

EYE CONTACT

BWA serving its Members for over 75 years
Newsletter for Members of B W A proudly
Sponsored by Tenants and Friends
November/December 2014



Contact Details: Blind Welfare Association of SA

Administration & Member Services: 1 Cameron Avenue, Gilles Plains

Postal Address: PO Box 163, Greenacres SA 5086

Telephone: 83676088

Fax: 83690063

E-mail: info@blindwelfare.org.au

Web site: www.blindwelfare.org.au

Welcome to our last Eye Contact for this year. I hope that all the winter colds and sniffles are long forgotten and that the warmer weather is agreeing with you and whatever it is you have planned for the Festive Season will be pleasant. In this edition we will endeavour to keep you informed about the activities for the next few months and the closure times for the Social Centre over the Christmas break and also introduce you to our new Manager, Jim Colligan.

Manager's Introduction

Hi all, it's so nice to be starting at the Blind Welfare Association. The year has flown and we are almost at Christmas, just enough time left this year to get to know the workings of this great Organisation, its Members, Staff and Volunteers before we break for Christmas and start fresh in 2015.

A quick reflection on 2014's Community Program, I am pleased to note the great number of BWA services and member activities attended which could have only happened with the help from our terrific band of Volunteers and Staff. I need to thank everyone for their outstanding efforts in making good things happen and look forward to going from strength to strength in the New Year.

As for those whom I am new to, I grew up and was educated in Adelaide; I have two wonderful children and two delightful grand-children. I have been coordinating or managing Community Services in SA for over thirty years. Fifteen years assisting people living with low vision or blindness into open or supported employment, education and training at the RSB before leaving to develop and manage Community Programs at Campbelltown and Prospect Councils, the Aged Care and Housing Group, and most recently the Multiple Scoliosis Society of SA.

I am hoping to bring the success and innovations learned in working with these organisations and other community involvement to strengthen and promote our BWA team and look at how we can make better use of both our own and community resources to positively assist the lives of our Members living with vision loss.

I look forward to meeting and thanking all those involved in our successes this year and being aware this is the last Eye Contact for 2014, I wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and Happy New year.

Jim Colligan

Manager BWA

Board Report

The Board wishes to pass on their condolences to Debbie Hoare on the loss of her husband Michael, who sadly died recently. Michael had a long association with Blind Welfare, serving as President on the Board for many years and later volunteering, before ill health restricted his ability to do so. He was also involved with Tenants and Friends as their Treasurer. Our thoughts are with you Debbie.

As many of you will be aware, due to there not being a quorum at the AGM on October 18, 2014 another meeting is being scheduled to be held out at BWA Social Centre on 13 November 2014 commencing at 10.30am. There has been no change to the Board Members as Leonore Scott and Jed Alexander were re-elected unopposed, with the other Members being Tony Starkey, Patricia Fryer, Maureen Montes and Sarah Savage.

President's Report 2014

It is with much pleasure that I present the 2013/14 Annual Report of the Blind Welfare Association (BWA). BWA is celebrating its 77th year of operation and over that time we have supported a very large number of the South Australians who are blind. During 2013 - 2014 we have expanded our Out Reach Services to the Southeastern Metro area through the employment of a dedicated S-E Member Services Officer who compliments our operations from the Gilles Plains Office. This initiative was possible due to an additional Grant from Home and Community Care (HACC) Innovation Grant. The member services provided during the past financial year have increased by 23% and the number of support hours provided by our Volunteers has increased by 120%, mostly transport.

Governance

The Board has continued to increase its knowledge and understanding of the requirements and responsibilities under the regulations of the Australian Charities and Non-for Profit Commission, the regulations and reporting under HACC Funding and potential changes that will effect BWA after 1 July, 2015 when current HACC agreements will cease. The future guidelines for Commonwealth Home Support Programs, HACC and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (2016). BWA is in a similar situation to other Disability/Community Organisations of how they fit into the proposed funding and operation of Support Services to the Community and particularly to those people who are blind in South Australia.

Funding

As mentioned above our Government funding is only guaranteed for the current financial year. The Board has also taken the decision to cease at this time the Lottery program due to unacceptable nett income (we believe this is due to lottery supporter's lack of disposable income and increasing operating costs). We are exploring other fundraising options to replace this income. With the above issues in mind the Board has been focused on being economically sustainable in the future with the support of the Foundation and the income from the Independent Living Units.

Services

During the year member services have increased. Some of the highlights of the activities include Gilles Plains Social Centre

- Melbourne Cup Luncheon

- BBQ's
- Concerts
- Outings
- Tai Chi
- Craft and activities

The Blind Welfare Association and the Royal Society for the Blind have continued their partnership in the provision of a Recreation and Leisure Program. Over 100 activities were provided of which in excess of 1000 people who are blind or vision impaired participated. The Volunteers continue to support our Members who are blind with transport to medical appointments, social activities and shopping. To the Volunteers, the Board, Staff and Members, thank you.

Financial Assistance

BWA continues to provide financial assistance to Members with energy and communication costs, home maintenance and purchase of specialist adaptive equipment.

Future

BWA over the next two or three years will have significant challenges in defining where our services will enhance the quality of life and independence for our Members which may or may not be part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Aged Care Reforms. Philanthropic support from the community in the future will be essential to BWA continuing to support and provide services to its Members particularly with the introduction of an increase to the Medicare Levy to support the NDIS (of which 50% of our Members will be denied access as they exceed the age limit).

Finally, I'd like to thank the Volunteers, Staff and general public for their support of the BWA Members. Also to my Fellow Board Members, I thank them for their voluntary commitment.

Tony Starkey

President BWA

Welfare / Member Services Officer - Sandy Holmes

Hello to all. I commenced as the Welfare/Member Services Officer recently on 18th August and I'm happy to say that I already know some Members as I was previously an Orientation and Mobility Instructor. I have been at BWA for approximately two months now and I am enjoying my role immensely, as I am learning lots of new things and meeting lots of new people.

I work closely with Trudy in Member Services and my focus is on talking to potential new Members about the services BWA provide. I complete the Special Purpose Welfare Funding applications and make sure BWA is compliant with funding contracts. I have also been referring Members to other services, such as

local councils when necessary. Some of my work takes me out in to the community including when I visit Members in their homes.

BWA have a continuous improvement plan and the purpose of this is to improve services and make sure we meet the needs of Members, as far as possible. As a part of the ongoing consultation process I have been collecting comments and suggestions from Members who come in to the Social Centre. I also invite comments and suggestions from all Members, Associate Members and anyone who has had contact with Blind Welfare. You can give your comments and suggestions over the phone, in person or via written correspondence and email. Comments and suggestions can be about social activities, the BWA website or any other aspect relating to Blind Welfare services and if you would like to speak with me in person, it might be necessary to make a time between 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. I can be contacted at Blind Welfare on telephone 8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8. Written correspondence can be posted to me at Blind Welfare Association, PO Box 163, Greenacres, SA 5 0 8 6 and my email address is: sholmes@blindwelfare.org.au I look forward to speaking with more of you as time goes on, so please let me know your comments and suggestions.

End of Year Calendar

Members' Xmas Party	Thursday 11 December 2014
Volunteers' Xmas Party	Thursday 18 December 2014
Social Centre closes	Thursday 11 December 2014
Australia Day Public Holiday	Monday 26 January 2015
Social Centre opens	Tuesday 27 January 2015

BWA Admin Office closes	Friday 19 December 2014
BWA Admin Office opens	Monday 5 January 2015

Last day for Medical Appointments, Home Visits and Shopping
Wednesday 17 December 2014

Medical Appointments, Home Visits and Shopping re-commences
Monday 12 January 2015

BWA Member Christmas Party

The Members Christmas Party will be held at the Gilles Plains Social Centre on Thursday 11th December. A traditional roast will be served for lunch which will be fully subsidised by the Association again this year. All Members are welcome to join in the celebrations and transport may be arranged. Numbers for lunch and transport are limited, so let us know if you would like to come along as soon as you can. Please RSVP on telephone 8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8 or via email on info@blindwelfare.org.au

Hot Weather Policy – Reminder for all Members

Now that we are in the warmer months, please familiarise yourself with the BWA Hot Weather policy as follows:

All programs at the Gilles Plains Social Centre, monthly Travel Club and Wednesday Night Bowls will be cancelled when the temperature is forecast to be 35 degrees Celsius or higher (according to the 6pm news bulletin on the previous day).

On days where the forecasted temperature is 35 degrees Celsius or higher, only scheduled medical appointments can go ahead with BWA volunteer drivers. Members who choose to access the Marney Pearce Technology Lounge on a day forecasted to be 35 degrees Celsius higher are able to do so independently. Unfortunately BWA are unable to provide transport or volunteer assistance on hot days. Please would Members make a booking with staff prior to coming in to use the Marney Pearce Technology Lounge? Staff, Volunteers and Members are asked to inform themselves of the hot weather policy and keep an eye on the weather forecast during these warm months, as no other notifications are able to be given.

SOUTH EAST SERVICES OFFICER'S REPORT

Greetings everyone. Having initiated contact with BWA members in the south east region, I am now pleased to announce the formation of a new social group for BWA members residing in the south east region. The first social get-together together was held in a Morphett Vale venue on 7th October and the next social get-together will be on 11th November. The event runs from 11am until 1pm and at \$3 cost per member, the group is able to provide tea, coffee and cake for members for morning tea provision. If you would like to attend please contact Danijela on 8 3 2 5 1 6 6 8 or 0 4 3 8 0 5 1 2 2 3 to RSVP. On another note, we have an exciting function coming up which will be our very first south east Christmas function for members residing in the south east region. The Christmas lunch will take place at the Emu Hotel in Morphett Vale on the 9th December. Cost of members' meal will be covered for by BWA. BWA members residing in the south east region will be sent out an invite to this event shortly. If you would like to attend the Christmas lunch function, I ask that you please provide your RSVP to Danijela by 28th November as we will require confirmed RSVP's to be able to budget effectively and to co-ordinate volunteer transport support for those members who require transport assistance. I look forward to ongoing communications with south east members and volunteers.

DANIJELA TURNER

South East Services Officer

8 3 2 5 1 6 6 8 or 0 4 3 8 0 5 1 2 2 3

dturner@blindwelfare.org.au

Volunteer Officer Report

I have interviewed ten prospective volunteers since the beginning of August. The interview usually lasts for about an hour and depending on what the person wants to do there is some follow up with training. For example if someone wants to drive for us then they have to complete a driver assessment, sighted guide training and have a current police check, which has to be less than six months

old. A volunteer who does not want to drive will still need to complete the sighted guide training and have a current police check. With regard to the police check there has been a huge change to our normal procedure. As from 1 July 2014 anyone seeking to work or volunteer in the disability services sector in South Australia has to be assessed by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Screening. This screening assessment will determine the foreseeable level of risk to people with disability based on their current and past behavior. This assessment has to be conducted before appointing an employee or engaging a volunteer within our organisation. Staff and volunteers will then need to be re-assessed every three years. Previously police checks were organised through the Police Department which were at no cost to us; now this screening will cost BWA \$55 for each volunteer and \$99.50 for staff. Obviously this has a big impact on BWA financially so when interviewing it is imperative that I perceive that this person is serious about becoming a volunteer for us. Unfortunately, and thank goodness it doesn't happen too often, an individual is only attending the interview in order to tick the box for Youth Employment or Centrelink payments. New additions to our volunteer force include a regular gardener, vehicle maintenance volunteer (cleaning, safety checks etc.) and a handyman. We have volunteers from all walks of life and it never ceases to amaze me at how willing they are to assist. We are at the end of school holidays and although activities in the Centre ceased, our volunteers still maintained medical appointments and shopping. We had a total of 15 volunteers helping with the barbecue, which was held on 8 October. We are in the process of planning the members' Christmas party and the volunteers' celebration.

We currently have 81 registered volunteers which includes 13 in the south east area. Most of you will know that Rosemary our manager left the organisation in October and I was very sorry to see her go. I have worked with Rosemary since I began in August 2012 and she has been a very fair and supportive manager and her empathy with staff, members and volunteers has to be commended. It is a sad loss for BWA.

AS USUAL A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS

JACKIE McEWEN

Volunteer Officer

BWA/RSB Recreation and Leisure Report

The RSB is currently offering individualised assessments to all clients to tailor a program that best meets your needs and abilities. The RSB's Health & Wellness Officers are able to sit down with you to discuss your goals and aspirations and create an Individual Service Plan that will outline the programs and services that best meet your needs. The RSB also offers individual sessions which may involve supporting the client to integrate into a mainstream fitness centre or activity in their local area. RSB staff can also provide information and education to other community based services regarding communication strategies and

ways to adapt activities that will promote access and inclusion to their programs to assist you in getting involved. For further information on how to access these services please call either: Lisa Jones Northern Health & Wellness Officer on 8 4 1 7 5 5 5 5
or Travis Little Southern Health & Wellness Officer 8 4 1 7 5 6 6 0

Tenants and Friends

Well here comes Christmas again and the Committee of Tenants and Friends have already started preparations for our annual barbecue which will be held on Saturday 6th December at 6pm. Tickets are now available and will be on sale at the November concert or from committee members. They are \$15 each and this covers food, supper and entertainment. John Kampis will supply music this year. We hope to see a good crowd. Please buy your tickets early for catering purposes. We will have a great raffle with many prizes. Any suitable items or money to buy goods for the raffle will be gratefully accepted. Tickets are 50c each and will be available in the Social Centre and on the night. There will be drinks for sale.

Our AGM has been held and the committee consists of Maureen Clothier, Heather Couzner, Lenore Scott, Irene Thomson, John Bastiaans, Carla Mognato and Steve McPhie. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their work throughout the year. We would love to see more people at the Friday night concerts next year. John books our entertainment, so if you know of any suitable artists, please let him know. Our entertainer for Friday November 7th is Matt Raynor and we hope to see you there. Everyone seemed to enjoy the sausage sizzle which was held prior to the October concert so we may have another one next year. We hope you all enjoy the coming festive season and hope to see you at our Christmas function. Our thoughts are with Debbie at the loss of Michael who had a long association with our group.

MAUREEN CLOTHIER

President

Tenants and Friends Social Club



BLIND WELFARE TRAVEL CLUB 2014 PROGRAM

Dear Members

Bookings: Close at 8pm on the Tuesday prior to the trip

Bus Leaves: Cameron Avenue Gilles Plains at 9am

Charge for Trips: \$32, which includes meals and admission charges to venues

Discount of \$4 for meeting at pick up points. Please advise the Treasurer if you drive to pick up point

Annual Travel Club Subscription: \$10 per person payable at the February AGM or ASAP afterwards

All travellers must be a Client, an Associate Member or a Volunteer of the Blind Welfare Association

For information or wanting to attend or cancel a trip please contact

Catherine Bottcher (Treasurer and Transport) on 8 3 9 5 1 0 0 5

Chris Mountstephen (Secretary) 8 3 7 1 2 9 2 8 or 0 4 3 8 2 9 2 8 3 7

Blind Welfare Association: 8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8 during business hours 9am- to 4pm

This information is subject to change but correct in November 2014 at the time of printing:

- Sat 8 Nov: Dried Fruit Shop at Kilkenny for purchases if desired and visit to the Jet Museum at Parafield Airport. Lunch locally.
 - Sat 13 Dec: Christmas Lunch at a venue to be advised
- Note: In the event of the temperature forecast being 35° or more on the Friday 6pm News the trip will be cancelled. There will be no further notification.

Editors Comment

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the upcoming Festive Season and hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Eye Contact. The next one is due out in early February 2015 and if you would like to make a contribution please forward it on to the BWA Office or speak to one of the Staff and they will do the rest. Contact details are as follows:

Telephone: 8 3 6 7 6 0 8 8, **Fax:** 8 3 6 9 0 0 6 3

E-mail: info@blindwelfare.org.au

Web site: www.blindwelfare.org.au