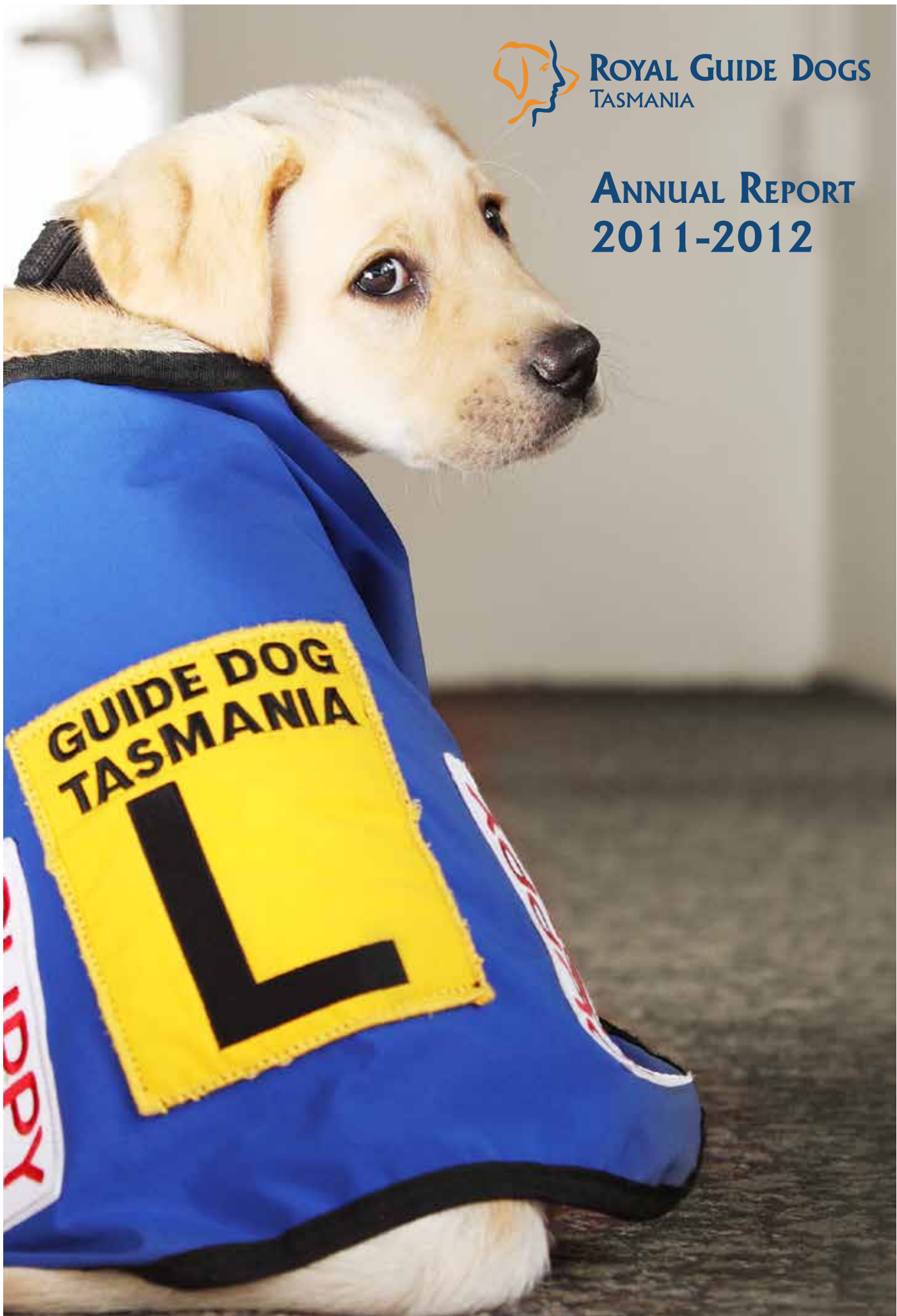




ROYAL GUIDE DOGS
TASMANIA

ANNUAL REPORT
2011-2012



OUR PATRON



His Excellency the Honourable Peter Underwood AC
Governor of Tasmania

OUR MISSION

To provide high quality services to international standard, which will increase the independence and quality of life for blind and vision impaired people and assist them to achieve their full potential within the community.

OUR HEAD OFFICE

Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind Association of Tasmania
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164 Elizabeth Street Hobart Tasmania 7000
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CONTENTS

Patron & Mission

Contents

President's Report	p.1
Board of Directors	p.3
Chief Executive Officer's Report	p.5
Financial Statements - Summary	p.6
Client Services Report	p.7
Funding Development Report	p.11
Sponsors & Partners	p.13

*Cover Artwork: 'Super Quinton'
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This Page: Southern volunteer Puppy Raisers during a session in March.



P.1 PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It is with pleasure that I present my first President's Report for Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead a team of active Board members and work with Management who are focussed on continuing to move RGDT sustainably forward and serve the blind and vision impaired sector.

The Board is grateful for the hard working team of staff that have again: increased front end service delivery; remained innovative in fundraising activities during a particularly challenging economic environment; and maintained a strong financial position from which to build a sustainable future.

In June 2012, the Board met with management to reset the three year rolling strategic plan and importantly we remain focussed on: increasing core mobility and independent living services for people who are blind and vision impaired; consolidating efforts towards building sustainable and predictable income streams; leveraging from sector alliances to the

benefit of the state and the Guide Dog brand; monitoring risks to the Guide Dog brand and where relevant exploring opportunities to continuously improve the brand; and monitoring opportunities arising from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) developments.

Pleasingly, the Board completed the next phase of its risk management journey through the completion of its Strategic Risk Profile. This enables the Board and Management to ensure that resources are being channelled into managing the most important strategic risks, as well as monitoring for emerging risks that need to be managed.

The Board is extremely pleased with the new leased Launceston office location in Invermay Road, which provides an enhanced working environment for our staff and visibility to the community. The Board is currently working with Management to sell the old premises, and invest the proceeds to provide a return, which can be channelled into front line core services.



It was great to be advised during the year that Guide Dogs was identified as the third most trusted brand in Australia. This is a great testament to the brand we have and a very good reason to continue the great work we do in brand positioning.

Mike Harris, a long serving Board member and former President over a number of years will resign from the Board at this year's AGM. Mike has been instrumental in guiding RGDT through some extremely challenging financial times and his leadership has been critical in seeing RGDT in its current good state of health. On behalf of the Board and Management, I express my gratitude for the large investment of time that Mike has contributed to RGDT and wish him all the very best in his future endeavours.

Furthermore, during the year both Bruce Free and Mylinda Sheppard resigned from the Board and I thank them both for their efforts and contribution whilst on the Board. Pleasingly, we have seen the addition to the Board of Ella Dixon from Launceston and Edmay Jackson from Hobart, which has complemented the mix of skills on the Board.

I thank every member of the voluntary Board, and Management, for their efforts and importantly the members, volunteers and supporters for your ongoing contribution to the Association. I look forward to working for and with you to deliver great outcomes into the future.

Dave Howie
President

Opposite Page: 'Dexter and Teejay - best buddies'

*This Page: 'Serenity'
(By Kirsty Pilkington)*



P.3 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Gordon Howie (President)

Director since 2009
Partner at KPMG Chartered Accountants
B. Com UTAS
Registered Company Auditor

Affiliations:

Member, Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia
Member, Institute of Internal Auditors Australia

David became a Director because of the strength of the Royal Guide Dogs brand and the fact that blind and impaired vision services are delivered locally by and to Tasmanians. David was keen to deliver value to the Royal Guide Dogs through his financial and risk management experience gained through his role at KPMG.

Benjamin Scott Swain (Vice President)

Director since January 2010
Partner at Murdoch Clarke Barristers & Solicitors
LLB (Hons) UTAS
Grad Cert of Legal Practice

A person for whom Ben had enormous respect introduced him to Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania. It quickly became very clear to Ben that the Association was also very deserving of the respect of the Tasmanian community and he was honoured to accept a role on the Board of Directors, whereby he can contribute to the governance and strategic vision of the organisation.

David Lyn Gordon

Director since 1999
Retired Chef
Accredited Access Consultant

David originally joined the Board due to his interest in assisting people who are blind or vision impaired. David has also, over time, developed a strong interest in supporting the needs of blind and vision impaired children.

Ella Dixon

Director since 2011
Regional Manager North and North West Programs and Services, Community Development Division-DPAC
Master in Regional Development Policy
Diploma Entrepreneurial Management
Graduate Australian Institute of Company Directors

Affiliations:

Australian Institute of Company Directors

Ella is passionate about community, voluntary organisations, and the important role they play in society. It is important to Ella to be an active member of the Tasmanian community. She was particularly attracted to a statewide organisation that she had supported in the past and RGDT has an excellent reputation. The work that RGDT delivers makes a positive impact on the lives of others and helps people achieve their full potential.

Derek Fails

Director since 2009
Optometry Manager
BSc (Hons) Optometry Bradford University
MC Optom. College of Optometrists, London

Affiliations:

Tasmanian Representative, Optometry Board of Australia
Former Project Manager, Tasmanian Eye Health and Vision Care Initiative
FAICD

Derek developed a strong professional interest in the services provided by Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania as a result of his involvement in the Tasmanian Eye Health and Vision Care Initiative, which led him to volunteer in a governance role in the Association. Volunteering is an important element of the social conscience of any community. To Derek, volunteering with RGDT is very satisfying, both personally and professionally.

Elaine Guy

Director since 2011
CPA

Affiliations:
Member, CPA Australia
Honorary Life Member, Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania

After a long association with RGDT through Puppy Raising, Elaine saw being a Director as an opportunity to assist in furthering the aims of an organisation she knows is dedicated to empowering people who are vision impaired in Tasmania.

Michael Harris

Director since 2004
FCPA; ACA; FCIS; FCSA; Grad. Dip. Accounting

Affiliations:
CPA Australia
Institute Chartered Accountants
Institute Company Sec. Australia
Institute Company Sec. International
Australian Institute of Company Directors

Michael’s wife’s aunt had a Guide Dog and therefore they were already supporters of RGDT. At the same time, Michael had an interest in the finances of the organisation.

Edmay Jackson

Director since 2011
UTAS Women’s Leadership Mentoring Program
NIDA Effective & Influential Communication, Workshop Facilitation, Committee Skills, Diversity & Inclusion, Complaint Management, Essential Governance

Edmay was motivated to become involved with RGDT because of her interest in supporting others to live independently and remain connected with their communities. Since joining the Board she has been impressed by the committed and caring manner in which RGDT staff work with vision impaired people to make this possible.

As a Director, Edmay is proud to be part of a team which assists RGDT to continue in its endeavours to deliver a vital community service into the future.

This Page: Puppy Quinnell, keen to learn all he can in the socialisation stage of his learning



P.5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

This has been an exciting year for Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania. Our strong, vibrant team works incredibly well to produce outstanding results, and across all aspects of the organisation we are working to support the delivery of premium quality services for Tasmanians who are blind or vision impaired.

We held a significant vacancy for nearly two years for a Client Services Manager and this meant that our service delivery staff shouldered much of the load across their Department, for which we are very appreciative. We were pleased to announce the appointment of Rebecca Gatenby to the position of Client Services Manager during the year. This is an important role within the organisation and we look forward to working with Rebecca as part of the wonderful team that comprises RGDT.

Our staff members have been particularly busy this year, responding to a number of challenges within the sector. It is hoped the introduction of the Australian Charities and Not For Profit Commission will reduce the administrative burden on organisations like our own; however, in the meantime there is much to do in analysing the impacts of this reform and preparing for them.

Other major reforms include the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Aged Care sector reforms. These important reforms are set to change the landscape permanently in terms of services for people with disabilities. Unfortunately, as with many major reforms, the devil is in the detail. With so many different groups to cater for, it can be difficult to ensure that everyone is catered for appropriately. RGDT, along with many other organisations providing services for people who are blind or vision impaired, is concerned that the needs of our clients have not been well understood by architects of these reforms.

We have been lobbying in support of people who are blind or vision impaired to ensure they have equality in terms of access to services and funding under the NDIS and aged care reforms. It won't be an easy process, but we believe that it is essential that the needs of people who are supported by our organisation are equal to those of any person with a disability.

Another strong collaboration is that of our six Guide Dogs Australia partner organisations. Leveraging strengths in key areas of each business to gain efficiencies, share knowledge, establish standards and present "One Voice" when communicating with government and the community is invaluable. This provides the benefit of a single national organisation, while preserving the closeness and relevance to clients and donors that goes with being a strong State based organisation.

We are pleased again to provide our financial figures for review. Since making the difficult decision some four years ago to isolate our bequest income from operational expenditure, we have been able to grow a significant endowment. This endowment is now contributing income annually and enabling growth in our service delivery. We would like to express our sincere thanks to those who have left gifts to RGDT in their Estate and to their families. These important legacies now have the capacity to contribute to the Association in perpetuity and ensure our long term sustainability.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to staff for their concerted efforts during FY 2011/12. I would also like to thank our Board of Directors. Their wise counsel, oversight and strong governance are instrumental in our ongoing success. And finally, I extend my sincere appreciation to all volunteers, supporters, donors and members of Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania. Your contributions ensure our commitment to the delivery of premium quality services is able to continue.

Dan English, CEO



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - SUMMARY P.6

The figures below are a summary from our audited Annual Financial Report 2011-12. The full Financial Report and Auditor's Opinion are available in hard copy on request or via our website: <http://www.royalguidedogs.com.au>

Statement of Comprehensive Income	2011-12	2010-11
Total income	2,359,759	3,167,738
Less expenses	(2,097,033)	(1,830,089)
Net surplus from continuing operations	262,726	1,337,649
Net surplus from discontinued operations	-	(1,076)
Revaluation of assets - buildings	(77,406)	78,917
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	185,320	1,415,490

Statement of Financial Position		
Assets		
Total current assets	4,041,250	3,379,536
Total non-current assets	1,403,672	1,909,560
Total assets	5,444,922	5,289,096
Liabilities		
Total current liabilities	261,105	266,523
Total non-current liabilities	120,703	144,779
Total liabilities	381,808	411,302
Net Assets	5,063,114	4,877,794

Equity		
Reserves	1,005,775	1,083,181
Accumulated surplus	4,057,339	3,794,613
Total Equity	5,063,114	4,877,794

This Page: Our PR Dog, Dexter, inspired fine portraiture from many students. These pieces were from a Prep class at Howrah Primary School in June and displayed proudly in the front window of our Hobart office.



P.7 CLIENT SERVICES REPORT

Puppy Development

Eleven puppies were welcomed into the Puppy Development Program in FY 2011/12. This year, RGDT welcomed the arrival of four puppies born from breeding stock who were originally raised in Tasmania and then provided to Guide Dogs Queensland to further develop their breeding program. It is lovely to see their puppies returning to Tasmania. Wendell and Whiskey recently moved from their puppy raising homes and commenced formal Guide Dog training. Eddie and Elsa will soon follow the “W’s” and will commence their training in late 2012/early 2013.



We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts of all Puppy Raisers who volunteer their time and their homes in the early stages of a potential Guide Dog’s career. We are always seeking new Puppy Raisers and we welcome any enquiries from people interested in volunteering for the Program.

Guide Dog Program

Stella and Shae, two of our recent graduates, have been developing working relationships with new handlers and are progressing well. Both clients are long-term Guide Dog handlers who have come back to the beginning again, subsequent to the retirement of their previous Guide Dogs. It is wonderful to see successful transitions for clients from the retirement of one dog, to developing the trust and confidence to work with a new dog, and therefore maintaining independent mobility, participation in the community and activities of their choice.



Despite every effort during training, not all of our dogs will graduate as guides. This year, two dogs that did not graduate, Dexter and Woolly, have gone on to provide valuable service in other ways. Dexter is now Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania’s star Public Relations dog. He’s a very popular ambassador during visits to schools, businesses and community groups to talk about Puppy Banks, other fundraising opportunities and our services.



Woolly, on the other hand, has been adopted by a family as a companion for their daughter who has a disability. Whilst RGDT does not train dogs specifically to assist people with physical or intellectual disabilities, their skills and temperament often make them suitable companions and they can go on to make a meaningful contribution to people living with a range of disabilities. And from Woolly’s new family: “Woolly’s completely settled in...She’s a great helper...and very much loved by everyone she meets.”

This Page (from top): Wendell and Whiskey (by Kirsty Pilkington); Stella; Dexter (by Kirsty Pilkington).

Opposite Page: RGDT Instructor at work with young RGDT client, Callum.

Low Vision Rehabilitation Services

Getting on with Core Business

This year there has been an 8% increase in referrals to the Client Services Department. Whilst the majority of services are provided for clients in their home, there has been growth in the provision of services in workplace settings. This has included Orientation and Mobility and Lifeskills programs provided for clients to achieve goals related to obtaining and maintaining employment, as well as educating employers and colleagues. Additionally, one staff member has completed the nationally recognised ‘Certificate in Access Auditing – Buildings’, delivered by the Institute of Access Training Australia. This has developed our capacity to provide advice to public and private organisations about essential requirements for making buildings and workplaces accessible for people who have a vision impairment.

A Client's Story:

Jane contacted RGDT for advice and support to manage her vision impairment so she could be more effective in her workplace. After our initial assessment and some demonstration of equipment, Jane began to realise the benefits that our service could provide in the workplace. Our staff attended Jane's workplace to break down the duties of her job role, identify the areas where she was having some difficulties and formulate possibilities to assist in these areas. Jane was then able to have a much better idea about the kind of equipment and modifications that were essential for her to continue being a productive member of her team. Through the assistance of RGDT's Low Vision Rehabilitation Services and the Job Access Workplace Modifications Scheme, Jane was able to access equipment to provide appropriate lighting for her workplace, enable access to both electronic and written information and to manage glare and fatigue. Jane's feedback about the assistance she received from RGDT was that the service was "...simply amazing, and the effect that it has had in my position is incredible...Thank you!"

We have also continued our efforts in working with children who have a vision impairment and their families. Early intervention is essential to maximise every child's opportunity to achieve age-appropriate developmental milestones and to establish the foundations required to achieve their fullest potential in life. Supporting and educating parents to enable them to develop and reinforce skills with their child between formal sessions from our staff is central to our philosophy. From a broader perspective, this year we have also engaged with families through Parent Forums. These interactive sessions have involved guest speakers, including staff from the Association for Children with Disability, and aim to further our understanding of parents' needs in order to develop appropriate supports and services. The sessions also facilitate sharing information with families about the range of RGDT services and the other organisations available to assist.

The continued growth in demand for services, combined with strategic changes required in response to emerging challenges and opportunities presented by national reforms in Aged Care and Disability, created the imperative to employ a Client Services Manager in June 2012.



P.9 CLIENT SERVICES REPORT (CONTINUED)

Projects

The Client Services team have been involved in several innovative projects this year, working directly with clients, as well as other community organisations and businesses in support of our mission to increase the independence and quality of life for people who are blind or vision impaired and enable them to achieve their full potential within the community.

These projects included:

- Activity Days involving small groups of school students and young adults in mainstream activities in the community, including ten pin bowling, indoor rock climbing, drumming, and the Hollybank Treetops Adventure. Activity Days provide participants with opportunities to develop mobility skills (including use of public transport and road crossing skills), problem solving, decision making and lifeskills that are essential for enabling ongoing access to the community and overcoming some of the physical or social barriers that prevent participation.
- An industry-leading project involving Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania, Hearing Link Tasmania and Tasmanian Deaf Society, involved us working in partnership with the Hobart Mercure Hotel to update public areas of the hotel and eight accommodation rooms to cater to the needs of guests who have a vision and/or hearing impairment. Our Low Vision Rehabilitation Specialists provided advice to the Mercure about adaptations and equipment to improve access to hotel facilities and services; as well as education and training for staff about low vision and how best to assist guests who are blind or vision impaired. The success of this project indicates the positive outcomes that are achievable through effective partnerships between organisations. Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania welcomes the Tasmanian Hotels Association's stated willingness to continue to "...work where we can with the Royal Guide Dogs and Tas Deaf to work with and educate venues around Tasmania who seek to follow down this path" in future.

This Page (from top): Young client, Emma, hanging out at Hollybank during an RGDT Activity Day; RGDT Instructor training a Mercure Hobart staff member in guiding a person with a vision impairment.

Opposite Page: Julie, with the aid of her white cane, climbed Cradle Mountain during the year. Julie's story featured in the 'Client Profile' section of the Autumn 2012 issue of our Insight Client Newsletter.



- Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania provided input to the formative stages of the ‘Find A Friend Keep A Friend’ project, managed by Montagu Community Living. The project aims to overcome social isolation amongst women with disabilities through group-based training and social interaction and support. The project will run for two years, commencing with a group of women who experience vision impairment.
- Our staff regularly educate other organisations and professional bodies about the range of services Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania has to offer. Organisations with which we have worked this year include Mission Australia’s Gateway Service, the Aged Care Assessment Team and Aged Care and Disability Support students at Polytechnic. RGDT services have also been promoted at the Gearing Up Expo, the Macular Degeneration Foundation’s Low Vision Day Expo, the Optometrists Association Australia (Tasmania) Conference and Agfest. Amongst others, these activities are valuable opportunities to build awareness about our services across the broader community.



A Client's Story:

Mr M was referred to RGDT for orientation and mobility services. Mr M's reduced vision is due to retinal damage. He is originally from Nepal and speaks limited English. His daughter has acted as an interpreter for the initial assessment and during mobility lessons. Making good progress through his program, Mr M has developed basic cane skills for mobility in his local area, with most of his extended family either observing or providing additional instructions! It's quite unusual to have so many other people involved during a lesson, however it's also great encouragement and support for Mr M.

Mr M attends English lessons four times a week at the Polytechnic. His program has included orientation to the campus to enable him to independently access the facilities. The Low Vision Rehabilitation Specialist has also provided education about vision impairment to the teaching and support staff working with Mr M to develop their understanding of how best to assist him.

Even though Mr M and our staff do not speak the same language, this has not limited the progress of the program. There have been many lighter moments and many hand gestures invented to overcome the language barrier!

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone at RGDT for welcoming me to the Association. I look forward to supporting the team and contributing to RGDT's ongoing development in the year to come.

Rebecca Gatenby
Client Services Manager

P.11 FUNDING DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania Funding Development Department has two simple, major objectives:

1. Support the activities of Client Services team.
2. Work efficiently and effectively, raising awareness and funds, to enable objective 1.

We have seen a number of changes across the Department this year, including reviewed position descriptions and roles, and recruitment of new staff and volunteers to best achieve our objectives. At 30 June 2012, we have an experienced, skilled and enthusiastic team, which will ensure the projects and activities are conducted in a way that best meets our objectives, but which also has a strong ownership of the Mission of the Association.

Projects

The major fundraising projects for the year continued to bring income and exposure to Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania. They included:

- Collection Dogs
- Puppy Banks (Public Speaking and Relations Program)
- Direct Mail
- Raffles (Telemarketing)
- Puppy Love (Sponsorship and Regular Giving Program)
- Guide Dog Pet Insurance

Public Relations

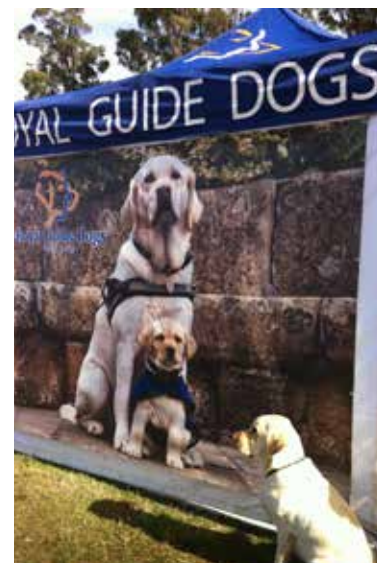
The PR activities and events that were organised in 2011/12 included:

- Agfest*
- 7HoFM Puppy Bank Muster (Hobart and Launceston)*
- Hobart Myer Christmas Parade
- Wrest Point Pups @ the Point
- Good Dog Q&A Forum*
- International Guide Dog Day*
- International White Cane Day*
- World Sight Day*
- Facebook
- New puppies' arrival in September, March and June*
- Online Door Knock*

(*RGDT has been very fortunate to receive consistent support from all of our local media outlets and will continue to develop these relationships as we introduce new activities, projects and events.)

Volunteers

With such a small staff working so hard on these and other projects, it has been critical to have the dedicated services of a band of volunteers, assisting



us to complete our activities and deliver such strong outcomes throughout the year. Volunteers come from all walks of life, each with a different reason for choosing Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania, and each with much to give. We are truly grateful for their continued support and commitment to us.

Our volunteers include:

- Drivers x 7
- Administration / Mailroom / Collection Dog volunteers x 20
- Work Experience Students: The Friends' School, Ogilvie High School x 4
- Board Members x 8
- Puppy Raisers and Boarders x 25 families

Supporters

We look back proudly on our efforts in a successful, high profile, strategic year of change, and look forward to continued growth in the year ahead – always focusing on doing what we do efficiently, and for the sole purpose of enabling our Client Service team to be financially resourced to provide much needed services. We thank all of our supporters; be they Corporate Partners, individual donors, Puppy Love sponsors and members. They are all critical in allowing the organisation to complete our Mission.

Kate Grady
Funding Development Manager

This Page (clockwise from right):

As part of the Puppy Bank Muster event, Elizabeth Street Hobart was adorned with paw prints in October;

Volunteers prepare for the Myer Christmas Pageant in November;

At 'Good Dog' a panel of experts discussed canine intelligence and fielded questions from audience members in March (left to right: Dr Katrina Warren; Dr Chris Johnson; Dr Pauleen Bennett; Dan English);

Our RGDT mascot, Wuppy, acknowledges support from one of our partners during the Puppy Bank Muster in October.

Opposite Page (from top):

PR dog Dexter resumes the position at the front of the RGDT Agfest site in May;

Eddie the Elf lead RGDT's Christmas Pageant entry in November;

Ten-week-old Quinton behaved perfectly in public during 'Good Dog' in March.



Companion Members



Training Members

- Commonwealth Bank Call Centre
- Inner Wheel of Hobart Sunset
- Clarence City Council
- Australian Ethical
- Nyrstar

... And the 250+ individual and family **Learner Members**.

2011/12 Royal Guide Dogs Tasmania Partners

