# BCA Inform 7th of September (Recommendations Session)

Attendees:  Sally Aurisch, Doug McGinn, Fiona Woods, Michelle Watts, John, Yvonne Huntley, Cynthia Cate, John Simpson, Susan Thompson, Marie Shang, Angela Jaeschke, Ashley Brooks, Brendon Donahue, Chaz Moller-Nelsen, David Saxberg, Cheryl Human, Emma Bennison, Helen Freris, Jaci Armstrong, Jane Britt, Jennifer Parry, Joelene Scot, Katie Butler, Lynne Davis, Prue Watt, Richard Attwater, Sean Tyrell, Jane Britt, Stephen Belbin, Steve Richardson.

Apologies:  Martin Stewart

Recommendation: BCA Offer one to one peer support to those that are new vision impaired with a focus on mentoring and available services and resources.

Presented by:  Yvonne Huntley

* BCA should touch base with new members to see if they are vision impaired and check they are across information and resources available, eg. pension, travel pass, equipment, service organisations.

Seconded by Michelle Watts – passed

Recommendation:  BCA establish and maintain a directory of services as a resource for doctors and opticians and people experiencing recent vision loss and that this directory of information be made available through a handbook and helpline service through appropriately trained volunteers.

Presented by:  Yvonne Huntley

* To have a handbook that can be given to people by their specialist when receiving a diagnosis of blindness or vision impairment that contains all relevant services and concessions that a person is eligible for would be of great assistance
* Whilst BCA does have the State specific Toolkits that contain such information we could be doing a much better job of promoting this information to reach a broader audience.  These toolkits also need regular updating.
* BCA has been working with Vision2020 over the past couple of years to develop the Adult Referral Pathway for blindness and low vision services.with the aim to be available in opthamolgist’s and other eye health professionals’ offices to ensure that appropriate referrals are being made for individuals to ensure they can make decions about their supports.

Seconded by Stephen Belbin – passed

Recommendation:  BCA to increase its lobbying of the ABC to ensure that program guide information about their AD content can be available through the BCA phone system.

* Currently BCA is only being provided an audio format of the AD programy from SBS.  ABC is yet to provide a similar audio of AD programs   BCA is in communications about the provision of this format as whilst they make a Word version available not everyone an access this option.
* By endorsing this recommendation BCA has another tool to work with when campaigning for this information from ABC.
* Individuals are also encouraged to make contact with ABC to request this information be provided to BCA.

Seconded by Susan Thompson – passed

Recommendation:  That BCA take all necessary steps to, including the provision of mandatory training for staff and the maintenance of appropriate style guides to ensure that all written information provided by the organisation  both directly and through social media and other online platforms is in the format of choice of the recipient where possible and is fully compliant with the Worldwide Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, 2.1 and the Principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

* BCA needs to improve the accessibility of its communications in the above as it is not always up to standard and as an organisation preaching to other bodies about accessible information we need to set an example.  Examples given included the lack of tagging of images on Facebook posts.

Seconded by:  Marie Shang – passed

Recommendation:  That BCA Considers through member engagement, changing the name of the organisation to reflect the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

* The name change is proposed to better describe what BCA stands for
* Comments on this included that the full name of Blind Citizens Australia does give an idea of who we stand for; the fact the Google does not show us when searching BCA is more about advertises paying for premium position rather than BCA not being a well known name; resources could be better spent on other things.

Seconded by Lynne Davis – majority against, not passed.

Recommendation:  A) that BCA implement strategies to better attract and support younger people who are blind or vision impaired in order to better meet their needs and to represent their interests. B) that consideration be given to the re-establishment within BCA of a young persons special interest branch.

Presented by:  A) Chaz Moller-Nelson and B) Steve Richardson

* It is felt that BCA does not have enough activity to appeal to younger people and that not enough of them even know of BCA
* Concerns that by the time the next generation comes through that there will be few members joining.
* Young people engagement will probably be more affective than the creation of a branch.

Seconded by Richard Attwater – passed

Recommendation:  That BCA increase its advocacy for people who are blind or vision impaired in relation to Covid19, particularly to stress the need for home based and other easily accessible testing and in relation to a check in mechanism that does not comprise the dignity, privacy and independence of the person.

Presented by:  Ashley Brooks

* Home based covid testing available to those that can’t visit the mainstream drive through services, is a long arduous process
* Checking in at locations is difficult when you can’t use a smartphone and there are limited alternative options
* Checking for vaccine eligibility is also difficult if unable to use online services.
* There are now some organisations providing some supports for these issues.
* These issues are more exaggerated for those from marginalised groups such as ATSI and CALD and covid has made it even harder for BCA to engage with these people.  We should endeavour to consult with such groups if when looking at solutions to these issues moving forward.
* Emma and Jane gave an overview on what BCA is doing in these areas and it was reiterated that BCA is collecting member feedback on experiences to put forward to the work they are doing with Qld, NSW and Victoria Department of Health.

Seconded by Stephen Belbin – passed

Recommendation:  That BCA advocate for all government forms to be an accessible, electronic, HTML format that can be submitted online.

Presented by Richard Attwater.

* Examples given of this issue include Centrelink sending hard copy forms knowing that the recipient is blind or vision impaired and when enquirying online their website states that those using assistive technology may not be able to complete forms online due to inaccessibility.
* Having to rely on friends or support workers is inappropriate as personal information has to be divulged which anyone else would not have to deal with.
* Government bodies are meant to be bound by the Web Accessibility Standards.
* There should be an expectation that the NDIS be held to these standards also even though they do not class themselves as a government body.

Seconded by Cynthia Cate - passed