

25 October 2022

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Blind Society will be held in Room 6, Level 1, Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Canberra on **Thursday 17 November 2022 at 6.00pm**. Nominations for Board positions and Proxy votes may be lodged by email – canblind@canberrablindsociety.org.au

If you would like to attend the meeting in person please RSVP the office or if you would like to attend virtually please follow this link for the zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88530814599>. The details of the AGM are also on the Canberra Blind Society website – www.canberrablindsociety.org.au

The following documents are enclosed:

- Agenda for Annual General Meeting on 17 November 2022
- Nomination Form
- Proxy Form
- Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 18 November 2021

If you would like to raise any matter of general business at the meeting, please notify Canberra Blind Society in writing no later than close of business Thursday 10 November 2022.

***Board Positions due for re-election, for a 2-year period, at this years' AGM are:
Vice President, Treasurer and two Ordinary Board Members***

CBS Members nominating for these positions for the first time, must include a half page CV including any qualifications or competencies they will bring to the Board

Nominations close on Thursday 10 November 2022

Room G06, Griffin Centre, Genge Street,
CANBERRA ACT 2601 – GPO Box 1188

Phone: (02) 6247 4580

E-mail: canblind@canberrablindsociety.org.au

www.canberrablindsociety.org.au

Office Hours: Tues - Fri 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Annual General Meeting

6.00pm Thursday 17 November 2022

Room 6, Level 1, Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Canberra

Welcome

Present

Apologies

- Confirmation of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 18 November 2021
- Business arising from the Minutes

1. Reports

- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Executive Officer Report

2. Election of Office Bearers and Board Members

- Vice President, Treasurer and two Ordinary Board Members

3. Confirmation of Public Officer

4. Confirmation of Auditor

5. Confirmation of Patrons

6. General Business



NOMINATION FORM

2022 CANBERRA BLIND SOCIETY BOARD

I hereby nominate

as a member of the Canberra Blind Society Inc.

to the position of

for a two-year term commencing 17 November 2022.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Approval by Nominee:

Date:

The nomination must be moved and seconded by financial members of the Canberra Blind Society Inc. and in the case of a nominee who is seeking election to the Board for the first time be accompanied by a written CV of no more than half a page including any qualifications or competencies the applicant will bring to the Board.

Applications to be received by 10 November 2022.

FORM OF APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

I,
(full name)

of State Post Code
(address)

Phone: (H) (W) Mobile:

E mail:

being a member of **Canberra Blind Society Inc.**

hereby appoint
(full name of proxy)

of State Post Code
(address)

being a member of that incorporated Society, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Society (annual general meeting or other general meeting, as the case may be) to be held on the 17th day of November 2022 and at any adjournment of that meeting.

*My proxy is authorised to vote in favour of/against (*delete as appropriate*) the resolution (*insert details*).

.....
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.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
(Signature of member appointing proxy)

(*To be inserted if desired.)

Date

NOTE: A proxy vote may not be given to a person who is not a member of the Society.

Canberra Blind Society Inc

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in the CBS office, Griffin Centre Canberra, Genge Street Canberra at 6pm Thursday, November 18, 2021

Welcome

President Peter Granleese opened the meeting at 6.06 pm and welcomed everyone.

Present

Peter Granleese, (President) Heather Fitzpatrick (Vice-President) Graham Downie, (Secretary) Dianne White, (Treasurer online) Lindy Hou, Fiona Grenfell, Chris MacDonald, Deb Quinnell, Brittany Bevan, Claire Manning, (the following online) Damien Wright, Scott Grimley, Sharon Sobey and Roy Daniell. In attendance Glenn Doney.

Apologies

Margaret Reid and Bruce White.

Minutes

Moved Heather Fitzpatrick, seconded Deb Quinnell: That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of November 19, 2020, be accepted as a correct record of that meeting. Carried.

Moved Fiona Grenfell, seconded Heather Fitzpatrick: That the minutes of the Special General Meeting of October 29, 2020 be accepted as a correct record of that meeting. Carried.

Moved Heather Fitzpatrick, seconded Fiona Grenfell: That the minutes of the Special General Meeting of July 22, 2021 be accepted as a correct record of that meeting. Carried.

President's Report

The report has been circulated and a copy is filed with the minutes.

Peter Granleese said that after 17 years, he was retiring as President of the Canberra Blind Society.

The database had been updated and would form the basis of the outreach program.

A three-year strategic plan had been produced and would run to 2023.

It had been recognised many people losing sight would not contact CBS. So Eyes For Life had been introduced for the outreach program.

Peter Granleese said the government had made clear organisations such as CBS should seek alternative income to government grants. Meanwhile, there was enough money for the next three years.

He thanked the Board, volunteers and Heather Fitzpatrick in particular for their work over the past year.

Treasurer's Report

The report has been circulated and a copy is filed with the minutes. The report was read to the meeting by Heather Fitzpatrick.

(Scott Grimley joined the meeting online at 6.20pm.)

Executive Officer's Report

The report has been circulated and a copy is filed with the minutes.

Election of Office Bearers

Nominations were received for: Heather Fitzpatrick as President, Graham Downie as Secretary, and Damien Wright, Chris MacDonald and Fiona Grenfell as Board members.

There being no other nominations, Peter Granleese declared those positions filled.

Peter Granleese vacated the President's Chair and invited Heather Fitzpatrick to take over the rest of the meeting.

Heather Fitzpatrick thanked Peter Granleese for his significant contribution as CBS President over 17 years.

Confirmation of Public Officer

Heather Fitzpatrick said she was willing to continue as Public Officer and was duly elected.

Appointment of Auditor

Scott Ellis, of Les Ellis and Associates was reappointed as CBS auditor.

Appointment of Patrons

Margaret Reid and Roy Daniell were reappointed as CBS patrons.

Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 6.38pm.

President's Annual General Report

Once again, it is my pleasure to present the Canberra Blind Society's (CBS) Annual Report covering the financial year ending 30 June 2021.

This has been like no other year in the history of CBS. For the first time in our long history, we were forced to close the office as part of the COVID-19 lockdown. All face-to-face contact ceased, and the Society became a virtual office run from our Executive Officer's home office. The CBS Board continued to meet on a monthly basis via Zoom and decided at the outset to take the opportunity to use the lockdown period to further develop the Society's organisational capacity.

The Board noted that the Society had a database of some 400 clients which had not been updated since about 2015 and that it needed urgent updating. For example, it was found that there were 36 individuals on the database who were deceased and many more were uncontactable, had left town, or no longer required CBS services. The database is currently a work in progress and will form the basis from which a revised client base can be built.

The Board also decided to revise the working to a three-year Strategic Plan as its guide to the future. The last three-year Strategic Plan finished on 30 June 2013. The Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board in October 2020 and a copy placed on the Society's website.

The Society continued to publish the Newsletter on a monthly basis as the best way of keeping connect with its client base during the lockdown period.

We thank volunteers Graham Downie, Scott Grimley and Heather Fitzpatrick who contributed to the Newsletter and Heather, Marylin Popp and Bob Sobey who produced the audio version.

In July 2020 CBS obtained a grant under the ActewAGL Community Grants Program. The grant allowed CBS some exposure on the ActewAGL social media pages and enabled CBS to undertake a scoping exercise to develop a Communication and Marketing Strategy that will help the Society to understand our external stakeholder engagement but also test the community perception of CBS and its services. The grant helped the Society focus on website development but also devise a strategy to increase the presence of our social footprint within the Canberra region.

One of the outcomes of the exercise was the development of the Eyes For Life Canberra concept targeted to individuals who were losing their vision but unwilling to seek assistance from a blindness agency. The Society will still retain the Canberra Blind Society as its principle operating identity while adopting the Eyes For Life Canberra as part of its outreach program.

Client Services

The Society maintained its presence in the Griffin Centre subject to the requirements of social distancing and the wearing of masks after the lockdown was partially lifted in November 2020.

The Friends of Braille Group facilitated by Sharon Sobey and Renita Adhar, recommenced on a weekly basis and were well attended for the rest of the financial year. The ever-popular Sense-Able Cooking classes run by Natalie and Stephanie Kerr continued on a monthly basis. The Audio Book Club organised by Bob James and assisted by Marilyn Popp also continued online and face to face during the first part of 2021 subject to social distancing.

In May 2021 CBS was successful in securing funding under the 'COVID-19 Stimulus Community Connections Grants Program' as part of the **Clearing the Way** project from the ACT Government. This funding was designed to support COVID safe projects that maintain and/or build community involvement, participation and connection through local, cultural, spiritual, sporting and recreation-based activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and into recovery.

CBS used the grant to commence an Arts & Craft Program that would allow our members to connect with each other, share and learn new skills. We thank Angie Sorbello for running the program on a fortnightly basis up until the second lockdown.

Due to the lockdown no social gatherings including the ever-popular Easter lunch, Christmas in July, Melbourne Cup lunch or the end of year Christmas lunch were held due to the current restrictions.

Volunteers

The role of volunteers continued to be crucial for the running of CBS. It is true to say that without their assistance, CBS would not be able to provide the services it intends to deliver.

A set of written procedures and a policy and procedures handbook is being developed and updated in line with the organisations changing

needs. We thank our Volunteer Coordinator, Lindy Hou for her assistance in developing the procedures handbook.

Staff and Administration

Glenn Doney continued as the Society's Executive Officer managing CBS on a day-to-day basis, ensuring that all the organisational and individual capacity building deliverables were completed on time and in accordance with the conditions of the various grants. A substantial amount of time was taken up establishing the back-office infrastructure in preparation for the commencement of the Outreach program.

Glenn was ably assisted by a small number of volunteers who performed a variety of administrative tasks. In particular, we thank Heather Fitzpatrick for her contribution to the financial framework of the Society and her general assistance to the Treasurer.

Glenn was also assisted by Alexandra Parnell, who joined CBS as an intern and was responsible for the Society's social media programs.

We also thank Chris MacDonald who helped the Society install Cliniko as the Society's chosen software package to manage all components of the CBS data base.

The lockdown during the first part of the financial year greatly affected the recruitment of new staff as required by the 2021-23 Information, Linkages and Capacity (ILC) funding grants. These grants provide money for the employment of an Outreach Officer and Occupational Therapist. Interviews were conducted for both positions, but suitable people could not be found with the necessary experience and qualifications to fill the positions due to the demands created by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown.

On 29 June 2021 we were however, able to appoint Debra Quinnell as the Outreach Officer. Debra has a long association with CBS, going back to late 1990 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.

Debra was appointed as the Society's Executive Officer in 2005 retaining her role as Manager of Can Braille until she left CBS in 2015. With 25 years' experience at CBS and her work with the NDIA and Royal Commission into Aged Care, Debra is well qualified for the role.

Apart from the 'COVID-19 Stimulus Community Connections Grant Program' and the ActewAGL Community Grant the Society also received the following Grants:

- October 2020 CBS received a 3-month grant from Volunteering ACT to provide both Personal Protective Equipment for volunteers, and some reimbursement for travel costs for volunteers and Board members
- April 2021 CBS received an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) – Economic Participation (EP) grant from the Department of Social Services, for a one-year pilot program to establish the barriers that potential employers have when looking to employ a vision impaired person. This program commenced in July 2021 and will run for one year
- June 2021 CBS received a Community Support and Infrastructure Grant (CSIG) for the refurbishment of the office, including painting CBS rooms and kitchen area, purchase of new furniture and equipment for the monthly cooking class
- June 2021 CBS received a grant under the ACT Technology Upgrade Grants Program which allowed for the purchase of an Everest Braille Embosser, one desktop computer, two laptop computers and two iPads

Constitutional Amendments

In July 2020 the Society held a general meeting to pass a resolution changing the Constitution simplifying the requirements for membership of the Society. The updates allowed membership to be made online as well as by written application.

In October 2020 the Society held a General meeting to amend the Constitution allowing members to nominate for the CBS Board and participate in Annual General meetings and General Meetings online.

Summary

The financial year ended on a high note. The grants received over the last two years have put the Society in a strong position for at least the next three years.

The Outreach program providing information and advice, assessments, counselling, referrals, assistance in daily living skills and ongoing assistance to individuals with changing needs, commenced on 1 July 2021.

The Society has since employed Brittany Bevan as Social Welfare Officer and Dr Claire Manning as the Project Officer for the Mentoring program. We are now in a position to recognise our goal of providing a holistic approach to services that we provide.

Over the last three years the Society has relied mainly on funding under the various NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Programs. These have been given to CBS to build our organisational capacity and fill in gaps in services not covered by the NDIS.

It is clear from information provided by the NDIS that the Society may not be able to rely on the same level of funding in future years. The guidelines to the existing funding emphasis the need to develop independent streams of income if the Society is to grow. This is a challenge ahead for future years.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those volunteers, some of whom have already been mentioned who have helped us over the year. I thank all of our staff who have now risen to five, for their hard work and professionalism to the tasks ahead. I also thank the CBS Board for their dedication and contributions over the last 12 months.

Canberra Blind Society Inc.

Treasurer's Report

Annual General Meeting 2020 – 2021

I have pleasure in presenting the Canberra Blind Society's Treasurer's Report for the 2020/21 financial year.

The ongoing pandemic has had a major influence on the finances at CBS. Shutdowns, travel restrictions and difficulty in getting staff in order to commence work on grant projects meant that CBS recorded a profit of \$401,573 for the financial year.

The major source of income continued to be income distributed from Grants. A list of major contributors to CBS is attached and includes a donation of \$31,167 from the JDR Trust.

I would like to thank Scott Ellis from Les Ellis and Associates who performed our annual audit and continues to be our auditor and advisor for financial questions.

I would also like to thank the CBS staff and volunteers for their efforts in the last year. In particular, I would like to thank Heather Fitzpatrick for helping me perform tasks as Treasurer when I have been unable to do so.

Dianne White
CBS Treasurer

Major Contributors to Society Funds

Government Grants:

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) – Economic Participation \$278,000

2020/21 Community Support and Infrastructure Grant (CSIG) \$7,123

COVID-19 Stimulus Community Connections Grants Program \$5,000

ActewAGL Community Grants Program \$5,000

Volunteering ACT \$5,000

Individual Capacity Building (ICB) Program Grant Opportunity 2019-2020 grant - \$730,000 (ongoing from previous financial year)

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building – Individual Capacity Building 2020-21- \$240,000 (ongoing from previous financial year)

Other Contributions / Income:

General & Member Donations	\$6,000
JDR Trust	\$31,167
Specsavers	\$2,145
Music At Midday	\$1,936
Money spinner at Calwell Shops	\$1,819
Canberra Southern Cross Club	\$1,770

Canberra Blind Society Inc.
Executive Officer Report
Annual General Meeting 2020-21

Over the past 12 months we have been successful in winning several grants from ActewAGL, Volunteering ACT, Department of Social Services, and the ACT Government.

The ActewAGL grant was awarded to CBS to use an external consultant (Cre8ive) to deliver a Communication and Marketing Strategy for CBS in moving forward as a potential business model. As a result of the indepth research and analysis it was discovered that many people who have just been diagnosed with a vision impairment are not being referred to CBS due the word blind in our Charity's name. Therefore, as a result, the recommendation was to come up with another name that was more general and appealing to the Canberra community and so the Board decided upon Eyes for Life Canberra.

Next, we received a grant from Volunteering ACT to help CBS volunteers with reimbursement of travel funds for helping our VIPs get to events or to the CBS office as well as our volunteer Board members attend meetings. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak there were also funds from the grant attributed to personal protection equipment to ensure all our staff and members were able to stay safe. The grant was a huge success with many people both VIPs and sighted friends receiving some small reimbursement which was gratefully accepted. A fantastic initiative

CBS was awarded an ILC grant titled "Mentoring Program to Enhance Employment Opportunities for VIPs - a pilot program." An exert from the grant submission. "Canberra Blind Society plans to design a mentoring program for potential employers of vision impaired persons (VIPs). This will consist of a community designed mentoring program that will be delivered by mentors who have a vision impairment disability. The next phase will be to develop and deliver designed activities that reduce stereotypes / preconceptions about VIPs and builds an inclusive employment opportunity for people who have a vision impairment as a disability."

In December 2020, CBS was successful in being awarded a COVID-19 Stimulus Community Connections Grants Program from the ACT Government. The 1-year grant was written around developing and conducting a bimonthly Arts n Craft Program for CBS member. The Arts and Craft class commenced on Wednesday 28th April 2021.

Finally in June 2021, CBS was also successful with another ACT Government one year grant; 2020/21 a Community Support and Infrastructure Grant. This

grant was to upgrade and modernise our office with some office furniture, painting and alterations to the kitchen area as well as some needed equipment for our monthly cooking class.

In late September CBS utilised the experience and knowledge of Guide Dogs NSW / ACT to conduct several mobility training sessions that taught our volunteers how to help our VIPs transit stairs and other obstacles in both a safe and respectful manner. The sessions were a huge success and even for our most experienced volunteers.

The Board decided that the CBS strategic plan required some additions and a contemporary feel and so a comprehensive plan was re written after lengthy discussion from all Board members. The completed document was placed on the CBS website.

CBS submitted on the 6th of November our final submission for the 2019-2020 ILC grant as per ILC requirements. We received a favourable response stating we had met all requirements and the grant was now closed and no further action was required.

Our retail outlet was starting to increase in size and over the past 12 months we made several purchases with the intent to expand when we have the capacity.

With a successful ILC grant in the previous financial year, in November 2020 we advertised for both Social Worker and Occupational Therapist (OT) positions with no applications being received from the OT. We interviewed 3 Social Workers however decided that none were quite the right fit for CBS and so decided to readvertise in February 2021. We advertised again for both positions and with no OT applying again, we decided to use an external consultant. We did interview another Social Worker, however again they were deemed to not be suitable for the role. We then decided to advertise and employ for an Outreach Officer in the new financial year.

Due to COVID-19 lockdowns a decision was made to transfer all CBS information and files to a cloud-based service which allowed staff remote access from anywhere that they had an internet connection. This proved to be a smart decision based on the time that staff had to work from home in the first ACT lockdown period.

At the end of November, the Department of Education, Skills & Employment hosted the ACT Job fair, with a high number of job seekers attending. CBS attended the fair with increased interest in our services.

Just prior to Xmas 2020 CBS were invited to attend a walk around the new City Walk extensions before it was opened to the public. The ACT City Walks Authority made this possible with several of our regular VIPs attending and providing constructive feedback on many features.

Also prior to Xmas the NDIS transferred all our ILC grants to the DSS and so Peter met with our new grants manager to discuss how our deliverables were tracking. Given we have had some pipeline problems with recruiting allied health staff meant we had to submit a variation for one of the grants, with the DSS accepting the written variation.

A healthy eating 2-hour workshop run by Nutrition Australia was conducted for several CBS members on Friday 11th December, resulting in high attendance and was huge success. The workshop concentrated on easy affordable and sense-able cooking with several other workshops planned for the coming year.

Since returning to the CBS office in late January CBS was liaising with the City Renewal Authority about a guided tour for CBS members to voice concerns around the practicality of the upgraded Garema Place. Peter, Lindy and Sharon met with three of the tactile assessors as they led the walk. We had approximately a dozen VIPs attend. As a result, CBS have now forged some links with ACT government in this area and several improvements were made based on CBS feedback.

In February 2021, Peter, Heather, Graham, and I met with Elizabeth Kikkert the shadow minister for Disability to discuss input from CBS for the possible expansion of the subsidised taxi scheme to also include uber. Also discussed was a follow up on the article Graham wrote in the February newsletter about taxi drivers not picking up VIPs with guide dogs. Finally, there was much raised about increasing awareness around the electric scooters and how they block walking spaces etc

As the DSS had approved the variation of our ILC grant, then we had Chris MacDonald from Eat Speak Learn come into CBS for an oral presentation about what he could offer CBS in terms of setting up a rehabilitation practice. As a direct result of the presentation, the Board accepted the proposal to use Chris as a Project Officer Consultant from Feb to June 2021 as per the DSS variation agreement and help in the set up a Clinical practice.

I contacted the University of Canberra early in January 2021 about their internships for students to help implement the Communication and Marketing strategy that Cre8tive submitted at the end of December 2020. We met with a UC Graphic design student Alexandra Parnell who put in an application via

UC to work 120 hours as part of her degree. Emma from Cre8ive was very happy with Alexandra's credentials and she met with Heather and me so we could make a final decision. We commenced an onboarding process around 25th May. It was an opportunity to get some of the CBS marketing assets designed and implemented as per the Communication Strategy.

In March Heather and I visited the Model Train Association to discuss about some of our low vision items. Magnifiers Australia sent us several products that allowed us to inform the Model Train community about all the possibilities to enhance their vision.

The Board decided to spread the load of reading the monthly newsletter across several people to allow for our volunteers having time away if they took holidays. Bob Sobey, Marilyn Popp and Heather Fitzpatrick shared the reading duties over 2021 and we are very thankful for their professionalism. We also moved on from the readers attending 1RPH as Graham Downie had his own studio and auditing equipment which allowed CBS to produce the newsletter even whilst reading it from their residence rather than needing to be in the actual studio due to COVID.

In April, Heather and I attended the Queanbeyan Quilters monthly meeting to discuss CBS services, plus inform them of several of our low vision items that may be of interest to their people. Heather did a 30-minute presentation about our services with the questions coming thick fast from the audience about a wide range of areas that impact the vision impaired community of a daily basis. Several were interested in some of the low vision items that we took as samples.

In April we also contracted Cre8ive to create the website and social media platforms as well as flyers for the newly Eyes for Life Canberra. We were working under tight deadlines and the completion date of July 2021. The work was completed on time with our newly created website having its own unique URL <https://eflc.org.au>

As well as creating a new website, CBS contracted Bevan Sharp who worked with Damien Wright (VBS Board member) on the CBS website to add an online retail outlet onto our website to sell low vision aid like lamps and magnifiers directly to the VIP community. Bevan was also the one who constructed the EFLC website and made the website assessable as he already had immense experience when constructing the CBS website several years earlier.

In late May I submitted another application to Grill'd in Woden to help support our Digital Literacy Program. We were successful in winning the monthly donation of \$300.00.

In June, Lindy Hou our Volunteer Coordinator attended a 1-day workshop conducted by Volunteers ACT about how to manage volunteers and construct an entire volunteer program. The learnings from the workshop are now formulating the plan forward which aligns to our strategic plan.

As we were successful with the mentor grant submission, then in early June we advertised for a Project Officer to run the program. After receiving 20 applications, we interviewed 4 potential candidates with the successful person commencing duties in early July 2021. The next job with the Mentoring Grant was to write a position description about employing 5-6 VIPs with lived life experience who will work as mentors.

Alexandra Parnell our University of Canberra intern completed her total number of hours, and we were so impressed with her work that we decided to offer her a paid position of 5 hours per week to monitor and keep our websites and social media current.

In late June Peter, Heather and I attended a 2-hour function at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet with other Government departments to promote greater awareness about diversity in the workplace. We subsequently had meetings setup with one of the Diversity contacts to further discuss CBS using the PMC as one of the Commonwealth Departments to implement the mentoring Program.

The Music @ Middy was a HUGE success and massive congratulations to Lindy Hou and her team of volunteers, raising nearly \$2000.00.

The last year has challenged us around how to operate in the COVID-19 world as well as harnessing the infectious enthusiasm that our volunteers possess in carrying out their regular duties. As such, I want to thank all volunteers for their work which is often above and beyond the call of duty, together with all CBS Board members for their support and encouragement to me in my position as Executive Officer and for their continued commitment to the Society.

Glenn Doney

CBS Executive Officer