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## Media Release

Blind Citizens Australia, in partnership with Vision Australia, is pleased to launch The Entrepreneurial Mindset, a new initiative to provide a supportive network and build awareness of entrepreneurship as a pathway to employment and financial independence for people who are blind or vision impaired.

Research conducted in 2018 by Vision Australia shows that people who are blind or vision impaired are less likely to be employed full time, with Australia having the lowest full-time employment rate (24%) when compared to Canada (28%) and New Zealand (32%).

When asked about the motivation to begin the journey towards private enterprise, successful entrepreneurs emphasise a determination not to be a statistic.

“Jobs (can be) volatile…as a vision impaired person, the statistics of unemployment are extraordinarily…inordinately high, and I’m not going to be one of them,” declared Elise Lonsdale, founder of DATA Australasia, at BCA’s 2021 virtual forum, BCA Connect.

“The Entrepreneurial Mindset project aims to provide the information, resources and tools to equip aspiring small business owners and sole traders who are blind or vision impaired, to confidently step out of their comfort zone towards financial independence,” states Nicole Willing, Project Manager.

“I encourage anyone who is blind or vision impaired and looking for a supportive network to assist them as they navigate their way towards business ownership to register your interest by emailing BCA@bca.org.au.”

In addition, if you are a business owner who is blind or vision impaired and interested in sharing your knowledge and experience with aspiring entrepreneurs, contact BCA on **1800 033 660** for further details on how you can be involved in the project.

## 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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