

## Brain Injury Australia

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## ***BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS WEEK 2008 BEGINS TODAY; DEDICATED TO AUSTRALIANS LIVING WITH THE LEGACY OF ASSAULT***

### **NEW FIGURES FROM NATION'S LEAD HEALTH INFORMATION AGENCY: MORE THAN 3,000 AUSTRALIANS SUFFER A BRAIN INJURY DUE TO ASSAULT IN ONE YEAR**

A report released last Friday by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) demonstrates the extraordinary toll taken by violence. **More than 1 in every 7 of the 22,700 hospitalisations – and the 980 deaths - for traumatic brain injury in 2004-05 were due to assault.**

Last year, **30,000 Australians required hospitalisation for an assault** and while rates for homicide and armed robbery have decreased in the last decade, **assaults have risen by almost 50 per cent.**

**Women (especially Indigenous women), infants and young people** are at the greatest risk. A 2005 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that **443,800 women - 5.8% of all women – had been assaulted in the previous year.** The rate of brain injury due to assault in Indigenous women is **almost 70 times that for non-Indigenous women.** **163 infant males (less than one year old) and 132 infant females were hospitalised as a result of assault last year.** And **7,652 Australians aged 12 to 24 were hospitalised for assault, a 27% increase on their number a decade ago.**

**“Brain injury is 10 times more common than spinal injury and results in, on average, 3 times the level of disability,”** says Nick Rushworth, the Executive Officer of Brain Injury Australia. **“It’s the last thing anyone thinks of in the heat of violence but the brain is immensely fragile. And injuring it is unlike injuring any other part of the body.”**

The consequences of a brain injury are profound, complex and multiple. Physical problems can include **chronic pain, paralysis and epilepsy, vision and hearing disturbance.** Many people with a brain injury will also experience **cognitive problems, including poor memory and concentration, reduced ability to learn, plan and solve problems.** And around two-thirds of people with a brain injury will experience changes in behaviour as a result of their brain injury, including the inability to control impulses, verbal and physical aggression.

**For more information, please contact Nick Rushworth, Executive Officer, Brain Injury Australia on (0417) 373 622 or (03) 9497 8074**

Brain Injury Australia is the national peak brain injury advocacy organization representing, through its State and Territory member organizations, the needs and interests of people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), their families and carers.

