



#yourstorymatters #ABTA Sue Croft physiotherapist blog.pdf

Birth Trauma Awareness Week

## RADIO

*Thank you to ABC radio for giving us a platform to talk about Birth Trauma.*

<https://ab.co/2HUqjFz>



## ABC Radio

You are a first time mum, your pregnancy has gone well, and you have your own thoughts about how you'll have your baby. You know it's going to be painful but you're determined to have a natural birth assisted by your partner, a midwife and maybe an obstetrician.

But what if it doesn't happen the way you imagine? And what if the outcomes continue to affect you, well after your baby is born?

Amy Dawes founded the Birth Trauma Association, along with Peter Dietz, Professor in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Sydney Medical School Nepean.

Joining them is midwife, nurse and PhD candidate Liz Skinner, who wants to open up a discussion about what she feels is a veil of silence around women who've had difficult deliveries, sometimes with lasting physical and emotional effects.

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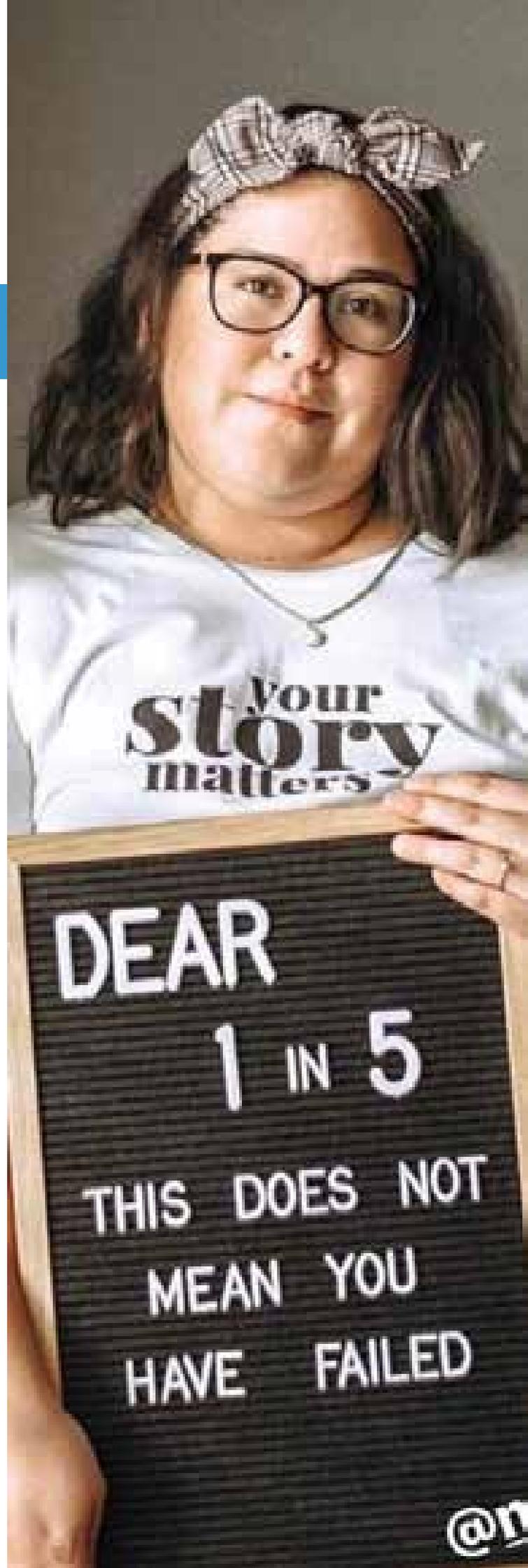
During this month we saw an increase in the number of individuals accessing our website with 3945 users, and 11,717 page views - which is triple our normal numbers.

We are incredibly grateful to all the women that bravely shared their stories, so others now know that they aren't alone. We would also like to thank Rachel Haywood From BrandUnity for the weaving of these many stories together and the editing of our video.

Special thanks to one of our ABTA members, April Hagan for creating the 'Your Story Matters' t-shirts for awareness week, enabling our supporters to help spread awareness via social media. A percentage of the proceeds from the sales were also donated to ABTA.



watch here



## *Continuing the conversation*

### MAINSTREAM MEDIA

We have had many opportunities presented to us, and would like to thank the media for your continued support in helping us reach more communities and individuals. We would like to thank ABC Brisbane Radio with Katherine Feeney in giving us the opportunity to highlight and discuss our peer support program.



#### About Regional

Thank you to About Regional for interview one of our Peer-2-Peer support mentors Reka about her experience and her volunteer work.

[Link here](#)



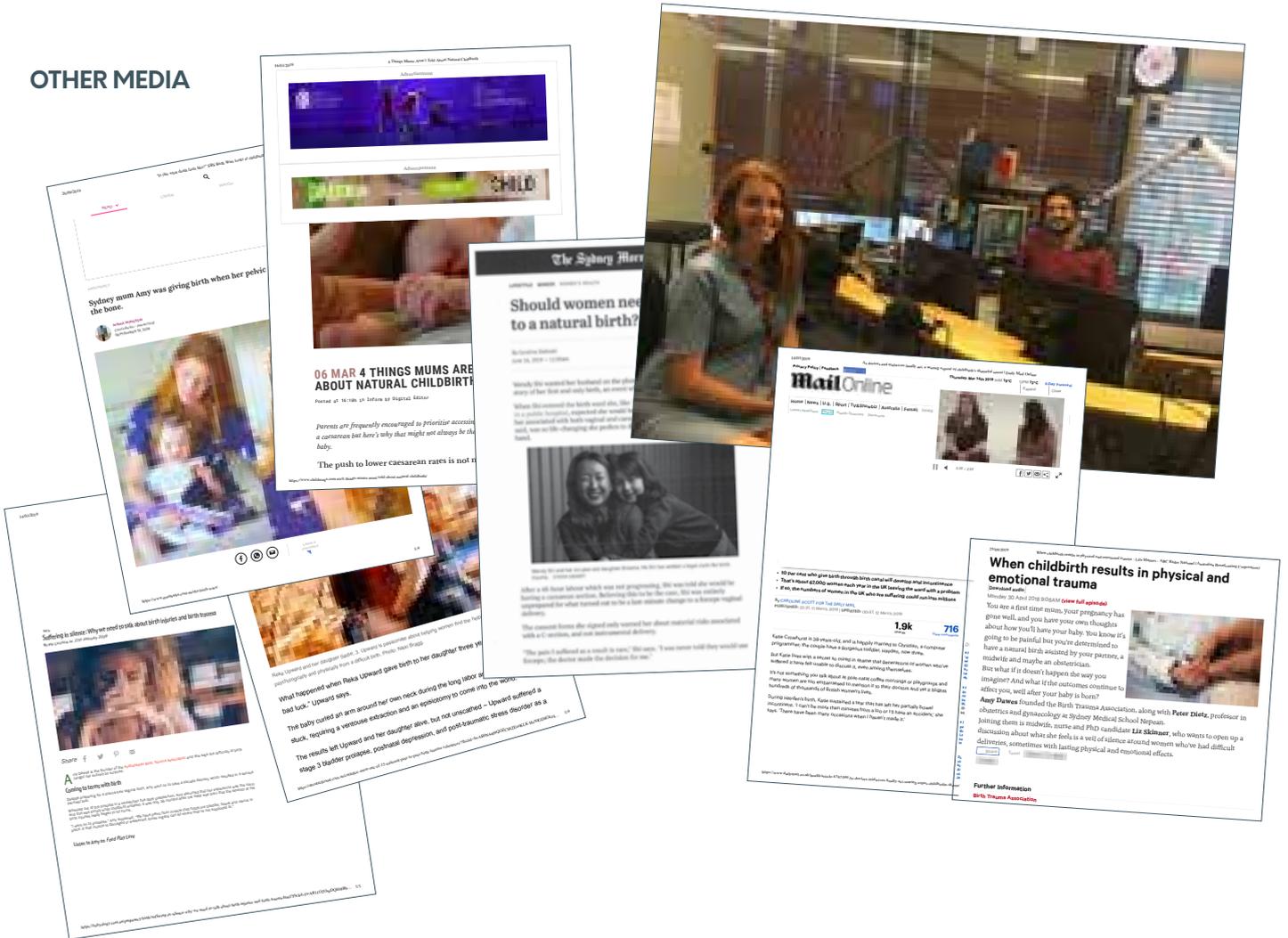
#### Sept 2018 - SBS Birth wars

" Many midwives say the rise in c-section births is dangerous for mothers. Whereas doctors claim the push for 'natural' births can lead to unforeseen complications later in life." *The Feed YouTube Channel.*

[Link here](#)



## OTHER MEDIA



## PODCASTS



### Babyology

**Why we need to talk about birth trauma**

by Elise Cooper.

<https://bit.ly/2VAY6lt>



### The Pelvic Health Podcast

**ABTA**

<https://bit.ly/35wb3rU>



# FUNDRAISING AND PARTNERSHIPS

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Every year we are completely blown away by our supporters' commitment to ABTA, and this year is certainly no different.

As ABTA grows, so does the amount of women and families we need to assist. Our partners are the backbone of what we do; from running marathons to donating on a regular basis, each contribution makes a huge difference to the impact we can make.

We are funded entirely by such generosity and, although this page is far too small to name all those who so kindly support us, we'd like to give a special thanks to the following organisations and individuals who have contributed to fundraising efforts this year.



A sincere thank you to the Brain Injury Foundation for the continued sponsorship of ABTA's Volunteer Manager, Christine Percy. This role is vital to the provision and future growth of ABTA's support services, allowing us to help more families impacted by birth trauma.



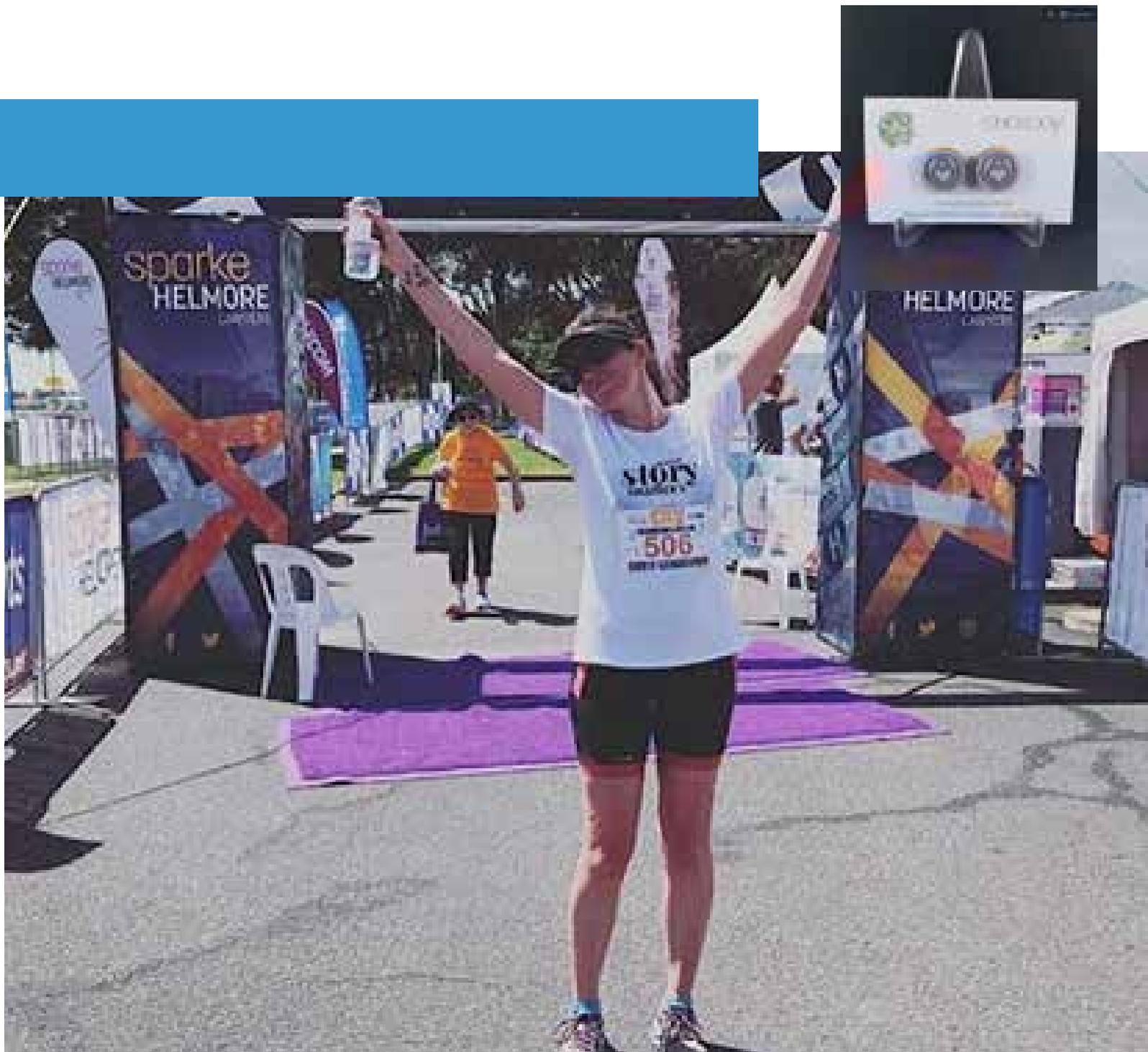
Lana Sussman from the Parents Village for her contribution to our P2P Support Training



Sydney Pelvic Clinic raised \$3,750



BrandUnity for ongoing website and design supports.



Lauren White Sexologist who kindly donated a percentage of her fees to ABTA during the month of July

Amy Dominey Artist for donating 3 beautiful pieces to be auctioned at The Women's Health & Fitness Summit

Samford Community Fundraiser March 2019 - \$1,095 A special thanks to all those that donated prizes for this event: <https://www.birthtrauma.org.au/fundraiser/>

ABTA members Kate Flammea ran a 5km fun run in Melbourne and raised a huge \$1,700!

Sarah Tindall did the Sparke Helmore City Triathlon in Newcastle NSW.

Angela James & Jac Thurley from Sydney Pelvic Clinic for their contributions to our P2P Training

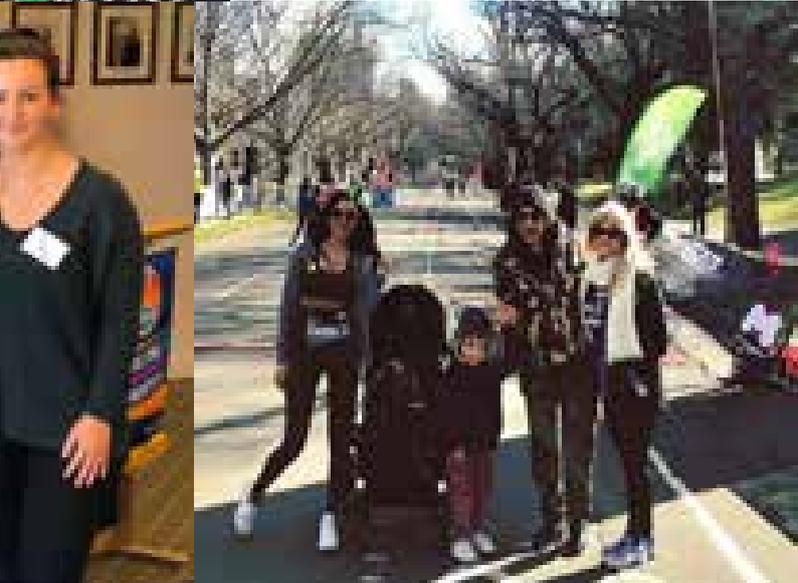
Peta Scott who created ABTA earrings and donated the proceeds.

Our birthday fundraisers April, Helen and Sarah. And thank you to Paypal Giving Fund for making this fundraising option easy.

# OUR MOMENTS

*There are many people we want to acknowledge, a few special people mentioned here. We also want to share some of our favourite moments - whether that was for advocacy, funding, awareness, support or training, they are all moments we are grateful for.*





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Our board of directors:  
 Professor Bryanne Barnett  
 Professor Hans Peter Dietz  
 Dr Oliver Daly  
 Dr Jenny Kruger  
 Professor Maya Drum  
 Andree Whitley at ABC News  
 April Hagen  
 Rachel Haywood from BrandUnity  
 Baker Solutions Group  
 Birth Trauma Association UK  
 Connecting Up  
 Rotary Club of Hawthorn  
 Sydney Pelvic Clinic  
 The Parents Village  
 Emily Billiau  
 Helen Newman  
 Liz Bennett  
 Emily Billiau From The Brain Injury Foundation  
 Rowan Cockerell Continece Foundation of Australia  
 Jan Smith  
 Jacqui Gillan  
 Alex Lopes  
 Elizabeth Bennett  
 Andree Withey  
 Simon Cunich  
 Michelle Wright  
 Lori Forner  
 Kim Thomas & Gwyn Gaynor

To each and every person that have trusted us with their story

# ABTA'S PEER2PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

In 2018, ABTA's Peer2Peer Support Program was launched, harnessing the power of shared experience to deliver non-judgmental peer-led support via an online live messaging service.

The Peer2Peer Support Program is now in its second year and has been available 5 nights a week, every week, during that time. Over 520 hours of support have been made available to families who have experienced birth trauma.

A total of 15 P2P Mentors have been involved in the delivery of that support and at the time of printing 6 of those Mentors were actively participating in the program.

The P2P Mentor training program is regularly updated based on participant feedback with the program being updated to include greater focus on examples of chats and appropriate ways to respond. Further mentor training sessions have been confirmed for Sydney in July, Brisbane in August and Melbourne in November 2019.

In August of 2018, an online Mentor Portal was launched providing online access for P2P Mentors to ABTA policies, procedures and the online training resources. This portal continues to be a valuable reference point for mentors.

Quote from Amanda (P2P Mentor)- "Being able to Volunteer for the ABTA Peer2Peer Mentor program has given me to opportunity to give back to the community, as well as helping me to continue to heal from my own birth trauma. The training we received has educated me on the range of psychological and physical forms of birth trauma, so that I can be an empathetic ear to those in need. There is also a wonderful group of ABTA Peer2Peer volunteers that I have met during my involvement with the program".

The opportunity for ongoing professional development is provided to mentors through Volunteer Connect Sessions. These webinar style interactive sessions allow mentors to engage in conversation and learning around birth trauma related issues. The topics

#### **Volunteer Recruitment**

- 15 applications received to become a P2P Mentor this financial year
- 6 currently active P2P Mentors
- 6 mentors currently awaiting training



**I volunteer to give back to the community that picked me up and made me feel connected when I was feeling down and alone. Penni**

**I volunteer in the hope that I can help some else to navigate through the trauma, just like other volunteers helped me. Amanda**

**I volunteer to allow other parents who have gone through something they didn't expect or don't fully understand a safe place to express themselves and ask questions without fear of judgement; and instead receive support and perhaps suggestions to help them to begin/continue on their road of recovery. Claire**

**I volunteer to give parents an understanding, empathetic, non-judgemental place to share their story. Reka**

*100% of users would recommend the P2P Support Program to their friends and colleagues.*



### Christine Percy

Christine joined the ABTA team in June 2018, bringing to the role 5 years' experience in maternity consumer representation and over 15 years' experience in a range of corporate roles including administration, human resources and project management.

As a mum of two, her own experience with prolapse and abdominal separation has provided her with intimate insight into the challenges women face navigating the medical system for postnatal care and the emotional hurdles that may need to be overcome when adjusting to the physical changes that occur due to pregnancy and birthing.

Christine's focus is to combine her knowledge and experience to create positive change for future generations of birthing women.

that have been covered so far include; intimacy after birth trauma, hospitalisation for PND, prolapse and exercise, hysterectomy recovery and approaching health care providers for answers. ABTA is also committed to raising funds for the up-skilling of mentors such as CPR for Mental Illness and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training).

Uptake of the P2P service from the public has been lower than anticipated and is largely attributed to a lack of awareness of its existence. An ongoing focus for ABTA is to raise awareness of its services within the perinatal health space in order to expand the number of referrals and users of the P2P Support Program. Also, based on feedback received from users of the P2P Program, ABTA intends to introduce a booking system that will allow volunteers and participants to chat at mutually convenient times. The booking system will be run in conjunction with the existing drop in session format.

Finally, we wish to thank the women and families who donate their time to ensure those who need support on their birth trauma journey are cared for. Your contribution makes a difference. Thank you.



I volunteer because we can heal through connection, sharing our stories, and supporting each other. Ashleigh

I choose to volunteer so that others have access to the support I wished I had when my son was born. Kristy-Lee



**A special thanks to Professor Bryanne Barnett AM, Lana Sussman from The Parents Village, Angela James and Jacynl Thurley from Sydney Pelvic Clinic for donating their weekends.**

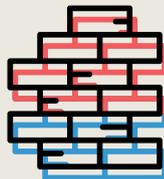
# STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our organisations strategic directions assist in guiding us through the next 3 years. To ensure we stay on track, that we further our services by stabilising the organisation's revenue and funding is paramount to our longevity and ability to continue to provide support to our community.



## WELLNESS & SUPPORT

- Position ABTA as the leading organisation in Birth Trauma support
- Pitch a 'prevention better than cure' positioning
- Establish a diversity in support for minority and hard to reach communities



## ORGANISATION STABILITY

- Invest in implementation of fundraising initiatives
- Establish a funding / grant strategy
- Diversify funding streams



## INFLUENCE & EXCELLENCE THROUGH EDUCATION

- Collaborative based Healthcare Professional education
- Strengthen community engagement



## ADVOCACY & REPUTATION

- Build bridges with key institutions to increase partnership and cooperation
- Establish a clear line of organisation support opportunities
- Media and public affairs

ABTA services are made possible by the dedication of a small team of amazing volunteers. Attracting and retaining volunteers that are aligned with ABTA's values and passionate about supporting families impacted by birth trauma is vital to ABTA's growth and ability to extend it's reach. There are a number of ways people can currently volunteer with ABTA:

### Volunteer your skills

We have been fortunate to have a number of professionals volunteer their time and skills to carry out a variety of tasks and projects for ABTA. Our volunteers have contributed to website development, the design of training materials, coordinating events such as park catch-ups and bookkeeping, to name just a few. We have a number of projects both big and small that require specific skill sets in order to see

them come to fruition. We are grateful for all contributions and provide certificates of appreciation and recognition via social media for contributions made. In the future, we are also particularly interested in engaging with fathers impacted by birth trauma, so that we can further develop our support offering.

### Volunteer as a P2P Mentor

Our P2P mentors volunteer their time at the front line of support for families impacted by a difficult birth. Their compassion and dedication are inspiring. ABTA is committed to increasing the opening hours of the P2P Support Service and to achieve this, additional P2P Mentors will be required. Comprehensive training and support is available to all volunteers participating in the program.

### Become an ABTA Advocate

ABTA believes in the power of storytelling as a catalyst for change. When a birth trauma survivor shares their story, it provides an opportunity for others to be educated, for the prevalence of birth trauma to be exposed and for sufferers to realise they are not alone.

ABTA is looking to connect with people who have been impacted by birth trauma and are interested in invoking change by sharing their experience at consumer engagement sessions and public speaking opportunities. We are grateful to all those who lend their voice to Birth Trauma Awareness.

**For all volunteer enquiries, please contact our Volunteer Manager, Christine Percy on [volunteer@birthtrauma.org.au](mailto:volunteer@birthtrauma.org.au).**

# >60,000 PAGE VIEWS

Our website has around 4000 page views per month. So, what are people searching, what are people looking for? From July to December 2018 we had over 35,000 views, which is 75% of our entire traffic from the year prior. We believe this is primarily due to the awareness campaign.

Since tweaking our home page and offering up a range of information pathways, by far our most popular page is “What is pelvic floor damage?” with an average of 500-700 views per month. This is followed by our “Birth Experience Blog” averaging 400 views per month, closely followed by our “Birth Trauma Peer2Peer Support Program” page.

So what does this tell us? It tells us that women continue to require the understanding of pelvic floor damage and the need to validate their own birth trauma experiences through reading the experiences of others. This is how we feel sure, feel seen and understood... in the hope that we are not alone, and that whilst not hoping someone has walked the path before you, that someone is going to understand where you are at physically and psychologically.

53.8% of people are still finding our website via online search and 20% via social media. We will continue to expand our reach on social and reach out to organisations and networks that support women and families. Our biggest source of referrals is kidspot.com.au followed by the ABC and Mamamia, which is why our focus with the media and other blogging entities remains a key focus. We can also see that women are predominantly the ones seeking information and support.

We also wish to acknowledge the Gidget Foundation that has worked towards referring women to us via their online platforms and social channels.

## OUR RESOURCES





ABTA is the first national charity in Australia & NZ dedicated solely to supporting families impacted by a difficult birth. With its headquarters based in Brisbane, Queensland, ABTA provides online services that can reach families across the country including much needed support to rural and remote areas. ABTA provides information to any person who is affected by psychological/and or physical birth trauma, including partners and extended family members, and to any person who wants more information about these conditions. This includes conducting professional development and training for health care providers.

## THE HISTORY OF ABTA

ABTA was founded in 2016, when Liz Skinner, a midwife, registered nurse, child and family clinician, lecturer and researcher with over 25 years' experience working with mothers, babies and their families, was interviewing affected women for her PHD thesis on the psychological impact of somatic trauma. Amy Dawes discovered Liz's work during the journey to process her own experience after the forceps delivery she had with her first child. Amy reached out to Liz and a friendship was formed.

Shortly after meeting Amy, Liz visited the UK and met with the UK Birth Trauma Association. It was during this trip that Liz recognised the great need for women and their families to have support in Australia and NZ. Upon her return, she made the suggestion to Amy, and so, with initial funds donated by Professor Dietz, the Australasian Birth Trauma Association was founded.

In 2017 a Board was formed and in that same year ABTA became a registered charity. ABTA is reliant upon our board of advisors and also on the women who had a lived-experience of birth trauma to train and commit to voluntary service facilitating our weekday live chat support service from their homes.

As the need for support and awareness has grown it has become apparent that face to face connection is also invaluable to women and their families impacted by a traumatic birth, so in 2018 we launched our face-to-face support group in Brisbane. We look forward to expanding these face-to-face opportunities into other states.

# SOCIAL CONNECTION



We are extremely proud of the network that has been cultivated through the support group. We have managed to maintain a supportive and judgement free environment.



## SUZI

My daughters 17th Birthday is coming up. After struggling for so long without having anyone to talk too about prolapse I'm so thankful I do now!! It's ABTA. I was searching for years after my diagnosis to find someone to talk too. Thank goodness ABTA was formed. It's given me;

1. Support
2. Friendship
3. Education and connection to health professionals who can help.
4. A voice
5. Makes me feel sane and not alone
6. Gives me hope that our daughters will have better outcomes and education that we didn't have.

And of course just to know that I'm not on my own as no one ever talked about these things!!! That's what ABTA has done for me!!!

## MEGHAN

In addition to practical information like where to find help, more importantly this association has provided me the invaluable knowledge that I am not alone, that my feelings physically, emotionally as well as physical are real and valid. I thank everyone involved and also all the fellow members and mums out there.

## CLAIRE

I've used the support group to ask questions, looked at the website for help, read parts of the amazing book recommended on here, I love this group and think ABTA is beyond amazing.

[birthtrauma.org.au](http://birthtrauma.org.au)



Australasian  
Birth Trauma Association



@birthtrauma.org.au

**ABTA**

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*Website*

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