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# National Convention

# Information Pack for Volunteers

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is the representative body for Australians who are blind or vision impaired. The organisation advocates on key issues and works to connect its members across the country. Its national convention provides the opportunity for people who are blind, and vision impaired to share developments in a range of areas.

## Convention 2025 Event Details

Date: Friday 13th - Sunday 15th June 2025.

Venue: Novotel Melbourne Glen Waverley, 285 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley Vic 3150, Phone: 03 8561 2345

There will be two volunteer induction sessions held at the Novotel Melbourne, Glen Waverley prior to convention and volunteers can select which session they prefer (only one session is required). These sessions will include information on blindness awareness, assisting people with their orientation and mobility needs, and what is expected and not expected of volunteers throughout the event.

- Session One: Wednesday 4th June, 3pm-4pm

- Session Two: Friday 13th June, 11am-12pm.

Note: Convention attendees will have access to Orientation and Mobility support from Guide Dogs Victoria staff at certain times throughout the convention.

## Role of Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to ensuring members are adequately supported throughout the convention. Our members experience a range of eye conditions from good, usable vision through to total blindness, so levels of need will vary from person to person. Volunteers will be required to assist with some or all of the following tasks:

* Helping participants to their seats
* Assisting with morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea
* Assisting people who leave the convention room during sessions.
* Assisting people to move between rooms for breakout sessions
* Assisting people to locate bathrooms or water bowls for dogs during breaks
* Assisting people at the start and end of each day to find their room or local transport.
* Note, members who need personal care support will bring their own support worker or carer.

## Why volunteer:

1. Volunteering at convention is a wonderful way to meet people from across Australia whilst learning more about blindness and vision impairment.
2. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided to volunteers whose shifts coincide with breaks.
3. You are welcome to attend the convention dinner. Payment for this can be made when you register as a volunteer (once your application is approved).

## How to Register Your Interest:

If you are available to assist with volunteering your time, we require volunteers for the following times. You can do one or more:

Friday: 1-4:30pm, 4:15pm-8pm

Saturday: 8-11.30am, 11am-2.30pm, 2-5.30pm

Sunday: 8-11.30am, 11am-2.30pm, 2-5.30pm

Please find the registration form at the end of this document. Kindly complete and email to BCA at bca@bca.org.au, with the subject line “Convention Volunteer Application.” Once we have received your volunteer application form, we will be in touch with further details.

Before you volunteer… we highly recommend you familiarise yourself with the following information from Vision Australia’s website – this will help you to decide if volunteering at the BCA 2025 Convention is right for you and that feel confident in your role. Blind Citizens Australia staff will also be available to answer any questions you may have over the weekend. Tips for assisting people who are blind or have a vision impairment:

### Approach, Ask, Assist.

Approach: if you suspect someone may need a hand, walk up, greet them, and identify yourself.

Ask: "Would you like some help?" The person will accept your offer or tell you if they do not require assistance.

Assist: listen to the reply and assist as required. Not all people who are blind or vision impaired will want assistance - do not be offended if your assistance is not required.

* Address people who are blind or have low vision by their names, so they know you are speaking to them.
* Let the person who is blind or has low vision know that you have entered the room.
* Do not walk away from a person who is blind or has low vision without indicating that you are doing so - it is embarrassing and frustrating to talk to thin air.
* Let the person who is blind or has low vision take your arm as described in the [sighted](https://www.visionaustralia.org/community/news/2022-10-14/video-guiding-someone-who-blind-or-has-low-vision) guide fact sheet - <https://www.visionaustralia.org/community/news/2022-10-14/video-guiding-someone-who-blind-or-has-low-vision>
* In dangerous situations say
"STOP" rather than "LOOK OUT"
* Do not relocate objects or furniture without telling the person who is blind or has low vision.
* Do not fill glasses or cups to the brim and inform the person you are about to do so.
* Use ordinary language when directing or describing and be specific. Do not point or say "over there". Direct people who are blind or have low vision to their left and right, not yours.
* Use words like "look" and "see"; they are part of everyone's vocabulary. Otherwise, both you and the person who is blind or has low vision will feel awkward.
* Describe the surroundings and obstacles in a person's pathway (remember to look up as well as down). Warn of the presence of over-hangs, such as kitchen cupboards, jutting side mirrors of cars, or trees.
* Do not leave doors ajar. Close them or open them fully.
* Be aware that the person who is blind or has low vision will be disadvantaged by not seeing what is going on. Therefore, talk about what is happening.
* Ask people who are blind or have low vision what they want or need. Do not direct questions through their companion.
* If people who are blind or have low vision extend their hands to shake, do so, or express verbally "may I shake your hand" to let them know you wish to.
* When seating people who are blind or have low vision, put their hands on the back of the chair and they will then be able to seat themselves.

Volunteering Application Form follows.

# Blind Citizens Australia

# 2025 Convention Volunteer Registration Form

Please complete and return to bca@bca.org.au by 30th May 2025:

First name:

Family name:

Year of Birth (volunteers must be over 18 years of age):

Address:

Suburb:

State:

Postcode:

Telephone H:

Mobile:

Email:

Emergency Contact:

Availability:

Will you attend an induction session? If so, which date?

Please mark applicable answers below with an “X”

I have:

* Usable low vision
* Full sight
* A current First Aid qualification and I am willing to act as a First Aider.
* A current police check (This is a requirement of volunteering. You must have a police check prior to the event.)
* Medical requirements:
* Dietary requirements (if yes please specify):
* I would like to attend the Convention Dinner on Saturday 14th June 7.30pm (your cost of $70): YES / NO.
* How did you find out about this volunteering opportunity?

End of document.