

**Memorandum of Understanding**

**between**

**VISION AUSTRALIA LIMITED**

**ABN 67 108 391 831**

**and**

**BLIND CITIZENS AUSTRALIA**

**ABN 90 006 985 226**

**2017 to 2020**

**1.** This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) embodies the bilateral agreement between Vision Australia (VA) and Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) (together, the Organisations) and the working relationship between the Organisations.

Underpinning this MOU is a mutual understanding and respect between the Organisations that:

* VA is Australia’s leading national blindness and low vision service provider; and
* BCA is the national representative body of people who are blind or vision impaired.

**2.** The Organisations share a common desire to enhance the quality of life of people who are blind or have low vision, and to minimise the impact of blindness and vision impairment. These common objectives will be progressed by the Organisations working together to:

* ensure that people who are blind or have low vision have access to high quality specialist services which meet their needs;
* eliminate the barriers which people who are blind or have low vision face in accessing the community, or in exercising their rights as citizens;
* influence Government, business and the community to better understand and accommodate the needs of people who are blind or have low vision; and
* promote awareness about blindness and low vision and to promote a positive image of people who are blind or vision impaired.

**3. Through this MOU VA will offer BCA:**

**3.1 Financial support**

* $150,000for the first year of this MOU
* $125,000 for the second year of this MOU
* $100,000 for the third year of this MOU.

The funds will be remitted quarterly to BCA in August, November, February, and May of each year.

At the end of June of each year of this MOU, BCA will provide VA with a report detailing the activities and services BCA has delivered utilising the financial support it has received from VA, including the funding of any overheads associated with operating BCA.

The activities and services to be delivered by BCA as per this financial support may change from year to year as agreed between the Organisations.

**3.2.** **Individual advocacy**

VA will direct and refer individual advocacy matters which arise in Victoria to BCA.

BCA will provide VA with a quarterly report which includes the number of individual advocacy matters it has attended to in total (including matters which were referred from VA as well as those which were not), and any identified trends or systemic advocacy issues that arise from these matters.

VA considers the provision of individual advocacy services (VA referred matters only) to be notionally valued at $35,000 per annum.

**3.3 Use of VA facilities for BCA meetings/functions**

Subject to availability, BCA will have access to VA meeting and conference facilities. Room use will be at no cost, however, any direct costs incurred by VA for services such as catering, security, after-hours access, cleaning, or repairs linked to BCA’s use of the facilities will be charged to BCA.

VA considers the provision of these facilities to be notionally valued at $5,000 per annum.

**3.4 Office accommodation**

VA will consider requests from BCA for casual office accommodation at agreed VA locations. Such accommodation may include the use of a computer, printer and telephone for one day, or part of one day, on an ad hoc basis. BCA staff will be covered by VA public liability insurance coverage. Requests for casual accommodation will generally be made where BCA staff are travelling interstate, or intrastate, and require a base for a short term.

Where BCA requires longer term office accommodation, a request will be forwarded to VA in the first instance to provide such accommodation at agreed VA locations.

VA considers the provision of casual office accommodation to be notionally valued at $5,000 per annum.

**3.5**  **Vision Australia Radio**

Vision Australia Radio (VAR)will provide BCA with access to a recording studio for up to 2.5 hours per week, and will air BCA’s national weekly program, ‘New Horizons’, at an agreed time via the VAR network. Each airing will include an announcement that the program is supported by VA. Arrangements may be made regarding access to studio time and program time, and BCA may request additional studio time (which may be provided at a cost to BCA).

VA considers that access to a recording studio and the airing of ‘New Horizons’ to be notionally valued at $15,000 per annum.

**3.6 Promotion of BCA**

On request, and at the discretion of VA, VA will promote BCA membership, events and activities to clients of VA through relevant VA media.

BCA will provide VA with information for inclusion in the welcome pack that is sent to new VA clients.

**3.7 Professional development**

VA will provide invitations for BCA staff and/or BCA Board members to attend selected in-house courses, training, and other professional development opportunities at no cost to BCA.

BCA will meet any of the costs, such as travel and accommodation, associated with the participation of BCA personnel.

BCA may also request the involvement of VA senior staff and subject specialists in its training and leadership development activities. Acceptance of such invitations shall be at the discretion of VA.

BCA personnel will have access to VA’s staff reference library.

VA considers that the provision of professional development opportunities for BCA staff and/or Board members to be notionally valued at $10,000 per annum.

**3.8 Principal sponsor of BCA National Convention**

VA will be the principal sponsor of the BCA National Convention and BCA will promote VA in all collateral and advertising material for the Convention, and provide VA with prominent positioning of a promotional stand at the Convention.

VA considers this sponsorship to be valued at $30,000.

In circumstances where BCA is able to source financial support from another blindness organisation for its National Convention at an amount equal to, or greater than, $30,000, BCA may enter into an arrangement for principal sponsorship with that organisation. However, any such arrangement with another blindness organisation will not affect any matter detailed in sub clauses 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3 and 4.1.4.

**4. Through this MOU BCA will offer VA:**

**4.1. National Convention and State and Territory conferences**

**4.1.1 Free registrations**

BCA will provide free registrations to four VA staff and/or VA Board Directors at the BCA National Convention.

Free registrations will also be provided for one VA staff member at each of BCA’s state and territory conferences.

**4.1.2 International guest speakers**

BCA will, when approaching and booking international guest speakers for its National Convention and state and territory conferences, include in the invitation a request encouraging guest speakers to meet with VA staff or clients.

VA will meet the additional costs of accommodation and interstate travel associated with guest speakers extending their stay for the purposes of meeting with VA staff or clients.

**4.1.3** **Provision of support**

BCA will provide VA with the first opportunity to provide orientation and mobility support, logistics support, and volunteer services at BCA's National Convention and state and territory conferences.

BCA will determine the level of support required and will only call on other organisations to provide this support where VA indicates that it cannot provide support to the required level.

**4.1.4** **VA address**

BCA will invite VA’s Chair or CEO to give a keynote address at its National Convention and at each state and territory conference.

For each National Convention and conference BCA will determine the length of time available for such an address and where it will fit within the overall program.

**4.2 Acknowledgment of support**
In recognition of VA providing financial and in-kind support under this MOU, BCA will publicly acknowledge this support in relevant BCA media. This acknowledgement will include a reference in each issue of BC News and an article within BCA's annual report which provides detail of how VA's support has been applied.

**4.3 Promotion of VA**

BCA will promote VA membership, events and activities to BCA members through relevant BCA media.

At the request of VA, BCA will seek volunteers for VA client engagement activities and promote new or changed VA services.

BCA will provide general information on blindness and low vision to BCA members and people making contact with BCA.

VA will provide BCA with information for inclusion in the welcome pack that is sent to new BCA members.

**5. Mutual respect**

**5.1** While under this MOU, there is an expectation that the Organisations will bring issues to the notice of each other. The right to make comment, public or otherwise, regarding any issue, is at the discretion of each organisation.

**5.2** The Organisations respect the rights of each other to make public statements and representations to Government, business and the community on matters concerning their respective organisations and/or constituencies.

**6.** **Collaboration**

**6.1** The Organisations will collaborate on issues where joint representations to Government, business and the community will achieve positive outcomes for the Organisations and/or people who are blind or have low vision.

Collaboration regarding such representations will include discussion between BCA’s Executive Officer and VA’s General Manager, Advocacy and Engagement (or their delegates) to determine which organisation will take the lead role in relation to identified systemic advocacy issues.

In circumstances where Government or business entities approach the Organisations about the establishment of advisory bodies or reference groups which are to include blindness sector representatives BCA's Executive Officer and VA's General Manager Advocacy and Engagement (or their delegates) will determine if representation from both organisations is necessary.

**6.2** The Organisations may each use or promote the collaborative relationship with one another as they individually see fit.

**7. Client referral**

The Organisations will refer clients to each other where there is an expectation that the referral will benefit the referred.

**8.** **Quarterly meetings**

VA’s General Manager, Advocacy and Engagement and BCA’s Executive Officer, or their delegates, will meet at least once a quarter to discuss work priorities and key policy and advocacy issues.

**9.** **Review and** t**ermination**

This MOU is effective from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020.

Termination of the MOU will take effect should one organisation choose to withdraw from the MOU, having given three months written notice to the other organisation.

This MOU will be reviewed annually by the Organisations at the time at which BCA provides VA with its report (as referred to in clause 3.1).

**10**. **Dispute Resolution**

Where any dispute arises under this MOU, the Organisations will take all necessary steps to resolve the dispute expeditiously by mutual agreement between BCA’s Executive Officer and VA’s General Manager, Advocacy and Engagement. If the matter remains unresolved it may be escalated for determination between VA’s CEO and BCA’s President.

Signed at: Melbourne

Signed Signed

John A Simpson Andrew Moffat

President, Blind Citizens Australia Chair, Vision Australia

Date: Date:

Signed at:

Signed Signed

Emma Bennison Ron Hooton

Executive Officer, Blind Citizens Australia Chief Executive Officer, Vision Australia

Date: Date: