

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS, 90 AUSTRALIANS HAVE DIED AFTER BEING “KING HIT”. BUT MANY MORE HAVE SURVIVED. WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM? BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS WEEK 2014 RECOGNISES THOSE WHO’VE LIVED THROUGH VIOLENT ASSAULT.

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS WEEK 2014 IS LAUNCHED MONDAY 11TH AUGUST

Brain Injury Australia - the peak advocacy organisation representing the needs of the over 700,000 Australians with a brain injury – will host the launch of Brain Injury Awareness Week 2014 at the opening the Acquired Brain Injury National Conference in Bendigo next Monday morning, 11th August, at 9:30 a.m. 2014’s Brain Injury Awareness Week is devoted to assault-related brain injury; the result of alcohol-fuelled violence, “king hits”, “cowards’ punches” etc.

Senator Mitch Fifield, the Assistant Minister for Social Services, will officially launch the week. The launch will also feature a speech by Dr. Mukesh Haikerwal - former President of the Australian Medical Association, now Chair of the World Medical Association, and appointed last week by the Minister for Health, Peter Dutton, as Chair of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare - who sustained a brain injury the result of a vicious assault in Melbourne in 2008.

“We not only need to stop mindless violence, of course”, says Dr. Haikerwal. “But we also need the legal system to reflect with severe sanctions the often catastrophic consequences of assault, such as brain injury. I am one of the very few lucky ones.”

A local man, Chris Oman, and his mother – and carer – Margaret will speak about the night he was attacked by three men while walking home from a hotel. The assault has left him with a very severe brain injury. Both will speak openly about the life-changing impacts of that night.

“I can understand why the media focusses on the fatalities”, says says Nick Rushworth, Executive Officer of Brain Injury Australia. “But what’s overlooked is the extreme fragility of the brain. It doesn’t take much force to inflict damage from which the brain will never fully recover. What becomes of the many thousands of Australians for whom their ‘one punch’ doesn’t kill?”

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