



BLIND SPORTS AUSTRALIA

A.B.N. 68 008 621 252

A Foundation Member of the Australian Paralympic Committee

Newsletter

December

2014



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

From the CEO

The Blind Sports Australia AGM was held at the end of October in Melbourne. It was very pleasing the number of people that attended – either in person or via teleconference. Thanks especially to those that came from interstate – John Vance representing ABBA, Lindsay Heaven representing BCA, and also to Pam Hyden representing GA who drove down from Bendigo.

The BSA Board has appointed four new directors. Welcome to

- Melissa Martin (Vic)
- Voula Karantzas (Vic)
- Karen Ryan (Qld)
- Garry Baker (Qld)

Along with David Blyth (Vic), Sam Theodore (Vic) and Gary Sargent (NSW) we now have a full complement Board with a great mix of skills and backgrounds. Over the next few newsletters I'll be including a segment with a brief biography of each of the new Directors.

Eileen Sargent (NSW) has also taken on the role of Secretary from me – thank you Eileen.

The Board will be coming together in Melbourne in December for an intensive induction day for the new Directors and to map out a work plan for the remainder of the financial year.

Gary and Eileen Sargent represented BSA at the 2014 National Disability Awards at Parliament in Canberra. Some useful connections were made and interesting ideas were raised on the advocacy of disability sports.

Voula Karantzas, David Blyth and I attended the NSO Industry Strategy Forum in Melbourne chaired by Rob Bradley from the Confederation of Australia Sport (CAS). The forum was held so NSOs could discuss ways in which they could maximise the potential of Australian Sport. The major outcome was the

NSOs would start using common terminology when advocating on behalf of their NSO. One such term is MVPA – moderate and vigorous physical activity. CAS have conducted studies and written some papers on the health, social and economic contribution sport plays in Australia. It is hoped that if NSOs start using the same terminology, and banding together, then some real changes may be made to the way sport is supported in Australia.

David Blyth is the Oceania representative on the International Blind Sporting Federation (IBSA) Executive team. David and Sam Theodore attended the IBSA Executive annual meeting in Tokyo at the end of November.

The main issue discussed was classification. A report will be circulated at a later date.



David Blyth at the IBSA Executive meeting in Tokyo

While in Tokyo, David and Sam also attend the World Blind Football Championship between Brazil and Argentina and were outstounded at the quality and speed of the game.

Kent Dredge sent a request for all members to assist him compile a member database for Blind Sports Australia. There are three main reasons BSA requires this database to be completed

1. It is a requirement of all National Sporting Organisations accredited by the Australian Sports Commission – which Blind Sports Australia is one.
2. It assists with insurance cover and will reduce the premiums BSA pays for the insurance of our members
3. We require information so we can go to the corporate market and arrange sponsorship partnerships.

It should be emphasised that no personal identifiable information will be passed on or used by BSA. Once the database is completed I will be the only person with access to in the database. We would really appreciate your assistance by returning the information to Kent as soon as possible.

On the 9th December, 100 grade 5 & 6 children from St Thomas the Apostle primary school will be spending the day playing Goalball and Blind Cricket. It is part of their inquiry unit 'make a difference' which discusses and investigates the issue of marginalised groups in the community. Rob Apps from ExSight Sports will be running the day on behalf of BSA (he might have a big kid (me) having a try as well).

The Sports Hall of Fame Awards were held in Melbourne in October. It was a who's who of Australian Sport and a great opportunity to promote the Blind Sports Australia brand.



Selfie of Sam Theodore and Stephen Barnes at the Sports Hall of Fame Awards

Erika Webb has 'volunteered', very kindly and graciously, to be the social media moderator

on Facebook and Twitter. It's a very time consuming task and we really appreciate that we could get Erika to do this role for BSA. Check out the Facebook page and Twitter.



Also a big thank you goes to Laura Russo who answered a call to read and record all the BSA newsletters. Podcasts will be available on our website (click [here](#)), and also via iTunes, with all newsletters available early in the New Year.



There are three new or updated policies now available on the BSA website – Member Protection policy, Anti-doping policy and Privacy policy. Please make yourselves familiar with these policies.

On behalf of the BSA Board and me, have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year holiday season. The BSA 'office' will be closed from the 10th – 26th January 2015.

Stephen Barnes
CEO

Meet Melissa Martin



Melissa Martin is one of four new Directors who have joined the BSA Board. Melissa brings a strong background in human resources, recruitment, outplacement and career coaching. She has worked across a range of industries including financial services, professional services and recruitment. She also brings significant experience consulting to industries such as education, child care, energy, and market research.

As a specialist in Human Resource Management and Career Coaching, Melissa provides individuals and business leaders with the support they need to ensure on-going success and satisfaction be that on a professional or business level

Melissa has completed a Masters of Organisational Psychology, and a Bachelor of Social Science, majoring in psychology. She is a certified Career Coach and a qualified Trainer and Assessor. Melissa is also a member of the Australian Human Resources Institute and the Career Development Association of Australia.

Welcome to the BSA Board Melissa.

Blind Sports Australia Swimming Championships

The Blind Sports Australia National Swimming Championships were held on Saturday 29th November at SOPAC – Homebush, NSW.

Moana Faasisila broke three Australian Records - 50m freestyle, 50m Butterfly, and 50m Backstroke. All the records were long standing records set in 1996. They have to be ratified by Swimming Australia.

Prue Watt OAM S13 Paralympian came and presented medals which was good and a highlight for the swimmers

A very big thank you to Margaret Gregson for organising the meet, and congratulations to all those who participated.



Prue Watt, Luke Andrews S11 13years, Moana Faasisila S11 12years, Kirsten Busby S12 15years

Christmas Donations

Blind Sports Australia is conducting two Christmas fundraising campaigns – one via email and the other as part of a karma currency promotion. If you are thinking of making Christmas donations this year please consider Blind Sports Australia so we can assist our member organisations. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. Click on the links below or send donations to Blind Sports Australia. You can also send a 'gift' as a present to a friend, or buy your holiday travel insurance from the link below.

- Cash Donation click [here](#)
- Gift Donations click [here](#)
- Get your travel insurance [here](#)

Insight of Dreams

Ben Felten, current president of Blind Sports NSW and former member of the Australian Blind Cricket team and world champion rower is a man on a mission. Ben recently attempted to break the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title for the "Fastest speed for a motorcycle ridden blindfolded". Achieving speeds of up to 220km/hour, he set an Australian record. Although not the speed he was chasing, it's not bad for a man who had not ridden a motorcycle for over 20 years and who had had just 25 hours of practice in the lead up to the attempt. The attempt to break the record is not one man's mid-life crisis in play. Ben aims to break down stereotypes about what can be achieved by people with a disability; in particular those who are blind or vision impaired and inspire others to pursue their dreams. The In Sight of Dream Foundation is being established to ensure they can.

To get into shape for the record attempt Ben trains at Sydney Motorsport Park, with the support of the Australia Racing Driver's Club who are one of Ben's many supporters. Ben and his two chase riders, Glen Spinks and John

Nassr, are riding Suzuki Hayabusa's. The record attempt itself was held as a special feature event of the Temora 1000 on October 25th 2014 at the Temora Airstrip.

Ben started going blind in his early teens and has been completely blind for just over 10 years. He gave up racing motor bikes in his early 20's, thinking he would never ride again - that was until this year when nearly three years of planning came together and he was able to get back on the bike again.

According to Ben, riding the bike is the easy part - it come second nature - "Just like riding a bike - you never forget." The biggest challenge is getting the communication between his two chase riders and him working. Ben has assembled a team of experts, including Paul Simpson from Bel-Pacific who donated not only the communications equipment but also time and expertise. Kevin Magee, former MotoGP champion came on board as technical advisor and Jamie Bezzina from SNR Pro was responsible for getting the bike tuned.



Ben Felten & Kevin McGee

On what was the hottest October day on record since 1910, in the middle of the day, as temperature became extreme, Ben had trouble hearing is navigator clearly and the attempt was called off for safety reasons.

According to Ben "without that communication system working perfectly I could not even begin to attempt to challenge the world record."

Not to be held back, Ben is already planning another attempt in 2015, but right now all his attention is focused on establishing the In Sight of Dreams Foundation, which will inspire and enable people, who live with a disability, to achieve their dreams, through programs aimed at personal and professional development. A number of events will be held over 2015 to both raise funds and to start the work of the Foundation. The Foundation has been given a helping hand by generous donation from OCTEC - a disability service provider providing education, training and employment services. If you want to support the In Sight of Dreams Foundation go to blindspeed.com.au to donate.

For the most up to date information about what's going on, check facebook at www.facebook.com/blindlandspeedrecord.

BSA applauds Ben and encourages everyone to get behind Ben and support him and the InSight a Dream Foundation.



What have the members been up to?

BSA - South Australia

South Australia has had a busy few months starting with hosting the Australia Goalball Nationals with Goalball South Australia and Goalball Australia. Straight after this BSA SA ran the annual 'Vision Challenge'. A great day was had by all and there are plans afoot to make it bigger and better next year. A couple of weeks later BGA held their Australian Stableford Nationals in Adelaide.

Kent has also been running blind awareness sessions within various schools including Immanuel College & Stradbroke OSHC.

Goalball Australia

The 2014 Australian Goalball Nationals were held in Adelaide in October. Congratulations to all the competitors, officials and supporters.

Results were

Men's	NSW
Women's	NSW
Youth	NSW
Juniors	SA

Goalball is also one of nine sports on offer at the Pacific Schools Games to be held in Adelaide next November. The last Pacific Games in Canberra had over 4,800 participants and 3,000 accompanying visitors. Teams came from around Australia and up to 30 visiting nations.

BVIT

To celebrate the International Day for People with Disability, Tenpin Bowling Australia launched their Bowling 101 program for people with disabilities. Marilyn, Eileen, Tim, Dale and Kirsty from BVIT and Stephen Barnes from BSA attended.



Dale, Tim, Marilyn, and Eileen from BVIT, with Cara Honeychurch, CEO TBA and Stephen Barnes, CEO BSA.

TBA also acknowledged the important contribution that volunteers make to include people with disabilities within local communities across Australia. Congratulations to Eileen Scott and Louise Eady who were recognised – you both work tirelessly for BVIT.



Marilyn Luck



Tim from BVIT

WABSF

The Lost At Sea Blind Sailing Team, consisting of Ryan Honschooten (Mainsheet), Erin McGlew (Foredeck), and Kylie Forth (Skipper) recently won gold in the 2014 IFDS World Blind Match-Racing Championships (Category 1) in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, held from 9-14 September.

Five countries were represented across two divisions in the championship: Australia, Canada, Italy, the UK and USA. Category 1 consisted of totally blind sailors, while Category 2 had totally blind Skippers with vision impaired crew. The course was laid out by audible buoys, and each boat had an acoustic tack indicator to identify whether it was on port or starboard tack. While there were no sighted sailors on board, each boat carried a radio and was in direct communication with the umpires.

Despite the first day of racing being cancelled due to a combination of fog, strong wind and enormous waves on Lake Michigan, the regatta organisers were able to complete all scheduled races.

The Australian team won seven out of their nine races in the three preliminary round robins, allowing them a free pass into the finals as top-ranked team in their division. The results of the semi-finals gave them the

opportunity to challenge the 2012 world champion, Luigi Bertanza (Italy), for the trophy.

A collision in the pre-start of the first match of the finals put the Australians on the back foot, and they were unable to retake the lead in that race. However, by sailing cleanly and conservatively they had three straight wins in the next matches, thus allowing them to take the title.

Just after the championships, the team's coach, Justin Kelleher, was named WADSA (WA Disabled Sports Association) Coach of the Year. The team were also finalists in the Yachting Australia Sailor of the Year with a Disability Award.



Blind Cricket Australia

The Blind Cricket Australia team are in Cape Town, South Africa completing in the Blind Cricket World Cup.

In January the BCA development squad are in Auckland to play a New Zealand development squad.

There have also been a number of 'come and try' days held in the state capital – and on grounds such as the MCG, SCG, WACA and GABBA.

ABBA

Commonwealth Games bronze medal bowler Tony Scott has announced his retirement from national and international competition,

effectively. Tony said he “I just cannot foresee being able to dedicate the time and enthusiasm needed for another crack at the Commonwealth Games, and there are some very talent bowlers coming through the ranks”. ABBA wish Tony the very best and thank him for his great service to the game.

ABBA Nationals will be in Adelaide from April 28th – May 7th 2015, and will be followed by the selection and training camp for the New Zealand 2016 and South Africa 2017 competitions. The ABBA AGM will also be in Adelaide during the Nationals.

Lindsay Mitchell (Vic) has taken on the role of Treasurer of ABBA taken over the role from Carolyn Pettit.



Tony Scott, centre, with his bowling director brother Peter, and Commonwealth Games vision-impaired mixed pairs partner Joy Foster, right, and her director Bruce Jones.

Golf

On 17 November 2014, blind golfers Jeff Ellis and David Blyth, with Maureen Ellis and Gary McInnes as their respective caddies, took part in a special inclusion day at Sandhurst GC in Victoria.

The inclusion day was just one part of a “Play Golf Week”, put together and hosted by Sandhurst’s Golf Services Manager, Christian Hamilton.

Jeff and David joined a number of other golfers including an amputee and several participants in wheel-chairs. They got to experience a couple of quadriplegic golfers using a German designed “Paragolfer” cart. The cart, worth around \$35,000, effectively

enables the person to stand up allowing free movement of the golf club.

They also played a few holes with Sandhurst GC member Peter Bryant, with his wife Marilyn as his caddie. Peter, a 12 marker, is experiencing slight vision loss and both he and Marilyn were very keen to get an understanding of how things work with blind golf.

BGA staged the 2014 Australian Stableford Championships at Adelaide Shores Golf Club, SA in late October. This was a very successful event with 17 players.

By virtue of an amazing round on the second day, the winner was Doug Burrows of Western Australia with 83 points-Doug said that his round on the Friday was by far the best he had ever achieved in blind golf. Graham Coulton NSW was runner up with 81 points. Sight category winners were B1 David Blyth Vic, B2 Gary Sargent NSW and B3 Jeff Ellis Vic whilst Deanna Minciullo WA won the Ladies Championship. The 2015 BGA Australian Stableford will again be held in Adelaide in May 2015.

The next major events on the Australian blind golf calendar will be the 2015 Victorian and 2015 ISPS HANDA Australian Opens. Both events will be staged at Rosebud Country Club in Victoria in the week commencing April 12 2015. This is the first time that Victoria has staged the Australian Open. Until 2014 where the Australian Open was staged in conjunction with the World Championships at Nelson Bay NSW, this event was staged exclusively in Perth. The BGA Board has decided that future Australian Opens will rotate between WA, NSW and Victoria and with the Australian Stableford in SA, BGA will have their major tournaments in each state. Rosebud Country Club has been a wonderful supporter of blind golf over more than 25 years and with on course accommodation provides a fitting venue for the major event on the Australian blind golf calendar. We are hoping for more than 25 entrants including entrants from overseas Blind Golfers. Entry forms will be

sent out soon for both events with entries closing February 27 2015.

The national/international calendar of events for 2015 is included in the BGA section of the BSA website.

BGA had its Annual General Meeting in November. The appointed Board for the next year is Doug Sloan (Vic) President, Rod Mills (NSW) Vice President, Dona Kuruvitaarachy (WA) Secretary Treasurer, Ross Thompson (WA) Director, Robert Curtin (SA) Director and Geoff Walsh (Vic) Director/Handicapper. Rick Krolik after many years on the BGA Board retired from his position this year.

Like most golf clubs in Australia, BGA is struggling to maintain membership. Golf can be a time consuming game in this modern age when there are many alternatives. BGA and its State members are on an active recruitment campaign. We believe there may be an untapped area of active club golfers who have given the game away as their sight deteriorates. If you know anyone who fits this category, please direct them towards blind golf. The best place to get more information on blind golf is on the BGA website www.blindgolf.com.au

Vale Darryl Evans

Darryl who was a respected and well liked member of WABGA passed away recently. Darryl gained his IBGA handicap in 2005 and until very recently was still competing actively in Blind Golf. Darryl represented Australia in the 2010 World Championships in England and was a regular attendee at WABGA games as well as major interstate tournaments. He will be missed by all in blind golf. Our sympathy to Darryl's family and his many friends.

Blind Sports Victoria

Micah is a young boy who has been involved in many sporting programs offered by Blind Sports Victoria. Some of the programs include

gymnastics, soccer and judo. Recently, Micah received a certificate from Noblesoul Academy for completing the introductory judo program.



Micah with Judo instructor, Ryosuke Miwa

The Judo program which is coordinated by Ryosuke Miwa from Noblesoul Academy said "It was a pleasure having Micah in the very first judo program for children who are vision impaired. He has achieved so much in a period of 8 weeks with only one session each week. Initially, he was a little shy, but as he spent more time on the mat, he became more relaxed and showed confidence in his knowledge and skills. Now, he not only knows basic throws and holdings, but also is capable of applying them in Randori (sparring), which requires good understanding of the nature of this sport as well as dedication for learning. It was honour to hear that he practices the techniques with his father at home.

I believe Judo has a great potential to lead children to a healthier, happier life, and children with vision impairment are no exception. I would love to see more and more people getting involved in this sport and hope that it opens up new possibilities in their lives."

In 2015, BSV will be extending this exciting sport to children in multiple locations.

For further information or to register your interest in this program, please email info@blindsports.org.au or phone the Blind Sports Victoria office on 9822 8876.

Royal Botanical Garden Walks

A series of 1.5 hour walks will be offered early in 2015 which will explore the fabulous collections of plants in our Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

The walks will be led by Rod Dunstan, who has worked as an Education Officer at the Gardens. The first walk will take the group along the Australian Border, as well as to the “Volcano” and Arid Garden.

Another walk will centre on the Ornamental Lake and the surrounding lawns, with their amazing specimen trees. This walk will also include a visit to the Herb Garden.

When: Mid-week, mid-morning in late January and early Autumn

Where: The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

As places are limited, please register your interest in these programs by contacting Sandra Knight at Sandra@blindsports.org.au or phone 9822 8876.

Upcoming events

For all upcoming events please go to the BSA website events page

<http://www.blindsportsaustralia.com.au/events.html>

The events calendar is also downloadable in pdf format.

Member Opportunities

Travel insurance

We strongly encourage members, their family friends and generally everyone that is travelling to check out travel insurance via our website.

Either click on one of the Covermore banners or use the link below

<https://track.commissionfactory.com.au/t/15299/11003/>

Using the banner or the link above you will get the same travel insurance as if you went through major travel agencies **BUT up to 30% cheaper!**

If you go direct to Covermore or through a travel agent you will not receive the discounted price – you must use the link or the banner. And remember – anyone that needs travel insurance can access it through these links

Why is BSA promoting this – because not only do you get great travel insurance at a great price, but BSA receives a commission for every policy purchased.

Media releases

Getting the news, events and concerns of blind sports out into the public arena has been difficult. We are very pleased to be able to offer member organisations unlimited press releases to be distributed to all media outlets in Australia – print, radio, TV and through search engines.

We encourage our members to avail themselves of this opportunity – every time you have an event happening, or something to celebrate please write a short press release and send it through to Stephen Barnes at BSA.

Please also include the contact details of the people who would be available to be contacted regarding the press release. Also give me a few days notice so the press release can be distributed at the correct time.

Use the BSA logo

On most correspondence from BSA and on our website you will notice that we include the Australian Sports Commission and the Australian Paralympic Committee logos.

We invite, and encourage, our member organisations to use the Blind Sports Australia logo on their correspondence and advertising material in much the same way.



We have found that adding the Australian Sports Commission and the Australian Paralympic Committee logos has assisted develop the BSA brand and lent some more creditability to the BSA brand. It also assists promoting the Australian Sports Commission and the Australian Paralympic Committee brands.

Additionally we have BSA banners, and access to ASC banners, that we would appreciate being displayed at all national events and competitions, and for state members at state events.

If you would like to use the BSA logo, or the BSA and ASC banners please contact Stephen Barnes.

Pin & Win

BSA has a national fundraising promotion underway – the ‘Pin & Win’ campaign. We ask the public to buy a collectible lapel pin and receive a complimentary scratch card where they could win some of the \$60,000 of cash prizes on offer. If you see the sellers of the ‘Pin & Win’ please go up and have a chat to them – it really helps them to sell the cards when they have a better understanding about

vision impairment and the benefits of sport to our constituents (and please buy a lapel pin too!).

The other aspect of the national fundraising promotion is it also promotes blind sports to the general public. It has been really great receiving emails and notes from people congratulating us (which includes our members) on supporting people partake in blind and vision impaired sporting opportunities.

Thanks to Gary and Eileen Sargent, Gary McInnes and David Blyth for meeting with the ‘sellers’ in Adelaide and giving them a briefing on blind sports and getting them have a try with a putter and then on the driving range – it gave them a real appreciation of what blind sports are about and they left feeling really enthused.



Volunteering?

Do you, or one of your members, need some volunteers? Need help with a 'Come and try' Day, or a sausage sizzle? Then let Stephen Barnes know the details and BSA will try and get some volunteers to assist. Send what types of volunteers you need, time commitment, and any other requirements and information – and don't forget to send contact details too.

Currently BSA is looking for:

Newsletter Editor

Blind Sports Australia requires a person to put together a quarterly newsletter.

Duties would include sourcing articles and reports from member organisations and affiliates, collating, and circulating via email.

Member Protection Information Officer

We require a person to undertake the role of Member Protection Information Officer when an issue arises.

MPIOs will only be called upon if an MPO issue arises. The most suitable MPO then will be selected

Full training will be provided. **You will gain a certificate upon completion of the training indicating that you are an accredited Member Protection Information Officer.**

Blind Sports Australia (BSA) is committed to providing an environment free of harassment. BSA believes that anyone who works for BSA and/or represents BSA, and everyone with whom BSA deals, has the right to be treated with respect and dignity.

Video maker

Seeking the support of someone to plan, film and edit a short promotional video to summarise what our organisation does! As a starting point: we were thinking snippets of film to be captured at member events and interview with the CEO and Board Chair.

Open to your creative ideas!

Lawyer to review policies

We need a person to review various policies for Blind Sports Australia e.g. privacy Policy, Code of Conduct, Member Protection, Selection Criteria, Athletes agreements, MOUs, Grants and acquittal statements and indicate gaps and changes required.

Graphic Designer

Expand your impressive portfolio and bring forward your eye for detail and design as you assist in overhauling and updating our log and brand.

- Produce graphic work for our marketing collateral
- Update and modernise our logo

Ideally you have these up your sleeve, too:

- A tertiary qualification within the design space
- Excellent communication skills
- An Adobe whiz
- Knowledge with HTML and User Experience

Contact details and links

Blind Sports Australia
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Email: admin@blindsportsaustralia.com.au

Website: www.blindsportsaustralia.com.au

Board Chair – David Blyth AO
Board member – Gary Sargent
Board member – Sam Theodore
Board member – Garry Humphries
Board member – Karen Ryan
Board member – Voula Karantzas
Board member – Melissa Martin

Board Secretary – Eileen Sargent

CEO – Stephen Barnes

Gary McInnes – Member Protection Information Officer

Kent Dredge – Member Protection Information Officer

