*CANBERRA BLIND SOCIETY (CBS)*

*July 2021 Newsletter* 430

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# Notice Board

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| **July 2021** |
| 7 | First Wednesday | 10:00 | Audio Book Club |
| 1, 8, 15, 29 | Thursday | 10:00 | Braille Group |
| 14, 28 | Second and Fourth Wednesday | 10:00 | Arts and Crafts |
| 23 | Excursion to National Portrait Gallery | 11:00 | Excursions |
| 16 | Third Friday  | 10:00 | Sense-Able Cooking |
| **August 2021** |
| 4 | First Wednesday | 10:00 | Audio Book Club |
| 5, 12,19, 26 | Thursday | 10:00 | Braille Group |
| 11, 25 | Second and Fourth Wednesday | 10:00 | Arts and Crafts |
| 20 | Third Friday  | 10:00 | Sense-Able Cooking |
| **September 2021** |
| 1  | First Wednesday | 10:00 | Audio Book Club |
| 3, 9, 16,23,30  | Thursday | 10:00 | Braille Group |
| 8, 22  | Second and Fourth Wednesday | 10:00 | Arts and Crafts |
| 17  | Third Friday | 10:00 | Sense-Able Cooking |
| TBA | Excursion to Floriade | 10:00 | Excursions |

# From the President’s Chair – Peter Granleese

Welcome to the July issue of the CBS Newsletter and the halfway mark for 2021. It is the beginning of a new financial year for CBS and another milestone as we announce the commencement, or should I say, the recommencement of the Society’s long-awaited Outreach Program. Long term readers of CBS will remember that CBS ran a very successful outreach program prior to 2014, providing information and assessments, counselling services, referrals, as well as training in daily living skills and assistance to individuals with ongoing needs. The program was highly thought of by the ACT Government who provided ongoing funding as well as one off grants for particular projects. The program was based on a holistic approach to the delivery of services and provided free of charge to all people who were blind or vision impaired.

With the introduction of the NDIS in 2014 and the loss of direct Government funding for its Outreach Program, CBS went through a period of uncertainty as it sought to define its new role in the NDIS era. This included a brief partnership with another blindness organisation before it found its way into the future.

In 2020, CBS received funding from The National Disability Insurance Authority to employ an Outreach Officer to reactivate the Outreach Program, a case of the wheel turning full circle. It was intended that the program would commence on 1 July 2020, but the COVID-19 lockdown and difficulties finding an appropriate person to fill the position, has delayed its introduction.

The position has now been filled and CBS is pleased to announce that Debra Quinnell has been appointed as the Society’s Outreach Officer. Debra has a long association with CBS, going back to 1989 as the Society’s Braille teacher and Braille transcriber and then as Manager of Can Braille, the commercial arm of the Society’s Braille transcription service.

In 2005, Debra was appointed as the Society’s Executive Officer while retaining her role as Manager of Can Braille. Debra left CBS in 2015 to take up an appointment with the NDIA before working with the Royal Commission into Aged Care, until it completed its work at the end of May 2021.

With 25 years’ experience at CBS and her work with the NDIS and Royal Commission, Debra is well qualified for the role of Outreach Officer and a great asset to CBS. Deb’s return is another case of the wheel turning full circle.

The Outreach Program will commence on the first of July from the Society’s walk-in centre, centrally located on the ground floor of The Griffin Centre, Canberra City. If you require any assistance or would like to talk to the Outreach Officer, you can contact Debra for an appointment online via the CBS website or by phone on 02 6247 4580 or email outreach@canberrablindsociety.org.au

Although the NDIS has radically changed the way disability services are provided, we at CBS are determined to continue our long-established tradition of providing a warm and friendly service in a timely manner. We are committed to developing our premises in The Griffin Centre as a one shop stop and a resource centre for the vision impaired community, as well as a gathering place for social events held throughout the year.

For the last 63 years, CBS has provided its services free of charge and this will continue where the service is not covered by the NDIS. However, the NDIA requires CBS to undertake a scoping exercise to develop alternative sources of income once the current funding comes to an end in 2023. This is a requirement of the current funding agreement and is part of the NDIAs plan to make organisations like CBS, more independent and less reliant on NDIS funding.

Accordingly, CBS will commence a six-month scoping exercise to determine the amount of income that can be derived by CBS from the provision of NDIS services where they apply in the future. It is not intended to require NDIS recipients to pay for NDIS services during the scoping exercise. In any case, CBS has a policy of providing three free consultations to anyone seeking assistance, including NDIS recipients.

Despite the Society’s long-established tradition of providing services free of charge, it is inevitable that CBS will move to a user pay system when providing NDIS services, if it is to survive into the future. Most individuals who qualify for the NDIS, have NDIS self-managed plans. This is the intention of the NDIS scheme, which is designed to empower individuals by giving them the funds to purchase these services from a provider of their choice. It is the intention of CBS to become the provider of choice for some of these services.

WATCH THIS SPACE

# The Way I see It – Graham Downie

In what it calls an exciting change, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has removed from many concession card holder’s free entry to its national parks.

This action is probably what might be termed an unintended consequence, nevertheless, despite a request for a reconsideration of its new system, people who do not own a motor vehicle are no longer entitled to free entry to NSW national parks.

Until April this year, printed passes to national parks were displayed on the windscreens of vehicles. Hence, anyone entitled to a concession or free entry could use their pass regardless of the vehicle in which they travelled. Though pensioners and eligible veterans are still entitled to a pass at no charge, these passes are now linked to a vehicle’s number plate and the vehicle must be registered in your name or at your home address.

“Issuing NPWS Concession Passes to a single vehicle, instead of a person, ensures there is a consistent state-wide approach to entry fee products and aligns these free passes with all other NPWS annual pass products, including Seniors discount passes,” Environment NSW says in its questions and answers on the subject.

Unfortunately, it is understood the change occurred, at least in part, because some concession card holders gave their passes to others to avoid park entry fees. For some people, park entry fees are quite significant. Kosciusko National Park, for example, charges nearly $30 per day for private motor vehicles or $190 for an annual pass.

In an email to the Executive director, Business Delivery, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Andrew Nicholls, I drew his attention to people who are blind and do not own a motor vehicle who are effectively no longer entitled to free entry to the state’s national parks. I suggested the change reflects general government attitudes in Australia that people who do not drive motor vehicles do not count in the grand scheme of things.

“The discrimination, implicit in your new arrangement, is far too common,” I told Mr Nicholls. “When I telephoned your office with my concern, I was assured the new position was not negotiable. Therefore, I respectfully request the matter be reconsidered for the benefit of people who do not have access to a motor vehicle to which a pass may be linked.”

For me, the financial impost is insignificant, but the principle is not. If people, otherwise entitled to a concession must own or have regular access to a motor vehicle to receive that concession, there is discrimination, intentional or otherwise.

Replying to my email, Manager, Park Fee Infrastructure & Systems Andrew Thornton said a number of alternatives had been considered when deciding on the system for managing national park use fees across the state.

“The vehicle-based approach is considered to be the most affordable, fair and transparent system to keep fees as low as possible and encourage overall visitation and park enjoyment,” he said. “The introduction of non-transferable passes for concession card holders aligns this group with the previous and ongoing requirement for all other pass holders to nominate a specific vehicle for their pass. This includes those receiving discounts such as Seniors, and addresses inequity between different user groups. This consistency is important for fairness and delivering an affordable and workable pass system.”

Mr Thornton said carers of people who did not have an applicable vehicle for a concession pass might be eligible for a discount or concession pass for their own vehicles when visiting a park with or without the person for whom they cared. My inquiries indicate this is not correct. Officially at least, any concession must be linked to a vehicle number plate, and the vehicle must be registered in the name or at the home address of the concession card holder.

Mr Thornton said, “NSW continues to offer the most generous national park concessions for pensioners in Australia. Only 45 of more than 870 NSW national parks charge entry fees. These fees directly help NPWS to maintain and improve visitor facilities, protect threatened species and their habitats, conserve historic sites and places of cultural significance. All entry fee revenue is retained by NPWS and reinvested in national parks.”

So, unless someone in the NSW government system has a serious rethink of its exciting change to the conditions for free NSW national parks entry passes, many people, otherwise entitled to these passes, will have to pay.

# Excursion to the National Portrait Gallery – Friday 23 July

Meeting Time: CBS office 10am, or NPG at 10:45am

Tour time: 11am to 12noon

Lunch: 12noon to 1:30pm

CBS is commencing bi-monthly excursion group on the 4th Friday of alternate months.

The next excursion will be at National Portrait Gallery.

The current exhibition is “Australian Love Stories”

The audio described tour will walk through their main collection, from portraits of Nick Cave to Kev Carmody, we can explore and discuss the intention of the artists making the portraits and the rich lives of their subjects.

Members can either meet at the Canberra Blind Society at 10am then travel to the National Portrait Gallery as a group or meet at the National Portrait Gallery at 10:45am. The hour-long tour will start at 11am.

Then we will have lunch at the Gallery Café where members can purchase lunch and socialise.

We aim to leave by 1:30pm either directly home or dropped off at CBS. The Gallery can cater for 10 people (including volunteers) for the Descriptive Tour.

NPG has kindly provided this tour to CBS for free. There is usually an admission fees at the Gallery.

This is our first excursion. Please book ASAP to support this activity.

Also let us know if you need transport or if you can provide transport.

Lindy’s mobile is 0402 113 836 or email volunteers@canberrablindsociety.org.au to book your place.

**Upcoming Excursions**

Floriade (September)

Botanic Gardens (November)

Suggestions for future excursions are welcome.

# Microwave conversion kits

CBS has conversion kits that will convert a non-talking microwave to a talking microwave. You can use a microwave that is less than 5 years old and has a keypad (not dials or push buttons). The conversion kits are available at CBS and we have an agreement with a company in Canberra to do the conversion. CBS purchased a cheap 20L microwave and had it converted, with the finished product now in the CBS kitchen for you to try. The conversion can work with microwaves of any size and so it allows you to have your preferred size to fit in your own kitchen area. It also allows you to use or purchase any brand of non-talking microwave and then have it converted to talking.

# Blind Citizens Australia positions vacant

**Membership Engagement Coordinator:**

* Networking and relationship-building
* Part-time role 22.5 hours / week
* Remote working arrangements
* People who are blind or vision impaired are encouraged to apply

We are looking for a ‘people person’ who builds strong and meaningful relationships with a range of stakeholders.

Communication is the basis of this role – both written and verbal – working with people where they are at, in way that meets their needs.

More information and how to apply:

<https://www.bca.org.au/2021/05/17/employment-opportunity-membership-engagement-coordinator/>

**Policy and Advocacy Team Leader**

* Full time role
* Remote Working Arrangement
* Leadership role – small and passionate team
* People who are blind or vision impaired are encouraged to apply

We are looking for someone to lead a remote team to make a difference in the lives of people who are blind or vision impaired. This role will also provide authentic representation of people who are blind or vision impaired to bring issues of importance to the table and to create change.

More information and how to apply: <https://www.bca.org.au/2021/06/08/employment-opportunity-policy-advocacy-team-leader/>

# Tech Updates – Useful keyboard shortcuts

People who are blind or have low vision rely on screen readers to vocalise what is on a computer screen or a mobile device. Keyboard shortcuts become incredibly useful for screen reader users because they speed up navigation and makes using a mouse almost unnecessary.

Here are some keyboard shortcuts. Save some time and give them a go:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Shortcut** |
| Increase font size | Ctrl + Shift + > |
| Decrease font size | Ctrl + Shift + < |
| Insert page break | Ctrl + Enter |
| Zoom in | Ctrl + Mouse Wheel Button Up |
| Zoom out | Ctrl + Mouse Wheel Button Down |
| Magnify | Windows Key + Plus (+) |
| Make anything a bulleted list | Ctrl + Shift + L |
| Revert back to normal formatting | Ctrl + Shift + N |
| Select to end of line | Shift + End |
| Select to beginning | Ctrl + Shift + Home |
| Select to end | Ctrl + Shift + End |
| Delete one word to the left | Ctrl + Backspace |
| Delete one word to the right | Ctrl + Delete |

# National Portrait Gallery

Australian Love Stories Audio Described Tour.

July 4 11:30 to 12:30

Bookings Essential – Exhibition ticket required

 [https://www.portrait.gov.au](https://www.portrait.gov.au/calendar/love-stories-audio-described-tour/2210) or telephone 6102 7070

# Macular Disease Foundation Australia - online quiz

One in seven Australians aged over 50 have some signs of macular disease, but almost 40 per cent of them are gambling with their vision by skipping crucial eye exams. That’s why Macular Disease Foundation Australia (MDFA) has launched [**Check My Macula**](https://vision2020australia.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3d84db70303f185352a5574e4&id=c330838a8b&e=26b9ac0fcc), an online quiz that reveals individual risk of macular disease in less than a minute, then helps patients book a potentially sight-saving eye exam with their local optometrist. More than 1.3 million Australians over 50 have some evidence of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) – the country’s leading cause of severe vision loss and blindness in Australia – but many may not realise until it’s too late. Visit [www.CheckMyMacula.com.au](http://www.CheckMyMacula.com.au) to take the quiz now, and also order a free Check My Mac Pack, including an Amsler grid.

# Reducing the barriers for VIPs to study

Twenty percent of people in Australia identify as having a disability yet people with disability make up only 7.3% of higher education enrolments. On top of this, students with disability are the second lowest funded equity group attending tertiary institutions. Blind Citizens Australia (BCA), Australia’s national representative organisation of people who are blind or vision impaired, has launched a scholarship program to support members to take up higher education. For more information pertaining directly to the BCA Scholarship Program or to apply [visit BCA's website](https://vision2020australia.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3d84db70303f185352a5574e4&id=1c4ab16c90&e=26b9ac0fcc)

<https://www.bca.org.au/2021/05/16/2021-2022-bca-scholarship-program-2/>

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# National Gallery of Australia

Know My Name: Australia Women Artists 1900 to Now

July 4 11.00am – 12.00pm

August 8 11.00am – 12.00pm

A 60-minute exhibition tour of [Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now](https://knowmyname.nga.gov.au/events/australian-women-artists-1900-now/) for people who are blind or low vision.

Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now showcases art made by women. It brings together more than 300 works, drawn from the Gallery’s collection and other collections from across Australia. This exhibition is part of a series of [ongoing initiatives](https://nga.gov.au/calendar/%E2%80%9Dhttps%3A/knowmyname.nga.gov.au/support/%E2%80%9D) by the National Gallery to increase the representation of artists who identify as women in its artistic program.

**Price** : Free, bookings essential
**Venue** : Know My Name exhibition (Level 1)

# In the kitchen

**Sweet and sour pork**

from: ACTNutrition [www actnss.org](www%20actnss.org)

Serves 4

**Ingredients**

1 red onion

1 small red capsicum

1 cup snow peas

1/2 punnet cherry tomatoes

1/2 head of broccoli

225g can of pineapple pieces, in juice

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon reduced salt soy sauce

1 tablespoon no added salt tomato paste

2 teaspoons cornflour

500g lean pork, thinly sliced

spray oil

rice to serve

**Method**

Slice onion into thin wedges.

Cut capsicum into strips.

Trim and cut snow peas and halve cherry tomatoes.

Cut broccoli into small florets.

Drain pineapple and keep pineapple juice for sauce.

In a small bowl combine pineapple juice, vinegar, soy sauce, tomato paste and cornflour.

Add 1 tablespoon of water and mix well.

Heat fry pan on high heat.

Lightly spray pan with oil and cook pork strips in batches for 2-3 minutes until brown.

Remove from pan and set aside.

Lightly spray pan with oil and add onion, capsicum and broccoli.

Cook for 2 minutes.

Add pineapple and cook for a further 3 minutes.

Add sauce mixture, snow peas and cherry tomatoes.

Return cooked pork to the pan and cook for 2-3 minutes.

Serve with rice and enjoy!

# Free counselling available

A Free Counselling service is available for adult singles and doubles (family members), at various locations throughout Canberra. The service is provided by Syeira Ferguson who is in her final year of University studies and is completing the practical requirement of a degree in counselling. Syeria is fully covered by professional indemnity and public liability insurance through her university and supervised by a qualified counsellor. If you would like to avail yourself of this service please contact Syreia direct on 0457 103 393 or by email [syeira@live.com.au](https://us17.admin.mailchimp.com/audience/inbox?id=1072801&contact_id=de07a27c770de6105e1bd138d43abd8c)

# Braille Group

The Braille Group meets at the Griffin Centre on Thursdays from 10:00 in the CBS office. Enquiries from new or existing members can contact Sharon Sobey on 0419 263 413.

# Book Group

Our next meeting is on the 7th July at 10:00am in the CBS meeting room. Our book will be “Still Life” by Louise Penny. We have space for new members and Zoom is also available. You can learn about how to join and enjoy a wide range of audiobooks from Bob James on 6296 4644.

# Arts and Crafts Group

The Arts and Crafts group meets every second and fourth Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be on 14th June commencing at 10am. If you would like to join the group and have not already notified us please contact the office or Angie Sorbello on 6247 4580 to add your name to the circulation list.

# Thanks to our Sponsors

Canberra Blind Society thanks our sponsors for supporting us.

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|  **Southern Cross Club Community Rewards Program**Members of the Southern Cross Club can help us raise funds by taking part in the Southern Cross Club’s Community Rewards program |

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