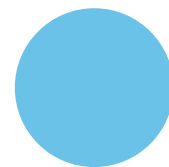


# get about

issue 63

term 2



**NDIS explained**

**High school transition**

**'Risky Business' – Primary mobility camp**

**Guide  
Dogs**  
VICTORIA





# Note From the Editor 🌟

Dear CMS'ers,

In this edition we take a look at risk and why we need to take risks in our lives. It seems like taking risks can be scary and also fun. You will hear from the students that came to our Risky Business Primary Students Mobility Program and read all about the risks they took and how they felt about it. Darren tells us why it's important to take risks in our lives and Zoron weighs in on the subject with his opinion on risk taking. You will read a great article written by a new secondary school student who took a big risk going to her new high school.

In other news, we are very excited to have Dani back in the CMS Team after many years and we look forward to having such a wonderful O&M working with us once again.

We have also put an article in for the parents and carers. If they don't know about the NDIS or have any questions, Simon has contributed an article that explains what the NDIS is and may answer some of those nagging questions.

And for the biggest story of the year.... Alicia and Rick San Martin would like to welcome their most beautiful baby boy Maximillian Joshua to the world, a baby brother for Tasman.

Paula Foote 🌟



## Dates for Diary

**27–29 June**

Olympic Camp

**19–21 August**

Family Weekend

**19–22 September**

Senior Mobility Camp

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## FORMAT REMINDER

A reminder that if this 'Get About' newsletter is not in your preferred format, or if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please contact our referrals officer on 03 9854 4467. We provide standard print, Large Print (font size 18), Audio CD, Braille and Email formats.

# Transitioning to high school 🌈

By Thanh

Being a fully blind student meant that I would have to adapt to changes quite a number of times, and high school was one of them. Luckily for me, I landed myself with a friendly, inviting community who were willing to help in any way they could. I know that there are others with vision impairments who are not as fortunate; however I hope that if you are someone who is about to go into high school, or if you know a vision impaired student who is about to transition into high school, that this piece regarding my challenges will aid you in some way.

The challenge I was most stressed about when preparing to attend my new school was orientation. My high school was a lot larger than my primary one, which unnerved me quite a bit. I had to study a multitude of tactile maps - around nine, I believe - during some of my O&M sessions, and that was only for the one campus I would be transitioning to straight away. To be honest, knowing me I'll probably get lost sometime soon.

Work was also something I thought about. What if the teacher didn't give my aid the assigned worksheets in time?

I can't tell you that everything was all sparkles and rainbows, but I can safely say that ASKING the teacher is perfectly fine. It's not against the law. They won't hate you, I promise.

Asking people around you helps, too. Your fellow students can see what's on the board, or what's on the screen. Better yet, ask your aid if you can.

The canteen and I had a love hate relationship as soon as we met. There were no markers to tell

you where the lines were, and the rope barriers were constantly moved. However, the cooking staff suggested that I order in the mornings, then just wait with my cane out at lunch in the general vicinity so that they could give me my lunch. No needing to worry about whether I needed to move up in the queue or not, or if I was even IN the queue.

So yes, even if it's only with the most important things, organization loves you very, very much. Questions also adore you, my friend. And remember, if it doesn't work, then it doesn't work. You are not obligated to stay at that school if it doesn't make you happy and satisfied, because your general well-being is too important to sacrifice. Trust me. 🌈



# Risky Business – Primary Students Mobility Camp

By Camp attendees

*How did you feel when you first came to the Risky Business Mobility Camp?*

**Ben** – When I first came to Guide Dogs camp I felt nervous and didn't know what to expect and I only knew one person and then I found out that there were other people that I knew.

**Tyler** – I was feeling a little nervous about the name, 'Risky Business', and I didn't know what type of risks I would take.

*What did you do at the start of camp?*

**Amanda** – We talked a bit about the camp and what to expect.

**Tyler** – It was a long discussion about risky business but it was really interesting and we all said a sentence and made up a story about risky business.

*Then what happened?*

*We had a visit from Xavier from Wildlife Xposure*

**Amanda** – Xavier from 'Wildlife Xposure' came to visit us.

**Lilly** – we got to touch lots of different animals, not just reptiles, owl, possum, lizard, 2 big python snakes and a green tree frog and crocodile.

**Tyler** – This was risky business!! We talked about reducing the risk of handling reptiles.

*In the afternoon we did a self-advocacy mobility challenge. We had to find information for Zeros a superhero from outer space. He knew nothing about the world and we had to find out special information for him. We got into groups to find out the special information for Zeros.*

**Christian** – We went to Glenferrie Road. We helped the 'superhero' from outer space.

**Charlotte** – When we were helping Zeros we went into Coles to ask one of the staff the directions to the train station. We felt a bit nervous asking for help from someone we didn't know. I felt better after we asked someone and it wasn't as scary as I thought it would be.

*After our self advocacy challenge we ate Chinese food. The risky business was to try something new and take a risk.*

**Sebastian** – we had food that was different from normal food.

**Ben** – I hadn't had a steam dim sim in soy sauce, and I have never had Chinese broccoli. I tried the white bait but I didn't like it.

**Amanda** – I tried the Singapore noodles, but I didn't like it.

**Neava** – I liked the lemon chicken with the sauce, but I didn't like the noodles, But Charlotte loved the Singapore Noodles the best.







*On Thursday we were up early and went to inflatable world.*

**Jessica** - it was risky business when we went to inflatable world and we went on the target jump and I took a risk to make the big jump.

**Neava** – it was so fun I wish I could come again. I really like the obstacle course and I also like jumping across the green balls.

**Amanda** – The scariest thing at inflatable world was jumping off the target. I thought that everyone else was doing it and it looked like fun. I checked out the base where I was going to land and it was safe.

**Lilly** –Darren and I were thinking about the bungee jump at inflatable world but I looked at it but I thought I won't do it, but I did it and it was really really fun.

*On Wednesday we went to The Enchanted Maze at Arthurs Seat. We did sky surfing, a challenging ropes course 5 metres in the air, tube sliding down a huge hill and went into lots of different mazes.*

**James** – I loved the nippers ropes course. I liked level 2 because you went on trickier things. When I got to the bottom of the flying fox I landed and I kept running.

**Mica** – It was a bit of a risk but it was quite fun. There were 2 types of tubes, the two people tube and tubes that held one person. There were 2 fast lanes and one bendy lane. I felt a bit excited, but I felt a bit nervous when I got to the top, because I went so fast. When I finished I felt a bit dizzy and a bit giddy because of going so fast. I had 2 turns – the first was in the fast lane and the second was in the twisty lane.

**Lilly** – I felt really petrified, but when I went down with Amanda, it was my favourite. We thought we were going down the slow lane but we went down the fastest lane.



*So is it good to take calculated risks?*

**Tyler** – When you take a risk and it's calculated, just go with it.

*What is the good thing about taking a calculated risk?*

**Phoebe** – Having a go is the reward. Feeling brave is a reward.

*What were you most proud of at Risky Business Camp?*

**Lilly** – I was proud about trying the tube slide.

**Sebastian** – I was proud of jumping off the big target.

**Jack** – was proud of jumping off the target.

**Ben** – I was proud of jumping off the bullseye target.

**Phoebe** – I was proud of having a go at tree surfing.

**Amanda** – I was proud of jumping off the target at inflatable world.

**Mica** – I was proud when I did the tree surfing

**Charlotte** – I was proud of tree surfing.

**Neava** – I was proud of tree surfing

**Christian** – I was most proud of jumping off the target

**Jess** – Maybe just trying new things – trying new lollies, speaking to the counter person, giving the money.

**James** – I was most proud of the obstacle course and coming down the slide really fast. 🌈



## Staff Profile

### Meet Krystle!

I am very excited to have started my new position here as an Occupational Therapist in the Support Services Team, working closely with both the Adult Mobility Service and Children's Mobility Service throughout Victoria. Having worked in a low vision and blindness setting previously with mainly adults, I am very excited to have this chance to come into Guide Dogs and work with people of all ages to achieve their goals related to day-to-day activities. I have worked as an Occupational Therapist for about 4 years now in services in regional and remote South Australia, New Zealand as well as Melbourne. I look forward to getting out and meeting many of you in the coming months! 🌈





# What's the risk?

By Darren Moyle

Life is a series of risks and most things in life are not certain. From a very early age children begin to take calculated risks in all aspects of their lives such as on the playground, in the classroom and even in social settings when establishing friendships. We have become a risk adverse society which has some clear advantages but also carries some disadvantages. On one hand we have limited the potential for injury during play, however on the other hand we have also limited children's ability to be challenged, have everyday adventures and learn from their mistakes through calculated risk taking.

Children and young people need to encounter some real risks if they are to respond positively to challenging situations, learn how to deal with uncertainty and develop problem solving skills. This cannot be achieved by limiting them to supposedly safe environments one hundred percent of the time. Children learn from their own efforts, experiences and mistakes. If we focus too highly on keeping them safe, we prevent them from having the very experiences that they need if they are to learn how to deal with the everyday ups and downs of life.

A child who is blind or has low vision is often exposed to less risk taking opportunities than their sighted peers and sometimes excluded from perceived high risk situations at school or at home. Often due to a perceived increase potential for injury and we want to ensure the child has a positive experience as much as possible. Children who are blind or have low vision must be exposed to a wide range of experiences first hand to help cement important knowledge about the world and develop their resiliency for times of hardship. Experiencing success and failure is a vital part of this learning process.

Orientation and Mobility programs should challenge children to explore and experiment. Students should be offered constant opportunities to make their own decisions and experience success and failure as part of this. Taking risks and learning through trial and error is key to children understanding their own strengths and limitations. 🌈



**Children and young people need to encounter some real risks if they are to respond positively to challenging situations.**

# I am a Runner 🌟

By Jaryd Clifford

“As I toe the line, I can taste the tension. It ebbs through each runner, a unique force of adrenaline which reaches its crescendo as the starter calls us to our marks.”

These were the words I used when opening my most recent article for the Athletics Exclusive website. My article was titled ‘My Racing Experience; A look into the unseen’ and I gave an insight, to the wider athletic community, what it’s like racing with a severe vision impairment.

I wrote this article in the aftermath of potentially my most successful week of racing. Only a few months earlier, I had raced in Qatar at the Para-Athletics World Championships where I came 7th in the T12/13 (vision impaired) 5000m. So as I entered the Australian Junior Championships in Perth I was confident of solid performances.

I started the week with a bang. 5th in the under 20 5000m in a time of 15:09.17, also a T12 National Record, was a huge achievement, capped off by the fact I was still only sixteen years old. Then a few days later, I added bronze in the under 18 1500m to become the first person in Australian athletics to claim medals in both Para and able bodied national competition. I had now staked my claim as not just one of Australia’s best para-athletes but also as a genuine national contender against my able bodied competitors.

Running is by far the world’s most natural sport, an endeavour which at one point nearly every person has undertaken. A mix between finding ones limits and gaining fitness, it is the sport where inclusivity is at its core. Ever since taking up the sport seriously in 2013 I have grown to love the camaraderie of my training group, the atmosphere of racing my opponents as well as the clock. Running for personal bests is what defines our sport

as the place where improvement is the centre of competition.

Yes I am bias, yet I think rightly so. Athletics as a whole, the running, jumping and throwing alike comes together to generate a place where all abilities are accepted and I would definitely recommend the sport to anyone willing to just get out there and have a go.

This year you’ll get the opportunity to follow vision impaired athletics as Channel Seven broadcast the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games.

To read my article mentioned above, follow this link; [athleticsexclusive.com/blog/racing-experience-look-unseen-5068](http://athleticsexclusive.com/blog/racing-experience-look-unseen-5068) 🌟





# National Disability Insurance Scheme

By Simon McDonald-Kerr

If you have a child who is vision impaired, you're probably already used to acronyms. You may be familiar with VT's, SVRC, GDV, CMS, DHHS, VI and RCH but the new acronym on people's lips is NDIS.

So what is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and what does it mean for your child?

The NDIS is a pioneering Australian reform to support people with a disability, using an insurance approach a bit like Medicare to share the costs across the wider community. It is designed to give people with a disability greater choice and control and cover the costs of the reasonable and necessary supports they require based on their personal circumstances, needs and goals.

## When does the NDIS start in my area?

Following the Barwon trial, the NDIS rollout is now ramping up across Victoria. North East Melbourne area is the next zone to launch from July 1st this year, followed by Central Highlands area in January 2017. Information about the dates that NDIS will be rolled out in your area can be found at [ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/vic](http://ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/vic)

## What can I do before then?

If you think your child may be eligible you should check their eligibility as a first action:

- Have a look at the NDIS website [ndis.gov.au/ndis-access-checklist](http://ndis.gov.au/ndis-access-checklist)
- If you think your child may be eligible and the NDIS has reached your area you can then call the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on 1800 800 110 to get an 'Access Request Form' that you will need to complete & return to NDIA to register.

- If you need assistance filling out the 'Access Request Form' please don't hesitate to speak with an instructor.

## How can Guide Dogs Victoria help me with the NDIS?

The info on the NDIS is fast changing, and we know that some people may be confused and concerned about changes. Guide Dogs Victoria may be able to assist you to:

- Understand the NDIS
- Work out if your child is eligible
- Identify your child's goals that the NDIS will consider funding
- Help you prepare for your child's NDIS meeting
- Gather documentation to support your application

All our O&M instructors are happy to help you with any inquiries or concerns about NDIS or you can contact our Support Services Manager Shelley Pannier on 9854 4467. 🌈



# Pupdate

By Guide Dog Zoron

Lately I have been thinking a lot about taking risks. Sometimes taking risks seems like a silly thing to do, but as the primary school kids learnt on the last CMS Risky Business mobility camp, taking risks can also be exciting and fun.

The students learnt about taking calculated risks, which means that they thought carefully about the activity and worked through the consequences of what would happen if they 'had a go'.

Guess what happened? The students found that when they were given tasks to do that were pretty scary, they gave it a go, even if they felt a bit scared. If the student didn't complete the task, they felt proud that they at least tried the activity. They then had a story to tell their family and friends.

Imagine never trying anything new or exciting. Imagine not ever being allowed to take a risk. Imagine how you would feel if you didn't challenge yourself. Taking risks is so important for learning new skills and building on those skills to do more challenging and exciting things.

I had to take lots of risks and learn new skills when I was learning how to be a Guide Dog. It was scary and fun and I made lots of mistakes learning my new job. Even though I didn't end up being a full time Guide Dog, I am proud that I had learnt guiding skills, because now I can work with kids and teach them how to be Guide Dog handlers. 🐾



**Zoz takes risks, do you?**



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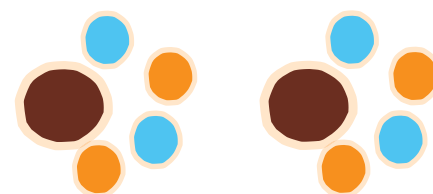
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If you wish to contact the CMS team or would like to ask about our programs, please ring the phone number of the instructor you wish to speak to, or alternatively, you can email:  
cms@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

# Staff Profile

## Meet Dani!

My name is Danielle and I have just started working in the Children's Mobility Service, again! I worked in the Children's team prior to having my family and now that my youngest has started at school, I am back! I studied O&M at La Trobe University, graduating in 1997 and have worked at both RVIB and Guide Dogs in that time. I have 3 kids of my own, all in primary school, 2 dogs (a greyhound and a whippet) and a budgie. I am looking forward to the challenge of juggling work, school commitments, after school activities, dog walking and trying to keep up my own personal interests of running, boot camp and cake making. I love that I am already meeting up with some of the children I used to work with, who have now grown up and are studying or working. 🌈



## FEEDBACK?

If you have anything to contribute to this newsletter, please feel free to contact us with your piece. We welcome all contributions from anyone.

Please either contact or email our referrals officer with your contributions as below:  
referrals@guidedogsvictoria.com.au  
or Phone: 03 9854 4467



Tylah on the giant slide!



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