

2021 Annual Report



**Blind
Sports
Australia**



Blind Sports Australia

A.B.N. 68 008 621 252
Foundation member of the Australian
Paralympic Committee

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Acknowledgement

Blind Sports Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We pay respect to their cultures, Elders past, present and emerging, and we commit to working together for our shared future.



SPORTAUS

Front Cover: Oscar Stubbs in action at the 2021 Tennis Victoria Blind and Low Vision State Championships.

Inside Front: Courtney Lewis at the Tennis Victoria Blind and Low Vision State Championships. (Both pictures are courtesy of Tennis Victoria).

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Image shows: Australia's first Paralympic judo athlete since 2008, Wayne Phipps in blue, fights his opponent in white.

Message from the Chair and CEO

The past twelve months has been a year of contrast. While covid restrictions have impacted our lives, frustrating many plans and interrupting sport and competition, Blind Sports Australia has been strongly pushing ahead on our journey of creating opportunities for the blind and vision impaired community to access sport and recreation.

Complementing our refreshed inclusive brand identity launched last December, we introduce a new look and feel for our Annual Report. You will see several new sections that provide an in-depth look at our major activities throughout the year.

Key focus areas

We explore three key areas that underpin our work - creating awareness, building engagement, and driving growth. Combined, they direct our efforts as we collaborate with our members and partners to change the sporting landscape and break down barriers associated with access and participation for people with a vision impairment. As we implement projects that open new markets and build capacity for blind sports across Australia, we are also seeking to change people's perceptions and creating awareness in the broader community about disability sport.

In July 2020, we were delighted to receive a grant of \$247,000 from the Department of Health to deliver a multi-year Driving Social Inclusion Through Sport project. We are working together with other sporting and disability organisations around Australia to develop and implement new sporting programs and empower volunteers in key regional hubs, where access to blind sport is limited.



Image shows: several blind footballers in teal uniforms are lead onto the grass pitch by a Coach.

Cooperatively, we are developing online training resources, (based on Australian and International best practice) to assist coaches and volunteers to engage people with low vision in sport. We are working with our members and relevant national sporting organisations to produce new resources for several blind sports.

In the third quarter of 2020 we welcomed two new employees to our team, boosting our capacity to support and engage with members and increasing our marketing efforts to lift the profile of blind sports. From November 2020 to May this year as many sports resumed their summer competition, we provided on the ground and marketing support to various member events including the Australian Blind Bowls National Championships in May in Port Macquarie, new Come N Try Days for Blind Cricket in Tasmania, the launch of ParaFive Football and Blind Football Come N Try days, and Blind Tennis State Championships. We also provided logistical and practical support to athletes in Goalball and Judo, to assist with their preparation camps and Tokyo 2020 qualification efforts.



Collaboration

Our continuing membership of both the Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability (ASAPD) and the Inclusion Alliance, has seen us work with leading National Sporting Organisations for people with a Disability to unite and strengthen our collective efforts to influence public policy, advocate for program funding, shared services, and build capacity to ensure all Australians have an opportunity to engage in sport in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

New brand and ambassadors

Late last year, we proudly revealed our new brand identity as a key tool in helping raise the profile of blind sports in the community. We are building a new modern and meaningful brand that has inclusivity at its core. Our new brand identity captures the elements of sport and the community we represent by using a combination of braille, the English alphabet, and a flexible, contrasting colour palette. Combined with an increasing social media presence across popular platforms, our marketing efforts are attracting a whole new audience.



Image shows: a group of different aged participants including a young boy in a wheelchair holding a cricket bat inside an indoor cricket facility smiling at the camera at the first Come N Try Blind Cricket Day in Hobart.

Message from the Chair and CEO

Showing blind sports in action is a fantastic way to broaden awareness. This year, we launched our brand ambassador program with the Australian women's goalball team, the Aussie Belles. In a mutually beneficial partnership, the Belles help amplify our voice and showcase blind team sports. In return, we support them by raising the Belles' profile via our marketing, investing our time and resources in their push towards Paralympic success in Tokyo 2020.

We are thankful to Zena Sport for their support of Blind Sports Australia with an equipment sponsorship that provides impact vests to the Aussie Belles and a discount for our community. Likewise, we appreciate Packaworld's assistance in providing a discount on their inflatable, portable goalball goals.

Driving growth

Driving growth of sporting opportunities in new regions has taken a huge step forward this year. Alongside the Driving Inclusion through Sport project, we have been working with Inclusive Innovations Tasmania and other partner organisations to establish a pathway for blind cricket participation, through the establishment of Blind Cricket Tasmania which has not existed for many years. We welcome Inclusive Innovations Tasmania to Blind Sports Australia, where its efforts to establish local blind sports will also benefit from our collective advocacy and funding work.

In June 2021, we were successful in obtaining an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grant from the Department of Social Services, which complements and expands our current work to achieve our vision. We look forward to working closely with our partners such as Vision Australia to implement this program over the coming year;



collaborating to develop physical literacy toolkits for schools, parents and community groups that will build the confidence of children with a vision impairment to engage in sport.

Thank you

Our amazing members undertake the frontline work in connecting with blind and vision impaired communities across a broad section of ages to engage them directly in sport, made possible by the dedicated efforts of volunteers and a small staff base.

We thank our members for their tireless efforts and other organisations from the disability sporting sector for their cooperation and collaboration on our projects.

We thank Paralympics Australia, and Sport Australia for their continued support and Vision Australia for providing us office space.

Finally, we thank our retiring board member Michael Clemens for his service to Blind Sports Australia over the past five years. Michael retired in March 2021, and his continued contribution to the blind sports community and ongoing voluntary help with sports such as Blind Cricket and Blind Golf have been and are invaluable.

We have laid solid foundations and cemented many building blocks this year, and look forward to delivering key project milestones in the coming year that further enhance opportunities for the blind and vision impaired community to access sport and recreation.



Image shows: three blind footballers, with eyeshades on and holding a blind football at training session at The Hangar in Essendon.

Sam Theodore
Chairman



Matt Clayton
CEO



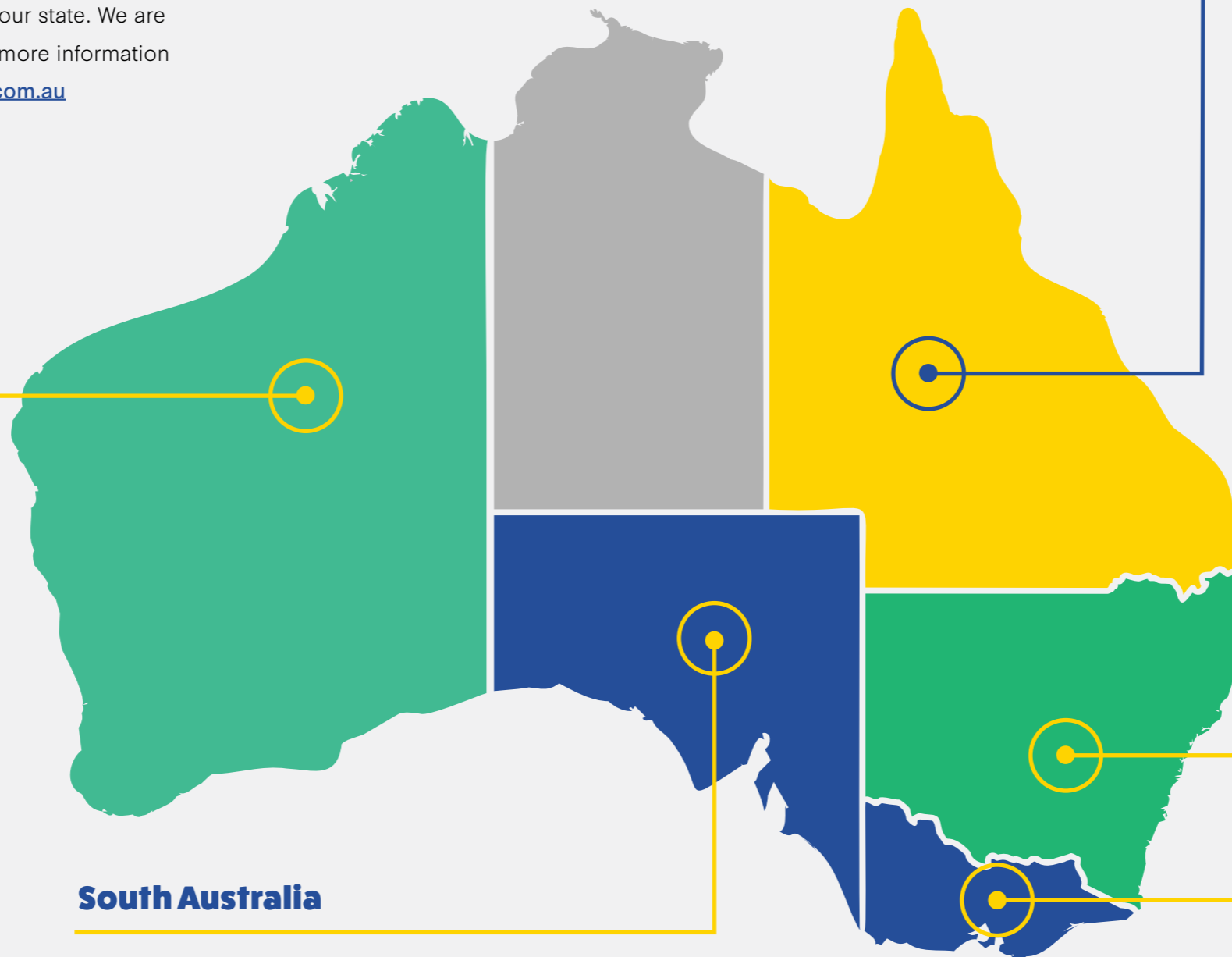
Image shows: formal photos of BSA Chair, Sam Theodore and CEO Matt Clayton, smiling and wearing suits.

Blind and Visually Impaired Sports Locations

Check out some of the blind sports available in your state. We are working to create more sports in more places – for more information on getting involved visit www.blindsportsaustralia.com.au

Western Australia

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Cricket | Goalball |
| Ten Pin Bowling | Football (Soccer) |
| Tandem Cycling | Sailing |
| Dancing | Swish |
| Lawn Bowls | Swimming |
| Tennis | AFL |
| | Athletics |



Queensland

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Athletics | Running |
| Cricket | Triathlon |
| Tennis | Ten Pin Bowling |
| Goalball | |
| Lawn Bowls | |
| Golf | |
| Swimming | |
| Swish | |
| Football (Soccer) | |

NSW/ACT

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| AFL | Goalball |
| Athletics | Rowing |
| Cricket | Sailing |
| Golf | Surfing |
| Cycling | Swimming |
| Winter Sports | Recreation |
| Football (Soccer) | Tennis |
| Triathlon | Touch Football |
| Ten Pin Bowling | |

Victoria

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Recreation | Running |
| Football (Soccer) | Table Tennis |
| Tennis | Ten Pin Bowling |
| AFL | Lawn Bowls |
| Cricket | Indoor Bowls |
| Golf | Swimming |
| Goalball | Archery |
| Judo | Winter Sport |
| Gymnastics | Cycling |

South Australia

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Cricket | Sailing |
| Goalball | Football (Soccer) |
| Golf | Swimming |
| Recreation | Swish |
| AFL | Tandem Cycling |
| Athletics | Ten Pin Bowling |
| Indoor Lawn Bowls | Tennis |
| Lawn Bowls | |

Tasmania

- Cricket



Image shows: a female blind bowler wearing a maroon Queensland state uniform bowling on the green at the Australian Blind Bowlers Association National Championships in Port Macquarie.

Image shows: a colourful map of Australia with lines pointing to a list of the blind sports played in each state or territory.

About

Blind Sports Australia

Blind Sports Australia (BSA) is a national sporting organisation for blind and vision impaired sport. BSA helps create pathways and opportunities for people to participate in blind sport from grassroots community level, right up to elite competition at national and international level.

We work with our members and other disability sporting organisations across Australia to grow blind sporting opportunities for people who are blind or have low vision and raise awareness of blind sports across the community.

BSA is a not-for-profit organisation. We are a founding member of Paralympics Australia, the Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability, and are Australia's representative to the International Blind Sports Federation.

Our vision

We aim to be recognised as the local, national and international leader in blind sports and recreation in the visually impaired and blind community, the wider disability sport and sporting communities, and the general public.

We focus on growing participation and exposure through building awareness of blind sports, and seek to be the driving force behind creating opportunities for people who are blind or vision impaired to access sport and recreation in Australia and internationally.

Board

- Board Chair:** Sam Theodore
(chair@blindsportsaustralia.com.au)
- Board Member:** Voula Karantzas
- Board Member:** Michael Clemens (retired March 2021)
- Board Member:** Brenton Lynch
- Board Member & Board Secretary:** Melissa Martin
- Board Member:** Simon Talbot

Staff and Volunteers

- Chief Executive Officer:** Matthew Clayton
- Marketing and Partnerships Manager:** Felicity Wilkeson
- Driving Inclusion Project Coordinator:** Krista Woodroffe
- Finance Support:** Hui-Cheng Wee
- Member Protection Information Officer:** Kent Dredge



Images from top right clockwise: a male youth blind tennis player smiling at the Tennis Vic Blind and Low Vision State Championships. A Victorian blind bowler competing at the ABBA Championships. BSA Board member Michael Clemens guides a blind golfer at the Blind Golf Open, in Rosebud. Matt Clayton BSA CEO speaking at a presentation dinner.

Member Organisations



Goalball Australia is the governing body for the sport of Goalball in Australia and works with state Goalball associations, Blind Sports Australia and the Paralympics Australia to develop and grow the sport. Goalball Australia aims to provide development and elite pathways for its athletes, coaches and referees.

<https://www.goalballaustralia.org/home>



Blind and Vision Impaired Tenpin Bowling began in 2001 at AMF Box Hill. From this small group, five bowlers represented Australia at the inaugural IBSA Blind Tenpin Bowling Championships in Helsinki, Finland, in 2002.

BVIT works to further the goals of blind and vision-impaired Australians in the sport of tenpin bowling and conducts national competitions.

<http://www.bvit.asn.au>



Blind Golf Australia promotes the game of golf amongst blind and vision impaired people and co-ordinates blind golf nationally. The organisation represents Australian blind golf internationally and creates and maintains registers of blind golf events throughout Australia with information about players, sight classifications and handicaps.

www.blindgolf.com.au



Blind Cricket has been played in Australia since 1922. Its early origins were in Prahran, Victoria where a group of blind and vision impaired people came up with the idea of putting some rocks in a can and using it as a ball. Today, Blind Cricket Australia oversees competitions in all mainland states and is developing the game in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

www.blindcricketaustralia.com.au



The **Australian Blind Bowlers Association (ABBA)** is the peak body for State Associations, and was formed in 1977 to provide a sport for blind & vision impaired people.

<http://blindbowlsaustralia.com>



Blind Sports WA promotes the sporting activities of each Federation member amongst people who are blind and vision impaired in Western Australia. We are affiliated with Association for the Blind of WA.

Blind Sports WA co-ordinates sport between States and creates a register of all events within Australia; and works with other bodies for international events on behalf of our members.

Contact: blindsportswa@gmail.com

Further Information: Blind Sports Western Australia



Blind Sports South Australia is the peak sporting body for people who are blind or vision impaired. Supporting over 10 different sports, Blind Sports South Australia provides a link between the athlete, other sporting community & agencies in South Australia & the national body, Blind Sports Australia.

www.blindsportssa.org.au



Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association has been helping Queenslanders with a disability lead active, healthy lives and achieve their dreams since 1977. We are Queensland's peak body for sport, recreation and fitness for people with a physical disability or vision impairment.

www.sportingwheelies.org.au



Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria is a state-wide organisation established in 1977 to promote health and wellbeing for people of all ages who are blind or vision impaired. Our objective is to increase participation and develop competitive and recreational sporting opportunities for people who are blind or vision impaired.

www.blindsports.org.au



Blind Sports and Recreation NSW/ACT is the peak organisational body for community members with blindness and low vision in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, providing sport and social recreation activities. We are recognised by the State Government as well as multiple peak vision agencies including Vision Australia, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Save Sight Institute and Blind Citizens Australia.

<https://www.blindsportsnsw.com.au>

Financial Summary

Like many organisations, Blind Sports Australia has felt the impact of Covid. Fortunately, with the assistance of government stimulus packages and incentives, plus good fiscal management, we have been able to navigate the financial year.

Covid has particularly affected:

- Corporate funding and donations
- Delivery of key projects (particularly activities interstate due to travel restrictions)
- Sporting competition and the schedule of national events

The Federal Government has been our main source of grant funding, including \$65,000 from

Sport Australia, as part of our annual National Sporting Organisation for people with a Disability (NSOD) sport investment agreement.

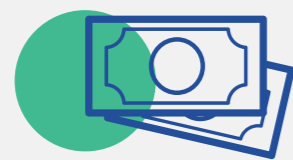
This year we also received two additional grants for;

- the “Driving Inclusion through Sport” program (Department of Health), which provides \$247,000 in funds spanning three financial years; and
- the “Information, Linkages and Capacity Building - Social and Community Participation” project to deliver a \$150,000 grant from the Department of Social Services across 2021- 22.

We are pleased to report a small net surplus of \$15,185 for the 2021 financial year, largely due to increased grant funding and Covid stimulus. Reduced expenditure in some areas was also a contributing factor to the surplus, due to the effect of covid restrictions on activity. However, some increases in expenditure, such as salaries is a direct result of implementing the above-mentioned programs, funded by the grants. Our finances this year also include support provided by Paralympics Australia (PA) for our women’s national Goalball team Tokyo preparations (fully expensed), for which we are thankful.

We have responded to the financial challenges faced by so many charitable organisations, by broadening our funding streams and targeting grants that have a real impact on growing sport for blind and vision impaired people. By increasing our marketing efforts to raise the profile of our sports and athletes, we aim to increase revenue from corporate engagement and sponsorship, and to seek funding from philanthropic and donation sources in the coming year.

The full 2021 BSA Financial Report can be downloaded from www.blindsportsaustralia.com.au/2021-annual-reports



\$214,785
BSA Revenue

- COVID-19 Stimulus
- Other income
- Memberships
- Sport Australia Funding
- Grants
- Donations
- Events

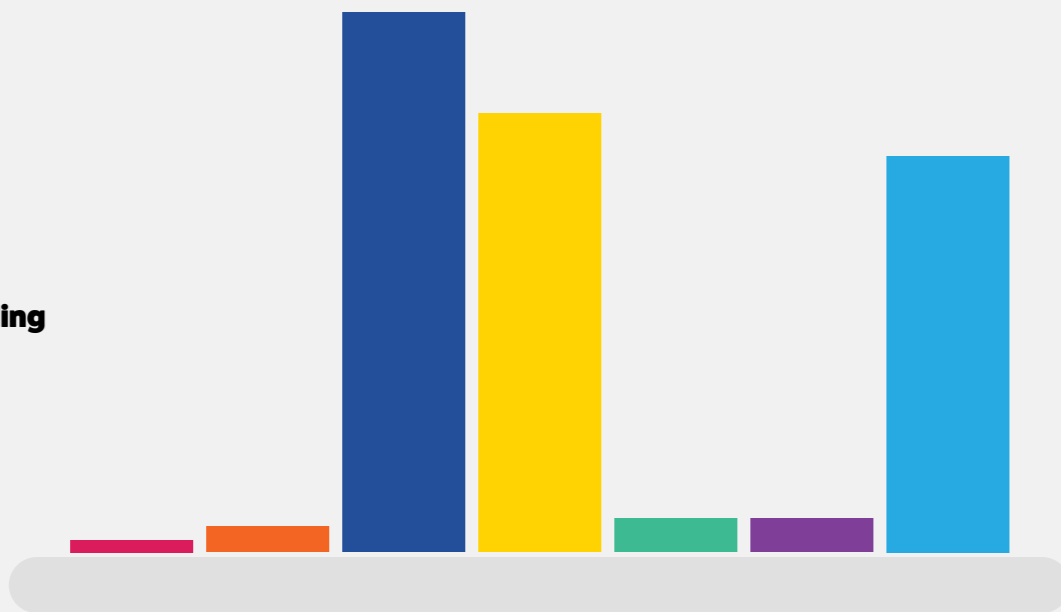


Image shows: a coloured bar chart of revenue sources which lists grants and funding as the top two sources for BSA.



\$199,600
BSA Expenses

- Travel Expenses
- Memberships
- Marketing Costs
- Insurance Costs
- Grants to Members
- General and Admin Fees
- Fundraising Expenses
- Event Costs
- Employee Expenses
- Accounting and Auditor Fees

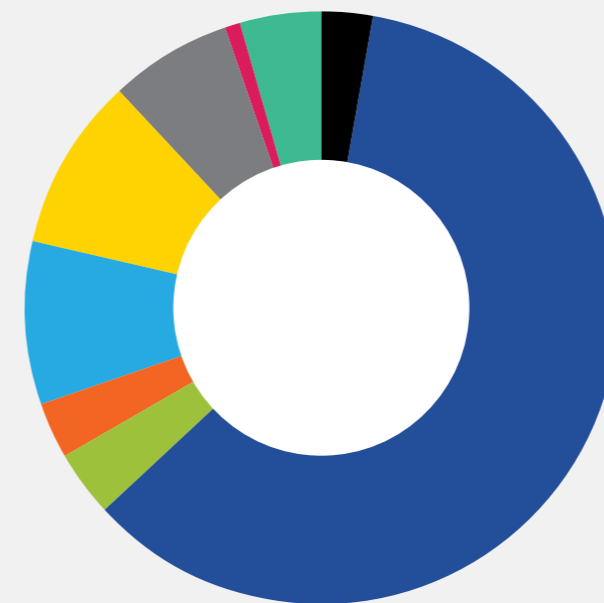


Image shows: a coloured pie chart of expenses which has employee expenses as the largest slice followed by member grants.

Message from SportAUS

SPORTAUS

Like so many Australians, sport has been a cornerstone of my life and has shaped me in ways I could never have imagined. I am passionate in my belief in sport's unrivalled ability to unite, inspire, and build healthier, stronger communities and I am committed to ensuring that every Australian who wants to be part of a sports community, in any role, enjoys the extraordinary benefits and grows as a result of their engagement with the sport of their choice.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC), comprising Sport Australia and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), is proud to support Australian sport at all levels, on behalf of the Australian Government. We nurture and develop sport at the community level with the help of our partners across the industry. This support extends to our Australian athletes competing at the pinnacle of world competition.

The unprecedented challenge of the global

COVID-19 pandemic since 2020 has required incredible resilience as a society and within our sport sector. We know, however, sport is playing a crucial role in the nation's rebuilding efforts, which presents us with great opportunities.

The Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics were shining examples of the hope and inspiration sport can provide to our elite athletes, but also the communities they represent. Postponed a year, it was wonderful to see our Australian athletes respond to this adversity with the equal-best gold medal haul in our Olympic history and a total of 46 medals across a myriad of sports. Our Paralympians also overcame the toughest of preparations to excel and inspire Australians, bringing home 80 medals including 21 gold across 10 sports. More so, it was inspiring to see how our Olympians and Paralympians represented us so proudly with humility and respect, reinforcing their status as important role models.

This is important, because we need Australian sport to carry forward a legacy from one generation to the next. This is about building sustainable improvement and success across everything we do.

We want to inspire a thriving participation base, recognise the invaluable contribution of our volunteers, build sport capability and give our elite athletes the very best chance to succeed to competition and life beyond.

We are immensely proud of our many programs and initiatives that support a connection and involvement with sport at all levels. Our national Sporting Schools program provides an important first step to get children active and engaged through sport, while the AIS's focus on wellbeing can ensure our athletes feel supported during their time in high performance sport so it is as positive and rewarding as it can be.

There is so much to look forward to with a golden runway of major sporting events on home soil over the next decade, leading to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Some of the world's biggest sporting events will converge on our shores, with World Cups or World Championships locked in for basketball, cricket, football, and netball, to name a few, presenting more wonderful opportunities for Australian sport to thrive.

South East Queensland's winning bid for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games provides an

incredible opportunity to unite the nation through sport and provide all Australian children the chance to dream of representing their nation on the world's biggest stage, right here at home.

2032 has become a giant target to aim towards, aligning our sports, our infrastructure, and our communities to leave a positive legacy for a post-COVID Australia.

This is a pivotal time for our sector and the future green and gold runway provides an opportunity to consider the role that each of us can play in building a stronger, leaner and healthier sports industry.

On behalf of the ASC, thank you to everyone who contributes to Australian sport with the aim of making it better for all.

I could not be more excited for sport in Australia and the opportunities that will come our way.



Image shows: the backs of several Aussie Belles womens goalball team players wearing Australian numbered shirts as they walk off court after a goalball match.

Josephine Sukkar AM
Chair of SportAUS



Image shows: Josephine Sukkar, Chair of Sport Australia, smiling at camera.



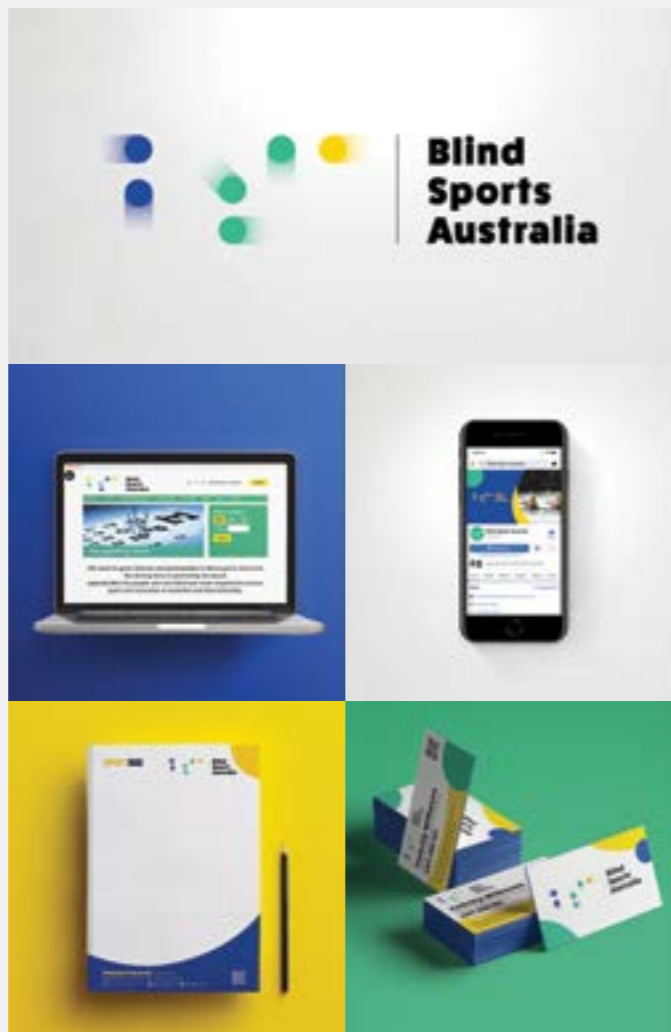
Creating Awareness

Creating awareness of blind sports is the key to growing sporting participation, ensuring people who are blind or vision impaired are aware of the opportunities to get involved. By using a mix of marketing and media tools, we are helping explain the blind sporting landscape, building an understanding in the broader community about the many opportunities available to people with low vision.

New brand identity

To effectively engage our sporting communities and the general public, we need to attract peoples' attention and a modern, meaningful brand is key to this. In December, we revealed Blind Sport Australia's refreshed inclusive brand that beautifully captures what we are about, and who we represent. By using a combination of braille, the English alphabet and bright contrasting colours, our new brand identity reflects both the movement of sport and the language of the vision impaired community. We thank design agency Inclusive Creatives for working with us to create our brand, which was recognised by winning the top industry award for Creativity in Inclusion at The Diemen Awards in March.

Top left image is a group team shot of the Aussie Belles and coaches.
 Middle left page image shows pictures of BSAs new brand assets, for example the logo and how it is applied to our website.
 Middle right page image is the wording our World Blind Sports Day video facebook post which was our highest reach and engagement for the year.



"BSA has successfully created a brand design that is not only accessible for people who are blind or have low vision, but truly reflects the inclusive nature of its business and the people it represents"

Ron Hooton, CEO of Vision Australia

Social media

With our new brand in place, we set about expanding the ways we engage with our key groups by creating new Instagram and LinkedIn social media accounts in addition to our Facebook page. These platforms allow us to directly engage with people, increasing both our followers and interactions. Since last June, we have posted over 100 items to our Facebook page, increasing our followers by around 55%. Creating our own video content showcasing blind sports and athletes has statistically proved very popular, attracting new audiences and helping spread the word about blind sports.



f Facebook reach 3.3k, engagement 205

Inaugural brand ambassadors -Aussie Belles

By showing the various pathways for blind sports across our channels, from volunteering to playing grassroots community sport, and right along the journey to international competition

and the Paralympics - we seek to inspire and attract others to join. In December we announced our brand ambassador program with the Australian women's goalball team, the Aussie Belles. In the lead up to the Tokyo2020 Paralympics, we have been able to shine a spotlight on the Belles training journey, engaging many in their story and highlighting the unique blind team sport of goalball.

"Our partnership with the Aussie Belles is mutually beneficial. As our ambassadors, they help promote community awareness of blind sports, and in return we support them by raising the team's profile and investing our time and resources in the push towards Paralympic success"

Felicity Wilkeson, BSA Marketing and Partnerships Manager

Sponsor: Zena Sport

The Aussie Belles also attracted the attention of Zena Sport, founded by ex- AFL Bulldogs Captain Brad Johnson. Brad and his wife Donna have developed an innovative, lightweight impact protection vest that protects females playing contact sports against breast, rib and ground impact. In June, we jointly announced a Zena Sport equipment sponsorship for Blind Sports Australia. We thank Brad and Donna for their support which provides impact vests to the Aussie Belles and a discount for our community. We believe the high level of protection the Zena vest offers will boost the confidence of vision impaired athletes, encouraging greater participation in blind sports such as Blind AFL, Blind Football, Judo, Goalball, winter sports and equestrian activities.



Building Engagement

It is only possible to grow participation in blind sports across Australia by engaging with our members, other sporting organisations, National Sporting Organisations for people with a Disability (NSODs), vision-based organisations and inclusion groups across Australia to achieve our shared goals.

Member support

We work collaboratively with our members to build engagement in blind sports and support them to deliver their programs directly to participants. This year with more BSA resources, we sought to increase our member support by providing on the ground and marketing assistance at various member events and Come n Try activities. We look forward to doing more of this as sport resumes and Covid restrictions allow.

In May we supported the Australian Blind Bowlers Association (ABBA) with marketing and media assistance at their national championships in Port Macquarie. In June we assisted on the ground at Blind Cricket Tasmania's inaugural Come N Try

day in Hobart. We have attended Goalball training camps, Blind Tennis championships, Blind Football Come N Try days and provided practical support wherever possible to advocate and assist our members.

We were pleased to see the expansion of Blind Sports NSW into the ACT and look forward to further supporting Blind Sports NSW/ACT as they continue to grow their presence and programs in the territory.

Welcome Inclusive Innovations Tasmania

In April, we welcomed Inclusive Innovations Tasmania (IIT) as a provisional state member of Blind Sports Australia, with a view of growing our membership to eleven organisations.

IIT is an independent not for profit entity, established to activate inclusive initiatives, such as Blind Cricket Tasmania where support sectors do not have the resources to do so. We believe IIT is a natural fit with Blind Sports Australia's membership base and will assist the growth of blind sports across Tasmania.

Image shows: WA blind bowlers in action on the green at the ABBA National Championships.

Collective work

A highlight of the past year has been our involvement in the successes of the Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability (ASAPD). This industry defining collaboration between all nine NSODs is a massive step forward in ensuring all Australians have an opportunity to engage in sport and physical activity in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Among the many achievements of the Alliance, a critical one has been the ability to advocate for the sector with a single united voice, gaining direct meetings with Ministers and making submission to the National Disability Strategy 2030, the National Preventative Health Strategy and National Employment Strategy.

The collaborative work of the Inclusion Alliance between Deaf Sports Australia, Sport Inclusion Australia and Blind Sport Australia has delivered on its shared vision to build the capacity of the sporting, recreational and fitness sectors to be

more inclusive of all people with a disability. A key highlight has been the development of Inclusive Toolkits that provide practical guidance to sports, clubs and councils across the country on inclusive practice and pathways to sport.

Australian Blind Football

This year has seen the launch of new programmes from Australian Blind Football, which is an initiative of Blind Sports Australia who oversees the governance and administration of the sport. We thank David Connolly who voluntarily takes on the role of National Manager to drive the opportunities for both Blind Football (for B1 athletes) and Partially sighted Football (for B2 and B3 athletes). ABF4All kicked off in March to increase grassroots participation in football for people who are blind or partially sighted, regardless of age, gender or ability.



Above images: from left to right show a young male participant holding a cricket ball with a determined look at Blind Cricket Tasmania's first Come N Try session. Next is two male blind footballers tackling each other to reach a football on the grass in the foreground.



Driving Growth

Of the three foundations that underpin our work, Driving Growth is a great indicator of our success. Fortunately, we can report good progress this year in growing new blind sports, by introducing sports into new regions across Australia, and increasing the opportunities for participation by developing the tools and resources needed to assist clubs and coaches.

Coaching resources

Our work to deliver the “The Driving Inclusion Through Sport” project has continued apace this year. We have almost completed two online resource booklets Coaching Vision Impaired Sport and Introduction to Vision Impaired Friendly Sport. Developed from International best practice, these inclusive resources will provide coaches and volunteers with specific tools, exercises, skills and capacity to engage blind and vision impaired athletes in specific sports.

We are excited to extend our work in this area, and currently are building an online portal for sporting clubs to access information, resources and tools to help grow blind sports. We look forward to launching the portal in coming months, which will be complemented by online training modules, based on Australian best practice that assist coaches and volunteers to learn more about vision impairment, communication strategies, adapting sports and ways to support the vision impaired participant.

ABF4All

Australian Blind Football have also worked closely with us to produce an online coaching resource, the ABF4All Handbook, which provides invaluable advice and tools for use. This follows on from the National launch of ABF4All in March, which connects Australian Blind Football with state football federations and community clubs like South Melbourne Football Club and Brisbane Olympic Football Club to increase grassroots participation in football.

Image shows: a young indigenous student holding a bell ball at the NT Activate Inclusion Sports Day.

As part of this initiative, the National Para Fives series was launched in May, although competition has been postponed due to Covid. This has since been renamed the National Blind Football series to align with the sport being played at the Paris2024 Paralympics, and the first match is scheduled in May 2022.

New regions

Driving the establishment of new sporting hubs in regional areas continues to be a priority for Blind Sports Australia, to introduce and develop pathways for ongoing blind sport participation, particularly in areas where there are limited opportunities.

In June we visited the Northern Territory, making connections and being involved in delivering the Activate Inclusion Sports Day held by Disability Sports Australia in Darwin. We look forward to

pursuing opportunities to collaborate and initiate programs that will potentially offer children access to Goalball, Blind Tennis and Blind Football.

Two years of hard work culminated in the launch of Blind Cricket Tasmania (BCT) in April. By working collaboratively with our provisional member Inclusive Innovations Tasmania (IIT) and partner organisations Cricket Australia, Cricket Tasmania, Blind Cricket Australia, Taverners Australia, VisAbility Tasmania, Blind Citizens Australia and RecLink Tasmania we were pleased to participate in the inaugural Come N Try day in Hobart.

IIT and BCT are creating pathways and ongoing opportunities to play cricket State-wide across Tasmania initially through hosting a series of Come N Try days. BCT aims to identify future players for a State team through this process, with the aim of competing at the National Cricket Inclusion Championships in 2023.



Above: three images from left to right show a female adult, male boy and male coach holding rackets at a Blind Tennis SA day. Next is Meica Horsburgh, Aussie Belle wearing blackout goggles about to throw a blue goalball. Next is two students inside a gym at the Activate Inclusion NT Sports Day.



**Blind
Sports
Australia**

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www.blindsportsaustralia.com.au

*Back cover image shows the Aussie Belles coaches and players on court wearing uniforms in a group smiling, with Brad Johnson from Zena Sport.