

eVision December 2022

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



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Right: Mother playing blocks with her children.

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FROM THE CHAIR

TĒNĀ KOUTOU KATOĀ,

It seems an age since our 2022 September National Conference but oh, what a wonderful event. To be finally able to meet face to face share, learn and laugh!

Huge thanks again to the Board organising committee along with Rebekah who put the three days together. There was something for everyone and the accommodation and hospitality from the staff at Distinction Hotel was amazing. I was very proud to be a 'Dunedinite' and the Chair of your PVINZ Board. Thank you again to all fellow Board Members for your contributions over the past year. We welcomed two new Board members to the team. The huge surprise of the Conference dinner was being honoured with Life Membership. Totally 'broad sided' and was plotted and planned without any clue it was going to happen. I was so pleased that Jim could be there with me at the dinner to share the presentation. Thank you all again for the many congratulations and kind comments.

There have been many challenges, in particular securing funding for PVI to continue its work for parents and whānau. Our EO, Rebekah, has done an amazing job in being 'creative' and seeking opportunities to financially support us. I am pleased that as I write this, the Board has become aware of the outcome of our latest funding round with the RNZFB and we have secured funding for the next two years of \$160,000pa. Whilst it is not as much as hoped, this puts us in a position of some certainty and enables us to seek the additional funds elsewhere.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your whānau a Merry Christmas and hope that it is all that you would want it to be.

Left: Mother holding child's hand, guiding her through a field.

Nga mihi nui, Judith
Chairperson, PVINZ INC



WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST FELLOWSHIP

**PVI IS DELIGHTED TO
ANNOUNCE THAT OUR
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, DR REBEKAH
GRAHAM HAS BEEN
AWARDED A WINSTON
CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP!**

Right: Three young boys following each other.

This prestigious fellowship will contribute towards overseas travel for Rebekah to London and Scotland, where Rebekah will meet with our equivalent organisations there, learn what programmes they offer, see what useful parent/whānau capacity building and training is provided and bring that knowledge back to benefit families here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

More to come early next year!

Read more about the fellowship here: wcmt.co.nz



RNZB CINDERELLA ATTENDEE FEEDBACK



- 6th year of partnership being the Royal New Zealand Ballet and PVI
- A record number of blind and vision impaired children, adults and their families took part in this year's event – Cinderella ballet
- Since the inaugural audio described touch tour and performance in Auckland back in 2017, the number of participants has more than doubled from 86 in 2017 to 216 this year.

PVI Board member Pascale Parenteau is thrilled to update us about this year's Royal New Zealand Ballet Cinderella audio described touch-tours and school matinees. The RNZB received a record number of bookings from individual parents and from Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) this year – altogether 143 people (a mix of students, carers, parents, and staff) attended an audio described ballet performance of Cinderella!!

WELLINGTON 10 children + 10 parents/teachers/ carers + 3 staff attended

CHRISTCHURCH 21 students + 21 parents/teachers/ carers attended

AUCKLAND 38 students + 35 parents/teachers/carers + 5 staff attended. Attendees came from Auckland North, Auckland South, Hamilton and Whangārei! The seats on hold for the blind and vision impaired students were all allocated, and a group of 11 senior students of BLENNZ Auckland Residential Transition Programme attended the Saturday audio described public matinee so they didn't miss out.

Left: Students from BLENNZ Wellington attending a Touch Tour before the Cinderella School Matinee. Photo by Stephen A'Court.

Royal New Zealand Ballet also received some overwhelmingly positive feedback and comments:

"It was my first time going to a ballet, I've never been to one before especially one that was audio described and that also had a Touch tour that gave extra insight into the show. Live orchestra was great I loved the plot twist, and the acceptance of the queen was good. I really loved the music. The fencing act was great and I gained a deeper understanding of the well-worded hard-hitting yet heartfelt message sent from the ballet. Thanks for the amazing experience."

— **Tyrese, student**

"We had a fabulous time and loved every minute of it. I haven't heard Amaria giggle so much in a long time. The highlights were definitely the wonderful music and touching the costumes and props. Keep up the amazing work, you're truly making us feel so included and bringing so much joy."

— **Stephanie, parent**

"This was my first time attending the ballet. I found it amazing. This was also my first time attending a live show with audio description. The audio description was helpful to me because I was unable to see the details of the people and the little things that were happening on stage. I felt that I could enjoy the show more with audio description. I was able to fully understand the story 10 times more than let's say if there was no audio description."

— **Jade, student**

"TJ really enjoyed it! And what a great opportunity for her! Her Nan also loved it!! It's something we would never have considered so we are so grateful for the chance. Thank you so much!"

— **Kerry, parent**

"Aimee is multi-sensory impaired so the transcribe for her was particularly important. She also has high anxiety so getting her to go to events is a challenge. To be able to see behind the scenes and watch the dancers practice was so special. It was a wonderful opportunity to show the work that goes in behind the scenes. She absolutely loved the experience and had so many questions. Please pass our immense thanks and gratitude on to all involved."

— **Annette, parent**

"I thought the ballet was fun, I said no to audio and now I regret not having audio so will definitely get that next time. Sitting in row two gave me good visual access."

I thought the touch tour was great and I love the props. It made it easier to understand what was happening on the stage having a touch tour. The music was great. I like Cinderella's outfit, I liked the ragged one, it looked pretty too."

— **Juliana, student**

On behalf of the RNZB dancers and staff and the many blind or vision impaired children and their families who attended their first ballet, a huge heartfelt thank you to Parents of Vision Impaired NZ for your generous financial support. You have done more than you will ever know!

BLIND SPORT NZ 2023



BLIND SPORT NEW ZEALAND IS THE NATIONAL SPORTING ORGANISATION FOR LOW VISION AND BLIND SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES.

We have asked Jemma from Blind Sport to give a quick update of what Blind Sport has been up to and what events they have coming up next year:

Many of you already know we aim to raise awareness of blind sport, connect individuals to sporting opportunities, lead/collaborate with organisations to create programmes and events, and finally support our membership, both individual and national bodies such as NZ blind cricket and Goalball NZ. But do you know we also host practicals and workshops for schools and organisations for PD? Do you also know that we have a sport development fund, which provides funding for members to get to events, buy equipment, travel, and coaching costs to create more sporting opportunities? And finally have you heard about our accessible sports kits which are all over NZ and you can borrow for up to 2 weeks free? Find out more on our website.

We are getting ready for an exciting 2023 at Blind Sport NZ with many new projects starting. Following the success of our first online basic awareness training, we are aiming to not only host it fairly regularly throughout the year for future coaches and volunteers, but also develop further specific sports modules to upskill on particular sports. If you have any ideas of what you would like from us training wise, please get in touch with jemma@blindsport.kiwi.

Above: Man rock climbing.
Left: Two people on a bike.

2023 DIARY DATES

8 JANUARY

Tennis Inclusion Fun Whanau Day
ASB Auckland
Cost - Free

19-22 JANUARY

Auckland Fifa Unity Pitch Activations
Cost - Free

17 FEBRUARY 11AM-12PM

Hamilton Fifa Unity Pitch Blind Football Have A Go
Cost - Free

24-26 FEBRUARY

Auckland Swimming NZ & Blind Sport
Swim Camp Series
Cost - Free, including transport and accommodation

27 FEBRUARY

BSNZ Online Basic Awareness training
Cost - \$15, but free for BSNZ members

17-20 MARCH

Dunedin Fifa Unity Pitch
Cost - Free

18 MARCH

Auckland Bike Series Part 1
Cost - Free

7-23 APRIL

Halberg Games 2023 BSNZ team, EOI's

20 APRIL

Auckland Bike Series Part 2
Cost - Free

29-30 APRIL

Healthvision Festival Of Disability Sport
Tauranga
Cost - Free

20 MAY

Auckland Bike Series Part 3
Cost - Free

17 JUNE

Auckland Bike Series Part 4
Cost - Free

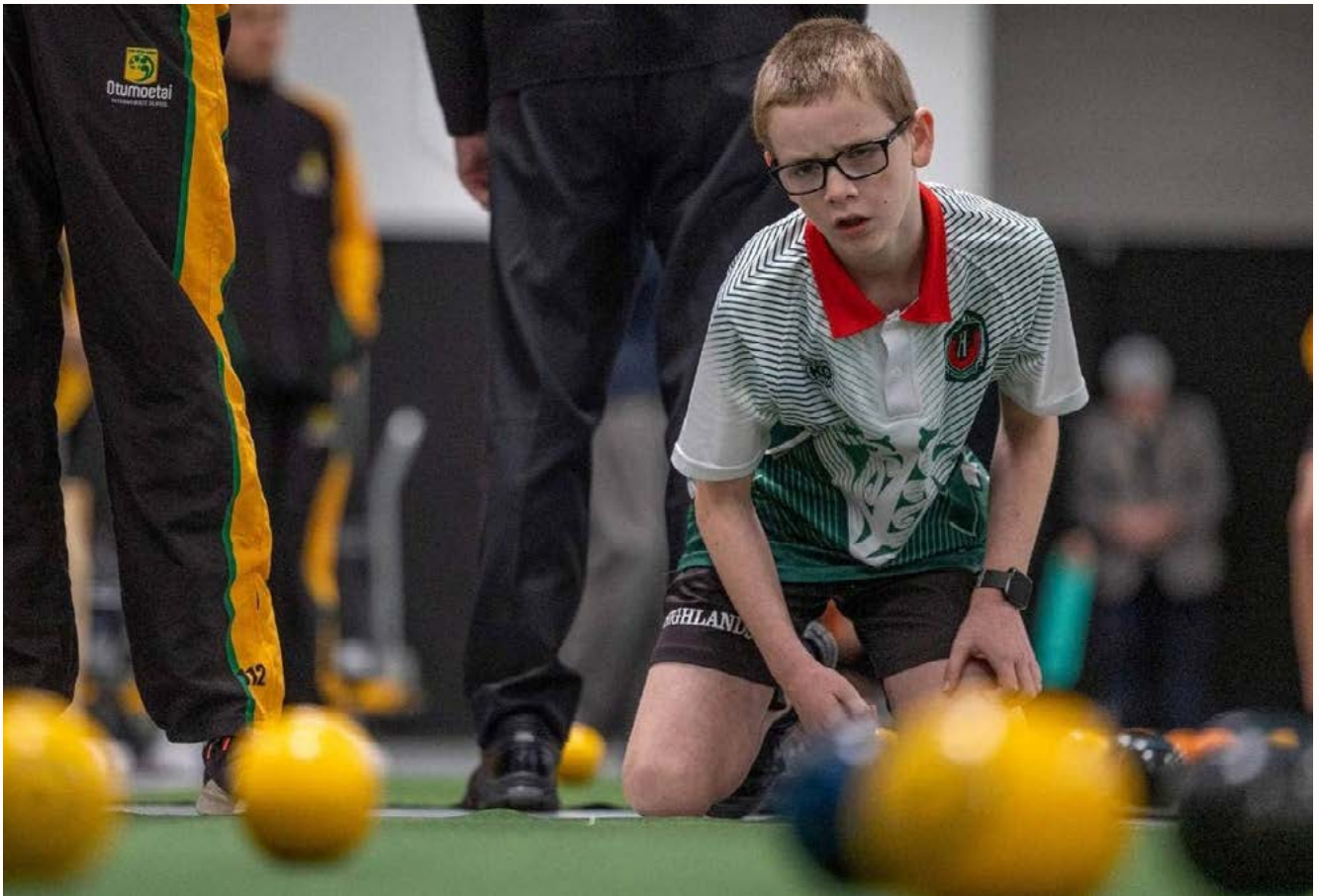
7 JULY

Auckland Bike Series Part 5
Cost - Free

To find out more information about any of the events above please get in touch with Jemma Drake jemma@blindsport.kiwi. This is not an extensive events list, and more activities will be planned and organised throughout the coming weeks. To keep in touch with the most up to date information please like us on Facebook, and also sign up to our newsletter on our website.



ZACH GRAHAM INDOOR BOWLS COMPETITOR



ZACH IS A STUDENT AT HIGHLANDS INTERMEDIATE IN TARANAKI AND RECENTLY ATTENDED THE ZESPRI AIMS GAMES IN TAURANGA.

He uses a white stick when he walks to school and reads in braille, but being visually impaired hasn't stopped 11-year-old Zach Graham bowling his way to success at his very first AIMS Games in Tauranga.

Zach is competing in indoor bowls, and is part of a team of seven players from Highlands School in New Plymouth. Read more by following the link:

stuff.co.nz/sport/other-sports/aims-games/300681286/visuallyimpaired-competitor-bowling-his-way-to-victory-at-aims-games



Left and Above: Highlands Intermediate indoor bowler Zach Graham, who is partially sighted, competing at the Zespri AIMS Games in Tauranga.

SUBMISSIONS BY PVI

PVI HAS SUBMITTED ON THE FOLLOWING OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS:

- Charities Amendment Bill. The objective of this bill is to make practical changes to support charities to continue their vital contribution to community well-being, while ensuring that contribution is sufficiently transparent to interested parties and the public.
- Franklin Local Board re Ray Fausett play space design. The local board want to create play spaces in Ray Fausett Reserve that young and older children can enjoy. PVI made suggestions for including blind and low vision children in the play design.
- Ministry of Education Long-term Insights Briefing: Preparing All Young People for Satisfying and Rewarding Lives. Preparing all young people for satisfying and rewarding working lives is an important issue to explore. Although many young people successfully navigate transitions from school to work, further education or training, a significant proportion of young people experience persistent barriers which prevent them from reaching their employment goals and aspirations. This is a long-standing and complex policy challenge with multi-generational consequences. PVI reminded MOE of the particular challenges that vision impaired young people face when seeking further education and/or employment post-school
- The Productivity Commission: A fair chance for all: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage. The Government has asked the Productivity Commission to undertake an inquiry into economic inclusion and social mobility with a focus on helping those experiencing persistent disadvantage. PVI focussed on the areas of disadvantage facing families and vision-impaired children and young people. We noted that any assistance must be accessible and support self-determination of the family unit.
- Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. This bill establishes a new legislative framework that addresses systemic accessibility barriers that prevent disabled people, tāngata whaikaha and their whānau, and others with accessibility needs from living independently and participating in all areas of life. PVI noted the many inadequacies of the proposed Bill and recommended it be strengthened in multiple areas.
- Inquiry into the future of inter-regional passenger rail in New Zealand (written submission and oral presentation). The Transport and Infrastructure Committee has opened an inquiry into the future of inter-regional passenger rail in New Zealand. The aim of the inquiry is to find out what the future could hold for inter-regional passenger rail in New Zealand. PVI emphasised the value of independent travel for blind and low vision persons and that trains support this in highly practical ways. PVI's oral presentation to the committee is at 52 minutes on the link, where our EO says, yes please more trains for our kids, our blind and low vision kids can't drive, they need a good end-to-end journey, trains take wheelchairs more effectively than buses, and our young folk deserve to be able to travel about the country as independently as any other kid does! The Committee members were lovely and really appreciated a submission that considered the experience of the end user and the difference that a decent rail network would make for people who would be able to independently travel Watch here: [fb.watch](#)

Right: Young boy plays on a wooden playground.



‘I’M MĀORI FIRST’



THE VISION-IMPAIRED COMMUNITY FINDING STRENGTH IN WHAKAPAPA.

Above: Illustration by Pounamu Wharekawa (Ngāi Te Rangi)

How a long-running Māori-led organisation is helping tāngata kāpō Māori find both support and solidarity.

Led by Associate Professor Bridgette Masters-Awatere at the University of Waikato, who collaborated with the Chief Executive of Parents Vision Impaired NZ, Dr Rebekah Graham, and with Chief Executive of Kāpō Māori Aotearoa, Chrissie Cowan, the project invited tāngata kāpō Māori to come together and talk about their experiences during the first Covid-19 lockdown.

Read more: thespinoff.co.nz/atea/01-12-2022/im-maori-first-the-vision-impaired-community-finding-strength-in-whakapapa

PROJECT UPDATE: CARE IN THE COMMUNITY FUND



SO FAR PVI HAS SUPPORTED OVER 130 FAMILIES FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH CARE IN THE COMMUNITY COVID PREPARATION FUND.

Above: Countdown Giftcards.

From this Fund, PVI families can receive a preparation care package, a \$100 Countdown voucher, reimbursements for Covid-19 preparation expenses, or for other items that will assist your family to prepare for Covid-19 related isolation periods.

We still have support available! Things to think about are, if your family got Covid-19 what would help? For example, apps, books, Disney Plus, Spotify, etc. This Fund is designed to support the whole family, so do think about what your children would want and how that might be different for each child - for example, apps for one, e-books for another, paperback books and art supplies for the other - and of course your needs as parents are important too!

If you and your family would find this useful in any way - please fill out the Google form and let us know and we will get it sorted for you! [forms. gle/45anrMmji9ucAFxc8](https://forms.gle/45anrMmji9ucAFxc8)

ODI PARENT/WHĀNAU NETWORK

PVI SECURED FUNDING FROM TE POU TO ORGANISE A TWO-DAY WĀNANGA FOR PARENT AND WHĀNAU ORGANISATIONS IN THE DISABILITY SECTOR.

It went really well! It is the first time many of us have been in a room together since the group formed in early 2021. As you can imagine, there was a lot to discuss! 22 people from 15 different groups attended.

What did we do during these two days?

We hammered out a clear understanding of who we are, what it means to be a parent/whānau led organisation or group, and where we 'fit' within Whaikaha (Ministry of Disabled People).

We met with the incoming CE of Whaikaha, Paula Tesoriero, who made time in a very busy schedule to spend over an hour talking about progress to date, answered our many questions, and gave some direction around how our collective voice as parents and whānau would have input.

We met with the Director of the Office for Disability Issues (ODI), who reaffirmed their commitment to Secretariat support and to hosting quarterly meetings between our organisations and various pieces of government/ministry work.

We shared the key issues our organisations are facing and discussed how we might work together on different issues.

Nigel Ngahiwi from Kāpō Māori Aotearoa led the group through some Treaty training within the context of disability, which was a challenging conversation for many.

We heard from Matt Frost, who is the lead for the government response to the UNCRPD/ IMM monitoring. This is a core mechanism for ensuring that the government upholds the rights for our children, and there is a need for increased involvement of families in this process. Matt outlined the current process, answered many questions, and affirmed ongoing involvement by the group with this process (next update will be March 2023).

We heard from the Ministry of Health/Te Whatu Ora team tasked with writing the new national disability strategy. The team spent over an hour listening to the groups collective concerns and making extensive notes! Health is a major pain point for many families and we raised the multiple issues and challenges we face at present.

And of course, throughout, so many conversations and sharing of stories.

It is the first time (as far as I'm aware!) that our collective has been brought together - we all run on the smell of an oily rag, we are all time poor with never enough time or funding to meet the need, and we are all highly passionate about making things better for families. A diverse group, there was potential for the many strong voices to clash, but somehow we instead found ways to support, connect and strengthen our collective approach.



Above: Attendees at the inaugural parent/whānau network wānanga. From left to right, and from back to front: Heather Lear (IEAG), Bridget Ferguson (Deaf Aotearoa), Zandra Vaccarion (NZDA), Friar Wadia (VIPs Equity in Education), Karen Miles (Parent to Parent), Rebekah Corlett (VIPs Equity in Education), Rebekah Graham (PVI), Cherie Cawdron (iFUNZ), Emily Writes (Awhi Nga Matua), Bridget Snedden (Family Network NZ), Trish Grant (IHC Advocacy), Kim Milne (FASD-CAN), Wairemana Campbell (Whānau Collective), Chrissie Cowan (KMA), Nigel Ngahiwi (KMA), Jon Kaho (Whānau Collective), Janette Thompson (iFUNZ), Andrea Lee (Fragile X), Leigh Henderson (FASD-CAN).

CONTACTS

Right: Family sitting on the beach while children play in the sand.

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