# C:\Users\CLong\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Word\BF logo 400x400 for facebook profile.pngBlind Foundation News October 2017

Welcome to your Blind Foundation News update for October 2017.

This update includes the International Retina Conference, an Access Matters campaign update and the launch of #WhatsYourChallenge. It also includes the Auckland Marathon and upcoming Equipment Display Dates.

If there is anything within this update that you would like to know more about then please get in touch with the Marketing team, whose details are at the end of this update.

# New Blind Foundation office opening in Albany – Denise Kitto, National Manager for Customer Service and Advice.

* The Blind Foundation has opened a new office on Auckland’s North Shore in Albany.
* The office has a Functional Low Vision Assessment room and an Adaptive Technology training room, helping to make our services more accessible to clients who live locally.
* The Albany office will be open on weekdays between 9am and 4pm.
* We welcome you to come and say hello, and have a look at our equipment display if you are in the area.
* The office is located in the Yes Disability building at: Level 1, 3 William Laurie Place, Albany. The office can be contacted on 0800 24 33 33.

# Blind Week Update – Cherie McClintock – General Manager for Fundraising.

* Thank you to everyone who supported this year’s Blind Week Appeal. We had over 1,700 volunteers register to collect. As well as helping raise awareness of blindness, our Blind Week appeal helps raise funds to support the work we do. It’s early days and donations are still pouring in, but so far we’ve banked over $300,000 in street collection, postal and online donations. Thank you.

# Auckland Marathon – Cherie McClintock – General Manager for Fundraising.

* At the end of this month we have 37 incredible people running the Auckland Marathon in support of the Blind Foundation, five of whom are Blind Foundation clients. We are looking for volunteers to join our cheer team on the day to help keep our runners motivated.
* You can cheer in Takapuna, Devonport or in the City. It’s a fun morning out, an amazing atmosphere and you can bring the whole family. If you’re interested in joining us, please email our Community and Events Manager Chris Harris at charris@blindfoundation.org.nz. The marathon is on Sunday 29 October.

# International Retina Conference – Fraser Alexander from the University of Auckland.

* The Blind Foundation is a gold sponsor of the Retinal International Work Congress, which happens every two years. Next year is the first time it will be held in New Zealand on the 10 and 11 of February 2018. It will bring together many different groups who all have an interest in advancing therapies for the conditions that we know so much about.
* At the event, there will be scientific sessions, treatment approach plenaries where we look at a range of conditions and treatment strategies, and lots of opportunities to ask questions of the world’s foremost scientists working in that area.
* The congress plans to bring together a group of diverse interests. Patients and their families will be a big part of it, but rehabilitation professionals, scientists, clinicians and anybody else who’s involved in advancing therapies will be there.
* It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity. We are bringing the best of the best to New Zealand, for instance Professor Jean Bennett from Philadelphia is the principal investigator for the first ever food and drug administration approved treatment for Leber Congenital Amaurosis.
* Because we’ve attracted sponsors from all sorts of industries, the registration rates are remarkably cheap. A patient registration for the whole weekend is $200.
* Another opportunity through the Blind Foundation is to be a volunteer at the event. We have so many patients coming from all over, that our volunteer input will be critical in the smooth running of the event. You can enquire about volunteering to Sue Vyas at svyas@blindfoundation.org.nz.
* As a volunteer you’ll get to participate in some of the congress, and get some lunch too.

Retina International is a body of 40 different patient-led organisations around the world, and the prime purpose of the organisation is to expedite the development, accessibility and availability of treatments for retinal disorders. These include most of the conditions that actually lead to Blind Foundation membership.

* For more information about Retina International World Congress, visit [www.retina2018newzealand.com/speakers/](http://www.retina2018newzealand.com/speakers/).

# Access Matters Update: Seven months after launch – Jelena Zidov, Policy Analyst.

* All the new governing parties have committed to improving accessibility in New Zealand, and our job now is to hold the newly announced coalition government to account.
* Whether it’s legislation or standards, all the parties recognised the importance of accessibility and made commitments to improve the lives of all New Zealanders.
* Thank you for getting us here. We couldn’t have gotten these commitments without your support, and thank you for coming on the journey with us over these seven months.
* Grassroots campaigners, with lived experience of disability, have been leading the engagement with MPs. Over 2,600 supporters are actively contributing to the campaign, and over 1,600 people who have signed the Open Letter asking political leaders who are yet to commit to accessibility legislation to do so.
* We are rolling out our 100 days post-election plan to hold Parties who have committed to supporting accessibility legislation or accessibility standards to hold pre-election commitments to account.
* We will develop the roadmap for developing and implementing the policy and legislation to support a new bill and standards.

# #WhatsYourChallenge Launch – Ian Moody, General Manager for Marketing.

* The 7 Day challenge involving 7 ambitious clients starts on 1 November and the Blind Foundation has launched a [#WhatsYourChallenge](http://pegasus/News/Pages/Let%27s-get-behind-WhatsYourChallenge.aspx) campaign in support of that. We want to turn the spotlight on ourselves and inspire others to achieve their personal challenges. It’s all about bringing about a sense of inclusion and to demonstrate our vision of “life without limits”.
* We encourage you to join the conversation on social media platforms such as the [Blind Foundation Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RNZFB/), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/blindfoundation/) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/BlindNZ?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) sites so the 7 Day Challenge crew can see your support.

# RNZ interview on technology triumphs and barriers for the blindness community – Neil Jarvis, General Manager for Strategic Relations.

* Neil Jarvis, Blind Foundation’s Strategic Relations General Manager, was interviewed by RNZ’s Checkpoint this month.
* He talked about the Orbit braille reader, the affordable electronic device soon to come to market, as well as some of the latest technology that’s helpful for the blindness community.
* He also raised the frustrating issue of unnecessary access barriers to technology.
* [You can listen to the interview on Radio NZ’s website.](http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/checkpoint/audio/2018617669/blind-community-face-barriers-despite-technology-advancements.)

## Staff profile

* This month we get to know Kay Barr, Trusts and Grants Fundraiser based in Awhina House. Kay applies to trusts and organisations for Blind Foundation grants. Kay's busy days involve checking which funders are open for applications. She collates statistics, manages accountabilities, thanks donors for grants and liaises with potential funders.
* What she enjoys most about working at the Blind Foundation is the people. She also said that every time a grant application is successful, she gets a little buzz.
* Kay's hobbies include watercolour painting, interior design and reading.
* Kay has many favourite books but 'The Buried Giant' by Kazuo Ishiguro is her most recent favourite.

## Equipment Display Days

Below is the next equipment display day up to the end of November 2017. As the details may be subject to change, please call your local Blind Foundation office to confirm.

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| Area | Venue | Date and time |
| Whakatane | Disability Resource Centre, 141-143 King Street, Whakatane. | Tuesday, 7 November.1pm – 3pm. |

For further information on any of the above, please contact the Marketing Team at communications@blindfoundation.org.nz or 0800 24 33 33.