



Blind Citizens NZ

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Inc

Annual General Meeting and Conference

Friday 13 October and Saturday 14 October 2023

Challenging Others, Challenging Ourselves

**Naumi Auckland Airport Hotel
153, Kirkbride Road, Mangere, Auckland**

Funding, Sponsorship, and Support

Blind Citizens NZ is extremely appreciative of the extent of support we receive via funding, sponsorship, and in-kind support. We take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank:

Accessible Information Communications (AI Comms)

Blind Low Vision NZ

Intopia

JC Computing

Little Rocket

Microsoft New Zealand, Rod Park Technology

Strategist

Ministry of Social Development

Optics Magazine

Stebbings

South Canterbury Branch Blind Citizens NZ

TBD Digital

Blind Citizens NZ Members and Supporters, many of whom prefer to remain anonymous

Friday 13 October and Saturday 14 October 2023

Challenging Others, Challenging Ourselves

Sessions

1. Friday 13 October

- 9:00am to 9:25am: Mihi Whakatau | Welcome | Roll Call
- 9:25am to 9:45am: Official Opening
- 9:45am to 10:15am: Kapa Haka Group | Mangere Bridge School (Audio Described by AudioDescribed Aotearoa)
- 10:15am to 10:45am: Morning Tea
- 10:45am to 11:30am: Guest Presenter
- 11:35am to 12:05pm: National President
- 12:05pm to 12:30pm: Business
- 12:30pm to 1:45pm: Lunch
- 1:45pm to 3:15pm: Guest Presenter | Business
- 3:15pm to 3:45pm: afternoon tea
- 3:45pm to 5:30pm: Guest Presenter | Business
- 5.40 pm to 6.10pm: President's half-hour
- 6.15 pm to 7.45pm: Dinner
- 7.45pm to 9:00pm Business | Whakakapi | Adjournment

2. Saturday 14 October

- 9:00 am to 9:20 am: Mihi Whakatau | Welcome | Roll Call
- 9:20 am to 10:20 am: Business
- 10:20 am to 10:50 am: Morning Tea
- 10:50 am to 12:30 pm: Guest Speaker
- 12:30 pm to 1:45 pm: Lunch
- 1:45 pm to 3:20 pm: Guest Speaker
- 3:20 pm to 3:45 pm: Afternoon Tea
- 3:45 pm to 5:00pm: Business
- 5:00pm to 5:15pm: Whakakapi | Adjournment
- 7.00 pm: Dinner | Poroporoake | Closure at the end of the evening's festivities

Annual General Meeting Agenda Items

We advise:

- The order of agenda items as presented may change.
- The schedule of guest speakers is located at the end of this section.
- Resolutions Committee - there will be reports from the Resolutions Committee as required throughout the Annual General Meeting and Conference.

1. Apologies

2. Obituaries

3. Appointments

3.1 Resolutions Committee

3.2 Returning Officer

3.3 Scrutineers

4. National President's Address

5. Annual General Meeting

5.1 Outcome of 2023 Scheduled Election: two Member-at-Large positions | Report from Returning Officer Rose Wilkinson.

5.2 Confirmation of Minutes of Annual General Meeting and Conference, 7-8 October 2022.

5.3 Confirmation of Minutes of Special Meeting of Members, 7 June 2023.

5.4 Matters Arising from Minutes of 2022, not otherwise addressed within the Agenda (Attachment "A").

- 5.5** Notification of items of other business – the inclusion of items that that have arisen since the close of the agenda on 30 August 2023 is at the discretion of the Chair.
- 5.6** Annual Report (Attachment “B”)
- National President | Chief Executive (combined)
 - National Office, Performance Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2023 (Moore Markhams Wellington Audit)
 - Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ)
 - The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT)
 - Workbridge
 - World Blind Union (WBU)
 - World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Accessible Books Consortium (ABC)
- 5.7** Consolidated Audit of National Office and Branches, Performance Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2023, Moore Markhams Wellington Audit (Attachment “C”)
- 5.8** Appointment of Auditor (recommended by the Board)
- 5.9** Remit (Attachment “D”)
- 5.10** Blind Citizens NZ Constitution - Review and necessary amendments (Attachment “E”)
- 5.11** Blind Low Vision NZ Library Service – Is this the Flagship Service we think it should be? (Attachment “F”)
- 5.12** Blind Citizens NZ Strategic Plan 2023-2026 (Attachment “G”)
- 5.13** Representative Appointments (Attachment “H”)

5.14 Branch and Network Representative Reports (Attachment “I”)

- Auckland Branch
- Rotorua Branch
- Whanganui Branch
- Taranaki Network
- Wellington Branch
- Nelson Branch
- South Canterbury Branch
- Otago Network
- Southland Branch
- Guide Dog Handler Special Interest Network
- Te Tiriti O Waitangi Advisory Group (verbal update)

5.15 Endorsement of International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) East Asia Regional Conference 2023 Yogyakarta Resolution
Reasonable Accommodation and Accessibility in Education for Students with Visual Impairment (Attachment “J”)

- 6.** 2024 Annual General Meeting and Conference (Attachment “K”)
- 7.** Other Business as notified in Item 5.5
- 8.** General Business (time permitting)

Friday 13 October

9.00 am – 9:25am	Mihi Whakatau Welcome Roll Call
9:25am – 9:45am	Paula Tesoriero, Chief Executive Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People
9:45am – 10:15am	Kapa Haka Audio Described Performance
10:15am – 10:45am	Morning Tea
10:45am – 11:30am	Ben O'Meara, Deputy Chief Executive Policy, Strategy and Partnerships, Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People
11:35am – 12:05pm	National President's Address to AGM and Conference
12:05pm – 12:30pm	Business
12:30pm – 1:45pm	Lunch
1:45pm – 2:30pm	Paul Hutcheson, Mediator and Facilitator
2:35pm – 3:15pm	Business
3:15pm – 3:45pm	Afternoon Tea
3:45pm – 4:30pm	Clive Lansink, Chair RNZFB Board of Trustees
4:30pm – 5:30pm	Business
5:40pm - 6:10pm	President's half-hour
6.15pm - 7:45pm	Evening meal Dinner
7.45pm – 9:00pm	Whakakapi Adjournment

Saturday 14 October

9.00 am – 9:20am	Mihi Whakatau Welcome Roll Call
9:20am – 10:20am	Business
10:20am – 10:50am	Morning Tea
10:50am – 11:40am	Robbie Francis-Watene, Co-Founder Lucy Foundation
11:40am – 12:30pm	Prudence Walker, Kaihautū Tika Hauātanga Disability Rights Commissioner
12:30pm – 1:45pm	Lunch
1:45pm – 2:35pm	Business
2:35pm – 3:20pm	Joy Lanini, National Manager Connections and Funding, Your Way Kia Roha
3:20pm – 3:45pm	Afternoon Tea
3:45pm – 5:00pm	Business
5:00pm – 5:15pm	Whakakapi Adjournment
7:00	Dinner Poroporoake Closure at the end of the evening's festivities

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Attachment “A”

Matters Arising from the 2022 Annual General Meeting and Conference

Introduction

The Board considered outcomes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting and Conference at its Annual Planning Meeting in November 2022.

These, along with other items already on the work programme, were by agreement given a priority level of either:

- High – means the issue | activity will be progressed as a matter of priority (work will happen).
- Medium – watch for opportunities and act.
- Low – low threshold for action i.e. will not go hunting the issue, but remain vigilant i.e. if something is heard or an influencing person/entity asks, it will be pursued and action taken.

A brief commentary is provided on items requiring an update, where there is no reference anywhere else in the Annual General Meeting and Conference agenda. Note that there may be updates to provide about some items.

1. **Melatonin:** Blind Citizens NZ has reached out to Pharmac and Health NZ for initial advice. There is nothing substantive to report at this time. In addition the Board supports holding an online hui as a mechanism to obtain feedback from members about using Melatonin. While the Remit is a starting point extending the discussion more widely for engagement with members of the community will provide useful evidence in support of the Remit. A hui on this item is to be arranged.

- 2. Co-Governance and Equal Partnership:** The Board resolved its approach to this topic would be to:
- convey the outcome of the AGM and Conference to the RNZFB Board with a view to asking how it wishes to enter into this discussion with Blind Citizens NZ to find a way forward to discuss these topics;
 - share this outcome with Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People and the Office for Disability Issues within Whaikaha, advising this is what blind people are expecting of service providers;
 - socialise the idea with the Health and Disability Commission and also the Office for Seniors; and
 - noted the decision reached already with respect to a letter to go to the RNZFB Board about Client Services and Co-Design and while a potential overlap the message is about consistency of approach.

This work is ongoing – the RNZFB Board of Directors considered the letter from Blind Citizens NZ outlining the situation. The Board of Directors has undertaken to bring the matter forward to blindness organisations for discussion. Timing for this to happen is unknown at this time.

- 3. Enabling Good Lives only available until 65 years of age:** The age-related approach is considered discriminatory and has been raised consistently in a range of hui relating to the Enabling Good Lives and Transformation of Services mahi. The application of the cut-off at 65 years feeds into other funding opportunities and these are also consistently questioned. Lack of funding appears to be the biggest challenge. Blind Citizens NZ continues to advocate for the removal of age-related discriminatory criteria.

4. **Blood Glucose Monitoring for Diabetics with Smart Phones::** Awareness raising and advocacy in relation to this item is ongoing.

Government agencies approached include Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand and Ministry of Social Development. The Board also considered the potential of holding an online Hui to broaden engagement and gather information.

5. **Resolution 3 | Major Disruption to Consumer Organisations' Peer Support and Recreation Activities:** Supported by information for the 2022 AGM and Conference and additional information gathered following that event, the RNZFB Board of Directors were informed of this resolution and related concerns.

In its response to the Board of Blind Citizens NZ, the following information was conveyed <begins> The Board noted the views of Blind Citizens NZ alleging that the Board's property principles are not always being followed by management with regard to use of buildings and facilities.

Thank you for bringing these matters to our attention. We will discuss your concerns with Management to ensure effective and consistent implementation of the Board's property principles.

We would like to clarify from the outset that the practice of charging for security guards for more than four hours on site was discontinued some time ago so this should not now be happening. Also there is no requirement for consumer organisations to have liability insurance.

You may already know that the Board has already committed to reviewing the BLVNZ alcohol policy and in the meantime the Board has clarified that there is no prohibition of responsible alcohol consumption on BLVNZ facilities, as a genuine part of peer support and social activities that some consumer organisations run for their members. We are also committed to addressing health and safety matters, including the presence of security guards on site. <ends>

6. Resolution 4 | Literacy through Braille: information from Blind Citizens NZ 2022 AGM and Conference was conveyed to the then BLVNZ Chief Executive. Supporting information was included with this specific request <begins> What Blind Citizens NZ is requesting: that our two organisations work collegially to address the multitude of elements that fall into these areas of concern:

- full implementation of the Strategic Framework for the Provision of Braille Services;
- ensure there is continued access to the Youth Library and Braille materials produced under the new Ministry of Education contract.

A copy of the letter was also sent to the RNZFB Board of Directors. While the situation remains outstanding for a fulsome response the RNZFB Board advised that <begins> The Board noted that you have addressed your queries regarding implementation of the braille strategy to the Chief Executive Mr Mulka. The Board has asked the Chief Executive to provide the Board with an update on the implementation of the braille strategy. <ends>

7. Communications' Plan: Amongst key factors considered by the Board and Chief Executive when operationalising this plan are resources.

When the Plan was initially created in 2019 this was achieved under expert guidance. The possibility at the time of a small position that would support the Chief Executive and fulfil some of the functions was a factor. This happened for a short while during 2019 as we tested in particular, the creation of a monthly newsletter that would go to members and stakeholders.

The Board and Chief Executive reviewed the Plan to ensure this remains fit for purpose. Endeavours to hold true to the Plan are happening. Although the Remit focussed on communications at a national level, the Board and Chief Executive's review considered involvement of Branches and Networks when raising awareness of organisational items.

While there are areas for improvement, for the limited resource Blind Citizens NZ has there have been gains.

Blind Citizens NZ Communication Strategy recognises we are a small organisation with a limited budget and it recognised also, there may not be ongoing funding to support the Plan. This is why it was designed the way it is. Organisational communications overall reconcile back to the Strategy. Ways of amplifying Blind Citizens NZ's voice are ongoing.

Bearing in mind resources i.e. we are a small organisation with limited resource and budget, and taking into account feedback from members, channels identified for the Plan and how these are perceived are:

- Blind Discuss Email List: well utilised;
- Member Forum Email List: still relatively new but the worth is recognised;

- National Feedback Line: there is information being publicised however more contributions are needed along with ongoing promotion of TellMe.
- Focus Magazine: well utilised, good presentation, and ways of separating out content for online access have been implemented.
- Email update to Members: we have been doing email blasts but can do better;
- Email updates to stakeholders: this is happening however more regular communications are needed.
- Facebook: we are tracking well and page likes and followers have increased in the past 12 months. When comparing with other similar sized organisations Blind Citizens NZ's situation is comparable.
- Twitter (now 'X'): when the Plan was developed, twitter was not identified as a tool many people from the blind community were using. However it is useful for informing stakeholders and getting messages out to people. We need to do more in this space. We are aware of other options such as Mastodon.
- LinkedIn: More effort in this area is required and being worked on.
- YouTube – this is a one-way repository and is used in this fashion.
- News media: we attract media from time to time, and when opportunities arise, we do push information out. We can do better.

In conclusion, we can always do better. However social media is a platform that those who use Facebook etc., can use. Liking and sharing our Facebook posts helps raise our profile. Likewise with our National Feedback Line on TellMe.

Attachment “B”

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Inc

Annual Report

1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Board

National President	Jonathan Godfrey
Vice President	Chrissy Fern
Board Members	Martine Abel-Williamson
	Wendy Chiang
	Andrea Courtney
	Tewai Halatau
	Paula Waby

Staff

Chief Executive	Rose Wilkinson
Administrative Support	Cameron Gunn
Finance Assistant	Mary Yee
Accessible Information Advisor	Thomas Bryan

Blind Citizens NZ Branches

Auckland	Headquarters
Nelson	Rotorua
Southland	South Canterbury
Whanganui	Wellington

Blind Citizens NZ Geographical and Special Interest Networks

Otago	Taranaki
Guide Dog Handlers	

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- Workbridge Council
- World Blind Union
- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Accessible Books Consortium (ABC)

Blind Citizens NZ

Report to Members 2023

Introduction

As we begin preparing for our joint report to the Annual General Meeting and Conference, we each look back at the year's mahi. Pinpointing areas we believe Blind Citizens NZ has made 'a blind bit of difference' is not always that easy – however it's what we do and continue to chip away at that often gets results when least expected. From Blind Citizens NZ's perspective, organisationally we believe that it is often the combined efforts of everyone being in synch that actually contributes towards positive change. That said, it's fair to say that we often look for evidence in outcomes of where we might be able to pinpoint Blind Citizens NZ's influence.

Annually after each AGM and Conference, the Board considers outcomes, and factors these for consideration at the Annual Planning Meeting. While there will be themes that indicate where we are doing well and | or can do better, it's important to know these are measured against our Strategic Plan goals and objectives. Of course our current plan comes to an end this year. Having reached out to you all for feedback to our next Strategic Plan and implementing some suggestions, the Board adopted the new Strategic Plan at its August 2023 meeting. We are socialising this with you all during our AGM and Conference.

Progress against our Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Plan sets out the aspirations and areas blind Citizens NZ is committed to making a blind bit of difference. This includes our purpose and that Blind Citizens NZ exists to give voice to the aspirations and lived

experiences of blind, deafblind, low vision, and vision-impaired people living in New Zealand (referred to as blind). Our report provides commentary about the actions we have taken in the past 12 months to respond to goals and their associated outcome statements.

Goal 1: Blind people live in an accessible, equitable and inclusive society.

Even before the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill was introduced into Parliament in July 2022, Blind Citizens NZ advocated and worked alongside our colleagues in both the blindness and disability sector advocating for positive change. When it came time to make submissions late in 2022, we supported our members and others from the blind community to make their individual voices heard and we were heard in numbers. In our view we believe it's fair to say that the majority of blind people who made a submission were Blind Citizens NZ members. Blind Citizens NZ is on record expressing our disappointment that the Select Committee did not act or respond to the voluminous response from disabled people. Instead it returned a report that after its first reading, the Minister for Disability Issues set aside until after the election. We will see if and | or how this legislation will be progressed after the election.

It's important to remember that legislation is not an end in itself. Active advocacy efforts will still be required no matter what the legislative landscape looks like. Regardless of what happens, the reality is there is work to be done and Blind Citizens NZ will be ready to continue our mahi in this space.

Efforts continue to be made in some centres which have seen improvements in the accessibility of public transport systems. We take this opportunity to recognise efforts by members within each of our Wellington and Auckland Branches. In these two cities audio

announcements on trains has been evident for a while. The introduction of audio announcements on buses is considered relatively new and contributes towards a more accessible experience across each of these public transport systems. In conjunction with the achievements locally there is continued effort at a national level through government agencies such as Waka Kotahi and the Ministry of Transport to achieve national consistency.

Audio Description is an area of work that continues to receive attention. Our work with Able and NZ On Air includes advocacy for increased funding to support growing the hours of audio described television programme content and funding. Our approach is multi-targeted and extends well beyond television. It includes live theatre, museums, art galleries, movies. We have networks across providers, producers, funders, and the Government.

Regarding the 2023 Census, Blind Citizens NZ's efforts have been extensive and ongoing since the day the last Census was launched in 2018. The work in which we have been engaged with Statistics NZ has influenced positive changes that have benefited blind people independently accessing information both leading into, and during the 2023 Census. Blind Citizens NZ has been recognised publicly for our ongoing efforts in this area.

Accessible EFTPOS terminals is an area in which Blind Citizens NZ has been involved since early 2000. Networks were ramped up in 2019-2020 and we continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure terminals are accessible.

Goal 2: The community's response to blindness is reflected in affirmative actions and attitudes.

Social media platforms are utilised to publicise specific work streams and collect information to inform our work.

Our Facebook Page and members on our public email list have once again increased during the past 12 months. Blind Citizens NZ's Facebook posts are paying dividends in terms of raising awareness of Blind Citizens NZ and promoting our work – the number of followers and 'likes' continues to increase.

Collaborating with like-minded organisations to influence consistent messaging about blind pedestrians and their safety remains topical. E-scooters and other wheeled devices that use footpaths and intersect with pedestrians are high on this list of concerns for blind pedestrians. In our advocacy and keeping blind people involved in our mahi, we have worked alongside the Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA) and Living Streets Aotearoa to present a petition banning E-scooters from footpaths. Clearly we have more to do to convince the powers that be that footpaths are for pedestrians!

Goal 3: Blind people advocate on both a personal and systemic level:

Our approach to Goal 3 involves:

- providing and supporting advocacy training; and
- demonstrating through collective action, how blind people can improve their life, and the lives of others.

Primarily our focus on this goal is highlighting examples of nationally-run virtual opportunities that reinforce collective action and that advocacy happens at many levels.

Providing opportunities for blind people to come together and create a safe space for them to share their views, experiences and whatever it is that is asked for, is vital. It's important to mention that when we talk about 'virtual' opportunities we don't just mean these are for people with all the whizz bang technology – people can phone in using their landline or mobile phone. Equally important is that we welcome all blind people – these opportunities are not just for our members. What we do need to do though is to plan these further ahead than we have been doing and making sure that we reach as many of our members as possible.

We have already mentioned how we supported blind people to independently make submissions in response to the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. For several people this was the first time they had ever made a submission!

Goal 4: Blind people receive the services they need to approach everyday life with independence, confidence and dignity.

In the second half of 2022, the RNZFB Independent Inquiry drew to a close. The RNZFB Board made its views known to the community. From Blind Citizens NZ's perspective we believe this made it clear that the RNZFB Board understood the issues brought forward could not just be closed off and consigned to the past. We are yet to see much substantive progress as a result of the Inquiry, but Blind Citizens NZ has put forward concerns we feel remain unresolved.

In mid-2023, we all learned that the Chief Executive Blind Low Vision NZ was winding up his time with the organisation by "mutual agreement". Mindful the announcement identified this was a mutually agreeable

outcome for the RNZFB Board and former Chief Executive, situations such as this are inevitable in the event a Board and its sole employee are in conflict. It's important to emphasise that Blind Citizens NZ did not create the problems between BLVNZ staff and senior management. What we did do was act on the numerous unhappy experiences brought to our attention. We stayed true to our core business (advocacy) and we acted responsibly. We reported these instances to the RNZFB Board and our advocacy ensured that anyone who wanted their views heard was given the chance to do so. It's unfortunate that Blind Citizens NZ seems to have been blamed by others for the demise of a Chief Executive. We did not create the conflict between the RNZFB Board and the former Chief Executive. Instead, and in order to protect the future of the services blind people rely on, Blind Citizens NZ committed significant resources to helping put things to right. Our job has not ended because we are still waiting for the outcomes of the promised services review. We can at least say that Blind Citizens NZ has ensured the inter-organisational relationship has not been tarnished by the words or actions of third parties.

After many years of seeking improvements to the Equipment Service, we now see a brand new way for blind people to purchase the tools they need. Getting the service that is actually needed is still a work in progress however. The opportunity for many blind people to receive a \$500 subsidy on purchases made using the new online store might have been taken up by many, but we must still ask 'who missed out, and why'.

Goal 5: Blind Citizens NZ is recognised for its leadership in the blind community, and as a leading Disabled People's Organisation.

Blind Citizens NZ continues to play a pivotal role in the DPO Coalition and the Independent Monitoring Mechanism. A significant effort has been

made by Government to address the Concluding Observations from New Zealand's examination before the UN Committee in August 2022. We cannot and have not accepted that all Government responses are satisfactory, but we do have a plan to see how the situation progresses. The main areas where we see a reluctance for progress to be made at this time relate to special education, some specific health practices, and immigration.

Our contributions to the World Blind Union are best demonstrated on this occasion by our success to host the WBU Executive Committee from 29 May to 2 June 2023 inclusive. This event held at the Brentwood Hotel in Kilbirnie, Wellington brought together WBU delegates from across 22 countries. Our Annual Report is an opportunity to recognise the support we received for our international event from Government officials.

Amongst guests who joined us we enjoyed the company of the Minister for Disability Issues Hon Priyanca Radhakrishna, Paula Tesoriero Chief Executive Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People, and Brian Coffey Director of the then Office for Disability Issues within Whaikaha. We also acknowledge contributions from Kapo Maori Aotearoa and the cultural welcome our international guests experienced. Of note is that it wasn't until the day prior to the official opening on 30 May that we realised it was the first time a WBU event of the magnitude we were privileged to host, had been held in New Zealand.

While on the topic of WBU, Blind Citizens NZ continues to hold both country delegate positions for New Zealand – these are currently held by the National President (primary delegate) and Thomas Bryan (second delegate). Blind Citizens NZ proudly provides Martine Abel-Williamson in her WBU President's position with 'in-kind' and financial support.

Goal 6: Blind Citizens NZ is a listening, receptive and responsive organisation that encourages people to belong.

We have continued to improve the inter-connectedness of blind people through accessible in-person and virtual meeting platforms. ZOOM and conference call facilities are the more specific mechanisms that have been used. These are used both nationally and locally by our Branches, Networks and Guide Dog Handler Special Interest Network. Virtual hui, while not the preferred option to come together, have been invaluable.

Here is a taster of some of the online hui we've run noting that for the majority, we offered two options for each topic:

- Input to inform organisational submission to “Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill” **and** to guide individuals about how to make a submission.
- Engagement to obtain input as Blind Citizens NZ prepared its 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.
- Input and feedback to Blind Citizens NZ’s Membership Subscription Review proposal.
- Engagement to inform organisational representatives attending the Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ Education Sector Workshop which focussed on Education and the Expanded Core Curriculum.
- Braille – engagement to gauge support for the establishment of a special interest network.
- Employment – the new WorkBridge.

The Board completed its Membership Subscription Review. By providing a subscription-free opportunity for blind people who have not paid a subscription since 2018, they might be interested in joining in local and

national activities again. The opportunity means blind people interested in finding out more about Blind Citizens NZ without being committed to paying for membership can do so. The point of difference is that anyone taking advantage of this opportunity is excluded from democratic processes. This one-off opportunity ends at 30 June 2025.

Together with the Te Tiriti o Waitangi Advisory Group, we are making progress on our journey towards being more culturally inclusive. We have been extremely fortunate to have Te Huia Bill Hamilton guide us with our mahi. We are taking small steps towards creating Blind Citizens NZ's tikanga. While we may not always get things right, we are making sure to take whatever time is needed to be confident we do create greater inclusiveness. There is more that will be shared during the AGM and Conference.

Goal 7: Blind Citizens NZ is recognised for what it adds to the blind community and society.

In reporting against this goal, we ask what are the benchmarks for how Blind Citizens NZ determines how we are recognised for what we add to the blind community and society. There is no doubt that we know what we do. When thinking about how others might value our efforts, while this could be measured in a multitude of ways, our experiences demonstrate that Blind Citizens NZ has earned the confidence and trust of those with whom we work and engage. The various supports and acknowledgements we receive are evidence of this.

Employment is paramount for blind job-seekers and | or those in employment and we're proud to share that we responded to numerous requests from those who sought Blind Citizens NZ's assistance. While no two situations are the same, each person has received and benefited from advice and guidance about their respective employment situation.

Our efforts have raised awareness about “Reasonable Accommodations” and what these mean for blind people in their respective workplace situations. Guidance in relation to Job Support and Training Funding (work place support) which has moved from Workbridge to MSD is yet another area that Blind Citizens NZ is recognised for its advocacy, support and guidance. In this context blind job-seekers and those in employment have benefited from both personal and systemic advocacy. When thinking about reasonable accommodations, Blind Citizens NZ’s input (along with others) has influenced the updated document:

Removing barriers: Reasonable accommodation of disabled people in Aotearoa

Blind Citizens NZ is respected for the advice we provide in relation to accessible information. Outcomes of our mahi as part of the All of Government Alternate Formats team continues to benefit blind people. Likewise our small team of ‘testers’ called upon from time-to-time to provide ‘user’ feedback in relation to websites and apps.

The Board conducts robust processes in its appointment of both national and international organisational representatives. In this regard Blind Citizens NZ is respected for the knowledge, expertise and collegiality our organisational representatives demonstrate in their respective positions. You hear from each of them about their mahi and in some instances the extent to about which they are sought after. There is no doubt that Blind Citizens NZ is recognised for our contributions across each and every area in which our representatives are involved.

Topics publicised in Focus are diverse and reflect Blind Citizens NZ’s mahi and the advocacy in which we are engaged. Often we raise issues topical to the blind community such as:

- Changes to the provision of services by Blind Low Vision NZ;

- Experiences submitting to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care;
- Logistics of reading a book of choice – options for blind readers;
- Partnership – teasing out what this means in different environments;
- Awhina House – demolition and communication challenges;
- Questioning the direction of Blind Low Vision NZ;
- Accessible Home Appliances (we were pleased to see this article picked up by BLVNZ's Korero);
- Impact of severe weather events.

Conclusion

Our annual report is an opportunity to acknowledge changes within our National Office and the small team that provide support to the Chief Executive. Puti Rutene Administrative Support resigned in May to enjoy quality time with her whanau. She had been with us for almost eight years and left a huge gap to fill. The National Office team working with and supporting the Chief Executive are Mary Yee Financial Assistant, Thomas Bryan Accessible Information Advisor, and Cameron Gunn Administrative Support – Cameron joined the team mid-September.

As we bring this report to members to a close, it is important to recognise the absolute commitment demonstrated by the Board, staff and our members around the motu. A big thanks to you all – it's the collective efforts of everyone's input that contributes to our organisational successes. What better time to celebrate those wins, however small or large they might be, than at our AGM and Conference.

**Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand
Incorporated**

**National Office
Performance Report
For the year ended 30 June 2023**

Notes to reader

1. A summary of financial information for these accounts can be located at the end of the presentation of the Performance Report for National Office.
2. Page numbering applies solely to the audited Performance Report for National Office, and not page-numbers in this agenda.
3. All statements presented in the Performance Report should be read in conjunction with the respective Notes to the Performance Report.

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Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue			
Donations, fundraising and other similar revenue	1	20,610	7,245
Subscriptions from members	1	809	861
Revenue from providing goods or services	1	357,433	348,550
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	1	21,197	7,712
AGM and Conference	1	26,016	3,177
Total Revenue		426,065	367,545
Expenses			
Expenses related to public fundraising	2	602	682
Volunteer and employee related costs	2	153,347	159,642
Costs related to providing goods or services	2	247,685	179,046
Other expenses	2	45,641	72,812
Total Expenses		447,275	412,182
Operating surplus/(deficit)		(21,210)	(44,637)
Unrealised gain/(loss) on fair value changes		28,724	62,477
Net profit /(loss) for the year		7,514	17,840

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

Assets		2023	2022
		\$	\$
Current Assets			
Bank accounts and cash	3	667,589	648,896
Debtors and prepayments	3	7,582	55,626
Total Current Assets		675,171	704,522
Non-Current Assets			
		2023	2022
		\$	\$
Property, plant and equipment	4	8,880	9,776
Investments	3	1,029,165	995,899
Total Non-Current Assets		1,038,045	1,005,675
Total Assets		1,713,216	1,710,197
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and accrued expenses	3	93,756	55,696
Employee costs payable	3	14,708	26,888
Other current liabilities	3	7,385	37,760
Total Current Liabilities		115,849	120,344
Total Liabilities		115,849	120,344
Total Assets less Total Liabilities (Net Assets)		1,597,367	1,589,853

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

Accumulated Funds	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Accumulated surpluses or (deficits)	5	426,014	467,629
Reserves	5	1,171,353	1,122,224
Total Accumulated Funds		1,597,367	1,589,853



Jonathan Godfrey
National President



Christine Fern
Board Member

Dated: 28 September 2023

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Cash was received from:		
Donations, fundraising and other similar receipts	610	27,245
Subscriptions from members	809	861
Receipts from providing goods or services	386,030	575,295
Interest, dividends and other Investment receipts	21,529	7,379
AGM and Conference	26,017	3,177
Net GST	42,999	96
Cash was applied to:	386,030	575,295
Payments to suppliers and employees	(452,813)	(399,264)
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	25,181	214,789

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Cash Flows

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash was applied to:		
Payments to acquire property, plant and equipment	(1,945)	(1,202)
Payments to purchase investments	(4,543)	3,336
Net Cash Flows from Investing and Financing Activities	(6,488)	2,134
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash	18,693	216,923
Opening Cash	648,896	431,973
Closing Cash	667,589	648,896
This is represented by:		
Bank Accounts and Petty cash	667,589	648,896

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office has elected to apply Tier 3 PBE SFR-A (NFP) Public Benefit Entity Simple Format Reporting - Accrual (Not-For-Profit) on the basis that it does not have public accountability and has total annual expenses of equal to or less than \$2,000,000. All transactions in the Performance Report are reported using the accrual basis of accounting. The Performance Report is prepared under the assumption that the entity will continue to operate in the foreseeable future.

Measurement Base

The measurement base adopted is historical cost with the exception of some investments which are carried at lower of cost or market value.

Presentation Currency

These financial statements are presented in New Zealand dollars (NZD) rounded to the nearest dollar.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated is registered for GST. All amounts are recorded exclusive of GST, except for Debtors and Creditors which are stated inclusive of GST.

Income Tax

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office is a registered charity and is wholly exempt from New Zealand income tax having fully complied with all statutory conditions for these exemptions.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Accounting Policies

Bank Accounts and Cash

Bank accounts and cash in the Statement of Cash Flows comprise all bank balances, on call cash funds and petty cash balances.

Debtors and other Receivables

Debtors and other receivables are measured at their cost less any impairment losses.

Creditors and other Payables

Creditors and other payables are stated at cost.

Property, Plant and Equipment

All property, plant and equipment is measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and impaired losses. Costs include expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the asset.

Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on a diminishing value (DV) basis over the useful life of the asset. Depreciation is charged at rates calculated to allocate the cost or valuation of the asset less any estimated residual value over its remaining useful life:

- Fit-Out 20% DV
- Motor Vehicles 20% DV
- Office equipment 30 - 67% DV
- Furniture and fittings 20% DV

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Accounting Policies

Depreciation methods, useful lives and residual values are reviewed at each reporting date and are adjusted if there is a change in the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset.

Tier 2 PBE Accounting Standards Applied

Financial instruments

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office has elected to apply NFP PBE IPSAS 41 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement for its financial assets. Financial assets are recognised when the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Equity and bond investments are held at market value at balance date. Interest income is recognised in the statement of financial performance using the effective interest rate method.

Dividend income is recognised in the statement of financial performance when the right to receive income is established. For public traded securities this is the ex-dividend date.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office derecognises a financial asset when either the rights to receive cash from the asset expire or are waived, or we transfer our rights to another party, provided certain conditions are met.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Accounting Policies

Financial assets at fair value through Statement of Financial Performance

Financial assets are classified as fair value through the Statement of Financial Performance with the goal of collecting cash flows and selling the asset.

Impairment of Financial Assets

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office assesses at the end of reporting date whether there is objective evidence that a financial asset or a group of financial assets is impaired. A financial asset or a group of financial assets is impaired and impairment losses are incurred if there is objective evidence of impairment as a result of one or more events that occurred after the initial recognition of the asset (a 'loss event') and that loss event has an impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset or the group of financial assets that can be reliably estimated.

Revenue

Revenue is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefit will flow to the entity and revenue can be reliably measured. Revenue is measured at the fair value of consideration received. The following specific recognition criteria must be met before revenue is recognised:

- **Donations:** Donation income is recognised as revenue when received and all associated obligations have been met.
- **Interest income:** Interest income is recognised as it accrues, using the effective interest method.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

- **Legacies:** Legacy funds received for specific future investment purposes or to meet specific future costs, are recognised as income in the reported surplus or deficit and then **transferred from Accumulated Funds** to a "restricted" Reserve to be used to fund specific future costs of the entity, or to be used in accordance with the terms of the bequest.
- **Revenue received in advance:** Grant revenue is recognised as revenue when it becomes receivable by virtue of a contractual agreement being signed and an invoice raised. The Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office has a liability to repay the grant if the requirements of the grant are not fulfilled. A liability is recognised to the extent that such conditions are unfulfilled at the end of the accounting period.

Changes in Accounting Policies

There have been no changes in accounting policies which have been applied on bases consistent with those in the previous year except that during the year the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated - National Office elected to adopt PBE IPSAS 41 Financial Instruments, in accounting for its investments.

This has had the effect of increasing the carrying value of the investments as at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022 by \$28,724 and \$62,477 respectively, and increasing the unrealised gains for the same amounts for those years.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 1: Analysis of Revenue

Revenue Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Donations,	Lotteries Commission	20,000	-
Fundraising and	Donations	610	7,245
other similar			
revenue	Total	20,610	7,245

Revenue Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Subscriptions	Membership Fees	809	861
from members	Total	809	861

Revenue Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Revenue from	Blind Low Vision NZ service	210,000	196,000
providing goods or	contract		
services	Calendar sales	3,429	5,118
	Disabled People's	12,949	14,356
	Organisation Govt		
	MSD Contract	130,376	132,240
	Other	679	836
	Total	357,433	348,550

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 1: Analysis of Revenue Continued

Revenue Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	Interest	7,878	1,285
	Dividends	3,344	3,384
	Gain/(Loss) on sale of investments	9,975	3,042
	Total	21,197	7,712

Revenue Item	Analysis	\$	\$
AGM and Conference	AGM and Conference	10,016	3,177
	Grants	16,000	-
	Total	26,016	3,177

Note 2: Analysis of Expenses

Expense Item	Analysis	2023 \$	2022 \$
Expenses related to public fundraising	Fundraising	602	682
	Total	602	682

Expense Item	Analysis	2023 \$	2022 \$
Volunteer and employee related costs	Staff Wages	153,347	159,642
	Total	153,347	159,642

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 2: Analysis of Expenses Continued

Expense Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Costs related to providing goods or services	Advocacy	2,044	1,980
	Conference	61,274	42,330
	Board Expenses	38,860	7,984
	Calendars	4,926	4,336
	Administration Expenses	77,398	52,347
	Office Expenses	63,183	70,069
	Total		247,685

Expense Item		2023	2022
		\$	\$
Other expenses	Audit Fees	13,957	14,250
	Accounting Fees	11,000	8,500
	Depreciation	2,842	3,523
	Election Expenses	-	2,703
	Impairment Costs	-	281
	Insurance	1,478	1,399
	Legal Expenses	6,137	30,403
	Member-for-Life Expenses	1,340	1,720
	Portfolio Management Fees	8,887	10,032
Total		45,641	72,812

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 3: Analysis of Assets and Liabilities

Asset Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Bank accounts and cash	Cheque account balances	346,449	339,191
	On call account balance	320,597	309,085
	Imprest Account	423	500
	Petty Cash	120	120
	Total	667,589	648,896

Asset Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Debtors and prepayments	Accounts receivable	1,379	49,986
	Prepayments	6,203	5,640
	Total	7,582	55,626

Asset Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Financial assets at fair value through surplus or deficit	ANZ Managed investment Portfolio	1,029,165	995,899
	Total	1,029,165	995,899

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 3: Analysis of Assets and Liabilities Continued

		2023	2022
Liability Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Creditors and accrued expenses	Trade and other payables	20,693	25,229
	Accrued expenses	31,728	26,771
	GST Payable	41,335	3,696
	Total	93,756	55,696

		\$	\$
Liability Item	Analysis		
Employee costs payable	Holiday pay accrual	14,708	21,954
	Wages accruals	-	4,934
	Total	14,708	26,888

		\$	\$
Liability Item	Analysis		
Other	Lotteries Grant - funds in advance	-	20,000
	Other	7,385	17,760
	Total	7,385	37,760

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 4: Property, Plant and Equipment

2023

Asset Class	Opening Carrying Amount	Purchases	Sales/ Disposals	Current Year Depreciation & Impairment	Closing Carrying Amount
Furniture and fixtures	1,989	-	-	(398)	1,591
Office equipment	3,351	1,945	-	(1,487)	3,809
Motor Vehicles	3,742	-	-	(748)	2,994
Computer Software	694	-	-	(208)	486
Total	9,776	1,945	-	(2,841)	8,880

**Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated –
National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023**

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 4: Property, Plant and Equipment continued

2022

Asset Class	Opening Carrying Amount	Purchases	Sales/ Disposals	Current Year Depreciation & Impairment	Closing Carrying Amount
Furniture and fixtures	2,767	-	(281)	(497)	1,989
Office equipment	3,941	1,202	-	(1,792)	3,351
Motor Vehicles	4,678	-	-	(936)	3,742
Computer Software	992	-	-	(298)	694
Total	12,378	1,202	(281)	(3,523)	9,776

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated – National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 5: Accumulated Funds

2023

Description	Accumulated Surpluses or Deficits	Reserves	Total
Opening Balance	467,629	1,122,224	1,589,853
Surplus/(Deficit)	7,514	-	7,514
Funds from Branch	-	-	-
Transfer to Investment revaluation reserve	(28,724)	28,724	-
Transfer to Reserves	(21,223)	21,223	-
Transfer from Reserves	818	(818)	-
Closing Balance	426,014	1,171,353	1,597,367

**Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated
National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023**

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 5: Accumulated Funds

2022

Description	Accumulated Surpluses or Deficits	Reserves	Total
Opening Balance	515,999	1,056,014	1,572,013
Surplus/(Deficit)	17,840	-	17,840
Funds from Branch	-	-	-
Investment revaluation reserve brought to account	(62,477)	62,477	-
Transfer to Reserves	(4,670)	4,670	-
Transfer from Reserves	937	(937)	-
Closing Balance	467,629	1,122,224	1,589,853
Breakdown of Reserves		2023	2022
Name		\$	\$
General Fund		624,358	615,704
Member-for-Life Fund		24,036	24,854
Leadership Fund		185,300	182,731
Branch Funds Brought to Account		48,518	48,518
Investment Revaluation Reserve		279,141	250,417
AGM and Conference Reserve		10,000	-
Total		1,171,353	1,122,224

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated
National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 6: Commitments and Contingencies

		2023	2022
Commitment	Explanation and Timing	\$	\$
Commitments to lease or rent assets	National Office lease for a further nineteen months (2022: 8 months)	43,494	18,787
	Photo-copier lease (2022: No commitment)	1,400	-
Total		44,894	18,787

Note 7: Related Party Transactions

		2023	2022	2023	2022
Description of Related Party Relationship	Description of the Transaction (whether in cash or amount in kind)	Value of Transactions	Value of Transactions	Amount Out-standing	Amount Out-standing
Branches	Large Format Calendar sales	989	1,544	-	1,517
Branches	Printing and postage charges	316	448	418	459

**Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated
National Office Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023****Notes to the Performance Report****Note 8: Events after the Balance Date****Events After the Balance Date**

There were no events that have occurred after the balance date that would have a material impact on the Performance Report. (Last Year: Nil)

Note 9: Related Party Transactions

Martine Abel-Williamson is a Director of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind. The RNZFB have provided funding to the entity during the year. Martine Abel-Williamson is also on the Board of Blind Citizens NZ.

Note 10: COVID-19

On 30 January 2020, the spread of novel Corona virus (COVID-19) was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organisation. On 25 March 2020, New Zealand was placed into Alert Level 4 lockdown to combat the pandemic. In the months following, and up to the date the financial statements were authorised for issue by the Board, the country has cycled in and out of various Alert Levels, some of which have included further lockdowns and restrictions on citizen movement and activities for extended periods.

The Board continues to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation, but at the date of signing this report the Board does not believe the entity has been or will be adversely financially affected by the pandemic. The known and expected impacts of the virus on the entity include:

Blind Citizens NZ | 2023 Annual General Meeting and Conference

- A decline in the collection of membership subscriptions / members are disadvantaged in democratic processes.
- An inability for branches and networks to meet face-to-face (a mechanism where membership subscriptions are collected). This impacted their ability to hold routine face-to-face committee, general and annual general meetings, all of which are constitutional requirements.
- The governing body continued to adjust the way it met while performing governance roles. In-person and hybrid meetings have been held.

Summarised financial information – National Office

Revenue and expense for the year ended 30 June 2023

Table:

Revenue	2023	2022
Donations, fundraising etc.	20,610	7,245
Subscriptions from members	809	861
Grants (Lotteries, BLVNZ, MSD)	357,433	348,550
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	21,197	7,712
Conference Registrations	26,016	3,177
Total operating revenue	426,065	367,545
Expense	blank	blank
Fundraising related expenses	602	682
Employee and volunteer related costs	153,347	159,642
Operating costs (national office)	247,685	179,046
Other expenses	45,641	72,812
Total operating expenses	447,275	412,182
Operating (deficit) surplus	(21,210)	(44,637)

End table.

Assets and liabilities at 30 June 2023

Table:

Current Assets	2023	2022	
Bank accounts and cash	667,589	648,896	
Debtors and prepayments	7,582	55,626	
Total current assets	675,171	704,522	
Non-current assets	blank	blank	
Property, plant and equipment	8,880	9,776	
Investments	1,029,165	995,899	
Total non-current assets	1,038,045	1,005,675	
Total assets	1,713,216	1,710,197	
Total current liabilities	115,849	120,344	
Total liabilities	115,849	120,344	
Net assets	1,597,367	1,589,853	

End table.

Accumulated Funds

Table:

Accumulated Funds	2023	2022	
Accumulated surpluses (or deficits)	426,014	467,629	
Reserves	1,171,353	1,122,224	
Total Accumulated Funds	1,597,367	1,589,853	

End Table.

Blind Citizens NZ Representative Reports

Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ)

From Pauline Melham, Blind Citizens NZ Representative

Introduction

I have served on the BLENNZ Board of Trustees for a little over a year now. I have attended all but one of the board meeting since I was elected, only missing the most recent meeting due to personal circumstances. Therefore, I am able to provide a reasonably full board report this year. Since our last Blind Citizens AGM, the BLENNZ Board has met six times, twice more in 2022 and three times in four times in 2023. In addition, I also attended a BLENNZ Sector Forum in early 2023, along with Paula Waby from Blind Citizens NZ and several others from our community, who were representing other organisations.

Board Membership

Several new board members have joined this year. The board is made up of the following members:

- Chris Gunn, Parent Representative, Board Chair
- Dave Cullen, Parent Representative, Vice Chair
- Kevin Manson, Parent Representative, Board Member
- Ross Meikle, Parent Representative, Board Member
- Tracey O'Sullivan, BLENNZ Staff Representative, Board Member

- Justine Edwards, Homai School Representative, Board Member
- Pauline Melham, Blind Citizens NZ Representative, Board Member
- Nigel Ngaiwhi, Kapo Maori Representative, Board Member
- Karen Stobbs, BLENNZ Principal, Principal
- Janny Cooke, BLENNZ Staff, Board Secretary

John Mulka, the former CEO of Blind Low Vision New Zealand sat on the board as the BLVNZ representative until his resignation from his CEO role in September 2023. Justine's first meeting was 25th August 2023.

In the mid-term board elections, due to take place on November 15, 2023, BLENNZ will be seeking two Parent of Vision Resource Centre, board members. A letter to parents of tamariki and rangatahi attending BLENNZ Vision Resource Centres has been sent.

BLENNZ Strategic Goals

BLENNZ has three strategic goals which are:

1. Biculturalism.
2. Curriculum Review.
3. Developmental Orientation and Mobility and Life Skills.

These goals are core to BLENNZ operation and business and outline what is important to the school and the board.

Alternate Formats Service

In August/September of 2022, BLENNZ took over the production of materials into Alternate Formats for BLENNZ learners, with the exception of Maths Braille and some other highly specific materials.

Previously, this contract had been held by Blind Low Vision New Zealand (BLVNZ). It would be fair to say that it took a little while for BLENNZ to get up to speed with the production of alternate formats for their learners, but they now have a librarian responsible for this area of work and we understand the work is going well, with no major delays in learners receiving materials in their chosen formats from BLENNZ itself.

Professional Development

As a board, we engage in a number of professional development sessions throughout the year. These have included introductions to governance by a member of the New Zealand School Trustees Association and a whakanaungatanga breakfast, where board members could get to know each other outside of the boardroom. At other times we are taken on tours of various facilities which have included, the new BLENNZ swimming pool, opened in mid-November, although operational before that, the South Auckland Office of BLVNZ and most recently (and the one I'm disappointed to say I missed) a tour of the new facilities at Guide Dogs.

As a board, we have spent some time this year finding out about the school's immersion programme. This programme is designed to bring young people and their parents together for a week at a time to learn about an aspect of the expanded core curriculum. It might be about technology, learning braille, skills for partially sighted learners or social skills. These are popular programmes and I have been encouraging the school principal to consider how the transition programmes offered could be increased.

Child Wellbeing Review

BLENNZ has decided to launch a Child Wellbeing Review across all campuses. It has taken some time to sort out the Terms of Reference for the review and to establish who would conduct the review, but this happened in early 2023. The review will look over any issues of child wellbeing that have been raised at BLENNZ for the last six years to determine if these issues were handled appropriately and/or if the Board could learn anything about how to handle these issues better. At the same time a survey will be sent to all parents asking if they are aware of any issues regarding child wellbeing.

Whilst the BLENNZ board are not expecting to find anything disturbing, it was felt that a review was timely and it would show the school took these issues seriously, as well as providing an opportunity to review and potentially improve school processes.

Start of the 2023 School Year

The beginning of the 2023 School year was a difficult start for those in Northland, Auckland, The Hawkes Bay and Gisborne, as a result of the severe weather events. School was disrupted for many students in these areas. Fortunately, no students or staff were harmed during these events.

Review of the National Curriculum

Currently, there is a major piece of work being led by the Ministry of Education and that is a review of the entire school curriculum, known as Te Maataiaho.

The Social Sciences curriculum is already being used in schools, the new Maths and English Curriculum will be implemented in 2025. A great deal of time has been spent at Board Meetings and as part of the BLENNZ Sector Forum, discussing the new Curriculum and the implications for BLENNZ learners. The new curriculum is based on principles of Think, Know, Do, allowing learners to move from finding out about a topic to being able to actively engage in it. It is designed to be cyclical in nature, so that ideas will be revisited and built upon throughout a child's time at school. The new curriculum will be Te Tiriti honouring and inclusive, the important concepts are clear to everyone and it's simple and easy to use. BLENNZ staff have received a great deal of Professional Development around the new curriculum. The positive aspect is that the teaching team can see BLENNZ learners in the curriculum and can see how it can be used to meet a variety of the BLENNZ learners' needs.

Discussions around the new Curriculum have also led both the BLENNZ staff and the board to discuss the important skills that a BLENNZ learner should leave school with. This does not just involve academic knowledge, but also skills specifically related to being a blind young adult.

As well as working with the school curriculum, BLENNZ has an extended core curriculum which covers areas of learning that Blind children need for example, orientation and mobility skills, social skills, use of technology, braille literacy, to name just a few.

Education Review Office Review

BLENNZ underwent its review from the Education Review Office (ERO) in March of this year. The language has changed from the team from ERO being reviewers to evaluation partners.

The school was invited to bring issues to the attention of ERO that they would value ERO's partnership with.

The issues were:

1. Review of hostel provision;
2. Improving outcomes for all learners;
3. Engaging with the wider community.

ERO reviewed BLENNZ and has passed the school and agreed to work on the issues outlined by BLENNZ. An Action Research project will be set up over the next three years to focus on these areas, most particularly on improving outcomes for all BLENNZ learners.

New James Cook Satellite Classroom

A new Satellite class is under construction. This will be located at James Cook High School. It will specifically be for senior students who currently attend the Homai Base School. The Satellite Unit, will be shared with Rose Hill Special Schools, BLENNZ will inhabit the ground floor whilst Rose Hill Students will inhabit the upper floor. There is room for the two cohorts of students to mix. The new satellite unit is located in the heart of the school with key facilities such as the library and other teaching rooms nearby. However, it should be remembered that this is a satellite unit and whilst some students may occasionally visit the rest of the school to attend mainstream classes, it is essentially a special unit within a mainstream setting.

Financial Matters

Financially, BLENNZ is in a safe financial position at present. BLENNZ has a proportion of accumulated funds that could be spent for the benefit of BLENNZ learners and the community. Both staff and board members were asked to come up with ideas for the use of these funds. Any ideas that were items that could be purchased from existing budgets were addressed that way. No final decision has been made yet.

Security Review

After a major security review at the Homai Campus, there are some changes to be made to security around the student hostels. It is envisaged that electronic locks that can either be accessed by a swipe card or other means will be installed. Furthermore, new sign in controls will be introduced and students will be able to sign in using a tablet or via an app on their phone. The app would also allow another method for students to contact staff for support if needed.

Conclusion

I have enjoyed my year serving as the Blind Citizens New Zealand representative on the BLENNZ Board. As I attended more meetings and gained in confidence in my position and knowledge around how a school board works and the role of a governor, I have contributed more to the working of the board. I look forward to continuing to serve on the board for as long as Blind Citizens New Zealand wishes me to be their representative.

The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT)

From Leyna Coleman, Blind Citizens NZ Representative

This report outlines some of the things BANZAT has been doing to promote Braille this year. I'll start with the 2022 AGM which took place in September. Most trustees gathered at BLENNZ with a couple of trustees and all observers on Zoom. The Chair (Maria Stevens) and Secretary/Treasurer (Mary Schnackenberg) were re-elected.

This year 1 person (a Braille reader) sat and passed the Trans-Tasman Certificate of Proficiency in UEB. UEB online (uebonline.org) has developed a competency certificate that is similar to the current qualification jointly administered by BANZAT and the Australian Braille Authority. BANZAT and ABA are looking at what this will mean for the future of the current certificate. This year's certificate is going ahead and I will let you know the results next year. I will also be keeping the Board updated on any changes BANZAT may make regarding this qualification.

BANZAT is continuing to promote Braille having a capital B. There is an article about this on the BANZAT website. A poster has also been produced to promote capital B for Braille which can be placed on doors, walls, cabinets etc. There is no tactile Braille on the poster but it can be used around the office for example to remind people that Braille should have a capital B.

Last year I reported that the BLENNZ Braille competition was taking a different approach with the Braille Challenge. I am pleased to report that this has been a big success.

Students aged between 4 to 21 years (54 students altogether) took part in the Braille challenge which involved setting and achieving an individual Braille-related goal. Of these students, 47 achieved their goal. BANZAT supported the challenge by funding prizes for each student who completed their goal as well as for small incentives as they achieved milestones along the way. Examples of goals included students learning their name in Braille, to writing out a Latin mass and learning Irish Braille. It was really exciting to see the students achieve their goals. It was also neat to see such a wide range of students taking part and goals achieved. Braille is definitely alive and well in the next generation! This year's Braille challenge is already underway and I look forward to sharing the results with you next year.

This year BANZAT received a grant from Lotteries to fund a course for blind people wanting to become Braille producers in New Zealand. We are thrilled with this result and are now in the early stages of developing this course. There will be announcements about this course as it develops.

BANZAT is excited to announce that we will be hosting the 8th ICEB General Assembly next year. The dates are Saturday 25 May to Friday 31 May 2024. The assembly will be held at the Grand Millennium hotel in Auckland. There will also be opportunities to connect virtually. The theme will be 200 years of Braille. This is the first time New Zealand has hosted an ICEB general assembly. If you are interested in what's happening with Braille in the English-speaking world, I encourage you to save the dates and check the ICEB website and BANZAT's communication channels regularly for updates.

There are several ways you can keep in touch with what is happening regarding Braille both in our country and internationally. BANZAT publish news and items of interest on their website www.banzat.org. There is also an email list and Facebook page you can be part of. The International Council on English Braille (ICEB) also publishes material on their website www.iceb.org and has a Facebook page.

As always I would like to thank Rose and the Board for their support as well as the BANZAT trustees and the organisations they represent for supporting the work of BANZAT. I hope this report has given you an idea of what BANZAT has been doing this year. I welcome any questions you may have.

Workbridge Council

From Chrissy Fern, Blind Citizens NZ Representative

As Blind Citizens NZ Representative, I attended all five Workbridge Council Meetings held this last year.

Special Council Meeting 16 November 2022

Council Member Representatives, plus the President or Chair and Chief Executive of each Corporate Member Organisation, were invited to attend this Special Council Meeting. Blind Citizens NZ National President Jonathan Godfrey and Chief Executive Rose Wilkinson and the President of Disabled Persons' Assembly Nathan Bond were the only extra attendees from Corporate Member Organisations. Workbridge Board of Management was represented by Chair Pam MacNeill, Deputy Chair and Strategy Group Chair Derek Gill, and Strategy Group Member Peter Allen. Workbridge personnel attendees were Chief Executive Jonathan Mosen, Chief Operating Officer Phil Hendry, and Manager Stakeholder Relations Nick Ruane and Workbridge's Legal Advisor Sue Barker from Charities Law.

Facilitator Gail Munro, past Workbridge Board Chair and Director of Governance Strategies Ltd, noted that this meeting was the culmination of extensive work started in April 2021. She reflected that the catalyst was the new Incorporated Societies Act, and that Council would be making important decisions on the future of Workbridge.

Lengthy discussion followed with all Council Members participating. Blind Citizens NZ highlighted concerns with the draft Trust Deed and the proposed structure for the new WorkBridge Foundation.

The meeting was adjourned to enable Council Members to consult with their organisations to agree their decision-making for voting on the draft resolution.

Voting was then held on the resolution as circulated.

The Council resolved to:

<begins> Note the Tomorrow's Workbridge governance white paper proposes establishing the WorkBridge Group in 2023 with:

- a. A charitable trust, the WorkBridge Foundation, as the parent body with members from the disability community.
- b. A new Disability Public Good Programme to fund outreach, disability scholarships and advocacy projects to enable more disabled people to gain employment. This will shift the power over what services Workbridge provides back to disabled people.
- c. Subsidiary companies to develop service offerings targeted to disabled people, employers and others and generating revenue to fund the Public Good Programme.
- d. Consumer Councils so the client voice is heard, self-determination is enacted and has impact.

Agree to establish the WorkBridge Foundation as a Charitable Trust based on the draft deed dated 4 November 2022, to transfer the assets and operations of the Workbridge Incorporated Society to the WorkBridge Foundation once established, and then seek dissolution of the Workbridge Incorporated Society in 2023.

Delegate to the Workbridge Council President and Board of Management Chair the power to give effect to these changes including making any minor amendments needed to finalise the Trust Deed. <ends>

Resolution passed unanimously

Blind Citizens NZ proposed a further resolution. This noted the need for clarity about when there would be a vote on the final Trust Deed, and identified elements to help improve the deed.

Resolution: The Council resolved to:

<begins> Note at a workshop held on 16 November 2022 the Workbridge Council recognised a number of improvements that could be made to the draft Trust Deed.

Agree that:

- a. The final Trust Deed must be approved by a Special Resolution of the Workbridge Council at a meeting to be held no later than 31 March 2023.
- b. The Council expects the WorkBridge Council President to invite the views of Council Members with respect to any proposed changes to the Trust Deed. <ends>

Resolution passed unanimously

Council Meeting 17 November 2022

Discussion was held on disability sector representation on the Board of the new WorkBridge Foundation Charitable Trust. Council agreed that five or seven Trustees was inadequate for there to be a suitable majority representation of disabled people. This led to an amendment to the Trust Deed to state that 'The Board shall be comprised of 5, 7 or 9 Trustees.

Annual General Meeting 17 November 2022

Attendees included Workbridge Council and Board Members and Senior Management personnel, Chief Executive NZ Disability Sector Network Peter Reynolds, Chief Executive Blind Citizens NZ Rose Wilkinson, Life Member and past Workbridge Council President Wendy Neilson.

Outcomes from the Council Meeting held earlier in the day were announced. Chrissy Fern from Blind Citizens NZ had been re-elected as Council President and Lachlan Keating from Deaf Aotearoa as Council Vice-President.

Outcomes from the Board Meeting held earlier in the day were announced. Derek Gill had been appointed as Board Chair with Pam MacNeill staying on as a Board Member. Heather Browning and Kerry Ludlam retired from the Board. Council approved the appointment of Lisa Oakley and Barry de Geest to the Workbridge Board of Management for a three-year term.

Council President Chrissy Fern highlighted the two resolutions agreed at the Special Council Meeting approving the establishment of the WorkBridge Foundation as a charitable trust to replace Workbridge as an incorporated society.

Revising of Draft Trust Deed from December 2022 to March 2023

The revised draft Trust Deed was circulated to Corporate Member Organisations and their Representatives to Council on 1 December 2022. This sought feedback on changes proposed at the Special Council Meeting.

The main changes were:

1. Strengthening the role of the Membership in the governance of the new WorkBridge Foundation;
2. Providing for a requirement to consult the Nominations Committee on the skills matrix used for selecting Trustees;
3. Providing for Life and Honorary Members;
4. Assigning reserve powers to amend the Trust Deed or terminate the Trust to a Special Meeting of Members;
5. Entrenching the role of existing Corporate Members;
6. Increasing the number of Original Trustees to nine.

The only feedback received by the deadline of 21 December 2022 was from Blind Citizens NZ so this was extended to 8 February 2023.

Disabled Persons Assembly had commented about the overall Deed and notified their intention to not be part of the new WorkBridge Foundation. Council of Trade Unions, Kapo Maori Aotearoa, Muscular Dystrophy Association and People First all stated they were satisfied with the revised draft.

Council President Chrissy Fern, Board Chair Derek Gill, Chief Executive Jonathan Mosen and Legal Advisor Sue Barker reviewed the feedback to produce a final version of the Deed. Business NZ latterly provided some legal drafting comments and this final review ensured that the Trust Deed had been scrutinised thoroughly. The majority of changes proposed by Corporate Member Organisations were included in the finalised Trust Deed. Two main changes relating to Members were:

- Recognising the role of Corporate Members who represent a number of disabled people, by giving each three votes compared to individual members who have one vote; and
- Strengthening Members' role in the governance of the new WorkBridge Foundation by including a power to appoint an auditor if required, and nominate Honorary or Life Members.

Council Meeting 7 March 2023

Voting on Special Resolution: The Council resolved to: <begins> Approve the revised Trust Deed dated 28 February 2023 in order to establish the WorkBridge Foundation as a Charitable Trust. <ends> Resolution passed with eight votes in favour, one abstention and one not received in time.

Council President Chrissy Fern reported that her mahi since the November 2022 meetings had mainly been working with Board Chair Derek Gill and Legal Advisor Sue Barker. This involved considering feedback from Corporate Member Organisations on the revised draft of the Trust Deed.

Chief Executive Jonathan Mosen updated Council on organisational performance, transfer of administration of Support Funds to Ministry of Social Development, and the future for the Employment Services Contract.

Establishing of the WorkBridge Group from March to June 2023

The Original Trustees of the WorkBridge Foundation Charitable Trust approved and signed the finalised Trust Deed on 27 March 2023. The nine Trustees include all existing members of the Workbridge Incorporated Board of Management, plus Council President Chrissy Fern and Council Member Raewyne Lovich.

WorkBridge Foundation was subsequently confirmed as a Charitable Trust with Companies Office and Charities Services.

The Inaugural Meeting of the WorkBridge Foundation Board was held on 3 April 2023, and included the following resolutions all being agreed unanimously:

- Appointment of Officers - Derek Gill as Chair and Chrissy Fern as Deputy Chair, each for an initial term of one year.
- Appointment of a Working Group of the Trust Board to explore options for the structure of commercial operations.
- Incorporation of a Company with WorkBridge Foundation as 100% shareholder, to receive the assets and operations of Workbridge Incorporated.

At the WorkBridge Foundation Board's second meeting on 18 April, recommendations were considered from the Working Group. These were about the design of an operating structure aligned to the Foundation's charitable purpose.

Resolutions were unanimously approved to establish a 3-tier operating structure for the WorkBridge Group:

- Tier 1 - WorkBridge Foundation,
- Tier 2 - Workbridge Holdings Limited, and
- Tier 3 - Workbridge Employment Services Limited, a subsidiary company for Workbridge's current operations, functions and resources including staff and management.

All three entities were registered as charities. The holding and subsidiary companies each have their own constitution.

Final Council Meeting 29 June 2023

Council President Chrissy Fern reflected on Workbridge's journey dedicated to providing a service which enabled disabled people in New Zealand to gain meaningful and sustainable employment. In conclusion she echoed the following words from Pauline Winter, Chief Executive of Workbridge from 1995 to 2000, ... <begins> "Today, Workbridge continues to develop new ways to deal with changed expectations and the new demands that present themselves, all the while, working towards achieving its mission to enable people with disabilities to participate and experience equal opportunities in the labour market." <ends>

Board Chair Derek Gill passed on the following recommendation from the Board to the Council which was duly noted:

<begins> That once the transfer of the assets and operations of the Workbridge Incorporated Society to the WorkBridge Group has been completed, the Board of Management of Workbridge will apply to the Registrar for the dissolution of the society, will deregister Workbridge Incorporated as a charity and complete the Business Cessation process with Inland Revenue. <ends>

Chief Executive Jonathan Mosen emphasised in his report that the creation of a Consumer Council for Workbridge Employment Services | Te Arawhiti mō Mahi is of vital importance. This will ensure WorkBridge remains true to its kaupapa and commitment to disabled people being co-designers of the services they provide. The Consumer Council fits well with the objects of the Foundation, in that it provides an opportunity for capacity building and development of leadership skills. It will be an advisory body to the Chief Executive and will not perform a governance function.

However, it may have a view on aspects of the Foundation's Public Good Programme which can be fed back to the WorkBridge Foundation Board. It is proposed that the Consumer Council comprise no fewer than seven and no more than nine members. Expressions of interest will be sought via various channels, including advising Disabled Peoples Organisations while making it clear that appointees will not be representing organisations.

WorkBridge proposes paying an attendance fee of \$350 per meeting to each member, plus expenses incurred as a result of their participation. Members will be appointed for a three-year term and a random drawing will set up a rotation system so a third of the Consumer Council retires annually.

The Chief Executive will determine the appointees and have the discretion to reappoint. WorkBridge are seeking comment on the Draft Terms of Reference for the new Consumer Council.

Closing Thoughts from Chrissy Fern

As I move on from being Representative for Blind Citizens NZ on the Workbridge Council, I would like to express my gratitude to the Board for appointing me in November 2019. This started my journey to being elected Workbridge Council President in October 2021, leading to me becoming an Original Trustee and Deputy Chair of the WorkBridge Foundation Charitable Trust in 2023. I am honoured to continue advocating for the employment rights and needs of disabled New Zealanders to be upheld.

World Blind Union

From Thomas Bryan, Blind Citizens NZ

Country Delegate

General Updates

Since the 2022 AGM and Conference the Board held an election for the primary role of WBU Country Delegate. Our National President Jonathan Godfrey was appointed to this role. The Board is reviewing this position at the Blind Citizens NZ November Annual Planning Meeting. Thomas Bryan was reappointed as the Secondary Country Delegate.

I want to thank Paula Waby for her work as WBU Country Delegate as she held the position for a number of years. I appreciate her help and support as we shared keeping everyone up to date during that time.

Highlights of the year

For me personally the highlight of the year was Blind Citizens NZ hosting the WBU Executive Committee Meeting. This was the first time that this meeting had been held in New Zealand.

In attendance was the WBU President, WBU CEO and staff, and representatives from the different WBU regions (I understand they travelled from 22 countries). Also present were members of Blind Citizens NZ Board and the Chief Executive, and guests including the Minister for Disability Issues and other government officials. The meeting was held over 3 days and for those who were not able to attend in person, the event was also on-line.

For our Asia Pacific Region, one of the key topics was funding and the need for a WBU Regional Office.

A couple of highlights include:

- Being able to meet in person with others from our WBU region. Normally we only get to meet on-line, and face to face once every 2 years. So, this was a great opportunity to meet and discuss regional concerns.
- The second was listening to the regional reports. Many of the regions face the same issues as we do here in New Zealand. The digital divide, environment design, lack of accessible infrastructure and public transport and access to information.

Over the last year a number of webinar events have been promoted hosted by a number of international organisations including WBU. While these often are in the middle of the night for us here in New Zealand, by registering even if you can't join the webinar, often these are recorded so you can access them at a more reasonable time. Note time constraints mean these opportunities are normally promoted via Blind Citizens NZ email lists. Some of the topics have included Accessible Pharmacies, Breaking down Accessibility Barriers through Localisation, and Global Trends on Accessibility and Urban Development.

WBU Access to the Built Environment Working Group

Early this year I was appointed as Chair of the WBU Environment Working Group. I had been appointed to this working group during 2022 and really enjoy the issues that come before us.

The strategic objective for this group is promoting full access to the environment for blind and partially sighted persons including safe and independent travel and access to transportation.

Since picking up the role of Chair I have provided a report to WBU on the work of the working group which I understand was for the Executive Committee meeting. I have also convened our first working group meeting. Currently the working group is small, but we do have members from around the world.

I also have been working closely with two of the team at WBU whose areas of work focus on access to the environment. I hope to be able to report more fully on this work next time.

Some key messages from our last working group meeting include:

- Updates from around our regions, what's working well and what are the barriers.
- Updates from WBU on their work with United Cities and Local Governments the international body representing local government. In particular a survey that they have been working on that will go out to local government. Note I will be sharing more about this later in the year.
- European standards and guidelines,
- Accessible housing
- Two indoor training centres Wayfinding centre NCBI Ireland, and one in Canada at CNIB. From the description these are much larger than say similar centres in Melbourne and Auckland, and will provide advice to local government, demonstrate best practice designs, and provide a safe space for learning to travel safely and independently.

World Blind Union Asia Pacific (WBUAP) Region

For a large part of the last 12 months, the WBUAP Board and Policy Council have been planning for the upcoming Mid-term Region General Assembly (MRGA).

Note that every 4 years each region aims to host a MRGA. This year the WBUAP MRGA will be held in late November in Phuket. The theme of the MRGA is Connecting Community, Information and Life. Information on this event again has been shared via Blind Citizens NZ email lists. For this event you will be able to register to attend online at:
<https://www.tab.or.th/wbuap2023/>

Other key items this year have included:

- East wind, the WBUAP regional newsletter. This is a great publication produced by our Editor Mary Schnackenberg, who sadly will be stepping down from this role later this year. I wish to thank Mary for her support and knowledge shared so often with me and the WBUAP Board and Policy Council. Thank you Mary.
- Attendance by many of us at the WBU Executive Committee meeting.
- Reporting back from meetings and conferences.

World Intellectual Property Organisation Accessible Books Consortium

From Martine Abel-Williamson, Blind Citizens NZ's Representative

The Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) is a public-private partnership established in 2014 that seeks to implement the objectives of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled (“the Marrakesh VIP Treaty”) at a practical level. ABC’s goal is to increase the number of books in accessible formats and to distribute these to people around the globe who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled.

WBU and the African Union of the Blind (AFUB) organized a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya on moving from Marrakesh Treaty ratification to implementation. My in-person participation and co-facilitation was sponsored by the International Disability Alliance (IDA) on whose board I serve, representing WBU. Seventeen participants from 14 countries attended. Participants left the workshop with strategies they could use to push forward with Marrakesh implementation in their respective countries.

From 28 February to 3 March I attended the Pacific Disability Conference in Nadi, Fiji. This was the first time I contributed to this regular event. On 28 February I presented on the Marrakesh Treaty and promoted the work of WBU. Four Pacific countries have acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty, not Fiji though, so I highlighted domestic legislation related to accession.

Because government representatives from most of the Pacific countries attended the conference, I was invited to meet up with staff from the Fiji Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women re Marrakesh Treaty matters.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) asked me to gather a focal point in each Pacific country I could possibly connect with for Marrakesh Treaty follow-up purposes.

Grace Antwi-Atsu is the new WBU representative on the ABC Board, following the passing of Scott Labarre in December 2022. On our WBU Right to Read Working Group, that Grace is now chairing, we have Neil Jarvis. Neil is our World Blind Union Asia-Pacific (WBUAP) representative.

I attended my first in-person ABC Board meeting in July in Geneva. We had the opportunity in Geneva to demonstrate, especially to the publishing sector, devices like the Envoy Connect, mobile phone apps like Dolphin Easy Reader, etc, to prove that we don't simply need titles somewhere on a server, but literally in the hands or ears of blind people.

WIPO hosted an event during the Assemblies in July to mark the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty. I was honoured to address the Assemblies on that occasion and I did circulate the link for online observing as well as the media releases afterwards to the blindness communities and sectors in New Zealand and the Pacific

Additionally, great news for us in New Zealand is that BLENNZ is the latest and newest authorised entity (AE) at WIPO level. This means that whatever they produce, can now be shared with the world.

Activities of the Accessible Books Consortium

Providing Guidance on Reading Devices and Software in Developing and Least-Developed Countries

One major challenge in many countries is a lack of accessible reading devices. Without such devices, beneficiaries cannot read books produced during ABC training and technical assistance (TTA) projects. There is a need for inexpensive but utilitarian reading devices in many countries. However, NGO personnel do not always have the technical expertise to select the most appropriate devices for the local context.

There are several options to read accessible digital books such as smart phones, dedicated DAISY players, computers, basic phones or solar-powered MP3 audio players. The choice of devices can be made according to the economic and device sustainability conditions in each specific community/country.

Many organizations applying for training and technical assistance projects do not have the necessary knowledge about reading devices and the devices included in proposals are not the most appropriate solution for users in developing and least-developed countries. Assistance from experts in the choice of devices as part of the training and technical assistance projects would help to address this issue.

For example, where internet connectivity and power shortages are common, devices such as solar-powered readers may be appropriate, although a major limitation of such devices is that navigation capabilities are not optimal for educational textbooks.

The DAISY Consortium is conducting a survey to map accessible reading in low- and middle-income countries. This survey will help to identify which languages are underserved by key enabling technologies such as text-to-speech and braille, as well as reveal which devices are commonly used for reading. It will also help stakeholders understand the availability of books that people with print disabilities require for school, university, and general literature.

WBU, ICEVI and the International Federation of Libraries Association (IFLA) are helping to identify survey participants in key countries. The DAISY Consortium's target is to get responses from at least 50 countries. The survey can be completed in English, French or Spanish and the DAISY Consortium intends to publish the interim results of this survey in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Donation of funds/reading devices: There is a WIPO initiative to request donations of reading devices. An initial proposal was submitted to WIPO's Director General (DG) in November 2021. At the DG's request, the proposal was subsequently amended to incorporate input from WIPO's Finance Division, Office of the Legal Counsel, and Procurement Section. Because a number of companies on the list are also business clients of WIPO, the proposal required significant scrutiny and coordination with the Office of the Legal Counsel to evaluate potential conflicts of interest. The plan was finalized and approved by the DG in May 2022.

A number of logistical hurdles had to be overcome, including identifying the most appropriate addressee and contact information for each company.

A formal request for donations was sent to nine companies at the end of September 2022, and an additional nine requests are in progress. There has not yet been a response from any of the companies contacted.

ABC is in discussions with an accessibility software developer to provide a multilingual reading application at no cost for use by people who are blind or otherwise print disabled. Using this free software, beneficiaries would be able to read accessible format copies downloaded from the ABC Global Book Service Supplementary Application.

ABC Global Book Service (GBS): The ABC Global Book Service (“the Service”) offers an online catalogue of books in accessible formats available at no cost to authorized entities (AEs) serving people who are print disabled. The Service provides AEs with the ability to exchange accessible books across borders.

As of June 2023, the Service has over 840,000 titles in 80 languages available for cross-border exchange without the need for clearance formalities. Of the 127 AEs¹ that have agreed to join the GBS, 70 are located in developing countries or least developed countries (LDCs). Participating AEs delivered nearly 140,000 accessible format copies from the ABC catalogue to persons with print disabilities in 2022.

In addition to the ABC library application used by AEs, ABC also provides participating AEs with a beneficiary application that can be offered to their patrons, so that people who are print disabled can search the ABC catalogue directly and download titles to read at their convenience. This beneficiary application is also provided free of charge.

¹ Includes BrailleNet (France) and SeeingEar (UK), which have since ceased operations.

Currently, 37 AEs, of which 10 are located in developing countries or LDCs, have agreed to provide this beneficiary application (known as the ABC Supplementary Application) to persons who are print disabled. AEs certify that the persons downloading accessible format copies through this beneficiary application are print disabled as defined in Article 3 of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty. ABC continues to promote its new beneficiary application to participating AEs that are located in countries that have ratified or acceded to the Marrakesh VIP Treaty and have implemented its provisions. Currently, this beneficiary application has over 370,000 accessible format copies hosted on the cloud available for immediate download.

As reported a year ago, Blind Citizens NZ wrote to Blind Low Vision NZ, reminding them to publicly promote its titles via the GBS.

In mid-June 2023, ABC officially launched the ABC Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), which are free of charge. The ABC APIs provide AEs with the ability to make the ABC beneficiary catalogue of 370,000 accessible format copies available in their own user interfaces. In this manner, beneficiaries can gain direct access to these ABC accessible format copies using the website or application that is most familiar to them.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) of the United States of America produces high quality audio books that are of great interest to beneficiaries worldwide. However, the audio format used by NLS is not necessarily compatible with reading devices used outside of the United States of America.

The Canadian Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) are converting the entire NLS collection of audio books into a more widely compatible DAISY 2.02 format so as to make the NLS titles available to beneficiaries in Canada. With NLS' approval, CELA and CNIB have shared over 82,000 of the converted titles with ABC in 2022-2023, thereby making these highly requested titles available to a much wider readership since the converted NLS titles will now be compatible with the majority of audio players worldwide.

Braille Ready Format (BRF) has been the format of choice for digital text in the GBS, however AEs are reporting that this limits their ability to exchange. The BRF format, being a production format created for braille embossing, is not easily reformatted or converted.

The Secretariat is looking to continue these conversations with AEs and welcomes a discussion on whether a different digital braille format should be considered for inclusion in the GBS instead, or in addition to, BRF.

Future ABC Global Book Service Activities | Inclusive Publishing Activities

Future of the ABC Charter and ABC Signatory LinkedIn Community

The Secretariat solicited the Board's feedback on whether ABC should develop a more in-depth technical course for publishers, in light of the existing Inclusive Publishing in Practice resource.

ABC continues to discuss the establishment of a portal for a federated search with third parties, with the aim to provide a central location for the public search, discovery and exchange of the largest number of titles in accessible formats in the widest possible range of languages. Such a federated search capacity across a network of catalogues would further assist AEs and people who are print disabled by maximizing beneficiaries' access to the widest range of titles on various platforms.

Training and Technical Assistance

The ABC model for training and technical assistance aims to equip organizations in developing countries and LDCs with the ability to produce educational materials in national languages to be used by primary, secondary and university students who are print disabled. ABC provides training in the latest accessible book production techniques through an online platform that incorporates interactive sessions with expert trainers. Once participants complete the ABC Online Course in Accessible Book Production for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ABC provides funding to the partner organization so that its personnel can utilize their recently acquired skills to produce educational titles in accessible formats for students who are print disabled.

ABC's online courses were developed by the DAISY Consortium and are inclusively designed, with navigable lesson content, accessible quizzes, described images and captioned videos. The courses teach participants how to make accessible books using production software that is also entirely accessible.

Three ABC Online Courses have been migrated from the DAISY Consortium learning platform to the WIPO Academy. The following three courses will each be available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish on the WIPO Academy's eLearning Center in the latter half of 2023:

- a.** ABC Online Course on Accessible Publishing Concepts: An introductory course intended for publishers and others interested in gaining a high-level understanding of critical concepts in accessible publishing. It covers topics including born accessible publishing, accessibility standards and best practices, and topics related to metadata. This is a self-study course taking about 2 to 3 hours and does not include the assistance of expert trainers.
- b.** ABC Online Course in Accessible Book Production for NGOs: A course designed for participants from ABC partner organizations in developing countries or LDCs that offers training in the latest techniques to produce books in accessible formats such as braille, audio, e-text and large print. The course is delivered through interactive sessions with expert trainers.
- c.** ABC Online Course on Accessible STEM Content for NGOs: An advanced course on the creation of accessible publications with scientific, technical, engineering and mathematics content, popularly called STEM. Given the complexity of the content, this course is intended for participants from partner organizations who have a certain level of expertise in accessible book production. The course is delivered through interactive sessions with expert trainers.

ABC plans to issue a “Call for Expressions of Interest” in the third quarter of 2023, inviting qualified organizations located in developing countries and LDCs to apply for the next round of ABC training and technical assistance projects. Ten to 12 organizations will be selected to receive training and technical assistance in accessible book production and up to 20,000 USD each to produce accessible educational texts in 2024 - 2025. The “Call for Expressions of Interest” will be posted on the [ABC website](https://www.abc.org.nz/) (<https://tinyurl.com/e483babd>) and will be announced through the [ABC newsletter](https://www.abc.org.nz/) (<https://tinyurl.com/5ekp93uv>).

ABC is in the process of discussing with a company a donation of a library management solution that ABC could offer to partner organizations in developing countries or LDCs. This application would allow for:

- a. the management of the certification of beneficiaries;
- b. cataloguing of the organization’s titles at a national level; and
- c. efficient distribution of accessible format copies to beneficiaries.

Accessible Publishing

ABC promotes the production of “born accessible” works by publishers, i.e., books that are usable from the start by persons who are print disabled. In particular, all publishers are encouraged to:

- use the accessibility features of the EPUB3 open standard for the production of digital publications; and
- include descriptions of the accessibility features of their products in the information they provide to distributors, retailers and others in the book supply chain.

ABC organizes the **ABC International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing** each year to recognize organizations providing outstanding leadership and achievements in the advancement of the accessibility of digital publications to persons with print disabilities. This year's ABC International Excellence Award ceremony will be held for the first time at the Sharjah Publishers Conference at the end of October 2023, which is a prequel to the Sharjah International Book Fair.

To further the objective of “born accessible” publishing practices, publishers and publisher associations around the world are invited to sign the **ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing**, which contains eight high-level aspirational principles relating to digital publications in accessible formats. Currently, 138 publishers have signed the Charter. A complete list of ABC Charter signatories is found in Annex II.

Future Accessible Publishing Activities.

Within the context of the European Union's Directive on Accessibility, ABC is collaborating with the International Publishers Association to maximize awareness amongst publishers and distributors of the need to comply by June 28, 2025 with the Directive's accessibility requirements for e-books.

Attachment “C”

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Inc.

National Office and Branches

Performance Report

For the year ended

30 June 2023

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Notes to reader

1. A summary of financial information for these accounts can be located immediately following the Audit Report.
2. Page numbering applies solely to the audited accounts, and not page-numbers in this agenda.
3. All statements presented in the Performance Report should be read in conjunction with the respective 'Notes' to the Performance Report.
4. The verified audited accounts include, from pages 3 to 28 inclusive, the "Moore Markhams" audit certification stamp on the bottom right hand corner.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated (Blind Citizens NZ)

Entity Information for the Year ended 30 June 2023

Incorporated Society: Registration Number 223080
Charity: Registration Number CC41040

Entity Information

Purpose

Founded in 1945, Blind Citizens NZ is New Zealand's leading blindness consumer organisation and one of the country's largest organisations of disabled consumers. Often referred to as a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO), Blind Citizens NZ works to heighten awareness of the rights of blind, deafblind, low vision and vision-impaired people (hereafter referred to as blind), and to remove the barriers that impact upon our ability to live in an accessible, equitable and inclusive society.

Entity Structure

Governance: Blind Citizens NZ's constitution identifies the composition of the Board whose role is to ensure effective governance of the organisation. There are seven positions all of which have a three-year term – the National President and six Members-at-Large. The National President's term concludes in October 2025. Each year by rotation, two of the six Member-at-Large positions are elected. Financial voting members (blind people ourselves) vote upon all elected positions.

The Board may co-opt up to a maximum of two financial Ordinary (voting) Members. This includes the position of World Blind Union Representative, an appointment made by the Board. When this person is not already a Board Member, co-option of the WBU Representative to the Board is mandatory.

The Vice President is appointed by the Board from amongst elected Board Members.

Entity Structure continued

Operational: There is one full-time staff member (Chief Executive) one part-time position (Administrative Support) with contracted financial, and project-specific support.

Branches and Networks: We have seven geographical branches around the country, three networks, and a Headquarters Branch for members who do not reside within the boundaries of a geographical branch or network. The development of additional networks is ongoing. Branches and networks (geographical and special interest) support the organisation with various activities, peer support and meetings held throughout the year.

Representative Positions

National representative and appointed positions are publicised for expressions of interest amongst our members. Well-documented procedures guide the Board in its decision-making and appointments. Representatives and appointees are required to consult about agenda items for their consideration, to submit and speak to topics on behalf of Blind Citizens NZ, submit written reports to the Board following meetings, and annually to the Annual General Meeting and Conference of Blind Citizens NZ.

Blind Citizens NZ is one of six organisations that comprises the Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) Coalition.

Blind Citizens NZ is represented internationally on:

- The World Blind Union (WBU) – 2 positions.
- Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) – 1 position.

Representative positions continued

Blind Citizens NZ is represented nationally on:

- Bankers Association Focus Group.
- Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ).
- The Braille Authority of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT).
- Workbridge Council.

Blind Citizens NZ has local representation on:

- Auckland Transport Public Transport Accessibility Group

Main Source of Funding

Blind Citizens NZ relies predominantly on the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind (Blind Low Vision NZ) to fund (from the charity dollar) our core service | business, which is advocacy. We have a three-year contract with the Ministry of Social Development. Additionally, Blind Citizens NZ receives revenue from donations, membership subscriptions, and interest from investments.

Main Methods Used by Entity to Raise Funds

Blind Citizens NZ's main method of funding is by way of a Funding Agreement Contract with Blind Low Vision NZ. Grant funding is also obtained by way of funding application(s) to the Lotteries Commission and other similar funding entities.

Reliance on Volunteers and Donated Services

Blind Citizens NZ relies heavily on branches, networks, members and supporters to volunteer their time and assist us progress our work. Board Members are volunteers – they do not receive any financial recompense for their time. Volunteers contribute to our activity outputs such as providing content for Focus (national publication), newsletters, social media, presentations, and representative appointments.

Contact Details

Physical Address: Ground Floor, 113 Adelaide Road, Newtown, Wellington
6022

Postal Address: PO Box 7144, Newtown, Wellington 6242

Phone: 04-389-0033; 0800 222 6940

Fax: 04-389-0030

Email: admin@blindcitizensnz.org.nz

Website: www.blindcitizensnz.org.nz

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BlindCitizensNZ/>

Statement of Service Performance

Description of Outcomes

Through our activities as a disabled people's organisation, and New Zealand's leading blindness consumer organisation, we strive to improve the lives of blind, deafblind, low vision and vision-impaired New Zealanders. We do this by contributing to raising awareness of our rights, and influencing the removal of barriers that impact on our ability to live in an accessible, equitable and inclusive society.

Description and Qualification (to the extent practicable) of Blind Citizens NZ's Outputs

Advocacy (personal and systemic)

Blind Citizens NZ works in areas that are blindness specific and where barriers and challenges are faced, such as but not limited to:

- Audio Description
- Education
- Accessible Public Transport
- Access to information and the environment
- Employment
- Pandemic and emergency responsiveness

Submissions and Select Committee Appearances

	2023	2022
Number of national submissions	5	6
Number of local submissions	6	17
Number of Select Committee appearances	2	1

Blind Citizens NZ National and Branch (Community) Meetings

	2023	2022
Number of meetings members have participated in	22	18
Number of attendees at meetings	377	319

Activities / Events

	2023	2022
National AGM and Conference - input from members on issues topical to the blind community to inform Blind Citizens NZ's work.	1	1
Members and guests who attended	75	71
National Special Meeting of Members – to address Membership Subscription Proposal held online 6 June 2023	1	1
Members and observers who attended	26	33

Information, Publications and Awareness

Number of issues of Focus national magazine produced	4	4
Number of Focus recipients per issue (distributed in Braille, CD, large print, and electronic formats)	780	737
Website – number of unique visits	7,482	11,350
Number of Facebook likes and engagements	8,970	7,336

Blind Citizens NZ | 2023 Annual General Meeting and Conference

Number of calls made by members to glean and or share information on the Feedback Line (national and branches)	8,435	4,355
Number of hours in total, members have engaged on the Feedback Line (national and branches).	837	830
Number of International White Cane Day resources (posters, 2 types of pamphlet, banners, feet-shaped statements)	5	5
Number of Branch Network Newsletters produced	22	23
Number of recipients of Branch Newsletters	1,191	1091

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Financial Performance

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue			
Donations, fundraising and other similar revenue	1	34,714	13,402
Subscriptions from members	1	3,900	4,852
Revenue from providing goods or services	1	361,736	350,769
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	1	36,558	14,869
AGM and Conference Fees	1	16,494	3,176
Other Income	1	6,217	-
Total Revenue		459,619	387,068
Expenses			
Expenses related to public fundraising	2	602	682
Volunteer and employee related costs	2	154,387	161,399
Costs related to providing goods or services	2	278,544	196,425
Grants and donations made	2	395	1,175
Other expenses	2	56,382	86,645
Total Expenses		490,310	446,326

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

Statement of Financial Performance continued

Expenses	Note	2022	2021
		\$	\$
Operating surplus/(deficit)		(30,691)	(59,258)
Unrealised gain/(loss) on fair value changes		28,724	62,477
Net profit/(loss) for the year		(1,967)	3,219

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	Note	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Current Assets			
Bank accounts and cash	3	771,022	788,499
Investments	3	210,398	371,830
Debtors and prepayments	3	8,545	53,651
Inventory	3	64	64
Total Current Assets		990,029	1,214,044
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	4	48,670	63,287
Investments	3	1,299,165	1,065,899
Total Non-Current Assets		1,347,835	1,129,186
Total Assets		2,337,864	2,343,230

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

Liabilities	Note	2023	2022
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and accrued expenses	3	93,647	53,412
Employee costs payable	3	14,708	26,889
Other current liabilities	3	11,135	42,588
Total Current Liabilities		119,490	122,889
Total Liabilities		119,490	122,889
Total Assets less Total Liabilities (Net Assets)		2,218,374	2,220,341
Accumulated Funds			
	Note	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Accumulated surpluses or (deficits)	5	1,047,021	1,098,117
Reserves	5	1,171,353	1,122,224
Total Accumulated Funds		2,218,374	2,220,341



Jonathan Godfrey
National President



Christine Fern
Board Member

Dated: 28 September 2023

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Cash Flows

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Cash was received from:		
Donations, fundraising and other similar receipts	13,637	37,829
Subscriptions from members	3,900	4,851
Receipts from providing goods or services	380,922	577,514
Interest, dividends and other investment receipts	36,784	14,782
AGM and Conference fees	26,494	3,177
Other	6,217	-
Net GST	43,363	(253)
Cash was applied to:		
Payments to suppliers and employees	(493,342)	(419,035)
Donations or grants paid	(395)	(1,175)
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	17,580	217,690

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2023

Cash flows from Investing and Financing Activities

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash was received from:		
Receipts from the sale of investments	-	27,338
Receipts from the sale of property, plant and equipment	10,000	-
Cash was applied to:		
Payments to acquire property, plant and equipment	(1,946)	(1,202)
Payments to purchase investments	(43,111)	-
Net Cash Flows from Investing and Financing Activities	(35,057)	26,136
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash	(17,477)	243,826
Opening Cash	788,499	544,673
Closing Cash	771,022	788,499
	2023	2022
	\$	\$
This is represented by:		
Bank Accounts, Savings Accounts and Petty cash	771,022	788,499

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated Statement of Accounting Policies for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated's Board has elected to apply Tier 3 PBE SFR-A (NFP) Public Benefit Entity Simple Format Reporting - Accrual (Not-For-Profit) on the basis that it does not have public accountability and has total annual expenses of equal to or less than \$2,000,000. All transactions in the Performance Report are reported using the accrual basis of accounting. The Performance Report is prepared under the assumption that the entity will continue to operate in the foreseeable future.

Measurement Base

The measurement base adopted is historical cost with the exception of some investments, which are carried at lower of cost or market value.

Presentation Currency

These financial statements are presented in New Zealand dollars (NZD) rounded to the nearest dollar.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated is registered for GST. All amounts are recorded exclusive of GST, except for Debtors and Creditors, which are stated inclusive of GST.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated Statement of Accounting Policies for the year ended 30 June 2023

Income Tax

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated National Office is a registered charity and is wholly exempt from New Zealand income tax having fully complied with all statutory conditions for these exemptions.

Bank Accounts and Cash

Bank accounts and cash in the Statement of Cash Flows comprise all bank balances, on call cash funds and petty cash balances.

Debtors and other Receivables

Debtors and other receivables are measured at their cost less any impairment losses.

Creditors and other Payables

Creditors and other payables are stated at cost.

Property, Plant and Equipment

All property, plant and equipment is measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and impaired losses. Costs include expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the asset.

Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on a diminishing value (DV) basis over the useful life of the asset. Depreciation is charged at rates calculated to allocate the cost or valuation of the asset less any estimated residual value over its remaining useful life:

- **Fit-Out 20% DV**

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated Statement of Accounting Policies for the year ended 30 June 2023

Depreciation continued

- **Motor Vehicles 20% DV**
- **Office equipment 30 - 67% DV**
- **Recording equipment 30% DV**
- **Furniture and fittings 20% DV**

Depreciation methods, useful lives and residual values are reviewed at each reporting date and are adjusted if there is a change in the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset.

Tier 2 PBE Accounting Standards Applied

Financial instruments

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated has elected to apply NFP PBE IPSAS 41 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement for its financial assets. Financial assets are recognised when the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Equity and bond investments are held at market value at balance date. Interest income is recognised in the statement of financial performance using the effective interest rate method.

Dividend income is recognised in the statement of financial performance when the right to receive income is established. For public traded securities this is the ex-dividend date.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated Statement of Accounting Policies for the year ended 30 June 2023

Financial instruments continued

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated derecognises a financial asset when either the rights to receive cash from the asset expire or are waived, or we transfer our rights to another party, provided certain conditions are met.

Financial assets at fair value through Statement of Financial Performance

Financial assets are classified as fair value through the Statement of Financial Performance with the goal of collecting cash flows and selling the asset.

Impairment of Financial Assets

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated assesses at the end of reporting date whether there is objective evidence that a financial asset or a group of financial assets is impaired. A financial asset or a group of financial assets is impaired and impairment losses are incurred if there is objective evidence of impairment as a result of one or more events that occurred after the initial recognition of the asset (a 'loss event') and that loss event has an impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset or the group of financial assets that can be reliably estimated.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Statement of Accounting Policies for the year ended 30 June 2023

Revenue

Revenue is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefit will flow to the entity and revenue can be reliably measured. Revenue is measured at the fair value of consideration received. The following specific recognition criteria must be met before revenue is recognised:

- **Donations:** Donation income is recognised as revenue when received and all associated obligations have been met.
- **Interest income:** Interest income is recognised as it accrues, using the effective interest method.
- **Legacies:** Legacy funds received for specific future investment purposes or to meet specific future costs, are recognised as income in the reported surplus or deficit and then **transferred from Accumulated Funds** to a "restricted" Reserve to be used to fund specific future costs of the entity, or to be used in accordance with the terms of the bequest.
- **Revenue received in advance:** Grant revenue is recognised as revenue when it becomes receivable by virtue of a contractual agreement being signed and an invoice raised. The Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated has a liability to repay the grant if the requirements of the grant are not fulfilled. A liability is recognised to the extent that such conditions are unfulfilled at the end of the accounting period.

Changes in Accounting Policies

There have been no changes in accounting policies which have been applied on bases consistent with those in the previous year except that during the year the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated elected to adopt PBE IPSAS 41 Financial Instruments, in accounting for its investments.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated Statement of Accounting Policies for the year ended 30 June 2023

Changes in Accounting Policies continued

This has had the effect of increasing the carrying value of the investments as at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022 by \$28,724 and \$62,477 respectively, and increasing the unrealised gains for the same amounts for those years.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Notes to the Performance Report

Note 1: Analysis of Revenue

		2023	2022
Revenue Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Donations,	COGS	10,549	3,052
Fundraising and	Grants	2,000	550
other similar	Donations	22,165	9,800
	Total	34,714	13,402

		2023	2022
Revenue Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Subscriptions from	Membership Fees	3,068	3,469
members.	Membership for Life	832	1,383
	Total	3,900	4,852

		2023	2022
Revenue Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Revenue from	Blind Low Vision NZ	210,000	196,000
providing goods or,	service contract		
Services	Calendars sales	2,786	3,940
	DPO / Government CE	12,949	14,356
	Meeting Fees		
	MSD Contract	130,375	132,240
	Other	5,626	4,233
	Total	361,736	350,769

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 1: Analysis of Revenue Continued

Revenue Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Interest, dividends, and other investment revenue	Interest	23,239	8,442
	Dividends	3,344	3,385
	Gain/(Loss) on Investments	9,975	3,042
	Total	36,558	14,869

Revenue Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
AGM and Conference Fees	AGM Recoverables	707	-
	Conference Fees	15,787	3,177
	Total	16,494	3,177

Revenue Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Other Income	Depreciation Recovered	6,217	-
	Total	6,217	-

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 2: Analysis of Expenses

Expense Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Expenses related, to public f/raising	Fundraising	602	682
	Total	602	682

Expense Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Volunteer and employee related Costs	Staff Wages	153,347	159,642
	Other	1,040	1,757
	Total	154,387	161,399

Expense Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Costs related to providing goods or Services	Advocacy	2,044	1,980
	AGM and Conference	69,342	43,030
	Board Expenses	38,860	7,984
	Focus	20,358	21,689
	Feedback Line	1,630	1,509
	Rent	27,881	27,121
	Calendars	4,505	2,792
	Administration Expenses	1,671	1,913
	Alternate Format Expense	3,428	1,932
	Operational Expenses	4,176	3,762
	Printing and Stationary	5,179	8,987
	Telephone	1,780	2,778

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 2: Analysis of Expenses Continued

Expense Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Costs related to providing goods or services	Travel	6,725	4,961
	Office Expenses	4,151	4,363
	WBU Expenses	22,686	24,781
	MSD Expenditure	43,994	18,773
	Other Expenses	20,134	18,070
	Total	278,544	196,425

Expense Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Grants and Donations made	Other	395	1,175
	Total	395	1,175

Expense Item	Analysis	\$	\$
Other expenses	Audit Fees	13,957	14,250
	Accounting Fees	11,000	8,500
	Legal Fees	6,138	30,403
	Election Expenses	-	2,703
	Depreciation costs	12,571	16,598
	Loss on disposal of assets	-	281
	Impairment of assets	208	298
	Portfolio Management Fees	8,887	10,032
	Insurance	2,281	1,859
	Member-for-Life expenses	1,340	1,720
	Total	56,382	86,644

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 3: Analysis of Assets and Liabilities

Asset Item	Analysis	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Bank account and cash	Cheque account balances	442,832	472,246
	Savings account balance	327,512	315,562
	Imprest Account and Petty Cash	678	691
	Total	771,022	788,499

Asset Item		2023	2022
		\$	\$
Investments	Short Term Deposits	210,398	371,830
	Total	210,398	371,830

Asset Item		\$	\$
Debtors and prepayments	Accounts receivable	1,190	46,634
	Prepayments	6,204	5,640
	Interest Receivable	1,151	1,377
	Total	8,545	53,651

Asset Item		2023	2022
		\$	\$
Inventory	Calendars	64	64
	Total	64	64

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 3: Analysis of Assets and Liabilities continued

		2023	2022
Asset Item		\$	\$
Financial assets at fair value through surplus or deficit	ANZ Managed investment Portfolio	1,029,165	995,899
	Term Deposits	270,000	70,000
	Total	1,299,165	1,065,899

		2023	2022
Liability Item		\$	\$
Creditors and accrued expenses	Trade and other payables	20,275	23,262
	Accrued expenses	31,748	26,771
	GST Payable	41,624	3,379
	Total	93,647	53,412

		2023	2022
Liability Item		\$	\$
Employee costs	Holiday pay accrual	14,708	21,955
Payable	Wages accruals	-	4,934
	Total	14,708	26,889

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 3: Analysis of Assets and Liabilities continued

Liability Item		2023	2022
		\$	\$
Other Current Liabilities	Lotteries Commission - funds in advance	-	20,000
	Other	11,135	22,588
	Total	11,135	42,588

Note 4: Property, Plant and Equipment

2023

Asset Class	Opening Carrying Amount	Purchases	Sales/ Disposals	Current Year Depreciation & Impairment	Closing Carrying Amount
Furniture and fixtures	1,990	-	-	(398)	1,592
Office equipment	4,211	1,945	-	(1,654)	4,502
Recording Equipment	136	-	-	(24)	112
Motor Vehicles	56,256	40,000	(43,783)	(10,494)	41,979
Computer Software	694	-	-	(209)	485
Total	63,287	41,945	(43,783)	(12,779)	48,670

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 4: Property, Plant and Equipment Continued

2022

Asset Class	Opening Carrying Amount	Purchases	Sales/ Disposals	Current Year Depreciation & Impairment	Closing Carrying Amount
Furniture and fixtures	2,768	-	(281)	(497)	1,990
Office equipment	5,016	1,202	-	(2,007)	4,211
Recording Equipment	166	-	-	(30)	136
Motor Vehicles	70,320	-	-	(14,064)	56,256
Computer Software	992	-	-	(298)	694
Total	79,262	1,202	(281)	(16,896)	63,287

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 5: Accumulated Funds

2023

Description	Accumulated Surpluses or Deficits	Reserves	Total
Opening Balance	1,098,117	1,122,224	2,220,341
Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,967)	-	(1,967)
Funds from Branch	-	-	-
Transfer to Investment Revaluation Reserve	(28,724)	28,724	-
Transfer to Reserves	(21,223)	21,223	-
Transfer from Reserves	818	(818)	-
Closing Balance	1,047,021	1,171,353	2,218,374

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 5: Accumulated Funds continued

2022

Description	Accumulated Surpluses or Deficits	Reserves	Total
Opening Balance	1,161,107	1,056,015	2,217,122
Surplus/(Deficit)	3,219	-	3,219
Funds from Branch	-	-	-
Investment revaluation reserve brought to account	(62,477)	- 62,477	-
Transfer to Reserves	(4,670)	- 4,670	-
Transfer from Reserves	938	- (938)	-
Closing Balance	1,098,117	1,122,224	2,220,341

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 5: Accumulated Funds continued

Breakdown of Reserves

Name	2023 \$	2022 \$
General Fund	624,358	615,704
Member for Life Fund	24,036	24,854
Leadership Fund	185,300	182,731
Branch Funds Brought to Account	48,518	48,518
Investment Revaluation Reserve	279,141	250,417
AGM and Conference Reserve	10,000	-
Total	1,171,353	1,122,224

Note 6: Commitments and Contingencies

Commitment	Explanation and Timing	2023 \$	2022 \$
Commitments to lease or rent assets	National Office lease for a further 19 months (2022: 8 months)	43,494	18,787
	Photo-copier lease (2022: No commitment)	1,400	-
Total		44,894	18,787

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 7: Events after the Balance Date

There were no events that have occurred after balance date that would have a material impact on the Performance Report (Last Year: Nil).

Note 8: Related Party Transactions

Martine Abel-Williamson is a Director of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind. The RNZFB have provided funding to the entity during the year. Martine Abel-Williamson is also on the Board of Blind Citizens NZ.

Note 10: COVID-19

On 30 January 2020, the spread of novel Corona virus (COVID-19) was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organisation. On 25 March 2020, New Zealand was placed into Alert Level 4 lockdown to combat the pandemic. This environment existed through until early to mid-2022. From then on, and up to the date the financial statements were authorised for issue by the Board restrictions on citizen movement and activities were removed.

The Board continued to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation, but at the date of signing this report the Board does not believe the entity has been adversely financially affected by the pandemic. The known and expected impacts of the virus on the entity include:

- A decline in the collection of membership subscriptions | members were disadvantaged in democratic processes.
- An inability for branches and networks to meet face-to-face (a mechanism where membership subscriptions are collected). This impacted their ability to hold routine face-to-face committee, general and annual general meetings, all of which are constitutional requirements.

Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated Notes to the Performance Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Note 10: COVID-19 continued

- The governing body continued to adjust the way it met while performing governance roles. In-person and hybrid meetings have been held.

Independent auditor's report

To the Members of Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated

Note: The formal document of the Independent Auditor's Report includes on the top right corner of each page, the Moore Markhams logo.

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying performance report of Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated on pages 3-27 which comprises the entity information, the statement of service performance, the statement of financial performance and statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2023, the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, and the statement of accounting policies and notes to the performance report.

In our opinion:

- a) the reported outcomes and outputs, and quantification of the outputs to the extent practicable, in the statement of service performance are suitable;
- b) the accompanying performance report presents fairly, in all material respects:
 - the entity information for the year then ended;
 - the service performance for the year then ended, and
 - the financial position of the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated as at 30 June 2023, and its financial performance, and cash flows for the year then ended;

in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Simple Format Reporting – Accrual (Not-For-Profit) issued by the New Zealand Accounting Standards Board.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit of the statement of financial performance, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows, statement of accounting policies and notes to the performance report in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand) (ISAs (NZ)), and the audit of the entity information and statement of service performance in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagements (New Zealand) ISAE (NZ) 3000 (Revised). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance report' section of our report.

We are independent of the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated in accordance with Professional and Ethical Standard 1 (Revised) 'Code of ethics for assurance practitioners' issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other than our capacity as auditor we have no relationship with, or interests in, the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated.

Board's responsibilities for the performance report

The Board are responsible for:

- a)** Identifying outcomes and outputs, and quantifying the outputs to the extent practicable, that are relevant, reliable, comparable and understandable, to report in the statement of service performance;
- b)** the preparation and fair presentation of the performance report on behalf of Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated which comprises:

- the entity information;
 - the entity information
 - the statement of service performance; and
 - the statement of financial performance, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows, statement of accounting policies and notes to the performance report in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Simple Format Reporting – Accrual (Not-For-Profit) issued by the New Zealand Accounting Standards Board, and
- c) for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the performance report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the performance report, the Board are responsible on behalf of the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated for assessing the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board either intend to liquidate the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the performance report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (NZ) and ISAE (NZ) 3000 (Revised) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the

aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of the performance report.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (NZ) and ISAE (NZ) 3000 (Revised), we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the performance report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting by the Board and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the performance report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated to cease to continue as a going concern.

Blind Citizens NZ | 2023 Annual General Meeting and Conference

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the performance report, including the disclosures, and whether the performance report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Perform procedures to obtain evidence about and evaluate whether the reported outcomes and outputs, and quantification of the outputs to the extent practicable, are relevant, reliable, comparable and understandable.

We communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

This report is made solely to the Members of the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated. Our audit has been undertaken so that we might state to the Members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Members, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Moore Markhams Wellington Audit | Qualified Auditors, Wellington, New Zealand

28 September 2023

Summarised Financial Information

Consolidation of National Office and Branches

Revenue and expense for the year ended 30 June 2023

Table:

Revenue	2023	2022
Donations, fundraising etc.	34,714	13,402
Subscriptions from members	3,900	4,852
Grants (Lotteries, COGS, BLVNZ, MSD)	361,736	350,769
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	36,558	14,869
Conference Registrations	16,494	3,176
Other Income	6,217	-
Total operating revenue	459,619	387,068
Expense	Blank	Blank
Fundraising related expenses	602	682
Employee and volunteer related costs	154,387	161,425
Operating costs (national / branches / networks)	278,544	196,425
Grants and donations made	395	1,175
Other expenses	56,382	86,645
Total operating expenses	490,310	446,326
Operating (deficit) surplus	(30,691)	(59,258)

Blind Citizens NZ | 2023 Annual General Meeting and Conference

Unrealised gain/(loss) on fair value changes	28,724	62,477
Net profit/(loss) for the year	(1,967)	3,219

End table.

Assets and liabilities at 30 June 2023

Table:

Current Assets	2023	2022
Bank accounts and cash	771,022	788,499
Investments	210,398	371,830
Debtors and prepayments	8,545	53,651
Inventory / stock	64	64
Total current assets	990,029	1,214,044
Non-Current Assets	Blank	Blank
Property, plant and equipment	48,670	63,287
Investments	1,299,165	1,065,899
Total non-current assets	1,347,835	1,129,186
Total Assets	2,337,864	2,343,230

End table.

Table:

Liabilities	2023	2022
Current Liabilities	Blank	Blank
Creditors and accrued expenses	93,647	53,412
Employee costs payable	14,708	26,889
Other current liabilities	11,135	42,588
Total current liabilities	119,490	122,889
Total Assets less Total Liabilities	2,218,374	2,220,341

End Table.**Accumulated Funds****Table:**

Accumulated Funds	2023	2022
Accumulated surpluses (or deficits)	1,047,021	1,098,117
Reserves	1,171,353	1,122,224
Total Accumulated Funds	2,218,374	2,220,341

End Table.

Funds held by Branches as at 30 June 2023

Auckland: \$84,850.54

Nelson: \$13,916.23

Rotorua: \$48,843.70

Southland: \$18,864.39

South Canterbury: \$221,464.88

Wellington: \$28,760.43

Whanganui: \$175,391.58

Attachment “D”

Remit to 2023 Annual General Meeting and Conference

Auckland Branch

Remit 1: The Braille Crisis

“That Blind Citizens NZ commission a comprehensive, externally conducted investigation into the state of Braille in New Zealand;

The Board seek the support and participation of The Braille Authority Of New Zealand Aotearoa Trust (BANZAT);

Conference strongly urge the Board to treat this as a priority advocacy project when determining its work schedule at the November 2023 Annual Planning Meeting”.

Explanation

This remit seeks to investigate as many Braille related issues as practicable. The research will provide a solid evidence-based context for understanding the state of Braille's instruction, supply and marketing in New Zealand. The Braille Strategy, entitled "Strategic Framework for the Provision of Braille Services" should form a central component of the Terms of Reference to be developed by the Board.

Braille is the only true tool of literacy for blind people. It surpasses other forms of accessible formatting for people who have no usable vision, or for those with usable vision who still find extended print access fatiguing or inefficient. Deafblind New Zealanders are dependent solely on Braille as the means by which they engage with the digital environment.

At the time of writing, we don't know how much Government funding is going into adult braille services, or Articles for the Blind postage or the BLVNZ Library service. It seems that Braille users have been almost exclusively reliant upon charity for the promotion, supply and instruction in Braille.

Last year, Blind Low Vision NZ and the Ministry of Education failed to reach agreement on the contractual arrangements which have been the only known commitment by the Government to contribute towards the funding of Braille. Whilst this was always to prioritise the provision of Braille for education, it also subsidised adult Braille services. The Government does purchase Braille production on a task by task basis. Marketing and distribution of material to adult Braille users lacks infrastructure.

Blind Citizens NZ and its allies, (particularly BANZAT and those which comprise the Independent Monitoring Mechanism) can use the findings of this research in Braille-related advocacy activities. Advocacy can include presenting to the United Nations Committee which reviews States Parties progress on implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Blind Citizens NZ can raise the state of Braille with government and utilise other opportunities as these arise.

Attachment “E”

Blind Citizens NZ Constitution – Review and necessary amendments

Introduction

As a result of changes to the Incorporated Societies Act (the Act) the Board is required to review our organisational Constitution and ensure this continues to meet the Act’s requirements. Changes to the Act are intended to make incorporated societies more robust from a governance standpoint by introducing officers duties and requirements for dispute resolution processes.

There is a transition period during which incorporated societies will continue to be subject to the 1908 Act until they re-register under the 2022 Act. Societies that fail to re-register between October 2023 and April 2026 will cease to be incorporated and will be removed from the Register. Re-registration will involve filing a constitution that is compliant with the new Act.

The Board began its work earlier this year and while time is on our side, the Board’s preference is to complete this mahi sooner.

Background to 2019 Constitution

Changes to our current Constitution were undertaken by Gibson Sheat in 2019. The Board sees advantages continuing to work with the same law firm and legal counsel i.e. the legal counsel is familiar with our Constitution. He guided amendments to our 2019 Constitution, working with some clauses that had been drafted as a starting point. We recall being told at time that many of our clauses were unnecessarily wordy.

While it was decided to focus on what needed to happen at that time, this is an opportunity to make sure our Constitution is easy to understand.

The Board's aim in bringing this item to our 2023 AGM and Conference, is to share with you areas that will require attention. This also provides an opportunity to think about the Constitution and offer suggestions about what else it is believe might need attention.

Areas to review and amend

Key changes resulting from the 2022 Act, and other work the Board has underway which needs to be factored into our Constitution in some way include:

- 1.** Consent of each member of the society will need to be collected, for example, by ticking a box when renewing their annual membership. To consider how this is achieved e.g. by including in the email reminder regarding membership subscription fees.
- 2.** Each society must appoint at least one Contact Person to be contactable by the Registrar. How the contact person will be appointed e.g. by the Board, needs to be included in the Constitution.
- 3.** Dispute resolution process must be included in the Constitution. This was done in the 2019 version of the Constitution (refer clause 15). This needs to be reviewed in light of the new Act and the need for it to be consistent with the rules of natural justice. Consideration of how the process accommodates people of all abilities, allows for a support person, is culturally appropriate etc.

4. Officers have new duties, which include acting in good faith and in the best interests of the society, complying with the 2022 Act and the constitution, and exercising the care and diligence that a reasonable person would exercise in the circumstances.
5. Societies can provide insurance and indemnify officers and employees, if their constitution permits this. Not a requirement to provide the insurance, but allows flexibility.
6. The majority of officers on the society's board or committee must be members of the society and all officers must not be disqualified from being an officer.
7. New rules define when an officer has a conflict of interest and a duty to disclose conflicts.
8. How financial statements are prepared may need to change – some societies will need to use XRB not for profit reporting standards.
Briefly:
 - a. Tier 4 XRB standards and cash reporting for societies with total operating payments less than \$140,000;
 - b. Tier 3 XRB standards and accrual reporting for societies with total expenses of less than \$2m.
 - c. Tier 2 XRB standards and PBE standards for societies with total expenses less than \$30m.
9. Whether financial statements need to be audited, or could be reviewed. The threshold under the new Act will be set in regulations but it likely to be set higher than the operating payment levels of Tier 3 and 4 Societies.

However, Blind Citizens NZ is also subject to the requirements under charities legislation. From 1 January 2023 the threshold for a required review is \$550,000 total operating expenditure, and the threshold for a required audit is \$1.1m total operating expenditure.

- 10.** Societies have full capacity, so individual powers don't need to be listed out in the constitution (refer clause 4.1.2), unless there are any restrictions on powers (e.g. borrowing) that it is preferred should be imposed. If so, restrictions need to be set out in the Constitution.
- 11.** Te Tiriti o Waitangi statement – governance position.
- 12.** Flexibility around President and Chair roles. Build in flexibility to allow option that the President does not have to be the Chair.
- 13.** Common seal no longer required (refer clause 14).
- 14.** Transition clause from old to 2019 Constitution to be removed (refer clause 18).

Attachment “F”

Blind Low Vision NZ Library Service – Is this the Flagship Service we think it should be?

Over the past 12 months or more, Blind Citizens NZ has heard from our members and many others about experiences, challenges, and decisions being made that impact users of the RNZFB Library Service. We've heard from users of our TellMe information service, BlindDiscuss and Member Forum email lists, as well as members bringing concerns to our Chief Executive, the National President and Board Members.

Not everyone is always part of the discussions so we are providing an opportunity for you to share your experiences and views at our 2023 AGM and Conference. For the purpose of this discussion, the National President will on this occasion set the scene sharing his personal experiences some of which are challenges, and his perspectives. These will either inspire others to share their aspirations, or show Blind Citizens NZ how little our community actually cares about having a quality library service for blind, deafblind, low vision and vision-impaired people...

From our National President Jonathan Godfrey...

When I first started getting lots of material from the RNZFB Library Service for pleasure, I was getting two and four track cassette tapes. Before that, I also had to read a couple of books for high school English classes that were on the older clunky tape things, but that's not important.

I got books that my mother thought I should read, books I wanted to read, and books the computer chose for me, but I also got piles of magazines.

It wasn't until the idea of charging for the magazines came about in the 90s that I learned about the history of the magazine service. It remains one of the greatest achievements of any consumer organisation in New Zealand. Blind people wanted a service, blind people made it happen, blind people proved to the RNZFB that blind people were using it, and the service got too big for that wonderful group of people to manage without it becoming a service of the RNZFB.

I can't imagine how many people got weekly magazines through the Library service from the 80s until today. The service moved from cassettes to CDs and I still got my dose of information. I could join in discussions at morning tea, and I learned stuff, lots of trivial but pleasurable stuff.

I'm still using the delivery service today, although it has moved to memory sticks. I don't need to explain all the reasons why, but a delivery service is what I'll keep using. I won't move to a system that ties me to one room at a time. I can't take an Alexa out to the farm, and to date, no interface has been offered to me that is a better option than any physical delivery service for getting books and magazines onto my various devices. The short version is that once I'm done with work, I want to be well away from my computer. I also want to keep my pleasures away from my mobile phone so that I get some time off from all the things I associate with work.

In order to meet my desire for pleasure reading, both books and magazines, I'm having to do more today than ever before to get hold of the books and magazines I want to read. I used to feel that the RNZFB library service was really serving my needs. Today, I don't feel the same and if we don't get the library service we want and need soon, it will further degrade towards irrelevance.

While I'm sharing experiences about audio | talking books and magazines, we know that Braille readers have a different and potentially worse story to tell...

Whether audio or Braille, the worry is that the catalogues are harder to work with, the ability to actually talk to a human about reading wish lists has diminished. The number of books and magazines recorded with synthetic speech are growing. The RNZFB Library produces audio for 70-80 magazines – of these human narration happens for around 6 including Women's Weekly and the Listener. The rest are synthesised speech.

As library users, do we have a preference for synthetic speech or human narration? On one hand it's great if a book is requested and can be made available within hours using synthetic speech. Some of us might find all the technical elements of these changes absolutely engrossing and impressive. However how much consultation has there been with us as members about our feelings on being read stories by a machine? It's okay if some think it's wonderful being able to ask for a book in the morning and start reading it that evening. Why, because it's synthesised speech. But how far into the book do you get before tiring of the machine's monotonous, predictable tone, and unemotional detachment from what appears in the text?

Those of us who are library users, should be aware of these changes that are happening especially if human narration is preferred.

It's Blind Citizens NZ's understanding that members can still have whatever it is they request - ask for a title and it will be sourced and delivered. However we all need to know that we must make it clear in our request if we wish for our title(s) to be narrated by a Human or we're okay for it to be synthesised speech, to make that part of our requests.

There are real concerns that the library service has turned into a book repository, and Blind Citizens NZ believes it could be so much better. We know because we are hearing from you. The Alexa was meant to be a turning point for us all to access the Talking Book Library – but how many of us are actually using this to its full potential? Blind Citizens NZ is hearing that many who have an Alexa find it too challenging to use – the skills are wordy and there's no easy way to find books.

In my job, I receive email messages every week telling me about articles I might like to read for work. These email messages give me the link to the whole article and allow me to download the articles I don't immediately read in full. I know other blind people who enjoy podcasts. This technology feeds the interests of those blind people so much that choices among articles must be made. This surplus of material is something I think I used to have from the RNZFB Library Service, and I enjoyed the quality of the service. But these mainstream services can't be brought into a library service that isn't ambitious for what it can deliver to blind people. That ambition can only be reflected in a quality service if the RNZFB (Blind Low Vision NZ) decides to resource the service and do so with a high-quality service in mind as against the smallest budget possible.

I know I'm not alone because we've heard from many of you in many ways. By putting the spotlight on what used to be a flagship service, Blind Citizens NZ believes it's worth bringing this topic forward and finding out how important the RNZFB Library Service is for us.

Attachment “G”

Blind Citizens NZ 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

Purpose: Blind Citizens NZ exists to give voice to the aspirations and lived experiences of blind, deafblind, low vision, and vision-impaired people living in New Zealand.

Vision: Every blind, deafblind, low vision, and vision-impaired person has choice and control over their life and therefore equity with all other New Zealanders.

Note: In the context of this document, the word “blind” includes all those people who are blind, deafblind, low vision, or vision-impaired, or who use any other blindness term that describes them, who can identify with our goals.

Values: We value with equal importance:

- respect for the different ways each of us responds to the challenges of blindness;
- the shared learning and support received from the lived experiences of others;
- commitment to democratic principles that ensure our representations are broadly based;
- commitment to sustained effort in our advocacy;
- constructive, cooperative and mutually supportive relationships with other disability organisations;
- the principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) with particular reference to Kāwanatanga (Governance), Rangatiratanga (Self Determination), Rite Tahi (Equality);

- the principles and opportunities of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the New Zealand Disability Strategy;
- our history and the role we have played in the lives of blind people since 1945.

Goal 1: Blind people live in an accessible, equitable and inclusive society.

- We will advocate on the grounds of human rights and equity using the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to those who create barriers to our full participation in society.

Goal 2: The community's response to blindness is demonstrated by positive actions and attitudes.

- We will always portray blind people positively.
- We will create greater community awareness that blind people can and do fully participate in society; (amended)

Goal 3: Blind people advocate at both a personal and societal level.

- We will provide and support leadership opportunities and advocacy training to promote the self-determination of blind people;
- We will demonstrate through collective action, how blind people can improve their life, and the lives of others.

Goal 4: Blind people receive the services they need to have independence, confidence and dignity in their everyday lives.

- We will assess blindness and disability services to ensure they are meeting the needs and expectations of blind people;
- We will advocate for a better experience for blind people using publicly available services;
- We will advocate for improvement in both quantity and quality of service where there is evidence of unmet need.

Goal 5: Blind Citizens NZ is recognised for its leadership in the blind community, and as a leading Disabled People's Organisation.

- We will work with Government and our disability sector partners to promote changes that benefit blind and other disabled people.
- We will actively support like-minded international organisations that advance the cause of blind people throughout the world including the World Blind Union.

Goal 6: Blind Citizens NZ is a responsive organisation that encourages people to belong.

- We will maintain a consistent flow of information to the blind community, and seek every opportunity to engage with them about the impact of blindness on their lives;
- We will promote and provide a safe and welcoming environment within our branches and networks for social interaction, peer support and sharing information.

Goal 7: Blind Citizens NZ is recognised for what it adds to the blind community and society.

- We will actively promote the benefits of joining our organisation, and seek new ways to attract more members;
- We will demonstrate that we are a dynamic and constructive Disabled People's Organisation worthy of everyone's support.

Attachment “H”

Representative Appointments

Introduction

The Board has the delegated authority to make appointments to national representative positions. Where practicable, the Board makes those decisions at its Annual Planning Meeting. It will also make decisions during the course of the year as and when required. For informational purposes, the Board shares with the Annual General Meeting, news of the appointments it has made.

Appointments made in the past 12 months

The Board has made the following appointments since the 2022 Annual General Meeting. Unless otherwise stated the Board made decisions at its 2022 Annual Planning Meeting.

- 1. World Blind Union Country Delegates: In the December 2022 Focus issue the Board called for:**
 - Applications for the Primary WBU Country Delegate position. There is a constitutional requirement that if the appointed person is not already on the Board of Blind Citizens NZ, they are then co-opt to the Board (refer Rule 6.3 ‘Co-opting Additional Board Members’); and
 - Expressions of interest in the Secondary WBU Delegate position (this is not a Board position).

At its March 2023 meeting the Board made appointments to each of the Primary and Secondary WBU Country Delegate positions.

The Board appointed in the interim, National President Jonathan Godfrey as Blind Citizens NZ's Primary WBU Delegate. The Board will review this decision during its November 2023 Annual Planning Meeting. Thomas Bryan was re-appointed as Secondary WBU Delegate.

2. **National Feedback Line Co-ordinator:** Vaughan Dodd was reappointed for a one-year term. The Board will review the position in November 2023.
3. **Moderator, Blind Citizens NZ's Blind Discuss List:** Carl Haliburton was appointed to this role in November 2020 and commenced in December 2020. With Mr Haliburton's agreement the Board reappointed him for a two year term (to December 2024).
4. **Moderator, Blind Citizens NZ's Member Forum List:** Carl Haliburton was appointed to this role and commenced when the list started in September 2022. With Mr Haliburton's agreement the Board reappointed him for a two year term (to December 2024)

Attachment “I”

Branch and Network Representative Reports

Auckland Branch, from Carolyn Peat

It has been another busy year for the Auckland Branch of Blind Citizens NZ. It started with the AGM and Conference 2022 that was held in Invercargill. We presented 3 Remits to the AGM and Conference and these were regarding:

- Accessible Diabetes Glucose Monitoring systems and making them free to Blind and vision impaired patients.
- The provision of Melatonin and asking Pharmac to fund this for Blind and Vision Impaired Patients.
- The Governance of Blind Low Vision NZ.

We also presented two papers for discussion one about Blind Low Vision NZ facilities and we wanted to know if others around the country were having similar issues to Auckland accessing the facilities. The other paper was about the provision of services for the supply and production and learning of Braille. I also asked about your remit from 2021 asking Blind Citizens NZ to develop a Communications Strategy. I hope we will have an update on this at the 2023 AGM and Conference.

Our annual Christmas party was a wonderful event held in the old Social Hall in the Jubilee Building. We had a wonderful dinner and some of our older members shared memories of school events in that place.

Our advocacy work continues with our branch making submissions on the following:

- Please extend 75% Total Mobility Taxi subsidy beyond January.

- Auckland Council Budget 2023-2024.
- Auckland Integrated Transport Plan.
- Auckland Future Development Strategy.

We also continue to participate in the Auckland Transport Public Transport Accessibility Group and Capital Projects Accessibility Group meetings. We are pleased to announce that by the time this report is submitted all Auckland buses will have next stop audio announcement messages on-board. This has been a long struggle that involved a Human Rights Commission Mediation but we are thrilled that now 3 out of our 4 issues have been resolved. The only issue left is the problem of flagging down the bus. We are also involved in the Universal Design Panel through Auckland Council.

Our General meetings were well attended. In March Nicola Owen spoke to us about the training of Māori and Pacifica language audio describers. This now means that we have audio describers who can audio describe Māori and Pacific cultural events and some can be in both Te Reo and English. In June Karen Plimmer and Latoa Halatau-Talagi and Tewai Halatau spoke to us about Enabling Good lives and Individualised funding.

In March of this year Sina Tanoi left the committee upon the birth of her daughter Dianne. We wish her well for the future. Our Annual General Meeting in August saw us farewell 3 long-standing members of the committee. Clive Lansink officially left in December when he was elected the Chair of the Board for Blind Low Vision NZ. We acknowledged his work as our Treasurer and barman for many years. Mary Schnackenberg has been our Secretary for many years and she leaves big shoes to fill. Finally we also acknowledged the long service to the Branch by Honorary Life Member John Puhara.

Our new committee has Sue Harris returning as Chair and we have Paul Brown as the new 'Mary' and Tewai Halatau as the new 'Clive'. We also welcomed back Karen Plimmer and Latoa Halatau-Talagi to join those of us who were re-elected. Martine Able-Williamson was our guest speaker talking about some of the challenges she has had as President of the World Blind Union.

We would like to thank the Auckland Community Organisations Grant Scheme and the Manukau Community Organisations Grants Scheme for supporting us. Without this support we could not fund transport for our members to get to meetings and continue to run our Information line on TellMe. I would like to thank the Auckland Branch Committee for supporting me in my role as Branch Representative and for Vaughan Dodd filling in when I could not attend Branch and Network information sharing sessions due to work commitments. We have been a great team. I am looking forward to the new challenges we will have coming and working with our new committee.

Rotorua Branch, from John Williams

2023 has been a year similar to last. Rotorua still has a problem with the homeless and safety for our members even though the council has worked to solve this situation it's still here. Blind Citizens NZ members choose to stay home or feel safer if they are with family so our outings have been few and members usually catch-up if one visits the other. We still have our Hybrid vehicle and it's still in use. We have Age Concern working with us as they have vision impaired clients with them. Achilles Rotorua is another community group for the disabled that has been with us for a few years – they have vision impaired members who have competed in several marathons and all have done extremely well. Our membership is steady and fingers crossed it will be better, for next year.

Te Arawa Whanau is a health organisation here in Rotorua - they provide services to vision impaired people and finding the right channel to get information to them is difficult.

We hope all branches are doing well. From the Rotorua Branch all the best for a happy and safe holiday as they are coming up so fast.

Whanganui Branch, from Dave Couling

Welcome to this, the branch's 60th Annual General meeting. This report is for Branch and 2023 National AGM and Conference.

The meetings during the year have been well supported with about 25 Members at each meeting, which is great.

My thanks to Glenis for her very valuable assistance in obtaining guest speakers and other entertainment. They have all been great.

My thanks to all committee members for their support and assistance which has allowed the Branch to function successfully.

I like to remind members that we own our own 10-seater van to transport you to socials and home again.

Please use this service as it is available for members to attend the socials and home again.

Phone the Blind Centre before noon and leave your details for the driver to pick you up.

Taranaki Network, from Bev McCulloch

We are up and running, yay.

It has taken a while to get people committed to our Taranaki Network but we now have nearly a dozen paid up members and a few more deciding.

We held a formal meeting and AGM on 9 September 2023 where Rose our Chief Executive came along to help me explain all about Blind Citizens NZ to the unconverted. There was a discussion about telephone dictation voting which I know a few will be doing including me, for the first time.

We agreed to establish an email list for our Taranaki Network – Rose has set this up for us.

Our next meeting was held at my house with six attending. Morning tea with cheese scones and Geof's famous chocolate cake got us into the mood. This was more of a discussion on what we want to achieve. There are some footpaths and crossings we need to talk to the city and regional councils about but the main subject was recreation and getting more members. So first up we will be going to the New Plymouth Club for a night of listening to a band, having a few drinks and maybe dancing. The end of October we will be trying out ten pin bowling with drinks or coffees at a pub afterwards. Reading this I can see a pattern already, food and drinks, as we have a couple of younger blokes who want to encourage more of the same to get involved.

Wellington Branch, from Jane Mehaffey

The Wellington Branch had its AGM on 2 September and the new committee is:

- Chair Carl Halliburton
- Secretary Janet Palmer
- Treasurer Owen Palamountain
- Branch Representative Pauline Melham
- Committee Members are: Mahendra Bali, Patrick Boyd, Thomas Bryan, Duan Jamieson, Allan Jones, Jane Mehaffey, Bernadine Rangi.

After many years of service to the Branch, Shaun Johnson decided to retire from the Committee we thank him for his service over the years and wish him well for the future.

The committee meetings have continued to be held by Zoom with the General Meetings being Face to Face with Zoom available.

The Wellington branch has been working to increase the membership and reaching out to all the areas of the Wellington region. It has begun to host general meetings in locations other than Braille House.

This year has centred around transport especially in regard to bus stops and their proximity to cycle lanes. Audio announcements on buses has been begun and Metlink has been asking for feedback on any aspect of the service.

Also the use of the Snapper fare system was introduced on the trains and Transmetro had several training sessions on how to use the machines.

The TellMe information line is constantly being promoted to blind groups with demonstrations of how to access the system. The death notices are being read out Wednesdays and Saturdays. Pauline Melham is doing a regular spot on what is happening in the Arts with emphasis on audio decried events being prominent.

The branch is getting ready to move to ANZ bank and to use the Xero accounting system.

Nelson Branch, from Karen Wilson

Annual General Meeting of Nelson Branch was held on 16 July 2022. Re-elected to the Committee was Chair Chrissy Fern, Secretary / Treasurer Lennane Kent, Vice-Chair Rodger Curry, Branch Representative Karen Wilson, and Past Chair Mike Stevens. Betty Blair was newly elected, and Jo-Kate Sinclair was co-opted to the Committee at the February 2023 General Meeting.

Nelson Branch Committee held ten monthly meetings in the past year, either in-person, by Zoom or with members joining by phone. The Committee is grateful to Blind Low Vision NZ for allowing us to use the meeting room at their Stoke Office for these meetings free of charge.

In October 2022 Nelson Branch had five Committee Members attend the National AGM and Conference in Invercargill.

General Meetings were held on 24 September 2022, and 18 February and 20 May 2023. These meetings were all held at 2pm on a Saturday in the Lounge of the Stoke Methodist Church Complex. Members have greatly appreciated Nelson Lioness and Soroptimists Clubs for continuing to provide transport and serving afternoon tea for General Meetings.

In September 2022 three new volunteers were welcomed. They assisted at General Meetings with setting up and packing away, ensuring members are seated safely and other tasks such as being the microphone runner.

The Committee hosted a lunch in December 2022 to wind up the year and thank volunteers.

In April 2023 the Committee held a morning tea in the lounge at Stoke Village for all our volunteers to get to know each other better; and to discuss roles and expectations of both the Committee and volunteers.

To keep our members informed, Nelson Branch Committee produced newsletters in September and November 2022; and February, May and July 2023.

Nelson Branch will have been established for 40 years in 2024 and we are looking forward to celebrating this milestone with a lunch on Saturday 15th June next year.

Nelson Branch has again had a busy year with advocacy covering many issues including:

- Pedestrian safety at intersections and crossing main roads;
- Hazards for pedestrians on footpaths from cycles, scooters, and skateboards including those that are electric;
- Accessibility of booking a taxi by phone;
- Changes to bus routes, stops and timetables;
- Mobility car parks in Stoke and Nelson shopping centres;
- Submission on a proposed Nelson City Council Traffic and Parking Bylaw;
- Count of signs and other obstacles on footpaths in Nelson and Stoke shopping centres submitted to the City Council;

- Audible Vehicle Alert Systems for electric and hybrid vehicles;
- Accessibility to information and voting in local body elections.
- Committee Members have attended meetings of Nelson Tasman joint Accessibility for All Forum, the Regional Transport Committee, and the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Public Education and Information Committee.

South Canterbury Branch, from Pam Marsh

As a Branch we have only met once in the year this report covers. We are planning on meeting more often in the future.

Pam (Chair) and Cyril Marsh along with Janice Mehrtens attended the AGM and Conference in Invercargill last October.

Pam Marsh
Chair

Otago Network, from Juanita Williams

This year we have been continuing our work with the Bus drivers and providing awareness education and answering questions about issues affecting blind and low vision bus users. This work has been very well received by all the staff and the Otago Regional Council.

We have also been continuing with the work with the roading companies and taxi companies and the medical staff from the urgent doctors and have awareness education meetings schedule for the remainder of the year.

This year we have started a Blind Citizens NZ Otago Network coffee group and have had up to ten people in attendance at most meetings, this has been a great way to quietly introduce new members into the group and we are looking at continuing this next year.

We held a very successful AGM with 18 people in attendance and lots of hearty discussion.

Raelene and Juanita are going to be going to Clyde to meet with the central Otago Blind Low vision social group which includes several members of the network.

This year(s) biggest challenge has been encouraging other members to share their skills and knowledge and join in with some of the advocacy work we are doing.

We have a Xmas lunch planned for the 2nd of December.

It has been great to have some of the newer members being actively involved and attending meetings and get together.

Southland Branch, from Robyn Garden

The Southland Branch of Blind Citizens NZ continues on a very positive note. The committee has met monthly, except for December, at the Blind Low Vision NZ Centre. Our two General Meetings were well-attended by members as was the AGM and General Meeting held on 8 July. The office bearers and committee remains unchanged which provides good continuity. However, it would be good to have new members. Thanks go to the Waikiwi Lions Club who provide transport for members to attend the General Members and AGM. Thanks also to the Invercargill Licensing Trust for providing funding towards a meal after the AGM.

The Southland Branch of Blind Citizens NZ celebrated its 60th Anniversary on 9 October 2022. Our Chairperson, Carolyn Weston, wrote a booklet, entitled “60 Years of Blindness Advocacy in Southland”, to commemorate this. The event was held at Ascot Park Hotel and was a fitting way to celebrate this achievement.

On 15 July, an event was held to launch the renaming of our BLVNZ Centre. Arthur Cushen, a well-known Invercargill who was blind and, amongst other things, worked tirelessly for blind people in Southland. He was the catalyst in gaining funding and support to build our BLVNZ Centre. To commemorate Arthur, the Centre will now be known as the Arthur Cushen Blind Low Vision NZ Centre.

Communication with members is important to us. We have undertaken a six-month trial of the TellMe information service. Our Branch newsletters and meeting summaries have been posted on this service.

Advocacy is always at the forefront of the work of our committee on behalf of its members. To help new committee members become more confident taking a lead in advocating issues, Carolyn Weston, our chairperson, ran a workshop on advocacy training for committee members.

We continue to be very active in community groups such as

Combined Disability, ICC Council Meetings and consultation huis. These have included:

- Invercargill City Council (ICC) public transport- audio announcement on buses, ‘on demand’ buses, upgrading on bus shelters and seating.
- ICC long-term plan.
- Meeting with management of the new Invercargill Central Mall to discuss ways to enhance access for vision impaired people.

- Annual Meeting of the Total Mobility Scheme.
- Workshop with the Design Team of the proposed new Southland Museum.
- Meeting with Gore members to support them with advocacy issues in their area.
- Ongoing communication with ICC regarding faulty traffic light pedestrian crossings and dual crossings.

We look forward to the coming year and continuing to working towards making things better our blind, low vision community.

Guide Dog Handler Special Interest Network, from Bev Duncan

Since last year's conference in Invercargill the Guide Dog Handlers Special Interest Network has had 2 meetings, one by conference call and the other on Zoom. Unfortunately, due to a number of events beyond my control a lot of meetings I would normally run or attend have had to take a back seat up until now.

The email list is still reasonably quiet compared to other lists though we have helped each other with a few issues along the way.

The network membership is growing slowly as more guide dog handlers find out about us. This is still by word of mouth so whether you are a guide dog handler or not, if you know of anyone with a guide dog or waiting on the waiting list for one, even if they don't have a guide dog now but are still interested in guide dogs please tell them about the network and invite them to join us by contacting National Office for more information.

The Annual General Meeting was well attended. I was again re-elected unopposed. It was also agreed that I should represent the network at the ABCNZ conference and AGM in Auckland. There were many concerns raised at the meeting including but not limited to the letter that have been sent to the departed Chief Executive of Blind Low Vision NZ. We will be refreshing the letter and sending it to the Acting Chief Executive to bring him up to speed with the matters we have raised and we hope for movement forward in the near future. Other issues that were raised are: communication, resourcing of staff, staff numbers, lack of consultation, retirement of guide dogs and more.

I look forward to catching up with many of you in October.

Attachment “J”

International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment East Asia Regional Conference 2023

Yogyakarta Resolution

Reasonable Accommodation and Accessibility in Education

for Students with Visual Impairment

21st September 2023

Introduction

The WBU Delegates (Jonathan Godfrey and Thomas Bryan) have received the outcomes of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) East Asia Regional Conference.

We believe the timing of our AGM and Conference is perfect to bring forward the resolution which we believe is in keeping with Blind Citizens NZ’s organisational positions. We recommend that Blind Citizens NZ 2023 AGM and Conference gives an organisational endorsement to the resolution which is supplied in its entirety.

Recommendation

That Blind Citizens NZ endorse the Yogyakarta Resolution passed at the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment East Asia Regional Conference 2023.

Preamble

1. We, the participants, including parents and caregivers, representatives of organizations of persons with blindness and/or other disabilities, researchers and professionals in education, health and rehabilitation, have gathered in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on 18-21 September, for the East Asia Regional Conference of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI).
2. Thanking the ICEVI East Asia Regional Board and the ICEVI Indonesia Network for having hosted this conference that aims to (1) explore global and regional perspectives on Reasonable accommodation and accessibility in education of children with visual impairment, including perspectives on education for all, legislation, access, training and resources; and (2) deliberate on current challenges and showcase good practices in the East Asia region, including accommodation and accessibility of devices, learning environments and instructional materials;
3. Noting that, in this Resolution, the term “visual impairment” is inclusive of blindness, low vision, deafblindness, and multiple disability plus visual impairment (MDVI);
4. Considering that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Preamble point e, states “Recognizing that disability is an evolving concept, and that disability results from the interaction between people with impairments and barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”;

5. Acknowledging that we, the conference participants, have identified attitudinal and environmental barriers as key factors in preventing or severely limiting access to quality education for students with disabilities, including students with visual impairment;
6. Recognizing that the provision of “reasonable accommodation and accessibility” are key factors in reducing and removing attitudinal and environmental barriers, in accordance with UNCRPD (Article 2), which states “Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to people with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”;
7. Acknowledging the principle of “accessibility”, as stated in the UNCRPD (Articles 3 and 9), requires national ministries to implement accessibility provisions in all aspects of life for all citizens, including those with visual impairment;
8. Noting that of the millions of books published worldwide each year, only 1–7 percent are made available to the 285 million people in the world who are blind and visually impaired, 90 percent of whom live in low-income settings in developing countries;
9. Recognizing the relationship between the principle of accessibility the principle of “universal design”, noting the UNCRPD (Article 2) refers to universal design as the “design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design”; and

10. Recognizing that the UNCRPD (Article 24) proclaims the right of all people with disabilities to be included in the national system of education, from preschool, primary, secondary, through to tertiary education, with provision of disability-specific reasonable accommodation.

Resolution

We, the participants of the ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference, declare the following resolutions:

- I. Early intervention and education for infants and young children with visual impairment is essential in enabling them to reach developmental milestones and in limiting developmental delays or further disabilities. Early intervention should be included in the national education system and provided by specialist and mainstream early childhood centers and preschools and implemented by qualified, competent staff.
- II. Inclusive education has been proven to be the most cost-efficient system of education. Therefore, awareness, understanding and implementation of inclusive education systems should be promoted. Documented best practices in implementation of inclusive education in various countries should be shared to promote awareness and understanding. Increased cooperation among departments/ministries of education and non-government organizations providing education services for students with visual impairment should be prioritized.

III. Mathematics continues to be one of the most challenging subjects for students with visual impairment due to limitations in teacher knowledge and skills in vision-specific accommodation and accessibility of teaching strategies and materials. Acquiring mathematical knowledge and skills is fundamental, because it trains students with visual impairment to develop analytical and systematic ways of thinking which are required for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Therefore, provision of accessible, inclusive mathematics teaching and learning methods and materials for students with visual impairment is an essential part of the provision of reasonable accommodation and accessibility within inclusive classroom settings. We, the participants of the conference are committed to the development of quality mathematics teaching and learning methods for students with visual impairment.

(ICEVI has created more than 600 instructional mathematics videos that are available on the dedicated YouTube channel entitled ICEVI Math Made Easy, <https://www.youtube.com/@ICEVIMathMadeEasy/playlists>. These high-quality instructional videos should be promoted and utilized by teachers of mathematics around the world. The teaching methods presented aim to support mathematics teachers in creating low-cost learning materials and developing teaching practices that are accessible and inclusive for students with visual impairment.)

IV. The provision of accessible books and educational materials for people with visual impairment is one of the important pillars in education and a fundamental right of persons with disabilities, in accordance with the UNCRPD.

The Marrakesh Treaty, adopted in 2013 and administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), allows for copyright exceptions to facilitate the creation of accessible books, including books in braille, digital audio and electronic (e-pub) formats. We, the conference participants, call on countries around the world, including in East Asia Region, to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty and adjust national laws and regulations to provide copyright exceptions for the production of accessible books and international exchange of accessible books across national borders. The Accessible Books Consortium (ABC), an alliance of WIPO and organisations serving people with visual impairment and other print disabilities, supports the development of national policies in compliance with the Marrakesh Treaty, strengthens national skills in producing “born accessible” books and supports the international exchange of accessible books.

- V. Technology is an increasingly important component in reasonable accommodation and accessibility in education. However, as a product to be utilized by people with visual impairment, technology-based tools and specialized devices should be available at affordable prices for people living in developing countries. Therefore, public-private partnerships are essential in ensuring the affordability and distribution of accessible technology and development of open-source adaptive/assistive software. Collaborative partnerships with organizations of and for people with visual impairment and other disabilities across countries and regions will ensure that accessible technology, tools and devices reach end users with visual impairment.

- VI. Although provision of reasonable accommodation and accessibility for students with visual impairment at all levels of education remains a challenge, best practices have been created and implemented by educators of students with visual impairment around the world. Best practices should be framed as education adaptive methods and models. Documentation and publication of best practices promotes awareness raising and adoption of the practices by educators and parents/caregivers of students with visual impairment, thereby positively impacting on student success in education. The ICEVI website, <https://icevi.org/>, is a valuable source of information about education for students with visual impairment.
- VII. To accelerate the development and implementation of essential, disability-specific human resources to support education of people with visual impairment, affirmative action and disability-specific training is required. One quality example is the ICEVI Higher Education Project, conducted in partnership with The Nippon Foundation, in seven East Asia countries during the past 17 years. The positive impact of the Higher Education Project has extended beyond education and into the employment sector. Provision of a more inclusive tertiary education has enabled the young people with visual impairment to pursue and complete their degrees and acquire important employment skills. As a result, they have become better prepared to enter the mainstream employment system, developing bright future careers and serving as role models for younger people with visual impairment, their communities and the broader society.

- VIII. The role of parents, caregivers, families and communities is central to the full development of children and young people with visual impairment, from infancy through to adulthood. Therefore, the existence of sustainable parent associations that serve as supporting networks is essential in helping parents to recognize and develop their important role as advocates and equal partners in decisions about their children.
- IX. Organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs), including organisations of the blind, also have a central role in fulfilling the education rights of people with visual impairment. Therefore, there should be close collaboration among all parties that support and promote quality education for people with visual impairment.
- X. The presence of empowered young people with visual impairment in society who serve as role models and mentors, positively influences parents/caregivers, educators and governments to prioritize investments in the required disability-specific human, financial and physical resources to ensure children with visual impairment receive a quality education, as it their human right.
- XI. Young people with visual impairment should be given a voice in decisions that affect them. In accordance with the principles and articles of the UNCRPD, young people with visual impairment should be valued partners in the development of quality, equitable, inclusive education systems, and societies.

In the spirit of inclusion, “Nothing Without Us” should not be just a slogan but be a reality.

Yogyakarta, September 21st, 2023.

Participants of the ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference

Attachment “K”

Preparation for the 2024 Annual General Meeting and Conference

Preparation for 2024

Since 2020 and due to COVID-19, the sequencing of geographical locations where AGM and Conferences have been held has been disrupted. Having this year’s AGM and Conference in the upper North Island means we can resume some consistency.

In 2024, the aim is for the AGM and Conference to be held in the upper South Island. Locations and venues that broadly fit into this geographical area will be explored. As per our customary practice options will be provided to the Board for it to make a decision.

Speakers and Theme for 2024

Once again the AGM and Conference offers an opportunity to members, Branches and Networks to offer suggestions for themes, guest speakers etc., for Blind Citizens NZ’s 2024 event. The Board will consider all possibilities at its November 2023 Annual Planning Meeting.

The Board encourages everyone to give some thought to these elements so please do bring your ideas along ready to share.