

eVision July 2021

—
Parents of Vision Impaired
New Zealand Inc
supported by Blind Low
Vision New Zealand
(formerly The Blind Foundation)



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Sports in July:
Blind Sport

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

JULY 2021



NAU MAI, NAU MAI, NAU MAI KI TOKU KAINGA TUPU, ŌTEPETI.

Above: With the May PVI Board meeting in Dunedin it meant that the board could visit Dunedin ahead of our annual conference in November. For some it was our first time visiting this city! Stacey and I got up early to check out the Saturday morning markets – can definitely recommend!

It has been a long time since PVI has held a board meeting in Dunedin. I enjoyed sharing our lovely city with the PVI Board during our time together at the end of May.

At our May board meeting, we regretfully accepted Nikki's resignation from her role as Central North Island representative to the board. I know this difficult decision wasn't made lightly but family must come first. I'd like to thank Nikki for her contributions to our parent organisation and wish her *whānau* a more settled time ahead. We respect her decision and it is the right one for her and her *whānau*. Just reminds us all that we are parents that juggle our busy lives and still find the time and energy to give to our organisation. I thank all at the PVI Board for their continued support.

It has been a very busy time during May and June and I thank Rebekah for her continued work on a number of external groups representing PVI. It is encouraging to note that the invites to contribute to various pieces of work in the sector are increasing and this is a clear sign that Rebekah is held in high regard. This needs to be managed along with the other day-to-day tasks. One of the issues that Rebekah and I have been involved in reminds us of the importance of understanding the governance role and knowing what is governance and what is operational.

Ngā mihi nui,
Judith



EO REPORT

KIA ORA TATOU,

It feels like it has been several months of submissions on regional and national policies and legislative consultations! PVI has made written submissions on local transport plans as per the board's position statements - you can find these written statements on our website here:

pvi.org.nz/documents You are more than welcome to use our position statements in your own submissions to your local council as well.

The Ministry of Education has been reviewing a number of policies relevant to disability, in the past few months PVI has responded to the following:

- Review of Interventions for Students with the Highest Level of Learning Support Needs
- Review of Special Education Grant (SEG) funding
- The proposal for the Education Review Office (ERO) to review professional learning and development (PLD) accessed by schools, *kura* and early learning services
- NZEI Pūaotanga: An independent review of primary school staffing in Aotearoa
- Holidays (Parent-Teacher Interview Leave) Amendment Bill.

It has been a lot! But also well worthwhile to keep the needs of our kids at the forefront of legislators' and Ministry officials' minds.

We organised a Zoom event with Nan Jensen on

Education Rights, this went really well and am keen to organise some more - let me know if you have any ideas or topics you'd like to cover!

The new parent/*whānau* led representation group with Office for Disability Issues (ODI) is going well. We had our first 'official' *hui* with the wider group, and since then we have been invited to provide consultative input into both education and health areas. It has been encouraging to see this group grow and to see new collaborations occurring - we created a joint submission for the highest needs review which supported each of our individual work and crafted a strong narrative for supporting the needs of our children.

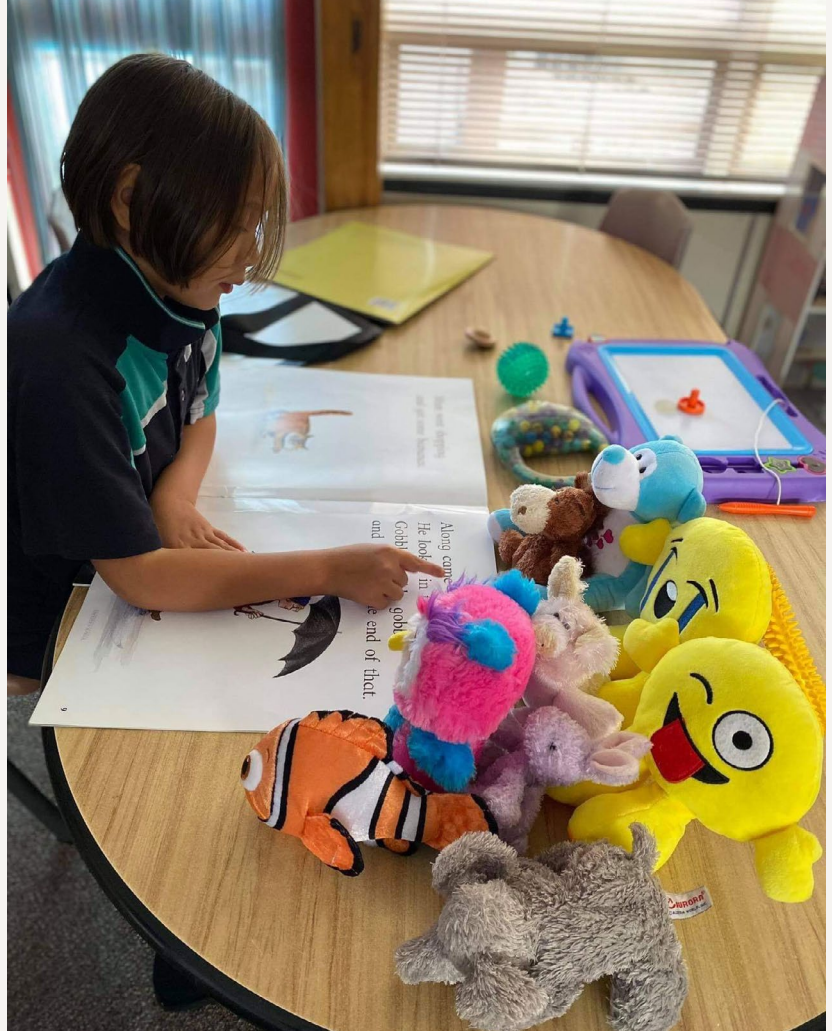
We've also collaborated on the following joint submissions with Blind Low Vision NZ and Kāpō Māori Aotearoa:

- He Tūāpapa ki te ora, Infrastructure for a Better Future consultation
- Housing and Urban Development in Aotearoa (GPS-HUD)
- Incorporated Societies Bill
- Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) Review

These ones are all terribly dry to read but highly important in terms of ensuring our families have affordable and accessible transport to use, can live in accessible homes and towns/cities, and that all future

EO REPORT CONTINUED...

Below: Lily at school reading to her 'class' of stuffed animals. They are not being well behaved!



development considers disabilities in their planning processes. Joining together with Blind Low Vision and Kāpō Māori also strengthens our submissions and reduces the workload, which is win-win for all of us!

Finally, am really enjoying hearing how everyone's kids are doing, the gains they make, the challenges they face, and the fun they have! Our Lily continues to enjoy school, and it has been super encouraging this year to see her reading start to develop. She finds the large print easier to manage. It just goes to show with a little support and some understanding and flexibility it is entirely possible to create learning environments that work for everyone.

Kia pai tō rā
Rebekah



Above: Rebekah

PVI CONFERENCE AND AGM 2021

NOTICE OF PARENTS OF
VISION IMPAIRED NZ INC.,
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SUNDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2021
AT THE DISTINCTION HOTEL,
DUNEDIN FROM 10.00 AM



REGISTRATION FORMS FOR THE PVI 2021 CONFERENCE & AGM ARE NOW AVAILABLE!

Register here: <https://forms.gle/3JVw6k56SsoAHURR7>
Date: 5–7 November 2021
Venue: Distinction Hotel,
Dunedin

We are limited in the number of spaces we can offer this year, so it is very much a case of first in/paid, first served. Would absolutely LOVE to be able to have all who would like to attend there but I'm sure you all understand the need for PVI to be fiscally responsible!

CONFERENCE FEES AND OPTIONS:

PVI members: Full conference*: \$200/couple and \$150/single
PVI members: Saturday day only (no accommodation required) \$30
PVI members: Saturday day only AND Conference dinner \$50
Non-PVI members and Organisation delegates: Conference \$250,
Conference dinner \$50

PVI will pay for the following for members usually resident in NZ:

- Return air fares (within NZ), return airport transfers from Dunedin Airport to Distinction Hotel
- Accommodation (own room) at the Distinction Hotel Friday and Saturday night. This includes breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning.

All other costs are parents own.

**The full conference package includes meet and greet Friday night (dinner at delegates own cost), full Conference Day Saturday (lunch provided), Conference Dinner Saturday night, and AGM Sunday morning.*

SPORTS IN JULY



THIS EVISION WE HIGHLIGHT THE WORK THAT BLINDSPORT IS DOING TO ENSURE SPORTING ENDEAVOURS ARE ACCESSIBLE FOR OUR CHILDREN. IT REMAINS A COMMON ASSUMPTION BY MANY SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND COACHES THAT SPORTS IS “TOO DANGEROUS” OR “NOT POSSIBLE” OR A “HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK” FOR BLIND AND LOW VISION CHILDREN. OFTEN PEOPLE MEAN VERY WELL BUT DON’T HAVE THE TOOLS OR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO CREATE A TRULY INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY SPORTING ENVIRONMENT, WHICH IS WHERE BLIND SPORT NNZ COMES IN!

BLIND SPORT

Blind Sport New Zealand is New Zealand's National Disability Sport Organisation for blind, deafblind and low-vision sport and active recreation. We work to ensure all individuals living with a vision impairment can actively engage in sport and active recreation in their local community.

Blind Sport NZ supports individuals with a vision impairment across Aotearoa to get active. They work with:

- all ages
- all levels of activity (participation and competitive)
- all vision impairments, including individuals with additional needs
- all sports and active recreation

Blind Sport NZ achieves this through:

- connecting individuals with local clubs and coaches
- upskilling sport organisations, coaches and schools so they can provide quality inclusive sport opportunities
- advocating for inclusive sport opportunities in all areas of sport
- supporting the sport community with programmes, event preparation and delivery
- supporting their organisational members with their programmes and events
- running youth programmes

Blind Sport NZ is connected to a wide range of disability specific and mainstream sport organisations and the wider blindness sector. This helps to ensure what they do is sustainable, local and led by the expert in that space. Blind Sport NZ works closely with the Parafed Network, which is a group of regional organisations that provides sport and recreation opportunities for those with disabilities, from beginners to high performance athletes. Visit the Parafed Network website to find out what opportunities are available in your region.

Blind Sport NZ also works alongside the Halberg Foundation, an organisation that enhances the lives of New Zealanders with physical disabilities through sport and active recreation. Through the Halberg Foundation, athletes can access funding for coaching sessions and adapted equipment. For more information about the Halberg Foundation head to their website.

Visit the Blind Sport New Zealand website www.blindsport.kiwi to learn more about the opportunities available and for details on how to contact the Blind Sport NZ team.



BLIND SPORT NEW ZEALAND'S ACCESSIBLE SPORT KITS



From August this year, accessible sports equipment will be available to hire for free across Aotearoa as part of Blind Sport NZ's Accessible Sport Kits. Available in 19 regions across New Zealand, the kit includes a range of accessible sports equipment, a comprehensive instruction manual and teaching resource.

By making accessible sports equipment and resources readily available across New Zealand, Blind Sport NZ is ensuring that vision impaired groups and individuals can engage in sport and recreation alongside their peers.

What is inside the Accessible Sport Kit?

- Accessible sport equipment – to allow users to play six sports (both team and individual) along with a wide range of games and activities to help get them active.
- Instruction manual - an overview of each sport, sport specific skill development, games and where to find more information.
- Teaching resource and lesson plans – to be used by teachers to encourage extended learning within their classroom. This will be centred around adapted sport, the importance of inclusion and could be expanded to cover a wide range of areas.

Who is the Accessible Sport Kit for?

- Physical education teachers with a blind or low vision student in their class. School teachers and their classes who are learning about adaptive and inclusive sport.
- Families who have a child with a vision impairment.
- Sport organisations running events/programmes who want to ensure their programme is inclusive and accessible to blind and low vision participants.

How can I hire an Accessible Sport Kit?

From August, the Accessible Sport Kits will be available to hire on the Blind Sport NZ website. If you would like to express your interest in hiring a kit, or would like more information, please get in touch with Blind Sport NZ's Education and Programmes manager, Casey Flood at casey@blindsport.kiwi

WIN AN ACCESSIBLE SPORTS KIT!

Click on the link below, fill out your name and email and be in to win! It's as easy as that!
<https://forms.gle/kTYXG5zQiro5Yg1E6>

The winner will be drawn 5pm on the 30th July 2021.

MEET CHAMPION SWIMMER, MARY FISHER



You can read more about Mary's paralympic achievements here: paralympics.org.nz/paralympians-profiles/mary-fisher-174

MARY FISHER IS A WORLD-CLASS SWIMMER, WINNER OF FOUR GOLD MEDALS, A SUPPORTER OF DEVELOPING PARALYMPIC SWIMMERS, A COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AND MENTOR AT THE BLIND FOUNDATION. SHE DESCRIBES HER MAIDEN PARALYMPIC EXPERIENCE, IN WHICH SHE WON FOUR MEDALS, AS “INCREDIBLE” AND SAYS OF HER GOLD MEDAL MEMORIES: “TO BE IN THE BEST IN THE WORLD ON THAT DAY AND TO BE ABLE TO SHARE IT WITH SO MANY PEOPLE WAS AWESOME.”

MARY TALKS ABOUT HER LIFE AND REFLECTS ON HER EXPERIENCES OF GROWING UP BLIND/LOW VISION.



Kia ora, I'm Mary and I live in Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington.

When I was born in 1993 my parents took me home the same day and were none the wiser they had a six-pound human who saw the world differently. They soon noticed I wasn't opening my eyes and looking around like my peers. An astute GP and subsequent ophthalmologists later learnt I had the rare genetic condition aniridia. It meant my irises never formed and other ocular structures were underdeveloped or deteriorated over time. As a child I had 6/60 acuity and as a teen this worsened to what I see now, light perception. Simon is my younger brother by two years and he has normal sight.

Upper Hutt was our home and I attended the local schools which generally worked for my *whānau*. My parents are incredibly supportive of mine and Simon's curiosities. With a mix of tech and advocacy from my parents and teachers I did well academically and thrived on learning. Blind Foundation recreation activities were a central part of my life and the friends I made over summers in Tāupo for kids camp are sturdy lifelong ones. At school I had some friends and wasn't outright bullied but often felt an outsider in social situations...looking back I'm sure this was far more to do with my introverted personality and geeky interests than with my eyes but at the time my vision impairment felt like a massive difference! At 15 I learnt Braille and how to use a cane.

I went on to do an arts degree by distance through Massey and now work part-time at Blind Low Vision NZ. I help connect people with volunteers

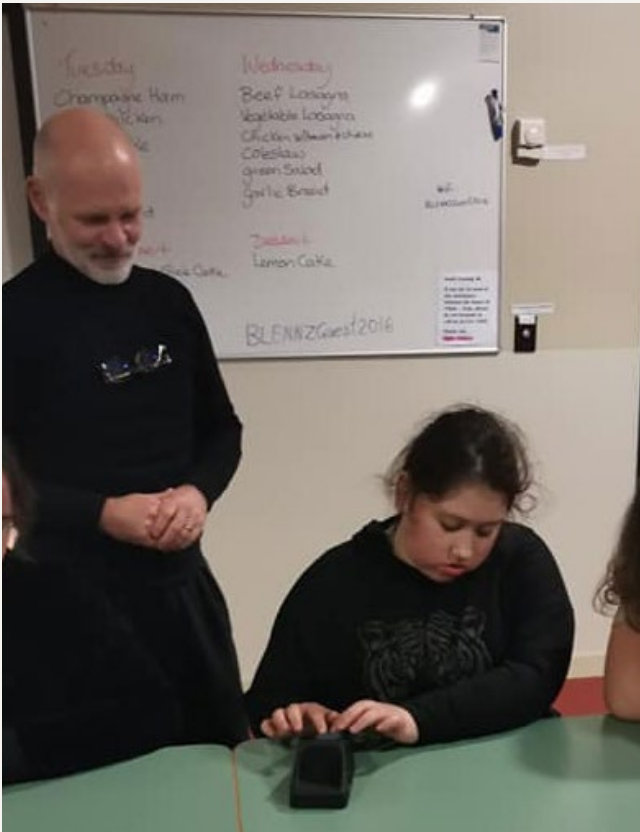
and recreation activities. Sometimes I'll walk to the office with a colleague who lives close to where I live with three flatmates and other times I'll bus. I know Wellington city fairly well and with confident cane and orientation skills so much is possible. That's not to rule out a guide dog in the future though!

From the age of nine I swam with Upper Hutt Swim Club and my childhood love of floating around in pools became a sport...which I grabbed and poured my (and my mum's) many, many early mornings into the ultimate goal of representing NZ at the Paralympic Games. It culminated in racing, medalling and setting world records in London 2012 and Rio 2016. The process was life-changing.

In the future I'm keen to be involved in research and help improve the current systems in disability and environmental issues. The best thing my parents did was to not hem me in when medical professionals said, "Mary's sight will be poor but we just don't know what she'll be able to do." They took that as an open book to encourage my passions, they advocated and were a support net...while still letting me get grazes and problem-solve for myself.

EKKO EKKO GAME

THE PVI BOARD HAS BEEN WORKING WITH A GAME DEVELOPER ON A FUN FAMILY GAME DESIGNED WITH OUR BLIND CHILDREN IN MIND.



Left: Cyrille shows Giana how to use the Ekko Ekko game device. **Right:** Cyrille demonstrating the Ekko Ekko game device with Kenan and Lily (who was more interested after she'd finished her macaroni cheese!).



The PVI Board has been working with a game developer on a fun family game designed with our blind children in mind. Cyrille Guillot, who has been driving the project, now has a working prototype! A handful of PVI families have trialed it, along with BLENNZ staff. Essentially you have to guess what the sound is BUT the sound has been distorted, getting progressively easier. It was a lot of fun and we are all looking forward to seeing the final product! Watch this space!

RESEARCH COLLABORATION UPDATE

Below: Chrissie Cowan (EO of Kāpō Māori Aotearoa) with the MTK group



FUNDED BY NGĀ PAE O TE MĀRAMATANGA, OUR PROJECT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BRIDGETTE MASTERS-AWATERE (DIRECTOR OF THE MĀORI AND PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH UNIT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO), CHRISSIE COWAN (EO OF KĀPŌ MĀORI AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND INC.), AND DR REBEKAH GRAHAM (EO OF PARENTS OF VISION IMPAIRED NZ INC).



Right: Minister Sepuloni meeting with members of MTK after receiving our research analysis report

Funded by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, our project is a collaboration between Associate Professor Bridgette Masters-Awatere (Director of the Māori and Psychology Research Unit at the University of Waikato), Chrissie Cowan (EO of Kāpō Māori Aotearoa New Zealand Inc.), and Dr Rebekah Graham (EO of Parents of Vision Impaired NZ Inc).

We held two *wānanga* in Hamilton. The first *wānanga* involved *whakawhanaungatanga*, followed by a discussion of people's experiences during and post Covid-19 of their to cultural and health needs and the types of supports that were supplied. The second *wānanga* presented the initial analysis to everyone, and we discussed these further.

People who attended identified that receiving support (from health, education, and social sectors) in ways that did not compromise their identity as Māori, nor expect them to choose between "being Māori" and "being disabled" as key. For example, people discussed the awkwardness of having strangers call to "check-in" during covid lockdowns. This occurred with both iwi-based and with DHB-based providers. Reluctance to engage with a stranger on the phone was sometimes misconstrued as *whakamā*. However, with no previous engagement and no *whakawhanaungatanga*, there was no relationship with the caller and/or provider. Providers

needed to establish a relationship first. The covid-related lockdowns could have been ideal for starting to establish relationships to build on in the future; this was a missed opportunity.

Most research and consultation-type events are inaccessible for *kāpō*. 'Standard' research practice has several barriers (travel, communication, time) that *kāpō* must overcome in order to attend – once these barriers were removed, people were highly enthusiastic about attending our *wānanga*. This experience highlights absent voices from research and health-related consultation processes. When reflecting together, people who attended commented extremely favourably regarding the research process as we minimised barriers to attendance and kept people well informed throughout.

Our summary analysis was presented to Minister Sepuloni by MTK at their meeting in June.

NOTES:

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