

MEDIA RELEASE

\$10k *Stay safe online* program for Tassie ABI group

A \$10,000 grant, presented on Thursday 30 November, will allow Tasmanian Acquired Brain Injury Services Inc. (TABIS) to launch its *Stay safe online* program, in response to growing instances of internet scammers preying on the service's users.

Natalie Rose, Business and Development Manager – TABIS says, 'We identified an urgent need to educate and protect vulnerable people in our community, including people living with acquired brain injury, from becoming victims of cyber scams, exploitation, harassment and bullying while using the internet.'

'Westpac has generously provided funding, which will allow us to engage a program facilitator, guest speakers and a resource booklet for each program participant,' says Natalie. 'This is a big step towards keeping at-risk Tasmanians safe online.'

From effective password practices to navigating social media and online shopping, the TABIS *Stay safe online* program will teach participants how to identify, respond to and protect themselves from online dangers, including identity theft, online scams and cyberbullying.

'The internet has opened up a whole new world for some of our participants,' says Natalie, 'reducing their loneliness, giving them new ways to communicate and increasing their independence. However, their brain injuries mean their judgements can be impaired, they may have reduced impulse control and they tend to take people at face value. So, in terms of cyber threats, people living with acquired brain injury are some of Tasmania's most vulnerable.'

'Regrettably, there are always those who will target vulnerable people,' Natalie says. 'One man sent thousands of dollars overseas to a woman he met online because he was lonely and he thought she would come to Australia. Another person we support phoned us as she was about to send money to someone who told her they were from the ATO and that the Federal Police were on the way to arrest her. Obviously, this kind of victimisation is distressing and costly.'

The TABIS *Stay safe online* program will reduce the incidence and impact of online crime against vulnerable people in our community, including people living with acquired brain injury, improving their safety and enhancing their quality of life.

TABIS is Tasmania's only dedicated service provider for people living with acquired brain injury. The service supports about 70 people. TABIS is a division of Li-Ve Tasmania.

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