### BEYOND BLINDNESS

### (BWA serving its Members for over 80 years)

**Magazine for Members of B B**

**AUGUST 2021**

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Welcome to the Spring edition of the Beyond Blindness Magazine, Eye Contact. We hope you find something of interest in the content as there is some interesting and helpful information published in this edition.

If you would like to write a letter to the Editor, please feel free to do so, as we are interested in your thoughts and feedback.

**A Message from the Board**

On behalf of the entire Beyond Blindness Board, I hope that all our members, volunteers and staff are remaining safe and well during these unusual and challenging times as we all deal with the ongoing difficulties presented by Coronavirus.

In the last edition of Eye Contact, I reported that the Beyond Blindness Board had agreed to embark on some forward-looking Strategic Planning work, the objective of which is to develop a plan that positions Beyond Blindness as a sustainable, effective, and responsive organisation within the Blindness and Disability sector into the future.

To ensure that we cater for all our members throughout South Australia, we continue to expand our services across the entire Adelaide metro region and near regional areas. Following the success of our expansion into the South, that began nearly eight years ago, we are now in need of appropriate office accommodation and a physical location to support the valuable work of our Co-ordinator, Tracey Reid, and our many wonderful volunteers, to continue the growth of activities and support to members across the region.

I am very pleased to announce that the Board has just signed-off on the lease of office premises at Christies Beach, that we plan to be officially opening in late September / early October. As we continue to grow as an organisation and develop and refine our model of support to Members, we envisage that this new venture will be replicated in our outer Northern region.

If you have any thoughts of how we might be able to improve services to you as a member, the Board and Staff would welcome your input. Please feel free to provide your feedback and ideas by email to info@beyondblindness.org.au or by phoning the Gilles Plains office on (08) 8367 6088.

Through our various Beyond Blindness communications channels, we will continue to provide regular updates on these exciting developments for Beyond Blindness and our members.

Tony Starkey, Chairperson

**General Manager’s Report**

As I write this, we are, once again, coming out of another Covid lock-down here in SA. We sincerely hope all our Members remain safe and well and are soon back to enjoying daily life and the company of friends and family.

It’s been a very busy few months since our last newsletter. Over this time, several of our members participated in a two-night trip to the Riverland and new groups are now up and running in the Northern and Southern suburbs of Adelaide. The Board and I have also been working on strategic planning to rebalance Beyond Blindness to better cater for changing needs and for all our members living across the metropolitan and near country areas. We will be surveying members over the next few months to further fine tune our programs and activities.

As you may have read in the preceding Update from the Beyond Blindness Board, planning is well underway to secure a new Southern office based at Christie’s Beach. This new regional centre will create new opportunities for our Southern members by providing a centrally located space for groups and volunteers to meet and, office accommodation for our Southern area Coordinator, Tracy Read.

We have also been looking at ways we can further assist Blind Sport in SA. This follows the recent involvement of our Marketing Consultant, Jayson Hanrahan, in the newly established SA Blind Sports Roundtable, initiated and hosted by the South Australian School for the Vision Impaired (SASVI). In addition, Beyond Blindness aided the National Blind Golf Championships, held in Adelaide during May and supported our SA Blind Cricketers through a financial grant and assistance with transport for a coaching event in the Riverland earlier this year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our growing volunteer team, with our volunteer numbers increasing from eighty-five to more than one hundred and twenty in the last twelve months. This has resulted in the tremendous success of our Small Jobs Program and will also enable us to further develop new activities and services for our members

We will also be trialling online Zoom meetings for those members interested in Adaptive technology, as well as looking for a more centrally located and accessible venue for our Choir to practice, due to a significant increase in interest from members across the broader metropolitan area.

In summary, I am very pleased to report that, once again, Beyond Blindness has ended the financial year in a strong position. This is due to the ongoing commitment of our Board, the dedication of our Staff and volunteers who continue to provide a range of wonderful services to members, and the generosity of the broader South Australian community.

Jim Colligan, General Manager

**Around the Office**

Recently, we welcomed two new members to the Beyond Blindness family. Some of our members may already be familiar with **Marian Phuah** and **Jessica Mudge** as, for the past few months, both ladies have been volunteering in the Beyond Blindness office, contacting members and assisting with reception and administrative tasks. In a recruitment process undertaken during May, both Jessica and Marian were successful in their applications for the position of Business Support Officer, that they now do on a job-share basis.

**Marian Phuah**

I’m from Singapore and came to Adelaide in 2017. I have 3 daughters and when we had a female cat, my husband used to say that he was the rose among the thorns. Alas for him, we recently acquired a FEMALE kitten. Imagine all the claws he faces daily!

I come from a Sales and Marketing background and worked many years in the telecommunications industry, after which, I became a homemaker whilst helping my husband in the marketing aspects of his business.

I started off as a Volunteer at Beyond Blindness and helped by contacting Members and assisted in administrative tasks. I am very grateful for the opportunity to work for Beyond Blindness and hope to make a difference in helping to improve our member and volunteer’s experiences.

Jessica Mudge

It has been a pleasure meeting everyone over the last few months. I am Jessica, you may have heard my voice as I volunteered in Reception between February until end of May 2021. I have been assisting Visa collating accounting information in preparation for changing over to a new accounting software. With some recent organisational growth, an opportunity for employment became available and I was asked to join the staff as a Business Support Officer. I was thrilled! How could I say no? I can honestly say it has been a pleasure, the culture at Beyond Blindness is second to none. Everyone genuinely is pleased to be here and has passion for the cause. I have been busy earning my keep, I assure you. If you are on Facebook, then you may have noticed increased activity on our social media. This has been a joint project facilitated by Jayson- Marketing Consultant and Marian and myself, to improve our member communications and bring about more awareness of Beyond Blindness in the community. I am proud to say, this has been a positive addition. As I make myself at home here at Beyond Blindness, I will endeavour to be of continued assistance to Visa in the pursuit of making processes paperless, creating and implementing improved policies and procedures, and ultimately freeing up resources for the benefit of our members.

**SECTOR UPDATE**

**NDIS Independent Assessments**

In the last edition of Eye Contact, we reported that, in a proposed change to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), first time applicants to the scheme, and some existing participants having Plan Reviews, would be required to undertake an Independent Assessment.

At a meeting with State and Territory Ministers on Friday 9th July, Minister for the NDIS, Ms Linda Reynolds, agreed not to make any legislative changes to the scheme, committing to consult on any future amendments. In a media release following this meeting, the Minister announced that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) would not be proceeding with the introduction of Independent Assessments. "Importantly, all Ministers agreed to work in partnership with those with lived disability experience on the design of a person-centred model," Minister Reynolds said.

Several States and Territories have been strongly opposed to the introduction of independent assessments, as well as disability advocates, Labor and the Greens. Until now, the Federal Government has said it is determined to introduce independent assessments for NDIS participants and applications. It has argued the reforms are needed to address inequities in the scheme and to place the NDIS on a "sustainable growth trajectory". Opposition Spokesman for the NDIS Bill Shorten said the development was welcome news for thousands of Australians who had been despairing and frustrated about the future of their care packages. Any changes to the NDIS have to be co-designed with the disability sector, not imposed on it, he said.

For further information or to read the Minister’s full statement, visit the NDIS website at [**www.ndis.gov.au**](http://www.ndis.gov.au).

**Adaptive Tech Corner**

When it comes to checking what time it is, there are a myriad of options to those for whom a standard timepiece just isn’t an option.

The variety of products currently available ranges from large print, talking, tactile and Braille watches, clocks and even key fobs.

When it comes time to choose a new timepiece, how do you make the right decision for your needs.

With generous assistance from a small group of Beyond Blindness Members, Volunteers and Staff here is a short review of some of the timekeeping products currently available.

**The Apple Watch**

Two of our Beyond Blindness Members, Franca Lombardi and Sarah Savage, recently purchased the Apple Watch and kindly share their opinions on its functionality.

Franca purchased her Apple Watch with cellular so she can make and receive calls, send text messages, and stream music. All the accessibility features on the iPhone have transferred to her watch, including invert colours, zoom and bold text, and list view as Franca finds this easier than grid view as apps are listed alphabetically.

Siri is also helpful for setting timers, alarms and answering the usual ridiculous questions asked, according to Franca.

Apart from telling time, Franca uses her watch for:

* Fitness and workout tracking
* Heart rate monitoring
* Blood oxygen tracking
* Notifications as the unique haptic Engine provides a gentle tap on your wrist every time a notification comes in. This also happens for alarms and timers.
* Fall detection

Sarah also likes the ability to ask Siri questions as well as having information read to her such as text messages, email, weather, and of course, the time.  Siri can send texts, be asked directions, set timers and alarms in the same way as you do with your iPhone.  No new commands to learn. According to Sarah, taking calls on the watch can also make you feel like a spy!

You can personalise the watch face making it easier to read with large numbers in your choice of colour or a fancy pattern, even micky mouse or a fluttering butterfly. The watch can be used as a fashion accessory as it is

Tracking your fitness is easy too as it records steps, sets goals and it is even waterproof for those who like to swim keeping track of lengths swam, checks heart rate, and if you ride a bike (tandem) it gives distance reached. The latest series 6 can measure your ECG and If your heart rate goes too low or too high it will alert you that you may be in danger.

The watch comes in 2 sizes, 40mm and 44mm with a variety of different bands to choose from.

For all the different model options, visit <https://www.apple.com/au/watch/compare/>

**The Eone Bradley Watch**

The Bradley timepiece from Eone is named after former U.S. naval officer Bradley Snyder, who lost his sight defusing bombs whilst serving in Afghanistan.

Eone's founder, Hyungsoo Kim, was a graduate student at MIT when he noticed that his friend and classmate couldn’t tell time — and it wasn’t just because he was blind. Too embarrassed to use his talking watch and interrupt the lecture, he’d discreetly whisper to his sighted friend for the time. Seeking better time telling alternatives for those who are vision impaired, Hyungsoo collaborated with designers and individuals with vision impairments to create a watch that everyone can use — sighted or blind.

The Bradley timepiece is a sleek, modern watch you can both touch and see to tell time. Instead of traditional watch hands, time is indicated by two ball bearings — one indicating minutes (top), and one indicating hours (side). The Eone Bradley is available in a variety of different configurations and finishes and ranges in price from $250 to $450 approximately depending on configuration.

For more information on the full range of Eone Bradley watches visit

<https://www.eone-time.com>

The Cube Clock

The Cube clock is a talking clock with a contrasting yellow button. Simple in design and easy to use, press the button on the top of the clock to hear the time in a natural English male voice. Includes volume control dial and an option to hear hourly time announcement.

The Cube clock is available from RSB and can be found at

<https://www.rsb.org.au/product/talking-cube-clock/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI89m2_9XK8QIVj7aWCh2h_wkiEAAYASAAEgLZC_D_BwE>

It retails for $110, but RSB has very kindly offered Beyond Blindness members a ten percent discount on this product.

The Dawn Clock

Another talking clock option, the Dawn Clock™ has 14 Reminder options: five medication reminders - Time for your medication, Morning/Afternoon/Evening/Night Medication Time.

 Nine Lifestyle reminders - Time for breakfast/lunch/dinner, drink some water, Time to get dressed, Time to shower, check your diary, Time to go to bed and Time for your appointment.

Three display Options - Calendar Display:
Day/Time/Date

1. Calendar & Moment Display: Day/Moment/Time/Date
2. Moment Display:
"Now it's Thursday Evening"
Before Dawn, Morning, Afternoon, Evening & Night

THE Dawn clock is also available from RSB and retails for $164.

**A Spotlight On…**

Member - Tony Wright

A highly active person and a former commercial pilot, Tony Wright wasn’t going to let vision loss slow him down. Tony has been a member of Beyond Blindness since 2014 and regularly participates in a range of activities in the Southern Region.

In his own words, Tony was a “ten-pound Pom”, emigrating from Wales to Australia with his family at the age of sixteen. He had a life-long ambition to become a pilot and, in the UK, the only practical way to do this was to join the Royal Air Force.

Tony was well down this path when his parents decided to relocate to Australia. On sage advice, they remained in Wales until Tony finished school as they were told that the entry requirements for pilot training in the Australian Air Force (RAAF) were the same as in the UK.

When Tony and his family arrived in Australia, he went straight to the RAAF Recruitment Office in Piri Street to sign up. This was in July and Tony was told that they didn’t start recruiting until December, at the end of the Australian school year. He was advised to go back to school, which he did at Salisbury, even though he had completed his schooling in Wales prior.

Tony returned to the recruitment office at the end of that year only to be told that they didn’t take recruits for flight training until they were eighteen, and Tony was still only sixteen at this stage. He gave up on his dream of joining the RAAF, but not on flying planes. Instead, Tony commenced taking private flying lessons and ultimately obtained his commercial pilot’s licence.

His first job as a pilot was taking people for joy flights at the Lion Park at Virginia. He then went on to work as a crop-dusting pilot in various locations around the country.

Tony’s flying career was interrupted for a period of two years when he was required to do National Service where he trained in Army Tanks. He says that he narrowly missed out on serving in Vietnam because of Federal Cabinet’s decision to withdraw Australian forces in 1971 and Gough Whitlam becoming Prime minister the following year.

When asked the question; How did you lose your sight, Tony replied,

“I’ve actually been blind two times in my life”.

“The first time was when I was working as a commercial pilot in 1974. I was flying the paper run, as we called it, taking a cargo of newspapers to Port Lincoln. I had an engine failure on take-off and crashed into the side of a hill” Tony said.

The head injury Tony sustained in the accident resulted in neurological vision loss and he was rendered legally blind for a period of three years. Fortunately, he did regain his vision in one eye and, although he couldn’t fly commercially again, he did get his private licence and continued to fly private planes up until 2000.

In the ensuing years, Tony attended Flinders University and completed his bachelor’s degree in Primary Education.

“I was one of their first blind mature age students” he said.

He had several different jobs after that and ultimately secured a position within the Public Service in 1979 as an Employment Officer. He finished his career with Noarlunga Centrelink in 2000.

Unfortunately, Tony suffered a heart condition and stroke in that same year. This impacted his remaining vision, and he was, once again, rendered legally blind with his residual vision continuing to slowly deteriorate.

When Beyond Blindness started providing services in the south, Tony said, “I just wanted to be involved”.

Now a highly active member, Tony’s main Beyond Blindness activity is Conversation Corner held at Glenelg. He is also a keen tandem cyclist and competitive ten-pin bowler.

Tony also makes good use of assistive technology. He has recently received a set of Envision Glasses, with financial assistance from a Beyond Blindness Adaptive Technology Subsidy.

With his RSB Guide Dog Yvette, and the support he receives from Beyond Blindness, Tony continues to approach life with the same level of passion and determination that he did when pursuing his dream to become a pilot.

Volunteer – Kay Hales

After leaving twenty-three years of full-time work as Human Resources Administrative Manager with BAE Systems, Beyond Blindness volunteer Kay realised there was something missing from her life. Kay had planned to enjoy traveling and spending more time with her husband Barry, two adult children and four wonderful grandchildren, but she found that she still had time on her hands and felt that she needed to do more….

“Leaving full-time work in September 2017 and just stopping wasn’t such a good idea! I knew it would be great to have more time to myself and have holidays to enjoy without the stress of returning to a busy role – and it was!” Kay said.

“I started volunteering for a weekly International Community Group who works with new, and sometimes not so new, arrivals into South Australia assisting with English and helping with resumes and how to learn for sitting the Australian Citizenship test. Involvement with picking up grandkids from school, helping at school kitchen & breakfast clubs also filled in time. But…. I still seemed to have too much time to spare, and I started to feel lost without goals to achieve. There was something missing in my life” she said.

With time to spare and a need to further give back to the community, in 2019 Kay started searching for volunteer roles on the internet, where she noticed Beyond Blindness had several positions available, including administration, which is Kay’s main area of interest.

“After a phone call and chat with Visa, I met with her for a face-to-face interview and heard there was administrative work available, and I was able to commence a few hours a week within the reception area”.

When asked what encouraged you to seek out volunteering opportunities with Beyond Blindness, Kay replied,

“I’ve always feared losing my sight and I’m sure I’m not alone with this. Then late in 2015 I experienced a scary problem with my left eye. A suspected cataract turned out to be a macular hole and resulted in an operation and a week of keeping my head down for most of my waking & sleeping hours. This resulted in a good outcome and a feeling that I had a glimpse of the issues someone with no sight experienced daily”.

Kay now assists in the Beyond Blindness Gilles Planes office one morning per week, working on the reception desk, answering phones, updating brochures, Annual Report formats and the Volunteer Information Booklet. She also contributes her extensive administrative skills to the production of the Eye Contact newsletter, formatting and adding photos and images to enhance the publication for our Volunteers and other sighted recipients.

“By being involved in BB and undertaking administrative tasks within an office setting, it feels like something that was missing in my life has been restored. It also gives me goals and a feeling of achievement on completing tasks which is part of my nature. So, I too have gained from this opportunity to assist with admin duties within the organisation and meet and chat with Beyond Blindness members when they come into the office” Kay said.

“I would certainly recommend volunteering in any area where you have a passion to not only provide a benefit to Beyond Blindness but to also gain a feeling of fulfilment for yourself. It’s by helping others in our community that you are also personally rewarded therefore it’s a win-win outcome”.

**Oaks Liberty Apartment**

Whether it’s just an overnighter or for a week, many members have taken the opportunity to stay in our Oaks Liberty Towers apartment in Glenelg.  The fully self-contained 2-bedroom apartment is the perfect place to relax, unwind and enjoy a break.

A 3-night stay will cost you $120 with any extra nights costing $80 per night.  Members can stay in the apartment for a total of 7 nights per year at this ridiculously reduced rate.  To ensure fairness only 1 stay during a peak period such as Easter, Christmas and New Year’s Eve is permitted.

If you are considering a stay or have any queries, please give Deidre Gavros a call at the Beyond Blindness office on 8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8.

**IMPORTANT MEMBER NOTICE - QR Codes on Public Transport**

QR codes are being installed throughout buses, trains and trams as quickly as possible and in a range of locations, such as windows, walls and screens inside the vehicle. You need to check-in once you are on-board.

If you do not have a mobile phone, you will not be able to check-in using the QR code.

We encourage you to register your metroCARD so you can check your own travel history.

We understand that this may be problematic for some Members; difficulty in locating the code, problems when using voiceover on your mobile device.

We encourage all Members to comply with these directions and suggest that people tap on using their VIP card if unable to use the codes.

For more information visit [https://www.adelaidemetro.com.au/.../covid-19\_public...](https://www.adelaidemetro.com.au/about-us/news/news-items/2021/covid-19_public_transport_updates?fbclid=IwAR3oEZWZTeFua2Tpq2bBsTTQJVgAmbjHIQ6Tf2HhLlZ2_FSZqaWK7lu8a_U)

If you do require further advice or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Beyond Blindness on (08) 8367 6088.

Like us @ [https://www.facebook.com/beyondblindnessSA](https://www.facebook.com/beyondblindnessSA/?__cft__%5B0%5D=AZUo8W3u1FNE0tOtR2NZjrM28zCoUC22A_Xxdbegx0x-kw0pNUwIxhHwIMOX9lMmnzoHqLMJMMQFHX75--wKyJqfogZkq_sM3avktstjJXMd5dGH5e_BEUwy0ZxZA8WhK1TLL3WBusF5DxfNJ7xL0PNkyxu6hNt40i2AsAfXB1HOcHbSouBNdGRoEZeStGocyQ8&__tn__=kK-R) for regular updates.

**Just a Reminder**

Census night is Tuesday 10 August

This year you can start your Census online with or without a Census number. From 24th July the ‘Get a Census number’ option will be available on the <https://form.census.abs.gov.au/get-census-numberwebsite>. This provides the option to start your form without needing to input your Census number from your instruction letter.

Help and support is available to make the Census accessible for people who are blind or have low vision. The following resources are available:

Audio assistance for the Census Household Form,

Braille forms and information,

Large print forms and information,

Assistive technologies

Audio assistance for the Census Form can be downloaded or listened to online from <https://www.census.abs.gov.au/.../access.../blind-low-vision>

Braille (grade 1 and grade 2) or large print forms can be requested online through the 2021 Census General Enquiry Form: <https://www4.abs.gov.au/web/survey.nsf/CensusEnquiryForm>

or call the 24-hour automated paper form request service on 1800 130 250 (you will need your Census number to use this service).

You can also call the Census Contact Centre on 1800 512 441 Monday to Sunday 8am to 8pm (AEST) for general  information and further assistance.

Census 2021 online forms are compatible with Assistive technologies such as screen readers. More information on compatibility see the following: <https://www.census.abs.gov.au/accessibility-statement>

A request from Member Services

To avoid disappointment, please remember to make an appointment if you require one on one, face to face assistance from the Member Services team at Gilles Plains.

Please always call the Transport Line to advise attendance and transport requirements for any activity or outing. Also call the Transport line if you wish to make any changes to your attendance or transport.  Phone 8 3 6 9 1 3 5 0 or email tthain@beyondblindness.org.au

**Editors Comment**

I hope you enjoyed this edition of your Beyond Blindness Newsletter. If you would like to make a contribution to our next edition, please forward it on to the Beyond Blindness office or call **8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8**

**E-mail:** info@beyondblindness.org.au

**Web site:** [www.beyondblindness.org.au](http://www.beyondblindness.org.au)