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# Blind Citizens Australia

# National Convention 2019

# Program

# “You can do it your way”

# Friday 29 March to Monday 1 April 2019

## Venue Details:

The Old Woolstore

1 Macquarie Street, Hobart, Tasmania

Ph: 03 6235 5355

Website: [www.oldwoolstore.com.au](http://www.oldwoolstore.com.au)

Hosted by: John Simpson, President, Blind Citizens Australia

Master of Ceremonies: Rikki Chaplin, Advocacy Officer, Blind Citizens Australia

## Follow the BCA National Convention:

* On Twitter at #BCAConv and #YouCanDoItYourWay
* Remember to follow us on twitter [@au\_bca](http://www.twitter.com/au_BCA)
* Like us on Facebook at [[www.facebook.com/blindcitizensaustralia](http://www.facebook.com/blindcitizensaustralia)](http://www.facebook.com/BlindCitizensAustralia?ref=hl)
* The convention will be streamed via the internet for those unable to attend in person. To access the stream, visit [[www.bca.org.au](http://www.bca.org.au)/conv2019/](https://www.bca.org.au/conv2019/)
* You can text your comments or questions to 0488 824 623 throughout the weekend
* Listen in to live radio coverage and nightly roundups via the RPH network through the Iris Digital outlets in Adelaide and Melbourne and via Print Radio Tasmania.

## Convention 2019 is proudly sponsored by:

## Major Sponsor*s*

### Vision Australia



Vision Australia is a leading national provider of blindness and low vision services in Australia. We work in partnership with Australians who are blind or have low vision to help them achieve the possibilities they choose in life.

We support more than 27,500 people of all ages and life stages, and circumstances. We do this through 28 Vision Australia centres in Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia; 30 clinics; and through outreach programs in the Northern Territory and Tasmania.

### Guide Dogs Australia



Guide Dogs Australia is a network of aligned Guide Dogs organisations based in every State and Territory across Australia and in many regional areas. We collaborate nationally, while having a strong state based presence, which means we can be more responsive and flexible in meeting diverse client needs at a local community level.

We are known for our industry leading Guide Dog and Orientation & Mobility Services and having the largest number of specialist Orientation and Mobility Instructors available in Australia. But more importantly, we can provide you with choice and individually tailored programs with the highest quality service and support across a range of areas - including Orientation & Mobility training and equipment, world class Guide Dogs, increasingly Assistive Technology and other emerging services, Library and Transcription services, Aids of Daily Living and peer / social support programs.

Please get in touch with your local office and speak to us about our range of services, supports and [equipment.www.guidedogsaustralia.com](http://equipment.www.guidedogsaustralia.com)

## Supporting Sponsors

### Department of Social Services



BCA National Convention wouldn’t be possible without the generous sponsorship of the Government’s National Disability Conference Initiative, who have funded our travel bursaries.

### Visibility



VisAbility have provided innovative, life-changing services to people living with a vision impairment for more than 100 years.

Our professional therapy and support services assist people across a range of ages and disabilities in their homes, at school, at work, and in the community across both Western Australia and Tasmania.

We are helping to shape a world where people with disability have the same right to participate, the same range of options, the same level of freedom and the same control over their day to day life as any other person.

### Intopia



Intopia is a social enterprise. We’re change makers. We believe everyone has a right to inclusive digital experiences that enrich their lives. We work to break down the barriers, and make technology universally accessible. Our services include strategy and policy development, accessibility audits, training and usability testing.

### Pacific Vision



Pacific Vision International provides a range of quality and innovative assistive technology for people with low vision and blindness. We are a leading provider of hardware and software for blind and vision impaired Australians.

### University of Tasmania



The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) website provides information, advice and resources to disability practitioners, academics, teachers and students on inclusive practices within the post-secondary education sector.

## We thank the following organisations for their support:

* Information Alternatives
* RPH Australia and the RPH network stations
* The Old Woolstore Hotel
* Aira
* BindiMaps
* Dog Guide Handlers Australia
* MONA
* Red Decker Tours
* Lark Distillery
* Duncan Meerding Designs
* The Tasmanian Branch of Blind Citizens Australia

## Access Information

### Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

O&M instructors will be on hand to assist with orientation to the hotel. They will be located in the main foyer on Friday from 10:00AM to 2:00PM If you arrive from Friday onwards, but outside of these times, volunteers will be available to assist. Should you be unable to locate someone to assist you, please call 03 9654 1400 or text 0488 824 623 to request assistance.

### Volunteers

Volunteers will be on hand to assist throughout the convention. Please note that volunteers are unable to provide support with personal care tasks. If you need assistance with feeding, toileting and other personal needs, you should arrange a support worker. Also note that we have a limited number of volunteers to assist a large number of people, so they will not have time to toilet dog guides or assist with complex tasks.

### Dog Guide Facilities

There will be two options for toileting dog guides at the venue, one close to the conference area and one near the accommodation. Both areas will be equipped with bins and we ask that you take responsibility for picking up after your dog to ensure these areas are kept clean for others.

### Aira Access

Aira is pleased to support the convention by making the venue an Aira Access location for the duration of the event. Aira is a service for your smartphone that connects you with professionally-trained human agents to assist you with any task. If you are an Aira Explorer at present, using the service at the hotel during the convention will be free, and will not be deducted from your plan.

Even if you’re not using Aira at the moment, if you have a smartphone, you can download the iOS or Android app for free. Use Aira for free for such tasks as finding a hotel room, a conference room, reading a hotel menu, describing exhibit hall tables, description during the conference/workshop sessions, or calling an Uber to get to public transportation.

We advise guests to download the free Aira app prior to the event so you will be ready to take advantage of this opportunity to experience Aira as soon as you arrive.

You can search for Aira in the iOS App Store or Google Play Store. Alternatively, go here: [www.aira.io/app](http://www.aira.io/app). You will find a banner at the top of the app that says “Tap to use Aira as a Guest for Free”. Register with email and phone number on “Sign Up as a Guest”. Then you will get a text message confirming your phone number. Double-tap on the link in the text message and you’ve signed up as a Guest!

### BindiMaps

BindiMaps is a new mobile app that helps blind and vision impaired users find their way around in indoor locations such as shopping centres, educational campuses, hospitals, hotels and public buildings.

It’s free, and you can try it at the convention! Find that convention room, that exhibitor, the catering or the bathrooms quickly, easily and independently. Download it here:

<http://bit.ly/Bindimaps>.

We’d love to hear what you think of the app. Try it out and come visit our stand in the exhibition area. Just search the app for “BindiMaps” and we’ll get you there.

## Associated Events

### Adaptive technology Exhibition

As in previous years, the convention will host an exhibition of the latest in blindness and low vision assistive technology. The venue is the conference foyer. Exhibit times:

Friday: 12:00PM-6:00PM

Saturday: 8:00-8:45AM, 1:00-2:00PM and 5:00PM-7:00PM

Sunday: 12:45-1:45PM and 5:00-6:00PM

### Convention Welcome Function

**Sponsored by Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) – University of Tasmania**

Friday, 29 March from 6:00 – 8:00PM in the Merino Room. Hosted by the Tasmanian Branch of BCA, the welcome function is a chance to meet old and new friends in a relaxed atmosphere. Drinks available for purchase and finger food provided. Also featuring a showcase of furniture designed by Tasmanian artist and BCA member Duncan Meerding.

### Convention Dinner

Saturday, 30 March, 7:00PM – 10:30PM in the Merino Room. Includes presentation of Blind Citizens Australia awards.

### Informal BBQ and Open Mic

Sunday, 31 March, 6:30 – 10:00PM, venue TBC depending on weather conditions. Includes an open mic where those who have registered their interest will share their talents.

### Optional Sight-seeing

We have organised sight-seeing activities on Monday 1st April, which will not be officially part of the convention program, but which will be a good opportunity to network and experience Hobart. Any costs associated with sight-seeing will be paid for by the individual during convention. Pre-booking is essential and further information about sight-seeing activities is available at [www.bca.org.au/conv2019](http://www.bca.org.au/conv2019) or by visiting the registration desk in the foyer.

## Friday 29 March

### 1:30-3:00PM: Concurrent Workshops

### Workshop 1A: Doing it Our Way: The Many Faces of Independence

Merino Room

Facilitators: Rikki Chaplin, Advocacy Officer, BCA; and Steve Richardson, National Policy Council Representative, QLD

A recent post on social media which implored people who are blind or vision impaired to be supportive, rather than judgmental of one another has sparked much discussion among some members of our community about the nature of independence and the need for a safe space in which to be ourselves. This facilitated discussion will provide an opportunity for participants to explore what independence looks like for people who are blind or vision impaired, whilst recognising and celebrating the fact that independence looks different for each of us.

### Workshop 1B: Beyond the Bare Minimum: The Future of Audio Description in Australia

Shearers Room

Chair: Emma Bennison, Former CEO Arts Access Australia and CEO, BCA

Panel: Ross de Vent, Director, Description Victoria; John Simpson, Audio Description Consultant; and Associate Professor Katie Ellis, Director, Centre for Culture and Technology, School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry, Curtin University

We are at a critical juncture in the development of professional Audio Description. Audio Description in the arts and cultural sector is now provided on a professional basis in three states, and momentum is growing in broadcast and cinema. This workshop will explore what values should underpin a vision for consistent professional practice in Australia and look at how these will be negotiated, disseminated and upheld into the future. This session will invite participants to share their experiences of Audio Description, and their aspirations for future practice. The information shared will contribute to a larger national conversation about professionalising Audio Description and offers users a Blind-first space to discuss the practice and make recommendations for future development.

### 3:00-3:30PM: Afternoon tea

### 3:30-5:00PM: Concurrent workshops

### Workshop 2A: Braille music: From the Perkins to the World

Merino Room

Presenter: Stephen Bennett

NZ Musician Stephen Bennett will lead a discussion about how participants use braille music and how they share their music notation with others. The workshop will include audio clips of interviews with blind musicians outlining how they have managed the challenges of working with braille music. There will also be a training session in the use of braille music editor software.

### Workshop 2B: Diverse Experiences of Blindness

Shearers Room

Chair: Helen Freris, Vice President, BCA

Panel: Paul Mugambi Mwenda, BCA Member; Joanne Chua, BCA Director and Chair of Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee; Stephen Belbin, BCA Director; and Judy Small, Convenor of the World Blind Union Asia Pacific Women’s Network

A panel of speakers from minority groups will reflect on how their minority status has shaped their experiences of blindness.

### 5:00-5:45PM: Choir Rehearsal 1

### 6:00-8:00PM: Welcome Function in the Merino Room

Sponsored by Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) – University of Tasmania

## Saturday 30 March

### 8:00-8:50AM: Registration

### 8:50-9:00AM: Housekeeping announcements – MC

### 9:00-10:30AM: Session 1: Opening Session

Merino Room

Chair: Prue Watt, BCA Director

### 9:00-9:05: Acknowledgement of Country – Stephen Belbin, BCA Director

### 9:05-9:15: President’s welcome

### 9:15-9:35: Feature Speaker: Edward Santow, Human Rights Commissioner.

The commissioner will update the convention in relation to a project the Australian Human Rights Commission is conducting on Human Rights and Technology. The presentation will focus particularly on the rights of people with disability and the challenges and opportunities technology offers in relation to protecting and upholding our human rights.

### 9:35-9:45: Q&A

### 9:45-10:05: Keynote Address: “AI + AR + Human = Beyond Possibilities”

Suman Kanuganti, CEO of Aira Corp.

Aira is taking advantage of recent technological advancements to redefine how people who are blind or vision impaired can access sighted assistance. Suman will share the story of Aira and how it is transforming lives and share his vision for how artificial intelligence will further enhance the independence of people who are blind or vision impaired into the future.

### 10:05-10:15: Q&A

### 10:15-10:45AM: Morning tea

### 10:45-11:00AM: Roll call

### 11:00AM-12:00PM: Session 2: With An Eye To The Future – Sponsored by Intopia

Panel: The Future of Work: Behind the headline and what it means for people who are blind or vision impaired.

Chair: Kelly Schulz, Customer Inclusion Protagonist, customer Inc.

Panel: Suman Kanuganti, CEO, Aira; Rocco Cutri, BCA Director

The “Future of Work” (FOW) is a headline topic when it comes to employment and economic participation. From automation and robotics, to recruitment and contingent workforces. What does it all mean, and what does it mean for people with a disability and specifically those who are blind or vision impaired?

### 12:00-12:30PM: Launch of Blindness Service Provider Expectations Policy

A dramatic presentation from the National Policy Council, with Lynne Davis, Helen Freris and Steve Richardson, introduced by Fiona Woods.

### 12:30-1:00PM: BCA Your Way: recommendations session

Chair: John Simpson, BCA President

Focused discussion based on recommendations received about particular actions that the BCA board could take in relation to issues directly impacting on people who are blind or vision impaired or the functioning of the organisation.

There is an additional recommendations session on Sunday afternoon.

### 1:00-2:00PM: Lunch

### 2:00-3:30PM: Session 3: Blindness Services in the 21st Century

Merino Room

Chair: Mick Baker, BCA Director

### 2:00-2:30: Vision Australia Update

David Speyer, GM, Commercial and National services

### 2:30-3:00: Guide Dogs Australia Update

Michael Kightley, CEO and Jason Hanrahan, GM, Client engagement, Guide Dogs Qld

### 3:00-3:20: VisAbility Update

Naomi Gilson, Occupational Therapist

### 3:20-3:50PM: Afternoon tea

### 3:50-4:45PM: Panel: New Developments in Australia’s Blindness Sector

Chair: Emma Bennison, BCA CEO

Panel: Dale Cleaver, Chair, Australian Blindness Forum; Judith Abbott, CEO, Vision 2020 Australia; and John Simpson, BCA President

### 4:45-5:00PM: Close

### 5:00-6:00PM: Choir Rehearsal 2

### 7:00-10:00PM: Convention Dinner in the Merino Room

## Sunday 31 March

### 8:00-8:50AM: Registration

### 8:50-9:00AM: Welcome and housekeeping - MC

### 9:00-10:20AM: Session 4: From Past to Present

Chair: Dan Stubbs, Chair, Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee

### 9:00-9:10: CEO’s welcome

### 9:10-9:20: Roll call

### 9:20-9:50: History of Tasmanian information services

Chair: Doug McGinn, Treasurer, Tasmanian Branch

Panel: Tasmanian branch members Vanessa Ransley, Jan Miller and David Ransley

Members of Tasmania’s recently established BCA branch will reflect on the history of information services in Tasmania and how information innovation has influenced national developments.

### 9:50-10:20: Launch of “Our Legacy: Changing What it Means to be Blind in NSW and the ACT”

Chair: Graeme Innes

Speakers: Susan Thompson, BCA member and Advocacy Advisor, Vision Australia; and Jennifer Parry

The NSW/ACT State Division of Blind Citizens Australia will launch a five episode podcast series showcasing the experiences of blindness and the development of blindness advocacy in NSW and the ACT lead by Blind Citizens NSW and Blind Citizens Australia.

### 10:20-10:50AM: Morning tea

### 10:50-11:45AM: Concurrent Sessions: Session 5: Doing it Your Way in Every Day Life

### Session 5A: Ultimate Independence: Combining Innovative Technology with Your Cane or Dog Guide

Merino Room

Chair: Kevin Murfitt, President, Dog Guide Handlers Australia

Panel: Penny Stevenson and Katie Butler, Dog Guide Handlers Australia and John-Ross Barresi, Innovation and Project Coordinator, Guide dogs Victoria

In the era of ever improving and emerging technologies, people who are blind or vision impaired have many more opportunities to increase their mobility and independence. Combine this technology with our dog guides or canes and we have the most advanced and effective mechanisms to be involved in our communities. This interactive session will showcase innovative technology and provide opportunities for discussion about how technology can enhance mobility skills.

### Session 5B: Life Hacks for Surviving Hospital When You’re Blind or Vision Impaired

Shearers Room

Panel: Susan Thompson, BCA Member and Advocacy Advisor, Vision Australia, Martin Stewart, National Policy Council Representative, VIC and Helen Badge, NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation

Accessing and advocating for the care we need when we go to hospital, as part of a plan or otherwise, can be challenging. Hear about research the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation and Vision Australia are conducting into how to improve our experiences in hospital from Helen Badge and Susan Thompson. Hear about Martin Stewart’s recent experiences in hospital and share tips and tricks for getting the best from your stay. Find out how your experiences can help the National Policy Council design and implement a new policy on healthcare provision.

### 11:50AM-12:45PM: Concurrent Sessions:

### Session 5C: Taking the Stress Out of Travelling Alone

Merino Room

Chair: Helen Freris

Panel: Jaci Armstrong, National Policy Advisor, Guide Dogs Australia; Rikki Chaplin, BCA Advocacy Officer; and Judy Small, Convenor, World Blind Union Asia Pacific Women’s Network

Travelling alone, whether in Australia or overseas, can be a daunting experience. In this session, you will hear stories of the challenges people who are blind or vision impaired have experienced in getting to their destinations and how they have overcome them. There will also be opportunities to share your own experiences.

### Session 5D: When Blindness is Not Your Only Impairment: The Impacts and Challenges of Living with Multiple Disabilities, Physical, Social and Emotional

Shearers Room

Chair: Steve Richardson, National Policy Council representative, QLD

Panel: Jonathan Craig, Editor, Blind Citizens News; Nicole McKillop, student; and Martin Stewart, National Policy Council Representative, VIC

Panelists will share personal stories of living with multiple disabilities, from communication to mobility and everything in between. This will be followed by a Q&A and discussion.

### 12:45-1:45PM: Lunch

### 1:45-3:00PM: Session 6: The NDIS and My Aged Care: Removing the Road Blocks to Choice and Control

Merino Room

Chair: Angela Jaeschke, Policy and Advocacy Manager

### 1:45-2:00: Removing the Barriers to the NDIS for People Who are blind or vision impaired.

Speaker: Matthew Wright, Branch Manager, National Engagement and Support Branch, NDIA

### 2:00-2:15: Removing the Barriers to My Aged Care for People Who are blind or vision impaired.

Speaker: Corey Irlam, Director, Advocacy and Government Relations, COTA Australia

### 2:15-2:35: Q&A with speakers.

### 2:35-3:00: Facilitated discussion: BCA’s current work in relation to the NDIS and My Aged Care and what comes next?

### 3:00-3:30PM: Afternoon tea

### 3:30-4:45PM: BCA Your Way

### 3:30-4:10: Recommendations Session 2

Chair: John Simpson

This session will include a report back from recommendations put forward at previous national and state conventions as well as dealing with new recommendations which were not covered in the Saturday session.

### 4:10-4:45: Q&A with BCA President and CEO

Your opportunity to ask questions and share your suggestions for the future of our organization with BCA President, John Simpson and CEO, Emma Bennison.

### 4:45-5:00PM: Convention close

### 5:00-6:00PM: Choir Rehearsal 3

### 6:30-10:00PM: Barbecue Dinner

Sit down dinner featuring BBQ style food, drinks are at the cost of the individual.

Includes the Open Mic performances.

## Monday 1 April

Optional sight-seeing activities, details at [www.bca.org.au/conv2019](http://www.bca.org.au/conv2019) or available from the registration desk. Pre-booking is essential.

## 2019 Convention Program Reference Group

Emma Bennison, Chair and BCA CEO

Doug McGinn, Tasmania

Vanessa Ransley, Tasmania

Mick Baker, BCA Director, NSW

Stephen Belbin, BCA Director, NSW

Graeme Innes, NSW

Sally Aurisch, NSW/ACT Coordinator, NSW