**BCA Inform: July, Sports and Community Participation**

On Tuesday, July 16th BCA Inform was held to discuss sports and community participation. With the Olympics just around the corner, the timing couldn't have been more perfect to delve into this important topic and explore opportunities in the realm of sports available to individuals in our community. The session featured esteemed speakers including Tim Haggis and from Blind Sports Australia, Bess Hepworth and Olivia Muller.

Bess and Olivia discussed their backgrounds and stressed the importance of encouraging more blind or vision impaired individuals to participate in sports. Bess highlighted the powerful synergy between sports and advocacy, emphasizing how involvement in sports allows blind and vision impaired people to engage with their communities. She underscored the need to spread awareness about the numerous opportunities available in blind sports, noting that there are many options to choose from. Bess and Olivia also emphasized the strong sense of community that develops among participants.

The session then introduced Tim Haggis as the next guest speaker. Tim spoke about the many benefits of sports, including physical fitness, but he particularly emphasized the importance of the connections built through participation. He advised attendees unsure of where to start, to contact their local state association for guidance on available opportunities. Tim pointed out that the options are now vast, ranging from Blind AFL to Blind table tennis, ensuring there's something for everyone.

A special mention was given to Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria for their active role in providing ample opportunities for community members. The speakers emphasized the importance of spreading the word about the wonderful opportunities available, whether individuals are seeking community participation pathways or aiming for elite-level sports.

It was agreed that creativity has led to a surge in participation and has helped overcome barriers, with the main message being the human connections fostered through sports. The session was a celebration of the growing accessibility and inclusivity in the world of sports, leaving attendees inspired and empowered to explore the opportunities available in their own communities.