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**New Employment Symposium Focuses on Increasing Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace**

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is hosting a new Employment Symposium in Sydney for businesses, organisations, HR agencies, and government departments who are interested in making their workplace more accessible and inclusive.

This event aims to answer questions and bust some of the myths about hiring employees who are blind or vision impaired.

“In Australia, 83% of businesses lack confidence in hiring someone who is blind or vision impaired,” said Sally Aurisch, Chief Executive Officer – Blind Citizens Australia

“This often prevents them from hiring highly skilled and productive workers, and forms a barrier to employment for people who are blind or vision impaired” she said.

”Our goal for this event is to build up this confidence by providing businesses with the information and support they need. People who are blind or vision impaired have a right to equal access to employment – we believe that this can be achieved by breaking the stigma.”

This symposium will feature Keynote Speaker Graeme Innes AM as he explores and breaks down the misconceptions about employing someone who is blind or vision impaired.

By attending BCA’s Employment Symposium on Monday 15th August, employers can gain:

* An opportunity to develop organisational diversity and inclusion
* Hear from employers and managers on their experiences with hiring staff who are blind or vision impaired
* Learn what funding is available for employers when they employ staff with disability
* An opportunity to create new business and government contacts
* Hear from employees who are blind or vision impaired and what assistive technology they use in the workplace

This event is free and fully catered. Tickets are limited.

BCA’s Employment Symposium is being held as part of our “An Eye to the Future” project funded by the Department of Social Services’s Information, Linkages, and Capacity building program.

Employers can find more information about the Employment Symposium on [BCA’s An Eye to the Future website](https://eyetothefuture.com.au/employers/upcoming-events/employment-symposium/).

## Media Contact

For more information/interviews please contact:

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## Background Info

### Who is Blind Citizens Australia?

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is the national organisation of people who are blind or vision impaired and is recognised as the major peak representative body for this constituency. Since 1975, BCA has provided information, peer support, individual and systemic advocacy, and consultancy services to its members and the wider community.

BCA Branches act as local representative groups and provide opportunities for social interaction for members. It has grown to an organisation of 3000 individual members and seven affiliated organisations.

Our mission is to inform, connect, and empower Australians who are blind or vision impaired and the broader community.

With over forty years of history, BCA has worked tirelessly “To Change What it Means to be Blind” both for Australians who experience vision loss and for blind and vision impaired people throughout the world.

Specifically, this has included:

* providing peer support
* providing individual and systemic advocacy
* facilitating information exchange
* empowering its members
* promoting positive community attitudes
* striving for high quality and accessible services which meet individual needs
* promoting research into the causes and amelioration of the impact of blindness and vision impairment

As the national voice of people who are blind or vision impaired BCA has a seat on many Government, commercial and community sector advisory bodies. BCA’s individual advocacy service is available to all Australians who experience vision loss. With a focus on issues that impact on the individual because of their blindness/vision impairment, BCA works both directly and through specialist community advocates, to resolve issues in a constructive and educative manner and draws on more formal processes where a mutually agreeable solution cannot be found.

BCA has been an active member of the World Blind Union at both the World and Regional levels since its creation in 1984. Over that period two of the senior members have held office as World President and several more have served on the World and Regional Executives and various standing committees. In November 2000 BCA was the lead organisation for the hosting in Melbourne of the WBU 5th General Assembly. BCA has also lead capacity building projects in Fiji and Vietnam and has participated in many international conferences and forums.

In association with its policy development and advocacy work, BCA has undertaken a range of blindness related research projects. Several of these resulted in published papers.

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