



## Celebrating 50 years with Guide Dogs

### Merran welcomes Jacob into her life

Almost 50 years ago, Launceston resident Merran Thurley received her first Guide Dog. A big, lovable Golden Retriever called Boyd. Only 17 at the time, Merran had no idea just how much a part of her life Guide Dogs would become.

Merran was born with congenital cataracts and glaucoma and had two prosthetic eyes by the age of 14. Getting her first Guide Dog while she was still so young was like getting her licence to drive a car. It gave her independence and freedom.

One of Merran's biggest achievements came after only a few months of having a Guide Dog, when she was able to hop on a bus and head to Hobart regularly to visit friends.

*"Having a Guide Dog has allowed me to work, travel, go on holidays, meet new people, and simply be able to do the things I've wanted. With a Guide Dog, I have choice."*



Merran with Guide Dog Jacob.

### Saying goodbye and hello

After Boyd, Merran went on to welcome Guide Dogs Tony, Monty, Shannon, Leo, Buffy and Ida into her life. Thanks to the team at Guide Dogs Tasmania, she had no more than a month or two between each dog.

According to Merran, each dog had its own personality and each was just as difficult to say goodbye to when it was time for retirement.

Earlier this year, it was 10-year-old Ida who hung up her harness for the final time, after providing Merran eight years of faithful service.

*"It's one of the hardest things you'll ever have to do as a Guide Dog handler. You know you have to do it and you know it's going to be tough. But you're up again the next day and getting on with it. And once you start again, you can't resist the temptation to keep on trying."*

**And start again she has; this time with Guide Dog Jacob.**



Merran with Ida, who is now enjoying retirement.

# The Guide News



**Merran training with Guide Dog Jacob.**

## Merran welcomes Jacob into her life

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Merran was matched with Jacob in January this year. Before commencing training, the pair had a week of bonding to get to know each other. Even at this early stage in their partnership, Merran knew that Jacob “was hers”.

*“I couldn’t believe my luck with him. He’s the sort of dog that wants to come along at a stroll rather than a run, which is perfect for my needs now. I got a pretty good 50th anniversary present in Jacob.”*

Merran is looking forward to a slightly more relaxed lifestyle with Jacob, but she will never forget her previous Guide Dogs that have enabled her to live a rich, fulfilling life.

*“Back at 17, I had no idea what the future was going to look like, but when it came time to get my second dog I thought I’d give it a go and it just went on from there. They’ve been like family to me and I still think about them often.”*

**Merran will officially celebrate her 50th Anniversary as a Guide Dog handler on 16 July, 2018.**



**Edward Cartwright with Guide Dog Izzy.**

## Class of 2017 graduate

We proudly capped off a great 2017 by celebrating the official graduation of five Guide Dogs at a very emotional ceremony in Launceston.

Guide Dogs Jacob, Jerry and Phoebe graduated from their formal training and have since been placed with clients. You can watch the moment all three “swapped” their learner coats for working harnesses here: [guidedogstas.com.au/2017-graduation](http://guidedogstas.com.au/2017-graduation)

Guide Dogs Izzy and Taylor also graduated on the day, after being matched and placed with clients during 2017. Already, they’re making a huge difference to the lives of their handlers; Edward Cartwright and Karen Savich.

If you can make a donation and help ensure we continue changing the lives of Tasmanians like Edward and Karen, complete the enclosed slip or donate online at [guidedogstas.com.au/how-to-help-us](http://guidedogstas.com.au/how-to-help-us)



# The Guide News



**Guide Dog puppy Sara modelling the new national coat.**

## New national look for our pups

Did you know that our puppies and Guide Dogs in training have a brand new coat? In fact, Guide Dogs in training right across the country are now uniform for the very first time since the launch of our national coats in January, made possible thanks to Guide Dogs Australia partner ADVANCE™.

The orange coats are highly visible and are made of a breathable material to keep the dogs cool when they're working. They're also designed to be recognisable as the coat of a Guide Dog in training, wherever you are in the country.

What this means for the community is that if you see a dog wearing this coat, or a working harness, it must not be distracted. It also means that the dog is legally allowed to go anywhere their trainer or handler can.

To read more about the new national coat and how it came about, visit [guidedogstas.com.au/new-puppy-coat](http://guidedogstas.com.au/new-puppy-coat)



**Sara, Violet and Vinnie.**

## Training update

We would like to introduce you to three new puppies that have joined our Puppy Development Program this year: Violet, Vinnie and Sara.

Our gorgeous 'V' siblings have come all the way from New Zealand, making them our first Kiwi puppies in over 12 years.

All three have been placed in Launceston with volunteer Puppy Raisers and are busy going out on daily walks to learn about different environments.

Archie continues his formal training in Hobart and is joined by Harvey. In Launceston, Paris' training is progressing well and she's recently been joined by Harper, Kobie and Kirsty.

If you would like to follow Kirsty's journey as she learns how to be a Guide Dog, tune into ABC Northern Tasmania's 'Drive' program where regular training segments with Kirsty and her Instructor, Sean, will be aired.

You can listen to previous segments on Kirsty's own webpage here: [guidedogstas.com.au/puppy-love/meet-our-pups/guide-dog-pup-kirsty](http://guidedogstas.com.au/puppy-love/meet-our-pups/guide-dog-pup-kirsty)



**Kirsty and Sean.**

# The Guide

## Taking the lead

### Leaving a lasting legacy

In December 2016, Hobart's Barbara Self attended a graduation ceremony that left her with an unforgettable feeling.

That day in 2016 marked the first official graduation ceremony held by Guide Dogs Tasmania, with three Guide Dogs and their handlers graduating. It was an intimate event, and supporters were invited along to be part of the special occasion.

Mrs Self, 88, has always given to Guide Dogs Tasmania. But it wasn't until the graduation ceremony, when she started talking to those whose lives had been directly affected by vision impairment, that she realised just how special these dogs are.



**Mrs Barbara Self.**

*"The fact that these people were able to go to work and live ordinary lives because of their Guide Dogs had a real impression on me. Guide Dogs make such a huge difference to people's lives."*

Mrs Self was so touched by what she saw that day, that she decided to take her support to the next level. She decided that she would leave her entire Estate to Guide Dogs Tasmania.

It was a big step, but Mrs Self had decided, along with her now late husband, that giving more money to one charity, rather than smaller amounts to many charities, would make a far greater difference.

*"It means that I've done something worthwhile that has helped other people, and sort of repaid what so many people have done for me in my lifetime. I thought there was no better charity than Guide Dogs Tasmania."*

If you would like to start a conversation about leaving a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs Tasmania, contact Melanie Spunt on **1800 484 333** or visit [guidedogstas.com.au/how-to-help-us/bequest](https://www.guidedogstas.com.au/how-to-help-us/bequest)



**Guide Dog Holly is the 'face' of our Bequest program.**



### 'Puppy Love' Regular Giving: join the club!

You can make a **big** difference when you join our Puppy Love program as a regular donor or sponsor.

Puppy Love members can follow the "Labradorable" journey with regular updates and have opportunities to attend exclusive activities and events.

Visit [puppylove.com.au](https://www.puppylove.com.au) or give us a call on **1800 484 333** during office hours.