



Guide Dogs Tasmania opens doors to public

Official Opening and 'Open Afternoon' at Guide Dogs Tasmania

Where: Guide Dogs Tasmania Head Office, 164 Elizabeth Street, Hobart

When: Official Opening BY INVITATION 12 – 12:30pm
Followed by PUBLIC 'Open Afternoon' 12:30 - 2pm
Saturday, December 5, 2015

Vision: Puppies and Guide Dogs in Training, invited guests (including Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AM, Governor of Tasmania) and general public – Journalists encouraged to take self-guided tours of the newly refurbished building and try out equipment.

On Saturday, 5 December, Guide Dogs Tasmania will be opening the doors of its head office in Hobart to enable the public to celebrate the official opening of the newly refurbished building, and take a look behind the scenes.

164 Elizabeth Street was acquired by Guide Dogs Tasmania in 1988, and until this year little had been done to ensure it was functional and appropriate for growing service delivery.

Mary Langdon, Acting CEO for Guide Dogs Tasmania, said she was extremely proud of the new building, which underwent refurbishments from January to September this year, and was excited to show the public behind the scenes this Saturday.

“Guide Dogs Tasmania has been operating its head office from the Elizabeth Street site for a long time, and while we all got used to it, the building was very unsuitable for our work and not accessible for people with a disability, which goes against everything we stand for,” Ms Langdon said.

“It was difficult for clients to navigate their way through the building because of the tight corridors and small rooms, many of which were impractical for use. We now have open plan spaces with plenty of room to move around safely for not only our clients, but our staff, volunteers and visitors too.”

The refurbished building also allows for some new additions to the head office, including a technology room where clients can try out equipment with assistance from staff, and a volunteer room which gives the organisations regular volunteers a designated place to carry out their important duties.

But for the public, the most exciting addition to the building would have to be the new puppy viewing room, located at the front of the office and easily noticeable when walking up and down Elizabeth Street.

“Our pups are what make us recognisable, so we knew that we needed some way of showing them to the public without any interference,” Ms Langdon said.

“It is lovely to see people’s faces light up when they take a second look. Some people even stop for a few minutes just to have a peak in before continuing on their way.”

An official, invitation only opening by Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AM, Governor of Tasmania, will be followed by a public opening, where people can come and take themselves on a self-guided tour through the refurbished building. Along the way, people can follow the orange paw prints that will take them to different areas of the building, including a dog training area, volunteer room, and of course the puppy viewing room. Participants will also get to meet some of our puppies and Guide Dogs in Training, find out about our lesser-known services, enter a competition to name our mascot Model Dog, and purchase Guide Dogs merchandise, including Christmas cards, shopping bags, and 2016 calendars.

Children will enjoy the opportunity to draw their very own Guide Dog or pet dog on arrival, have their photo taken with our Ambassador Dog, Dexter, and take part in a Guide Dog Quiz that could win them a great prize.

“With so many new additions to the building, we hope people will take this opportunity to come and see our Head Office, and find out more about Guide Dogs Tasmania and what goes on behind the doors,” Ms Langdon said.

“Building contractors, Fairbrother, have done a fantastic job with the refurbished building and we can't wait to show people these major improvements.”

ENDS

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