

THE **HOME & LIVING** SHOW

ON THIS WEEKEND!

FORSYTH BARR STADIUM  
NOVEMBER 2 - 3, 2019

[CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS](#)

aimatocent%2FididkifjG1p-24573tstet-0PteIzazofeHansubh450605044/soved-16022168301layot-Hajnit4/oytagdefeures%2Fesponsor

Thursday, 17 October 2019

## Brain Injury Otago Street Appeal

62

0

[Features \(/features\)](#) > [Sponsored content \(/features/sponsored-content\)](#)

The dedicated team at Brain Injury Otago provide support for 600 people across Otago living with brain injuries and their families. Based from the society's office in Dunedin's Community House, Brain Injury Otago liaison officer Cathy Matthews and part-time liaison officer Sue Whyte provide a vital mobile service, with the support of finance and administration officer Jane Butterfield.

For Mrs Matthews, this involves covering Wanaka, Alexandra, Cromwell, South Otago, Milton, North Otago, and Oamaru, which Ms Whyte covers the greater Dunedin area.

With so many miles to cover, the Brain Injury Otago team were delighted recently to receiving funding from the Alexander McMillan Trust towards a vehicle.

"Having a car for the service is fantastic in terms of making it easier to cover so many miles, and the signwriting is good way to remind people that the service is available," Mrs Matthews said.

Along with meeting people one-on-one, the liaison officers help to run regular peer support groups across the region, where people recovering from brain injury can meet, socialise, and share support.

"The people we work with have a variety of needs – some may have complex and ongoing issues, while others just need short term support," she said.

Peer support groups were good for many people, as they gave them opportunities to socialise, take part in their own chosen activities, and also to hear from speakers on topics that interested them.

"If the group members want to hear from a speaker on a particular topic, we can organise that for them."

Among the broad ranging topics covered include travel, technology and digital media records, spatial awareness, sensory overload, seizures, planning for the future, and beekeeping.

Mrs Matthews said the causes of brain injury were mixed, with two-thirds occurring through accidents, and one-third through medical events.

The most common single cause of brain injuries were falls.

A big part of our work is helping people to understand what is happening in their brain, and to help them with strategies for working through it," she said.

Another important aspect of the society's work was around helping schools, clubs, and organisations to ensure they had effective concussion protocols in place.

When you suffer a brain injury, you need to listen to your body and deal with it in order to get better," she said.

Busy people may not want to slow down, but fatigue was often a major factor for them.

In fact, 30% of people experienced symptoms lasting longer than four weeks, and children could take still longer to recover.

Brain Injury Otago will hold a street day collection tomorrow from 10am to 5pm, with collectors at mainly supermarkets throughout Dunedin and Mosgiel.

The collection is supported by many volunteers, including pupils from Kavanagh College, Columba College, Otago Girls High School, and Taieri High School.



**Taking to the streets . . . Preparing for tomorrow's Brain Injury Otago street day appeal are (from left) association finance and administration officer Jane Butterfield, liaison officer Cathy Matthews, and volunteer AJ Bowler. PHOTO: THE STAR**