

Annual Report 2010



Synapse is dedicated to assisting those with, or influenced by, an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) or whose behaviour challenges our understanding.





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The main reason for the change, is the negative societal implications and stigma that surrounds the term “Brain Injury”.

Brain Injury is also incorrectly classified under health and Government guidelines, which has limited our ability to procure funding, and engage with stakeholders.





Synapse is positive and suggests the value of relationships rather than a label for an injury. It relates to the connections between people, communities and opportunities.



**Neil Federer
(President)**



**Jennifer Cullen
(Chief Executive Officer)**

Overview

This year, Synapse (formerly the Brain Injury Association of Qld Inc.) has undergone dramatic change, building Organisational capacity and engaging with stakeholders in a way we never believed possible.

We have built partnerships across the community, government and corporate sectors - our messages are being heard through perseverance and quality service delivery.

Synapse continues to challenge generic disability models with experience and a strong evidence base.

Brain Injury is not a single disability, but a spectrum disorder classified under Dementia in the DSM IV-R.

Office Purchase and Relocation

The highlight of 2009 - 2010 has been the purchase of new premises at 262 Montague Road, West End (Brisbane). This is not only a major financial milestone for the Organisation, but provides a major increase in our capacity to provide services to the community both locally, state-wide, and nationally.

With a focus on training and information technology infrastructure, the design of Synapse's new head office allows other community and not-for-profit services to take advantage of our facilities.

A consolidated base of operation also means we now have an increased ability to provide much needed services to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Rebranding

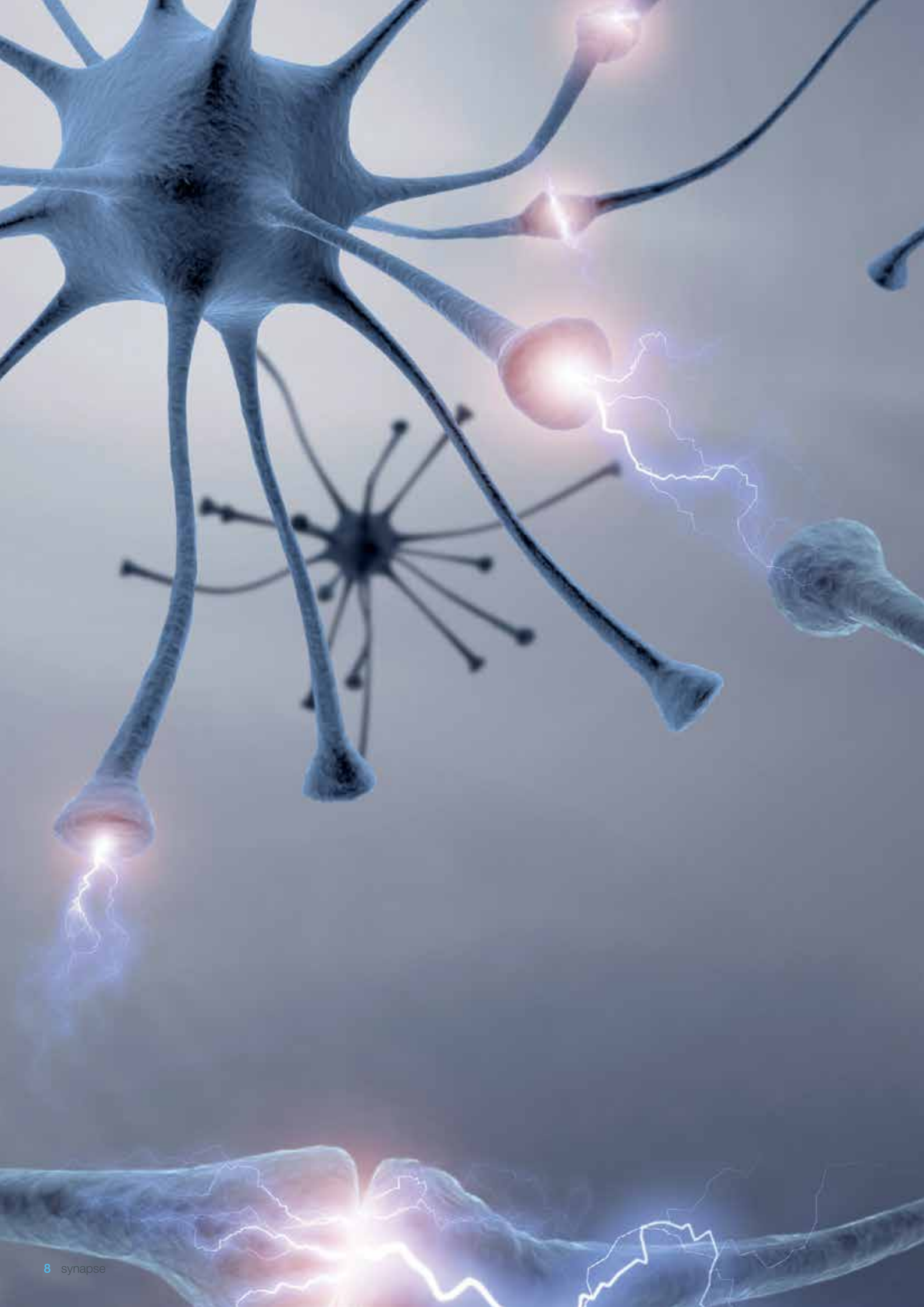
After 24 years, the community's attitudes and perceptions about Acquired Brain Injury are still in need of change.


To meet this need, the Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc. (BIAQ) has adopted the new trading name of "SYNAPSE".

This process has not been undertaken lightly, with a Communications Audit and extensive engagement across all our members and stakeholders.

Synapse is a name that is both positive and suggests the value of relationships rather than a label for an injury. For us, Synapse relates to the connections between people, communities and opportunities.

Though the name has changed, our organisation, our people and our processes will stay the same. Our mission and values remain the same. We will continue to strive to be the peak disability organisation providing specialist services to those living with Acquired Brain Injury or behaviours that challenge our understanding.





what is a synapse?

We define the word SYNAPSE as the junction between neurons that is home to the processes that allow for movement, dreams, and the ability to achieve goals.

Synapse provides the people, the services, and the support to assist people in pursuing their life goals.



challenging behaviour

Supporting individuals with complex and challenging behaviours is our speciality.

- Autism (Spectrum Disorder)
- Dementia (incl Brain Injury)
- Spinal Injuries (co-morbid disorders)
- Other Cognitive Disorders

Synapse customises training and induction sessions to your Organisation's needs.



Looking for practical strategies to manage behaviour? Synapse Training prides itself on delivering high quality and innovative training services.



Overview

Synapse Training is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO Number: 30617) delivering nationally accredited and non-accredited training programs across Australia.

Who would benefit from Synapse Training?

- Staff who support individuals with behaviour that challenges our/community understanding
- Organisations that support clients in the areas of accommodation, respite, care, independent living, education, community access, family support, lifestyle support and post-school services.
- Carers
- Teachers / Teachers' aides
- Foster Carers / Child Safety Officers

Features

Customised Corporate Training

Our training can be tailored to meet the needs and requirements of your organisation. Training can be delivered in the form of either a two (2), four (4) hour or full day session. Alternatively, a series of sessions may be delivered over a period of time to suit your human resource needs.

Training Seminars:

- Supporting Individuals with Complex & Challenging Behaviours (SICCB)
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
- Understanding Acquired Brain Injury (UABI)
- The Effective Support Person
- Customised Induction to specific Organisational requirements
- Mandatory Training

Achievements

- Official creation of the Synapse Training department born out of sector need
- Strategic and evidence-based work targeting services outside of the community sector and increasing Organisational capacity
- Synapse Training was the first external training service to deliver behaviour training to staff in the maximum security Woodford Correctional Centre
- Up-skilling of LSW's to spearhead the induction training of new staff
- Presentation of an awareness speech to Ministers at a parliamentary breakfast at 'Brain Injury Awareness week'
- Completed training at the Institute of Applied Behaviour Analysis (California)
- 646 hours of training conducted
- 93% + of all participants rated the quality of our training as 'Very Good' or 'Excellent'



synapse accommodation

Synapse believes that every person deserves quality accommodation and individualised support to achieve and maintain the greatest possible degree of involvement with society.



Overview

Synapse Accommodation consists of the following services:

- Supported Accommodation
- Lifestyle Support
- Lawnton Transitional Facility

Target Group:

- People aged between 18 and 65 who have an Acquired Brain Injury.
- People with a disability who have complex support needs, and who would benefit from services provided by Synapse.
- Priority is given to people with an Acquired Brain Injury whose complex needs make it difficult or inappropriate for them to access other disability community services.

Features

The Association operates within a formalised Model of Practice including, but is not limited to:

- Positive Behaviour Support
- Client-Centred Planning
- Strengths-Based Approach
- Least Restrictive Alternatives

Through Client-Centred Planning, the services we provide focus on addressing the clients' behaviour(s) that limit their inclusion. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Community Access – supporting clients to access vocational, leisure and social activities, and attending appointments.
- Home Management – supporting clients to pay bills, budget, prepare meals, shopping, complete household tasks.
- Personal Care – overnight support, mobility transfers, showering, toileting, medication management

Achievements

- A total of 3 clients have transitioned from the transitional units, 2 moved into permanent supported accommodation of their choice, and 1 returned home to family after successfully completing a 3 month assessment, which has enabled the person to remain living with family
- Evidence has shown a reduction in behavioural incidents. This has been achieved by working within the model of Positive Behaviour Support, staff following protocols and procedures and importantly understanding the individuals they support
- Connecting and integrating clients with the community before they transition, ensuring that family and lifestyle networks are stable and sustainable, preventing relapses of behaviour and / or family breakdown





rural, remote and indigenous achievements

- Far North Queensland Learning Network - including the first ever forum on Complex Care in Rural FNQ (Rural and Remote Challenge)
- Community Services Skilling Plan Indigenous Mentoring Program (CSSP IMP)
- Awarded the “Reconciliation and Diversity” Award for work with indigenous communities and building community capacity
- Participated in the HACC Indigenous gathering
- All Synapse staff have annual Cultural Awareness training by a Queensland Health Educator



assessment and planning

The Assessment and Planning Service provides functional and comprehensive assessments, guided by a model of client-centred planning & strength-based practice.



Overview

The state-wide Assessment & Planning Service is independent and fee for service, offering support, advice, consultation and assessment services for people with an Acquired / Traumatic Brain Injury / Disability and their families.

The Assessment and Planning Service has a high level of proven expertise in assessment and community-based support. This includes providing assessments in remote regions of Far North Qld and indigenous populations. The service networks extensively with allied health and community services to provide the best possible outcomes for clients.

Features

The Assessment and Planning Service provides experienced case managers who can assist clients or their decision makers to identify appropriate options based on a client specific assessment inclusive of, but not limited to:

- Preliminary Assessment of Skills and Functioning (Activities of Daily Living).
- Options & Future Planning
- Risk Assessment (in-home, shared environment, or within the workplace)
- Occupational Health Safety Assessment
- Allied Health Support & Assessment.
- Rehabilitation Support
- Behavioural Support and Consultancy

Eligibility:

- Be under 65 years of age;
- Have an Acquired Brain Injury
- The client must have a funding package, be compensable or able to pay privately.
- Meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Disability Services Queensland Eligibility Policy 2006

Achievements

- Receipt of the "Reconciliation and Diversity" Award for work in supporting and partnering with indigenous communities and building community capacity
- Development of the Behavioural Consultancy Service, state-wide
- Strategic and evidence-based work targeting services outside of the community sector and increasing Organisational capacity
- Development of medico-legal reporting
- Development of a consortium of partnerships across Qld, especially rural and remote
- 570 hours of assessments completed
- 218 assessments completed under the Younger People in Residential Aged Care Initiative (Council of Australian Government - COAG)



The Community Response Service uses an innovative and evidence-based model of practice to provide outcomes for health professionals, clients, families and corporate partners.



Overview

People who have acquired a brain injury and their families know the devastating impact it can have on their lives. The diversity of the impact is reflected in the calls that our Organisation receives.

The Community Response Service responds to enquiries on all issues relating to Acquired Brain Injury. All calls are answered by the Community Response Officer who listens to the concerns of the caller, discusses the types of assistance or information that may be appropriate, and facilitates ways the caller can access the required support or information. This response may include the provision of appropriate resources and/or linking the caller to some of the thousands of services listed on our database.



Features

The Community Response Service operates under Home and Community Care (HACC) Information, Education and Training (state-wide) guidelines, providing services including but not limited to:

- Information and referral
- Information / education presentations (introductory level)
- Publication development, including Bridge Magazine (formerly Synapse Magazine), online fact sheets and 'Acquired Brain Injury - The Facts'
- Event management
- Marketing and advertising material
- Facilitation of several network meetings, including the Brain Injury Network (BIN) and ABI Learning Network - Far North Queensland
- e-Newsletter development and distribution
- Needs-analysis, statistics collation and reporting

Achievements

- Over 3,400,000 hits across our web site(s)
- Over 82,500 publications distributed (both electronic and hard copy)
- Over 225,000 contacts with individuals
- Development and sponsorship of the ABI Learning Network Far North Queensland
- Facilitation of the 'ABI Rehabilitation - Rural and Remote Challenge'; a forum on complex care in Far North Queensland and presenting working models of rural and remote rehabilitation services
- Actively working outside of the sector to increase awareness and procure corporate support, address unmet needs in the community, and increase Organisational capacity
- Responsible for the rebranding and marketing of the Organisation, managing the development of the new web site, new stationery, and other electronic infrastructure



Welcome to Synapse

Welcome to the new Synapse web site - we have recently undergone a rebranding process to enable better service delivery and more effective engagement with the community.

[Read the Full Story](#)



1 Reconnecting Lives

2 Synapse Training

3 Synapse Accommodation



Assessments & Referrals



Reconnect a life and help stop young people from living in aged care facilities.

[Read More](#)

Donate Now



Publications & Posters



Register now for comprehensive Synapse Training seminars or information sessions.

[Read More](#)

Upcoming Events

Frequently Asked Questions

✓ What is Synapse Training?

Synapse Training can teach practical strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Access registrations online.

[More Details](#)

✎ What is Synapse Accommodation?

Synapse Accommodation believes that every person deserves greatest possible degree of involvement with society.

[More Details](#)

❓ Who are Synapse?

Synapse, formerly known as the Brain Injury Association of Qld, have recently undergone total rebranding.

[More Details](#)

❓ Are free downloads available?

Synapse have a large range of high quality publications available for FREE download through our Document Library.

[More Details](#)

About Brain Injury



More common than Intellectual Disability or Autism - you know someone with this invisible disability.

[Read More](#)

e-Connect [subscribe now](#)

Subscribe to our monthly free e-newsletter.

Name

E-mail

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Fact Sheets and Online Publications

- Click on one of the tabs above to access the fact sheets by topic.
- Click on the link below to access free downloadable content including Synapse Magazine and Awareness Posters / Desktop Wallpapers.

[Download online publications](#)



TRAINING

- Synapse Training
- Event Registration
- Training Downloads
- Training Calendar

[Read More](#)

ACCOMMODATION

- Synapse Accommodation
- Lifestyle Support
- Referral Forms
- Options Planning

[Read More](#)

SERVICES

- Community Response
- Assessments
- Publications and Posters
- FAQ Services

[Read More](#)

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[Read More](#)

web site and publications

Synapse's unique approach to web design and publication development has proven successful in engaging with stakeholders and reinventing the community sector.



www.synapse.org.au

With a new design and almost 1,000,000 hits per year, www.synapse.org.au is a leading electronic resource both nationally and internationally.

The web site features a comprehensive range of free Fact Sheets and online publications (over 130 online resources).

They provide information and practical strategies for clients, family members, friends and associated professionals.

Additional features include:

- Information on all our services
- Downloadable referral forms
- Online enquiry forms
- Online job applications
- Publication downloads - and much more.



Publications

Bridge Magazine (formerly Synapse Magazine)

Bridge is a full colour glossy magazine (published quarterly since 2000) with practical information and strategies for people affected by Acquired Brain Injury, their family, friends, health professionals and corporate partners.

Bridge is a collaborative publication, and we encourage submissions, stories, and/or practical articles from other stakeholders.

Corporate sponsorship is also available on request.

Acquired Brain Injury - The Facts

ABI - The Facts is a collection of our most comprehensive fact sheets, taking the reader from the hospital stage, right through to long-term rehabilitation and employment options.

This publication has been one of our most popular resources, with a new edition due out soon.

Awareness Posters

These posters are available as hard copies or for free download (as jpegs, PDFs and desktop wallpapers) via our web site.

Each poster has been customised to appeal to a wide demographic including youth and alternative cultures. The focus is on raising awareness about Acquired Brain Injury, disability issues, and harm-minimisation / prevention in the wider community, and to those who are most at risk.

The posters have been one of our most popular resources with copies sent to, and downloaded by individuals and Organisations around the world.

We always grieve for our soldiers lost at war,
but rarely for the thousands who return home
to a life that will never be the same again.

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Post Traumatic Stress
- Invisible
- Undiagnosed



supporting our diggers





human resources and finance

Through a model of continuous improvement, staff empowerment and financial excellence, Synapse's Operational team underpins the Organisation's success.



Overview

Synapse prides itself on being an employer of choice.

With high work standards and through a process of continuous improvement, all employees receive the following training before they undertake any formal work:

- Supporting Individuals with Complex & Challenging Behaviours
- Model of Practice
- Understanding Acquired Brain Injury
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Mandatory training (including: manual handling, personal protective equipment, documentation, medication management, workplace health and safety)
- Preventing and responding to abuse, assault and neglect.



Human Resources

- 90 full-time equivalent staff members
- Successful audit undertaken for Workplace Health and Safety (100% achievement)
- Disability Services (DS) Accreditation Audit – Standard 10 (compliant)
- Reduction in averages of monthly staff non-compliance from 5.56% to 4.49%
- Implementation of online Recruitment process
- Implementation of Online Mandatory Training Refreshers (yearly completion for all staff)
- 30% increase in staff professional development access

Employee Incentives

- Generous allowance paid for completion of AFA/CPR refreshers
- Flexible working hours incl TOIL, nine day fortnight and short shift allowance
- Employee Assistance Program
- Professional development budget

Operations and Financial

- Successful external audits – DS accreditation audit, HACC surveillance audit, WPH&S Compliance audit and Annual Financial audit
- Obtaining financing for the purchase of 262 Montague Road, West End Building and relocating Synapse Central Office & leasing out part of the building.
- Implementation of pay equity in relation to DSW award and CSWACAW award and being one of the first NGO's to pay its employees from the State Government Supplementary funding.
- Introduction and successfully obtaining long-term finance leasing for plant and equipment
- Implementation of cash flow projections and cash flow management systems, installment plans and managing effectively within the financial resources
- Introduction of zero based budgeting and successful planning and implementation of budgets for 2010-11 financial year
- Rapid up-skilling leading to 5 promotions within a Department of 9 employees



Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc.**Trading as Synapse**

ABN 75 631 135 125

**Independent Audit Report to the members of
Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc.**

We have audited the accompanying financial statements, being a special purpose financial statements, of the Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2010, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes as set out on pages 2 to 15.

Committee's responsibility for the financial statements

The Members of the Committee are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial statements, are appropriate to meet the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (QLD)* and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The Committee's responsibility also includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by Members of the Committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee's financial reporting requirements under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (QLD)*. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial statements to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audit did not involve an analysis of the prudence of business decisions made by Members of the Committee or management.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

HLB Mann Judd (SE Qld Partnership) ABN 68 920 406 716

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Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc.

Trading as Synapse

ABN 75 631 135 125

**Independent Audit Report (continued) to the members of
Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc.**

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc, as at 30 June 2010 and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

HLB Mann Judd
HLB MANN JUDD

CS Sturges
CS STURGES
Partner

Date: *29th October 2010*

Brisbane, Queensland

financial report

30 June 2010

Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc
Trading as Synapse
ABN 75 631 135 125

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2010

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Revenue	5,131,692	5,040,381
Accountancy and auditor's remuneration	(24,000)	(8,851)
Advertising and promotions	(22,331)	(26,578)
Client support services	(283,267)	(343,965)
Computer expenses	(38,780)	(50,783)
Consultancy fees	(39,032)	(56,149)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(131,858)	(146,287)
Employee benefits expense	(3,851,745)	(3,969,239)
Finance costs	(117,467)	(52,056)
Insurance	(38,780)	(31,257)
Meeting expenses	(16,941)	(9,075)
Motor vehicle expenses	(87,251)	(54,429)
Other expenses	(184,328)	(135,769)
Printing and office supplies	(39,143)	(42,702)
Repairs and maintenance	(24,480)	(21,735)
Telephone	(37,872)	(40,232)
Utilities	(36,363)	(30,436)
Surplus for the year	158,054	20,838
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	158,054	20,838

Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc
Trading as Synapse
ABN 75 631 135 125

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2010

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	734,711	756,964
Trade and other receivables	202,459	171,963
Other current assets	6,222	21,386
Total current assets	943,392	950,313
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	8,449,802	3,682,003
Total non-current assets	8,449,802	3,682,003
Total assets	9,393,194	4,632,316
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	514,909	686,616
Short-term borrowings	19,551	-
Short-term provisions	126,004	148,134
Total current liabilities	660,464	834,750
Non-current liabilities		
Long-term borrowings	5,478,298	720,000
Long-term provisions	47,499	28,687
Total non-current liabilities	5,525,797	748,687
Total liabilities	6,186,261	1,583,437
Net assets	3,206,933	3,048,879
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	3,206,933	3,048,879
Total equity	3,206,933	3,048,879

financial report

30 June 2010

Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc
Trading as Synapse
ABN 75 631 135 125

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2010

	Accumulated Surplus \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2008	3,028,041	3,028,041
Surplus for the year	20,838	20,838
Balance at 30 June 2009	3,048,879	3,048,879
Surplus for the year	158,054	158,054
Balance at 30 June 2010	3,206,933	3,206,933

Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc
Trading as Synapse
ABN 75 631 135 125

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2010

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from customers	5,069,437	4,896,356
Payments to suppliers and employees	(4,884,174)	(4,634,109)
Interest received	31,759	6,119
Finance costs	(117,467)	(52,056)
Net cash provided by operating activities	99,555	216,310
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payment for property, plant and equipment	(4,899,657)	(70,203)
Net cash provided by investing activities	(4,899,657)	(70,203)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Proceeds from borrowings	4,777,849	-
Net cash used in financing activities	4,777,849	-
Net increase in cash held	(22,253)	146,107
Cash at beginning of year	756,964	610,857
Cash at end of year	734,711	756,964

Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc
Trading as Synapse
ABN 75 631 135 125

Statement by the Members of the Committee
For the year ended 30 June 2010


The Committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity.

The Committee has determined that the special purpose financial statements should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Committee the financial statements as set out on pages 2 to 15:

1. Presents fairly the financial position of Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc. as at 30 June 2010, and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Brain Injury Association of Queensland Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:


.....
President

Brisbane
Date: 28/10/10


.....
Secretary

Brisbane
Date: 28/10/10



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