

Brinae & Durakai Smith



LIVED EXPERIENCE: Maternity (Brinae - consumer), Traumatic Injury (Durakai - consumer, Brinae, carer)



Brinae is the mother of Durakai Smith, who at 6 years old suffered severe injuries in a dirt bike accident. He was airlifted from their regional family farm in Collie, near Dubbo, to Sydney where he was in an induced coma for 7 days with broken arms, legs, ligament damage to his neck and spine, facial fractures and frontal lobe damage. Durakai fought for his life - had to relearn how to walk again, and was left with epilepsy and the after effects of a traumatic brain injury. This experience has been eye-opening for this family, and has awakened a passion in Brinae to spread awareness and advocate for improved holistic support for other families of children with a brain injury, epilepsy or who have experienced a traumatic event. Brinae wishes to increase the support network for the people who fall through the gaps between systems through sharing their lived experience. Through their experiences, the Smith family has understood the mental health and PTSD challenges that can accompany such a traumatic injury, and understand that this can be a gap in the health system after discharge from hospital. Lending a perspective from a regional area, Brinae is able to co-design solutions with organisations and health services to bridge this gap and work towards a future where no one is left unsupported. She acknowledges that as a society we can be too proud to voice our concerns and seek help, however she wants to be able to break down these barriers. In addition to this, Brinae has insights into how the education and social system are able to better accommodate and adapt for families and children in similar circumstances to hers, and wishes to share these insights to create positive system change.

KEY INFORMATION

Place of Birth: Maitland & Dubbo, New South Wales, Australia

Current location: Geurie (Dubbo), New South Wales, Australia

Age: 30 years old & 7 years old

Language/s: English only

LGBTQIA+: No

NDIS Participant: Yes (Durakai)

Heritage: Aboriginal

Diagnoses: Durakai - Epilepsy, Traumatic Brain Injury

Healthcare Access: Primary Health Care, Allied Health, Secondary and Tertiary care

ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPERIENCE:

- Awarded Dubbo City Young Person of the Year (2009)
- State Youth Representative - Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2009)
- Chairperson for State Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2010)
- Represented PCYC Australia at One Young World Youth Conference in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA (2012)
- Awarded NSW/ACT Regional Community Achievement Award (2013)
- Bandage Bear Appeals Ambassador - Durakai
- Photography business-owner and creative since 2012

LINKS:

[Six-year-old motorbike rider fighting for life - Dubbo Photo News](#)
[Durakai Smith fundraiser to help him as he learns to walk again and recovers from a brain injury](#) - Daily Liberal
[Grand final: Penrith's smallest fan fulfils his dream and meets his idols](#) - The Daily Telegraph
[Durakai Smith's 7th birthday will raise funds for Westmead Children's Hospital](#) - The Daily Telegraph