



Blind Citizens NZ

Focus

Publication of the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Inc Volume 61 No 2 – June 2025

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In this edition

Rose Wilkinson, Chief Executive

Although our June Focus issue arrives a little late in your mailboxes, reasons for this will become clear as you read about some of the outcomes of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi Advisory Group's mahi.

We have a few items to bring to your attention and while not all are mentioned here, we hope you will enjoy each of the items we have. When you get to the National President's contribution you will see reinforcement of Braille being a primary literacy and numeracy tool for blind people. His contribution identifies the importance of Braille which Braille users and readers alike will resonate with.

You'll learn what the Board is looking for in candidates standing in this year's election of National President and two Members-at-Large. There is information about an online opportunity for candidates to come together to learn more about what being on the Board of Blind Citizens NZ involves.

We continue to call for expressions of interest in the Coordinator role for our National Information Line and to promote the opportunity for 'guest editorials' in our September, and December Focus issues. Our 2025 AGM and Conference 'Ka mua, Ka muri | Walking backwards into the future' is promoted along with side-event activities.

The presentation of awards happens during our AGM and Conference – if you have been thinking about nominating someone for an organisational award, there is still time...

Last but not least, amendments to Blind Citizens NZ Constitution are necessary to ensure we meet our legal obligations. We provide a further overview of new content and amendments.

We hope you enjoy our June Focus ...

Board co-opts two new Board Members

The Board of Blind Citizens NZ determined at its June meeting to co-opt two new Board Members. Peter Allen MNZM (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tamatea, Kāi Tahu ki Otakou) of Palmerston North and Russell Lowry (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tamatea, Kāi Tahu ki Otakou) of Whanganui, will each serve a two-year term commencing 1 July 2025.

This news was first shared with the Te Tiriti Advisory Group (Advisory Group) at its hui on 28 June 2025. The Advisory Group acknowledged the mahi undertaken over many years working with the Board and members and proudly celebrates this auspicious outcome.

The Board's decision exercises delegated authority within the Blind Citizens NZ Constitution.

It is a pragmatic interim step towards honouring resolutions passed at our 2024 AGM and Conference, and a remit passed at our 2021 AGM and Conference which among other things, should see kāpo tāngata whenua elect Board Members of their choosing.

Full realisation of these resolutions will require changes to our Constitution, updating our member register, and changes in our administrative systems, policies, and processes, which cannot all be completed in the short run.

The selection of Mr Allen and Mr Lowry was based on a recommendation from our Te Tiriti o Waitangi Advisory Group, established by the Board in 2023 to help Blind Citizens NZ become a more inclusive organisation for kāpo tāngata whenua. The Board wishes to express our collective thanks to the Advisory Group for their work on a range of initiatives. We understand the need for diverse perspectives at the Board table and the critical role we have in ensuring the needs of kāpo tāngata whenua are being met.

Co-opted Board Members have the same rights and responsibilities as elected Board Members in all but one respect. Under our current Constitution, a co-opted person cannot serve as Vice-President. Any constitutional changes that are required to ensure some Board Members can be elected by only kāpo tāngata whenua will be progressed but will not be rushed.

Members should therefore expect not to see any proposals relating to kāpo tāngata whenua representation on the Board in the current round of constitutional changes.

Board Members have expressed our enthusiasm for this new development in a long and proud history for Blind Citizens NZ.

We hope members will join with us in wishing Peter Allen and Russell Lowry every success and enjoyment for the challenge ahead.

A lesson from a student

Jonathan Godfrey, National President

I taught Sarah Smith in a first-year statistics class back in 2002 or thereabouts. It was at a time when I had dispensed with any terms other than “blind” to describe my circumstances to students and the world at large, but it was also at a time before I had any Braille skill. Sarah Smith is not her real name, nor is it important for this story except that her real family name is much more distinctive than Smith. Sarah is both true and important because it is the first time I can recall being misled by my screen reading software.

Making sure I have a class list of names and email addresses gave me a chance to look for students whose names were interesting for any number of reasons. Sarah sounds far too similar to Sara (no h) so it is just one name that I know must be checked very carefully.

My screen reader skills were more than adequate to allow me to review the spelling of names letter by letter. Back to Sarah though. She was a confident young woman who was happy to ask questions after class and always expected an answer. As an aside, this is far too rare today.

I remember not having an answer for her one day, so asked her to send me an email to speed up my ability to get the answer back to her. She did. The email arrived soon thereafter and there in my inbox was the message from Sara H Smith, or at least that's what I heard. If I'd had a Braille display back then, I'd have seen that for some reason, Sarah was capitalising the h in Sarah, not indicating her middle name started with H. I was blissfully unaware.

For some reason which has no bearing on this story, I was looking through the class list for something else when I stumbled across a Sarah Smith whose middle name did not start with H. Wow, two Sarah Smiths in one class. I wonder if they know each other!

The list was sorted in order of student ID number so I went looking for Sara H Smith and couldn't find her.

Note to readers, I know the following might not work in audio, but perhaps it will illustrate the point.

So, I now have an email from Sara H Smith and no Sara H Smith in my class. Has there been an administration error? (quite possible).

My class list has the email address for a Sarah Smith, but it is different to the one used by Sara H Smith who asks lots of questions both in person and now by email.

Not long after this quandary was discovered, Sarah did ask me another question in person.

I then got to ask if her middle name did in fact start with H. “No, why would you think that?” she said. “Because that’s what your email tells me”, I replied, just before I heard the penny drop in my head. Seems that Sarah was using multiple email accounts, one for social stuff and one for official matters relating to the university etc. She had messaged me from her social account where she was tired of people leaving the h off the end of her name. She had intentionally capitalised the h in an effort to get her friends to spell her name correctly. Mystery solved and some laughing at my expense along with it.

My initial reactions to the above was that I needed to improve my skills in using my screen reader, and perhaps to have less mistrust in the university’s admin systems, but not that I needed to get Braille into my life.

I’d come across Braille labels on things. I’d worked out the number indicator, the patterns for 1, 2, and 3, been irritated by the fact that 4 uses three dots when all the 2 dot combinations had not yet been used up, and little more. I was seeing so little Braille in my world, and I certainly wasn’t searching for any more.

My first wife is a Braille user. She had things labelled and a definite opinion on the requirement for me to learn Braille properly. OK, train spotters will notice the “first” there, and now be asking questions, so the answer is yes, there is a second wife. Amy and I managed a small (minimal fuss) ceremony at the farm in January. Oops, side-tracked again.

It took very little time for me to learn the patterns of dots for the basic alphabet. Having a mathematical mind makes such things easier, I guess. A Perkins Braille typewriter was borrowed from the local RNZFB office and my lessons continued. Typing uncontracted Braille was easy for me, but reading was and remains slow. I am not and probably won't ever be a person who sits down and reads War and Peace in Braille. I did learn many contractions and rules, some of which were then dropped when New Zealand adopted Unified English Braille (UEB). I used to get practice by reading discarded agendas at the end of Blind Citizens NZ Board meetings, and I do remember being tripped up by one contraction in particular and getting immediate help from then President Carolyn Weston. I was though, approaching Braille learning as an academic exercise, not a life-changing endeavour. Finding anything in Braille was exciting even if I didn't give a hoot about what I was reading.

I don't actually get much use out of contracted Braille today, but I can sit down and play cards with my kids, I can read the labels in the taxis that still have them.

I can write shopping lists and speech notes. I can press the right button in elevators, and I can read the safety card on flights (if it exists). I can decipher the Braille on the occasional signs I stumble across in modern buildings, and so much more... all because I met someone at a Blind Citizens NZ Conference.

Thinking back, labelling my extensive CD collection was a much better way to improve my Braille skills than other suggestions I received. I had buy-in from the start because I could put my CDs away after parties and I could find a specific song so much faster. Making Braille labels for items in my pantry and freezer were also really useful applications. It was clear that having a reason to learn and improve was always going to help.

The nature of the work I do was also changing. If I could not adapt, my employment would have come under some pressure. The key statistical software I was using for teaching became inaccessible almost overnight. I got by because I continued to use an older version which had less bells and whistles, and if I'm completely honest, I BS'ed my way through a number of classes. At the same time though, the software I was using for my PhD and research remained accessible because it relied on writing programs. Programs in most computing languages are just plain text, albeit full of brackets and other punctuation for formatting so they are pretty accessible to screen reader users.

Programming is so much better now that I can use Braille and sound together. Sarah might have forgiven me for not getting her name right, well once anyway, but programs are unforgiving machines that don't always offer kind support to fix errors. I cannot fumble my way through - I must get it right. Braille is helping me get more things right, first time. Braille is helping make me employable.

Braille is helping me be a better person who respects the way other people spell their names. Braille helps me be a better dad, husband, and so much more.

And so, my story could end. My lessons in life courtesy of Braille are coming around again, this time in the form of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI).

Some of the reasons I had for learning Braille could now be solved by increasing my use of Gen AI. It's certainly helping me fix the bugs in my programs for example. What is now obvious to me is that I've got to adapt again to keep up with my colleagues and to stay ahead of my students, and I must continue to do so in the years ahead. For me, not adapting to change will be a recipe for failure.

Maybe some of the reasons I had for getting Braille into my life are less relevant for the younger members of our community. They might not have 500 CDs to label. I do though believe that there will be reasons to embrace Braille as the means to create opportunities.

Blind musicians might get by reproducing what they hear, but a blind person who learns Braille music will have more options. This isn't me by the way, but learning another language will be easier for someone who can read that language. I will always be left wondering how much better my learning of Japanese would have been if I had been a Braille user at school. I know some blind people who are able to survive in advanced mathematics without Braille. However, they are rare, and always at risk of not being able to retain enough of an equation in their heads if they only use their ears. Braille helps expand the possible even for the most talented blind people out there.

Gen AI is only going to help us as blind people if it is used in a way that uses the knowledge we do have. Used in the right way, it can help us learn more. Used in the wrong way and it becomes a substitute for learning. Gen AI can, and I suggest should, make us more employable than people who cannot use it as a tool. Gen AI can support us in expanding our horizons, help us filter information, make some painful tasks more efficient, and empower us to make a wider range of choices for ourselves, but Gen AI will not cook dinner for us or do the dishes afterwards. Gen AI isn't going to help me win a game of Rummy Cub against my kids either. I need Braille for that!

If we do not make sure young blind people know how to use all the tools needed in the 21st century, we will be consigning them to a less satisfying life than might otherwise be possible.

I'd also like blind adults to keep thinking about a wider range of ways for us to adapt in a changing world, including developing skills in both Gen AI and Braille. Gen AI might be the latest exciting tool being talked about, and in comparison, Braille might not be seen as so exciting, but Sarah still wants me to spell her name correctly.

I can and I will if I just take a moment to move my hand over to the Braille display.

Blind Citizens NZ 2025 Scheduled Election

From Rose Wilkinson, Returning Officer

This is our final notice calling for nominations for this year's Blind Citizens NZ Board election. There are three positions due for election i.e. National President and two Members-at-Large. The terms of office for all three positions conclude at the end of this year's Annual General Meeting and Conference (3-4 October).

Currently the two Member-at-Large positions due for election are held by Chrissy Fern and Martine Abel-Williamson. Jonathan Godfrey holds the position of National President.

Call for nominations: Rule 10 Elections, Clause 10.1, directs Blind Citizens NZ in its election procedures. Of note is that:

- people currently in these positions are eligible for re-election;
- the term of office for each of the three positions is three years;
- successful candidates will commence their term immediately following the conclusion of this year's Annual General Meeting and Conference (3-4 October);
- the election of all three positions happens at the same time by a ballot of all eligible Ordinary (voting) Members;
- nomination forms and | or email nomination procedures are available upon request from National Office.

Anyone standing for election is encouraged to take time to become familiar with the duties and responsibilities of Blind Citizens NZ's Board Members.

The Board has recently finished its annual self-assessment and has identified its main strength as having an understanding and experience of blindness as it affects a diverse range of our members. The Board believes it is essential for candidates to have some governance experience. It is looking for people who have financial skills to boost the Board's knowledge base and capabilities.

Board Members are required to be well-prepared for Board meetings, and candidates should be aware of the time-commitment involved which includes reading meeting agendas of around 150 pages or more in length. As there is a definite vacancy to fill in this election, the Board hopes that all those who feel they have these skills and experience to bring to the Board, will put themselves forward.

If you are thinking about standing for one of the three positions, there will for the first time, be an online opportunity for candidates to learn more about what being on the Board of Blind Citizens NZ involves. This opportunity excludes anyone currently on the Board of Blind Citizens NZ standing for re-election. This online opportunity for candidates is scheduled for 6pm, Tuesday 22 July 2025. It will be facilitated by Chrissy Fern, Vice President Blind Citizens NZ with the Chief Executive Rose Wilkinson present to assist as required. To register as a candidate for this online opportunity, please contact our National Office by phoning 0800 222 694, selecting option 1 from the menu email to admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz

Now to details about timelines and the procedure for the election of all positions. To be eligible for nomination for any position, you must:

- a.** live in New Zealand; and

- b.** for at least 24 months of the past five years up to and including 14 August 2025, have been a (financial) Ordinary Member of Blind Citizens NZ.

Three people are involved in the nomination process – the person being nominated, plus one to move and another to second the nomination. All must be financial Ordinary (voting) Members as of 14 August 2025.

There are two ways nominations can be completed and submitted. We have a paper nomination form, or there is an email process. If using the paper form, signatures of all three members involved in the nomination are required. Email procedures similarly require the same people to confirm their respective roles in the nomination process. If choosing the email procedure, you must contact the Returning Officer at our National Office before commencing this process. This is important, as there are instructions unique to the email procedure that must be followed. The email procedure mirrors, as closely as possible, requirements for the paper-based option.

The closing date for nominations is 4pm Thursday 14 August 2025. Candidates are required to provide their CV at the same time as their nomination is submitted to the Returning Officer. Nominations and CVs should be sent to the Returning Officer at one of the following:

- **Post:** Blind Citizens NZ, PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242;

- **Fax:** 04-389-0030;
- **Email:** election@blindcitizensnz.org.nz

Once nominations close, if the maximum number of nominations for the three positions is received, no election will be needed. Candidates will be declared elected unopposed. Should nominations exceed the number of positions being elected, an election will be held.

Voting in the election: Ballot material will be sent to all Ordinary Members recorded as financial on the National Office member database at **4pm, Thursday 14 August 2025**. No later than **Thursday 5 September 2025**, ballot material will be distributed in the voting member's preferred format.

When does voting close? Completed ballots (votes cast by voting members) must be received at National Office no later than **4.00 pm, Tuesday 23 September 2025**. Vote counting will take place no later than Wednesday 1 October 2025.

Ways to get election information for Blind Citizens NZ's elections: there are several options available for members to participate in the election process. Election (ballot) material about candidates standing for election is available in large print, audio, Braille, by email, and via our National Information Line bulletin on TellMe.

Choose your preferred voting option: When voting in Blind Citizens NZ elections, you can choose one of three options.

Remember that the way you vote, can be different from the way you choose to receive your election (ballot) material.

You can cast your vote using the large print form, the Braille-card option, or TellMe. For many reasons, we encourage members to use TellMe. This offers a truly independent, confidential, and empowering voting experience. It means you can independently do all the things you need to do in an election – you hear about the candidates standing for election, and you cast your vote. When casting your vote using TellMe, you are in control.

TellMe gives you certainty that your vote will be received by the due date and time. You no longer need to worry about whether your postal ballot will reach its destination in time to be counted. We point out the time it can take for mail to reach someone. This means there is no guarantee your postal vote will arrive by the close of voting. If you would like to know more about using TellMe and casting your vote using this option, please contact our National Office.

If you are in any doubt about what your preferred communication option is to receive information and vote in Blind Citizens NZ's election, please contact our National Office to check.

Blind Citizens NZ 2025 AGM and Conference

Ka mua, ka muri

Walking backwards into the future

Blind Citizens NZ is celebrating a milestone event during our 2025 AGM and Conference. We proudly share that we are one of the oldest disabled people's organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand. In our view, achieving 80 years is no mean feat. Our theme 'Ka mua, ka muri | Walking backwards into the future' is a well-known Māori proverb that promotes the idea that we should look to the past to inform our future which is our organisational way of working... Many people from the blind community and our readers will confirm advocacy topics and challenges faced by blind, deafblind, low vision and vision-impaired people have been around for many years. While in essence they remain the same, they are different. By revisiting the work we've done (looking backwards) we continue to improve and build on what we've done, while positively influencing change moving forward.

Our venue is the Brentwood Hotel in Kilbirnie, Wellington. We start at 9am Friday 3 October and go through to late Saturday 4 October, interspersing business sessions and guest presenters across the two days. Our Conference Dinner is the culmination of our two-day event where we also present organisational awards. Remember nominations for awards close at midnight, Sunday 10 August 2025.

Financial assistance for first time attendees: For Ordinary (voting) Members who are coming to our event for the first time, there is the opportunity to receive financial assistance. To be eligible as a first-time attendee, in addition to this being the first time you would be attending a Blind Citizens NZ AGM and Conference, three requirements need to be met. You must:

- be in a position to make a financial contribution (each situation is determined on a case-by-case basis);
- commit to attending the full two days of the AGM and Conference including the Conference Dinner (attendance can be on a daily basis, or staying at the Brentwood Hotel); and
- be an Ordinary (financial voting) Member of Blind Citizens NZ.

If you meet the above requirements and would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please contact the Chief Executive for further information via one of the following options:

- Email: admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz and put “2025 first-time attendee” in the subject line;
- Post: PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242; or
- Phone: 0800 222 694.

Applications for financial assistance for first time attendees close 4pm, Thursday 14 August 2025.

The Board will make a final decision about the number of members it can support following the close of expressions of interest.

The National President issues a standing invitation to first time attendees to join him over dinner on Thursday evening. This opportunity is for first-time attendees to ask questions about the AGM and Conference, to find out how things are done and about some of the intricacies of our programme which are unique to Blind Citizens NZ, and above all, encouraging participation.

We continue with the concept of 'side-events' which are face-to-face (in-person) first introduced in 2022. These are happening on Thursday 2 October and this year we have four as follows:

- 11am-1:30pm | Kapo tāngata whenua: led by Blind Citizens NZ Te Tiriti o Waitangi Advisory Group, we welcome kapo tāngata whenua and haka pono ki te kaupapa (this term relates to anyone who supports the work Blind Citizens NZ, and the Advisory Group are doing and welcomes ta iwi as well as sighted whanau | family etc). This is an opportunity to learn what is a 'pepeha', why a 'pepeha' is important and to have assistance to create your 'pepeha'. There will be opportunities to discuss other topics as well.

- 2:00pm-3:00pm | Guide Dog Handlers Special Interest Network: Whether you are a current Guide Dog Handler, you are aspiring to be one, or perhaps you have been a Guide Dog Handler, this side event is your opportunity to mingle with people who share similar Guide Dog Handler interests and of course benefit from peer support.
- 3:15pm-4:15pm | Braille Special Interest Network: brings together Braille readers and users to share experiences.
- 4:30pm-5:30pm | World Blind Union: led by our country delegates Jonathan Godfrey and Thomas Bryan, you will hear about the WBU, the contributions New Zealand makes in this international space, and areas of work in which our delegates are involved.

Registration: we have a few options to choose from when registering to attend our AGM and Conference. Registration can be completed online, you can download the registration form and send it to us, or you can opt for paper registration. Whichever option you choose it's important to select the correct registration category. If opting to register online or to download the form, you can make your selection from the below options... Please note that registrations close 4pm, Monday 15 September 2025.

Online Registration

- **Blind Citizens NZ's Members:** [Blind Citizens NZ Members - Online AGM and Conference registration](#)

- **Observers and Guests:** [Observers and Guests - Online AGM and Conference registration](#)

Download Registration Form

- **Blind Citizens NZ's Members:** [Blind Citizens NZ Members - AGM and Conference registration \[Word Doc\]](#)
- **Observers and Guests:** [Observers and Guests - AGM and Conference registration \[Word Doc\]](#)

Board Members and nationally appointed organisational representatives will receive individual advice of registration.

Registration details (costs etc.) are available when completing the relevant registration form online or downloading it. To assist with paying registration costs, you can take advantage of the option to pay by instalment. You can find out more and put a payment plan in place by contacting National Office. Each situation is considered on a case-by-case basis.

For paper copies of the registration forms, or for more information, contact your Branch, Network, or the National Office. Contact details for National Office are 0800 222 694 select option 1 from the voice message or email admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz.

National Information Line Coordinator

Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest in this position from amongst Ordinary Members of Blind Citizens NZ are called for. The Coordinator's role and purpose of the Information Line is to:

- Keep members and potential members of Blind Citizens NZ informed of the work of Blind Citizens NZ at a national level; and
- Provide an open forum for members and potential members of Blind Citizens NZ to discuss blindness-related issues.
- Guidelines for this position are available upon request. If you are interested in finding out more, please send an email to admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz with "National Information Line" in the subject line. Or phone 0800-222-694.

Awards and Nominations

Blind Citizens NZ has several opportunities for Branches, Networks, and Ordinary Members to recognise and acknowledge the work and achievements of people within the blind community. Depending on the criteria for a specific award, this may mean there is an individual, organisation, or a business that could be recognised.

All nominations require detailed supporting information to be provided. Nominations and supporting information must be received by midnight, Sunday 10 August for these awards.

1. Beamish Memorial Award: The Beamish Memorial Award is the most prestigious award Blind Citizens NZ has the honour and privilege of awarding to anyone within the organisation. Only Ordinary Members of Blind Citizens NZ who have made an outstanding contribution to society in their particular field of service to the community, are eligible. Perhaps you know of someone you believe meets the criteria, and whose outstanding efforts should be recognised.

2. Extra Touch Award: This award recognises an individual or organisation where, as part of the process of providing service to the public, there is an outstanding contribution towards improving access or services to blind and vision impaired people. There are many opportunities to recognise these contributions, including access to: information, society, technology, transport and pedestrian safety, everyday equipment, educational, vocational or recreational opportunities, shops and customer service, and services in general. When making a nomination, be sure to include the nominee's name and contact details. Include information that tells the Board how the nomination meets the Extra Touch Award criteria.

3. Johnston Cup for Leadership: Blind Citizens NZ aims to encourage members to accept leadership responsibilities inside and outside the blindness community; and to develop an environment that recognises them for their leadership wherever and whatever that might be or mean for them.

The Johnston Cup for Leadership encourages and recognises leadership potential from amongst Ordinary Members of Blind Citizens NZ.

There may well be people who meet the criteria who have contributed in some demonstrable way to the betterment of the community by way of their leadership. Or they may have assumed leadership responsibilities that are far more than the role they hold.

All nominations and supporting information should be sent to:

- **Email:** admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz; or
- **Post:** PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington.

Amending Blind Citizens NZ's Constitution By Rose Wilkinson, Chief Executive

The Board of Blind Citizens NZ continues to work on mandatory changes to the organisation's Constitution along with some additional tidy-ups. As previously advised mandatory changes are necessary to ensure Blind Citizens NZ is compliant with the Incorporated Societies Act 2022 and Incorporated Societies Regulations 2023.

Our work continues to be guided by Gibson Sheat Lawyers, the same law firm that worked with Blind Citizens NZ in 2019 when changes were made to the current Constitution. The Board met with Nigel Stirling from Gibson Sheat during its recent June meeting to progress this work.

The Board's preference is to complete this work by the end of this year. Timeframes to achieve this are being worked through and will be publicised in the near future. From the end of July onwards, there will be monthly online meetings convened for members, Branches and Networks to discuss proposed Rule Changes.

On this note, we have previously shared where changes must be made to Blind Citizens NZ's Constitution. Areas that must be amended, or where new content is required are shared again including new elements. This work includes:

- replacing the term 'objects' with 'purposes' to align with terminology used in the Act and replacing the powers listed in Rule 4.1.2 so that Blind Citizens NZ has full capacity to carry on any activity subject to any restrictions in the Constitution, Act or other legislation and the general law.
- there are officers' duties under the Act, such as the duty to act in good faith and in the best interests of the society, to exercise powers for a proper purpose etc. A clause is to be inserted which contains a brief description of Board Members' duties noting the Board Policy Manual sets out duties and responsibilities;
- there is no longer a requirement for a Common Seal - this provision is out of date.

Focus - Guest Editorials

Rose Wilkinson, Chief Executive

We are on the lookout for members interested in writing guest editorials for Focus. This can be about anything topical to the blind community. If you have a burning issue, you'd like to give some oxygen to, please contact the Chief Executive via:

- **Email:** admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz | Please put 'Focus Editorial' in the subject line; or
- **Phone:** 04-389-0039 | if reaching voicemail leave a message and the Chief Executive will return your call; or
- **Post:** PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242

Opportunities to engage with the National President

By Rose Wilkinson, Chief Executive

There are regular opportunities for members to engage online with the National President Jonathan Godfrey. These happen regularly and there is no specific topic allocated. Members can raise topics for discussion, and clarification etc.

The schedule of dates from August to December 2025 inclusive follows. These are held from 5pm to 6pm on the following Tuesdays: 5 August, 16 September, 28 October, and 9 December.

Membership Renewal Reminder

It's that time of year where we offer reminders to subscription-paying members about membership renewals. You can pay your membership subscription at a Branch or Network event. If these options are not suitable, we have alternate, safe options to replace the in-person approach. You can ask your bank to assist by making a one-off payment to either the Branch or National Office bank account. You could consider setting up your membership renewal payment so that this happens at the same time each year. Otherwise, internet and phone banking are options to pay your annual subscription.

Subscription-paying members are reminded of the decision reached by members at last year's AGM and Conference. This is that from 1 July 2025, Blind Citizens NZ's base membership subscription for Ordinary (voting) Members and Associate Members will be \$10 per year, or \$30 per year for those who can afford it. For Ordinary (voting) Members, remaining financial ensures you are involved in Blind Citizens NZ elections, and all other democratic processes. The Member-for-Life subscription remains \$300.

Blind Citizens NZ, Membership Renewal and Application Form | Financial to 30 June 2026

When depositing funds into Blind Citizens NZ's bank account to renew your membership, please let National Office. You can post this form to PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242, phone us on 0800 222 694 or email us admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz

Please include your name and the reference "subs". Blind Citizens NZ's bank account details are: 06-0230-0002634-00.

Full Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Select your preferred option for receiving information:

Braille | Audio | Print | Large Print | Email

Email Address: _____

Subscriptions for Ordinary and Associate Members are \$10 per year, or \$30 per year for those who can afford it. Below, please select your membership category and the amount you are paying:

- **Ordinary Membership** (people who are registered with or eligible to receive full services from the RNZFB): **\$10 | \$30**
- **Associate Membership** (sighted family | whānau): **\$10 | \$30**
- **\$300.00**, being a one-off payment for Membership-for-Life.

I include a **donation** of \$_____, a contribution towards the Board and National Office.

Blind Citizens NZ – Board and National Office

Board

- **National President:** Jonathan Godfrey:
a.j.godfrey@massey.ac.nz
- **Members-at-Large:**
 - ✓ Martine Abel-Williamson: martine.the1@xtra.co.nz
 - ✓ Andrea Courtney: andycoute@gmail.com
 - ✓ Beverley Duncan: bev.d.duncan@gmail.com
 - ✓ Chrissy Fern (Vice President): fernmeek@gmail.com
 - ✓ Maria Stevens: mariastevens31060@gmail.com
 - ✓ Paula Waby: paula.waby4@gmail.com

Focus | Items for publication

- **Email** articles to: admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz
- **Post:** PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242

National Office

- **Physical:** Ground Floor, 113 Adelaide Road, Mount Cook, Wellington.
- **Post:** PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242.
- **Email:** admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz
- **Phone:** 04 389 0033; 0800 222 694.
- **Website:** <http://www.blindcitizensnz.org.nz>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/BlindCitizensNZ/>
- **Chief Executive:** Rose Wilkinson:
rwilkinson@blindcitizensnz.org.nz

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