# Recommendations for Consideration

# at BCA National Convention 2019

## Blindness Service Provider Expectations Policy – National Policy Council

That the Convention recommend the adoption of the Blindness Service Provider Expectations Policy, drafted after consultation with members and blindness service providers, by the National Policy Council in February 2019. In doing so, the convention recommends that:

1. The BCA board and staff continue to consult and collaborate with blindness service providers to encourage and support voluntary implementation of the policy over time, recognising that it provides an aspirational benchmark, many of whose expectations blindness service providers already satisfy.
2. That the NPC consider ongoing feedback from members and blindness service providers in reviewing the policy at least annually, or more frequently if warranted.

# Pedestrian Concerns – Sydney Branch

Blind Citizens Australia Sydney Branch notes with concern that certain forms of motorised vehicles are increasingly being permitted to operate on footpaths and in other pedestrian spaces. It appears that their use is inadequately regulated to ensure pedestrian safety – particularly for people who are blind/vision impaired, those with other disabilities and older Australians.

We recommend BCA consult with relevant authorities to ensure adequate protection for the safety of pedestrians.

## Accessibility requirements for public procurement of ICT – BCWA

We are finding that one of the biggest obstacles for blind and vision impaired people to find and keep a job is the inaccessibility of the information and communication technology used by government departments, the organisations they fund and private businesses.

Blind Citizens WA thus recommends that BCA lobby the Australian governments – national, state and local – to implement AS EN 301 549 (Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services) in all procurement of ICT.

Furthermore, as more and more activities are now conducted online – such as banking, purchasing tickets, completing forms – and as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines have been updated to WCAG 2.1 which now better accommodates people with vision impairments, Blind Citizens WA also recommends that the Australian national, state and local governments adopt the WCAG 2.1 guidelines to ensure that websites are as accessible as they can be.

## Access to publicly funded screening programs – Lynne Davis

That the BCA Board develop an advocacy strategy aimed at increasing the access of blind and vision impaired Australians to publicly funded screening programmes for conditions such as bowel cancer and breast cancer.

**Rationale:**

Publicly funded mass screening programmes have become an essential part of community health and preventive medicine. In all countries. In Australia, some of the better known screening programmes have been aimed at the early diadnosis and treatment of such conditions as bowel and breast cancer, but there are many others.

Unfortunately, there has been little attention paid to the accessibility of these programmes to people who are blind or vision impaired. The lack of access takes many forms, including limited availability of information about the existence and purpose of the programmes, non-availability of forms relating to consent, medical history, etc in accessible formats which can be completed independently, and the difficulty of completing required procedures (for example, in bowel cancer screening) in non-visual ways.

The consequences for our community are significant. If the argument in favour of screening programmes is that early diagnosis and treatment save lives, and the rationale for public funding is to make screening available to everyone, then these arguments must surely be extended to barriers other than cost alone. In the case of people who are blind or vision impaired this means focussing on access barriers such as those referred to above.

BCA could work with health authorities in all states and territories and the Commonwealth to identify access barriers in screening programmes and to advocate for ways of removing these barriers.

## Establishment of Employment Related Special Interest Branch – Lauren Henley

That the BCA Board considers establishing a national special interest branch for members who are currently in employment. This would provide a much-needed peer support opportunity to allow people to discuss challenges, strategies, tips and tricks that are unique to the work environment.