***CANBERRA BLIND SOCIETY (CBS)***

*November 2021 Newsletter* 434

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**Given the challenging COVID-19 situation, and the state and territory lockdowns, we are planning to deliver the best possible local events for our members and clients to participate in, when and where possible.**

**The health and safety of members and clients, volunteers and staff is our highest priority and Canberra Blind Society is following closely announcements from Office of the ACT Chief Health Officer to finalise the COVID-safe arrangements for any event moving forward. Further information will be made available as soon as possible. For updates on the COVID situation please go to the ACT Health website at**[**covid19.act.gov.au**](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/)

# Notice Board

* **During lockdown Book Club and Friends of Braille will be operating online with Zoom meetings. Please contact the organisers of the sessions for details. Other in person activities are cancelled until restrictions ease and it is safe for people to gather.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **November 2021** |  |  |  |
| 3 | First Wednesday | 10:00 | Book Club |
| 4, 11,18, 25 | Thursday | 10:00 | Friends of Braille |
| **December 2021** |  |  |  |
| 1 | First Wednesday | 10:00 | Book Club |
| 2, 9, 16 | Thursday | 10:00 | Friends of Braille |
| 22 | CBS closes for Christmas break |  |  |
| **January 2022** |  |  |  |
| 27 | CBS Re-open |  |  |

# From the Acting President’s Chair – Heather Fitzpatrick

Welcome to the November edition of the CBS Newsletter. As the ACT comes out of lockdown and a vast majority of the ACT population is vaccinated against Covid-19 I am pleased to say that CBS and Eyes for Life Canberra are getting ready to resume activities. Our first activities are set outdoors – a walk in the Botanic Gardens and a Christmas picnic. Details for each event are outlined further along in the newsletter.

Office visits are not recommencing yet, but Deb and Brittany are ready and willing to help with enquiries via the website, telephone, email and telehealth appointments.

Please contact Deb on 6247 4580 or 6176 3470 or email outreach@canberrablindsociety.org.au. Brittany can be contacted by telephone on 6176 3470 or email sw@eflc.org.au.

When we re-open the office to visitors we will be following the recommendations from ACT Health on best practices and we’ll have a Covid-19 safe plan.

The Annual General Meeting for CBS will be held at 6 pm in room 1 ground floor of the Griffin Centre. Please let us know if you are intending to attend in person by emailing the office canblind@canberrablindsociety.org.au. We will also have a zoom meeting link for those that want to attend virtually. Please email canblind@canberrablindsociety.org.au to register and a link will be provided closer to the meeting.

# The Way I see It – Graham Downie

An email seeking publicity for the 2022 Youth Summer Camp prompted this reflection on the importance of recreation, particularly for people who are blind or vision impaired.

The summer camp, arranged by Blind Sports and Recreation NSW/ACT, will be from January 10-14, at the Sydney Academy of Sport, North Narrabeen. When I last visited that venue it had the less grandiose name, Narrabeen Fitness Camp. When very young, we slept in small cabins with two bunk beds. Later the cabins were larger and included toilets and showers. When aged about 11, at the Narrabeen camp, I had my first go at a trampoline, instructed by rugby union international Alan Morton.

Enough reminiscing - whether competitive sport or regular gentle, or not so gentle recreation, humans are much richer for the activity. For some, it is the journey, for others the destination. But a disability can limit the opportunity for regular physical activity. The recent COVID-19 lockdowns have added a further difficulty. In my case, prevented the opportunity to use my tandem bicycle for some weeks and for even longer my ability to swim.

The lack of physical exercise is not good for the body or the mind. Though I have a good exercise bike, I lack the motivation to use it, unless there is an AFL game or cricket to relieve the boredom.

Opportunities offered by the youth summer camp rather make one wish he were a few years younger - well, quite a few years younger. The camp was created to give young people in NSW and the ACT the opportunity the chance to experience a variety of adaptive sports, make new friends, try new things and have lots of fun.

Participants aged 10 to 18 can play Goalball, AFL, Football, Cricket, Tennis and Golf. (I think I will apply) There will also be trips to the beach, indoor skydiving, aqua golf and on-site interactive sessions.

The cost is a fairly hefty $600, though applicants may be able to claim through the NDIS. If not, and if the cost prevents anyone from Canberra attending, please contact me through the CBS office.

Registrations will close on Wednesday December 1. Places are limited and at time of writing there are only a few remaining.

To register online, www.Blindsportsnsw.com.au or email: info@blindsportsnsw.com.au.

General manager Blind Sports and Recreation NSW/ACT Jason Stubbs said the organisation had previously focused on elite sports. Recently it had changed its name to include recreation and the ACT. He speaks enthusiastically about the value of recreation for people who are blind or vision impaired and hopes to increase the organisation’s presence in Canberra next year.

The organisation is affiliated in Sydney with six organisations: Blind Cricket; Blind Tennis; Blind golf; Futsal; soccer and goal ball. Jason Stubbs said he hoped to replicate at least some of these activities in Canberra next year.

In November, he will take two young people to Melbourne to experience AFL played by blind people. Played indoors, the game uses a ball and goal posts with electronic bells. Players with no vision score nine points for a goal and are awarded a mark by taking possession of the ball. There are four teams in Melbourne for blind players: Bulldogs; Bombers; Hawks and St Kilda.

The Board of the Canberra Blind Society is very aware of the importance of recreation for people who are vision impaired or blind. Where possible, we help people to join community groups, such as Park Run and Fitability. The former’s activity is self-explanatory. The latter offers a tandem cycling program for people with vision impairment or other disabilities. Almost certainly, there are numerous untapped opportunities in community clubs and organisations. CBS is most willing to help people to find a suitable organisation or support for an unmet recreational or social interest.

# Check in CBR card

A Check In CBR card is now available. This is designed for those people who do not own a smartphone or who are unable to download and use the Check In CBR app. This free card contains a unique QR code which can be scanned at the majority of businesses and venues across the ACT. This will make checking in a quick and private process for card holders. Note that the Check In CBR card cannot be used at those locations where there is no-one to assist with scanning of the card (for example on public transport).

[Applying for a Check In CBR card](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/check-in-cbr-app/check-in-cbr-app-form) is a quick and simple process and can be done on behalf of an individual if they are unable to do so. The link to the application form for this card is below.

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/check-in-cbr-app/check-in-cbr-app-form>

If you are unable to apply for a Check In CBR card online, please contact the ACT Health Digital Solutions Support team on (02) 5124 5000 for assistance.

If you are unable to check in on public transport, please ensure that you have a registered MyWay card or keep good records of the services you have used.

# How to get your COVID-19 vaccine certificate on your phone

Proof of vaccination for entry is **in addition to checking in with the QR code at the door**. There is no special ACT vaccination certificate. You will need the federal one.

You can store the certificate wherever you store important documents on your phone. There will be different places for Apple and Android devices.

If you already have an online Medicare account, there are four stages:

1. Sign in to myGov on the phone or tablet where you want to store the certificate.
2. Select "Go to Medicare" under "Proof of COVID-19 vaccination".
3. Select "View history".
4. Select your name and then either "View immunisation history" or "View COVID-19 digital certificate" and download the pdf file. There is also the option to "Save to phone" (on Android) and Add to Apple Wallet (on Apple iOS) to create a shortcut on your homescreen, and "Share with check in app". As of time of writing, this option has only been linked to Service Victoria. The ACT has no plans to add proof of vaccination to the Checkin CBR app.

You can also use the Medicare app.

1. Sign into the Medicare app
2. Click 'Proof of vaccinations' under 'Services'
3. Click 'View history'
4. Scroll down and select 'View COVID-19 digital certificate' (you can also see that you've had the jab by clicking 'view immunisation history statement'
5. Select 'save to phone' OR go to the share button in the top right-hand corner and email the document to yourself.

If you haven't already set up an online Medicare account, you'll need to join your Medicare to your MyGov you'll need to do that first. And that takes a bit of doing. [The steps are outlined here on the Services Australia website](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts/how-set-your-account). You'll need to know things such as the last date you visited a doctor, the location of that practice and the name of your doctor.

# ATSA Independent Living Expo

[ATSA Independent Living Expo](https://www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au/)

Wednesday 24 November 8.30 am – 4.30 pm

Thursday 25 November 8.30 am – 3.00 pm

Exhibition park (EPIC)

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In 2021, the ATSA Independent Living Expo is set to have more than 100 exhibitors displaying a wide range of products and services in assistive technology, mobility solutions, pressure care, employment support, accessible recreation/holiday ideas, modified motor vehicles and a lot more.

**Eyes for Life Canberra (EFLC) will be one of the Exhibitors at the Expo. EFLC provides advice, counselling, and support services to people of all ages who are coming to terms with, or living with, a vision impairment or have an eyesight problem. Come and visit our booth, chat with our friendly staff and volunteers, get all the information on our products and services.**

ATSA Independent Living Expo is open to visitors of all ages, including those with a disability, seniors and their families, friends and carers, free of charge.

# Canberra Blind Society – Launching a pilot Mentoring Program with Canberra Employers

After receiving funding earlier in the year, the leadership team have been busy during lockdown employing a small team for an exciting new initiative. Over the next year Canberra Blind Society is implementing a pilot Mentoring Program with a team of 5 VIP Mentors and a Project Officer.  The program will be designed by the Mentors to work with, and support selected Private and Public Sector Organisations by overseeing initiatives related to better paths to employment. The program will focus on building more understanding to encourage more inclusive employment opportunities for people who are blind or have a vision impairment.  The VIP Mentors will do this by finding out about the Employer perceived challenges, sharing their experiences, trialling ideas for activities to support all stakeholders and working towards reducing stereotypes/preconceptions about VIPs.

The Project Officer Claire Manning will provide project progress in coming months and share news from our CBS VIP Mentors.

# Disability Royal Commission

**Next public hearing on human rights of people with disability**

The next public hearing will look at the human rights of people with disability and making the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) a reality in Australian law, policies and practices. Respect for human rights builds inclusive communities and prevents violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.

The hearing will be held virtually on Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 November 2021.

[**Public hearing 18**](https://comms.external.royalcommission.gov.au/ch/89073/1hmkj/2891836/i.PlwEArkzzRih3G3EzV3oMOe6paivfTWD0SlgpF.html) will hear from a range of people with disability and advocates, international human rights experts and human rights leaders to examine:

* the relevance and significance of the CRPD to people with disability in Australia
* the nature and extent to which CRPD rights are part of Australian domestic law
* the gaps in recognising and enforcing human rights for people with disability in Australia
* approaches to the interpretation of the CRPD
* the Australian Government’s approach to the CRPD
* models existing in Australia and in other countries for enforcing CRPD rights.

The hearing will be [**live streamed**](https://comms.external.royalcommission.gov.au/ch/89073/1hmkj/2851722/i.PlwEArkzzRih3G3EzVTZDR0j1KO7WOGmaxHhlK-1.html) on their website with captions and Auslan interpreters.

# Radio 1RPH Book readings

Book readings are among 1RPH’s most popular programs for listeners in the ACT and beyond.

Starting from Monday 18 October we are increasing the number of book readings for young people in the new time slots of 7.30pm, two days a week. The new schedule starts on Monday 18 October with two episodes of ***The Dead of the Night*** by John Marsden on Monday and Wednesday at 7.30pm following the evening newspaper program. The episodes will be repeated on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4.00pm.

Listen to Radio 1RPH at 1125 am on the am dial via the listen live link on the website <http://www.radio1rph.org.au> Radio 1RPH is also conducting trial transmission on digital radio.

# CBS has joined Facebook

Thanks to our Visual Communications Officer, our Facebook page for is now live. The link is: <https://www.facebook.com/CanberraBlindSociety>. Please like and follow us to get updates on events at CBS.

# Art by Description for people who are Blind or with impaired vision

**Friday 5 November**

**2pm – 3.00pm**

**Morocco and memory: Henri Matisse and Hilda Rix Nicholas**

This presentation will include audio description, discussion, music and poetry.

Free l For more information call Adriane Boag on 02 6240 6632

To register email access@nga.gov.au to receive the zoom link

Henri Matisse travelled to Tangier in the early twentieth century, a few years before Australian artist Hilda Rix Nicholas.

Both artists found new ways to paint colour in the luminous light of Morocco and the works created by Hilda Rix Nicholas launched her career in Europe.

The National Gallery of Australia’s collection includes a number of Nicholas’s jewel like Tangier paintings as well as the huge stencil screen prints by Matisse that recreate his travels to the south seas. Both artists’ work captures the sensation of being immersed in another world.

# Tech Updates - Government support for development of bionic visual-spatial prosthesis for the blind

Health Minister Greg Hunt recently announced the Federal Government’s Medical Research Future Fund is investing $800,000 towards developing a non-invasive bionic vision wearable development prototype for people who are blind or vision impaired.

The ARIA system aims to provide users an immersive and detailed real-time perception of their immediate environment, enabling a new level of agency and autonomy. Blind Citizens Australia are one of the ARIA project’s research partners as part of a collaboration with University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney and World Access for the Blind Australia

ARIA will begin pre-clinical trials in Australia in 2022.
If you would be interested in early access to ARIA, please contact earlyaccess@ariaresearch.com.au.

Bioptic driving demonstration event

**What:** Australia’s first ever bioptic driving demonstration day
**Where:** Wakefield Park Raceway, Goulburn, NSW
**When:** Wednesday 10 November - 8am to 10am

What is bioptic driving and why should you attend?
Bioptic driving is the use of a telescope device as assistive technology reasonable adjustment that gives functional support to people with low vision to allow them to drive safely.

This event will demonstrate bioptic driving by Australian bioptic drivers who hold current driver licences. You may wish to attend as an observer if you are a person living with a central vision impairment condition, know someone who does. You may wish to attend if you are an optometrist, occupational therapist, driving instructor or orientation and mobility specialist.

Bioptic driving has been practiced in Australia since at least the 1980s and world wide for over 50 years! But due to neglect, system failures and misinformation that has denied the right of disabled people to be treated equality in access to assessments for driving, little is known about it.

Who is organising this event?
Bioptic Drivers Australia (BDA) is a not for profit organisation supporting bioptic driving development in Australia. BDA has arranged this event with the volunteer efforts of:

• Project management - Ascent Training Services

• Venue - Wakefield Park Raceway

• Driving instructor and cars - 5th Gear Motoring

• Bioptic drivers - Bioptic Drivers Australia.

What are the logistics?
The event will commence at 8am and conclude by 10am. Bioptic drivers will drive around a closed circuit in usual on road driving conditions. The event will be filmed for post production release and include video of drivers inside the car, outside the car and interviews. Some bioptic drivers will be driving their own cars. When you email you will be provided with advice and if approved to attend, asked to agree to event rules to support a COVID safe event.

RSVP: by Monday 25 October 2021 to allow us to make appropriate arrangements at the venue. To RSVP or ask questions, email: Belinda O’Connor atbiopticdriversaus@gmail.com

# In the kitchen

**Vegetable Fritters**

These can be cooked the night before, refrigerated and eaten cold the next day.

## Ingredients

* 2 eggs
* 1 cup milk
* 1 cup self-raising flour
* Olive oil spray
* Salad or salsa to serve
* 3 cups chopped/grated vegetables (such as corn, sweet potato, zucchini, capsicum, broccoli, cauliflower)
* 1/2 cup fresh herbs (such as coriander, spring onion, parsley)
* 1/2 cup cheese (such as mozzarella, cheddar, cottage. Optional)
* 2 teaspoons (metric) spices (such as paprika, turmeric, coriander, chilli. Optional)
* Natural/Greek yoghurt to serve (optional)

## Method

1. Wash and chop/grate the vegetables and herbs.
2. In a large mixing bowl whisk the eggs, then add the milk, herbs and vegetables stirring well.
3. Add the flour and cheese and spices if you are using these.
4. Spray a large non-stick frying pan with olive oil spray and heat on medium heat. Dollop 1 tablespoon of the batter mixture into the frying pan at a time making sure there is enough room to flip the fritters.
5. Cook for about 2 minutes on each side until golden brown in colour.
6. Serve with salad or salsa and a dollop of yoghurt!

## Notes

* Try using wholemeal self-raising flour to add more fibre
* Costs $1.20 per serve

Recipe reproduced with permission from SecondBite – [www.secondbite.org](http://secondbite.org/).

# Christmas Picnic

CBS invites all clients, members and family to a picnic to celebrate Christmas 2021 on Saturday 11 December. Come along and join us in a picnic at Black Mountain Peninsula. Sandwiches, finger food, Christmas cake and drinks will be provided, please bring your own beer or wine if you wish to drink alcohol.

Time: 12.00 – 2.30 pm

We encourage everyone who wishes to join us to be double vaccinated.

The December sun may be a warm one, don’t forget your hat and sunscreen. The Peninsula also has a swimming spot if you felt like a dip in the lake.

Please call Deb on 6247 4580 or email outreach@canberrablindsociety.org.au if you are interested to come along. If you require transport you will need to contact Volunteers@canberrablindsociety.org.au

# Excursion to the National Botanical Gardens

CBS invites you to an excursion to the National Botanical Gardens on Friday 3 December 2021 to celebrate **International Day of People with Disability.**

The Gardens opened as an outdoor attraction on 29 October 2021. We encourage everyone who wishes to join us to be double vaccinated.

Come and join us in a walk through the Gardens which includes a range of walking activities, and hopefully we’ll spot some birds, reptiles and mammals.

Clients and friends can purchase food at Café Pollen, however we would need to book very early to ensure we get the required seating. Some people may want to purchase take away or bring their own food and find somewhere in the gardens to sit.

We will meet at the Gardens carpark at 11 am and leave at 2.30pm. Please call Deb on 6247 4580 or email outreach@canberrablindsociety.org.au if you are interested to come along.

If you require transport you will need to contact Volunteers@canberrablindsociety.org.au .

# Friends of Braille Group

The Friends of Braille meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursdays from 10:00 in the CBS office. Enquiries from new or existing members can contact Sharon Sobey on 0419 263 413. Contact Sharon for the Zoom link and for any help needed.

# Book Group

The Audio Book Group will meet on Wednesday 3rd November at 10:00 to discuss “Room For a Stranger” by Melanie Cheng. Join us by Zoom for a time of information sharing, good company and a few laughs along the way. New members are welcome, contact Bob James on 6296 2644 or CBS for further information. Audio books can become an important part of your life.

“Room For a Stranger” is a novel set in present day Melbourne and deals with the issue of ageing, loneliness, being an overseas student in Australia, and homesharing as a solution to the situation of two loveable Melbournians.

New members are always welcome, all you need is a love of reading, a Vision Australia Library membership, and facility to use Zoom. We would like to assist if you are considering joining us.

Call Bob James on 6296 2644.

# Thanks to our Sponsors

Canberra Blind Society thanks all our sponsors for supporting us.

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

 

  

 