

# Strategic Framework

For The Provision  
of Braille Services



Blind Citizens NZ



BANZAT





## Executive Summary

When developing this Strategic Framework for the Provision of Braille Services (referred to hereafter as Strategic Framework), we were guided by the following significant principle documents:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and
- New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026.

These documents can be found on the Office for Disability Issues Website at [www.odi.govt.nz](http://www.odi.govt.nz)

The range of principles and ideas identified in this Strategic Framework are comprehensive. From the outset, the objective was to clarify the range of factors that need to be recognised, and connected, so that the best outcomes (for braille users), when delivering braille services, are achieved.

Initiated by a resolution from the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand's (Blind Citizens NZ) 2015 Annual General Meeting and Conference, this work takes cognisance of key stakeholders.

The resolution referred to states: "That Blind Citizens NZ work with The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust, the Blind Foundation, Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ, and other interested parties to develop a strategic framework for the provision of braille services with scoping to include the provision of electronic braille resources, growth and development of braille library collections, and the promotion of braille as a primary literacy tool." The aim is that this long term Strategic Framework will drive an integrated approach toward achieving results for braille providers and users. The Strategic Framework is centred on essential priorities that raises awareness amongst the blind community i.e. people who are blind, vision impaired, deafblind or have low vision, (hereafter referred to as blind), of the primacy of braille, and the provision of braille services.

## **Stakeholders**

- Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand (Blind Citizens NZ).
- Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ).
- Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind (Blind Foundation).
- The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT).

**Note:** refer to appendix for information about each of the stakeholders.

## **Risks**

Although identified stakeholders have jointly developed this Strategic Framework, due diligence requires the identification of risks that might impede its implementation. Those risks include:

- one or more stakeholders placed in the position of not being able to support the Strategic Framework; and / or
- stakeholders who have a role with implementation of the Strategic Framework, being unable to do so as they would prefer.

## **Key Strategic Elements**

To ensure goals remain the focus of the Strategic Framework, we have identified a vision and mission statement.

### **Vision Statement**

Recognising braille is a primary literacy and numeracy tool for blind people, that anyone who needs or wishes to learn braille, receives teaching and all materials they require to meet their needs, on time.

### **Mission Statement**

As braille is a primary literacy and numeracy tool for blind people, this Strategic Framework should support the sector, stakeholders and agencies in their planning. This framework recognises the need to optimise all resources to contribute to building, strengthening, and resourcing the provision of braille services.

## Key areas

### 1. Promotion / Awareness raising of braille as the primary literacy and numeracy tool

While recognising that both internal and external elements contribute to the promotion and awareness raising of braille, neither element is exclusive to each other. Therefore, when considering these elements, both must be borne in mind.

**Internal elements** should include for example:

- activities to celebrate, promote, and share braille (e.g. music concerts and camps, reading and writing competitions, and its history and future);
- monitoring and participating in national and international events which promote and raise awareness;
- systems and processes that meet the needs of, for example, children and adults most at risk of losing their sight.

**External elements** should include:

- promotion of signage;
- public events where examples are shared to demonstrate the range and use of braille;
- educational opportunities to raise awareness across all age groups;
- opportunities to raise awareness about the whole of life literacy and numeracy needs of braille users.

## Objectives

- a) Achieve the normalisation of braille as the primary literacy and numeracy tool for blind people.
- b) Undertake research to inform the future practice in promotion and awareness raising of braille such as:
  - indicators to identify those who would benefit from early access to braille;
  - evaluation of events raising awareness about braille;
  - how to promote braille in multicultural Aotearoa New Zealand.

## 2. Resources / Tools

The following resources and tools, while not an exhaustive list, are indicative of what should be available and/or promoted for the benefit of everyone involved in learning, teaching, promotion or awareness raising of braille:

- braille writing equipment;
- braille paper;
- braille reading equipment;
- electronic displays for reading and writing of braille;
- braille embossers;
- braille translation software;
- swell paper machines;
- 3D printers;
- training opportunities – online and face-to-face.

### Objectives

- a) Users, producers and teachers have knowledge of, and easy access to braille reading and writing equipment, and learning opportunities to meet their needs.
- b) Whānau have opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of braille to support the user.

### **3. Teaching of Braille**

Teachers and others involved in the teaching of braille are required to:

- understand and promote the diversity of ways braille tuition can be accessed; and
- have high quality teaching resources available, that meet the needs of the individual learner.

#### **Objectives**

- a)** Teachers of braille have recognised qualifications, knowledge and skills to meet the needs of learners who may include those acquiring literacy and numeracy through braille, or those who are literate and numerate, and learning braille.
- b)** Promote and encourage the acquisition of knowledge for those providing peer-to-peer support and mentoring.

## 4. Production of Braille

A time-framed plan will identify the value in, and need for, current and potential producers of braille through their respective efforts to take steps to ensure:

- there is an increase in the production of braille;
- compliance with standards set by BANZAT;
- sustainability, capability and capacity of the production workforce;
- ongoing professional development for the production workforce.

### Objectives

- a) Raise awareness and encourage more people to become accredited producers of braille.
- b) Increase the provision of braille to meet the current unmet need.
- c) Monitor international developments in braille production and standards, for possible implementation in New Zealand.

## 5. Tactile Graphics

There is recognition of the extent to which tactile graphics may be utilised for users of braille. Indicative elements that recognise the benefit of tactile graphics to the end-user is paramount. Tactile graphics may include:

- literacy, numeracy, arts, sciences, and mobility;
- equipment is fit for purpose; and that
- in the process of determining what is “fit for purpose” to achieve the learning outcome, consideration be given to a range of tools and approaches such as a real object or model, verbalisation, 3D printing, or any form of raised diagram.

### Objectives

- a) Teachers and producers, with input from end-users, work together to maintain and develop knowledge and practice.
- b) Teachers and producers keep pace with technological changes including the innovation of tactile graphics and emerging multi-media opportunities.
- c) Teachers have the knowledge and skills to match the tactile graphic with the learning intent, enabling the learner to achieve the desired outcome.
- d) Producers of tactile graphics have the knowledge and skills to create tactile graphics fit for purpose.

## **6. Growth and development of braille library collections**

There is anecdotal evidence to support that there is:

- currently suppressed demand for braille because of the unmet need;
- a need for catalogues to be up-to-date and readily available;
- a need for better promotion of reading materials as they are purchased and/or produced.

### **Objectives**

- a)** Collection development policies are:
  - in place;
  - informed by registered librarians;
  - reflective of the needs of both end and potential users; and
  - published.
- b)** Increase and develop braille library collections.
- c)** Reduce barriers around the receipt and return of braille items by raising awareness of the Articles for the Blind postage service.
- d)** Develop and implement a central repository of braille files of publicly available material.

## 7. Distribution of braille in electronic and hard-copy options

Recognising more affordable electronic braille displays and embossers are available:

- end users have the right to request both hard copy and electronic braille files;
- potential exists to increase availability of braille files for embossing, or reading on electronic braille displays.

### Objectives

- a) Electronic braille files are produced to the internationally accepted standards adopted by BANZAT.
- b) New Zealand publishers produce their work in formats that are borne accessible, that enable the production of electronic braille files and/or hard-copy braille.



Blind Citizens NZ

## **Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand (Blind Citizens NZ).**

The Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated (Blind Citizens NZ) is known as a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO). Established in 1945 by blind people, Blind Citizens NZ is New Zealand's leading blindness consumer organisation, and one of the country's largest organisations of disabled consumers.

Blind Citizens NZ exists to give voice to the aspirations and lived experiences of blind, deafblind and vision-impaired people living in New Zealand. Through advocacy, its aim is to heighten awareness of their rights, and to remove the barriers that impact upon the ability of blind, deafblind and vision impaired people to live in an accessible, equitable and inclusive society.

A member-led, member-driven organisation, the Board of Blind Citizens NZ is elected by financial members who belong to geographical branches or networks across the country. Branches and networks work with Councils and Local Authorities and through organised events provide invaluable blindness-related peer-to-peer support. Nationally it works with Central Government, stakeholders from across the disability sector and businesses, to influence positive change that will make a blind bit of difference for blind people. Additionally, Blind Citizens NZ's advocacy supports the call for accessibility legislation.

Blind Citizens is a lead organisation within the Disabled People's Organisation Coalition, which comprises seven DPOs. In our DPO Coalition role, we work alongside Government on the development and governance of the Disability Action Plan, and the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

In conjunction with its role on the DPO Coalition, Blind Citizens NZ is involved in disabled people led monitoring and the Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM). The IMM is a mechanism set up to monitor and report on Government's performance and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The IMM comprises three independent partners, these being the Human Rights Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, and the DPO Coalition.

Blind Citizens NZ has well-developed mechanisms that facilitate engagement with, and input and feedback from its members and others within the blindness community, to inform its work.

**Website:** [www.blindcitizensnz.org.nz](http://www.blindcitizensnz.org.nz)



## **Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ)**

The Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) is a national school that provides a network of education services to over 1500 blind, deafblind and low vision learners throughout New Zealand from birth to 21, including those who have additional special needs. BLENNZ was established as a national network of services in January 2005. It is one of the six special schools nationally that have been legislated to provide residential provision for learners.

### **Vision**

Every BLENNZ learner is well prepared to achieve in life.

### **Mission**

To enable learners who are blind, deafblind or have low vision to reach their full potential, BLENNZ provides quality education and specialist teaching services in partnership with whānau, educators and the wider community.

The purpose of BLENNZ is to ensure that the education needs of learners who are blind, deafblind or have low vision are identified and appropriate programmes and services are available.

The services and programmes of BLENNZ are aligned to support the principles and intent of government priorities, goals and strategies for education; the aims of the Disability Strategy for an inclusive society and the removal of barriers; and the principles of best practice in blindness education.

It aims to support the government goals for education by enhancing education opportunities for its learners, facilitating access to and participation in the regular curriculum and developing skills for independence.

Participation in this working group is aligned with BLENNZ's commitment to provide equity through access.

**Website:** [www.blennz.school.nz](http://www.blennz.school.nz)



## Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind (Blind Foundation)

The Blind Foundation is New Zealand's main provider of practical and emotional support for the tens of thousands of Kiwis who are blind or have low vision, enabling them to face their future with confidence. Every day an average of three New Zealanders turn to the Blind Foundation for support with sight loss. With a vision of 'Life without limits – Kahore e Mutunga Ki te Ora', Blind Foundation staff around the country aim to enable people who are blind or have low vision to be self-reliant and live the life they choose. We equip people with the skills needed to participate fully in society. This includes support in living independently, getting around, using technology, continuing to read and communicate, being socially active and staying in or looking for work.

We are a unique New Zealand charitable incorporated society with a proud history of providing support and direction to people who are blind or have low vision. We are a client-focussed, self-determining, member directed organisation and we ensure that the life experiences of people who are blind or deafblind and those with low vision are included and advanced in our work. We are socially responsible, inclusive, and embrace cultural diversity. We uphold the Treaty of Waitangi and recognise the status of the tangata whenua. We align to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the New Zealand Government Disability Action Plan, the New Zealand Disability Strategy and the World Health Organisation Vision 2020.

### Our Purpose

To enable people who are blind or have low vision to be self-reliant and live the life they choose.

## **Our Vision**

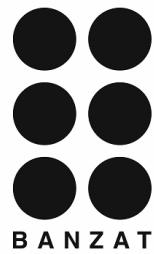
Life without limits

Kahore e Mutunga ki te Ora

## **Our Values**

We have four core values that guide the work we do: Optimistic; Connecting; Aspirational and Empowering.

**Website:** [www.blindfoundation.org.nz](http://www.blindfoundation.org.nz)



## **The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT)**

### **About BANZAT**

The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT) was set up in 2010.

The charitable objects include:

- (a) To set standards and to make rulings on braille code usage within New Zealand;
- (b) To maintain awareness of, and consistency with, current international developments in all braille codes;
- (c) To accredit practitioners involved in braille production;
- (d) To promote braille as the prime literacy medium for blind people;
- (e) To promote best practice in teaching, acquisition and distribution of braille.

### **BANZAT Members**

Five organisations co-operated to establish BANZAT, namely:

- BLENNZ;
- Blind Citizens NZ;
- Blind Foundation;
- Kāpō Māori; and
- Parents of Vision Impaired.

The above organisations appoint seven trustees who may appoint between two and four additional trustees. Trustees must be braille qualified as set out in the Trust Deed. Trustees include experienced teachers, producers and end users of braille.

## Activities

- In setting standards, BANZAT keeps abreast of code development through serving on committees of the International Council on English Braille.
- BANZAT, with the Australian Braille Authority, administers the annual examination of the Trans-Tasman Certificate of Proficiency in Unified English Braille.
- BANZAT has developed a framework for accrediting braille producers working in New Zealand who are using computer braille translation software.
- BANZAT monitors the quality of braille produced in New Zealand to ensure it meets the standards BANZAT has set.

**Website:** [www.banzat.org.nz](http://www.banzat.org.nz)



Blind Citizens NZ

