Guide Dogs.

2026 Impact Report

Your Impact Unleashed



Looking forward together

For almost 70 years, people like you have helped change lives through Guide Dogs Victoria. We are deeply grateful that you continue to be part of that story.

This year, your support has helped children and adults who are blind or have low vision work towards the things that matter most to them and live with greater independence, choice and confidence.

Your generosity has also helped us care for, raise and train more extraordinary dogs. Today, we are building on almost 70 years of expertise to find new ways for our dogs to make a difference - from Guide Dogs and Court Dogs to PTSD Assistance Dogs and other emerging roles.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our supporters and donors. Together, we are helping more people live the lives they choose and creating new possibilities for the future.

On behalf of the Board, our staff and volunteers, and the people we support, thank you for trusting us with your generosity and for believing in what we can achieve together.

Nicky Long
CEO Guide Dogs Victoria



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.

Our Clients

At Guide Dogs Victoria, we support people of all ages who are blind or have low vision, as well as people with other sensory disabilities, to make their own choices, live with confidence and pursue life on their terms.

21,867
hours of services delivered to our Clients

2,780
Client program engagements

284
Clients participated in a Guide Dog program

600
Orientation & Mobility programs for children and adults

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

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

Our dogs

223
working Guide Dogs in the community

150
puppies born at Cute HQ

51
dogs matched with new handlers
28 Guide Dogs
15 Personal Support Dogs
3 PTSD Assistance Dogs
2 Court Dogs
2 Facility Dogs
1 Ambassador Dog

17
dogs selected for our breeding program

14
puppies and untrained dogs provided to Guide Dog schools interstate and overseas

Our people

720 volunteers
140 new volunteers

270
Puppy Raisers

139
employees
17 new starters

Our services

This year, our Vision Services team continued to evolve and broaden the support we offer to Clients.

Our practitioners are building on their expertise and developing programs that support people to explore what works for them, build confidence and work towards their goals. Across every stage of life, our focus remains on giving people greater choice in how they navigate, participate and live life on their terms.

Getting around independently

Orientation & Mobility, Guide Dog Services and Children's Mobility Services help people build the skills and confidence to navigate their communities.

Children and families

Our Early Childhood and Children's Services work alongside children and their families to support development, independence and participation from the earliest years.

Living independently

Occupational Therapy, Support Coordination and other practical supports help Clients work towards their individual goals at home and in the community.

Technology and low vision

Assistive Technology and Orthoptic Low Vision Services help people make the most of technology, practical strategies and their available vision.

Employment and participation

Our Employment Services and Access Consulting work with individuals, employers and organisations to help remove barriers to participation.



Wellbeing and connection

Group Programs, our Wellbeing Hub and Peer Counselling create opportunities for connection, shared experience and support.

Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs

Our expertise in dogs and human-animal partnerships continues to create life-changing partnerships through Guide Dogs and a growing range of Assistance Dog programs.

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 Program, becoming the eighth Court Dog to be sworn in across Australia.

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.

It is another example of how the skills, temperament and training of an exceptional dog can be harnessed in new ways, providing comfort and support when people need it most.

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 the 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 became 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 Gino, a black Labrador. Together, they now navigate university, busy streets, catch-ups 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.

From learning to navigate with a cane at eight, to finding the confidence to advocate for herself, pursue the things she loves and ultimately partner with Gino, May’s journey has evolved over more than a decade.

Now, with university, figure skating, mentoring and a future career in law in her sights, May is shaping what comes next – on her terms.



Our future

As we look ahead to 2027, our 70th year, we are building on everything we have learned and looking ahead to where we can make an even greater difference.

We will continue to strengthen support for people who are blind or have low vision, find new ways for our dogs and expertise to change lives, and work alongside our community to remove barriers to independence and participation.

With the continued support of people like you, we can build on almost 70 years of impact while creating new possibilities for the people and communities we serve.

More dogs, more lives changed

Building on our Guide Dog expertise to expand Court Dog and PTSD Assistance Dog programs and explore other roles where exceptionally trained dogs can make a difference.



Learning and sharing globally

Strengthening international partnerships and sharing Victorian innovations, including our Transition to Retirement Program, to improve support for Guide Dog Handlers.

Accessible travel

Building on recent transport reforms and the advocacy of people with lived experience to make travel safer and more accessible.

Community wellbeing hub

Developing our Kew Campus as a welcoming space for broader sensory disability services, shaped with the community.

Sustainability

Progressing solar energy planning, waste reduction and native planting to reduce our environmental impact.

Financial strength

Growing philanthropy, gifts in wills, corporate partnerships and community fundraising to help sustain our impact well into the future.

People and culture

Supporting and recognising the staff, volunteers and Puppy Raisers whose care and expertise make our work possible.

Our supporters. Your impact.

Thank you for helping people who are blind or have low vision live life on their terms. Behind every program, every partnership and every story in this report are people who choose to support Guide Dogs Victoria.

Your generosity helps us plan for the future, respond to changing needs and continue finding new ways to make a difference.

Whether through philanthropy, gifts in Wills, partnerships, fundraising or individual giving, every contribution becomes part of something bigger.

As we approach our 70th year, thank you for continuing to be part of our story and we hope you will join us on this journey to shaping what comes next.



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.

If you'd like to learn more about our programs or explore how your support can make a lasting impact, connect with our team.

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