



Blind Citizens NZ

Focus

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A Tribute to Hana Bainbridge From Rose Wilkinson, Chief Executive



As this September Focus goes to print, we have said farewell to Hana Bainbridge, who passed away early this month. Hana worked at National Office as part of our small office team for eight months. She carried out our Member Engagement Project, and has worked with us from time to time since. Plans were underway for Hana to return early next year to begin the next step in our member engagement work. Hana contacted many of our readers, and

some may recall her chats and relaxed approach as she sought feedback to the many questions about which she was asking. She also joined us at last year's AGM and Conference where she met some of you in person. Hana's infectious smile, vibrant personality and commitment to getting the job done, contributed to our work place in ways that just cannot be quantified. We miss already her unplanned visits, and catch-ups. Our thoughts are with Hana's family and friends at this sad time...

Note: top left, is a head and shoulder coloured photo of Hana – taken outside there are flowering pot plants and climbers behind her. Hana's head is tilted slightly to her left. She has a beautiful big beaming smile. Her long brownish coloured hair, pulled softly from her face, is in a ponytail.

The Beauty of Braille Editorial, by Allan Jones

Well we are three quarters of the way through the year, and when you receive our September Focus, we will be approximately two-three weeks away from our annual general meeting and conference.

With a proposed new Constitution that we will begin voting on around the same time, I suggest it will be an important conference for the future and well-being of Blind Citizens NZ. We will also be electing new board members.

Besides keeping up with Blind Foundation policies and government policies, the two major issues that concern us are public transport and the vexing issue of e-scooters. I am pleased to report that transport is a major disability issue and that that a rekindled and reinvigorated Disabled Persons Assembly are spear heading both these issues.

On receiving my braille of the last Focus, I was reminded how good it is to be able to read a technical document in braille. I am referring to the article Anne Hawker wrote regarding available benefits. The layout of this document in paragraphs and being able to absorb each statement, for me, gave more meaning. I also wanted to comment on some other aspects of braille. I should say that I usually write braille. For my own consumption, I write it in “old grade 2” braille. I raise these issues out of curiosity not out of criticism. The word “towards” I would still write “ dots 2 3 5 followed by “w” the sign for “a r” then letters “d and s” I was interested to read “t followed by the sign for “o w” the sign for “ a r” “d s” I am fairly sure at school we didn’t break up syllables. Another example of this is the word “honesty” In a braille document I read “dot five and o for one followed by s t y. My last example was in the word 75th. In my braille Focus it was spelt numeral sign 75 followed by the letters t h. I would have used the sign for the dots 1 4 5 6.

Some readers will be aware of the e-mail discussion about improvements to the pocket braille calendar. Produced by the Blind Foundation, this is a very handy and much used tool. I will be very interested to see how the 2020 calendars turn out. One last comment before I leave the topic of braille.

The Census debacle has made me very aware that there may well be a considerable number of blind people who don't have access to a computer. Hence, although I am in favour of online voting, we must be aware that some blind people could be disenfranchised by such a move.

In this issue of Focus, I want to use four lines from three songs. The first is again an Eagles song "New kid in town" - I am taking some "poetic license" to welcome the Blind Foundation's new Chief Executive John Mulka with this song. However the lines quoted are very much aimed at us "Blind Citizens NZ members" - "Hopeless romantics here we go again", I would suggest that we have a "messiah" hope for new directors and board chairs that they're going to put everything right. The changeover for me that I remember the most was from Wally Christiansen to Geoff Gibbs. Geoff made some huge changes working with blind members to introduce computer technology. He also believed in blind people having self-determination for their future. I look forward to meeting John Mulka and leave this section of my editorial with what I think is the quote of the song that we could aim at all outgoing directors and board chairs "we'll never forget you till someone new comes along".

National President Jonathon talks about e-scooters in his editorial. Last week a blind person came very near to being knocked down outside the Blind Foundation office in Adelaide Road Wellington. He felt that the scooter was travelling about 25 mph. I intend writing a card with my photo on and asking e-scooter riders to watch out for me, and others who may not be aware of them approaching.

I am acutely aware that my diminished hearing makes this more of an issue. When talking about e-scooters, a blind friend came up with a line from Bob Dylan, "how many deaths will it take till too many people have died?" Wellington mayoral candidates can certainly expect to be grilled on this topic when they come to the session with members at the Blind Foundation on 19 September.

Saturday 10 August saw both Auckland and Wellington branches hold their annual general meetings. Auckland made a day of it having a focus group in the morning. The leader of the focus group from the Chemists Guild put on lunch for attendees.

I am heartened by the appearance of new faces on the Auckland committee, and there are also several members still on the committee whom I am sure will mentor and guide their “up and coming leaders”. Wellington saw the retirement of two long-serving members Ann Bain and Bev McCulloch. Ann has given many years’ service to the branch serving as chair, secretary, and national counsellor. Bev brought enthusiasm and good leadership to the branch. Ann now lives in a retirement home and Bev has gone to live near one of her daughters and grandchildren in New Plymouth. Mara Kelland is the new chair of Auckland branch, while Ina Smart is Wellington’s new chair. My musical quote for this issue is from one of the first Bob Dylan songs I heard in 1962 “the times they’re changing, don’t stand in the doorways don’t block up the halls”.

The month of August has also seen the international film festival. I took in two films - a documentary about China’s “one child per family” policy, and a rather amusing film called “Britany runs a marathon”. A considerable portion of the first film was in subtitles and the second film was a trifle confusing in parts. Two films I want to go to when they come on to general screening are the film about Hellen Kelley and the film called “Leonard and Marianne”. Cowen fans will know that Marianne was the “love of Leonard’s life” hence the song “So long Marianne”.

Finally, I will leave you with two amusing experiences of synthetic speech.

Some of you may have noticed that if you bash e-scooters with your cane they will come to life with some sort of “utterance”. I have never made out what it is; however, the scooters never understand the utterances that I “hurl” at them.

Focus being a “family magazine”, I won’t elucidate further... The second amusing event happened this morning when I received a call and couldn’t answer I asked Siri to tell me “who was the last caller”. Siri asked me “who I wanted to call”. After a number of tries, in frustration I said “oh god”, only to be told “god is not in your address book”. Siri offered to try and find the number but I told her not to bother; “c'est la vie”

Ambition

From Jonathan Godfrey, National President

“Well ... let’s start with ... what is ambition?” This was the first line of an interview I gave last month. OK, I confess, that stopped me in my tracks. I’d volunteered to help this researcher tease out the notion of ambition; I hadn’t planned on becoming a dictionary.

As I reflected on the interview afterwards, I couldn’t help ponder the speed at which I reached for something solid to hold on to. No, not the desk or the concrete pillar in my office; it was Blind Citizens NZ’s purpose statement, “Blind Citizens NZ exists to give voice to the aspirations and lived experiences of blind, deafblind and vision-impaired New Zealanders” and how that relates to me from the deepest inner core of my being out to what it is that the world sees of me. Don’t worry, there won’t be any deeply personal stuff coming out in this column!

I can personalise the purpose statement to read, “I give voice to my aspirations and my lived experiences as a blind New Zealander.”

The lived experience part is the past; it matters. I am a product of my parents, biologically and practically.

They gave me opportunities and taught me many skills, some of which are only just becoming obvious. For example, Amy and I bought a lifestyle block.

The feral deer in the native bush reserve next door have been wandering through the next to non-existent boundary fence, and are eating the newly planted trees. I do like the idea of some venison sausages but putting up a fence is the solution I'll talk about.

Amy and I had been shopping and as someone who plans, I had already purchased some rolls of sheep mesh fencing when they were on special, because "we'll need it one day."

I knew that I knew how to work with it and all I needed was a line of fence posts, and someone else to hit the staples in while I held the wire. I didn't even remotely wonder if I remembered how to put the wire in place when the shop assistant was working out the bill; as an aside, this guy has learned not to ask if I know how to do something. Anyway, back to the fence.

A 110m roll of sheep mesh is moderately heavy; I can lift it from the ground onto a trailer, but I don't want to go walking anywhere with it. I put the heavy end in the wheelbarrow and went for a wander, Callum beside me offering advice, and Amy defending the car's paintwork. I now have to explain that the new fence-line is at the bottom of a fairly steep but walkable bank; destination is south-west, maybe thirty metres in a straight line, and six metres lower in altitude. So, we empty the wheelbarrow and line up the roll pointing dutifully towards the south-west. Theory is going well at this point, but wire rolls are heavy and to everyone's surprise they can take an amazing number of turns on uneven ground and with enough speed rising, they can get airborne. Thankfully, the council hasn't yet removed the gorse on their side of the missing fence and it's so thick that my imitation steam roller can't penetrate it.

Unrolling the wire is a family affair. This is a lesson learned from my own father. Callum's question, "Dad, why are we holding this end?" was answered with the obvious "would you like to lift this end instead?" followed by "now you guys just walk that end to the end and let me know when you get there."

It seems we were perhaps fifteen to twenty metres off target. To cut a long story short, we attach one end and roll out the wire while Amy gets the fun job, and with all the careful planning in the world, I can report that the fence line is either 109m long or that the manufacturer lied. The fence line is in place but will need a tidy up when the sun comes back out. Callum and Amy now see why I have confidence that the other fences needed to enclose my orchard are going to go up fast.

So, what's the point of the fence story? Well, my aspirations for a fenced orchard are achievable. Why? Because I'm prepared to try, and if I'm honest, I'm prepared to make mistakes occasionally. Amy and I have planted oranges, pears, figs, blueberries, blackberries, lemons, limes, cherries, nectarines, plums, peaches, a pomegranate, and a persimmon, not to forget the obligatory line of feijoas. My love of fruit trees comes from my upbringing, and just for the record, we still have another thirty fruit trees to plant. I have confidence that the fences will be erected because of my experience as a kid helping my dad put up fences, but actually aspirations and lived experience isn't enough. We can sit around at home and talk about aspirations or we can do something about it. This is where I think "ambition" comes in.

For me, ambition involves a belief and the willingness to act. Not just "I want", but "I will get". Ambition is the energy that feeds me as I make the necessary plans that turn dreams into realities. I can have aspirations for myself, my children, my students, and other blind people. I can have ambition for myself, but I can't inject ambition into anyone else. I can help create opportunities, but I only really have control over which opportunities I take up.

I guess that being a parent means I can encourage (force) my children to take up opportunities too, but practically everyone else is free to make up their own minds.

I've always wanted lots of land to plant lots of trees; a large section in town was adequate but not really meeting my aspirations.

My desire to find a suitable piece of dirt to put trees on has been complemented by Amy's aspirations to have enough space for many more donkeys. Ambition can therefore be affected by the people we share our lives with.

All too often however, many of us will find that there are roadblocks stopping our ambition doing its job. There will be some people whose lived experience has hampered their ambition and their aspirations.

There are people among us who face difficulties just getting from one end of the day to the other without depending on friends or family members; they are facing challenges in having what others take for granted as an ordinary life.

The 2018 General Social Survey results were released recently. There is clear evidence that disabled people spend more time with family members and much less time with friends than do nondisabled people. The proportion of people saying they do not have an adequate income to meet every-day needs is larger for disabled people (17.9%) than it is for nondisabled people (9.4%). The proportion of disabled people who say their health is fair or poor (48.6%) is considerably higher than the comparative proportion for nondisabled people (11.9%). The results in all reported measures of safety are consistently lower for disabled people versus nondisabled people. The final statistic of interest for me was that 23.0% of the disabled people sampled had experienced discrimination in the previous twelve months, while only 16.9% of nondisabled people in the sample had been discriminated against. I have to say that I find these discrimination rates quite alarming.

I'm not sure that this matches what New Zealanders think we are like as a nation. I wanted to know if this was something new or history repeating itself, so I went back to the results for the same questions from the 2016 General Social Survey and they were pretty similar to the current outcomes.

The question for me is what can we do about all of these issues? The answer has a “who” component as well as a “what” component. I worry that too many people believe they aren’t in a position to help make a difference, while others seem to think it is someone else’s job. Some people don’t like my use of the statement, “if you aren’t part of the solution, you’re part of the problem” but I stand by it. I think there are too many situations where the silence of the majority gets used as tacit approval of the status quo.

Those people didn’t stand up and say they were part of the problem, and they didn’t make the problem, but they weren’t actually part of the solution either. In situations like this, I try to turn the situation around. This is what the United Nation’s Committee overseeing the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities did when it said that our government must state why it did not engage with disabled people on policies that affect disabled people. The Committee did not limit this to disability-specific issues so a topic like e-scooters on footpaths is something the government should have discussed with disabled people by way of our representative organisations. That means, they should have worked with the seven organisations that form the DPO Coalition. Will this become an issue of significance when New Zealand is next reviewed by the Committee? Well, I do hope so. The Government is receiving submissions about this and other matters affecting the safety of us all, no matter which part of the roading system (including the footpaths) we are primarily using.

Blind Citizens NZ uses the lived experience of our members and the aspirations you have to form a collective view of our aspirations as a community. We then make sure the right people hear what we have to say on your behalf. On the topic of e-scooters on footpaths, I’ve ** represented Blind Citizens NZ in ** delegations that have met with the Associate Minister of Transport, her officials, and officials on behalf of the Minister for Disability Issues.

These delegations have made it very clear that footpaths are for feet and that use of anything that could ever be called a vehicle either has no place on a footpath or must have their use strictly controlled. While we do not want to prevent progress such as e-scooters or unmanned delivery vehicles, we are clear that their existence cannot compromise the safety of people who use the footpath, as we have nowhere else to go.

I suggest to you all that you can play a role in getting us back to a situation where we all feel safe on our footpaths.

You can ring the companies whose e-scooters create a hazard when they get left on the footpath. You can call your local council who let these companies operate in your city, and if you're into social media, you can share and like the Face Book posts that many others in the community are making that complain about e-scooters. You can do all of those things from the comfort of your own home. If you are wanting to take your experience out and about though, you'll need to look out for opportunities to tell your local councils about your experiences at public meetings. Remember, every local authority has a time on its formal meeting agendas for public comment. You are a member of the public, so why not get out there and make a comment; you could do it on your own or invite your friends and do it as a group.

So why don't people speak up? I often hear others say it is a lack of confidence, and you won't hear me arguing, but confidence is contagious. You can even catch it off yourself. Doing something that is well within your comfort zone is a great place to start, ... then push that personal boundary just a little. It's yours to play with. It doesn't matter if we're talking about making a public announcement or deciding to go off into the unknown (somewhere not on your beaten tracks), it takes confidence to try something but just like the first time you did some things you now think of as simple, confidence is always involved at some point. Ask yourself who or what has given you confidence; then ask yourself what affects your confidence today.

If it's a lack of skill or knowledge, then you can ask for help or do some research. I'd be surprised if something you want to do hasn't already been done by someone like you before, so find that person and ask them questions.

The adage "when there is a will, there is a way" speaks volumes to me. Yes, I have plenty of confidence, but there are situations where I am extremely nervous; fortunately, for me, the "go get 'em" attitude wins most of the time.

I do believe that ambition conquers any lack of confidence. If you want something, you'll probably have to work for it. Rest assured that Blind Citizens NZ is working hard to eliminate the road blocks in our lives that can hamper aspirations and ambitions, but our work alone won't lead to all of your personal aspirations being met. That will take some ambition and then some action on your part.

PS While skydiving really is not my thing, and I'm not about to suggest you do it, anyone who gets their thrills this way will get a thumbs up from me.

PPS By the time we get to Conference, Amy may well have acquired another donkey. You can ask me in the first weekend of October.

Programme Highlights

2019 Annual General Meeting and Conference

Getting on with it – A New Horizon

As this issue of Focus reaches readers, Blind Citizens NZ's 2019 AGM and Conference will be almost two weeks away. While the notified timeframe for registrations will have closed, we will be doing all we can to accommodate receipt of late registrations.

The dates you need to know are **Friday 4 to Sunday 6 October**. We will be at the Naumi Hotel in Mangere, Auckland.

We have the usual business (AGM) items on Friday and Sunday.

Amongst business items will be the formal announcement of the outcome of the election of four-members-at-large, discussion and decisions on Remits and sundry topics will happen. A summary of Blind Citizens NZ's work over the past 12 months, and preparation for next year's 75 year celebrations will be highlighted including that Clive Lansink will talk about plans to put together a presentation of recordings of notable events relevant to Blind Citizens NZ history, going back to the 1950s. Then, guest presenters on Saturday 5 October, referred to as our Open Day, include:

- Robert Martin New Zealand's first ever representative on the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Hon Carmel Sepuloni Minister for Disability Issues;
- John Mulka, Chief Executive Blind Foundation;
- Brian Coffey, Director Office for Disability Issues;
- Pic Picot from Nelson (renowned for his business enterprise Pic's Peanut Butter);
- Jonathan Mosen Chief Executive Workbridge;
- Hannah Pascoe, sports enthusiast / para-athlete.

For late registrations, please contact our National Office direct or you can locate the registration form on our website. As always, there are options to suit individual needs. For anyone unable to attend in person, we will be streaming over the three days. Details will be publicised via our website, TIS, and other information-sharing options closer to 4 October.

Audio Description - Able's Trustee Vacancy and Survey From Rose Wilkinson, Chief Executive

Blind Citizens NZ is the catalyst for introducing audio description into New Zealand, and our efforts continue to influence change. Audio description in New Zealand came about following years of advocacy from the 1980s to the present. In 2011,

Blind Citizens NZ hosted a two-day workshop in Wellington. This workshop profiled the numerous benefits of audio description as you might imagine such as for live theatre, opera, museums, art galleries, cinema, and television. Our advocacy continues and on this occasion, our focus is on audio described television programme content.

The following information, provided on behalf of Able, New Zealand's primary producer of both audio description and captioning tells you about Able's trustee vacancy, and a survey opportunity.

Able's Trustee Vacancy

Are you interested in helping shape the future of audio description and captioning in New Zealand? The Media Access Charitable Trust, as part of its board rotation policy, is seeking to appoint a new trustee who will represent the perspective of the blind and vision-impaired community. The Media Access Charitable Trust provides strategic oversight of the not-for-profit organisation, Able, which produces captioning and audio description for New Zealand free-to-air television broadcasters.

Audio description is an alternative audio track that helps blind and vision-impaired people obtain more enjoyment from television. Captions are similar to foreign film subtitles and enable the Deaf and hard of hearing communities to access television.

The trust board comprises five trustees, including two sector representatives. One offers the perspective of the blind and vision-impaired community and the other offers the perspective of the Deaf and hard of hearing sector. Our trustees have a collegial approach and are very supportive of the chief executive and employees of Able.

The trustee positions are voluntary, but travel and meeting expenses are reimbursed. The Media Access Charitable Trust board meets quarterly in Auckland. Please register your interest by emailing your CV and covering letter to board@able.co.nz.

Applicants can include a letter of support from an organisation serving the blind and vision-impaired community. **Applications for this position will close at 4pm, Friday 18 October 2019.**

Note to potential applicants of this trustee vacancy: Blind Citizens NZ has established a procedure for candidates seeking a letter of support for this trustee vacancy. Candidates seeking support from Blind Citizens NZ should submit their application for the attention of Rose Wilkinson, Chief Executive by post to PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington, or by email to her at letter-of-support@groups.io Candidates should ensure their application reaches the Chief Executive by 4pm, Monday 7 October. A sub-committee comprising two board members and the Chief Executive will consider applications and make a decision by 4pm Friday 11 October, which applicants it believes are worthy of support.

Survey recruitment - would you like to take part in some important research about TV?

Able, the company that runs TV's audio description and captioning services is conducting research among blind, deafblind, and vision-impaired New Zealanders. You do not need to use the service to take part, as they would love to hear all views on audio description in New Zealand.

This will help the company understand what matters to you and how to shape the service for the future.

The survey will start mid to end September 2019. If you would like to take part, please phone Able on 09 950 5172 with your name and telephone number. Able will pass your details on to the research company so they can interview you. If you prefer to use an 0800 number please contact Blind Citizens NZ's national office on 0800 222 694 with your details.

These will, on your behalf, be passed along to Able. After participating in the survey, your name will go in to the draw for a \$100 Prezzy Card.

Changes to 018 Directory Service

During August, regular and infrequent users of the 018 Directory Service will have become aware as they contacted the service, of changes that would take effect on 1 September. As callers contacted 018 during August, they would hear a message each time they phoned, up to three times, informing them of changes to the service.

A five-month trial of reduced hours of the 018 service (7am-9pm), commenced on 1 September, and ends 31 January 2020.

In our work with the Ministry of Business Employment and Innovation (MBIE), and Yellow, Blind Citizens NZ has we believe, positively influenced the approach “Yellow”, the provider of the 018 service, is taking. More recently, the Office for Disability Issues was involved in discussions lending its support to the outcome. Blind Citizens NZ’s advocacy has influenced, not only the introduction of a trial period, but ensured a later start-time for the new service times. This ensured users of the service referred to as ‘protected callers’ would be informed ahead of changes happening. Additionally, that the trial would run for five months including over the Christmas and New Year period. Protected callers are those people who have a physical or print disability (e.g. people from the blind and deafblind community) who experience challenges using the print directory.

Reasons behind the reduction in hours are due to a decline in use of the service, and the high cost associated with this. Spark and Yellow the provider of the 018 service, have obtained ministerial approval to reduce the operating hours and conduct the trial. Yellow has analysed protected caller statistics for the 12-month period 1 May 2018 to 30 April 2019. This revealed the total number of directory assistance calls made by protected callers between the hours of 9pm and 7am were 428. During the same timeframe, for 130 days there were no directory assistance calls made during the hours of 9pm to 7am.

Key points to note for now are:

- The trial will run for 5 months from 1 September 2019 – 31 January 2020. Trial hours will be 7am-9pm Monday to Sunday including public holidays.
- After hours i.e. 9pm to 7am, there is a callback option for protected callers. This is in the form of an option for the customer to leave a message to be called back the following morning. Customers are asked to leave a message with their name, number and time to call back.
- Before final decisions are made Yellow will carry out a survey in December/January with the protected caller group.

Preparing for the Blind Foundation's new Strategic Plan

Blind Citizens NZ asks for your thoughts

The Board of Blind Citizens NZ during its August meeting, considered ways to gather feedback from members nice and early, that will inform its direction and thinking in preparation for input to the Blind Foundation's next Strategic Plan. One approach the Board is taking is to utilise the organisation's "The RNZFB at a Glance" document, as a guide for members to provide feedback. Adopted by Blind Citizens NZ's 2010 Annual General Meeting and Conference, the RNZFB at a Glance document briefly lists the most important statements that captured at the time, the essence of what members agreed it expected from the Foundation. Even though this publication has been in existence for several years, the Board believes the majority of topics remain relevant. These include for example, the RNZFB's:

- governance and culture;
- relationship with members and consumer organisations;
- array of services such as rehabilitation and support, communications, library and information, and equipment;
- fundraising and funding.

“The RNZFB at a Glance”, is available from National Office upon request. It is also available on our National Feedback Line Bulletin, menu option 5-1-4-9, and our website by taking this link:
<https://abcnz.org.nz/issues/blindness-services/the-rnzfb-at-a-glance-2/>

Having your feedback by 4pm, Friday 8 November will enable the Board to consider this when it meets later that month. Your feedback will guide the Board with updates to this document also. Please send your feedback for the attention of the Chief Executive Rose Wilkinson, either by email to: admin@abcnz.org.nz, or post to PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington.

Update - Blind Citizens NZ 2019 Election

Rose Wilkinson, Returning Officer

Positions for election this year are National President and four Members-at-Large. When nominations closed at 4pm, Thursday 15 August, there was one nomination for National President, and five nominations for the four Member-at-Large positions. Congratulations to Jonathan Godfrey, who is elected unopposed as National President. For the four member at large positions, the candidates in alphabetical order by surname are Martine Abel-Williamson, David Allen, Wendy Chiang, Christine Fern and Shaun Johnson.

Ordinary Members recorded as financial on the National Office database at 4pm, 15 August are eligible to vote. The distribution of ballot material i.e. information about each of the five candidates, how to cast your vote have been distributed. All voting options close at 4pm, Tuesday 24 September, i.e., mail and TIS. If you are casting your vote by paper ballot or braille voting-cards, by posting these as soon as possible means you will be ensuring these arrive in plenty of time and before voting closes.

Of note, is the Board is required to conduct an extra-ordinary election to fill the vacancy created in February 2019, when Vaughan Dodd needed to resign his Member-at-Large position.

Rule 10.7 (c), gives the Board the authority to determine an extra-ordinary election process. It must then notify this in either Focus (national publication), or to financial Ordinary Members individually. The Board has sought legal advice and its decision is to conduct the extra-ordinary election to fill that vacancy in conjunction with this scheduled 2019 election. This means the lowest polling candidate in this election will fill the vacancy created in February 2019. The person elected to this position will complete Vaughan Dodd's term of office, which concludes at the end of the 2020 Annual General Meeting and Conference.

Blind Citizens NZ - Representative to Workbridge Council

Expressions of interest are called for

Workbridge is one of several national organisations on which Blind Citizens NZ holds a representative position. Additionally, employment is one of six key issues the Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM), has identified that must be progressed on behalf of disabled people in New Zealand. As well as the Disabled People's (DPO) Coalition of which Blind Citizens NZ is a member organisation, the IMM comprises the Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman. Workbridge exists to support job seekers who are disabled and / or have a health condition, as well as employers and workplaces across the country. There is potential for links to be forged between this representative position, and other employment related work in which Blind Citizens NZ is involved.

The Board of Blind Citizens NZ is calling for **expressions of interest from financial Ordinary (voting) Members of Blind Citizens NZ**.

Members interested in this representative position should request the position description, which outlines requirements, attributes, etc., as we provide an overview only here in Focus. You may be suited to this role if your extensive skills and expertise include knowledge and understanding of the following:

- the disability community in general;

- barriers to employment and the challenges experienced by blind and vision impaired job-seekers, and those in employment;
- vocational services and funding opportunities available for disabled job seekers and those in employment; and
- the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Expressions of interest close at 4pm, Tuesday 1 October 2019.

Please talk about the skills, knowledge and expertise you would bring to the position as per the job description. Send expressions of interest for the attention of the Chief Executive Rose Wilkinson – either by post to PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington, or email to rwilkinson@abcnz.org.nz

Blind Citizens NZ's 75th Anniversary in 2020

The Board continues to progress plans for 2020, when Blind Citizens NZ will celebrate 75 years of existence. As previously advised, the preferred weekend is 9-11 October i.e. this aligns closest to 8 October, when the organisation was formally established. The Board continues to seek your input about:

- International guests – suggestions welcome;
- Speakers, presenters and their topic(s) - are there people you believe should be included in the programme?
- Topics – are there specific events and happenings of the past 25 years in particular, that come to mind?
- Do you have suggestions the 75-year celebration theme can take?

The Board continues to seek ideas for Blind Citizens NZ's 75-year celebrations. It is important for the Board to hear from members, branches and networks – all feedback will inform its next opportunity for decision-making, which will be in November. Please send suggestions for the attention of the Chief Executive. To be certain these arrive in sufficient time for inclusion in meeting papers, they should arrive at National Office by 9am, Friday 8 November.

The Board will receive all suggestions and consider these at its meeting on 22-24 November 2019.

Member-at-Large Vacancy –Extra Ordinary Election From Rose Wilkinson, Returning Officer

Blind Citizens NZ is conducting an extra-ordinary election to fill a Member-at-Large vacancy as at 31 August 2019. The vacancy occurred with respect to Murray Peat's resignation for personal reasons. The term of office for the vacancy concludes at the end of the 2020 Annual General Meeting and Conference. The Board has the delegated authority to set its own timelines and process for an extra-ordinary election. This means these can vary to those for scheduled elections. This formal notice in the September Focus issue provides details for the extra-ordinary election to fill the Member-at-Large vacancy as follows:

- **Nominations close:** and must be in the hands of the Returning Officer by 4pm, Wednesday 10 October 2019.
- **Participation and Voting:** financial Ordinary Members financial as at 10 October 2019 are eligible to participate in the extra-ordinary election and vote.
- **Distribution of ballot material:** this will happy by Wednesday 24 October 2019.
- **Voting closes:** at 4pm Wednesday 14 November 2019.
- **Vote counting:** this will be finished by 6pm, Friday 16 November 2019.

In addition to dates and sundry information provided, key factors for members interested in standing for election to fill this Member-at-Large vacancy, include the following....

- **Eligibility requirements:** You are eligible for nomination provided you have been a financial Ordinary Member of Blind Citizens NZ for no less than 24 full months measured cumulatively during the period of five consecutive years ending on the closing date for nominations.
- **Nominations:** the person standing for election will need two financial Ordinary Members to support their nomination. One will “move/propose” and the other will “second” the nomination. Each of the three people involved is required to sign the paper nomination form. Email procedures similarly require each of the three financial Ordinary Members to confirm their role in the nomination process. When choosing the email procedure, candidates are required to contact the Returning Officer prior to commencing this process. This is important for there are instructions unique to the email procedure you must follow.
- **Candidate’s CV (supporting information and position statement):** Candidates should send these to the Returning Officer with their nomination. Information about the role of Board Members etc., is available from Blind Citizens NZ’s website, and/or upon request from National Office (contact details located at the end of this Focus issue). Candidates should be familiar with these requirements.
- **Where to send nominations:** these can be sent to the Returning Officer via any of these options:
 - ✓ **Post:** Blind Citizens NZ, PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242;
 - ✓ **Fax:** 04-389-0030;
 - ✓ **Email:** election@abcnz.org.nz
- **Will there be an election:** If there is more than one nomination to fill the vacancy, there will be an election. Should there be only one nomination, then no election will be required. The successful candidate will be elected unopposed and commence in the position immediately.

Blind Citizens NZ – Board and National Office

Board

- **National President:** Jonathan Godfrey (Management Committee) jonathan@tactileimpressionz.co.nz
- **Vice President:** Martine Abel-Williamson (Member-at-Large / Management Committee): martine.the1@xtra.co.nz
- Andrea Courtney (Member-at-Large / Management Committee): andycoute@gmail.com
- Geraldine Glanville (Member-at-Large): gbglanville@xtra.co.nz
- Shaun Johnson (Member-at-Large): shaun.zdots@xtra.co.nz
- Paula Waby (World Blind Union Representative / Management Committee): paula.waby4@gmail.com

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- **Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/BlindCitizensNZ/>
- **Email:** admin@abcnz.org.nz
- **Chief Executive, Rose Wilkinson:** rwilkinson@abcnz.org.nz

Blind Citizens NZ is appreciative of donations received from our members and supporters, and for funding from the Blind Foundation, and the Lotteries Grants Board

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