

Guide Dogs

TASMANIA



InSight

Client Services Newsletter

Autumn 2016

Client Profile

A year of welcome changes.



Above: With his white cane, Paul can exercise safely whenever he likes.

To say that the year 2015 was a year of change for Hobart man Paul Watkins would be an understatement. Within the space of 12 months, Paul accepted that his vision impairment was leading him into dangerous situations, and he also received his very first Guide Dog.

The 67-year-old self-employed psychologist was diagnosed with Diabetic Retinopathy early in life and had extensive laser surgery in his late 20s to try to revert the condition. This stabilised the problem for a while, but didn't fix it.

Paul's eyesight continued to deteriorate over the years, and he now has significant low vision. In 2014 he noticed that his daily walks were becoming more and more challenging, as well as unsafe.

"There were things on the ground that I just wasn't seeing," Paul said.

And although his vision impairment never stopped him from doing things, it eventually got to the point where he became frustrated with how long and slow the walks were becoming.

After various incidents of tripping over objects left on the footpath - once he cut his arm on a piece of rusty corrugated iron left under a large dumpster parked against the front fence of a suburban home, with an obvious risk of tetanus - Paul decided, "This is ridiculous."

He didn't want to stop walking. To keep his diabetes under control, he didn't have an option. He also enjoyed his walks. So instead of letting his vision impairment stop him altogether, Paul decided to make a change.

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Client Profile

A year of welcome changes - continued from Page 1

He contacted Guide Dogs Tasmania with a simple goal in mind: to be able to go out on his daily walks, whenever he wanted to, independently and safely.

At the start of 2015 Paul commenced his white cane training program with a Low Vision specialist at Guide Dogs Tasmania. This was a challenging but exciting time for Paul, as he could instantly see the benefits of using the cane. He came to understand the techniques required, and how it could provide him with vital information about the surfaces he was walking on, as well as any objects in front of and around him. It even proved amusing when a number of people asked him, "Have you found anything yet?"

But having been so independent, Paul really didn't want to go out in public until he had "perfected" the white cane. It wasn't so much the white cane that he had to accept, but the fact that mistakes were all part of the learning process.

After a few months of intensive training – and not always getting it right - Paul was back into his regular walks without a worry. The cane had solved a lot of issues and he had a newfound confidence.

To complete the journey, and add yet another welcome change to his life, Paul was also matched with his first Guide Dog last year; a beautiful girl named Holly.

"She's the most amiable, effervescent, gorgeous dog you could ever meet, with her constant captivating smile," Paul said. "She's strong willed, intelligent, knows what she wants to do and sets out to do it."

Sounds like Holly has something in common with her handler.

Paul accepts that there are now new challenges to face with Holly – including the ever changing distractions and diversions from both humans and other dogs. Paul welcomes this as part of the journey, one in which he chooses to take part and one which allows him to continue to be independent, make his own choices, and live the way he wants, rather than allowing his vision impairment to dictate this.

We have no doubt that Paul will take on this new challenge - with the assistance of Guide Dogs Tasmania – with 100 per cent determination and enthusiasm.



Above - Paul with Guide Dog Holly: a strong, confident and enthusiastic team.

Service Profile

with Client Services Manager, Mary Langdon

New Team Member



Above: Welcome, Naomi Gilson.

I have pleasure in welcoming our newest Client Services team member, Naomi Gilson. Naomi's role is a Low Vision Rehab Specialist, based in our Hobart office. Naomi has just relocated from Victoria, and we can't blame her for wanting to move to our beautiful island state! Naomi looks forward to meeting and working with clients and delivering our range of low vision services. She joins our professional and personable team of Specialists - Eion, Kim, Maree and Sean, and our Client Liaison Officers - Courtney and Julie.

As the profile on pages 1 and 2 of this newsletter illustrates, our services are all based on our client's goals and independence. When you meet with one of our Specialists, you will be at the centre of the service, and you will be given the opportunity to express your own goals and what it is that you need to 'Develop Skills, Optimise Choices, Create Possibilities' and maintain independence. Guide Dogs Tasmania's low vision services are all about you! For assistance, please phone **1800 484 333**.

Opening Day A Success

As many of you are aware, Guide Dogs Tasmania completed a major refurbishment of our Hobart building late last year. The renewed space has offered many opportunities for clients, such as being able to undertake mobility programs within our accessible spaces and the addition of an Aids and Equipment room. This space allows clients to make an appointment with one of our Specialists and come into our office to test equipment. Our puppy viewing room is another fantastic addition, and it provides the opportunity for thousands of pedestrians to stop and look at our pups and training dogs. We have seen many beaming smiles from the public as they view the dogs.



Above: The official ribbon-cutting.

We had our Official Opening on Saturday 5th December 2015, and we were honoured that our Patron, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AM, Governor of Tasmania, officially opened our refurbished building. The Opening was a great success, and it gave the public the chance to learn more of what Guide Dogs Tasmania does, including a simulated blindfolded activity, equipment display, information on the Puppy Raising program, lots of giveaways and of course, the opportunity to pat the pups! A big 'thank you' to all Guide Dogs staff and volunteers who helped prepare for, and assist on, the day.

Service Profile

With Client Services Manager, Mary Langdon - continued from Page 3

NDIS Update

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides eligible people with a flexible, whole of life approach to the support they need to pursue their goals, and supports social inclusion and economic participation.

We have been waiting for the latest announcement as to what age group would be next in the progressive roll out in Tasmania, and we are pleased to report that the bi-lateral agreement between our State and Federal Governments has now been agreed upon.

From 1 July 2016, it has been announced that NDIS will also include the 12-14 age group. The current age group in Tasmania is 15 - 24 years.

Over the next few years, it is anticipated the roll out of NDIS in Tasmania will be as follows:

- 1 July 2016: 12-14 years old;
- 1 January 2017: 25-28 years old;
- 1 July 2017: 4-11 years old;
- 1 January 2018 : 29-34 years old;
- 1 July 2018: 0-3 years old and 35-49 years old ;
- 1 January 2019: 50-64 years old.

For further information contact the NDIS on **1800 800 110**
or visit the NDIS website: **www.ndis.gov.au/tas**

Guide Dogs Tasmania is NDIS ready, and you can find out more about our approved services by visiting the “Our Services” section of the Guide Dogs Tasmania website or visiting this page directly:
guidedogstas.com.au/our-services/ndis/

Service Profile

Did you know?



Handy Feature for Pedestrians

Not many people are aware of the fact that all modern traffic lights have a handy feature that can be used by people who are blind or have low-vision; this feature is the 'pulse function'.

If you place your finger or thumb on the middle section of the raised arrow on the traffic control, you will notice that it vibrates simultaneously with the audible noise of the traffic lights.

This pulse function can help you tell when it's safe for pedestrians to cross the road as it will vibrate slowly when it's a 'red man' and quickly when it's a 'green man'. It can also be particularly helpful if you have another traffic light nearby that's making noise, or if you are hard of hearing. It can provide extra confidence to know when it's safe to cross the road, something that's important for all of us.



Above: The pulse function is very handy.

We would encourage anyone who notices any faults with pedestrian crossing equipment to contact the Traffic Signals Hotline on **1300 139 933** and report the issue.

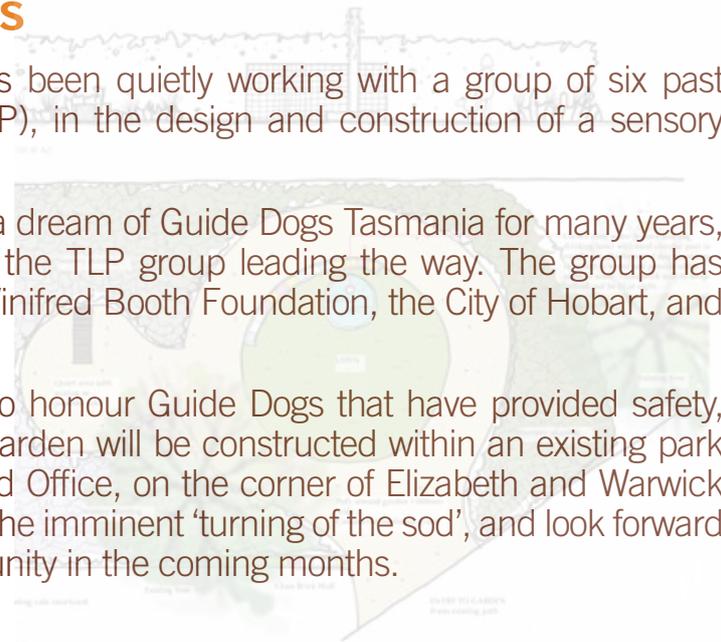
Guide Dogs Garden of Memories

Over the last three years, Guide Dogs Tasmania has been quietly working with a group of six past participants of the Tasmanian Leaders Program (TLP), in the design and construction of a sensory garden to honour Guide Dogs.

The 'Garden of Memories' is a project that has been a dream of Guide Dogs Tasmania for many years, and simply would not have made it this far without the TLP group leading the way. The group has sought and secured significant assistance from the Winifred Booth Foundation, the City of Hobart, and Playstreet Landscape Architects.

The Garden of Memories will be a reflective space to honour Guide Dogs that have provided safety, mobility and companionship to their handlers. The Garden will be constructed within an existing park just up the road from the Guide Dogs Tasmania Head Office, on the corner of Elizabeth and Warwick Streets, in North Hobart. We are extremely excited by the imminent 'turning of the sod', and look forward to sharing the finished product with the whole community in the coming months.

Thank you TLP, and to all of the project partners.



Above (faded): The initial design concept for the Garden of Memories.

InSight Notices

Events, Activities, Groups

Prefer a PDF or CD instead?

Are you a client of Guide Dogs Tasmania and would like to receive a PDF Insight via email, or an audio disc for Daisy Player?

Phone Courtney on 1800 484 333 and let her know your preference for receiving Insight.

Couch to Kayaking IS ON!



On April 8, 9 and 10, Roaring 40's kayaking is offering a weekend program that includes:

- A 2 hour familiarisation to a kayak;
- A 3 hour rescue session in the pool (how to get in and out safely);
- A 4 hour paddle instruction off Sandy bay beach; and
- A full day sea kayaking expedition.

Total cost for the weekend is \$425.00 p.p and it is open to all persons with a vision impairment over the age of 16, along with their family and friends.

To book, contact Roaring 40's kayaking:
0455 949 777
jenny@roaring40skayaking.com.au

For information contact Eion Jennings:
0404 573 385 / couch2kayak@outlook.com

Carer Gateway

Recently, the Federal Government launched "Carer Gateway". The purpose is to provide information about the services and support available for people who care for someone with a disability, chronic illness, dementia, mental illness or who are frail aged. Carer Gateway provides information for carers by phone and online.

Further information and support for carers:

- Call **1800 422 737** Monday to Friday, 8am - 6pm.
- Visit www.carergateway.gov.au

Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST)

CTST provides accessible transport across the state to aged, disabled and disadvantaged members of the community, including their carers when necessary. This service is available to people who do not have access to suitable or appropriate transport. Examples of how they assist include transport for shopping, doctor and hospital appointments, paying bills, visiting the hairdresser, visiting family and friends. All CTST vehicles are driven by friendly local volunteers.

For more information or to book transport:
Call: **1800 781 033**
Email info@ctst.org.au
Or visit www.ctst.org.au

InSight Notices

Events, Activities, Groups

Advocacy Tasmania

Advocacy Tasmania provides advocacy services for people with all disabilities. Advocacy Tasmania provides services to people in the greatest need and priority is given to issues which most affect quality of life.

It also has a role to play in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), ensuring that people with a disability receive fair treatment in their dealings with the Agency and with service providers funded by NDIS.

If you think you need assistance simply call Advocacy Tasmania on **1800 005 131**

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.

Volunteer Puppy Raisers needed. “No Puppy Raisers: No Guide Dogs”

Free information sessions held in -

Hobart:

Monday 18 April 3pm

Monday 18 July 3pm

Launceston:

Monday 25 July 12pm

RSVP:

Phone 1800 484 333 (essential)

MORE INFORMATION:

guidedogstas.com.au/how-to-help-us/volunteer/

27 April, 2016

is International Guide Dogs Day

Get on board at guidedogstas.com.au during April to find out more.

Proudly supported
by Metro



Contacts for Guide Dogs Tasmania

Phone: 1800 484 333

Email: admin@guidedogstas.com.au

Offices:

Hobart: 164 Elizabeth Street

Invermay: 62 Invermay Road

Web: guidedogstas.com.au

Guide Dogs News

Take the Lead: join PUPPY LOVE

You can help us train the next generation of Guide Dogs for Tasmanians, 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 or 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:

"Become a Puppy Love regular supporter and watch me become a hero!" - Paris, 7 months.



It has been a busy time in the Guide Dog Department, with the completion of two more client training programs, resulting in a replacement dog for a client in the South and a first time Guide Dog for a client in the North West.

For the very first time, we were able to run these training programs in a class format utilising our newly refurbished Hobart office. We now have a building that clients can safely access, and have rooms from which training programs can be efficiently and effectively administered. It was a great experience for the clients, who were able to offer each other support, and for our staff, who were able to observe a training program taking place first hand. To read a special account of this program, visit guidedogstas.com.au/gold.

Yoda, Yuri, and Pepper are nearing the end of their training and currently undergoing walks with their trainer wearing a blindfold, to fully test them out prior to matching with clients.

We have clients anxiously awaiting the graduation of these dogs, with a number of our current working Guide Dogs nearing retirement age. This is a challenging period for handlers, as they have to hang up the harness of their current dog they have relied on and loved for eight years, and pick up the harness of a new, young dog that still has to learn new routes and lifestyle needs of their handler.

And at the other end of the program? Well, we are eagerly awaiting the arrival of two more bundles of joy later this month! 'H' is for?

