

BLIND SPORTS & Recreation Victoria

Friend, what a year!

We certainly have had a lot of fun this year exploring our world through a wide variety of accessible and inclusive sport, recreation and arts events and activities. We've made many connections and welcomed new friends into the BSRV team and community. It has been a busy twelve months.

We are delighted to invite you again to stay involved and active with BSRV in 2024 and look forward to the experiences and adventures the New Year will unveil.

Please note that the BSRV office will be closed from 3pm on December 20, 2023, through to January 29, 2024. During this period, our team will be taking a well-deserved break to recharge and spend time with their families. The office email address and phone message bank will be monitored periodically for any urgent matters that require attention.

Welcome to our December newsletter.
The BSRV team.

In this edition

What's on - Zoom / dial in
What's on - In-person events
We joined in - Read about some activities and outings
Christmas 'Bringing Joy Through Song' event
BSRV Board update
BSRV Ambassador update
Doug Sloan OAM, Award winner
Maurice Gleeson OAM, Award winner
Providing valuable input to a new sensory garden
2023 Blind Tennis Open, S.A.
Health and well-being
Volunteer opportunities
Seeking your feedback

What's On - Zoom / dial-in

Summer Fitness Online Program

Keep moving with BSRV's Summer Fitness Online Program.

While you wait for our online weekly fitness sessions to recommence on Monday 29th January 2024, have a NEW Summer Fitness Online Program available! This program of pre-recorded sessions, created by the BSRV fitness team, is designed to keep you moving and relaxed over the Summer break. There's a great variety of fitness classes, meditations and some Christmas themed walk sessions. PLUS a special Christmas message from Jenny Dodd. Enjoy!

[Discover the Summer Fitness Online Program](#)

MUSIC QUIZ WEDNESDAY

with
Quiz Master
Alan Bartlett

Music Quiz Wednesday challenges in 2024

"I enjoy the music quizzes because it challenges your mind to think and try to recall things from the past, it gets your memory cells tickin' away a bit". Peter.

Join BSRV and Alan Bartlett in 2024 for musical fun.

Term one dates and times:

Wednesday 21st February - 1pm to 2pm

Wednesday 20th March - 10:30am to 11:30am

Wednesday 19th June - 1pm to 2pm

[Read about Music Quiz with Alan Bartlett](#)

What's On - In-person Events



Join us to explore Herring Island in South Yarra

We will be joining the *Walk & Talk Buddies of Stonnington*, a local community walking group, and two Parks Victoria Rangers, for a guided tour of this special man-made island on the Birrarung "Yarra River," located just 4km from the central business district of Melbourne.

Date: Monday 12th February 2024

Time: Walk 10am - 12pm, lunch/coffee at Kanteen Cafe afterwards

Meeting location: Kanteen Cafe, 154 Alexandra Ave, South Yarra

Cost: FREE tour, BYO money for any purchases at the Cafe

RSVP: Contact Marian by Monday the 5th of February, 2024 by phone or email:

marian@blindsports.org.au

0490 905 712

[Learn more about visiting Herring Island](#)



Join us for a 'Sensing Nature' walk at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

Together with nature guides, Rachel DeSumma (BSRV Program Manager), Rose and Marg we will move slowly around the gardens, taking our time to explore the scents, sounds and textures offering invitations to explore our non-visual senses. This walk is an all abilities walk for people with low vision or blindness, or other physical or intellectual disabilities.

When: Wednesday 21st February, 2024, 10.30am to 2pm

Where: Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

Cost: Free. BYO or buy your own lunch

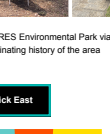
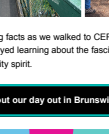
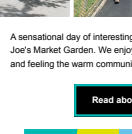
RSVP: Monday 12th February 2024. Please note that Rachel will be on leave until the 30th of January and will confirm places after that date

Contact: Email or call Rachel to register your interest:

Rachel@blindsports.org.au

0493 105 800

[Learn more about this 'Sensing Nature' walk](#)



Wangaratta Peer Support Group. Please join us.

Our Wangaratta Peer Support Group will continue in 2024 with our coffee and cake catch up for people who are blind or have low vision. It's a monthly get together on the first Wednesday of the month, returning February 2024. No January catch-up.

Come along to have a chat, meet new people and discuss how we want to support each other and the kinds of activities we'd like to do together.... while enjoying great coffee and delicious food at *Where is My Coffee*.

When: First Wednesday of every month, returning Wednesday 7th February 2024

Time: From 10.30am

Where: *Where is My Coffee* (Cafe), 1/103 Murphy Street, Wangaratta

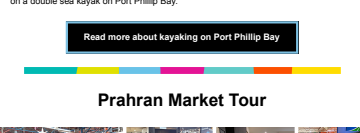
Where is My Coffee is a social enterprise, serving up delicious coffee and life changing opportunities for people with disability.

RSVP to Tegan by email or phone:

tegan@blindsports.org.au

0478 626 393

[Catch up dates for 2024](#)



Blind Tennis at the National Tennis Centre in 2024

Friday night Blind Tennis for juniors and adults at the National Tennis Centre will commence in February 2024 following the Australian Open.

"I came along for the first time and have not stopped smiling since. What an absolutely wonderful group of people, rarely have I felt so instantly at home. Cannot wait to come back and do it all again!" Dave, Blind Tennis participant.

2024 term dates:

Term 1: 9th Feb – 22nd March

Term 2: 19th April – 28th June

Term 3: 19th July – 20th September

Term 4: 11th October – 14th December

Juniors: Friday evenings from 5.30pm to 6.30pm

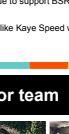
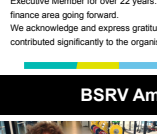
Adults: Friday evenings commencing at 6.30pm to 8pm

Photo courtesy of Tennis Australia. Photographer: Fiona Hamilton.

[Discover more about Blind Tennis](#)

We joined in!

Matt Preston, eat your heart out!



Such a wonderful and inclusive foodie experience... discovering new cuisines and friends on this great 'Flavourhood' Tour.

[Read more about our Flavourhood Tour](#)

Nature, community and friendship



Joining 'Friends of Coburg Lake', we helped nurture the land to leave a lasting legacy.

On Friday the 6th of October, participants Lou, Alan, Dave and Anne, with support workers and volunteers in tow, embraced the inclement weather for what turned out to be a most memorable Blind Sports excursion.

[Read more about our tree planting adventure](#)

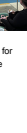
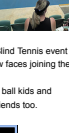
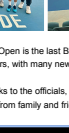
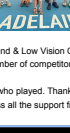
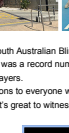
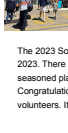
A lot to learn along the Merri Creek



A sensational day of interesting facts as we walked to CERES Environmental Park via Joe's Market Garden. We enjoyed learning about the fascinating history of the area and feeling the warm community spirit.

[Read about our day out in Brunswick East](#)

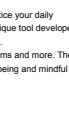
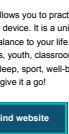
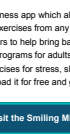
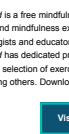
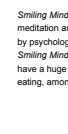
Collingwood Children's Farm



A school holiday animal farm sensory tour. We smelled, touched and tasted.

[David writes about his experience at the farm](#)

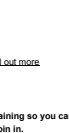
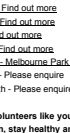
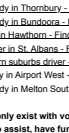
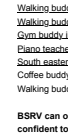
Feeling our way at Design Fringe



We had a fabulous day of tactile art experiences.

We had a sensory feast while exploring art and design at the Annual Design Fringe Tactile Furniture Tour. Thanks to Vitae Veritas and Nilgun Guven, the Melbourne Fringe, Linden New Art, and the artists that generously shared and explained their work.

Kayaking in Port Phillip Bay



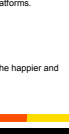
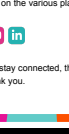
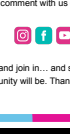
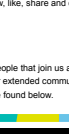
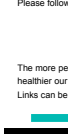
"A wonderful and energising experience", said Carmel, BSRV volunteer.

We learned how to react to the wind and waves, how to paddle to the conditions and new tips for water safety... and had immense fun.

Annette Leishman, BSRV volunteer Ambassador, shares her account of her day out on a double sea kayak on Port Phillip Bay.

[Read more about kayaking on Port Phillip Bay](#)

Prahran Market Tour



"A place all foodies must visit," Maria (BSRV Ambassador) shares her experience visiting the wonderful Prahran Market.

[Discover why Maria recommends visiting the Prahran Market](#)

Bringing joy through the gift of song and Origami

Staying connected through creativity and love of the arts. A wonderful lead up to Christmas celebrating the BSRV Origami project and the Statewide Vision Resource Centre children's choir at the Victorian Artists' Project in East Melbourne on the 14th December.

Inspired by the desire to bring joy to others, Rob and Gigi led and mentored groups who learned Christmas carols through braille music and Origami making respectively.

[Read about celebrating the 'Connected Together' projects](#)

Welcome to Kaine Reynolds

Congratulations to Maurice Gleeson on his reappointment as President to BSRV at the AGM. We welcome Kaine Reynolds to the BSRV Board in the role of Secretary and sincerely thank Kaye Speed who is retiring from the Board after being an Executive Member for over 22 years. Kaye will continue to support BSRV in the finance area going forward.

We acknowledge and express gratitude to individuals like Kaye Speed who have contributed significantly to the organisation's success.

BSRV Ambassador team

As we bid farewell to our outgoing Ambassadors Phoebe, Chris, Wanda and Jason, we want to extend our gratitude for their contribution in raising awareness of Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria (BSRV).

As we embark on a new chapter, we are excited to welcome three new individuals – Maria, Shane and Dave who will be joining our Ambassador team. Their enthusiasm, skills and commitment to the BSRV mission, make them valuable additions to our organisation, and we look forward to the continued growth that they will undoubtedly bring to BSRV. Thank you all for your ongoing support, and here's to the bright future ahead.

[Meet our the wonderful past and present BSRV Ambassadors](#)

Congratulations Doug Sloan OAM

Doug Sloan OAM receives a Victorian Senior of the Year Award.

Doug's enthusiasm and commitment for helping others, encouraging participation and for enjoying life to its fullest has been recognised with him receiving the 'Healthy and Active Living' Award at the 2023 Victorian Senior of the Year Awards' that took place at Government House.

Unfortunately Doug was unable to attend the event, so his award was received by BSRV President Maurice Gleeson OAM, on his behalf.

[Read more about Doug Sloan OAM](#)

Congratulations Maurice Gleeson OAM

Member for Higgins, Dr. Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP, presented Maurice Gleeson with the Higgins Community Spirit Award on 18 December. The aim of the award is to formally recognise the exemplary contributions of people in the Higgins community, who have demonstrated compassion and generosity in serving the local community.

Maurice received the award based on his long-standing commitment as President and CEO of BSRV for the past 33 years, through which he has increased awareness, participation and blind sport and recreation options for people with vision loss. At the same time, Maurice has provided support to others at any time of the day or night - whether it be someone who has lost a spouse, family member or friend; assisting a newly arrived refugee to integrate or welcoming a new participant to BSRV's thirty plus programs.

A garden to engage visitors in a unique way

On behalf of the BSRV Community, Rob and Silvana (BSRV Ambassadors) have been consulting with Parks Victoria in the design of a sensory garden at the Serendip Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary is located about 45 minutes west of Melbourne and is very typical of a native Australian landscape with an added manmade lake.

The Sensory Garden is intended to provide an experience that can be shared and enjoyed by everyone and is designed to stimulate sight, smell, sound, touch and taste. Parks Victoria have welcomed input and are being very creative and innovative with the gardens design. Final design is expected soon and construction is due to start in 2024.

Blind Tennis Open South Australia November 3rd to 5th

The 2023 South Australian Blind & Low Vision Open is the last Blind Tennis event for 2023. There was a record number of competitors, with many new faces joining the seasoned players.

Congratulations to everyone who played. Thanks to the officials, ball kids and volunteers. It's great to witness all the support from family and friends too.

[View the S.A. BLV Tennis Open results](#)

Health and Well-being

mindfulness

Have you tried Smiling Mind?

Smiling Mind is a free mindfulness app which allows you to practice your daily meditation and mindfulness exercises from any device. It is a unique tool developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to your life.

Smiling Mind has dedicated programs for adults, youth, classrooms and more. They have a huge selection of exercises for stress, sleep, sport, well-being and mindful eating, among others. Download it for free and give it a go!

[Visit the Smiling Mind website](#)

Volunteer with BSRV

You can make a real difference to someone's life in your local community.

If you are interested in volunteering your time to assist, please contact Susan Marshall by phone: 03 9822 8876 or by email: info@blindsports.org.au

[Discover the benefits of volunteering with BSRV](#)

Volunteer opportunities

[Running buddy - Wendouree Lake Track loop in Ballarat - Find out more](#)

[Tandem bike pilot around Lynbrook - Find out more](#)

[Walking buddy in Thornbury - Find out more](#)

[Walking buddy in Bundoora - Find out more](#)

[Gym buddy in Hawthorn - Find out more](#)

[Piano teacher in St Albans - Find out more](#)

[South eastern suburbs driver - Melbourne Park on Fridays - Find out more](#)

[Coffee buddy in Airport West - Please Enquire](#)

[Walking buddy in Melton South - Please Enquire](#)

BSRV can only exist with volunteers like you. We provide training so you