



## **BLIND SPORTS & RECREATION VICTORIA NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2019**

Welcome to the first edition of Blind Sports and Recreation Newsletter (BSRV) for 2019.

We look forward to the Government's conducting of two Royal Commissions - one being into The Aged Care Sector and the other The Disability Sector. BSRV would encourage any person, group or organisation to make submissions either as an individual or a systemic group who have been affected by either neglect, abuse, violence or exploitation.

Such inquiries/processes are not to be regarded as revenge or retribution. Rather, to be about identifying what has gone wrong in the past and what now by contrast should be expected in a civilised society ie. what we want to identify. The only way we can move forward and create a better society is to identify what's happened in the past and is currently happening, so we can create a better culture moving forward into the future.

Unfortunately there are often too many good people who remain silent. But they should know how important it is to give feedback, and if they feel they can't do so directly, they could find an advocacy group and/or somebody else who's prepared to do it on their behalf.

Furthermore - what is extremely important in the longer term and whatever the findings of the Royal Commission, Governments say they will monitor implementation of recommendations, but who monitors the degree to which such implementation of recommendations has made any difference?

Will the Royal Commission recommendations include how such recommendations will be **implemented and measured?**

Maurice Gleeson OAM  
President  
Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria

# Table of Contents

Mount Macedon Camp .....	1	
Lunch, Music & Dancing! .....	2	
Kids Gymnastics Clinic .....	3	
This Girl Can – Victoria .....	3	
Harmony Day 2019 .....	3	
Teens Program.....	4	
BSRV Active Teens Blind Tennis Program - Wyndham .....	4	
BSRV Active Teens Blind Soccer - Dandenong .....	4	
Goalball For All.....	4	
Registrations are Open! What's Goalball for All?.....	4	
Blind Tennis International Tournament 2019 .....	5	
Meet some of the Victorian players competing in the International Blind Tennis Tournament in June.....	6	
Volunteers Needed.....	8	
Fancy a hit of tennis?.....	8	
Blind Bowls Vic – Drivers Needed!.....	8	
Tandem Cycling – Pilot Rider Needed Would you like to go for a tandem bike ride once a week? .....	8	
Sponsorship .....	9	

# Mount Macedon Camp

By Carmel Jolley



On Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February a group of people who are blind or have low vision headed off to Mount Macedon for two days of walks and fun, we were assisted by 3 great volunteers, Liz, Shirlene and Gary.

After our 8am start from Kooyong our first stop was for a coffee in the hamlet of Mount Macedon. The coffee shop also sold bread, jams, chutney's, books and served as the post office with pigeon holes for the mail.

We then met ranger Helen who guided us on a very interesting walk at Macedon Regional Park. The walk was to a lake which was man made to provide water for a proposed tuberculosis sanatorium at the turn of last century, however due to public campaigning, the sanatorium was never built. What was interesting was that the park had both indigenous plants, native plants and introduced plants such as rhododendrons. The original plantings were based on providing pleasant walks for the patients at the proposed sanatorium. Although the walk was in the rain, it was very

informative and an opportunity to see how community attitudes to fauna have changed over the years, from the 'old world' to valuing our native species.



Next stop was a picnic lunch at the famous Mount Macedon cross. We walked around the cross but due to the inclement weather had to abandon one of the planned walks. After a meal at the local pub we settled into our comfortable accommodation to get a good night's sleep for the next day's activities.

Wednesday saw us at hanging rock, the famous landmark from the book and movie Picnic at Hanging Rock. Our visit started with the discovery centre where we learnt about the geological formation of the rock and the history around the establishment of the racecourse and race meetings.

Next was a walk along the path to the top. It was a steep climb, the path winding between rock formations and trees. We did not make



it to the top as it was a very difficult climb but instead walked around the base and then around the surrounding area.



After lunch we headed for home, via Hanging Rock winery where we did some wine tasting, a pleasant end to our two days. Thanks to Sandra from Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria for all of her organising and Parks Victoria.

## Lunch, Music & Dancing!

By Miriam Bilander

25 of us went to the Chatterbox Cafe last month for a delicious lunch in Werribee, where the staff were super accommodating for wheelchairs and guide dogs and the food was yum!

After lunch we went to the Old Shire Offices in Werribee for a Tuesdaylele music concert supported by the Wyndham City Council.

The band we heard was 'Dafka', an ukulele duo that played Jewish, gypsy and jazz tunes for one hour. Everyone was tapping their feet and enjoying the music so much that several of us got up to dance. The concert would have been cancelled because of the rain but the organisers made a special effort to relocate indoors just for our group.

Photo below: Enjoying lunch at Chatterbox Cafe



Photo below: The dancing begins



If you would like information on any future events happening in the West, email [miriam@blindsports.org.au](mailto:miriam@blindsports.org.au) or phone 9822 8876.

# Kids Gymnastics Clinic

In January this year, Essendon Keilor Gymnastics Academy together with BSRV held a school holiday clinic

Somersaults, giant leaps into the foam pit, crab walking on parallel bars and hanging from Still Rings, were just some of the amazing things these children who were blind or had low vision participated in.

Photo below: Children receive their medals



Thank you to the wonderful staff at Essendon Keilor Gymnastics Academy, Transurban for their financial support and Miriam Bilander from BSRV for coordinating such a great event.

## This Girl Can – Victoria

This Girl Can – Victoria is more than just a physical activity campaign – it is about empowering women to be comfortable in their bodies and in public spaces. This is about empowering women to be active whenever, wherever and however they choose – without being judged.

VicHealth selected 25 everyday Victorian women to be This Girl Can – Victoria Ambassadors, and they have each shared their story about how they have overcome worries about being judged on their appearance, ability or priorities to get active.

While we are no longer searching for ambassadors, we're still interested in hearing stories from all kinds of Victorian women. We encourage any women reading this to share their story with others by joining the conversation online via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and using the hashtag **#ThisGirlCanVIC** (note the 'VIC'!). You can help us build momentum by encouraging other women you know to get involved too.

The community of women engaged with the campaign online and elsewhere goes a long way to empowering other women with the confidence to get active.

For inspiration, you can check out ambassador stories here: <https://thisgirlcan.com.au/meet-the-girls/>

## Harmony Day 2019

Harmony Day is a time to celebrate Australian multiculturalism, and the successful integration of migrants into our community.

Australia is one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world and we should celebrate this and work to maintain it.



Harmony Week is about inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, regardless of cultural or linguistic background, united by a set of core Australian values.

To celebrate Harmony Day, BSRV together with Werribee Bowls Club invite you to come along and enjoy a delicious lunch, game of lawn bowls and lots of socialising and conversation! Wear something orange and help us to celebrate cultural diversity.

When: Tuesday March 19  
Where: Werribee Bowls Club  
239 Watton St, Werribee  
Time: 11am – 2pm  
Cost: Free  
RSVP: [miriam@blindsports.org.au](mailto:miriam@blindsports.org.au)

## Teens Program

Are you, or do you know, a teen who is blind or has low vision? Do you want to be active and try out a new sport?

BSRV will be hosting 2 new, low cost programs just for teens, kicking off in Term 2.

Bring a friend or family member to join in!

***BSRV Active Teens Blind Tennis Program - Wyndham*** will commence with a FREE OPEN DAY at Hoppers Crossing Tennis Club (Wootten Rd Reserve, corner of Hogans Rd and Wootten Rd, Tarneit).

The Open Day will be on Sunday 5 May, from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm.

(Delivered in partnership with Tennis Victoria and Hoppers Crossing Tennis Club).

***BSRV Active Teens Blind Soccer - Dandenong*** will kick off in early Term 2 (venue and times to be confirmed).

This is a great opportunity to try your hand at some new skills, have fun and meet new people.

To register your interest and receive further information about the program contact [Allie@blindsports.org.au](mailto:Allie@blindsports.org.au) or phone 9822 8876.

## Goalball For All

By Brooke Carter

***Registrations are Open!***



### ***What's Goalball for All?***

Goalball for All is a series of come and try days, where you will have the ultimate opportunity to try Goalball. Playing Goalball is hungry business, we have identified this and not to worry... We've got you covered!

Every come & try day will include a friendly social barbecue that everyone is invited to attend.

Want to know more about Goalball, email us at [info@goalball.org.au](mailto:info@goalball.org.au).

To find out more about our programs, check out website at <https://goalball.org.au/> or follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/vic.goalball/>

**When:**

*Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> 2019*

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

*Thursday March 21<sup>st</sup> 2019*

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

*Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup> 2019*

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

**Where:** Scotch College Junior School Gym (Entry 7 Corner of Glenferrie Road and Callantina Road).

**Getting There:** 10 minute walk from Kooyong Train Station (Glen Waverley Line) or catch Tram #16 from Glenferrie Train Station (Belgrave/ Lilydale Line) to Stop #16 Callantina Road.

**Cost:** Free

**Registrations:** Registering is easy; all you need to do is fill out our form located at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdb99jo3SDQ4Y85AoIXFndeuBmMFPyA4tIcFQg1kag9n\\_IRnA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdb99jo3SDQ4Y85AoIXFndeuBmMFPyA4tIcFQg1kag9n_IRnA/viewform)

## Dance Classes

Do you want to build your core muscles, strength and balance, while exercising your brain? In partnership with the Centre for Adult Education, BSRV is offering weekly dance classes for beginners with vision loss. Classes are open to adults of all ages and body types and there is no prior level of fitness required. Classes are fun and informal.

You will benefit from improved posture, flexibility, strength and balance.

Classes are held at the Council of Adult Education, 253 Flinders Lane Melbourne (near Flinders St station) on Fridays from 12.30 to 2.00pm.

To register your interest or find out more, please contact Amanda at Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria on 9822 8876 or email [Amanda@blindsports.org.au](mailto:Amanda@blindsports.org.au)

## Judo for Children

Yarra Judo is planning a trial program of 4 classes for visually impaired children starting on the first Saturday of term 2 (27 April). Classes will be run at Eltham College and will be fully integrated.

There are classes for 3 age groups. 4 to 6 years, 7 to 10 years and older than 10 years.

### ***Why judo for Visually Impaired players?***

The reasons for visually impaired players to do judo are virtually the same as for normally sighted players. Due to the nature of judo where no kicks and punches are involved, it

is a very safe sport for vision impaired players and any other children.

Below are some of the benefits of doing judo:

1. Teaches Respect
2. Exercises the mind
3. Improves co-ordination, balance, spatial orientation and directionality
4. Teaches how to fall without injury
5. Increases discipline, resilience and character building
6. Teaches self-defence
7. Improves overall confidence
8. Teaches co-operation
9. Physical exercise

The coach for the program will be Neel Beyers. Neel has been involved with judo for close on 45 years. He was a national champion in his country of birth (South Africa) and is currently graded as a 3rd Dan. In South Africa he coached a University team and in Australia started his own club in 2013 running classes for school children. He started his club primarily to accommodate his oldest son who has been diagnosed with ASD. Neel has an International Level 1 Instructor certification from the International Judo Federation. He is also a member of Judo Australia's Special needs (No Limits) committee.

For further information about this program or to register your child, please email [info@blindsports.org.au](mailto:info@blindsports.org.au) or ring 9822 8876.

## Blind Tennis International Tournament 2019

***Meet some of the Victorian players competing in the International Blind Tennis Tournament in June.***

### Michael

Photo below: Michael with Coach Samir



Michael is legally blind but dreams of being a professional tennis player, and is about to take his career to the world stage by participating in the 3rd International Blind Tennis Tournament being held in Spain in June 2019.

"It's a dream come true," Mikey said. "In the past I've had opportunities for being in the Paralympics to represent Australia, not in tennis but in athletics as a sprinter but I was never dedicated enough. "I don't have the passion for sprinting as I do for ball games. I've been playing tennis for 5 years and my goal is to become a professional player - I'm working extremely hard on my fitness and training."



Mikey has had muscular dystrophy since birth and said his partial vision was out of focus. "The best way to explain it to someone is what the average person sees at 60m I have to come up 6m to see that," he said.

## Genamarie

Photo below: Genamarie about to serve



With boundless energy and a zest for life, Genamarie is part of the Australian team who will travel to Spain in June for the 3rd International blind Tennis tournament.

Genamarie said "I didn't think I could play ball sports after I lost my sight, but after learning about the blind tennis program I gained courage and confidence to play and it is now my pride and joy. I love being able to tell people that I play sport! It has given me a sense of freedom, confidence and independence. I was extremely excited when I was selected to play in the 1st Blind Tennis Tournament in 2017. It was an amazing event and the skill of the tennis players was incredible. I was thrilled at the end of the tournament in 2017 to accept the

Best Fairplay award on behalf of the Australian team.

Now, here we are in 2019 and once again I have been selected to play at the 3rd International Tournament. I'm so excited and look forward to another excellent competition in 2019 and the opportunity to learn new skills and meet the many dedicated and wonderful tennis players from around the world."

## Chris

Photo below: Chris standing alongside bagpiper in Ireland



Chris has been playing tennis for eight years and hopes one day to turn pro. But one thing sets him apart from his Greek-Australian counterparts Kokkinakis and Kyrgios - Chris is blind. "After I lost my sight I thought a lot of things would not work out for me because of the sight difficulties but coming to blind sports has really changed my life," he said. Chris lost most of his sight in 1999, a complication from a chronic illness. He had to quit playing Australian rules football, and

he says he became so withdrawn at one stage he feared leaving the house on his own. After discovering blind tennis, he says his confidence returned and so did his desire of becoming a professional sportsman.

Chris is thrilled that he will be competing at the 3rd International Blind Tennis Tournament which is being held in Spain in June 2019 along with 3 other Victorian players, 3 players from South Australia and a support team.

“I’m so excited to be able to represent my country in blind tennis. It really is a wonderful sport and I look forward to meeting the other blind and vision impaired tennis players who will be competing from all around the world.”

To ensure this dream can become a reality for the players and their support team, please support the team travelling to Spain by clicking on the link.

<https://www.mycause.com.au/page/188402/help-blind-tennis-players-score-an-advantage>

## Volunteers Needed

### ***Fancy a hit of tennis?***

Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria are looking for keen volunteers to assist with our wonderful tennis program.

The program provides a perfect way to get active and meet new people in a fun environment. If you don’t have any experience with tennis, we’re happy to show you the ropes!

The program is held on Friday evenings at Melbourne Park Indoor Tennis Courts. For further information, email Adam at [Adam@blindsports.org.au](mailto:Adam@blindsports.org.au) or telephone (03) 9822 8876.

### ***Blind Bowls Vic – Drivers Needed!***

Blind Bowls Victoria play on Sunday’s at various locations and are looking for a mini bus driver to assist them with the occasional country trip.

Could you spare some time to assist this great group of blind bowlers?

Contact [info@blindsports.org.au](mailto:info@blindsports.org.au) for further information.

### ***Tandem Cycling – Pilot Rider Needed***

***Would you like to go for a tandem bike ride once a week?***

Photos below: Two people on a tandem bike riding along bike paths



We have a gentleman who lives in the Hawthorn area and is a keen cyclist. He is looking for someone who enjoys cycling as much as he does and would like to join him as a front rider on his tandem bike once a

week. It would be preferable for the person to have experience on a tandem bike.

If this sounds like something that may be of interest to you, please contact Susan at the BSRV office on 9822 8876 or email [info@blindsports.org.au](mailto:info@blindsports.org.au).

## Sponsorship

Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria invites interested individuals and companies to contact us about sponsorship in this newsletter, a quarterly publication distributed widely including all three levels of

government and various departments including Department of Sport & Recreation, VicHealth and Department of Education.

The newsletter is well circulated through the Australian Sports Commission, a number of generic sporting organisations, numerous corporate partners – both small and large, and other disability sporting groups as well as the Victorian Institute of Sport and to members of the general public.

If you would like to discuss the opportunity for sponsorship, please contact Susan on 9822 8876 or email [info@blindsports.org.au](mailto:info@blindsports.org.au)

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## Yes, I would like to support Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ P/Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit my credit card for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name on card ..... Expiry Date...../.....

Signature .....

*Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible*  
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