

# Guide Dog Tales

The latest news from Guide Dogs Victoria

Spring Issue 2018

## IN THIS EDITION

Pawgust

Thank you for  
your supPAWt

Stephanie

Finds her dream  
wedding dress

Most trusted  
charity

Six years in a row!

Australia's  
Most Trusted  
Charity Brand  
2013-2018





## A message from Karen & Willow

### It's been a wonderful few months of fun and lots of dog walking.

We were honoured and proud that Guide Dogs Australia was voted Australia's Most Trusted Charity for the sixth year in a row.

We also launched our new national fundraising initiative PAWGUST, which has already raised more than \$470,000. In support of PAWGUST, Willow and I have been walking every day this month, reaping the benefits of daily exercise and enjoying the fresh air. See page 3.

There are also an exciting few months ahead for Guide Dog Handler, Stephanie. Stephanie is about to marry her fiancé Rob, who she has never seen. This is one inspiring story and makes us feel so proud of our dogs and teams, who help give people like Stephanie companionship and the independence to lead fulfilling lives. It's your support that helps us train Guide Dog pups like Stephanie's Dog Rocky, who go on to make such a difference in our clients' lives, details are on page 4.

As you read through your copy of Guide Dog Tales we hope that you feel part of the Guide Dogs community. You truly play a vital role in enriching lives – we simply could not do our work without you. On page 7, we introduce you to some of these puppies in Cute HQ. Over the next few months, we are gearing up for two of my favourite events, Graduation Day and Meet the Pups.

I encourage you, if you are not already a Puppy Pal, to sign up before 14th September to get an exclusive invite to Meet the Pups. See page 7.



Finally, I would like to thank you, our amazing donors. Your generosity never goes unnoticed. We rely so heavily on your donation and every little bit helps.

Warmly,

Karen Hayes & Willow 🐾

Chief Executive Officer & Ambassador Dog

ARE YOU READY TO **CHALLENGE DARKNESS?**

[www.dialogueinthedark.com.au](http://www.dialogueinthedark.com.au)

Tuesday - Sunday  
Opposite ArtVo, District Docklands, Melbourne

**DIALOGUE  
IN THE  
DARK®**



# PAWGUST

Grab your best mate & walk 30 mins a day for 30 days



## PAWGUST

**PAWGUST is our first national campaign and it's been a PAWsome effort so far!**

**Registrations have closed, but it's not too late to donate at:**

[pawgust.com.au](http://pawgust.com.au)

**Stay tuned for the next edition of Guide Dog Tales for the final result. 🐾**



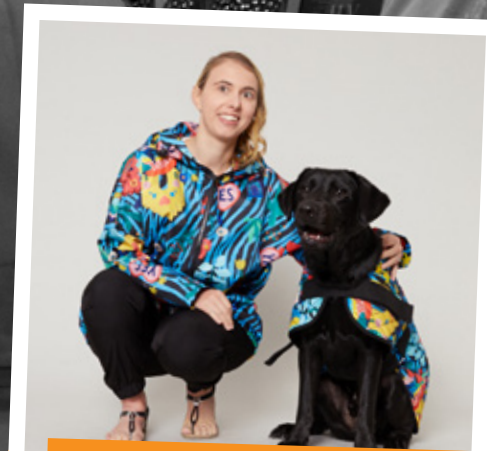
It's not too late to donate!



The joyous moment when Steph realises she's found her dream wedding dress.



Steph's Mum, who also has vision loss, feels her wedding dress.



Steph and Rocky promoting the Guide Dogs & Gorman Campaign.

## Steph's Dream Wedding Dress

**Stephanie has found her dream wedding dress - it's just that she can't see it.**

Since she was a little girl, Stephanie has dreamed of being a bride in a stunning dress. But she didn't know her dream would turn out this way. Steph will marry her fiancé, Rob, later this year. Sadly Steph has no idea what Rob really looks like, but she knows he's the one for her.

Thirty-one year-old Stephanie first noticed her vision problems at age 19. That's when she was diagnosed with Cone-Rod Dystrophy – a rare retinal disease that leads to blindness. Slowly but surely, the condition stripped Steph of her independence and confidence. First, it was her driver's licence which was taken away when she was just 23.

**"That came as such a shock," Stephanie said. "When I lost my licence, I decided I would travel the world as much as I could while I still had around 70% of my vision."**

Over the last few years, Steph's vision has fallen away rapidly – she now has only 3%. "My mum and two of my three brothers have the same genetic condition," she said. "One brother has a Guide Dog and he really encouraged me to give it a go. "I wasn't too sure about it ... but I went along for a half-day trial with a dog named Leo. I didn't like it at first because I couldn't feel the ground with my cane. But then Leo and I got into step.

"I started crying and thinking 'Oh my God, I can get my independence back'. "My fiancé Rob said he'd never seen me walk so fast and freely until that day. It gave me so much confidence!"

Stephanie immediately applied for a Guide Dog and was matched with Rocky last year. "Rocky and I clicked immediately," she said. "Rocky has changed my whole outlook on life. He's been great not only for my independence, but for my mental health too. His companionship is incredible."

With her wedding to Rob coming up, Steph has tackled the daunting task of dress shopping. While Steph and her mum felt the fabric and shape of each dress she tried on, an 'amazing shop assistant' described all the details. "I thought, 'How can I choose a dress I can't see?' – it was pretty scary." Then when Steph tried on the last dress she could feel herself 'lighting up' and she 'just knew that was the one.'

We know that Steph will make a beautiful bride. And with Rob and Rocky by her side, she is feeling very positive about the future.

That's the precious gift that a Guide Dog delivers. Confidence and independence. Please, will you help us give more Victorians this priceless gift? Visit our website at [guidedogsvictoria.com.au](http://guidedogsvictoria.com.au) to find out how. 🐾



It's a happy day for Steph as she tries on the various dresses.





WINNER!

# AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED CHARITY 2018

## 6 years in a row!

Guide Dogs Australia has been voted Australia's Most Trusted Charity Brand, maintaining our exclusive hold on the title for a sixth-consecutive year.



CUTE HQ NEWS

## Inside cute HQ



One of our cute pups enjoying kong treats.



Staying warm this winter.



Fern and Sony gave us another six lovely healthy pups.

## Meet me!



Become a Puppy Pal TODAY and get an exclusive invite to our Meet the Pups event.

*Hello, my name is Gavin.*

I am an adorable puppy bred to become a Guide Dog. I was at the 'Meet the Pups' event earlier this year, where Guide Dogs Victoria's regular donors got the opportunity to meet the latest puppy litter and watch some fantastic Guide Dog training demonstrations.

If you would like to meet cute pups like me, sign up to become a Puppy Pal at [guidedogsvictoria.com.au/get-involved/puppy-pals](http://guidedogsvictoria.com.au/get-involved/puppy-pals).

Puppy Pals helps fund the training that prepares our adorable Guide Dog puppies to support someone living with low vision or blindness.

You will help name litters, follow their amazing journey with regular Pupdates and be invited to attend our exclusive Meet the Pups events. So what are you waiting for? Details are in the section below. 🐾

## JOIN US ON A JOURNEY OF THE SENSES

50% off registration when you book with a friend.

Mention this discount code ↘

Discount code **GDV241CAUG**

Experience incredible wildlife and trek through the world's highest tea and coffee plantations in March 2019. Explore the breathtaking summit of Meesapulimala – the second-highest peak in South India.

**HURRY! Offer ends September 30<sup>th</sup> 2018. Spots are limited!**

**Call Amanda 1300 059 686 or visit [bit.ly/GDVIndiaTrek](http://bit.ly/GDVIndiaTrek) for more information.**

**Guide Dogs**  
VICTORIA



## Become a Puppy Pal today



### FROM JUST \$30 A MONTH - ONLY \$1 A DAY!

**It costs more than \$50,000 to breed, raise and train each Guide Dog.**

Puppy Pals help fund the training that prepares our adorable Guide Dog puppies to support someone with low vision or blindness. You will help name litters, follow the litter's amazing journey with regular Pupdates, and be invited to attend our Meet the Pups events.

**So what are you waiting for?**

**Your supPAWt will change lives forever.**

**Call 1800 988 626 or visit [guidedogsvictoria.com.au](http://guidedogsvictoria.com.au)**



# Jean Margaret Stewart 1921-2017

**Guide Dogs Victoria was very honoured to receive a generous gift in a Will from the Estate of the late Jean Stewart. 🐾**

Jean had a few passions close to her heart: dogs, the ballet, opera, Gilbert and Sullivan, radiography and photography.

Throughout most of her life, Jean would visit the local Brookville dog park in her spare time and bring treats for all the dogs.

Born in 1921, Jean was actively involved with Guide Dogs Victoria for more than 34 years! Jean in her later years cared for her mum who suffered from Macular Degeneration and Jean herself suffered the loss of her vision through Glaucoma. It was through her love of dogs and desire to help people with low vision that she became an avid supporter of Guide Dogs Victoria.

Jean's passions were evident at her funeral service where a congregation of dogs from her beloved dog park were there at her request. Jean's legacy will allow Guide Dogs Victoria to build a Doggy Day Care Centre which is part of our 'Future is in Sight' campaign.

The Doggy Day Care will provide a critical income stream for Guide Dogs Victoria and, just as importantly, care for and enrich the lives of thousands of dogs. Jean's friend, Anthea, said, "Jean would be smiling sitting up on her cloud in heaven knowing this is how her legacy would benefit dogs."

Guide Dogs Victoria is very humbled to have known Jean all the years she supported our work, and to also have acknowledged and thanked her for choosing to support Guide Dogs in such a generous and profound way.

If you would like more information on how you can support Guide Dogs by leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Tracey Pratt our Key Relationships Manager – Gifts in Wills on (03) 9854 4417 or 0448 032 850 for a confidential discussion.



Jean with Austen who visited her regularly.



## Diary dates



- 25 August:** Guide Dog Graduation Day
- 16 September:** Blind Tennis - Free Event
- 20 October:** Meet the Pups (Exclusive Puppy Pal event)

## Acknowledgements

### Guide Dogs Australia Partners



### Guide Dogs Victoria Sponsors



Strathmore Community Bank

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### Social Media

