

# Guide Dogs

TASMANIA



# InSight

## Client Services Newsletter

Spring 2015

## Client Profile

### Callum's Determination Pays Off

It's been a big couple of years for young Callum Harper. Now in Year 8 at Launceston Church Grammar School, Callum has had a very busy time learning his way around this environment, which compared to his primary school, is very large indeed!

It's likely we can all remember some of the challenges of starting high school: making new friends, having new teachers, learning new subjects that need specific materials, doing more homework - it's a very exciting yet stressful time in our lives.

In addition to all of this, Callum has had to work very hard to learn how to navigate his way around school entirely by memory, given he is blind.

It hasn't been all hard work (there have been many laughs and giggles along the way and the occasional footy or cricket banter), but with the ongoing help of Guide Dogs Tasmania and Callum's persistence and determination, he is now able to make his way to and from school and to many of his classrooms by himself.

Using his white cane as a mobility tool, Callum can safely travel up and down stairs, through narrow passageways, around bags, books and students and onto his next class or activity.

Now that Callum's got mobility at school under control, he is ready to step up to the next challenge: independently catching the bus to Aurora Stadium for the footy.

This may sound like a simple task, but it actually involves learning many things; including getting to and from the bus stops, using safe cane skills, crossing busy streets, learning about traffic lights, hopping on the correct bus, knowing when to get off at the correct stop and sometimes asking strangers for help.

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Above: Callum uses his white cane to help him navigate safely through and around busy environments, including traffic intersections.



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# Client Profile

## Callum's Determination Pays Off - continued from Page 1

These are all big skills that Callum is developing and improving upon, and once again his determination has paid off.

With continued support from Guide Dogs Tasmania, Callum has been able to achieve all of these things and catch the bus to Aurora Stadium under the watchful eye of his Orientation and Mobility Instructor.

Although the return trip home is still a work in progress and there is more to learn before Callum is ready to do the entire trip independently, he has mastered a great deal and there is much to be proud of.

Perhaps one day he'll catch the bus to Aurora Stadium for a match-up between his beloved Geelong Cats and the mighty Hawks – and perhaps his beloved Cats might even win!



Above: With guidance from Callum's Orientation and Mobility Instructor, he has set himself the next goal: getting to the footy and home again, independently. Skills to learn include getting to the right bus stop (left), catching the bus and getting off at the right place safely (centre) and navigating to and around the ground (right). So far, so good! Setting goals and working with Guide Dogs Tasmania to achieve them safely and independently is what it's all about.

# Service Profile

What we do.

## More than Dogs.

Did you know that Guide Dogs Tasmania is “More than Dogs?” Around 85% of what we do is about long canes, life skills, instructing, and providing support for moving around safely and independently with a low vision condition. Guide Dog training and Guide Dog services make up the remaining 15%.

Our Low Vision Rehabilitation Specialists work across the state, providing training and solutions for all sorts of problems associated with low vision. We recommend contacting us so you can receive specific advice, but following on from the tips and ideas in the last edition of Insight, here are a few more general examples of equipment and tips that may be suitable for you.

### Magnifiers:

- Hand held magnifiers are generally more powerful as they reduce in size. A magnifier that fits over the whole page is not very powerful, while small hand held magnifiers are powerful, but they reduce the amount of print that can be read at one time.
- Electronic magnifiers are portable and have a rechargeable battery. They can magnify to a large size, have an auto focus camera and have a freeze frame for holding images.
- A Video magnifier, also known as a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), uses a small camera to project the image onto a TV screen.

### Glare problems:

‘Fit Over’ glasses are available with lenses that reduce the amount of glare, but do not reduce the light. Yellow, orange or amber lenses are recommended for Macular Degeneration, Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) and Pre-op Cataracts. Grey, amber or green lenses are recommended for Diabetes, Albinism and Post-op Cataracts. Grey or green lenses are recommended for Glaucoma. Wearing a hat with a brim or using a visor will also assist with reducing glare.

### General tips:

- Think about arranging your lounge room in a way that is suitable for you, rather than for your visitors. Positioning a chair closer to the TV may assist with viewing.
- A line drawn around the power point holes, with a dark felt tip pen to create contrast, may assist when plugging in a cord.
- Patterned drinking glasses may be easier to locate on a bench than clear glasses, and could reduce breakages.

So, next time you think of Guide Dogs Tasmania, think “More than Dogs”. They are labradorable, but they are just the tip of our iceberg! Contact us for information, support, or to help us.

# Service Profile

With Client Services Manager, Mary Langdon

## Australia's Most Trusted... 3 years in a row!

For the third year running, Guide Dogs has been voted Australia's Most Trusted Charity in the annual Australian Reader's Digest 'Most Trusted Brand' poll.

It is an honour that people have placed their trust in our services and believe Guide Dogs is an organisation they want to support. Our work is about supporting people to achieve independence and their goals in life, whether it be participating in their local community, accessing further education or finding employment.

We are humbled by this award and we thank the Tasmanian community for placing their trust in us and the work we do - developing skills, optimising choices and creating opportunities for blind and vision impaired Tasmanians.

We are the only organisation training Guide Dogs in Tasmania, but we also provide so much more than dogs. We are encouraged and driven by the support we receive from the community and look forward to that support continuing in the future.



## Audible Traffic Signals

A Northern Tasmania resident has advised us that he is noticing audible traffic signals in the Launceston area failing more often than in the past. He has reported eight cases of failed audible signals to the Department of State Growth and they responded positively, indicating that they would take prompt action to rectify the issues.

The Department of State Growth advised that they rely on reports from the public to identify signals in need of attention as there is no preventative inspection program. We encourage you to report any faults to the Department:

- North 6777 2808,
- North West 6477 7091
- South 1800 030 688

Thank you to the gentleman who advised Guide Dogs Tasmania of this issue.

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# Service Profile

With Client Services Manager, Mary Langdon

## Cisco Academy for the Vision Impaired

VisAbility (formerly the Association for the Blind of Western Australia) works in partnership with the Cisco Academy for the Vision Impaired (CAVI) in delivering a number of accredited training courses (Beginner and Advanced). Courses include, but are not limited to:

- Braille
- Email using Outlook 2010
- Word 2010 basics
- Operating a personal computer with Windows
- Browsing and searching the Internet with Explorer 8
- Write, design and produce business documents,
- Create electronic PowerPoint presentations, and
- Design and produce Excel spreadsheets.

CAVI Trainers are vision impaired and are former students. There is an option to study externally. For more information phone Peter Cliff on 08 6222 4902 – or visit [www.cavittraining.com](http://www.cavittraining.com)

## Client Feedback from Service Evaluation forms.

The Guide Dogs Tasmania team wishes to thank clients for their willingness to post back the Service Evaluation forms with their very valuable feedback. Client feedback is so important to us and at the time of writing this article 181 responses had been received. Some of the feedback includes:

- 100% of clients said they would recommend Guide Dogs Tasmania to others.
- 99% said the service they received met their need.
- 98% rated the professionalism and communication of our staff as 'excellent'.

In answer to "What did you value most about the service you received?" there have been many comments, including: information, professionalism, respect, helpfulness, patience, strategies offered, support with aids and equipment so that I can read better, knowledge that the staff have, efficiency, kindness, honesty.

We ask clients to continue to provide us with feedback. We rely on this information so we can always strive to improve our services and meet the needs of all Tasmanians who seek our support.

Warm regards, Mary Langdon.

# InSight Notices

Events, Activities, Groups

**For more information about  
Guide Dogs Tasmania's services:**

**Phone:** 1800 484 333

**Office Locations:**

164 Elizabeth Street, Hobart  
62 Invermay Road, Invermay

**Web:** [guidedogstas.com.au](http://guidedogstas.com.au)

**15 October, 2015  
is International White Cane Day**

Visit [guidedogstas.com.au](http://guidedogstas.com.au)  
during October to find out more.

**# MoreThanDogs**

**We urgently need  
volunteer Puppy Raisers!**

**Free information session:**

Hobart

Tuesday 3 November, 4pm

RSVP:

Phone 1800 484 333 (essential)

MORE INFO:

[guidedogstas.com.au/how-to-help-us/  
volunteer/](http://guidedogstas.com.au/how-to-help-us/volunteer/)

## **Blind Citizens Australia**

1800 033 660 / [www.bca.org.au](http://www.bca.org.au)

BCA is the national organisation of blind and vision impaired people. BCA aims to achieve equity and equality for people who are blind and vision impaired by empowerment, promoting positive community attitudes and striving for high quality and accessible services. Members can obtain an Identity Card which may be used where photo identification is normally required.

## **Launceston Vision Impaired Support Group**

6343 2882 – Wendy Collins  
CWA Rooms, 129 St John Street,  
Launceston

This group meets on the first Monday of the month between 10am-12pm to discuss topics of mutual interest with occasional outings.

## **Hobart Glaucoma Support Group**

6234 5578

Contact Julie Leeper for dates and details.

## **Independent Living Centre (ILC)**

1300 885 886

The ILC assists with information and demonstration of many Aids for Daily Living.

# InSight Notices

Events, Activities, Groups

## **“Let’s Connect” Deafblind Advocacy Meeting**

15 October, 9:30am - 12:30pm  
TASDEAF (64 Cameron St Launceston)

For Tasmanians living with deafblindness to learn about:

- Self advocacy
- Deafblind advocacy in Australia
- The Let’s Connect project

Interpreters, morning tea, lunch provided.

RSVP: Friday 9 October  
Meredith.prain@ableaustralia.org.au

## **“Let’s Connect” Project Free Deafblind Awareness Training**

16 October, 9:30am - 4:30pm  
TASDEAF (64 Cameron St Launceston)

Topics covered: causes, communication, orientation and mobility, technology, practical strategies.

Relevant for case managers, support workers, allied health professionals, teachers, early childhood educators.

Limited spaces. Morning and afternoon tea provided. Please advise if you would like an interpreter.

RSVP: Friday 9 October  
Meredith.prain@ableaustralia.org.au

## **Bisdee House Day Respite: Changing Lives**

6277 8800

Bisdee is funded through the National Respite for Carers program, which is committed to supporting carers who assist aged people to remain living in their own home. Bisdee House services can assist working carers in maintaining their work obligations and in establishing a life balance.

## **Support for Stroke Sufferers**

6231 4424

Many people lose vision as a result of a stroke. Stroke Support Groups can assist people to cope with all aspects of life following a stroke. Contact Connie Digolis to find out about groups and services available through the Stroke Foundation.

## **Gabby’s Going Places**

A fantastic web resource has been created by Guide Dogs Victoria as a useful classroom resource to help children and teenagers, their teachers and parents to understand some of the challenges of living with very low vision or blindness. Visit the Guide Dogs Victoria website and search ‘Gabby’s Going Places’.

# Guide Dogs News

They may be small and very cute, but they come with a lot of energy and a willingness to learn. Jerry and Jacob joined our Puppy Development Program recently and have settled in quickly. With more pups arriving before the end of the year, we are on the hunt for new volunteer members of our Puppy Development Team. If you know anyone interested in joining the team as a Puppy Raiser or Boarder, please encourage them to look at the 'how you can help' section of our website for more information.

Two clients have graduated with dogs in the South after completing intensive training programs. Both clients are first time Guide Dog Handlers, and have found the experience challenging and rewarding, as their independence and mobility extend with their new mobility 'aids'. Although it is hard to say farewell to the training dogs, it is such a rewarding experience to watch them with clients and see the bond grow during the training programs. Within days Guide Dog Holly was looking to her new handler for commands and care and completely ignoring her trainer.



Above: Pepper, learning the technicalities of guiding in her new harness, closely monitored by Guide Dog Instructor, Kim.

Yoda, Yuri and Pepper are now in the training group and currently learning to wear the harness and all the technical terms needed for safe guiding. They are all progressing nicely, learning things quickly, and have really settled in to training routines.

In April this year, Guide Dogs Tasmania was visited by an International Guide Dog Federation Assessor to ensure that we are meeting all international standards and protocols. We are pleased to announce that we passed this assessment with flying colours. A big thank you to everyone involved in helping us provide a program to such a high standard.

## Take the Lead: Join 'Puppy Love'

It costs over \$30,000 to raise and train one puppy into a working Guide Dog. You can help us do it, from just \$15.00 per month. Simply fill in the details below and post to:

PO Box 82, North Hobart, Tas, 7002

OR

Phone 1800 484 333 for more information / to request a DDR form

Mr / Mrs / Miss / Other ..... Name .....

Address:..... Postcode:.....

Telephone: (....) ..... Email: .....

Monthly membership of ( )\$15 ( )\$30 Other (\$.....)

( ) VISA ( ) MasterCard

Card No: ..... / ..... / ..... / .....

Expiry Date: ..... / ..... Signature: .....

**PUPPY LOVE**