Blind Foundation
Year in Review 2017
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Cover Image: Blind Foundation client Lottie and her Dad Sam.
Inside Cover Image: Blind Foundation client Maureen.
Our purpose and values

Our new purpose, vision and values were launched early in 2015 and are part of a new Strategic Plan which will guide the Blind Foundation through to 2020.

Our purpose
Enable people who are blind or have low vision to be self-reliant and live the life they choose.

Our vision
Life without limits. Kahore e Mutunga ki te Ora.

Our values

Optimistic
We promote optimism and hope, and positively address challenges through being solutions focused. We encourage enthusiasm and energy for our cause. We support one another and practise positive approaches that build resilience and strength for times of adversity.

Aspirational
We constantly strive for improvement, and actively look to learn from what we do. We challenge ourselves, we are agile, flexible and open to change. We are responsive to innovations that improve the organisation and make things better for clients.

Connecting
We are inclusive and transparent, and communicate openly. We practise great team work, working together for the greater good. We build collaborative relationships, develop partnerships and connect across boundaries, enabling us to better achieve our vision and goals.

Empowering
We empower people, and enable self-reliance and fulfilment. We listen, and treat others with care and respect. We value diversity and are responsive to each person’s unique needs. We demonstrate accountability and integrity in our work.

A message from the Chair

The 2016/17 year has been marked with a number of significant achievements for our organisation.

For decades we have delivered services to a third of our clients from Parnell and a small centre at Homai in South Auckland. However, in order to provide assistance where and when it is needed we have started to set up satellite centres around Auckland. The first will be a full service regional office in Albany on Auckland’s North Shore.

We are also going to increase the number of ‘pop-up’ offices in areas where we have smaller numbers of clients. These temporary offices will serve as a Blind Foundation information office for the public and give clients in more remote areas the opportunity to receive services and view equipment.

As part of our ongoing emphasis on improving the Blind Foundation’s approach to service delivery, a major initiative is underway to ensure greater responsiveness. Integrating Client Services will empower staff to effectively deal with client needs, eliminating delays and waiting lists while ensuring specialist skills are used where needed most.

The Board has given approval for Foundation Properties Limited to purchase a property adjacent to our Parnell site. This will create numerous options for the expansion of this magnificent strategic asset.

With a focus on the Blind Foundation’s future, the Youth Engagement Strategy has delivered leadership programmes to build youth involvement in the organisation. This includes the set-up of a Youth Council to provide the perspective of our younger people and to help lead the Blind Foundation into the future.

An updated draft of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind (RNZFB) constitution will be placed in front of members for their consideration and voting in October. We believe we have put together a set of rules that will create greater opportunities not only for members to participate more actively but to ensure the organisation is more accountable to its members and clients.

After years of work the RNZFB Act has been repealed. To become an incorporated society was always on the cards since 2002. The Bill was passed unanimously at its third reading in Parliament on 24 August and the Governor-General gave Royal assent to the new law on 29 August 2016.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to extend a sincere thank you to every one of the many supporters who have helped the Blind Foundation this year. Your support is absolutely critical and greatly valued, ensuring we can continue to offer world class services to our blind and low-vision community.

Rick Hoskin
Board Chair
Chief Executive’s report

Year two of our strategic plan has seen us achieve some major milestones across the areas of policy, advocacy and accessibility, making a very real difference for people in our community who are blind or have low vision.

At the heart of the year’s activities has been our commitment towards an accessible New Zealand, through the priority of Access for All.

In February, the Blind Foundation took the lead and was joined by eight partner organisations to launch the Access for All campaign. The group formed The Access Alliance to run the campaign, which aims to get parliamentary parties to put in place accessibility legislation ahead of the election.

This year saw the successful pilot of our advocacy network training programme to develop self-advocates among our members and clients. We have received great feedback about the training which is resulting in tangible contributions to the Access Matters campaign, including new connections with MPs and the establishment of local lobbying groups.

After considerable lobbying from the Blind Foundation and partner organisations, the Government announced its decision in June to join the Marrakesh Treaty. This monumental step will have a dramatic impact on the blind and low vision community, making it possible to access, distribute and share a wider range of copyrighted works in accessible formats.

In the area of literacy and accessible formats, a major agreement was reached with Vision Australia to bulk swap library content, adding more than 10,000 titles to our library in one exchange.

This year has seen some significant strides in evolving our technology to ensure digital readiness now, and into the future. We are delighted to report the successful completion of the Transforming Braille project. The first commercial Orbit units were released and will be available for sale from the Blind Foundation in the near future.

At an organisational level, we have concentrated on ensuring we are appropriately structured for the future. Our transformation team has been reviewing current service areas, seeking ways to enhance customer experience and deliver modern and relevant services that are underpinned by a strong understanding of client needs.

Overall the year has been capped with multiple wins for our organisation and our clients, and we have achieved positively against our strategic plan priorities. Our vast network of supporters has again shown their generosity, allowing us to complete the year with a surplus.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you for your valued contributions. Your support and dedication is critical to helping us shape a future where our blind and low vision community can truly live a life without limits. Thank you.

Sandra Budd
Chief Executive

Chair’s Award recipient celebrates 30 years

When Blind Foundation staff member Thomas Bryan was asked to attend the AGM in November, he thought he was giving a presentation on technology. Instead, he was surprised to receive the 2016 Chair’s Award for being a champion of the Blind Foundation.

“I was lost for words and a bit emotional,” he says. “Even after a week, it hadn’t really sunk in.”

Thomas is currently Service Support - Adaptive Technology/Employment Services for Independent Living, working in emerging technology and employment strategy.

“I am able to advocate and promote how accessing technology and our services can make a real difference in the lives of our members.”

Thomas’ roles have been varied during his 30 years with the Blind Foundation. He has worked as an instructor, a service manager and was formerly head of Support Services. Some of the projects he has been involved with include the launch of new bank notes at Government House and working with Kiwi Rail for a new pedestrian alert system at level crossings.

He also worked with Media Hub to help blind people to use Facebook more accessibly, talked with Trade Me to demonstrate the Blind Foundation’s special technology with respect to its app, and liaised with Air New Zealand to explore digital access for blind users.

Thomas was instrumental in the BlindSquare initiative in Wellington, which helps those who are blind or have low vision or a print disability to explore the city independently.

He is a long-serving member of the Disability Employment Forum and the Health and Disability Long Term Work Programme Reference Group. As a member of these groups, Thomas raises issues that impact on the Blind Foundation as an employment services provider and the needs and barriers facing clients.

Board Chair Rick Hoskin says Thomas is a “true champion of the Blind Foundation” and has represented the organisation in many ways.

"Thomas is often found at the forefront of initiatives that promote disability and blindness. He builds collaborative and inclusive relationships that have a direct benefit to the Blind Foundation.”

Thomas Bryan holding his award standing next to Blind Foundation Board Chair Rick Hoskin.
Meet the Board

The Blind Foundation’s Board is elected by our voting members. The Board’s role focuses on the wider issues of organisational purpose, including setting and monitoring the strategic direction and long-term sustainability.

Richard Hoskin, Chair
Rick was re-elected to the Blind Foundation’s Board of Directors in 2015, after initially stepping onto the Board in 2009. In November 2011, he was elected as Chair.

Rick is the former owner and director of PhysioACTION, a physiotherapy practice that employed more than 25 staff in clinics throughout Auckland.

In his earlier days, Rick worked at the Blind Foundation’s Adult Rehabilitation Unit and previously on the switchboard. Rick has been a client since he was 17 years old. He is a director of Foundation Properties Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the RNZFB; a trustee on the Bledisloe Estate and Bledisloe Royston Trusts; and a member of the Institute of Directors.

Keith Appleton
Keith was first elected in November 2010. He is a Tauranga-based chartered accountant in public practice and has a keen interest in education. Keith has held executive positions on the Board of Trustees of two schools. He holds several company directorships. Keith has served on the Advisory Board of the Counties Manukau Plunket branch and ME/CFS Support (Auckland). He is a member of the Institute of Directors and of Governance New Zealand.

Clive Lansink
Clive was re-elected to the Board in November 2016, having previously served from 1991 to 1995. Blind since birth, Clive has spent much of his personal life working on behalf of blind and low vision people and was President of Blind Citizens New Zealand for a total of 13 years. He has an engineering degree as well as a law degree. Much of his career has been spent in the computer industry, and in the blind community he is particularly known for his development of the Blind Foundation’s Telephone Information Service. Clive is now semi-retired and running his own business from home, undertaking consulting and projects in areas of technology and human rights law.

Nicola Owen
Nicola joined the Board in 2014. She is one of the first trained audio describers in New Zealand, and, along with her blind partner, she runs Audio Described Aotearoa to provide audio description services and training across New Zealand. She is a qualified rehabilitation worker with experience in teaching sighted guiding skills and producing accessible documents, including braille. Prior to establishing her company, she was the development manager of Auckland Disability Law and spent six months on secondment at the Human Rights Commission. Nicola has extensive New Zealand and UK experience in disability rights and advocacy, including helping to write the first UNCRPD Auckland Shadow report. She is also an associate member of Blind Citizens New Zealand.

Judy Small
Judy joined the Board in November 2013. She has been a client of the Blind Foundation since she was four years old. Judy graduated in 1999 with a Masters of Social Science (Hons). Her thesis was a sociological study of blind people and how they identify themselves. She worked as a policy analyst in social policy for more than 11 years in the Office for Disability Issues and has also served on the Blind Citizens New Zealand National Executive. Judy is currently employed as a disability advisor to the Hamilton City Council.

Carolyn Weston
Carolyn was re-elected to the Board in 2015 after being welcomed back to the Board in November 2012, having previously served from 1992 to 1998. Carolyn is a client of the Blind Foundation who studied and worked in early childhood education. She has more than 20 years’ experience working in governance, serving on various boards of trustees and committees. Carolyn is passionate about Blind Foundation clients’ needs and access to services. She is also a member of Blind Citizens New Zealand and Kāpo Māori Aotearoa/ NZ Inc.

Julie Bartlett MNZM
Julie was appointed to the Blind Foundation Board in 2014. She has worked for more than 20 charitable organisations, including the Alzheimers Foundation, Autism NZ, West Auckland Hospice and the Multiple Sclerosis Society in a variety of roles ranging from volunteer to fundraising manager. In 2002, Julie founded and led StarJam, dedicated to empowering young people with disabilities through performance. Early in 2016, Julie launched Sources Of Unconditional Love (S OUL), which empowers girls, especially those who suffer from prejudice and discrimination.

Julie was named NEXT Woman of the Year 2012 and appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen’s Birthday Honours 2013. Julie is a member of the Institute of Directors and Governance NZ.

Peter Hoskin
Peter joined the Board for the first time in November 2012 and was re-elected in 2015. He has been a member of the Blind Foundation since he was nine years old. He studied law at Auckland University, then worked at Russell McVeagh, an Auckland firm of solicitors, before setting up his own practice. After 27 years in one career, it was time for a change, so Peter sold his practice and today manages an investment portfolio. He also plays and writes music and helps raise two teenage sons. Peter is a member of the Institute of Directors.

Paul Sullivan
Paul was re-elected as a director by Blind Foundation Associate Members in 2013, after initially joining the Board in 2010. He is a management consultant with advisory firm Cornwall Strategic and has a varied background in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. Paul is a member of the Institute of Directors, with more than 10 years of experience on boards, and is currently a director of several organisations.

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Our clients

Total clients: 12,601

New people registered between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017: 1,464

Ethnicity

- Māori: 8% (Total: 983)
- Not stated: 5% (Total: 698)
- Pacific Island: 4% (Total: 535)
- Other: 5% (Total: 577)
- Asian: 2% (Total: 270)

Age

- 0-21: 9% (Total: 1,096)
- 22-64: 27% (Total: 3,413)
- 65-79: 15% (Total: 1,927)
- 80+: 49% (Total: 6,165)

Office region

- Wellington: 26% (Total: 3,317)
- Central North Island: 26% (Total: 3,302)
- Auckland & Northland: 22% (Total: 2,758)
- Christchurch: 17% (Total: 2,077)
- Dunedin: 9% (Total: 1,147)

Eye conditions*

- Macular disease: 35% (Total: 6,446)
- Cataract: 8% (Total: 1,508)
- Glaucoma: 7% (Total: 1,278)
- Pseudophakia: 4% (Total: 726)
- Hereditary Retinal Dystrophy: 4% (Total: 662)
- Other: 42% (Total: 7,573)

* Total number of eye conditions noted is more than the total number of people as some present with multiple conditions.

At a glance

Direct client services

- 5,727 sessions held with clients accessing rehabilitation services
- 1,483 people accessed adaptive technology services

- 1,236 clients, and their families, received counselling services
- 599 people received vocational services

Access to information

- 542,138 library items circulated to people across the country
- 172,662 pages of accessibly formatted documents delivered
- 27,465 hours of information listened to on the Telephone Information Service

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The 7 Day Challenge was held for the first time in October during Blind Week, proving an unforgettable experience.

The event concept was driven by Blair Gilbert, Blind Foundation National Manager Community and Life Enrichment. Blair had been thinking about the idea for some time and it was as he climbed to the summit of Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku, in the Marlborough region, that the event took shape.

“I said to my mate, let’s do a seven-day challenge – let’s climb some mountains, paddle some rivers and run some hills. I want to show New Zealanders that people who are blind or have low vision really can do anything they set their minds to.”

Blind Foundation clients Ben Geddes, Hamish Tahana, Jo Froggatt, Neelusha Memon, Peter Jones, Petronella Spicer and Shannon Cleave signed up to tackle the inaugural challenge.

The team began its quest in Tauranga and made its way to Wellington, undertaking seven adventure challenges over seven days, covering 700 kilometres in total. All challenges were unknown to participants, until they received their instructions at each location.

The gruelling week took in everything from paddling a waka, tandem cycling, climbing Mt Tongariro, to white water rafting down a seven-metre waterfall - one of the world’s highest commercially-rafted waterfalls.

Team member Jo Froggatt’s advice to others is to grab such opportunities with both hands, even if they have doubts about their abilities.

“Just get up off the couch and get out there. There’s absolutely nothing like the feeling of achievement when you have given your all. When I look back at what we achieved, it seems unreal,” says Jo.

The challenge not only reinforced the Blind Foundation’s life without limits vision but provided a superb awareness raising platform for the country’s blind and low vision community, and the work of the Blind Foundation.
The year has delivered a number of exciting new technologies for Blind Foundation clients, all designed to increase accessibility across daily life. One particular technology trial has been simplifying city visits for blind and low vision residents in Wellington.

BlindSquare, a GPS navigation device for those who are blind or have low vision, has made great progress in Wellington with a rollout across the central city.

The Global Positioning System app provides information to guide people as they travel around Wellington. A matchbox-sized iBeacon device is located inside the doorway of participating businesses and as a BlindSquare app user nears the retailer or business, the iBeacon broadcasts a Bluetooth signal. The BlindSquare app recognises the signal and converts it to a voice message on the user’s iPhone.

The spoken description of the business includes its name, what goods and services it provides, location of entrance and any key information about the store including layout or where the counter is located.

When exiting the store, the beacon announces the name of the street the user is exiting on and where the nearest bus stop or crossing is located.

BlindSquare also provides users with other information including the names of roads and where bus stops are. It can be used to plan a journey or to look for specific businesses while on the move or from home.

Two hundred iBeacons will be in place around the city once the rollout is complete. Wellington City Council, which is partnering with the Blind Foundation for the project, is currently looking at other projects and partners for additional locations around Wellington to use the iBeacons and BlindSquare.

Neil Jarvis, Blind Foundation General Manager Strategic Relations, says the iBeacon and BlindSquare rollout in Wellington has contributed significantly to improving accessibility for the Capital’s blind and low vision community.

“This is an exciting step forward and an excellent example of how we can harness new technologies to improve accessibility across daily life.”

BlindSquare app developer Ilkka and first user Ronja.
Youth leadership

Over the last 12 months there were multiple levels of engagement with youth, all aimed at empowering and growing a new generation of leaders.

Led by the Community and Life Enrichment team, a youth engagement strategy was successfully co-created with youth. The Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) focused on building stronger connections with young clients while providing relevant services to meet their needs, and ultimately helping them to live independent and productive lives.

YES is about developing opportunities and activities for 17–25 year olds to grow confidence and leadership skills. At the heart of this was the need to get young people connecting with each other, either in their local area or via digital platforms like Facebook.

Another initiative of the Youth Strategy is EPIC (Empowered, Participating, Inspired and Connected).

The two-day EPIC event was held in April in Wellington, bringing together 35 registered participants for one of the largest gatherings of young members. The event provided a mixture of workshops, guest speakers and social activities with topics including advocacy, employment, legal rights when renting and youth voice within the blind sector.

On the international scene, four clients took part in the Blind Foundation’s new youth international development programme. As part of the experience they embarked on a journey of a lifetime to the shores of Lake Joseph in Toronto, Canada. The Blind Foundation collaborated with Vision Australia and CNIB (Canada) to create the opportunities with participants sharing cultural and leadership knowledge at CNIB’s Camp Joe.

21-year-old Leah Morris says her experience is one she will never forget.

“I learnt so much about myself as well as others, I was overwhelmed by how amazing it was. The contacts and connections I have made during this trip were outstanding and I am excited to be part of the future of the Blind Foundation.”

Honours in the community

Blind Foundation client and long-time volunteer Clarice Anderson received a Queen’s Service Medal this year for her services to the blind and seniors.

Blind Foundation client and long-time volunteer Clarice Anderson received a Queen’s Service Medal this year for her services to the blind and seniors.

Clarice Anderson and volunteers. Photo credit CHB Mail and reporter/photographer Nicki Harper.

Clarice also leads a bi-monthly social afternoon at Woburn Rest Home for people who are blind or have low vision and organises a monthly ladies lunch.

For the last eight years, Clarice has also gifted her time to help others to learn braille.

She was born blind and after a few operations as a child, managed to regain a little sight in one eye. Clarice and her guide dog Shaz are well known in the Waipukurau community.

Modest about her contributions, Clarice acknowledged other volunteers who work alongside her at the Blind Foundation.

“We have wonderful people who volunteer their time, and a hard-working committee. I just offer my services where I can—this is about a lot of people not just me.”
Thank you to our supporters

Every year thousands of individuals and organisations across the country donate their time and money to help provide essential support for Kiwis who are blind or have low vision. We are extremely grateful for their support – we simply couldn’t do it without our generous and caring supporters.

Donating

We rely heavily on the generosity of the public to provide many of the services that support people in our community who are blind or have low vision. Whether it’s counselling someone who has lost their sight, breeding and training guide dogs, providing special workplace training and support or producing new content for our library – all of this is possible thanks to our donors. Every donation makes a big difference, so thank you to everyone who has supported us in this way.

Fundraising

Every year thousands of New Zealanders support the Blind Foundation by fundraising in their community. From coordinating a street collection to running a marathon or baking puppy-shaped bikkies, we are so grateful for the support of our fundraising volunteers who help raise awareness and money for people who are blind or have low vision in their communities.

Cherie and Marvel collecting during Blind Week.

Red Puppy sponsors

The breeding and training of guide dogs is only possible thanks to the generous support of the public. We are so grateful to every person who donates regularly to support these amazing puppies and the many other essential services that help Kiwis who are blind or have low vision live life without limits.

Pupstar Harris started his training in May 2017.
Bringing books to life

Every year many generous New Zealanders support the Blind Foundation Library, and this year was no exception. Thousands of people responded to our appeal to support the production of more books for the Library.

It’s hard to imagine life without books. But through the Blind Foundation Library, Kiwis who are blind or have low vision can continue to experience the joy of reading.

Children like little Zac have a bright future. While he might look like any other Kiwi kid, Zac has Ocularmotor Apraxia. It’s a neurological condition, meaning he struggles to move his eyes from left to right, focus on words and follow a line of text.

“In the beginning, it was devastating not knowing what was happening and feeling something wasn’t right.”

“When Zac was diagnosed it was heartbreaking, we thought, how will we get through this? Then he got tactile books from the Blind Foundation Library and we saw him smile because he could understand the story. I felt like suddenly there was a clear path after so many obstacles,” says Zac’s Mum Donna.

Zac enjoys large print books from the library which give him the opportunity to read, learn, develop and visit amazing worlds in his imagination.

It may seem like a small thing, but it makes a huge difference.
A special thank you

Proudly feeding Blind Foundation Guide Dog puppies

Corporate Supporters

- 2degrees
- Air New Zealand
- Craig Griffin & Lord
- Hill’s Pet Nutrition (NZ) Ltd
- Hudson Gavin Martin
- Milford Asset Management
- Napier Port

- Nelson Pine Industries
- Pic’s Really Good Peanut Butter
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- QuickCircuit Limited
- Sistema Plastics
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Key Supporters

- Anne Matheson
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- Colleen Crockett
- Daphne Anderson
- Dorothy Cutts
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- Lee Wilde
- Lois K Odering
- Lynne Erceg
- Maureen Benjamin
- Maureen Mayne

- Mike and Anne Thompson
- Mr D B Laxon
- Mr John Rochfort
- Olive and the late Des Walker
- Phil and Siobhan Logan
- Ray and Denise Hoy
- Rotary Club of Paraparaumu
- S M O’Connor
- Sally P Campbell
- Taumarunui Opportunity Shop
- Vern and Barbara Pain
- Waikato Diocesan School for Girls

Trusts and Foundations

- Alice & Stan Flavell Charitable Trust
- Auckland Council & Local Boards: Albert-Eden, Hibiscus and Bays, Howick, Mangere-Otahuhu, Otara-Papatoetoe, Upper Harbour
- Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Trust
- Community Trust of Southland
- Doris M Partridge Trust
- Gordon Roberts Charitable Trust
- Grumitt Sisters Charitable Trust
- Hutt Mana Charitable Trust
- J R McKenzie Trust

- Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust
- L W Nelson Charitable Trust
- Lottery Grants Board
- Marlborough District Council
- Marriot Trust
- Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust
- N H Taylor Charitable Trust
- N R Thomson Charitable Trust
- Napier City Council
- Nelson City Council
- New Plymouth District Council
- Nikau Foundation
- Olive Stoddard Charitable Trust
- Otago Community Trust
- P H Vickery Charitable Trust
- Pelorus Trust

Bequests

The Blind Foundation gratefully acknowledges all of those who left a gift in their Will during the last financial year. It is because of these generous gifts that we can make a lasting difference for New Zealanders who are blind or have low vision. We’d like to especially thank the following bequestors:

- Adamson, Edith Irene
- Alexander, Edith
- Bowskill, Geoffrey Barrington
- Butler, Yvonne Vivian
- Carrad, Leighton Barclay
- Christian, Vivien Phylis
- Coster, John Ronald
- Davies, Barbara Marjorie
- Greivulis, Voldemar
- Hagonson, Norma Josephine
- Hancock, Margaret Mary
- Hargreaves, Thomas Ingram
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- Howe, Stanley Malcolm
- James, Barry Keith
- Jones, Lawrence Frank

- Kennedy, Malcolm Francis
- Leslie, James Williams
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- Mutimer, Helen
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- Short, Noel Oliver
- Stewart, Vivienne Joyce
- Strude, Albert Frederick Michael
- Talbot, Berry Hampden
- Towers, Marion
- Westlake, Lewis Vercoe
- Wolfe, Nola Susan
- Wright, Colleen Margaret
- Young, Robert Boyd
Strategic Priority 1: Independent Living

People have the skills to adapt to the impact of blindness and low vision.
A total of 5,727 rehabilitation service sessions were delivered to clients. These sessions help people adapt and adjust to everyday life whilst living with vision loss. Examples include learning to move around a client’s home and community safely with the use of a white cane, confidently travel on public transport, look after personal needs such as dressing, coping with social situations such as eating in restaurants, and being safe in their homes whilst preparing food and cooking.

People adjust to vision loss by receiving counselling and support.
Throughout the year 1,236 adults and children, and their families, received Blind Foundation counselling and family counselling services to assist with their adjustment to sight loss.

The Blind Foundation recognises the importance of these services and employed additional counsellors to ensure people receive counselling and support at the earliest possible time.

More people have technology and literacy skills to be connected and informed.
A total of 1,483 people received Blind Foundation support to use a range of technology programmes and access information online.

33 clients chose to learn braille during this year.

More people can access information they need when they need it.
More than 560,000 talking books and magazines were delivered to Blind Foundation library members across NZ.

There are almost 15,000 titles, up from 11,500 titles, available to Blind Foundation library members through the library service, primarily in audio, braille and large print. Library members can also choose from 40 magazine titles.

Blind Foundation library members now also have access to more than 550,000 titles through the international Bookshare platform. To encourage uptake amongst library members, they are offered a free annual subscription for two years.

The 4,600 library members use the door-to-door service and/or the Blind Foundation library app, BookLink, to receive their reading materials. 900 members use the app which enables them to download the books they wish to read.

The average BookLink user downloaded 5.6 books in June 2016, which has risen to 6.4 books per month by June 2017.

The Blind Foundation provided 172,662 pages of accessibly formatted (braille, large print, electronic text) documents.

People listened to 27,465 hours of information on the Telephone Information Service (TIS). The range of information on TIS includes 100 newspapers available through the service.

More people are employed.
599 people received vocational and employment services and support to either retain their current job, seek new employment, or study.

The Blind Foundation continued the process of assessing clients for work readiness, implemented last year. The assessment tool provides a more targeted approach to employment readiness and assists with building stronger relationships with employment and recruitment agencies. The aim continues to be assisting greater numbers of blind and low vision people to secure meaningful employment.

Children & Young People equipped to be successful adults.
A Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) was co-created with the Blind Foundation’s younger members. YES focused on building stronger connections with youth members while providing relevant services to meet their needs, and ultimately helping them to live independent and productive lives.

Lives are enriched by social and recreation activities, peer support and connections within the community.
The Blind Foundation has increased the breadth and amount of recreational and social activities available including new cycling events, book clubs, art and dance classes, and social groups.

Volunteers operate 32 local Telephone Trees—telephone support and information networks—around the country. There is also a national telephone support service by volunteers, which fielded approximately 1,400 calls this year and made outbound calls.

Guide Dogs staff made 895 visits to clients with a guide dog. These included initial interviews and assessments for those people new to having a guide dog, as well as follow ups with experienced guide dog handlers.

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More people can access information they need when they need it.
More than 560,000 talking books and magazines were delivered to Blind Foundation library members across NZ.

There are almost 15,000 titles, up from 11,500 titles, available to Blind Foundation library members through the library service, primarily in audio, braille and large print. Library
Strategic Priority 2: Access for All

Increase the understanding of the need for accessibility.
In February, the Blind Foundation took the lead and was joined by eight partner organisations (later growing to 13) to launch the Access for All campaign. The group formed The Access Alliance to run the campaign, which aims to get parliamentary parties to put in place accessibility legislation ahead of the election.
Youth Parliament this year debated the mock Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill, aimed at improving website and app accessibility for people with print disabilities in New Zealand. This delivered considerable exposure and contributed to increased understanding within the parliamentary audience.

Create the conditions where blind people and those with low vision have the choice to participate in society through access to:

- The built environment and community spaces.
The Blind Foundation contributed to 49 government and local council submissions, including to Christchurch, Tauranga, Palmerston North and Wellington City Councils.
The Blind Foundation completed many advisory sessions with government, local council and private companies to improve plans for buildings and public spaces.

- Information, communications and services.
The Blind Foundation continued to advocate for the need to protect print disabled people’s right to accessible formats.

A significant agreement was reached with Vision Australia to bulk swap library content. This adds more than 10,000 titles to our library in one exchange, increasing our collection of audio titles by over 33% at no extra cost.

Work to progress the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty continued and after considerable lobbying from the Blind Foundation and partner organisations, the Government announced its decision in June to join the Treaty.

- Technology and Equipment.
The Blind Foundation continues to provide an equipment service for all clients. The Foundation assesses new technologies and develops its own where necessary to assist clients. The BookLink app has allowed a significant percentage of Foundation library users to receive their book via the Internet.

- Training, higher education and employment.
The Blind Foundation ran a successful residential pre-employment course which prepared nine clients for work. Work has also begun on a project to create more ‘market pull’ to get clients into work. This project involves the Blind Foundation working with employers to structure jobs around clients’ capabilities.

Influence technology design so it is accessible and easy to use.
This year saw the completion of the Transforming Braille project, which the Blind Foundation has played a leading part in since 2012. In February, the first commercial Orbit units were released, delivering more affordable braille and more accessible content.

Every public library will have access to a print disability collection.
The Blind Foundation continues to maintain community-based support networks in local libraries. The networks enable people who are blind or have low vision to receive support and access the Blind Foundation’s library app, BookLink, locally rather than directly through Blind Foundation staff. In addition, the library is a member of a National Resource Sharing Think Tank, led by the National Library which is working toward creating fairer resource sharing across all New Zealand libraries for the benefit and purpose of all New Zealanders.

Empower our clients, and their whanau and families, to be effective self-advocates and campaigners.
The Blind Foundation successfully piloted a new advocacy network training programme to develop self-advocates among members and clients. This has helped drive contributions to the Access Matters campaign, including new connections with MPs and the establishment of local lobbying groups.

Be a trusted advisor and influence decision makers to take action.
The Blind Foundation continued to work with international organisations. Some highlights:

- led the World Blind Union’s Asia-Pacific (WBU AP) campaign on the Marrakesh Treaty ratification. This included launching a report by the UN Development Programme and WBU AP to be used for countries in their ratification process.
- helped the Round Table on Information
Our performance

Strategic Priority 3: Reach More People

Enhance our current services. Clients report a satisfaction rate of 94.3% annual average rating for the service they receive from the Blind Foundation.

Increase awareness of the Blind Foundation services. The Blind Foundation reported a record year in media coverage breaking the $7m value mark for the first time. This relates to articles across local and national newspapers, radio, television and online.

Engagement work continued with eye health specialists including:
- speaking at the annual Royal Australian New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists conference.
- educational evenings for professionals at clinics and at Blind Foundation offices throughout the year.
- articles in the monthly NZ Optics magazine.
- invitations to Blind Foundation events including research presentations.

Extend our presence and connections in the community so people get advice, support and services.

Registration under the Chief Executive approved service membership allowed an additional 182 people to receive services who, without this status, would not have received our support. They benefited from services targeted to meet their assessed functional requirements.

Provide eye care education to reduce avoidable vision loss.
As a Trustee of V2020NZ, an organisation focused on reducing preventable vision loss, the Blind Foundation Chief Executive co-led a project to revitalise partnerships with the eye health sector. The aim was to co-ordinate a response to avoidable vision loss.

The Eye Health Coalition (EHC) has continued its collaboration to ensure access to the best quality eye care for New Zealanders. It met twice this year in February and May.

The Parliamentary Friends of Eye Health (PFEH) now has 18 parliamentarians signed up and is focused on advancing for an eye health strategy.

Respond to the needs of people with low vision currently unable to access services.
A discovery phase to identify this unreached group of potential clients is well underway. Collaborative work with government agencies has resulted in ensuring this group of individuals is represented by the Blind Foundation. Future focus includes work on understanding the client base and influencing policy decisions for service delivery models.

Accelerate the use of technology to reach more people.
The Blind Foundation continues to explore ways to encourage more clients to be active online. These include enhanced training, more enticement to use online channels and partnering with other organisations.

Be recognised as a trusted advisor contributing to evidence based research.
The Blind Foundation presented the Prevalence Study research paper to eye health professionals, and is awaiting formal publication. The Study identified New Zealand’s current low vision population (6/12 to 6/23) to be 44,300 and the blindness population to be 30,000 people. It will be used to better understand the potential needs of this population segment.

Strategic Priority 4: Build a Foundation for the future

Build a culture of innovation, excellence and continuous improvement.
The Blind Foundation moved to a new model of contracting with its principal government agency. Results based accountabilities contracting was introduced and the Blind Foundation is working for the first time within this new framework.

The Blind Foundation successfully completed two Ministry of Health audits related to claims processes and service delivery and compliance. Both audits demonstrated satisfactory outcomes.

Almost 65% of the calls coming into the Blind Foundation are answered at the point of first contact, providing an improved experience for callers.

Grow financial sustainability through diversification that provides social benefits.
Foundation Properties Limited, a subsidiary of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind, continues to grow and develop our investment properties in order to help fund our essential services. During the year our investment property portfolio grew by 15% in value.

The Blind Foundation continues to invest in its people through a leadership development programme and a range of in-house courses and seminars throughout the year.

The fifth annual STAR Awards were held to recognise the valuable, and valued, contributions of staff and volunteers. The awards celebrate success and encourage a culture where people can be their best.

Increase capability to engage and connect with the wider community.
The annual Blind Foundation Engagement Roadshow was timed differently to previous years with one leg in May and June, and another in September and October.

The Roadshow allows members of the community to connect with Board and staff, and their feedback helps inform Blind Foundation decisions. In total there were 24 events across 18 cities and towns with a record 560 people in
Financial review

The financial year ending 30 June 2017 was another positive one for the Blind Foundation.

Financial Results

The Blind Foundation’s operating revenue was $34.7m, an increase of $2m on the previous financial year, mainly due to higher donations and legacies from our loyal supporters.

The Blind Foundation’s income was further improved by interest income of $2m, the increased value of bonds and investments of $1.1m and this year’s dividend distribution of $3.7m from our property subsidiary Foundation Properties Limited.

Operating expenses reduced by $1.9m to $36.5m. However, this is largely due to the one-off nature, last year, of the change in policy for the economic life of the Blind Foundation’s building assets, from 50-100 years to 25-100 years. If the depreciation expense was excluded from the operating expenses, these expenses would have remained at a similar level to last year.

Overall, the financial results of the Blind Foundation resulted in an operating deficit of $1.9m which was much improved from the $5.7m deficit last year.

Financial Position

Prudent financial management, combined with buoyant stock and property markets in the last 12 months, has enabled the Blind Foundation to further improve its long-term financial sustainability.

The balance sheet has been strengthened by increases in the value of bonds, shares and investment property.

The Blind Foundation remains highly dependent on charitable giving, which provides over two thirds of our operating income. With so many worthwhile causes seeking donations and support, we are hugely grateful to our generous supporters who help provide essential services to New Zealanders who are blind or have low vision.

Greg Hurn
Chief Financial Officer
## Summarised financial information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 ($000s)</th>
<th>2016 ($000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and legacies</td>
<td>25,747</td>
<td>24,074</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service contracts</td>
<td>7,989</td>
<td>8,151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property income</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>456</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating revenue</strong></td>
<td>34,703</td>
<td>32,681</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting independent living</td>
<td>16,716</td>
<td>18,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting access for all</td>
<td>4,755</td>
<td>4,826</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching more people</td>
<td>2,129</td>
<td>2,146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building a foundation for the future</td>
<td>5,742</td>
<td>6,460</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>6,152</td>
<td>5,893</td>
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<td>Grants</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect property costs</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
<td>36,568</td>
<td>38,420</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Operating deficit</strong></td>
<td>(1,865)</td>
<td>(5,739)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance income</strong></td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>1,945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revaluation of investment property</td>
<td>6,093</td>
<td>(282)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revaluation of bonds and investments</td>
<td>1,099</td>
<td>1,247</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dividend received from FPL</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>3,060</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total surplus</strong></td>
<td>11,067</td>
<td>231</td>
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### Cash flow for the year ended 30 June 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 ($000s)</th>
<th>2016 ($000s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash flows from operating activities</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash was received from:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations and legacies</td>
<td>22,944</td>
<td>25,489</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service contracts</td>
<td>8,354</td>
<td>7,932</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental and other income</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>440</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash was applied to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Payments to employees</td>
<td>(18,384)</td>
<td>(18,860)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payments to suppliers</td>
<td>(15,383)</td>
<td>(14,169)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payments of grants</td>
<td>(890)</td>
<td>(590)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net cash flows from operating</strong></td>
<td>(2,823)</td>
<td>242</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 ($000s)</th>
<th>2016 ($000s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash flows from investing activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash was received from:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redemption of short-term investments</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest income</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>463</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sale of fixed assets</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dividend received from FPL</td>
<td>4,334</td>
<td>2,426</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash was applied to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of property, plant and equipment</td>
<td>(2,213)</td>
<td>(1,744)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of bonds and investments</td>
<td>(2,995)</td>
<td>(1,201)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of intangible assets</td>
<td>(315)</td>
<td>(453)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net cash flows from investing</strong></td>
<td>877</td>
<td>(504)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 ($000s)</th>
<th>2016 ($000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net increase / (decrease) in cash and equivalents</strong></td>
<td>(1,946)</td>
<td>(262)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and equivalents at the beginning of the year</td>
<td>2,416</td>
<td>2,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash and equivalents at the end of the year</strong></td>
<td>470</td>
<td>2,416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support us

Make a life-changing difference for Kiwis who are blind or have low vision.

It costs approximately $36 million and many volunteer hours each year to provide vital services that support New Zealanders who are blind or have low vision to live a life without limits.

The Blind Foundation relies on the generosity of people across the country, who donate their time and/or money to support our services in the community.

If you already support the Blind Foundation, thank you so much. Please don’t underestimate the impact of your support.

If you have been inspired by what you have read in this report and would like to make a difference, please consider volunteering or donating.

Blind Foundation volunteers provide a wide range of vision-related support, assist with fundraising and help with group activities for people who are blind or have low vision. Volunteering provides a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, share existing skills and have fun, while giving something back to the community.

There are many ways to support the Blind Foundation with a donation: you can make regular donations, a one-off gift, leave a gift in your Will, become a corporate partner, hold a community event or take part in a fundraising sports activity.

To find out more about how you can help, visit blindfoundation.org.nz or call us on 0800 24 33 33.