# Blind Citizens Australia off to a flying start for 2017

Blind Citizens Australia is off to a busy and exciting start to the year, so we thought we would update you on highlights so far.

You may recall that former President, Emma Bennison, was appointed as our new Executive Officer in January. Emma has now commenced work. She will be based in the BCA office from Monday to Wednesday and will work from her home office in Hobart for the rest of the week.

Following the appointment of three new Directors to fill casual vacancies, the board and senior staff came together for a face-to-face meeting in Sydney on 11th and 12th February to set BCA’s priorities. They also received professional development in relation to governance and financial management.

The new National Policy Council was launched on the Saturday afternoon when NPC members joined the meeting via phone. BCA’s incoming President, John Simpson, provided an overview of his vision for the organisation. You can read his statement here:

<http://bca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/BCA-Presidents-address-110217.docx>

Emma Bennison introduced BCA’s strategic plan for 2017-2020. A summary of the plan can be found at:

<http://bca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Summary-of-Strategic-Plan-2017-2020.docx>

Vice-President Lynne Davis will chair the NPC. Lynne, along with Policy and Advocacy Coordinator Lauren Henley, lead an interactive introduction to the NPC and its work. They reviewed current and future policy issues and emphasised the importance of regular consultation with members to ensure policies are evidence-based.

On Saturday evening, a Memorandum of Understanding, (MOU) between BCA and Blind Citizens NSW, outlining a shared path towards a possible merger, was signed by the Presidents of both organisations. You can hear extracts from the launch event here:

<http://bca.org.au/new-horizons-program-491/>

To read the MOU document, visit:

<http://bca.org.au/memorandum-of-understanding-between-bca-and-bcnsw/>

Now, we are looking ahead to a number of new funding opportunities. We hope these will enable us to reach out to many more people who are blind or vision-impaired, particularly those who are most vulnerable or isolated in our community. We look forward to bringing you more details on these exciting new initiatives as they come to hand.

As always, we welcome your suggestions and feedback. So please contact us any time on the details below. We look forward to hearing from you.

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