

**Ph** 1800 033 660 | **E** bca@bca.org.au | **W** [bca.org.au](http://www.bca.org.au/) | ABN 90 006 985 226

**BCA National Convention 2025 Program**

**Friday, 13th June – Sunday, 15th June 2025**

**Novotel Hotel, 285 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley, Victoria**

**‘Individually, and together, we create change’**

**Please note:** The conference program may be subject to change without notice.

**Special thanks to our sponsors**

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**Day One: Friday, 13 June 2025**

Afternoon:

* Orientation to venue
* Buddy program introductions

**The following two sessions are reserved exclusively for the groups listed below:**

**2:00pm – 3:30pm**

**Branch Leaders get together**

Location: Kulin Room One

**Session Chair:**

Katrina Taylor, Women’s Branch President

**3:30pm – 5:00pm**

**Executive Leadership Program graduates and mentors get together**

Location: Kulin Room Two

**Session Chair:**

Katrina Taylor, Women’s Branch President

**4:45pm – 6:15pm Registration desk available**

**6:00pm – 8:00pm Welcome Function (Foyer in the Pre-Function Area)**

Please join us for canapés and drinks. Just a quick note: drinks will be at your own expense, but we’ve got the canapés covered. We will also enjoy some wonderful tunes from the music group.

Deb Deshayes, BCA Chief Executive Officer, to open.

**Day Two: Saturday, 14 June 2025**

**8:15am – 9:15am Registration**

Main Convention sessions on both days will be held in the Ballroom.

Master of ceremonies: John Simpson

**Session One**

**Session Chair:**

Vaughn Bennison, BCA President

**9:25am – 9:40am Convention acknowledgements and housekeeping**

**9:40am – 9:55am Opening of the Convention by a special guest**

**9:55am – 10:00am Vaughn Bennison, BCA President thanks the special guest**

**10:00am – 10:15am Roll call**

**10:15am – 10:35am Martine Abel-Williamson QSM, World Blind Union President**

**10:35am – 10:40am Helen Freris, BCA Vice President thanks Martine Abel-Williamson QSM**

**10:40am – 10:50am Remarks from Vaughn Bennison, BCA President**

**10.50am – 11:00am Nab & Blab with Katrina Taylor**

BCA’s history is deeply connected to the lived experiences of its members. During the Convention, Katrina Taylor will conduct interviews with various members, exploring their experiences as people who were blind or vision impaired in 1975. For those born after 1975, she will ask them to share their hopes and expectations for what life might be like for someone who is blind or vision impaired 50 years from now.

**11:00am – 11:30am Morning Tea**

**11:30am – 1:00pm Session Two**

**Celebrating 50 years of BCA**

**Session Chair:**

Lynne Davis

**Part 1: The BCA origin story.**

Three of the five people who organised the very first BCA Convention in June 1975 reflect on how our organisation came about, why it was needed and who was involved.

**Speakers:**

David Blyth AO, BCA member

John Machin, BCA member

Bill Jolley, BCA member

**Part 2: The high priority of communication.**

From the beginning BCA has recognised that access to information is key in the lives of its members, and communication is vital. This session will review the history of BCA’s various communications, highlighting examples from the early days to today.

**Speakers:**

John Simpson AM, BCA member

Stephen Jolley, BCA member

Emma Bennison, BCA member

**1:00pm – 2:00pm Lunch**

**Optional lunch time session, United Blind Leaders Lunch**

Location: Kulin Room One

**2:00pm – 2:40pm Session Three**

**Blind Citizens Australia Eye to the Future employment project.**

Together for change: Building inclusive workplaces for people who are blind or vision impaired. Join us for a dynamic panel discussion on creating inclusive workplaces featuring a range of speakers. Hear about the recent work of the Eye to the Future employment project, practical insights, success stories, and strategies to build pathways to meaningful and inclusive employment.

**Session Chair:**

Rachael Johinke, BCA Staff member

**Speakers:**

Raj Reddy, BCA Director

Dr Graeme Innes AM, BCA member

Siobhan Tierney, IncludeAbility at The Australian Human Rights Commission

**2:40pm – 2:50pm Nab & Blab with Katrina Taylor**

**2:50pm – 3:30pm Session Four**

**Self-Advocacy: Speaking up to get what you need.**

This session will include a panel discussion on the many ways members have advocated for themselves. We will explore some of the skills that have led us to successful outcomes.

**Session Chair:**

Martin Stewart, BCA staff member

**Speakers:**

Annette Ferguson, BCA member

Lauren Henley, BCA member

**3:30pm – 4:00pm Afternoon Tea**

**4:00pm – 5:00pm Session Five**

**You can’t ask that: Panel question and answer session.**

Based on the TV show of the same name, a diverse group of BCA members will be asked a set of probing questions about blindness, BCA and disability in general.

**Session Chair:**

Michael Janes, BCA member

**Speakers:**

Ryan Honschooten, BCA member

Karen Knight, BCA member

Jane Britt, BCA member

Natasha Brake, BCA member

Neale Huth, BCA Director

**5:00pm – 7:00pm Free Time**

**7:00pm Convention Dinner**

A complimentary welcome drink will be offered on arrival.

**Masters of Ceremonies:**

Dr Katie Butler and Dan Stubbs

The Convention Dinner will provide a great opportunity to catch up with friends both old and new. The David Blyth Award, BCA Certificates of Appreciation and Aspirations Award presentations will once again be a highlight of the evening. We will also hear performances from some of BCA’s talented musicians and maybe there will be a few surprises along the way!

**Day Three: Sunday, 15 June 2025**

**Master of ceremonies:**

Helen Freris, BCA Vice President

**9:00am – 9:45am Session Six (Optional session)**

**This is how we do it: What women do best, supporting, encouraging and connecting with each other.**

The National Women’s Branch invites all women attending the convention to join this workshop to reflect upon and explore ways to encourage each other to embrace our unique abilities; support in building confidence and independence, as well as fostering meaningful connections within a supportive community.

**Session Chair:**

Joyce Jones, BCA member

**9:30am – 9:45am Registration (if required)**

**9:45am – 10:00am Seating for a 10:00am start**

**10:00am – 10:20am Convention acknowledgements, housekeeping and roll call**

**10:20am – 11:00am Session Seven**

**Support workers and us: The changing face of independence.**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and My Aged Care have enhanced our access to the community. Has this improved our independence, or has it added a layer of dependence? Join Emma Bennison in a conversation about the many ways we use support workers; at home, at learning institutions, at work and in the community.

**Session Chair:**

Emma Bennison, BCA member

**Speakers:**

Dan Stubbs, BCA member

Lauren Henley, BCA member

Steve Ransley-Richardson, BCA member

**11:00am – 11:30am Morning Tea**

**11:30am – 12:10pm Session Eight**

**Life Hacks: What’s your secret?**

Join in the group discussion where members share tips and tricks they’ve found to make their lives that bit easier. High-tech, low-tech or no-tech, we want to know what it is.

**Session Chair:**

Ben Clare, BCA member

**12:10pm – 12:20pm Nab & Blab with Katrina Taylor**

**12:20pm – 1:00pm Session Nine**

**Artificial Intelligence: The future of independence?**

This session will explore the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Could AI fulfil its promise as the future of independence for people who are blind or vision impaired? How might we use it in the workplace, at home and out and about? What are its potentials – and what is the fine print? When might we use it and when should we exercise caution?

**Session Chair:**

Vaughn Bennison, BCA President

**Speakers:**

Jonathan Craig, BCA member

Michael Curran, BCA member

**1:00pm – 2:00pm Lunch**

**Optional lunch time session, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gathering**

Location: Kulin Room One

**2:00 – 2:50pm Session Ten**

**Where are we now and how far have we come?**

Many aspects of our lives as people who are blind or vision impaired are different now from what we experienced in 1975. Many of these changes are the result of BCA’s advocacy and campaigns, including some that spanned many years. Fiona Woods will lead a discussion with Helen Freris and Lee Kumutat reflecting on BCA’s biggest successes, what we can learn, what makes us unique and the achievements that make our members proud.

**Session Chair:**

Fiona Woods, BCA member

**Speakers:**

Helen Freris, BCA Vice President

Lee Kumutat, BCA member

**2:50pm – 3:00pm Nab & Blab with Katrina Taylor**

**3:00pm – 3:30pm Afternoon Tea**

**3:30pm – 4:30pm Session Eleven**

**The hypothetical.**

In this hypothetical, we’ll transport ourselves to a BCA Board meeting in 2050; dealing with pending challenges and testing the ability of the organisation to be stronger than ever. The session will be led by Dr Graeme Innes AM who will pose some questions and scenarios to the expert panel that will take on the role of BCA Board members twenty-five years into the future.

**Session Chair:**

Dr Graeme Innes AM, BCA member

**Speakers:**

Dan Stubbs, BCA member

Jonathan Craig, BCA member

Emma Bennison, BCA member

Francois Jacobs, BCA member

Sheelagh Daniels-Mayes, BCA member

**4:30pm – 5:00pm Session Twelve**

**Closing and Convention summary.**

Vaughn Bennison, BCA President and Deb Deshayes, BCA Chief Executive Officer.

**5:00pm BCA 2025 Convention Close.**

**Speaker Biographies**

**Vaughn Bennison**

Before developing a career in broadcasting, communications policy, advocacy and organisational management, Vaughn worked for many years advising and training people on assistive technology. He has worked in IT support and incorporates technology into all aspects of his life.

When he’s not busy being the President of Blind Citizens Australia or CEO of Tasmania’s only cross-disability disabled persons organisation, he can often be found playing with some new form of technology or other. He has a particular interest in home-automation, collecting vintage recording and HiFi equipment and loves to find interesting ways to connect old and new technology together. Vaughn lives in Hobart with his family.

**Deb Deshayes**

Deb is a seasoned leader with a strong track record of leading impactful programs and projects. She has more than 18 years of experience in the disability, health, community, and not-for-profit sectors, and owned and operated a counselling practice for 11 years.

Her extensive leadership background spans 13 years, during which she has guided both small and large multidisciplinary, project and advocacy teams in diverse settings; regional, remote, and across the nation. She possesses in-depth knowledge of blindness and vision impairment, both professionally and personally. Deb is passionate about equity, inclusion for all, and empowering people to live their best lives. In addition to her role as Chief Executive Officer at Blind Citizens Australia, Deb volunteers with two groups: Victoria Police Disability Portfolio Reference Group and Zoos Victoria Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Group. Her experience is supported by qualifications in Counselling, Mental Health, Management and Coaching.

**Helen Freris**

Helen lives in Melbourne and joined BCA in 1991.  Since then she has served on the National Women’s Branch, the National Policy Committee  and various Convention planning committees.  Helen has served as a Director since 2017, currently in the position of Vice President.

Helen also serves on the Board and Policy council of the World Blind Union Asia Pacific region, and is the advocacy lead at Women with Disabilities Victoria.

Attending Conventions has been a highlight of Helen’s BCA membership, where she has always enjoyed gathering and interacting with BCA members.

**John Simpson AM**

After some years managing fundraising and PR teams within major not-for-profit organisations, John was appointed Executive Officer with BCA in 1986. Since then, he has held senior management positions with RPH Australia, the Lions Eye Health Program and Vision Australia’s Accessible Information Division where he managed Audio Description services, Vision Australia Radio and the division’s overall operations at various times.

Alongside these appointments John directed the operations of Information Alternatives, producing braille and other accessible format materials for more than 40 years. He has also undertaken many research and project management assignments to address the information needs of people who are blind or have other ‘print disabilities’.

In 2012, John moved to Euroa with his wife Christine, from where he manages his various community involvements, which have included Director and then President, BCA; Director, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations; Director, Community Broadcasting Foundation; Chair, Vision 2020 Australia, Independence and Participation Policy Committee.

In 2010 John received the Roundtable on Information Access’ Lifetime Achievement Award and in 2020 he was made a Member (AM) in the Order of Australia.

**Martine Abel-Williamson QSM**

Martine Abel-Williamson QSM – World Blind Union President, resides in Auckland New Zealand. She was born in Namibia but grew up in South Africa, after her single mum was told that there were no inclusive or special education opportunities in Namibia. She attended the national school for the blind in South Africa and acquired 2 Degrees and one Post-Graduate Diploma in Psychology and Education. She immigrated to New Zealand where she continued tertiary studies in the fields of vision rehabilitation, management and social policy.

She was employed by Blind Low Vision NZ, the equivalent of Vision Australia as a Vision Rehabilitation Instructor, then moved on to local government to lobby on behalf of disabled persons. She is currently on the Board of Blind Citizens NZ and became involved with WBU in 2007 where she has been President since 2021. In 2018, Martine was awarded the Queen’s Service Medal for her work and involvement in the disability sector and community. She also serves on other boards and entities such as the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and works for central government agencies such as the Ministry of Health and NZ Human Rights Commission.

**Dan Stubbs**

Dan is the Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner and is the inaugural head of Victoria’s Disability Worker Commission. As a blind person, Dan understands the rights and reliance people have on disability services and the need to ensure services are safe and high quality.

He previously worked in the community legal sector as a lawyer and in various leadership roles. He has also worked extensively in developing countries where he led work on disability. Dan also has a long history of leadership in Australian systemic advocacy organisations of people with disability, including the ACT Council of Social Service, Community Legal Centres Australia, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations and Blind Citizens Australia.

Dan has a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons), and Graduate Diplomas in Development Economics and Legal Practice.

**Lynne Davis**

Lynne has been a member of BCA since the early 1990s, and a Board member at two periods in that time. She edited Blind Citizens News for a number of years and has chaired the National Policy Council. Most recently, she has been a member of the committee which planned how to celebrate this 50th anniversary year. Lynne lives in Sydney.

**Dr Graeme Innes AM**

Graeme is Chancellor of Central Queensland University and a board member of the NDIS. He was Australia's Disability Discrimination Commissioner for almost ten years. He is a lawyer, company director and author, and a long-term committed BCA member. He loves cricket and sailing and relaxing with fine Australian white wine.

**Fiona Woods**

Fiona was President of BCA from 2021 to 2024, having been on the board since 2017. She became a member and served on the Council in the 1990s, also serving a term as President of the National Women’s Branch. Fiona has experienced a lot of BCA history firsthand and is proud of the changing roles of its women members. She is the mother of six adult children, a Director of Vision 2020 Australia and a member of the NDIS Participant Reference Group.

**Martin Stewart**

Martin lives with positivity and passion, a characteristic which has led to many achievements. Throughout his life he has been committed to creating change, making a difference in areas such as public transport, industrial relations, hospitalisation procedures, technology access and disability rights.

Martin has been the President of the Victorian Blind Cricket Association and the Blind Workers Union of Victoria, and worked as the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind’s Industrial Relations Manager. Since 2019, he has been Blind Citizens Australia’s National Advocacy Officer.

**Rachael Johinke**

Rachael is the Project Coordinator for ‘Eye to the Future’ at Blind Citizens Australia, working to improve employment opportunities for people who are blind or vision impaired. She holds a Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education and is a passionate advocate for accessibility, inclusion, and meaningful employment for people with disabilities. Rachael is also a well-known performing artist under the stage name ‘Rachael Leahcar’. Having been legally blind since childhood due to Retinitis Pigmentosa, she has used her platform to raise awareness and inspire change. With experience in both the arts and disability sectors, Rachael brings a unique perspective to advocacy and employment discussions.

**Emma Bennison**

Emma is a blind leader with a deep commitment to disability advocacy and community transformation. She is a former President and CEO of Blind Citizens Australia. Emma is currently the Chief Innovation Officer at Life Without Barriers. Emma also serves as a Director of NV Access and is a co-founder of United Blind Leaders. Emma is also Principal at Emma Bennison and Associates, offering consulting services across business strategy, transformation, the arts and disability.

Until recently, Emma also chaired the Attitude Foundation, which reshapes narratives about disability through realistic and empowering media representation. She’s a member of Tasmania’s Ministerial Arts and Cultural Advisory Council, where she champions inclusive cultural policy and practice.

Emma received the Lesley Hall Award for Lifetime Achievement in Disability Leadership in 2024. She also won the national Aspire Award for Community Development and Advocacy in 2020.

**Michael Janes**

Michael has been an active BCA member since attending his first convention in 1981. Over the journey he has been a Board Member, Convention organiser and Election Returning Officer amongst other roles. Michael represented both Victoria and NSW on numerous occasions in Blind Cricket and was a member of the Australian team that introduced Blind Cricket to Sri Lanka. During his working life Michael has been employed in all three levels of Government and the not-for-profit sector.

**Dr Katie Butler**

Katie brings absolutely no experience of hosting important celebratory dinners to her role of Co-Master of Ceremonies! What she does bring, however, is a strong track record in eating excellent food - and talking... a lot! She makes a living doing just that through her work in equity, diversity and inclusion, and as an academic. Katie has been a BCA member since 2009 and has attended a number of Conventions. She is therefore excited to be helping make the BCA 50th Anniversary dinner one to remember.

**Joyce Jones**

Joyce has been a member of BCA since 2009 during which time she has been secretary of the Women's Branch and has attended all National Convention and State forums. Joyce is the Secretary of BCA QLD Branch and has been on the committee of Dog Guide Handlers Australia. She has served on the Disability Advisory Council of Toowoomba Regional Council.

**Katrina Taylor**

Katrina hails from Western Australia, has lived in Northern Queensland and now calls Western Victoria home. She is passionate about country life and all that it has to offer. Katrina is a Social Worker, Writer and Tactile Artist, and is a graduate of BCA’s Executive Leadership Program.

**Annette Ferguson**

Annette grew up in country NSW during the 60s, 70s, and 80s - a time when no one really talked about accessibility or inclusion, or even low vision or disability. It wasn’t until much later in life that she realised just how much effort she put into the clever workarounds to live independently with low vision. Over the years, through plenty of trial and error - and some tough conversations - Annette saw a need and has teamed up with her local community to help build a more inclusive space for people with disabilities and guide dog users.

**Bill Jolley**

Bill Jolley has been with Blind Citizens Australia from its beginning. As a young adult, he joined the movement of blind people to speak for themselves in matters that concerned our well-being, ranging from participation in civil society to accessible disability services.

He was a member of the organisation’s first committee when BCA was constituted in 1975, filling the role of Secretary and chief constitution drafter.

He later served as President for 7.5 years, as Executive Officer for 6.5 years and as a member of the Finance Committee for about 15 years.

Bill’s highlights include:

Leading the advocacy for their installation, and advising on initial installations, for audible traffic signals in Melbourne around 1981;

Leadership of cross-disability partnership projects – in particular, the Telecommunications and Disability Consumer Representation (Tedicore) project and the National DDA Standards Project, both in the late 1990s; and international outreach, including the Braille Literacy project in Vietnam and Australia’s hosting of the World Blind Union general Assembly in 2000.

Elsewhere, he is Chair of Vision Australia, is a Life Member of the World Blind Union, has been Treasurer of the International Council on English Braille, and led the transition to Unified English Braille in Australia.

**David Blyth AO**

David was born in Boulia, Queensland, in 1934. He was blinded in 1949 after an accident with leftover war armaments. After a long period of hospitalisation, he went to work at the Queensland Industrial Workshops for the Blind in Brisbane. He started his lifetime involvement there as an advocate for blind people.

In 1957, he decided there was no future for him in Brisbane, so he moved to Melbourne. This move was to be the most important decision he ever made. It was there he met Jess, whom he married in 1959. They had 3 children and now have 3 grandchildren.

David joined the Victorian Blind Workers’ Union and became the President. It was in this role that he made his move onto the National stage as a delegate to the AFOB . He found that state-based interests took precedence over good decision-making, and because only organisations could be members, many blind people were not represented.

In 1975, David was approached to look at forming a new organisation. This was the beginning of what is now known as Blind Citizens Australia. It was the vehicle that allowed him to realise his dream of an organisation that was available to all Australians who are blind or vision impaired.

David was the first President of BCA and represented BCA at the founding meeting of the World Blind Union in 1984. In 1992, David became the President of WBU and was awarded the Louis Braille Medal for his services to blind people internationally.

David was made an officer of the Order of Australia for his services to blind people, both nationally and internationally.

The late Hugh Jeffrey approached David in 1995 to establish the Jeffrey Blyth Foundation (JBF). The JBF is there to raise funds to support BCA. It is the dream of David and Hugh to eventually make BCA financially independent.

**John Machin**

Born blind in 1942, John went to a local school before learning braille at the RVIB in Melbourne.

John completed his education at St Edmund’s School in Sydney. After returning to Melbourne, he worked in the RVIB Talking Book Library, AGFA Films, the Queen Victoria Hospital and the Monash Medical Centre.

Before taking up work at AGFA in 1972, John got involved with the Blind Workers Union of Victoria. This introduced him to a number of other organisations for the blind and their objectives. He soon took on the role of Vice-President of the union and became a delegate for the Australian Federation of Blind Citizens. He was also a Foundation Member of the Victorian Radio for the Blind Committee. In 1975 Bill Jolley and John became directors of the Villa Maria Society of Victoria.

While working at AGFA in 1974 with another blind workmate, Serge Bankowski, John got to hear of a new organisation called the Australian Council for the Advancement for the Blind. He obtained a magazine they produced outlining their policies which he thought could be of concern to blind people in Victoria. This publication was shown to David Blyth, Hugh Jeffrey and Bill Jolley for their consideration. This led to the formation of the NFBC, now known as Blind Citizens Australia.

John retired from full-time work in 2002, and due to deteriorating health, now lives in a nursing home.

**Rajdeep Reddy**

Rajdeep Reddy lost his vision in late 2022 and returned to Australia in early 2023.

In June 2023, Rajdeep joined the Eye to the Future project, where with the invaluable support of Madison Braime and Joelle Roult from Vision Australia, he was able to secure a small contract in the food and drinks industry and a full-time position at Serco, contracting with the NDIA.

Since then, Rajdeep has continued to support others with assistive technologies, sharing his knowledge and experience.

Before his vision loss, Rajdeep worked in the media department at Tennis Australia and coached tennis. Now, he’s relearning tennis through Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria.

Rajdeep is determined to showcase the capabilities of visually impaired people, not just in employment, but also in sports and everyday life.

**Siobhan Tierney**

​Siobhan Tierney is the Director of IncludeAbility, an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission focused on increasing meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability. With extensive experience in policy development and project management across government and non-profit sectors, she has a strong track record of creating better outcomes for people and communities.

Under her leadership, IncludeAbility collaborates with an Ambassador Advisory Group of people with disability and an Employer Network to promote best practices in recruitment and employment, aiming to create accessible and inclusive workplaces.

Before her role at IncludeAbility, Siobhan directed a policy team at the Disability Royal Commission, where she developed findings and recommendations to address employment barriers faced by people with disability.

Siobhan’s commitment to disability inclusion and her strategic leadership continue to drive positive change in employment practices across Australia

**Stephen Jolley**

Stephen has been a member of BCA since its formation in 1975. For over 20 years, he worked in Information Technology and for a similar period until early 2015, with Vision Australia. There he was, close to the radio service, leading it for 15 years, and utilising its capability in his role to develop and enhance client communication.

He covered countless BCA conventions as a broadcaster through extensive live coverage and daily packaged presentations. A project that stands out for him was the massive coverage of the General Assembly of the World Blind Union, held in Melbourne during November 2000.

On May 18, 1975, he debuted as a broadcaster on ABC’s experimental community access station 3ZZ in the inaugural edition of A Blind Affair. For around 13 years, he presented the National BCA audio magazine Soundabout. Whenever possible, he has exploited evolving communications technologies to pursue his passion for bringing the event beyond the venue and into the homes of the blind and vision-impaired community.

**Lauren Henley**

Lauren Henley is a passionate advocate for the rights of people who are blind or vision impaired and a leading voice in the Australian disability sector. In 2023, she was named Blind Australian of the Year, a recognition of her unwavering commitment to equity, inclusion and systemic change.

Lauren currently serves as the Director of Policy and Advocacy at Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia (ATSA), where she works to improve access to life-changing technologies for people with disability. Her work focuses on shaping national policy and ensuring that the voices of consumers are at the heart of decision-making processes.

A strong international advocate, Lauren has represented Australians with disability - including those who are blind or vision impaired - at the United Nations, championing human rights on the global stage. Her leadership continues to influence public policy and drive greater inclusion across Australian society.

**Ben Clare**

Ben Clare has over 20 years' experience in the disability sector, focusing on education for people with vision impairment and multiple disabilities across the Pacific and Timor-Leste. He has worked extensively through the Australian Volunteers Program in roles such as ICT adviser and inclusive education officer, and is passionate about informal education in resource-poor settings.

Currently, Ben is the Disability Lead Adviser at Aspen Medical, supporting self-help projects and advising the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on disability policy. He has also returned to journalism as a producer and researcher at the ABC, following earlier recognition as a police reporter for The Daily Telegraph.

Ben was Pacific Regional Chair for ICEVI (2016–2021), served as Vice President and Secretary of SPEVI (2023–2025), and is now Co-President. He also sits on several boards and committees, including SPEVI’s Committee of Management, the Canberra Business Chamber’s Disability Working Group, Australian Volunteers International, the Australian Braille Authority, the Australian Disability and Development Consortium, and others. He also supports Blind Citizens Australia.

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