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# BCA Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

### About Us

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is the peak national representative organisation of and for the over 500,000 people in Australia who are blind or vision impaired. For nearly 50 years, BCA has built a strong reputation for empowering Australians who are blind or vision impaired to lead full and active lives and to make meaningful contributions to our communities. BCA provides peer support and individual advocacy to people who are blind or vision impaired across Australia. Through our campaign work, we address systemic barriers by promoting the full and equal participation in society of people who are blind or vision impaired. Through our policy work, we provide advice to community and governments on issues of importance to people who are blind or vision impaired. As a disability-led organisation, our work is directly informed by lived experience. All directors are full members of BCA and the majority of our volunteers and staff are blind or vision impaired. They are of diverse backgrounds and identities.

Founded in 1975 by people who are blind or vision impaired, BCA maintains an enduring commitment to the following principles:

* People who are blind or vision impaired are best placed to advocate for their needs in all aspects of life.
* People who are blind or vision impaired can derive significant benefits from connecting with their peers and learning by sharing lived experience, skills and knowledge.
* People who are blind or vision impaired have the right to receive high quality, accessible services which meet their needs.
* People who are blind or vision impaired can foster positive community attitudes towards blindness, vision impairment and disability in the broader Australian community.

BCA is a company limited by Guarantee, recognised as a Public Benevolent Institution and with Deductible Gift Recipient status. Any person who is blind or vision impaired in Australia may become a member. BCA’s work is led by our Chief Executive Officer, Sally Aurisch and conducted by a policy and advocacy team and a projects and engagement team. BCA is governed by a Board of nine directors and President, Fiona Woods. We work in partnership with several blindness organisations, with the disability sector and with Federal, State and Territory governments.

The Strategic Plan 2019-21 was adopted before COVID-19 had evolved. The way we achieved our goals had to be modified quickly. Our core business of informing, connecting and empowering people who are blind or vision impaired became more crucial than ever, with the additional imperatives of advocating for the needs of people who are blind or vision impaired arising from the pandemic and ensuring that BCA was well positioned to continue its business despite the emergency. The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, known as Disability Royal Commission (DRC) was also announced during the previous Strategic Plan. It was vital to make the most of the unique opportunity that the DRC offers to represent and speak up for our community and to support our members to tell their stories.

As a virtual workplace and through reliance on technology and strong leadership, BCA continued to expand and flourish during the life of our previous Strategic Plan. This plan embraces many of its innovations, while focusing on our determination to make BCA a more inclusive and diverse organisation and workplace, which lives its values and achieves its goals of:

* advocacy
* inclusive representation
* awareness raising
* long-term viability
* positive work culture

### Vision

BCA believes in a future in which our trusted leadership and positive influence achieve equity for people who are blind or vision impaired, where we can live our lives in any way we choose, in a place that respects, recognises and responds to our uniqueness and diversity.

### Purpose

BCA informs, connects and empowers people who are blind or vision impaired and the wider community.

We represent and advocate for our interests, provide high quality support, services, projects and events and increase access, awareness, and expectations within the broader community.

We are a sustainable, credible, and independent organisation led by our strong and diverse community of people who are blind or vision impaired.

### Values

Transparency - BCA communicates and conducts business in a way that develops trust between staff, board, members, volunteers, partners and the community, and that strengthens our reputation. BCA is accountable for the effective use of resources and for how we represent the diverse community of people who are blind or vision impaired.

Empathy, compassion and kindness - BCA recognises the humanity of our staff, board, members and volunteers and all the people the organisation engages with. We foster a culture of caring and kindness, where we respect differing opinions and welcome many perspectives.

Diversity and inclusion - BCA is building a culture of open-mindedness, compassion and inclusiveness among staff, board, members and volunteers and community groups from diverse cultures, backgrounds and life experiences, and creating opportunities for engagement, shared learning and participation to enhance connection and authentic, positive representation.

Continuous learning, ingenuity and innovation - BCA will continue to seek creative, tailored solutions to address and resolve the inaccessibility and ableism encountered by people who are blind or vision impaired. We will seek and create opportunities for members, board, staff, volunteers and community to learn, develop and improve.

Collaboration and teamwork - BCA understands the power, effectiveness and support that teamwork brings. BCA has a shared vision with clearly articulated policies and processes, along with open and effective communication channels that connect staff, board, members and volunteers and the community we represent. We will continue to welcome opportunities to collaborate with partners and stakeholders for our mutual benefit.

### Goals

### Goal 1:

BCA will continue to deliver quality, targeted individual and systemic advocacy and campaigns, including advocating for services that meet our needs, based on consultation with our diverse community, data and research.

Key strategies include:

* Providing individual advocacy for people who are blind or vision impaired who require support, including people who are referred from our partner blindness organisations and people who approach us.
* Giving people who are blind or vision impaired the tools and confidence to advocate for themselves.
* Developing public Policies and Position Statements which clarify how the needs, rights and expectations of people who are blind or vision impaired can be met, in areas including pedestrian safety, disaster management and emergency preparedness and other areas which the Board and National Policy Council identify as priorities.
* Creating and delivering effective campaigns and projects to raise awareness of barriers to the participation of people who are blind or vision impaired in Australian society, including employment, education, audio description, voting and banking.
* Responding proactively and with agility to emerging issues, utilising media awareness and contacts and ensuring positive and representative amplification of the voices of people who are blind or vision impaired.

### Goal 2:

Continue to improve our reach and representation to ensure our services, opportunities and conversations are inclusive of everyone in the blind and vision impaired community.

Key strategies include:

* Ensure our communications and consultations reflect the intersectionality of our community, acknowledging that the experience of blindness or vision impairment will be different if you have deafblindness or other disability, if you are from a culturally diverse community, if you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or if your identity is sexually or gender diverse (LGBTQIA+).
* Extend our outreach and partnership to increase our focus on people who become blind or vision impaired later in life, younger people, older people, and people based in regional areas.

### Goal 3:

Continue to raise awareness of our work in order to grow our reputation as a leading advocacy organisation and credible source of information for people who are blind or vision impaired, stakeholders and the broader community.

Key strategies include:

* Increase connection and engagement with people who are blind or vision impaired through:
  + higher membership numbers.
  + achieving connection with people who are blind or vision impaired who have not previously contacted BCA.
  + heightened social media engagement.
  + Strengthening advocacy outcomes through best practice and successful case closures.
  + Greater opportunities for community consultation.
* Increase connection and engagement with key community stakeholders, including blindness organisations, other disability organisations and organisations working with marginalised groups through:
  + Pursuing and creating opportunities to collaborate, including through partnerships and formal partnership agreements.
  + Representation and advocacy to governments and media.
* Increase our profile and reach across the broader Australian community through:
  + Circulating information about policy issues (such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, My Aged Care, the Australian Disability Strategy and interaction with the Disability Royal Commission and its findings).
  + Producing a broad range of communications and presentations.
  + Maintain our involvement in and commitment to international bodies which work to improve life for people who are blind or vision impaired throughout the world, especially in the Asia Pacific region.

### Goal 4:

Continue to diversify income streams and improve internal processes to ensure our long-term ability to achieve our vision.

Key strategies include:

* Increase donations and bequests, including more BCA Backers.
* Increase earned income, including fee for service work.
* Maximise efficiencies and accountability in line with clarified priorities.
* Review and embed sound governance policies and procedures.

### Goal 5:

* Continue to provide opportunities that maintain a positive and productive working culture, which values and prioritises the wellbeing of our people.

Key strategies include:

* + Provide opportunities to develop the capacity, skills and confidence of staff, members, leaders and potential leaders.
  + Seek and promote ways for staff, board, members and volunteers to support each other, virtually and in person.
  + Employ and support well-qualified staff, including staff with lived experience of blindness or vision impairment and other lived experience of intersectionality, who have the skills to represent the breadth of our diverse community, acknowledging our many perspectives and reflecting our shared experience.
  + Continue to develop and deliver our Executive Leadership Program.