Guide Dogs.

2026

Guide Dogs Victoria Annual Report





Contents

Overview	4
Patron Statement	6
Report from our Chair and CEO	8
Our Clients	14
Our Dogs	32
Our People	42
Our Reach	54
Our Supporters	62
Our Gratitude	74
Our Sustainability	78
Our Future	80
Our Governance	82
Our Financials	86



Acknowledgment of Country

Guide Dogs Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, culture, and community.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples.

Our Vision and Mission

To be a leader in breaking down barriers so people can live a life of their choosing.

Our Purpose

To support a life without limits.

Our Values



Walk the talk

The buck stops with us. So, we keep our word and keep going no matter what.



Never stop exploring

We're fearlessly creative. We've always asked and answered the tough questions and if there's a better way, we'll find it.



Lead with head and heart

Forever focused on our purpose and mission, we combine care and careful planning to deliver successes worth celebrating.



Lift each other

From a guiding hand to a high five, we unleash and acknowledge everyone's potential.


Guide Dogs.
Zak

Patron Statement

As Patron of Guide Dogs Victoria, it is a pleasure to welcome the publication of its 2025-2026 Annual Report.

For Victorians who are blind or have low vision, the right support makes all the difference.

That support takes many forms. It may mean a Guide Dog partnership, practical training, or simply having someone there to offer advice.

By helping people live more independently, Guide Dogs Victoria makes our State stronger.

Thank you to Guide Dogs Victoria for this vital work, and to everyone who makes it possible.

Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC

Governor of Victoria



Report from our Chair and CEO

This year, Guide Dogs Victoria (GDV) continued to strengthen its role as a vital community organisation, supporting Victorians living with vision loss, low vision or blindness, to live a life of their choosing. Guided by our purpose - a life without limits - we remained committed to breaking down barriers and building stronger connections between people, dogs and community. It was also a year of preparation, as we laid the groundwork for the new strategic direction we are launching in Financial Year 2026/27, foreshadowed in last year's report.



Michael Boyce
Chair



Nicky Long
CEO

Highlights

We are proud to present the Annual Report showcasing a successful year. We are pleased to report that our work supported 1,478 clients, an increase of 115 on last year, and this was made possible by our high-performing employees and strong volunteer community, as well as our generous and loyal donors.

Financially, we closed the year with a deficit of $288K — a significant improvement on last year's deficit of $1.19M. This was underpinned by disciplined cost control and growth in fundraising income, with total revenue reaching $20.5M.

This turnaround has come from sustained effort across all areas of our activities and was achieved despite escalating costs, driven by the rising cost of living.

Other key achievements include:

- Finalisation of a new strategic plan, developed in consultation with our community of clients, employees, volunteers and donors.
- Development of a comprehensive plan for the diversification of our dog programs, with 223 working Guide Dogs in the Victorian community, 150 puppies born, and growth in Personal Support, Court and Facility Dog placements alongside our core Guide Dog work.
- Strengthened international relationships: GDV hosted the Assistance Dogs International Trainers' Workshop at our Kew Campus and presented at the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) Conference in Tokyo, where our world-first Transition to Retirement Program was recognised internationally. CEO Nicky Long was appointed to the IGDF Board.
- Held our second Community Fair, welcoming more than 3,000 people to our Kew Campus — up from 2,000 people the year before — an excellent event for people of all ages and abilities.
- Continued progress towards a more sustainable Kew Campus, with plans advancing for a 180kW solar system expected to cut emissions by around 200 tonnes each year.
- Following the retirement of our Board Chair Dr David Cochrane, Vice-Chair Nick Mescher and Board Director Lisa Tepper at the November 2025 AGM, we formally appointed new Board Chair Michael Boyce, and Board Members Dr Jane Schuller, Professor James Elder and Jonathan Isaacs. We also welcomed new Board Member Chris McFadden in early 2026. All of our new Directors bring a breadth of experience and expertise. We thank David, Nick and Lisa for their many years of contributions to GDV.



Challenges

Alongside these achievements, we continued to navigate a challenging operating environment. NDIS pricing remains fixed while wage, facility and operating costs continue to rise, increasing our reliance on fundraising to deliver support that reaches beyond what any funding scheme alone provides. Demand also continues to outpace resourcing in some of our newer service areas, and we remain focused on building sustainable funding and workforce models to meet it, including developing innovative and diversified income streams to evolve our services and support to our clients into the future.

Looking Forward

Nationally, Financial Year 2025/26 marked the beginning of an important evolution in how Guide Dogs organisations work together, with the development of an Alliance model alongside Guide Dogs Australia. We look forward to this new way of working strengthening our collaboration, whilst reducing duplication and building a more connected national approach.

In 2027 Guide Dogs Victoria will launch a new strategic direction - an advancement made even more significant as we approach our 70th year of extraordinary impact and support to the Victorian community. Our refreshed strategy is built around three priorities: deepening our life-changing dog partnerships through diversifying the roles for our accredited dogs; broadening our service programs to provide more holistic approaches to support our clients; and fostering extraordinary donor engagement and giving, recognising the vital role our supporters have in our future. We will also be undertaking design and planning to upgrade our dog facilities across nursery, kennels and training areas to support our long-term breeding and production capacity, and complete our campus redevelopment.



Our Board

2025 marked a significant transition of long-standing board members. We extend our deepest thanks to Dr David Cochrane, Nick Mescher and Lisa Tepper, who stepped down at the end of 2025 from the GDV Board after years of dedicated, high-impact volunteer leadership.

Dr David Cochrane joined the Board in 2016, bringing exceptional economic, financial, and strategic expertise. He played a pivotal role in overseeing the governance of our major campus redevelopment, navigating the complexities of tendering, contracts, the pandemic, and inflation. Most recently as Chair of the Board, his calm leadership, attention to detail and steady support have been invaluable to the Board, the Executive and to our CEO, Nicky Long.

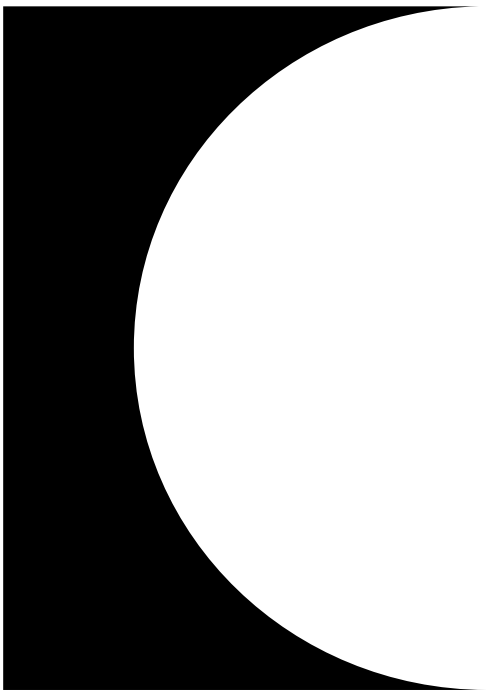
Nick Mescher, who joined in 2019, brought deep expertise in digital transformation, technology, and strategic leadership. Nick championed innovation across GDV and supported the Board through the intensity of the Future is in Sight redevelopment. Most recently as Vice-Chair of the Board, his energy, thoughtful challenge and collegial spirit strengthened our digital capability and operational resilience.

Lisa Tepper, who joined in 2020, brought strong public-sector leadership and digital strategy expertise. Her work across the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee strengthened our approach to cyber, governance and digital capability uplift. Thoughtful and rigorous, Lisa has made a powerful and lasting contribution.

Please join us in acknowledging and celebrating David, Nick and Lisa for their outstanding contribution to Guide Dogs Victoria. We also welcome Michael Boyce as our new Chair, together with several new directors who joined the Board this year, bringing fresh expertise as we look to the future.

We would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution all our Board members make - many hours of volunteered time and expertise given to the strategic direction, governance, financial stewardship and risk management of Guide Dogs Victoria.

To our clients, volunteers, donors, partners and employees - thank you for all you do to support our work and trust Guide Dogs Victoria to deliver on its mission. Together, you make possible the independence, confidence and connection that we work toward every day. We move forward into the year ahead with a steadfast determination to deliver our plans and an ongoing gratitude for your shared commitment to ensuring every Victorian who is blind or has low vision can live a life without limits.

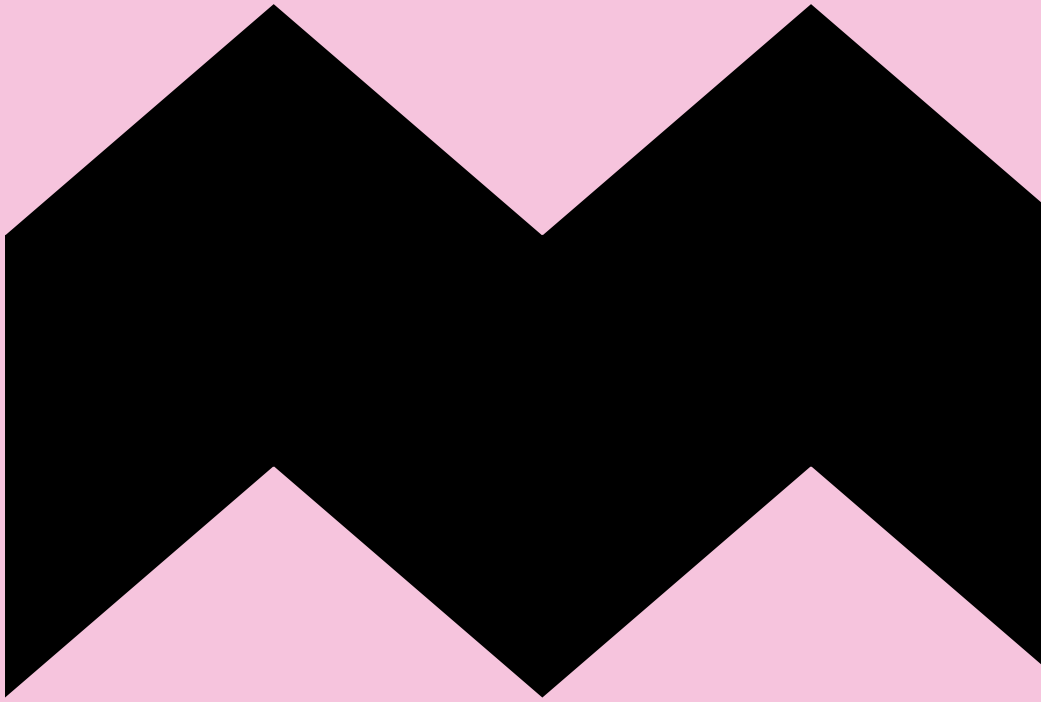






Our Clients

At Guide Dogs Victoria, we support people of all ages with vision loss, low vision or blindness, and other sensory differences to make their own choices, live with confidence and pursue life on their terms.



People, Participation and Impact.



- 284 Guide Dog program participants
- 435 adult Orientation and Mobility program particpants
- 165 child Orientation and Mobility program participants
- 414 Occupational Therapy program participants
- 294 Orthoptics program participants
- 236 Support Coordination clients
- 62 Early Childhood program participants
- 78 Assistive, Accessible Technology program participants
- 298 accessed a Vision Service Assessment (holistic program to determine need)
- 74 Wellbeing Hub or Peer Counselling participants
- 138 Group program / camp participants
- 20 Employment program participants
- 216 School Holiday Program participants
- 66 Community Day program participants

Our Services

Turning New Technology into Practical Support.

This year, our Vision Services team continued to evolve and broaden the supports we offer to clients. The integration of current and emerging technology into our services has been a focus. Technology is changing the way people with low vision or blindness access information and navigate everyday life.
Our practitioners are building the knowledge, programs and support that enable clients to trial, learn and confidently use technology in ways that work towards their goals.

Meta Glasses are one example. Through one to one and group programs, clients can explore the technology before deciding whether it's right for them. Unlike a phone, Meta Glasses allow people to access information hands free and in the moment. A person can ask to read a menu or street sign, identify an object or describe their surroundings.

Our practitioners are also incorporating other technology into their work, including the ASHIRASE haptic navigation tool and the WeWalk Smart Cane that combines traditional white cane mobility with features to support navigation, obstacle detection by haptic or audible feedback. These tools can complement established mobility skills while providing clients with additional information and choice.

By continuing to embrace new technology across Vision Services, we are expanding the range of tools and approaches available to clients. It reflects the expertise of our team and our commitment to evolving our services alongside technology. Giving people more choice in how to navigate, participate and live life on their terms.



Access Consulting

Providing assessment and reports with a focus on blindness and low vision to ensure workplaces, private buildings and community spaces are accessible for people with all abilities.

Adult Mobility Training

Learn to move confidently and safely through any community.

Assistance Dogs and Assistance Dog Training

Supporting people through specially trained dogs that promote confidence, wellbeing and participation in everyday life and challenging situations.

Assistive Technology

Support to identify and use the right technology to make life easier at home, at work, at school and in the community.

Audiology

Guide Dogs Victoria also offers Audiology Services in partnership with Expression Australia from our Kew Campus, supporting people with their hearing health and communication needs.

Children's Mobility Services

Giving children aged 0 to 18, with low vision or blindness, the skills to reach their potential and build independence.

Early Childhood Services

Supporting parents and carers of children aged 0 to 7 with low vision or blindness and working with those children to reach developmental goals.

Employment Services

Delivered in partnership with CVGT Employment, we work alongside clients and employers to prepare for, secure and sustain employment by challenging perceptions and building workplaces where people can thrive.

Group Programs

Learn skills, connect and share experiences with members of the community in a fun and relaxed group setting.

Guide Dog Services

Supporting Clients to partner with a Guide Dog to access the community with confidence.

Occupational Therapy

Supporting people of all ages to complete everyday activities safely and independently, using practical strategies and adapting tasks or environments to meet individual needs.

Orthoptic Low Vision Services

Supporting clients to understand their level of vision and providing options to maximise their vision through practical strategies and technology.

Support Coordination

Supporting clients to access the NDIS and understand how to make the most of their plan by connecting them with the right information and services to work towards their goals.

Wellbeing Hub and Peer Counselling

Conversation with a lived experience Community Liaison Officer who can validate experience and feelings, reduce overwhelm, relieve emotional distress, restore hope, discuss mainstream supports, and on-refer. Peer Counselling involves formal counselling with a lived experience Social Worker.

Long Cane Refresher Program

Residential program offered throughout the year and recommended for anyone who requires a primary mobility aid. The long cane is a reliable primary mobility aid that supports safe, confident and independent travel. Refreshing cane skills provides an opportunity to explore the latest cane options and cane tips. Different designs can offer different levels of feedback, comfort and support, helping a client find the combination that best suits their mobility needs, travel environments and preferences.





Acquired Brain Injury Service

Provides specialised assessment and training for people who have vision changes, caused by a brain injury, that are impacting day to day life. The service aims to optimise the use of remaining vision, other senses and cognitive skills.

The team consists of Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Occupational Therapists and Low Vision Orthoptists. All programs are individually tailored to address each person's goals, mobility needs and daily activities.

Group Programs:
Growing Skills, Enhancing Futures

Guide Dogs Victoria successfully delivered new co-designed Group Programs for Children and Adults. Group Programs that focused on building the skills and connections that enhance futures towards optimising the life of one's choosing.



Pathway Programs



Little Explorers: Learning with Every Sense

This year, our Early Childhood Education team continued to create new opportunities for our youngest clients to learn, play and connect through the new Little Explorers program - bringing specialist expertise into the simple joy of childhood discovery.

Play-based activities encouraged children to discover more of the world around them using available sight, sound, touch, and smell. From exploring nature with magnifiers and investigating light and shadows, to textured painting, leaf rubbings and craft, each activity is designed to make exploring accessible, engaging and fun.

Importantly, activities were adapted to each child's individual preferences and needs, giving children different ways to participate, make discoveries and build confidence in their environment. Little Explorers created an inclusive space where children can learn through play, connect with others and experience the world in ways that work for them.

Confident Kids: Ready for the Unexpected.

Confidence is just as important when things don't go to plan. Our Confident Kids Group program gives children who are blind or have low vision the skills and strategies to navigating everyday situations – and the unexpected.

Children practiced road crossing and safe travel, alongside problem solving for situations such as becoming lost or responding to an emergency. They met emergency service workers, explored emergency vehicles and took part in a bushwalking safety session.

Importantly, children also helped choose and plan group activities, giving them opportunities to make decisions, solve problems and learn alongside their peers.

By practicing these skills in a safe and supportive environment, Confident Kids program supported children to take on their world with greater confidence.





Creating Pathways to University

This year, Guide Dogs Victoria partnered with Monash University to deliver a campus experience for students who are blind or have low vision, supporting their transition to university and helping them build confidence in navigating a new, complex environment.

Alongside our Orientation and Mobility specialists, students explored lecture theatres, transport hubs, accommodation, study spaces and cafeterias; developing practical navigation skills, while becoming familiar with university life.

The experience was about more than finding a way around campus. It gave young people the opportunity to picture themselves at university, understand the support available and feel more confident about taking the next step in their education.

Working in partnership with Monash University's Disability Support Services team, the initiative demonstrates how specialist expertise and accessible environments can come together to create more inclusive pathways into higher education and open up more possibilities for young people.

From BBQ's to Blind Golf: A New Approach for Men

What does a program for men experiencing vision loss look like? This year, our Vision Services team decided to do things differently.

The new Men's Series brings men together around activities that are practical, social and most importantly enjoyable. Rather than starting with a traditional support group, our Occupational Therapists created experiences around the things people might want to do in everyday life – cook a great barbecue, grow vegetables and herbs, try a new sport or simply spend time with other men who understand some of the changes vision loss can bring.

BBQ Basics and Beyond introduced adaptive utensils and techniques for cooking safely and independently. Green Thumb Gang moved outdoors, using accessible gardening methods and adaptive tools to get participants planting, growing and getting their hands dirty.

The series also looked beyond our own campus. Participants tried blind golf alongside Blind Golf Australia while Game On: Sport without Sight, delivered with Blind Sports Australia and Recreation Victoria, introduced everything from walking and swimming to boxing, cricket and AFL.

Behind the fun is a serious purpose. Vision Loss can change routines, relationships and how people participate in their community, with social isolation a very real risk. The Men's Series creates a different way to respond, bringing specialist support and peer experience into activities that feel relevant, informal and part of everyday life.



Building Understanding. Growing Community.

The more people understand, the more inclusive our community can become. By opening our doors and taking our expertise out into the community, we're creating new ways for people to support, connect and learn about blindness and low vision. Together with Guide Dogs Victoria, we embrace the world with a different perspective.

Opening Doors to a New Generation

This year, Guide Dogs Victoria launched the School Holiday Program, welcoming children of all abilities, aged 8-12 to our Kew Campus. The program is designed to provide an interactive day to build understanding of our work and the experiences of people with low vision or blindness. It also has a strong focus on our dog program and the lifecycle of raising and caring for our dogs.

Across the program days, children experience Guide Dogs Victoria from many different perspectives. They meet puppies, enjoy time with our Ambassador Dogs, watch our dogs at work, play sensory games and take part in blindfold challenges. Importantly, they also hear directly from people with lived experience, creating opportunities to ask questions, challenge perceptions and learn about different ways of experiencing the world.

The response to this new program was overwhelmingly positive, with children embracing every part of the experience. As one young participant told us: *"This was sooo fun and I would totally do this 100 million more times."*



The successful pilot created a new way for Guide Dogs Victoria to connect with younger members of our community, bringing people onto our campus and building greater awareness, understanding and connection from an early age. The program will continue with increased opportunity for attendance, given each session sold out within 24 hours.

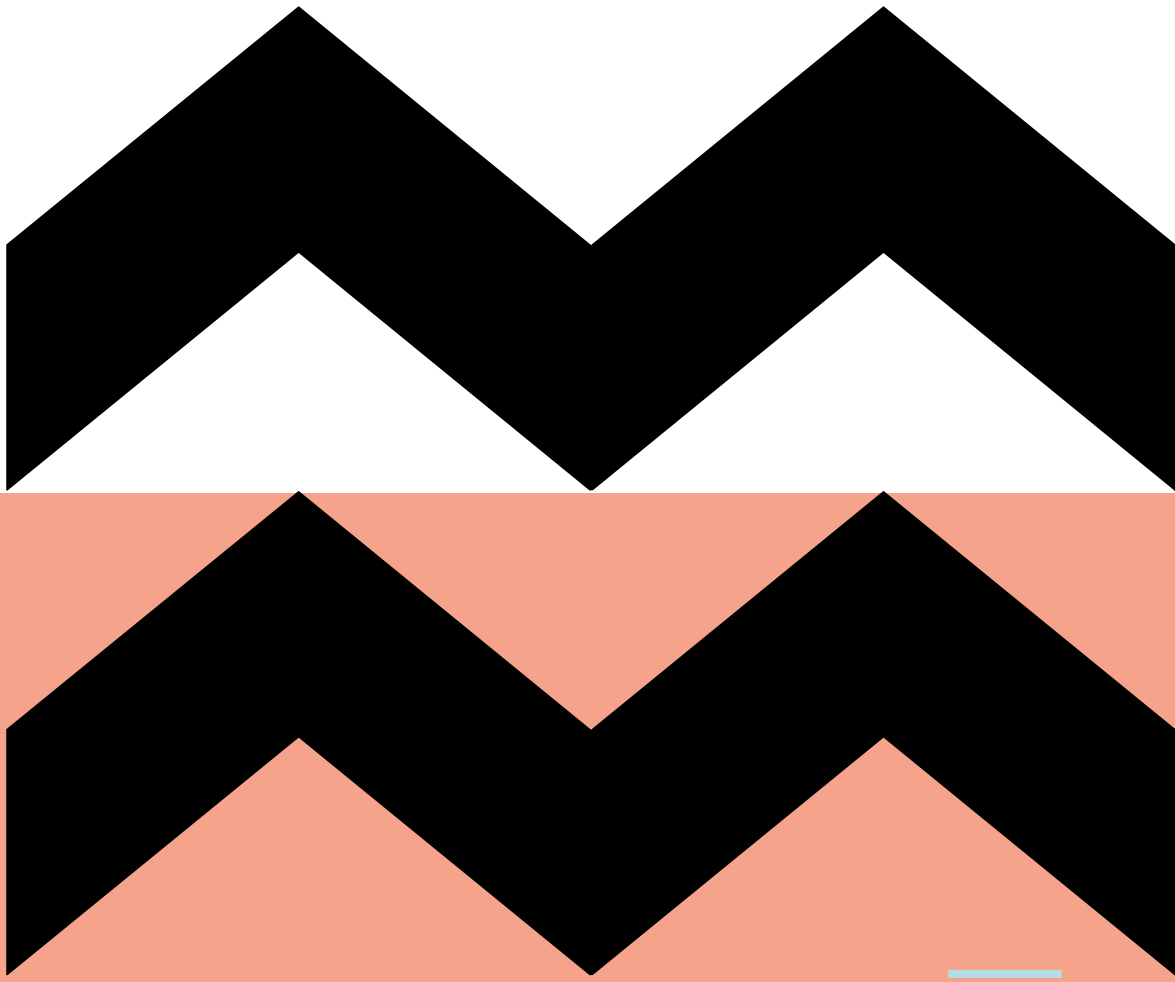
Putting Accessibility into the Minds of Future Innovators

What if the next generation of technology was designed with accessibility in mind from the very beginning?

This year, our Vision Services team participated in Amazon Girls' Tech Day, challenging young people exploring STEM to consider how technology could create greater opportunities for people who are blind or have low vision.

Drawing on their specialist expertise and experience working alongside clients, our team introduced students to assistive technology and challenged them to imagine what they might create themselves. It encouraged students to consider accessibility and inclusive design from the outset, and importantly, the people who will ultimately use the technology they create.

By bringing the experiences of people who are blind or have low vision into STEM conversations today, we can play a small and important role in shaping the thinking of tomorrow's designers, engineers and innovators; laying the foundations for a future where technology can open even more possibilities.



Consumer voice in developing technology

Our Consumer Advisory Council stepped up to provide a consumer perspective on the early-stage development of an assistive device by students from the Australian National University (ANU). Project VER is an assistive technology engineering project designed to support people with low vision through a wearable device that describes their surroundings. It combines emerging vision technology with artificial intelligence, including large language models (LLMs), to provide live audio feedback.

Now in it's second year as a student Capstone project at ANU, the project aimed to build on the existing system, a crossbody bag design, with refinements to meet newly established goals and success criteria. The student team had defined the software requirements, focusing on object recognition, text-to-speech, position and environment description, and potentially GPS navigation. Work was also underway to miniaturise the circuit board to make the new device smaller.

In July 2025, the ANU student team, led by Harriett Furphy, joined our Consumer Advisory Council to discuss their design plans and gain an understanding of what users need and where the device could be improved.

The feedback shared during the testing day had a direct and meaningful impact, with many of the Council's suggestions incorporated into the final design. The mobile app interface was likewise shaped by discussions about what worked best for participants.

The project went on to win ANU's Best Engineering Project of the Year award: wonderful recognition of a collaborative effort, and proof that user-focused design makes for better design.

Measuring What Matters to our Community

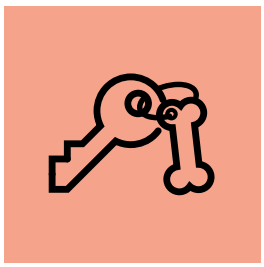
Social Impact and Value

Over the last 4 years, Guide Dogs Australia has worked with member states to measure our social impact. Through our award-winning Social Impact Measurement Framework, we consistently monitor, analyse and share how our services create meaningful lasting change. Outcomes are not just immediate feedback, they represent real-life progress that evolves over time, shaped by individual circumstances and supported by community. Our impact is measured across seven impact domains to see where we are contributing to positive outcomes, where we can do more, and where we can influence wider change.

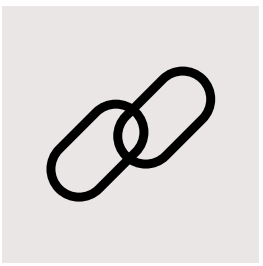
Our seven key domains include:



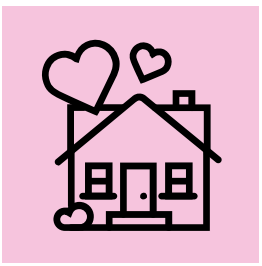
Choice



Independence



Connection



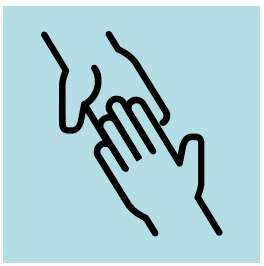
Daily living



Mobility



Meaningful activity



Wellbeing

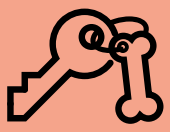
Our Social Impact in Numbers and Voices

Here's how people told us their lives have changed across our seven impact domains:



Choice

75%
of clients say they have more choice in how they go about their day.



Living the life you want

78%
of clients say they are more able to live the life they want.



Relationships and connections

72%
of clients say they have made or maintained social connections and relationships.



Day-to-day life

78%
of clients say they are more independent when doing daily activities around the home or online.



Getting out and about

80%
of clients say they are more independent when getting out and about.



Meaningful activities

72%
of clients say they do more of the things that are important to them.



Feeling good

72%
of clients say they feel more positive about the future.

"Before, I would go out once a week, and now I do something every day - swimming, dancing, hair appointments"

"It's helped me communicate with other parents and this has helped me build friendships"

"I no longer walk into obstacles on the footpath, using public transport is a breeze, and shopping is a lot easier"

"I feel I have more purpose and a vision for my future"

"I have more choice and control of things I can do"



Noora's Story

My World is Expanding Again

As Noora's vision changed, so did the world around her.

"I thought I was isolated. My world felt like it was shrinking and I was getting smaller and smaller," she says.

Today, with her Guide Dog Vine by her side and support from across Guide Dogs Victoria's Vision Services team, Noora is finding new ways to navigate, cook, dance, write and participate in her community.

Noora was also one of our exhibiting artists in our Annual Blind and Low Vision Art Exhibition.

For Noora, there is no single service or tool that makes this possible. While Guide Dog Vine plays an important role in how she moves through the world, her long cane remains essential, particularly when Vine is unwell or when she is somewhere a Guide Dog cannot go.

Working with our Orientation and Mobility Specialists has helped Noora build her cane skills and find practical solutions for the places she wants to go.

"Sometimes there are tips the O&Ms give which blow my mind, little tips that make doing things less complicated."

Those skills mean being able to do things that matter, including taking her daughter out for dinner and going to guitar lessons together.

Rediscovering the everyday

Having previously been sighted, changing vision has also meant relearning everyday tasks Noora once did without thinking.

Working with her Occupational Therapist, she found new ways to navigate her home, use kitchen appliances and prepare food safely, using practical techniques and simple adaptations such as tactile markers.

"The first time I was able to make a pasta dish for my daughter - wow. That was important to me."

Support has also enabled Noora to pursue something she had always wanted to do, dance. Today she participates in adult ballet, contemporary dance and tap, using strategies developed with her Occupational Therapist to communicate with instructors and adapt classes around her vision.

"Dancing keeps me sane."



Finding her voice

Learning how to communicate what she needs has been equally important. Noora has developed strategies to explain her vision, let people know how to interact with Vine and advocate for practical changes.

At her daughter's school, those skills have supported conversations with teachers, students and other parents and helped create new friendships.

"I am part of the school community."

Technology has opened another door. Noora is a professional writer, but as her vision changed there was a period when she was unable to read and write as she had before. Learning to use VoiceOver initially felt overwhelming. With support and practice, she progressed from using it for just five minutes at a time to relying on it every day.

"Just writing makes me happy. It is important to me."

There is still more Noora wants to do: learn braille, meet more people who are blind or have low vision, and even volunteer and use her love of public speaking to give back.

Most importantly, she now looks to the future differently.

"I feel hopeful. I know there is a way out. With Guide Dogs Victoria, I feel my world is expanding."

For Noora, that expanding world is made up of Vine and her cane, technology and practical skills, dancing and writing, time with her daughter, friendships and community - all giving her more ways to live life on her terms.



Our Dogs

Impact Unleashed: Our Dogs in Numbers

223
working Guide Dogs in the community.

150
puppies born at Cute HQ.

48
dogs matched with new handlers:

28 Guide Dogs

01 Ambassador Dog

15 Personal Support Dogs

02 Court Dogs

02 Facility Dogs

14
puppies and untrained dogs provided to interstate and overseas schools.

17
dogs retained for breeding.



Strengthening our international relationships and sharing Victorian innovation

This year, Guide Dogs Victoria joined Guide Dog organisations from 27 countries at the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) Conference in Tokyo, following a visit to Huikuang Guide Dog School in Taiwan (pictured right). The gathering provided an important opportunity to share innovation, strengthen international relationships and learn from the opportunities and challenges facing Guide Dog organisations around the world.

We were particularly proud to share Guide Dogs Victoria's world-first Transition to Retirement Program on the international stage. Guide Dog Mobility Instructor Cassie Coleman presented the program, which supports Guide Dog Handlers as they transition from one Guide Dog partnership to another with dignity, clarity and care. The approach was exceptionally well received by international delegates, demonstrating how innovation developed here in Victoria can contribute to better practice across the global Guide Dog movement.

The conference also brought significant recognition for Guide Dogs Victoria. Aaron Horsington received the John Groom Long Service Award, recognising 30 years of contribution to the Guide Dog movement, while our International Guide Dog Day campaign, Built to Guide, received the Dorothy Award for its impact in educating the community about the role and value of Guide Dogs.

Our contribution to the international movement has continued to grow, with Guide Dogs Victoria CEO Nicky Long being appointed to the IGDF Board. This builds on a history of international contribution, including the extraordinary contribution of John Gosling AM whose more than 50 years of service to Guide Dogs Victoria, now continuing as a volunteer, remains deeply respected throughout the global Guide Dog community.

The week also provided opportunities to participate in international research and workshops alongside experts in dog welfare, Assistance Dogs and the justice sector, further strengthening the exchange of knowledge between Guide Dogs Victoria and organisations around the world.

From sharing our own innovations to learning from international colleagues, these relationships ensure our teams remain connected to global thinking and emerging practice, while contributing our own expertise to a movement united by a shared commitment to people who are blind or have low vision.







Shaping the Future of Assistance Dogs Across our Region



David Locklin, Executive Director for Assistance Dogs International (ADI)

Welcoming trainers, professionals and organisational leaders from across Australia and the Oceania Asia region for an important gathering of assistance dog expertise, Guide Dogs Victoria was proud to host the Assistance Dogs International (ADI) Trainers' Workshop at our Kew Campus in November 2025.

The event brought together leading practitioners from ADI-accredited and candidate organisations to share expertise, advance best practice and strengthen collaboration across the assistance dog sector.

Across the program, delegates explored the complete journey of an Assistance Dog – from early puppy development, puppy raising and cooperative care through to advanced training, matching, working life and retirement. The workshop provided an important forum for practitioners to exchange knowledge, challenge thinking and learn from the experience and innovation taking place across the region.

Guide Dogs Victoria was proud to contribute our own expertise to these conversations. Breeding Program Manager, Emily Wilkes presented on best practice in Early Puppy Development Programs.

Importantly, the gathering extended beyond training and practice. CEOs from participating organisations came together at Guide Dogs Victoria for a strategic workshop focused on the upcoming Disability Discrimination Act submission and shared regional priorities.

Together, these conversations are contributing to a stronger, more connected sector. One that continues to evolve standards, strengthen practice and explore how assistance dogs can create greater opportunities for the people and communities they support.

Hosting the workshop was an important opportunity for Guide Dogs Victoria to play an active role in that work: bringing expertise together, sharing what we have learned and learning from our international colleagues as we collectively shape the future of Assistance Dog Programs across our region.

We thank Assistance Dogs International and the organisations that generously shared their knowledge and experience, along with Houndztooth, Black Dog Wear and KONG for their support of the event.





A New Chapter in our Veterinary Team

This year, Guide Dogs Victoria farewelled Dr Ann Hansen after an incredible 15 years of dedicated service to our organisation and our dogs.

Throughout her time with us, Ann provided exceptional veterinary care across every stage of our dogs' lives, from preventative care and microchipping through to treatment and surgery. Her expertise, dedication and commitment have made a lasting contribution to the health and wellbeing of countless dogs, and we thank her for everything she has given to Guide Dogs Victoria.

We were also delighted to welcome Dr Andrew McKay to our veterinary team. Andrew brings more than two decades of experience in companion animal practice, having graduated in Veterinary Science from the University of Melbourne while also playing AFL with Carlton Football Club.

Andrew's extensive veterinary expertise and passion for animal care will play an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of our dog colony. We're thrilled to have him on the team.

Driving Change in Accessible Transport

This year, Guide Dogs Victoria continued to advocate for a safer, more accessible and inclusive transport network, working alongside the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning to bring the experiences of people who are blind or have low vision into conversations about transport accessibility.

Our involvement extended across Victoria's evolving transport network, including participation in the opening of Melbourne's Metro Tunnel and ongoing engagement with government on the importance of accessible public transport. These opportunities reinforced the value of considering accessibility from the outset and ensuring the voices of people with lived experience help shape how transport services are designed and delivered.

An important milestone was the Victorian Government's announcement of stronger protections for people travelling with Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs. The reforms introduced stronger consequences for commercial passenger vehicle drivers who refuse passengers travelling with assistance animals, alongside broader measures to improve passenger safety and accountability.

We were particularly proud of the contribution of Board Member Cameron Algie AM and members of our Consumer Advisory Council, whose lived experience and advocacy helped strengthen the case for change.

Together, these initiatives reflect the important role Guide Dogs Victoria plays beyond our direct services — working with government, advocating for systemic change and helping create a transport network where people who are blind or have low vision can travel with greater independence, dignity and choice.

May's Future, on her Terms



At 18, May is studying criminology at university, pursuing her passion for figure skating and mentoring other people who are blind or have low vision. With plans to move into law, she has big ambitions for her future.

Guide Dogs Victoria has been alongside May for more than a decade, with support evolving as she has grown and her needs, confidence and aspirations have changed.

Born with retinal cone dystrophy, May's vision declined throughout childhood. By primary school, getting around was becoming increasingly difficult and she was relying more on her dad and brothers to guide her. At the same time, she was experiencing isolation at school and losing confidence.

At eight years old, May began working with Guide Dogs Victoria's mobility specialists, learning how to navigate safely and confidently with a cane. Just as importantly, the team supported her to understand her vision impairment, advocate for herself and become comfortable asking for what she needed.

"I learned that it's ok to ask for the things that I need to level the playing field with everyone else. As a child, I really needed that."

Those early skills gave May confidence to explore what was possible. In Year 7, she discovered figure skating and taught herself to skate – something she says she would have been 'too scared to even try' without the navigation skills she had developed with Guide Dogs Victoria.

As May moved through her teenage years, her needs continued to change. Navigating with a cane had become increasingly tiring and she had long hoped that a Guide Dog might become part of her future.

After finishing high school, May was matched with a black labrador, Gino. Together, they now navigate university, busy streets, catching up with friends and everyday life.

“Now that I have Gino, I feel so much more confident and safe. And I have my best friend with me all the time.”

Today, May is also using her own experience to create connection for others, mentoring teenagers and young people who are blind or have low vision.

May’s story demonstrates the impact of personalised support over time. From learning to navigate with a cane at eight, to developing the confidence to advocate for herself, pursue the things she loves and ultimately partner with Gino, Guide Dogs Victoria has supported May at different stages to build the skills and confidence she needs to shape a future that is uniquely her own.

A Second Pair of Paws for Melbourne’s Courts

This year, Court Dog Tilly officially joined the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia as part of the Guide Dogs Australia National Court Dog Program, becoming the eighth Court Dog to be sworn in across Australia.



Representatives pictured from left to right: Law Institute of Victoria Councillor Tom Ballantyne, The Hon Chief Justice Alstergren AO, Guide Dogs Victoria CEO Nicky Long and Board Chair Guide Dogs Victoria Michael Boyce.

Tilly joins Melbourne Court Dog Poppy, whose impact over the past three years has demonstrated the important role Court Dogs can play in providing calm, comfort and emotional support to children and vulnerable court users during what can be an incredibly challenging time. Growing demand for the program in Melbourne created the need for a second specially trained dog.

Together, Tilly and Poppy are helping create a more supportive experience, using the unique skills and temperament of Court Dogs to provide a reassuring presence when it is needed most.

Tilly’s appointment also reflects the continued growth of the National Court Dog Program, with six Court Dogs appointed across Australia in the past 12 months – extending the reach of a program that demonstrates just how many different ways an expertly trained dog can make a difference.



Our People

The Team Behind Our Mission

720
volunteers





140
new volunteers

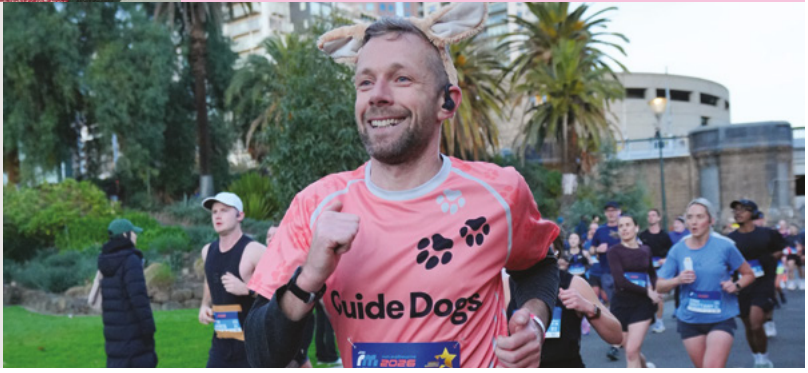
270
Puppy Raisers





139
employees

17
new starters



Celebrating Our Staff

At Guide Dogs Victoria, our clients come first and it's our people who make that possible every single day.

A Stronger Culture Together

Our people play a critical role in shaping the culture and future of Guide Dogs Victoria. A positive, engaged and connected workforce is fundamental to delivering on our purpose and making a meaningful difference in the lives of the people and communities we support. In June 2026, we invited employees to share their experiences through our annual Culture Amp engagement survey, providing valuable insight into what is working well and where we can continue to improve.

The results give us much to be proud of. Our overall employee engagement score reached 76%, up 10 percentage points from December 2024 and seven points above the Culture Amp Australian not-for-profit benchmark. Importantly, positive movement was recorded across every category measured, reflecting a workforce that is increasingly engaged, connected and confident in our organisation's direction.

These results demonstrate the progress we have made in creating a workplace where our people feel valued, supported and motivated, providing a strong foundation to continue delivering on our mission and purpose

Service Milestones

We are proud to celebrate the dedication of staff who have given many years of service. Their long-standing commitment reflects not just years, but a lifetime of impact for our clients, dogs and community.

25+ years of service	
Jenny Black	37 years
Peter Tomlins	32 years
Irene Grant	27 years
Katrina Ritter	27 years
Janice Aldred	27 years
Kathryn Atkinson	26 years
20+ years of service	
Elizabeth Smallwood	24 years
Jun Atobe	23 years
Alicia San Martin	21 years
Sally Armstrong	20 years
Lyn Pandji	20 years
15+ years of service	
Diane Foster	19 years
Kellie Virth	19 years
Michelle Boyd	19 years
Emily Wilkes	19 years
Shelley Pannier	18 years
Lucie Sapulovic	18 years
Aaron Horsington	18 years
Claire Yan	17 years
Simon McDonald-Kerr	16 years
Eamon Quinn	15 years
Emily Paton	15 years

Reward and Recognition

Each quarter, our Reward and Recognition Awards highlight staff who embody our values in action. In 2025-2026, team members across the organisation were recognised for creativity, leadership and commitment to the way they do their work including:

Aaron Horsington

Adnan Karadza

Alice Maffei

Cameron Finney

Catherine Rodbard-Bean

Damien Nguyen

Diane Foster

Eamon Quinn

Elisa Phillips x2

Erica Sangiorgio

Jade Delios Callanan x2

Jenny Black

Josie Verga

Julie Corner-Hulls

Karen Nottingham

Kaye Jones

Laura Davidson

Lauren Gay

Leanne Blandford

Mary Heath

Melanie Jacobson

Nilasha Ahamadon

Olivia Compagnino

Taryn Wallington

Our Volunteers

Guide Dogs Victoria was founded by a community of volunteers. Involving and engaging people who bring skills, passion and time to our work remains an essential part of who we are. Our volunteers are vital to enabling people living with low vision or blindness to live a full life of their choosing. Their generosity, dedication and expertise strengthen our work across Victoria and support the delivery of programs and services throughout the organisation.

Volunteers are embedded across almost every area of Guide Dogs Victoria - caring for and supporting our dogs, assisting clients, raising essential funds, preserving our history, running events and providing practical support across a wide range of programs.

During the year, our volunteer community grew to more than 700 volunteers, reflecting the continued commitment across Victoria towards our mission.



Volunteer Service Awards

May 2025—April 2026



55 Years

Chris Feehan

45 Years

Judy Goy

25 Years

Pamela Haigh

20 Years

Alan (Derek) Crute
Claire Black
John Holloway
Linda Zahner
Louise Lampard
Marilyn Sorel
Meredith Griffin

15 Years

Barbara Walsh
Iain Edwards
Jenny Waldon
Libby McFarland
Loretta Priest
Marilena Joannides
Michael Davey
Michelle Hodgson
Peter Edwards
Rhonda Ryan
Roz Keenan
Yvonne Campbell

10 Years

Alison Baum
Cassandra Coleman
Darren Baird
Elizabeth Hollingsworth
Heather Zipsin
Jan Roberts
Janet Padgham
Julian Brown
Lisa Bradley
Lynne Calvert
Lynne Harris
Melanie Harvey
Melissa Farnham
Rebecca Sandwell
Rochelle Kendt
Sally Dewis
Sarah Caldwell
Stephen Paull
Susan Mravlek
Tracey Atherton

5 Years

Akiko Ryumon
Bruce Tritton
Janine Hearn
Juliette Warwick
Kathryn Harrison
Marcus Amor-Smith
Millie Wells
Mitali Thakar
Mitesh Shah
Oleg Zendel
Oliver Mayall
Sam Ariakia
Simon Hutchison
Simon Morris
Stephanie Parry

Building Connection and Engagement

This year saw the launch of our inaugural Volunteer Community Calendar, providing a central place for volunteers to access upcoming events, learning opportunities, celebrations and important dates.

The calendar supports greater connection and engagement across our diverse volunteer workforce, helping volunteers remain informed and connected to the broader Guide Dogs Victoria community beyond their individual roles.

National Volunteer Week

During National Volunteer Week in May 2026, more than 80 volunteers gathered at the Betty Amsden Education Centre in recognition of their service across a broad range of roles and projects, including:

- Puppy Nursery, Kennels and the Dog Recovery Program
- Puppy Development, including Puppy Raising, Puppy Classes and Enrichment Classes
- Events that raise awareness and essential funds
- Historical Archives
- Client support across residential, children's and wellbeing programs
- Administrative and operational support
- Driving, including puppy deliveries and Collection Dog support across Victoria
- Board and committee participation

Hosted by Volunteer Program Manager Mary Heath, the event featured a client impact story from Lucy Carpenter, a tour of the Kennels with the Kennels team and retiring Guide Dog Jim, and a live cross to Japan with CEO Nicky Long following the International Guide Dog Federation Conference.

The gathering provided an opportunity for volunteers to connect, and for us to formally acknowledge the breadth and value of their service.



Expanding Volunteer Opportunities



New volunteer roles were developed during the year to support emerging organisational needs and broaden opportunities for people to contribute their skills. These included six new Guide Dog BART Assessment Volunteers, three Wellbeing Interview Volunteers, five Visitor Support Volunteers, three Gift Shop Support Volunteers and ten School Holiday Program Volunteers.

Volunteer involvement also increased across Client Support, with five new Client Support Volunteers supporting residential, group program and occupational therapy programs.

Across our Dog Facilities, we onboarded fourty-five new volunteers across the Training Kennels and Puppy Nursery.

Celebrating our Volunteers – Cathy Iozzi

Loving dogs, supporting people and strengthening our Guide Dogs Victoria community.

For Cathy Iozzi, volunteering with Guide Dogs Victoria is about far more than her love of dogs. It is about being part of something bigger - a community of people working together to change lives.

Cathy officially began volunteering as a Puppy Raiser in 2021, although she had wanted to take on the role for many years. Dogs have always been much-loved members of her family, and she had previously puppy raised with Australian Border Force. With a professional background in education and disability support, volunteering with Guide Dogs Victoria brought together her skills, experience and love of dogs in a way that felt deeply meaningful.

Five years on, Cathy's contribution has grown well beyond Puppy Raising. She is a Breeding Stockholder, welcoming one of Guide Dogs Victoria's breeding dogs into her home; an Enrichment Group Leader, helping young puppies develop the skills and confidence they need; and a Temporary Carer when puppies need a short-term home. She also volunteers weekly in Puppy Raising Administration, helping with coordination, documentation, Puppy Class planning and supporting prospective volunteers.

Across each of these roles, Cathy sees the same bigger picture - every small contribution is part of a much larger journey towards independence for a person living with low vision.



The mission is also deeply personal for Cathy. With a family history of blindness and low vision, she understands the importance of independence and the difference the right support can make.

"Knowing that my contributions can directly help someone navigate the world with greater confidence is incredibly fulfilling".

It is hearing directly from people living with low vision and blindness that brings this purpose into focus for Cathy. At Guide Dog graduation ceremonies, intake morning teas and information sessions, she has listened to clients share their experiences and describe the profound difference that Guide Dogs and other GDV services have made in their lives.

“These moments constantly reinforce why I do this. It grounds everything we do in real-world impact”.

That connection to the mission has also shaped Cathy’s understanding of volunteering. Through her administration role, she is sometimes one of the first people a prospective Puppy Raiser speaks to. She gets to share in their excitement as they take their first steps into a journey she knows so well.

It has shown her that the Guide Dog journey is never the work of one person.

“It’s made me realise that volunteering isn’t just about handling the dogs, it’s about building and sustaining the community that makes it all possible”.

For Cathy, one very proud moment was also watching Hollie graduate as a Guide Dog. Cathy had Puppy Raised Hollie from just eight weeks. She had been there for every training milestone, challenge and small breakthrough. She knew the countless hours of work that had gone into preparing Hollie for her future.

So, when Cathy watched Hollie complete her graduation walk, it was deeply emotional.

She describes it as watching a ‘beautiful, complex puzzle finally come together’. Every early socialisation experience, every obedience lesson and every lesson in good house manners had become part of the foundation for the remarkable Guide Dog Hollie would become.

And then came the moment Cathy had been working towards all along - knowing that Hollie would go on to help another person living with blindness or low vision experience greater confidence and independence.

“To see all that dedication and hard work culminate in her success, and to know the profound, life-changing difference she is now going to make for someone living with low vision, is an achievement I will carry with me forever”.

While the dogs may have been Cathy’s starting point, the people and the community have become just as important.

“GDV is just a wonderful community to be a part of. It offers a highly welcoming and supportive environment where you can learn new skills, take on diverse roles, experience new things, and build lasting friendships”.

Cathy’s story captures what makes volunteering at Guide Dogs Victoria so powerful. We are incredibly grateful to Cathy for more than five years of generous service across so many areas of Guide Dogs Victoria.
Her contribution reflects the very best of our volunteer community - people who give their time, skills and heart because they believe in a world where people living with blindness and low vision can live with greater independence, confidence and connection.

End-of-Year Celebrations

In December 2025, Guide Dogs Victoria hosted three end-of-year volunteer gatherings across Kew, Bendigo and Geelong.

More than 120 volunteers attended the Kew Morning Tea on 5 December, providing an opportunity to reflect on the year and acknowledge the people who had given their time across the organisation.

A highlight was the recognition of long-serving volunteers Barbara Bedford and Val Riseborough, who both retired after more than 40 years of service. Over four decades, Barb and Val supported Guide Dogs Victoria across a number of roles, most recently contributing to the preservation of our Historical Archives. Their service represents an enduring contribution to the organisation and its history.

Regional celebrations followed in Bendigo and Geelong, providing an opportunity to thank and connect with Puppy Raisers, Temporary Carers and Collection Dog volunteers from across Victoria.



Thank You

From supporting the development and care of our dogs to assisting clients, delivering programs, raising funds and providing essential support behind the scenes, volunteers make a significant contribution to Guide Dogs Victoria.

We extend our sincere thanks to our more than 700 volunteers for their generosity, commitment and continued support of our mission.





Our Reach

Raising Awareness in our Community

Using our voice and platform to advocate and educate in Victoria and beyond.

191,434

Total number of followers across all Guide Dogs Australia social media channels.

113,000

Total number of media engagements across the country.



540,242

Total number of engagements across all Guide Dogs Australia channels.

45

Total number of events delivered in the Victorian community.

105,422,525

Total number of impressions across all Guide Dogs Australia social media channels.

The Heart Behind the Harness

Built on the foundations of our first Community Fair in 2025, this year's Community Fair returned bigger than ever. We welcomed more than 3,000 people to our Kew Campus and this was a significant increase in attendance and a powerful demonstration of the growing connection between Guide Dogs Victoria and our community.

Under the theme Heart Behind the Harness, this year's Fair celebrated all the people behind our work: our clients, volunteers, puppy raisers, donors, staff, partners and supporters. Everyone who plays a part in making what we do possible. Across the campus, visitors could meet our dogs, watch live demonstrations, experience our services, hear from people with lived experience and take part in accessible sport, activities and entertainment.

Importantly, the Fair also brought our wider community together. The strong support of our corporate and community partners was complemented by organisations including Specsavers, Retina Australia, Blind Sports Australia and Braille & Tactile Signs, creating opportunities for visitors to discover services, organisations and experiences from across the blindness and low vision community.

More than a day out, the Community Fair has become an important way to open our doors and bring people closer to our mission. The record turnout and extraordinary support from across our community was made possible by a whole of organisation effort and this year's Community Fair reflected a true celebration of the Heart Behind the Harness – the people, partnerships and shared commitment that make our mission possible.











Making our Mission Hard to Miss

Sometimes, connecting people with our mission starts with something that simply makes them smile.

This year, we introduced some larger-than-life additions to our community events, using playful Guide Dog mascots to capture attention, create memorable moments and give people another reason to stop, engage and learn more about Guide Dogs Victoria.

Our giant inflatable Guide Dog, Goldie, proved impossible to miss at International Guide Dog Day, with children and families lining up for photos. He was also the first stop as people entered our Community Fair. At Run Melbourne, Guido, our Guide Dog mascot suit, took the fun onto the course, engaging participants and spectators along the way.

These playful moments create another way for us to connect with Victorians – from long-time supporters to people discovering Guide Dogs Victoria for the first time. A photo, a laugh or a larger-than-life Labrador can be the beginning of a much bigger conversation about mission and impact.

We would like to thank the donors and sponsors who made our giant inflatable dog, Goldie, possible.

Major Sponsors:

Fallons Bus Service and Melbourne Satellites.

Minor Sponsors:

Geoff and Merry Bransbury, Mr Reg Keating and the Algie Family.





Betty’s Legacy Lives On: 2026 Ladies Lunch





The 2026 Betty Amsden Ladies Lunch brought together an inspiring community of women, philanthropists, leaders and supporters to celebrate leadership, legacy and meaningful impact. Held at the Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club, guests heard from Carman’s Kitchen founder Carolyn Creswell OAM, who shared her perspectives on resilience, authenticity, leadership and purpose-driven business. Most importantly, the event raised vital funds to support employment pathways for women who are blind or have low vision, creating greater opportunities to pursue meaningful careers and financial independence. With the generous support of our guests, donors and partners, the event continued the extraordinary legacy of Betty Amsden AO and her enduring commitment to creating opportunities for others.

Accessibility by Design: Launching our Partnership with A.G. Coombs

This year, Guide Dogs Victoria officially launched our partnership with A.G. Coombs through Accessibility by Design, bringing together leaders from business, government and the community to explore how we can create organisations and spaces where everyone belongs. Through a panel of experts spanning accessibility, inclusion, architecture and the built environment, the conversation challenged organisations to consider accessibility from the very beginning — across buildings, technology, workplaces and everyday experiences. The event marked the beginning of a partnership built on shared values and a commitment to creating meaningful social impact, while extending Guide Dogs Victoria’s expertise and advocacy into new organisations, industries and communities.

Alan Kohler AM Event: Creating Connections through Conversation



In June, Guide Dogs Victoria brought together a select group of leaders from across Victoria's business, investment and philanthropic communities for an intimate evening with respected economic commentator Alan Kohler AM, generously hosted at the Gandel Foundation.

Against a backdrop of global economic change, Alan shared his perspectives on the forces shaping business, investment and confidence, creating a compelling starting point for broader conversations about leadership, community and social impact. The evening also provided an opportunity to share Guide Dogs Victoria's evolving work and future direction, including how our expertise in breeding, raising and training extraordinary dogs is being applied through an expanding range of Assistance Dog programs.

The success of the evening was in the connections it created – bringing existing and prospective supporters closer to our work, creating space for meaningful conversations and opening new opportunities for philanthropic relationships and partnerships that can support our impact into the future.



Representatives from left to right. A.G.Coombs: Aaron Clark & Terri Hosking. NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission: Meredyth Pettit and Tiffany Cherry, MC.

Guide Dogs Victoria Volunteer Ambassadors: Championing Community and Amplifying Our Impact



Dolly Diamond

A long-time supporter of Guide Dogs Victoria, Dolly is a visible and proud leader of our presence at the Midsumma Festival Pride March and ChillOut Festival. She also extends her welcome by inviting clients to her performances throughout the year, ensuring they feel seen and celebrated. A huge supporter of our social media campaigns, Dolly is always responsive to requests for content and actively promotes our mission online. In April 2026, she attended and hosted the Community Fair, helping to elevate the event's profile, showcasing her creativity and deep commitment. Her blend of visibility, artistry, and advocacy makes her an invaluable partner in promoting inclusivity and diversity.



Nick White

Comedian and content creator Nick White has brought his trademark humour and energy to Guide Dogs Victoria, finding new ways to introduce our work to broader audiences. Nick supported our Community Fair with a live comedy performance and then invited Guide Dogs Victoria to join him on stage as a part of his Melbourne International Comedy Festival show, creating a unique opportunity to bring a Guide Dog into an unexpected setting and build greater awareness and understanding through entertainment.
His willingness to share his platform and connect new audiences with our mission makes Nick an exciting and valued ambassador for Guide Dogs Victoria.



Jack Silvagni

As an AFL player for St Kilda Football Club and Volunteer Ambassador, Jack brings energy and sporting passion to Guide Dogs Victoria. Through his profile and authentic enthusiasm, Jack continues to inspire younger generations and strengthen our community connections.



Her Honour Judge Amanda Mansini

Her Honour Judge Amanda Mansini is a Judge of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia and Co-Chair of the National Court Dog Program Committee. A passionate advocate for trauma-sensitive court environments, Judge Mansini has been instrumental in championing the role specially trained Court Dogs can play in supporting children and vulnerable people through challenging court experiences. Her advocacy for the National Court Dog Program, delivered in partnership with Guide Dogs Victoria, reflects her strong belief in the difference a calm, expertly trained dog can make in creating a safer and more supportive experience for court users.



Lauren Phillips

Beloved voice of Melbourne mornings on Nova 100 and host of Channel Nine's Postcards, Lauren has been a hugely active advocate for our mission. She has welcomed us into the Nova 100 studio to promote the Community Fair. Lauren frequently shares and responds to online requests for content, amplifying our voice across platforms. With her personal connection to blindness through her grandfather, her advocacy is heartfelt and genuine, making her one of our strongest champions in both the media and community spaces.



Andrew 'Lehmo' Lehmann

A well-known comedian and radio host, Lehmo became an ambassador alongside his son Laddie after visiting our Campus and falling in love with our puppies. He has been a tireless supporter, using his platform to raise awareness while also embracing opportunities for media engagement.
Lehmo's humour, warmth, and family-focused advocacy continue to strengthen bonds with our supporters and inspire new ones.



Our Supporters

Our Supporters. Our Impact.

Thank you for changing the lives of people living with low vision or blindness.

Our support from the community takes many forms and flows into Guide Dogs from all over Victoria. We are appreciative of all our supporters and are pleased to bring you a heart-warming story.

$14.246M

raised from 28,037 donors.



1,400

Otus Fellowship members.



The Otus Fellowship was established to honour the generosity of our wonderful supporters who have included Guide Dogs Victoria in their Will.

Park Trek 2026: Every Step Makes a Difference

In March 2026, a dedicated group of supporters, including Guide Dogs Victoria CEO Nicky Long, took on the spectacular Great Ocean Road Walk for Park Trek 2026, raising vital funds to support people who are blind or have low vision.

Over four days, from 24–27 March, participants trekked along Victoria's iconic Shipwreck Coast, navigating rugged terrain, challenging weather conditions and long stretches of trail.

More than a physical challenge, Park Trek brought people together through a shared commitment to making a difference. Every step taken and every dollar raised will help Guide Dogs Victoria deliver life-changing Guide Dogs, expert mobility training and specialist services that build confidence, independence and connection.

The determination and generosity of our trekkers, together with the support of their families, friends and communities, demonstrated the power of people coming together for a shared purpose.

Park Trek 2026 was a powerful example of community fundraising in action, turning personal challenge into meaningful impact and helping more people who are blind or have low vision live the lives they choose.


GREAT OCEAN ROAD



Gifts in Wills

Thank you for your generosity

Francis Samuel Abrahams

James Alford

Rita Andre

Judith Helen Lee Archer

Beverley Anne Asmus

Joyce Asquith

Denis Babore

Norma Bain

Heather Barnes

Marie De Bavay

Hildegard Bell

Mario Berra

Wilfred & Ruby Bird

Elizabeth Anne Bishop

Elizabeth Bishop

Peter Richard Blayney

Barbara Jan Lyn van Bommel

Cyril Raymond Bond

Patricia Joyclyn Bowen

Brian Lawrence Bowtell

Alma Joan Boyd

Linda Brown

Neville and Rita Brown

Julie Jeannette Buncle

Carolin Mary Burgess

Joanna Buuren-Sluitman

Freda Campbell

Gillian Chambeau

Gary William Chapple

Pauline Cocks

Joyce Cook

Alice Coppleman

Anita Constance Crawford

Ian Cross

Alfred Noel Curphey

Edna Curwen-Walker

Ian William Dodd

Mary Anne Dooley

Sylvia Mary Dungan

Beverley Nola East

Bertha Joan Cowcher Filmer

Muriel Frazer

Muriel Gauder

Barbara Dawn Ginnane

Gillian Mary Gubbins

Valentine Hannah

Moya Hattam

Marjorie Louisa Hayes

Alex Herbert Herrmann

William Mansel Higgins &
Dorothy Higgins

Margaret Letitia Hill

Vivien Hollow

Patricia Mary Holmes

Graeme George Hooper

Sam Lee Kok Hua Hua

Peter Lawlor Jarman

Nella Jarvis

In grateful memory of our very special supporters whom we cannot thank in person and whose life-changing gifts were received during the past year.

Joan Jones

Mary Veronica Jones

Adrianus Aristides Kasbergen

Edith Grace Kemp

Margaret Knudson

Maureen Lenehan

Perri Gladys Letford

Maureen Mary Mc Donald

Audrey Mavis Mackie

Alfred Maffei

Laurence Maher

Barbara Manton

Joseph Norman Mason

Annie Gladys Matthews

Margaret Elizabeth McRae

Charlotte Meissner

Warren Francis Mills

Norma Rene Minney

Kevin Mitchell

Luisa Murray

Claire Nailer

Carol Naismith

Sylvia Nixon

Sue Norris

Anthony Noy

Josephine Overmyer

William Thomas Penrose

Victor Russ Pittman

Lola Poynton

Rose Myrtle Pratt

Nancy Reid

John Schotkamp

Margaret Shanahan

William Arthur Shipperlee

Brian Smith

Betty Brenda Spinks

Zdenka Sulzer

Ruth and Harry Taafe

Peter Taliana

Pauline Joan Tanaskovic

Rose Tenenbaum

Margaretta Torresan

Kevin Turner

Augusta Johanna Hendrika Van Diggele

Russell Herbert Vontom

Angus Buchanan Watson

Barbara Wheelton

Marjorie Wilks

Beverley Williams

Ada Withers

Mary Wynne

Verlie Young

We would like to thank the following trusts, foundations and groups for their generous support. *

Bowness Foundation

Drury Trust

Hewison Family Foundation

HMA Foundation Pty Ltd

Isaacson Davis Foundation

Japan Festival Committee

Kel & Rosie Day Foundation

L87 Foundation

LJM Foundation

Louise Schaufler & Ursula Flanigan Testamentary Trust

Lynx Charitable Foundation

Mandy Deam Foundation

Mannabank Foundation

Mutual Trust Foundation Neville-Smith Family Fund

O'Donohue Family Foundation

Pierce Armstrong Foundation

Rae and Peter Gunn Family Foundation

Robert & Elizabeth Sinclair Foundation

The Brian J Sutton Estate Trust

The Orloff Family Foundation

Urquhart Charitable Fund

Wagner Foundation

*Donations $5,000 and above in FY2025-2026.

Guide Dogs Victoria Partners

Thank you for your ongoing partnership, generosity and support.

Together, we're creating meaningful and lasting impact for our community, now and into the future.

A.G.Coombs

Advanced Vetcare

atn.

HAG

HOUNDzTOOTH
PET HEALTH YOU CAN TRUST. NATURALLY.

HWL EBSWORTH
LAWYERS

MARSHALL WHITE

Miele

PARK HYATT MELBOURNE™

Pic's Really Good Peanut Butter

QT
MELBOURNE

TOYOTA



The Ripple Effect of Giving

For Bronwen, supporting Guide Dogs Victoria has grown into a deeply personal commitment that spans decades. What began with Puppy Raising has evolved into ongoing giving, community fundraising and sharing her passion for Guide Dogs Victoria with the people around her.

That combination of personal support and community connection has become a powerful part of her contribution. By talking openly about why Guide Dogs Victoria matters to her, Bronwen has encouraged friends, colleagues and members of her wider network to learn more, get involved and support Guide Dogs Victoria too.

Bronwen's connection began in the late 1980s, when her mum spotted a newspaper advertisement looking for Puppy Raisers.

"We thought, why not, and applied," she recalls.

Their first puppy was Vashti, a lively black Labrador. After beginning Guide Dog training, Vashti ultimately followed a different path, becoming a customs sniffer dog at Tullamarine Airport.

Their second puppy, Velma, went on to become a Guide Dog. Meeting the person she would be partnered with became one of the defining moments in Bronwen's relationship with Guide Dogs Victoria.

"We were in our early twenties and Velma's handler was the same age as us. It really made me stop and think about the ways their life was different from mine, the things I took for granted and how our girl Velma was going to change his life."

"Guide Dogs are so much more than just a dog in a harness. They are life changing."

That experience helped shape a connection that has remained strong ever since.

Over the years, Bronwen has continued to support Guide Dogs Victoria in many ways, including as a donor and community fundraiser. Just as importantly, she has made Guide Dogs Victoria part of the conversations she has with the people in her life.

Friends and colleagues have followed her involvement, supported her fundraising efforts and developed their own connection to Guide Dogs Victoria through the stories and experiences Bronwen shares.

"I share stories, photos and updates and people really enjoy them. They'll often ask me how it's going or when something is coming up again."

For Bronwen, community fundraising has become one of the most rewarding ways to bring those relationships together.

PAWgust has been a particular highlight. Having taken part every year, she participated once again in 2026 as the campaign marks its final year.

Each August, Bronwen describes her household as becoming a "walking, talking, awareness-raising orange fest". Friends and colleagues have supported her year after year, not only by donating but by taking an active interest in the cause behind the fundraising.

It is this ability to bring others along with her that makes Bronwen's support so powerful. A donation can make an immediate difference, but when a supporter also shares why they give, the impact can travel much further.

A conversation with a colleague, a fundraising page shared with friends or an introduction to Guide Dogs Victoria can help bring new people into the community and build support that continues well beyond a single campaign.

Bronwen's story shows the ripple effect one supporter can create.

Her own support has helped raise vital funds, while her enthusiasm has encouraged others to discover Guide Dogs Victoria and understand the difference their own support can make.

That broader community of donors and supporters plays an essential role in helping Guide Dogs Victoria continue providing services for people with low vision or blindness.

After decades of involvement, Bronwen's connection with Guide Dogs Victoria is a reminder that there are many ways to make a difference and that one person's support can inspire many more.

Support might begin with a donation, but it does not have to end there.

Sharing why you give, inviting others into the conversation or bringing your workplace, family or community together around a cause can help extend the impact of your own support.

For Bronwen, that has become one of the most meaningful parts of giving: knowing that her contribution is not only helping Guide Dogs Victoria today but also inspiring more people to care about its work for years to come.

Generosity Across Generations

Sometimes, a family's connection to a cause grows over time, shaped by the different ways each generation chooses to become involved.

For Elaine, her husband Richard and their daughter Sue, Guide Dogs Victoria gradually became part of family life. With Labradors always a much-loved presence in the family, Sue began Puppy Raising in 1992 while Richard was still working. He loved having the puppies around and, when he retired several years later, found his own way to become more closely involved with Guide Dogs Victoria.

Richard began volunteering with Guide Dogs Victoria in the late 1990's, walking the Brood Dogs for the nursery before becoming more involved with the charity and joining the committee. Around this period, his connection also grew into philanthropic support, adding another dimension to the family's involvement.

Sue's own connection was already well established by then. Her second puppy, Winna, later became a Brood Dog and another puppy she raised, Jill, would also go on to become a Brood Dog. As Richard's involvement deepened through volunteering and giving, Guide Dogs Victoria became increasingly woven into their family life.

"Guide Dogs was now entrenched in our lives," Sue says.

When Richard passed away, Elaine made a conscious decision to continue the financial support they had begun together.

"I wanted to keep the involvement going and so I continued to donate to what I believe is an important cause."

For Elaine, giving became a way of continuing something she and Richard had valued together, while also reflecting her own belief in the importance of Guide Dogs Victoria's work.

That commitment has also carried forward through Sue. Although her hands-on involvement changed as life became busier, her financial support continued. Then, when she retired, Sue found herself following a path that felt remarkably similar to her father's.

"Dad's involvement grew when he retired. This encouraged me to become involved again when I retired. I am so pleased that I reconnected."

Sue returned to volunteering, this time as a puppy nurturer in the nursery, adding another dimension to the support she had continued over the years.

"My role as a nurturer is a delight and brings me great pleasure every time I am in the nursery," she says.

For Elaine, seeing Sue reconnect has added another chapter to the family's long relationship with Guide Dogs Victoria.



“I am still interested as Sue has once more become involved,” she says. “I completed a very enjoyable tour recently and I was delighted to see the changes that have happened in recent years.”

Those changes have strengthened Sue’s commitment too.

“The breadth of the programs offered is incredible and to see new initiatives inspires my involvement.”

Across the decades, Richard, Elaine and Sue have each supported Guide Dogs Victoria in their own way through philanthropy, volunteering and Puppy Raising. The form of their involvement has changed at different stages of their lives, but their commitment to giving has endured. Their story shows how generosity can become part of a family’s values and be carried from one generation to the next.

Richard’s support for Guide Dogs Victoria made a difference during his lifetime, but its influence did not end there. His generosity became part of a family connection that was already growing through Sue’s Puppy Raising and continued to evolve over the decades. Elaine chose to continue the financial support she and Richard had shared, while Sue went on to find new ways to contribute through giving and volunteering.

“The reward I have received through my involvement is enormous,” Sue says. “It cannot be measured in dollars or by the time involved. It is an important part of my life.”

Perhaps that is one of the most enduring legacies of giving: supporting something you believe in today, while inspiring the people you love to carry that generosity forward.



Our Gratitude

Our National Partners

Guide Dogs Victoria is a member of Guide Dogs Australia, and we have a number of long-standing National Partners. The benefits of the partnerships are shared across all participating states.

Without these generous partners who assist us through donations of not just funds, but volunteering time, donation of products, services in kind, and workplace giving, we could not continue our vital work supporting clients in the many ways we do.

Thank you to our National Partners for your incredible support throughout the past year:

BlackHawk
Every ingredient matters

Boehringer Ingelheim

coles

GREENSTONE

Hallmark

IDEXX

KONG

Petstock Foundation

RITCHIES IGA

Woolworths
The fresh food people

More than a Card. Making Everyday Connections more Inclusive.

This year, our partnership with Hallmark demonstrated how inclusive design can bring greater awareness of blindness and low vision into everyday life.

Together, Hallmark and Guide Dogs developed an accessible greeting card range shaped by people with lived experience of low vision or blindness. Their insights informed features including braille messages, tactile elements, high-contrast colours and clear, easy-to-read text — making the experience of choosing, giving and receiving a card more inclusive.

For Karlee, the importance of this is deeply personal.

"I've celebrated milestones where I couldn't read the card in my hands in front of friends waiting for my reaction. It made me feel invisible and awkward."

More than 70,000 accessible cards have now reached over 1,000 stores nationally across Christmas, Mother's Day and all-occasion ranges.

Importantly, their impact extends beyond the people who use the accessibility features themselves. By bringing inclusive design into a familiar product on shelves across Australia, Hallmark is helping make accessibility more visible and encouraging thousands of people to think differently about the everyday experiences of people who are blind or have low vision.

It is a powerful example of what can be achieved when lived experience, accessibility expertise and the reach of a national partner come together - creating practical change while building broader community understanding of inclusion.


Thank you



Our Sustainability

A Sustainable Campus

Environmental sustainability is central to Guide Dogs Victoria's Kew Campus. Designed around natural light, green spaces and sustainable materials, the campus supports the wellbeing of clients, staff, volunteers and dogs while reducing our environmental impact.

Guided by our Sustainability Committee and partners, we are focused on reducing fossil fuel reliance, improving energy efficiency, increasing recycling, conserving water and creating a greener, more resilient campus.

Following a feasibility study, we are committed to progressing a 180kW solar system across two campus buildings, subject to funding. Expected to reduce carbon emissions by approximately 200 tonnes annually, the system will deliver ongoing electricity savings that can be redirected to our services, while supporting future opportunities for battery storage and vehicle charging.

We continue to improve the sustainability of our operations. We have reduced our vehicle fleet and will explore hybrid and electric alternatives over time. Gas-fired boilers and heaters are progressively being replaced with efficient electric heat pumps, while significant upgrades to LED lighting are reducing energy consumption and future operating costs.

Waste reduction and recycling remain priorities. We are improving waste separation, reducing landfill and exploring ways to reuse organic and garden waste. Our Container Deposit Scheme, operating across the campus and with local community groups, is another growing initiative that encourages recycling and community participation.

Native planting is reducing irrigation needs, supporting biodiversity and creating shaded spaces for people and dogs. As our gardens mature, we have seen an increase in native birdlife. We also plan to reinstate the river pump to reduce reliance on mains water for irrigation. Our new volunteer group, Paws and Petals, supports the ongoing care and development of our gardens.

Together, these initiatives are reducing emissions, conserving resources and managing costs, while creating a more sustainable campus and directing more resources towards supporting our clients and communities.



Our Future

Building on our legacy, embracing new opportunities

For almost 70 years, Guide Dogs Victoria has supported people with blindness and low vision to live with greater independence, confidence and opportunity. As the needs of our community evolve, so too must we.

Throughout the year, we have undertaken an extensive consultation process to inform our strategy for the future. Through conversations with staff, volunteers, clients, donors and other key stakeholders, we have reflected on our strengths, listened to what matters most and identified opportunities to make an even greater difference.

The changing health and disability landscape presents both challenges and opportunities. It encourages us to think differently about how we deliver services, embrace innovation and strengthen partnerships that extend our reach and impact, while ensuring we remain strong and sustainable.

Our future builds on our internationally recognised Guide Dog program and our expertise in delivering specialist allied health, rehabilitation and support services.

We see opportunities to further strengthen and diversify our accredited assistance dog programs, while broadening the support we provide to people with blindness, low vision and other sensory needs.

Strong partnerships and a dynamic Community Hub will play an important role in bringing people, expertise and services together, creating new opportunities for wellbeing, participation and community connection. Deepening relationships with our supporters and inspiring new ways of giving will also be essential to sustaining and growing our impact.

Underpinning these ambitions is a commitment to investing in our people, strengthening our capabilities and embracing new ways of working to remain a sustainable, innovative and responsive organisation.

As we look ahead, our focus is on creating more opportunities for people to build confidence, independence and connection through meaningful partnerships and expert services that respond to individual needs and aspirations. At the heart of our future is a commitment to supporting more people to thrive.

We look forward to sharing our new direction in 2027.



Our Governance

Guide Dogs Victoria Board of Directors



Michael Boyce
Chair

Michael joined the Guide Dogs Victoria Board in August 2025 and was appointed Board Chair in November 2025. An experienced Company Director, CEO and Executive, he brings more than 40 years of leadership experience across health technology, aged and disability care, and technology services.



Melissa Dixon
Board Member

Following 30 years in media and consumer sectors both internationally and in Australia, including two decades in senior roles at Disney, Melissa joined the GDV Board in January 2023. Her background spans executive roles, consulting and finance and business operations. Melissa is a Chartered Accountant and brings deep strategy, financial and risk management, people & culture and governance expertise to Guide Dogs Victoria.



Malcolm Haack
Board Member

Malcolm joined the Board in January 2023. With 26 years in global blue-chip organisations overseeing legal and compliance affairs, he brings extensive legal expertise.



Cameron Algie AM
Board Member

Cameron joined the Board in July 2023, Cameron brings lived experience with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) and a distinguished career in law. Former CEO and Facilitator, co-founder of an RP research foundation. Author of Understanding and Managing Vision Loss. Current Chair of Guide Dogs Victoria's Consumer Advisory Council.



David Simmonds
Board Member

David joined the Board in June 2024, bringing valuable lived experience as a longtime Guide Dogs Victoria Client and former staff member. His tenure as a Director at Victoria's Department of Transport and Planning, as well as his personal and professional insights have been invaluable to shaping Guide Dogs Victoria's future direction.



Jane Schuller
Board Member

A respected leader in eye health and vision care, Jane brings more than 20 years of clinical experience as an Orthoptist across private ophthalmology practices and major teaching hospitals in Australia and internationally. She has held senior governance and leadership roles with Vision2020 Australia and Orthoptics Australia and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Joining the Guide Dogs Victoria Board in March 2025, Jane brings deep clinical knowledge alongside extensive experience in governance, strategic leadership and stakeholder engagement across the eye health sector.



James Elder OAM
Board Member

James joined the Board in March 2025 and is a highly experienced ophthalmologist specialising in paediatric and genetic ophthalmology. He previously served as Director of Ophthalmology at the Royal Children's Hospital and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Melbourne. James brings extensive clinical expertise and a deep understanding of working with children, families and people living with vision impairment to support the best possible life outcomes.



Jonathan Isaacs
Board Member

With more than 30 years of experience across finance, operations and commercial property, Jonathan brings significant commercial expertise to the Board. A Chartered Accountant and Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, he spent 22 years with Clemenger Group, including a decade as CFO/COO and major shareholder. Joining the Guide Dogs Victoria Board in October 2025, Jonathan contributes particular expertise in financial management, property strategy, and complex business operations.



Chris McFadden
Board Member

Chris brings extensive experience in corporate governance, board leadership and risk oversight across complex international organisations. He has held Board and senior executive roles within publicly listed companies, working across strategy, performance, legal and commercial governance in the energy sector. Joining the Board in March 2026, Chris adds further depth to the Board's governance and risk capability as the organisation continues to grow and evolve.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Independent Committee Members

Quality and Clinical Governance Committee

Sandra Knight

Amanda Pearson

Fundraising, Marketing and Innovation Committee

Edwina Webb

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Consumer Advisory Council Members

Cameron Algie AM

Rob Fletcher

Skye de Vent

Peter Sumner

Kevin Boyce

Paul Macey

Glen Bracegirdle

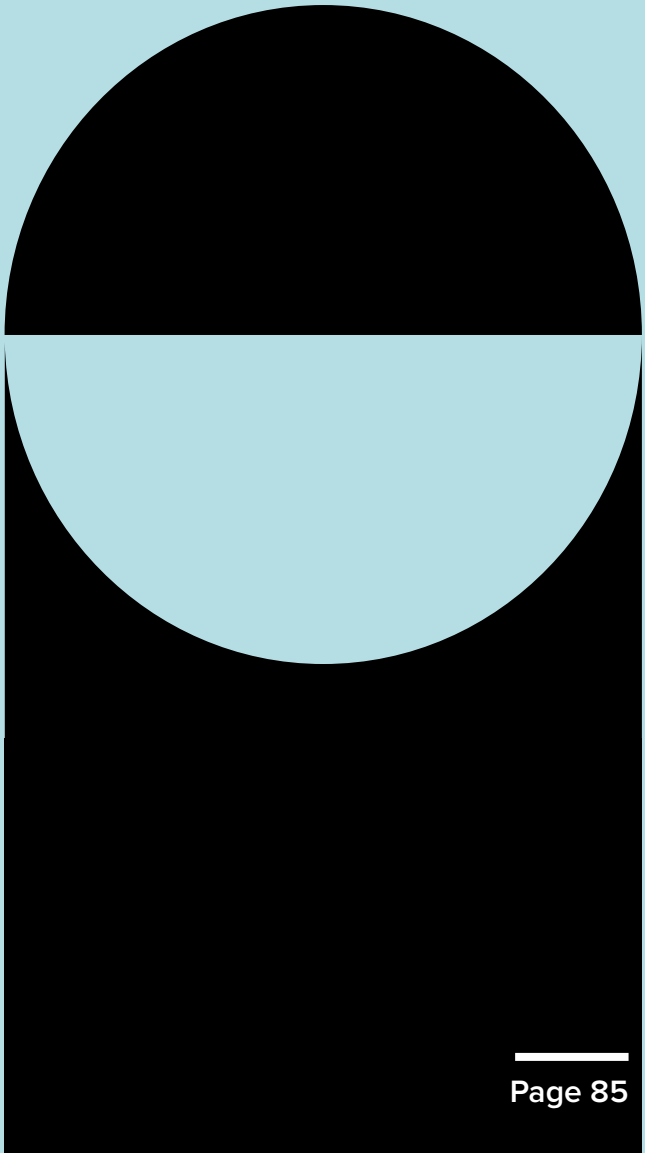
Veronica Levy

Trudy Ryall

Sandra Knight

Corporate Governance

Guide Dogs Victoria promotes fairness, transparency and accountability. Our Governance Commitment Statement describes our key governance obligations and outlines our commitment to leading standards. Key Board policies and further information on those who govern our organisation can be found on our governance webpage. These structures ensure decision making meets stakeholder expectations of sound corporate governance, while meeting the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) governance standards, and acknowledging our responsibilities to members, donors, Clients, staff, volunteers and the communities in which we operate.





Our Financials

Guide Dogs Victoria's activities in Financial Year 2025/26 resulted in an operating surplus excluding depreciation of $1.167M, with an operating deficit of $288K.

Revenue

	$'000	$'000
Revenue	**2026**	**2025**
Fundraising and gifts in wills	14,246	12,868
Fundraising for capital purposes	-	503
Revenue from the provision of dogs and orientation mobility services	5,354	5,608
Rental revenue	396	333
Finance and investment gains	411	474
Other income	82	36
Total Revenue	**20,489**	**19,822**

Expenditure

	$'000	$'000
Expenditure	**2026**	**2025**
Fundraising and gifts in wills	(4,162)	(3,132)
Cost of provision of dogs and mobility services	(14,685)	(15,409)
Community information and public education	(1,285)	(1,367)
Other corporate services	(645)	(1,103)
Total Expenditure	**(20,777)**	**(21,011)**
(Loss)/Profit before income tax	**(288)**	**(1,189)**
Income tax expense	**-**	**-**
Deficit for the year	**(288)**	**(1,189)**
Other comprehensive income	**-**	**-**
Total comprehensive income for the year	**(288)**	**(1,189)**

Balance Sheet

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Assets

	$'000	$'000
Current assets	**2026**	**2025**
Cash and cash equivalents	442	1,318
Trade and other receivables	992	695
Inventories	1,070	936
Financial assets	409	772
Total current assets	**2,913**	**3,721**

	$'000	$'000
Non-current assets	**2026**	**2025**
Trade and other receivables	18	33
Financial assets	3,601	4,234
Property, plant and equipment	33,493	34,515
Right of use asset	507	759
Total non-current assets	**37,620**	**39,541**
Total assets	**40,533**	**43,261**

Liabilities

	$'000	$'000
Current liabilities	**2026**	**2025**
Trade and other payables	682	819
Provisions	1,405	1,301
Deferred revenue	0	74
Lease liabilities	315	341
Borrowings	530	530

	$'000	$'000
Non-current liabilities	**2026**	**2025**
Provisions	18	67
Lease liabilities	202	431
Borrowings	396	2,426
Total non-current liabilities	**616**	**2,924**
Total liabilities	**3,548**	**5,989**
Net assets	**36,985**	**37,273**
Accumulated funds		
Reserves	**4,800**	**4,800**
Retained earnings	**32,185**	**32,473**
Total accumulated funds	**36,985**	**37,273**

Our Performance

Key Performance Indicators Financial Year 2025/26

KPI	
Services	
Service delivery hours	21,867
Number of clients supported	1,478
Number of qualified Guide Dogs placed	28
Number of Personal Support Dogs allocated	15
Number of other working dogs allocated	22
Number of Guide Dog Handlers	223
People	
Number of staff	139
Number of volunteers	720
Finance $'000	
Operating surplus/ (deficit) excluding depreciation	$1,167
Operating surplus/ (deficit)	-$288
Operating surplus/ (deficit) before Capital Purpose Income	-$288



We’re here whenever you need us.

2-6 Chandler Highway, Kew, VIC 3101
1800 804 805
vic.guidedogs.com.au

To donate please visit guidedogs.com.au/gdt-vic

Guide Dogs.

ABN 68 004 621 461