



Blind Citizens NZ

Focus

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It's the Putting Right that Counts

Editorial by Allan Jones

As of 8.30am Queens Birthday Monday my headline for this editorial changed. I am glad to say with positive news, two well-known members of Blind Citizens NZ have been awarded Queen's Service Medals: Nola Burgess from Gisborne and Martine Abel-Williamson from Auckland.

I first met Nola in 1996. I visited Gisborne for my employer and took advantage of the "sunshine bus service" that Nola set up and coordinated. There were three accessible vans which offered disabled people transport around the Gisborne area. Nola has also been a tireless supporting the welfare of blind people in the Gisborne area, and been a staunch supporter of Blind Citizens NZ.

Martine Abel-Williamson is well known for a variety of roles. Her work with Auckland Council, her voluntary positions with World Blind Union, her involvement with Blind Citizens NZ at both a local and national level, the latter where she is Vice President, and with Auckland Disability Law where she is Chair.

I am also delighted to see that Linda and Jewls Topp have become "Dames" and that Grant Nisbit has received a gong for his involvement in sports broadcasting.

Before moving on to other topics I would like to mention that Radio NZ's Auckland issues reporter Todd Nile is going to be Fairfax's Auckland issues reporter. Todd's voice will be well known to our readers. He has been a reporter for Radio New Zealand and a number of private radio stations for the last 33 years. He was the reporter for last year's America's Cup. He also wrote two books on two unusual New Zealand motor vehicles, the Trekker and the Fiat Bambina. I hope that he may have time to be persuaded to read the book about the Trekker, on to talking book.

There were at least two blind members who worked on the assembly line during the late 1950's where the Trekker was assembled.

Currently there are four reviews/investigations in to services that have a direct effect on our well-being. First there is System Transformation, a process I talked about in the last two editorials. Updating this process there have been appointments to two senior management positions. The starting date for the Mid-Central prototype has been put back to 1 October. Later this year all disability provider organisations will have their contracts reviewed and most importantly for members of Blind Citizens NZ and other disabled people, there will be an education process launched in how to use the new system.

Secondly, there is the Social Welfare Commission Enquiry headed by a former children's commissioner Cindy Kiro. To quote from the press release setting up this review, Social Development Minister Carmel Sepuloni said the group would undertake a broad-ranging review of the welfare system. "It will deliver advice to the Government on ways to ensure people have an adequate income and standard of living, are treated with respect, can live in dignity, and are able to participate meaningfully in their communities." It's time to fix New Zealand's broken benefit system.

I am trying to establish what the linkage will be between system transformation and the enquiry. I believe there will certainly be linkages and areas of responsibility and I am hopeful and optimistic that there will be changes and improvements that affect the lives of our blind and vision impaired members. My hope is that they will get assistance with the extra costs of their disability. Blindness technology has had a profound effect on our lives.

However, we must realise that for many the purchase of technology is beyond their budget.

Finally there are the enquiries in to health and mental health.

The two enquiries/reviews that interest me the most are the disability transformation process, and the Welfare enquiry.

When I took on the editorship of Focus, I vowed not to get in to a raft of horror stories and I believe it is important to maintain this approach. Over all these reviews, we could spend a great deal of time and energy writing about “what is wrong”. The very famous LV Martin advertisement comes to mind - “it’s the putting right that counts”. Again for me there are two very important issues to cover in the mental health commission’s review - they are the pernicious methamphetamine use and the alarming and frightening youth suicide statistics.

I guess many of you will know someone whose life has been destroyed by the use of methamphetamine. I have an extended family member whose life has been ruined by the involvement with this drug.

I will try to keep tabs on all of these enquiries.

Finally, in this editorial I want to develop the theme that National President Jonathan launched in the last edition of Focus - “sorry you can’t do this”. I particularly want to comment on other statements which have remained in my memory.

One of the most memorable stories is one which my old school mate Don Mckenzie loves to tell. He was in the then director’s office with his dad, when the director said to him “that he needn’t have any ideas about going to university, he didn’t have the mental or physical strength to cope with this”.

Don, after under his breath questioning the man’s parentage, a sport that many of us often indulged in, proved him wrong by succeeding in obtaining a BA and having a very successful career as a physiotherapist. Sometimes the statement “you can’t do this” has the effect of making one more determined to succeed.

Some examples of statements that people made which I remember are: A group of twelve year old boys from the then Institute for the Blind standing on the Newmarket post office steps. John Johnson housemaster and Shaun Johnson's dad suggested to us that "if we could cope with finding our way around Newmarket we would cope with anywhere in the world". This certainly proved right for me. Another statement which made me "dig my heels in" was when I was getting ready to leave Pearson House - Ray Brown a man I had a lot of respect for said in his very slow distinctive voice "well you'll be back", I clenched my teeth and said "no I won't be". I don't think I ever thanked Ray for saying this as his statement drove me on to never go back to the then Foundation to live.

I wonder how many readers remember their first employer and things they said to them. My first professional employer was an English Psychiatrist who at the interview suggested that sometimes "hospitals made well people sick". He also during heated debates would say "I've made up my mind, don't confuse me with the facts". We knew we had to back off and accept the decision he had made. The other thing my first employer said to me which I will always remember was that after working for 18 months he said that after Christmas he wasn't going to employ me. He said "if you don't go overseas you'll become bitter and twisted". I wouldn't be taken notice of unless I had the experience of community based rehabilitation ideals. I benefited a lot from spending three years in London.

There was a negative outcome to "you can't do this and that". At times it appealed to my sense of laziness or my sense of wanting to get out of doing something. A good example of this was being told, "blind people couldn't do algebra and geometry". This meant at Grammar I could sit out these classes. I never, unlike Jonathan, had the head for mathematics and statistics. It would have been to my betterment if I had.

I liked the fact that Jonathan didn't get in to the "blame game" when discussing this topic. I agree with him when he suggests this would be a good discussion to have at Blind Citizens NZ's Annual General Meeting and Conference.

One final piece of social legislation I want to make mention of and that is the "end of life" legislation. We must be vigilant about safeguards so that disabled people aren't bullied into this action. I was disappointed to hear that the Australian doctor who went overseas to take advantage of this legislation used blindness as a reason for not wanting to go on living. Some years ago I remember author Colleen McCullough suggesting that her loss of sight would mean she couldn't go on writing. My first thought was "hasn't she heard of adaptive technology".

I hope all readers will be warm over winter remember that there will be an extra \$20 a week for single people and \$31 for couples from 1 July to 30 September - this extra money is to assist with the extra costs of heating

Important Lessons from our History

From Jonathan Godfrey, National President

I attended the Auckland Branch meeting on 9 June 2018 for the commemoration they had planned for a protest march held way back in 1978. That march up Auckland's Queen Street happened because a group of blind people felt that their dignity was being compromised by the actions of people who thought that they knew what was needed for blind people without fully engaging with the blind community.

The paternalistic attitudes of the day were clearly contradictory to the nothing about us, without us ideal that we say and hear a lot today.

The Auckland Branch committee had managed to get hold of the original Television New Zealand coverage of the march; first, the footage used as part of the standard news bulletin, and second, the 22-minute coverage that aired on a show called Dateline Monday. Yes, the footage shows some people I've known well for a number of years in a much younger form, but it also allowed me to hear the voice of Terry Small who was the National President of our organisation in 1978.

Attendance at the event allowed me to talk with people who went on the march, and to talk to others both at the event and beforehand, to get more of a sense of what was going on. In preparation for my trip, I read through the relevant sections of Quest for Equity, and found that there was so much more I wanted to learn than I read in that excellent history of the first fifty years of Blind Citizens NZ. You can get a copy of Quest for Equity from National Office or on talking book from the library.

I learned for example that in 1978 our organisation had 1,500 members, being approximately 30% of the Blind Foundation's membership. For one reason or another, we can't boast that sort of membership today, and in part I suspect that is a reflection of how much has changed since then and that for many of us, life has a great deal more to offer today than it did back then. Or at least, that is what many people in our community believe anyway. Obviously, there is a sense that there is still more that could be improved so that the young blind people of today, and those to come along, can grow up in a world that is better than the one many of us have to fight with today. That is evident to me because blind people keep coming together at Blind Citizens NZ events to share ideas, aspirations, solutions, a laugh or two, and perhaps like me, a sense of belonging.

I had a great time talking with blind people about the past; a past that for me doesn't really have a sense of reality because I was only a kid when those momentous events were unfolding.

I grew up in a world that had in part been created by the Terry Smalls, the Cyril Whites, and the numerous stalwarts of our community who are no longer with us to share their wisdom with me. I can re-read their words in *Quest for Equity* or learn of the events from those people around us that did meet them, learn from them, and carry on the legacy that they left for us. By engaging in events that remind us of our past, I can also see what makes today no different from 1978. The issues of the day have changed in the detail, but not so much in principle. Blind Citizens NZ, or the Association as it was known back then existed for the same reasons as we are here for now; in our modern language we say that Blind Citizens NZ exists to give voice to the aspirations and life experiences of blind, deafblind and vision-impaired New Zealanders. Those forty or so blind people and their supporters who marched up Queen Street wanted a world which would embrace the vision, blind, deafblind and vision-impaired people live the life they choose.

Before I had that excellent chance to engage with members in small groups, I was invited to speak with the branch's members as part of their general meeting. I was able to voice my concerns about the challenges our organisation is facing.

The workload is increasing because our advice, our informed opinion, and our collective aspirations for a better New Zealand are being increasingly recognised as adding value to the discussions being held before decisions are made. We repeatedly provide representatives that can articulate the needs and aspirations of our community. But we are also becoming victims of our own success. The opportunities to work with Government officials exist and are growing because of the great work done by our representatives in developing the Disability Action Plan 2014-2018, the NZ Disability Strategy 2016-2026, and the work done on monitoring New Zealand's progress against the UN Convention, to name just three exercises.

In recent months, our work within and for the DPO Coalition with respect to the UN Committee's evaluation of New Zealand and the list of Issues that were subsequently released in March this year show me, and I hope you as you read this column, that what we do really has value to New Zealand, not just the blind people living here. I can tell you that we get the verbal accolades due to us for our work, both as individuals and as an organisation.

I was asked by a longstanding member of Blind Citizens NZ at the Auckland Branch meeting if we were getting the financial support we needed, and I had to say that in my opinion the answer is no. I acknowledge that the funding we receive from the Blind Foundation has increased more than inflation in the last few years, and for that I say a public thank you. I've already noted the increasing workload being put on us from Government though. I note that in most situations, our representatives do receive a meeting fee for their time and expertise. In all but a very small number of situations, the cost of getting to those meetings are recovered. I now stand very firm on the idea that if people want the skills our representatives bring to discussions they must also understand that there is a cost for doing so.

As part of our funding contract with the Blind Foundation, we have committed to providing representatives for discussions about the services we receive. I'm totally confident that we will have no trouble finding high-quality representatives when the opportunities arise. In a way, the Blind Foundation has made sure that by providing us with substantial financial support, that we will be there with an informed opinion to share. The same can't be said for Government though. At present, there is no direct financial support to help us exist as an organisation, an organisation that is ready to rise to the challenges being put in front of us to help develop the solutions which will make NZ a better place for disabled people. Government has already benefitted substantially from the work done by our organisation in the past.

I suggest that if Government seriously values the voice of disabled people by way of their representative organisations (Articles 4.3 and 33 of the UN Convention) and wants us to continue that work, then we need to get talking about supporting the things we do that make Blind Citizens NZ what it is today, and what we need to become in future.

I have no doubt that our organisation needs to evolve because the world around is evolving. We also need to keep reminding ourselves of what it is we need now and aspire to for our futures. We need to dare to dream, just like the young blind mother of two in the Dateline Monday item who said she wanted to read magazines. In the end, her dream of magazines became a reality, because our organisation exists, and a group of committed blind people joined together to start the magazine service that was later passed over to the Blind Foundation's Library Service to run.

My visit to Auckland Branch has ended up being so much more than just a lesson in history. I keep asking myself if Terry Small and Cyril White would have been proud of the work that followed once they passed the reins over to others. I really do think so. Would they be proud of what the organisation they helped create became in the last forty years? I reckon they would, because they would see that we are still doing what they stood for - Blind people speaking for ourselves.

Letter to the Editor - From Elmer Curry

Editor's note to readers: I commented in my editorial about the National President's contribution in March. Elmer Curry's letter to the editor responds in part to that contribution and expresses a different view to mine. He also comments about space taken up on Focus to publicise the annual election, as well as the Governance Review Panel and the work of Board Member Geraldine Glanville. We have diversity of opinion in our organisation and I value the expression of these differences: I urge contributors to "play the ball not the ball carrier".

Now read on for Elmer Curry's contribution...

You can't, quite correct, you can't, say and do what you like Jonathan, without a heck of a lot of assistance. You can't so just accept that the people who say that are only thinking of your best interests. Ignorant as they might be, it is their view as sighted people who close their eyes and trip over their feet. You have achieved what you have, but why waste all that space in our magazine telling us all, who are blind, that you have a personal problem with what people tell you. There are numerous blind folk out there who have also achieved. No, not in the academic field but in other ways and were possibly told the same as you, but got on with it. I think we blind people understand where you are coming from.

I believe our magazine wastes too much space with your sort of editorial and all the information that is given out so regularly about elections. Surely if we were told there were vacancies here or there, and if one is interested, then applying to head office for further information would be enough. It would save a lot of space and then there would be place for you to tell us of what the Association is doing. I believe as an Association we only represent a very small number of the overall Blindness membership. The magazine could be used as a stimulus if it were more informative as to what is being done. So many non-members ask what does the Association do. Here is our chance to tell them and maybe they will become more interested.

I congratulate Geraldine and her group for putting together all that they have re changing our constitution. I am in awe of that sort of person because I find it difficult to concentrate when reading it, let alone being able to put it all together...

Experiencing a Whole New World

From Hannah Pascoe

It's taken me a few years to truly comprehend the challenges I face on a day to day basis. I like to think I take everything on with optimism and willingness to have a go. Right from losing the remaining vision I grew up with, I refused to give up just because I couldn't see. Well as difficult as it was, my unconscious refused to let me give up and so I pushed forward to get past the initial stages of living as a fully blind individual. A big part of that was having so many other people to look up to and the support of many from Whanau, friends, Mahi to other members in the Southland blind, and sporting communities. Receiving my first guide dog was the icing on the cake – thanks sweet Cora dog.

Another part which has now become a massive part of my life is keeping fit. It started as just a 20 minute run on the treadmill to run out day to day frustrations and after a while it started to become enjoyable. Following one opportunity after another I decided that since I could endure blindness, I could endure a marathon too and have now completed 16 to date. These included the New York Marathon which were my first and second. Running really gave me a new appreciation for life and I loved the freedom the road gave me. One highlight was running 2km free of the tether during the Queenstown marathon. I remember passing runners who had no idea I was running blind. For one moment, I was just another runner and no different from anyone else slogging it to the end.

Because of the confidence and freedom running gave me, I had a great idea that since I could learn to run marathons, I could learn to swim again too in order to complete a triathlon. It's where I realised wanting something isn't as easy as just making up your mind. I underestimated what the challenges of learning to swim again involved. I then begun to truly appreciate what it meant to be blind.

Yes I could swim as a sighted kid but swimming blind was a completely new ball game from technique to actually swimming straight and in the open water with no lanes to boot. Thankfully with some creative teaching and research we came up with some strategies and with amazing support, completed two Challenge Wanaka half Ironman events consisting of a 1.9km open-water swim, 90km tandem ride and a 21.1km off road run.

What sets someone who is blind apart from someone who isn't? From completing all this, I've learned that planning is everything and the relationships we build with people is crucial. We don't have the luxury of chucking on our shoes or pumping our tyres then taking off whenever we feel like it. We have to think about weather, bus timetables and other people's schedules. How long it will take to get somewhere, knowing where we are going, navigation and the time it will take to get it all done. The realistic fact is organisation and people play a massive part in helping us to live full and happy lives so it's important to me to appreciate every person that comes into our lives.

Going for a run or tandem ride these days is like going on a big gossip session. On one marathon occasion in Christchurch, I had a guide who had never met a blind person before so was nervous – naturally. What started out as a sighted person guiding a blind person finished as two equal runners crossing the finish line together and his perception changed forever. Last year, a friend had a go at piloting the tandem and found herself elated after 60km of bunch riding. On her second ride she piloted a 240km charity bunch ride – the very next week from Queenstown to Invercargill to help raise funds for the Lakes District rescue Helicopter, and those are just two examples. I have a book full.

I think of it as doing a small part for our community – educating one person at a time to change perceptions to bridge the gap between able and disabled and bring us closer together.

So given all I have learned this far, I am now learning all about competitive racing and what it means to be in high performance as a blind athlete. I recently returned from the World Para Track Champs in Rio de Janeiro coming fifth in pursuing and match racing. It was a completely unique experience being in such an environment where it's all about winning and not just participating. It's where I learned another piece about managing blindness. As I am so used to having my independence, it felt strange having it taken away given we were in a foreign non-English speaking country in a performance capacity. Nevertheless it was one unforgettable experience and I look forward to smashing this too. All going well, claim a medal at the end of it.

There will always be a new challenge to face. The key is how you accept that challenge which is where I'm at in my own journey. Especially when it comes to challenges you don't see until it's in front of you. Sometimes it can be exciting and other times daunting but the important thing is to give it a go because you never know. 'The best is yet to come'.

Editor Comment: I welcome Hannah's contribution. Sometimes we who have been blind from birth aren't cognisant of the struggles of those who lose sight at a later stage of life, keep on keeping on. Hannah I will follow your career with great interest.

Armistice Day Coin – keep me, spend me, remember me

Reserve Bank of New Zealand

In October this year the Reserve Bank will issue a new colour circulating legal tender 50 cent coin to mark the centenary of Armistice Day. It will work with Blind Citizens NZ on how best to recognise the new coin so you can keep it and not spend it.

The coin will hold the same value as the standard 50 cent coin so you can use it as you would a normal 50-cent coin.

This coin follows the ANZAC coin minted in 2015 to mark the centenary of New Zealand's efforts in WW1 and to support New Zealand's WW100 initiatives and events.

It does not replace the existing 50-cent coin. It will be accepted in coin and vending machines, and will be legal tender like all the coins minted by the Reserve Bank.

The coin design and appearance: The size and thickness of the coin is the same as the existing 50 Cent coin. The only change is to the face of the coin – the side where you would usually find an engraving of Captain Cook's ship, The Endeavour.

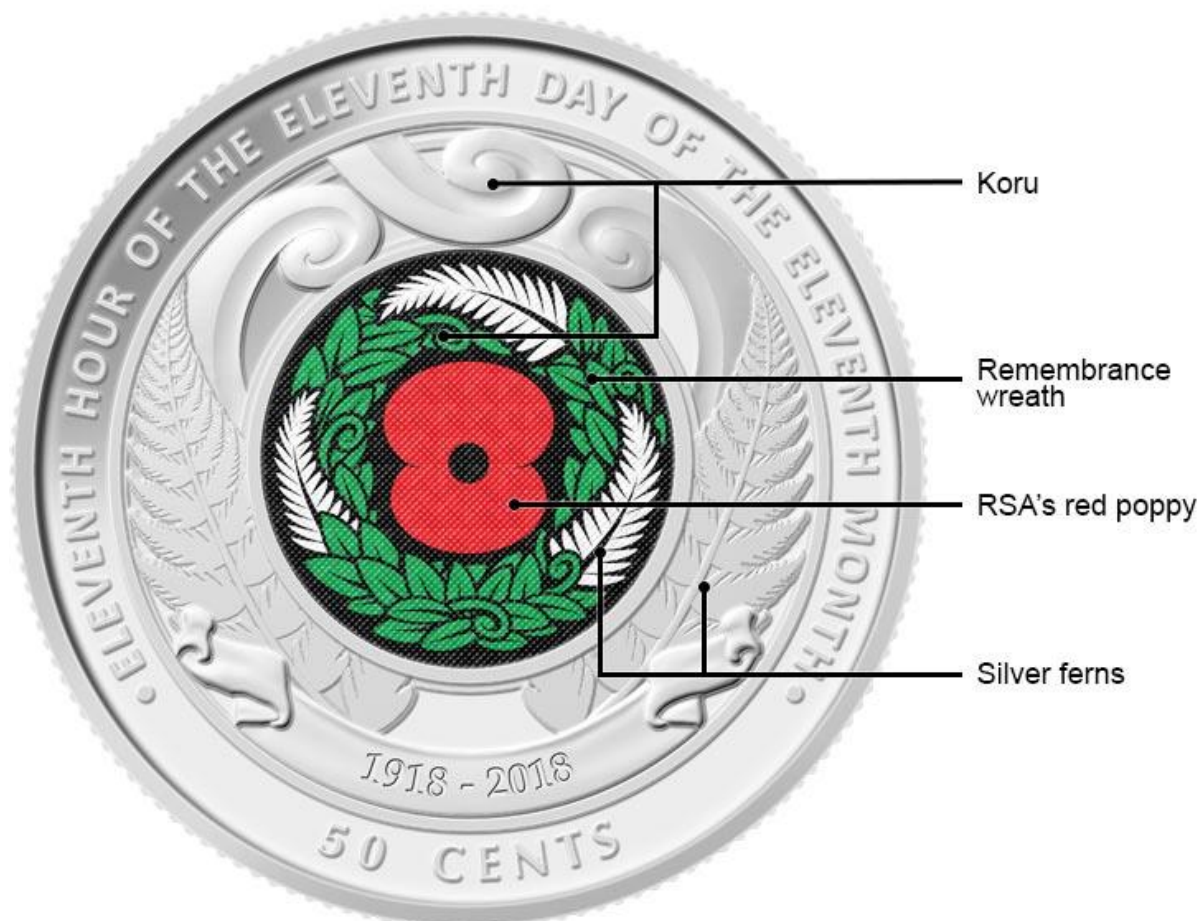
Description: Replacing The Endeavour on the face of the coin is the official RSA's red poppy. This colourful red poppy sits in a circle in the middle of the coin surrounded by a free formed green remembrance wreath that has incorporated the silver fern and koru as strong New Zealand elements. The printed silver ferns on the wreath represent the past, present, and future. They also reflect the three armed forces in New Zealand. In the outer circle, surrounding the poppy, there is an engraved silver fern on each side of the coin – these reflect New Zealand's national identity. An engraved koru pattern representing new beginnings sits at the top. Then at the bottom a commemorative ribbon with the years of the centenary 1918-2018 appear. Engraved around the outer edge of the face of the coin in upper case from left to right are the words "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" with text "50 Cents" sitting across the bottom of the face of the coin. While the face of the coin is almost smooth, if you explore the centre of the coin where the poppy etc., sits in the circle, you may feel a slight variation in texture where the outside of the circle blends into the band that surrounds it.

A portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II appears on the reverse

Coin availability: The majority of the coins (approximately 1.6 million) will be released into circulation from 1 October 2018. The coins will be distributed to New Zealand retailers throughout the country.

To maximise the chance of receiving a coin, and to be fair to everyone, the coins will be divided between regions based on population. You may just get one in your change. The public and groups with a vested interest will be able to order a limited number of coins through the NZ Post website in the second half of the year.

Below in colour, is a photo of the commemorative coin.



Stay Informed by using the Blind Foundation's Telephone Information Service

Note to readers: Blind Citizens NZ has a National Feedback Line on the Blind Foundation's Telephone Information Service. We utilise this as a way to share information about what we are doing, and to gather feedback from our members. This is a great way for anyone that does not have a computer or internet access to remain involved in our work. Our thanks to the Blind Foundation's Library and Studio team, in particular Geraldine Lewis and Joe Gilfillan for this article.

TIS – the Telephone Information Service – offers another option for people to access a huge quantity of information.

Users begin by calling either their local TIS number, or in some cases an 0800 number. TIS will then ask for a user number, and then a 5-digit PIN. Both of these can be set up by the Blind Foundation National Contact Centre – 0800 24 33 33.

Once logged on, users use their telephone keypads to choose from a variety of Menus to navigate their way to the info they want. In addition to accessing information, TIS also has a number of places where callers can leave messages for various people or groups. Organisations running elections or referenda can even use TIS as a Voting Booth.

As an example, the Main Menu offers Library information and book ordering options to people who press 1. TV watchers find programmes for all the channels listed in The Listener by pressing 2. Information about the Blind Foundation is under 3. Many regional groups have spaces on 4. Community Groups for Blind people – such as Blind Citizens NZ, Taaururangi and Kapo Maori Aotearoa are on 5. Community Information is under 6, Government information 7, and there are commercial services on 8.

Daily Papers from NZME and Stuff are updated early every morning in time for people to read at the start of their day if they choose option 9.

Once callers have made their choice from those 9 options, they are offered further choices that will lead them to the material they are interested in.

Much of the content on TIS is narrated by wonderful volunteers all around the country. There is also some material – such as the newspapers – which is synthesised, enabling it to be available much faster than were it to be narrated.

After using TIS a few times, it really does become very easy to find your way round, all controlled using the buttons on your telephone. And it's worth remembering callers can't 'break' TIS! If you push a wrong button, you just end up where you weren't expecting to be and simply push 0 to go back. And if you become terribly lost, just hang up and dial in again.

Editor comment: I, like many other blind members of Blind Citizens NZ have enjoyed TIS. I was the Wellington Branch's Feedback Coordinator in the early 1990's and have just recently assumed this mantle again. I believe TIS is a great feat of cooperation and coordination between Blind Citizens NZ and the Blind Foundation. One feature I use daily is being able to access directory service at no charge. When Telecom was privatised they made the statement that "they would love to offer blind people free access to directory service but couldn't find a way to do this." Clive Lansink called their bluff by saying and proving that this could be done. I am eternally grateful to Clive for this service. One other aspect which will always bring a smile even on the worst day is hearing Clive say "this option is not available".

2018 Annual General Meeting and Conference

Raising Expectations: is blindness defining who we are?

From Rose Wilkinson, Executive Officer

Plans are progressing for this year's AGM and Conference at the Brentwood Hotel, Wellington, and we hope yours are too. We are in Wellington at the Brentwood Hotel for this year's three-day event (Friday 5 to Sunday 7 October). Registration forms are available from our National Office, website, branches or network coordinators. Updates regarding speakers and topics will be publicised via various organisational mechanisms during August.

If you will be a first-time attendee, you may be pleased to learn that following the success of last year's opportunity, the Board has once again decided to offer an **incentive for financial members who will be first-time attendees** i.e. financial assistance will be available. The number of members and the level of financial support will be determined by the Board once it knows the extent of interest.

The number of members and the level of financial support will be determined by the Board once it knows the extent of interest. If you will be a first-time attendee, you should submit your expression of interest to the Executive Officer Rose Wilkinson by 20 August 2018. Criteria set by the Board requires that you are a financial Ordinary (voting) Member of Blind Citizens NZ, that this will be your first time attending a national AGM and Conference, that you are interested in being part of this year's three-day event and can make a financial contribution. The extent of financial contributions is contingent on attending the three-day AGM and Conference on either a daily basis or staying at the Brentwood Hotel, and will be coordinated by the Executive Officer on the Board's behalf. If you will be a first-time attendee and plan on coming this year, then please **send your expression of interest to National Office** for the attention of the Executive Officer, via any of the following options:

- **Email:** admin@abcnz.org.nz and put “first-time attendee” in the subject line;
- **Post:** PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242;
- **Fax:** 04-389-0033

Additionally, to support members who want to come and to avoid you making a one-off large payment all at once, we once again offer a payment plan to suit your budget. This means you can make regular payments so that your time at the Brentwood hotel is paid for before the AGM and Conference starts on 5 October.

Workbridge Council Representative

We are calling for expressions of interest to fill our representative position on the Workbridge Council. The term of office is decided by the Board on a case-by-case basis commencing with a one-year term.

Interested, financial members should submit an expression of interest along with supporting information by 20 August 2018. Your extensive skills and expertise should 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.

Representing Blind Citizens NZ in this position will involve attending a minimum of three one-day meetings per year in Wellington (actual costs are paid). If you are interested in finding more out about this representative position, please contact the Executive Officer Rose Wilkinson at National Office (contact details at the end of this Focus issue).

Expressions of interest / applications should be received no later than 4pm, Monday 20 August 2018, for the attention of the Executive Officer via:

Email: admin@abcnz.org.nz; or

Post to PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242

Blind Citizens NZ Prestigious Awards

Call for Nominations

Nominations for the Beamish Memorial Award, and the Johnston Cup for Leadership are called for. Criteria for each of these awards are provided to guide your thinking towards making a nomination. For each award, only financial Ordinary (voting) Members of Blind Citizens NZ, branches, and the Board may make nominations. These should be sent to the National Office for the attention of the Executive Officer (details are located at the end of this Focus issue). The close of nominations is advised in conjunction with each of the two awards.

Beamish Memorial Award: The Beamish Memorial Award is the single most prestigious award that Blind Citizens NZ has the honour and privilege of bestowing on anyone within the organisation. It can only be awarded to an Ordinary Member of Blind Citizens NZ who has made an outstanding contribution to society in their particular field of service to the community. If you know of someone whose outstanding efforts you believe should be recognised, and they meet the criteria we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity. The name of the person you are nominating, their contact details, along with information and reasons in support of the nomination are needed.

Nominations close and must be received at Blind Citizens NZ's National Office by 4pm, Thursday 30 August 2018.

Johnston Cup for Leadership: this award encourages and recognises leadership potential from amongst members of Blind Citizens NZ.

The intent of this award is to encourage those with leadership potential to accept leadership responsibilities inside and outside the blindness community; and to develop an environment where they can be recognised for leadership in their field of endeavour.

There will be members of Blind Citizens NZ whose leadership potential has benefited the community through their efforts. Provided they are Ordinary (voting) Members of Blind Citizens NZ, and you believe they are worthy of being nominated for this award, all you need to do is to let the Board know. Information in support of the nomination is required. Nominations must be received at National Office by **4pm, Wednesday 22 August 2018**. Contact details for national office are located at the end of this publication.

Blind Citizens NZ 2018 Scheduled Election

Rose Wilkinson, Returning Officer

This is the final reminder about this year's scheduled election. Positions that fall due this year include World Blind Union Representative (held by Paula Waby), and three Member-at-Large positions (held by Andrea Courtney, Murray Peat, and Daniel Phillips). Of note is that:

- people currently in each of these positions are eligible for re-election;
- the term of office for all positions is two years;
- successful candidates will commence their term immediately following the conclusion of this year's Annual General Meeting and Conference;
- the election for all four 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.

Timelines and the procedure for the election of all positions follows. Additional information is available upon request from the National Office and on Blind Citizens NZ's website. Anyone standing for election is encouraged to become familiar with the duties and responsibilities of Board Members. Also, the skills, experience and knowledge needed for these positions.

Contact details for Blind Citizens NZ's National Office and website are located at the end of this Focus issue. Now to the timelines and procedures...

Eligibility: To be nominated for any of these positions you must: live in New Zealand. You must also have been a financial Ordinary Member of Blind Citizens NZ for at least 24 months of the past five years, up to August 2018.

Election timeframes

a) Thursday 16 August 2018, 4pm:

- Nominations for all positions close on this date/time.
Ordinary Members participating in the election (standing for election and/or voting) must be recorded as financial on the National Office member database by this date/time. Candidates must provide their CV when their nomination is sent to the Returning Officer. Nominations 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@abcnz.org.nz

b) Thursday 6 September 2018: ballot material (candidate and voting information) will be despatched from National Office.

c) Tuesday 25 September 2018, 4pm: voting closes. All votes must be received and in the hands of the Returning Officer.

d) Thursday 27 September 2018: vote-counting takes place.

e) Friday 5 October 2018: election outcome announced at Blind Citizens NZ's Annual General Meeting

Completing your nomination: Candidates can complete and submit nominations by paper, or email. The paper form requires the signature of each of the three members involved in the process. Email procedures similarly require the same people to actively confirm their respective role in the nomination process. Candidates opting for the email procedure are required to contact the Returning Officer prior to commencing this process. This is important i.e. instructions unique to the email procedure must be followed.

Once nominations close: if the maximum number of nominations for the four positions is received, no election will be needed. Candidates for those positions will be declared elected unopposed. Otherwise, an election will then be held.

Candidate information: election (ballot) material about candidates is available in large print, audio (CD), braille, by email, and on our National Feedback Line on the Telephone Information Service (TIS). If you are in any doubt about your preferred communication option for Blind Citizens NZ elections, please contact our national office to check.

Voting options: there are three options to choose from. Please note that the way you vote, can be different from the way you choose to receive your election (ballot) material. You can vote using the large print form, the braille-card option, or TIS which offers a truly independent and empowering voting experience. By using TIS, you can independently do all the things you need to do in an election – you hear all about the candidates standing for election, and you cast your vote.

You can also be certain your vote is received on time, something that cannot be assured when using the postal option. To find out more about using TIS to cast your vote, or you are uncertain you are registered with us to do so, please contact our national office.

World Blind Union Forum and United Nations Advocacy Network

Blind Citizens NZ and the Blind Foundation both contribute to the work of the World Blind Union (WBU). Each organisation sends one voting delegate from New Zealand to the WBU assembly meetings, and both organisations take part in the work of the WBU at regional and global levels.

Here in New Zealand, both organisations make up the WBU Forum, a grouping which discusses WBU issues and ensures we act jointly on WBU matters. The WBU Forum meets two-to-three times each year. We know that there are many people who will be interested in what the Forum is working on, and so, from now on, our intent is to publish a summary of our most recent meeting, shortly after it has taken place.

In conjunction with our WBU Forum work, we are publicising an opportunity for a National United Nations Advocacy Champion. This is a voluntary role. The person we appoint to work with us (Blind Foundation and Blind Citizens NZ) will have the opportunity to benefit by becoming member of a regional network where trainings, webinars, and conferences may happen. Also the designated person will learn and gain experience around United Nations and other related work. Full details about the requirements of this voluntary position can be obtained upon request from either Blind Citizens NZ or the Blind Foundation. A fundamental requirement of this role is that you have knowledge and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the work of the World Blind Union, and our involvement in WBU.

If you are interested and would like more information, let us know, we'd love to hear from you – email admin@abcnz.org.nz with **WBU Advocacy Champion** in the subject line. Alternatively, phone our national office for more information. Ideally, expressions of interest should be received by 9am, Friday 31 August 2018.

Obituaries - by Allan Jones

Since our March Focus I have learned of the deaths of two men who were well known to Blind Citizens NZ Owen Wilson from Napier, and JB Munroe formally of Invercargill.

Besides his work with Blind Citizens NZ Owen Wilson was a member of the NZ Bowling Federation. I shared a room with Owen at two Blind Citizens NZ Conferences in the 1990s. One memorable occasion was when Owen asked me to take care of his Guide Dog Falcon while he had a shower. When Owen returned we found that I was looking after two dogs – the second dog escaping from his owner and coming to join us. Owen had a socialistic view on politics and is someone I will miss.

John Baldwin Munroe, referred to as JB Munroe, was a “larger than life character”. He was a labour member of parliament 1972 1975. He then became chief executive of IHC. He was a leading light in the formation of DPA and assisted in persuading television to make the disabled recipients of the 1981 telethon. That telethon raised over \$6 million and was instrumental in the initial financing of Total Mobility. The best conversations I enjoyed with JB were held on planes flying between Wellington and Auckland. His work with DPA, Total Mobility and IHC will be remembered by those of us who knew him.

Personnel - Blind Citizens NZ

Board

- **National President:** Jonathan Godfrey (Management Committee)
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- **Vice President:** Martine Abel-Williamson (Member-at-Large / Management Committee): martine.the1@xtra.co.nz
- Andrea Courtney (Member-at-Large): andycoute@gmail.com
- Geraldine Glanville (Member-at-Large / Management Committee): gbglanville@xtra.co.nz
- Shaun Johnson (Member-at-Large): shaun.zdots@xtra.co.nz
- Murray Peat (Member-at-Large): phone 021 081 66126;
murraytp@xtra.co.nz
- Daniel Phillips (Member-at-Large); 027 468 3669
- Paula Waby (World Blind Union Representative / Management Committee): paula.waby4@gmail.com

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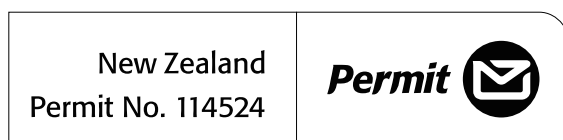
Fax: 04-389-0030; Internet: <http://www.blindcitizensnz.org.nz>

Email: admin@abcnz.org.nz

Executive Officer, 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

If undelivered within 14 days please return to
Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand inc.
PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242.



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