**Blind Citizens Australia Election of Directors 2019**

**Candidates Statements**

## Lauren Henley

My name is Lauren Henley and I am a 33-year-old woman from Victoria. I first became involved with BCA back in 2008, not long after losing my sight in a motor vehicle accident. I have gone onto hold a range of professional roles within Government and the not-for-profit sector since this time. I sincerely believe that I owe much of this to the support I have gained through my involvement with BCA. This is the strength of our organisation. Together, we are changing what it means to be blind.

My personal experience has driven me to ensure others can reap the rewards our organisation has to offer long into the future. A position on the BCA board would enable me to contribute to this shared vision.

I believe my insight into the operations and complexities of member-based organisations would place me in a strong position to make a positive contribution to the governance of BCA. I am working for member-based organisation, Council on the Ageing Victoria at present. Over the past decade, I have also contributed to the work of BCA as a Branch President, a volunteer and an employee. I have a strong grass roots focus and would work to ensure BCA reflects the diverse needs of the community it serves at all times.

I act locally but think globally and always apply a human rights lens to my work. My commitment to upholding, promoting and protecting the rights of people with disability is best demonstrated through my previous work at the Australian Human Rights Commission. Earlier this year, I was also selected to represent the voice of Australians with disability throughout the second review of Australia’s performance under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the United Nations.

## Suzanne Hudson

My name is Suzanne Hudson, friends call me Suzy. I have been a passionate active member of Blind Citizens for approximately ten years. I have had a vision impairment all my life, I have a Social Science degree from University with a major in welfare and community services. I am currently employed as a support worker. I also am on the equal access advisory committee for the Tweed Shire Council, this has been for the past 6 years. I am the coordinator for the Tweed Valley blind citizens group. I have participated in the organisation of the last 2 state conventions for New South Wales. In 2018 I was presented with the Faye Drawet advocacy award by the Tweed Shire Council this was very humbling as Faye was a foundation member of PWDA.

Thanks to my impairment I am a good communicator, my eyes might not work very well however my ears work a treat as does my tongue. I have a large network of people who are involved with the disability community, both as service providers and people with lived experiences of disabilities.

I’m wishing for the opportunity to place myself forward for the position on the Board of Directors for Blind Citizens Australia and hope to talk further with you in the future, thanks for taking the time to read this brief summary of what I have too offer.

## Doug McGinn

I lost my sight in 1985 and needed to re-train as an adult with vision loss. I attended the RVIB to re-train. For a short time, I used a dog guide but use a long cane now for mobility.

In 1987 to 1990, I completed a Bachelor of Science at the University of Tasmania with a double major in Mathematics. As a student, I was extremely active regarding the rights and services of students with disabilities. I was integral in the establishment of a Student Support Group, Disability Resource Rooms at both main campuses and the employment of Disability Advisers.

In 1991, I took up the position of one of these Disability Advisers, and apart from a short 2 year stint working with long-term unemployed in Footscray, I have been with the University of Tasmania since then.

I have been a Director of Royal Guide Dogs for 4 years and have also served on several previous BCA committees including the NPC. I was recently heavily involved with the Organising Committee for the 2019 National Convention held here in Hobart.

I know that I can bring over 35 years of experience of being a service user and service provider. My work at the University is with students with all types of disabilities and ongoing medical conditions including those with vision impairments.

I understand most of the issues faced by people with vision impairments including:

* Living in a rural area with limited services
* Keeping up with changing technologies
* Issues related to aging

More importantly, I know that my experience demonstrates my ability to work with a diverse range of people’s views. I have a reasonable understanding of the policies and strategic issues facing BCA and would hope that I can quickly understand new complex issues as they arise.

## Steve Richardson

I joined Blind Citizens Australia in 1994, becoming a member of the Brisbane branch.

I became more actively involved when I started producing Soundabout Queensland. I then joined the branch committee, serving as a director and Vice president. In more recent years, I have been involved with the production of the national soundabout newsletter, and earlier this year, produced a series of interview based life ready podcasts. I have served the last two years as Queensland representative on the MPC, and the last 12 months as Brisbane branch coordinator.

I am a qualified audio engineer with 26 years experience in the community radio sector, working at 4RPH in Brisbane. Working at a small community radio station gives you many opportunities to be multi-faceted. I have spent most of that time on the station's management committee, including time as a president, and also served on the board of the national peak body, RPH Australia.

I am also a musician, a clock collector and a mad keen train spotter. I love being alive and have a keen desire for serving the blind and vision impaired community. I identify as having multiple disabilities, as I also have a bone condition associated with my blindness. I am passionate about raising awareness of the impacts and challenges of living with more than one disability.

Should you see fit to elect me as a candidate, I look forward to helping in the work of the national board.