

# Paw Prints

Guide  
Dogs  
WA/TAS



You are changing lives – thank you!

Autumn Edition | 2026



Meet Nero,  
our 200th pup!

## Inside

- Meet our newest recruits
- Join our volunteering community
- Celebrating International Guide Dog Day
- **Plus more...**

# Reflections from our CEO 🐾

The past few months have been a whirlwind, with so many reasons to celebrate and thank you.

Our International Guide Dog Day celebrations were a wonderful opportunity to pay tribute to our incredible working dogs and the people behind them. Our passionate Orange Army with their four-legged comrades were out in force across Perth, Busselton, Hobart and Launceston on 29 April.



There was a great turn-out from the public, as we brought attention to the vital role Guide and Assistance Dogs play in enhancing independence and quality of life for people living with low or no vision, disability, or other challenges. It was a delight to see landmarks across both states glowing in our signature orange.

Another highlight from the past few months was catching up with our amazing volunteers at the Annual Volunteer Thank You Day in Ross, Tasmania. The event — which included dog races, dog-themed craft and a fantastic barbecue lunch — brought together volunteers from across Tasmania Dog Services and Community Fundraising and 45 dogs for a well-deserved celebration.

In February we welcomed our 200th puppy to the Breeding Program, proudly supported by the WA Government. As our dog numbers grow to meet the need for Guide and Assistance Dogs in WA and Tasmania, so too does the need for volunteers. If you'd like to help sponsor a puppy in training or become a Volunteer Puppy Raiser or Dog Boarder, we'd love to hear from you.

None of our work would be possible without the steadfast support of donors and volunteers, who care so much about delivering greater independence, freedom and inclusion to those who need it. Your generosity means the world to us.

Later this year, Guide Dogs WA will celebrate 75-years of providing support to West Australians, honouring a legacy that began when the first Guide Dog school in the country was established in Perth in 1951. I look forward to celebrating this incredible milestone with you.

## Anna Presser

Chief Executive Officer, Guide Dogs (WA & Tas)

# Update from the Dog Services Team 🐾

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter, and thank you for being part of the Guide Dogs WA and Guide Dogs Tasmania community.

Recently, we proudly celebrated International Guide Dog Day with our staff, volunteers and dogs hitting the streets in an army of orange (you can read about this later in this edition) — a day that recognises the incredible impact Guide and Assistance dogs have on the lives of people with low or no vision, disability, or illness. It's also an important opportunity to raise awareness about how the broader community can support these working partnerships through understanding and respectful behaviour.

Our Guide, Assistance, Facility and Companion dogs play a vital role in supporting independence, confidence, and connection. Each partnership represents thousands of hours of careful breeding, training, and teamwork — and most importantly, a bond of trust between dog and handler.

When you see a Guide Dogs WA or Guide Dogs Tasmania dog out in the community, they are often working hard to keep their handler safe. While our dogs are friendly by nature, a few simple etiquette tips help ensure they can do their job effectively, and most importantly, safely:

- **Please don't pat, feed, talk to, or distract a working dog.** Even brief distractions can impact their focus and compromise safety.
- **Always speak directly to the handler,** not the dog, if you wish to ask a question or offer assistance.
- **Give the team space** when passing, allowing the dog to guide confidently and safely.
- **Ask before helping,** and follow the handler's lead.
- **Remember: working dogs are mobility and support aids,** not pets, when they are in their harness or working coat.



Source: Triple M Hobart

By respecting Guide and Assistance Dog etiquette, you help create safer, more inclusive communities and support the independence and dignity of the people our dogs work alongside.

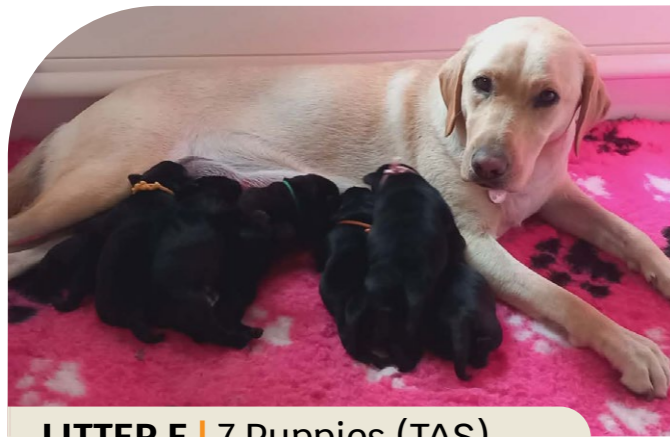
**On behalf of everyone at Guide Dogs WA and Guide Dogs Tasmania, thank you for your continued support and for helping us raise awareness — not just on International Guide Dog Day, but every day.**

## Kim Ryan

Business Manager Dog Services (WA & TAS)

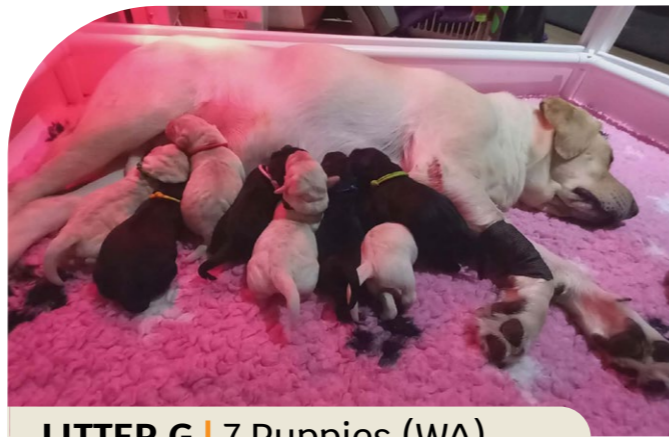
# Welcoming our biggest season of new recruits! 🐾

In the last 12 months, we've welcomed a record 12 litters across WA and Tasmania with 76 new recruits in total. Sixty-two puppies are already in our puppy development program, with 14 still with their mums and carers. Two new announcements are pending, and five more litters are due by the end of June. Visit our website and get in touch if you are interested in providing a loving home for our breeding dogs (broods) and their newborn litters.



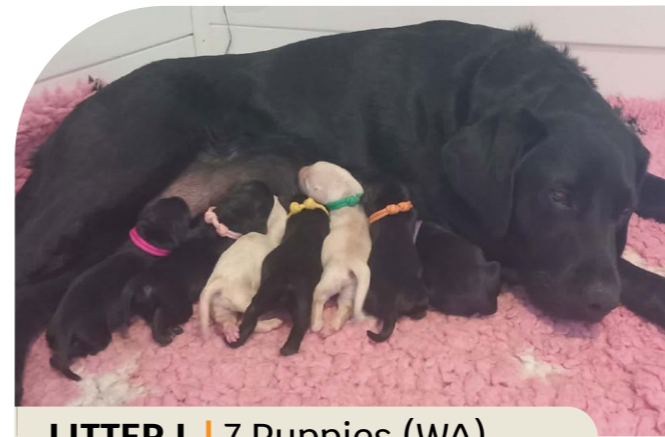
**LITTER F** | 7 Puppies (TAS)

DOB: 3 May 2025 | TO: Daisy x Bond



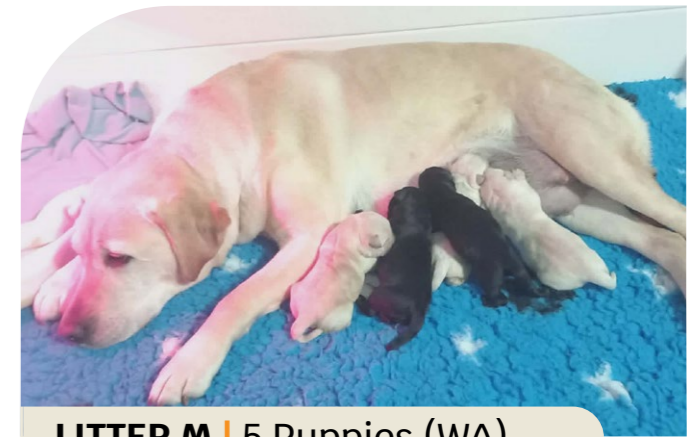
**LITTER G** | 7 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 2 June 2025 | TO: Kim x Murdoch



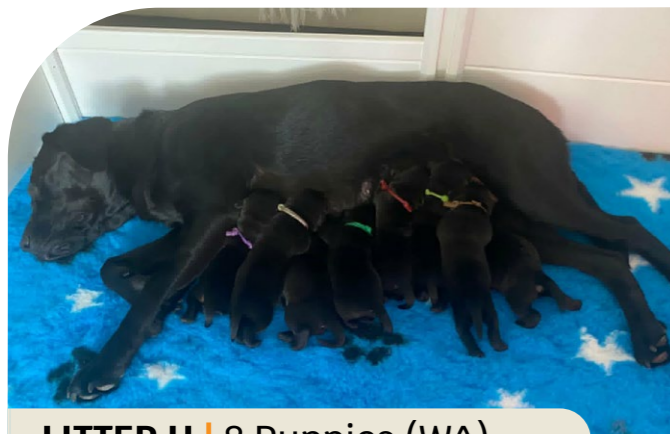
**LITTER L** | 7 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 27 October 2025 | TO: Maggie x Chief



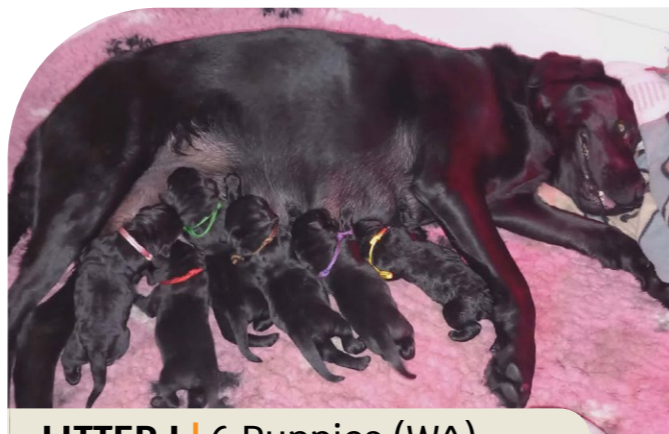
**LITTER M** | 5 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 26 November 2025 | TO: Anika x Chief



**LITTER H** | 8 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 3 May 2025 | TO: Rose x Chief



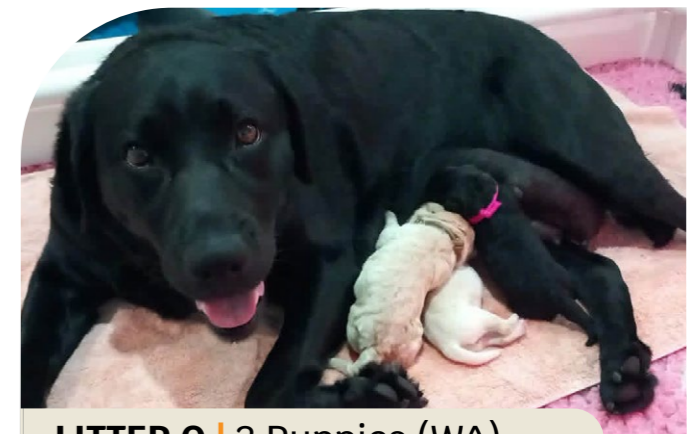
**LITTER I** | 6 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 20 June 2025 | TO: Brie x Bond



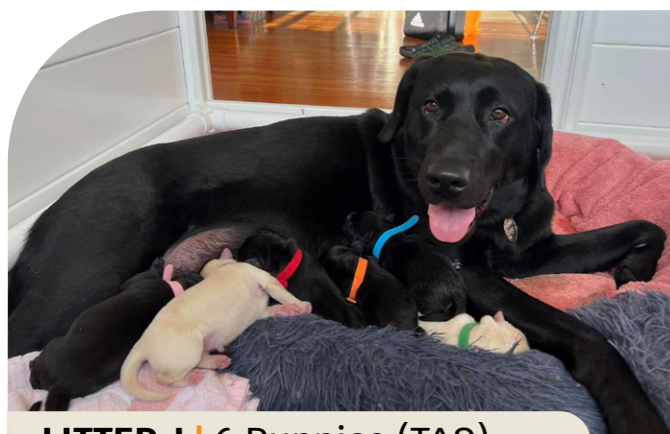
**LITTER N** | 7 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 13 January 2026 | TO: Rose x Q



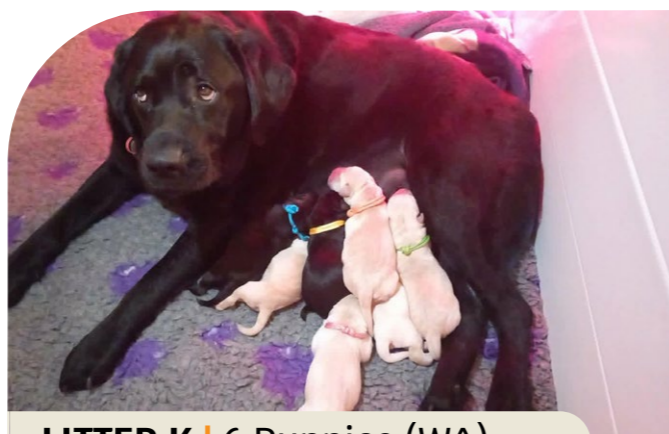
**LITTER O** | 3 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 22 February 2026 | TO: Brie & Monty



**LITTER J** | 6 Puppies (TAS)

DOB: 6 August 2025 | TO: Unity x Monty



**LITTER K** | 6 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 17 August 2025 | TO: Velvet x Ivan



**LITTER P** | 9 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 25 February 2026 | TO: Rio x Chief



**LITTER Q** | 5 Puppies (WA)

DOB: 25 March 2026 | TO: Sienna x Pirate

# Paws for celebration: meet Nero our 200th pup!

**Our breeding program reached an important and exciting milestone in February with the arrival of our 200th puppy, Nero (now named Noah).**

Born to mum Rose, he was one of eight gorgeous pups (six boys and two girls). Since his arrival we've welcomed four more litters, with five more expected before the end of the financial year.

Nero arrived less than two years after our breeding program marked its 100th birth, growth made possible through the WA State Government's \$5 million investment, along with continued donor and sponsor support.

Since the program began, it has grown in scale, consistency, and capability. We now meet the majority of our puppy needs through the program, supported by our ever growing network of volunteer Brood Carers, Whelpers and Puppy Raisers.

It takes a community to raise a future Guide Dog, and we wouldn't be able to achieve that without you. As our breeding program grows, and we welcome more puppies, so do our needs. If you'd like to help sponsor a puppy in training or become a Volunteer, we'd love to hear from you!

Visit our website to learn more.

*"It takes a community to raise a future Guide Dog..."*



Meet the N Litter



## Q&A with **Dion Humbler,** Manager Breeding

**The program is going from strength to strength. What percentage of puppies required are now coming from the breeding program?**

We are now breeding more than 90% of puppies required for our program. We still purchase or exchange puppies occasionally with other Guide and Assistant Dog schools, mostly to bring new genes into our colony.

**Can you tell us about the role of Whelping Volunteers in the breeding process?**

Our Whelping Volunteers are vital to the success of our breeding program. As well as providing a loving and safe home for our Broods, they dedicate 8 weeks of their time to raising our new litters when they are born, and help to socialise the puppies. They are supported by our amazing and experienced breeding team.

**What is the average gestational period for puppies?**

The gestation period is 63 days in dogs. We time our breeding precisely, so can usually predict the whelp date within one day.

**How long does labour generally last?**

All of our girls are different, we have had whelps between 1 hour and 13 hours. Of course, the number of puppies does influence the whelp time. Our experienced staff are with the Broods and their Volunteers during the whelp, to detect any problems early and intervene if necessary, to ensure a safe outcome for mum and pups.

**How long does mum feed the puppies before weening?**

Our mums will generally feed the puppies for the first 6-7 weeks. From four weeks of age, we will commence feeding our puppies, initially with a special puppy milk formula and then with gruel made from ground up puppy biscuits. Being labradors, they are usually very quick to pick up solid feeding.

**At what age do the puppies open their eyes?**

Two weeks (eyes and ears open) is normal, but we can see them peeping from about 10 days of age sometimes.

**Average litter size?**

Our average is about 6 puppies per litter.

**What colour puppies have we welcomed?**

Last check, we were running at 37% yellow and 62% black (1% brindle). We don't select for colour, but black is the dominant colour in labradors.

**Do we get more boys or girls?**

Last check, we have had 53% girls and 47% boys.



Dion and pup

# A gift that changes lives – today and tomorrow 🐾

**For adults and children living with disability or illness, companionship can mean the difference between simply coping or truly thriving.**

At Guide Dogs WA and Tasmania, our Companion Dogs are carefully bred, extensively socialised, and expertly trained to provide comfort, confidence, and reassuring presence when it is needed most. Each placement is thoughtfully matched, creating a bond with the power to transform lives. One such story is that of Companion Dog, Thia.

In 2025, Thia was placed with a family whose lives have been profoundly changed by her presence. The family has two young daughters. The eldest lives with ADHD, while the youngest lives with autism and is home-schooled due to anxiety. Everyday routines that many families take for granted, such as sleeping through the night, feeling safe, and managing emotions, were significant challenges.

From the moment Thia arrived, her calm and affectionate nature made her a perfect fit.

The girls instantly adored her, forming a connection built on trust, warmth, and reassurance. On her very first night in her new home, Thia slept in the youngest daughter's bedroom. For the first time in a long while, she didn't call out to her parents in the middle of the night. Thia's quiet presence brought comfort, security, and peace.

For this family, Thia is more than a dog. She is a source of emotional stability, a gentle companion during anxious moments, and a loving presence that helps both children feel safe and understood. Her impact is felt every single day.

Stories like Thia's are only possible because of the generosity of people who believe in a future where no one has to face life's challenges alone. Thia's journey was made possible through a generous gift left in a Will to Guide Dogs WA, helping to fund her training and placement. Training and placing a Companion Dog requires significant time, expertise, and resources, but the outcomes are extraordinary and long-lasting.



By choosing to leave a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs WA or Tasmania, you can help ensure that life-changing partnerships like this continue for generations to come. A gift in your Will is a powerful way to extend your compassion beyond your lifetime, creating a legacy of independence, confidence, and emotional wellbeing for individuals and families across Western Australia.

A gift in your Will doesn't just change a life. It creates a future filled with hope, connection, and unconditional support.

**Leave a legacy that truly makes a lasting difference.**

If you would like further information on how to leave a gift in your Will to Guide Dogs WA or Tasmania, please contact **Alisa Guillory** for a confidential chat on (08) 6222 4938 or email [giftsinwills@guidedogswa.com.au](mailto:giftsinwills@guidedogswa.com.au)



# Because of you, we can train more Guide Dogs like Walter 🐾

Thank you.



Patrick and his sisters

## Last Christmas, Glenn Wilson and his second Guide Dog, Walter, captured hearts and inspired extraordinary generosity.

Thanks to your support, our Christmas Appeal raised more than **\$182,000**. Your gift helps us train more life-changing Guide Dogs like Walter, giving more West Australians and Tasmanians greater independence, confidence, and the freedom to thrive, just like Glenn.

If you'd like to see other ways you can support the incredible work of Guide Dogs WA, Guide Dogs Tasmania and VisAbility, please look out for our **Tax Appeal in May**, featuring the inspiring story of Patrick Henderson and his family.

Born prematurely at 28 weeks and 5 days and weighing just 750g, Patrick has low vision and other complex disabilities. His journey with us began in infancy, and thanks to supporters like you, we've been able to provide consistent and ongoing care for Patrick and his family for more than seven years.

We can't wait to introduce you to the amazing Patrick, his inspiring family, and his dedicated team.



Glenn Wilson and Walter

## Pups day out! 🐾

Every once in a while, our Guide Dogs in training get the opportunity to do something a little bit different. For five lucky pups and their Volunteer Trainers this was a special invitation to visit Myer Perth City.

Thanks to the store General Manager (a proud supporter of Guide Dogs WA) our dogs in training were able to visit the store before opening hours to experience what it is like to go shopping in a (not so) busy department store.

From browsing the clothes, to visiting change rooms, and waiting at the counter to pay, our pups experienced all the things they might be expected to do on a real trip to the shops. A great way to familiarise our trainees to outside noises, lights, and smells, giving them practical exposure, while still in a controlled environment.

Opportunities like these allow us to prepare our prospective Guide and Assistance Dogs for the journey ahead and equip them with the tools they need to be the best possible Guide Dog partners they can be.



## Driving to make a difference!

For Viv Seery, volunteering became the perfect way to settle into life in Tasmania after moving from Western Australia in 2018.

After finding the role through the Volunteering Tasmania website, Viv joined Guide Dogs Tasmania in 2019 as a volunteer driver with our fundraising team.

One day a week, she travels throughout the north of the state collecting and rotating our iconic collection dogs, returning funds to the office for counting. Viv's role has also evolved to helping at major events such as agricultural shows and International Guide Dog Day.

And it's not just the driving that Viv loves, it's the people. Each collection stop comes with a friendly chat and a chance to say 'thank you'. With over six years of volunteering completed so far, "I think a lot of people know me now!" she laughs.

Viv's time and care are just one example of how volunteers help make our work possible. Every donation collected by our generous volunteers helps us support greater independence, freedom and hope for Tasmanians living with low or no vision, disability, illness or other life challenges. Check out our website for volunteering opportunities.



# Volunteering is a group effort at the City of Busselton

In Busselton, our two trainers Gillian and Laura are helping turn energetic pups into confident Guide Dogs.

Since partnering with the City of Busselton in 2023, they've supported 13 dogs through the formal training program.

This is where volunteering makes all the difference. Fourteen City staff signed up as 'Bed and Breakfast' Boarders, opening their homes to ensure our future Guide and Assistance dogs have a safe and loving environment to rest after their training.

During the day when they are not training the City of Busselton has provided dedicated office space for the dogs to be in the office on those days too!

One of these dogs is Tomas. In July 2025 he was partnered with Peta, the City of Busselton's Event Coordinator. From day one, Tomas became part of community life. Across major sporting, music and community events, Tomas accompanied Peta everywhere.

Tomas is now on to his next chapter. As a new graduate, he has farewelled Peta and the City of Busselton and begun his career as a Guide Dog.



## Meet Helen, our newest employee

Guide Dog Helen has officially joined VisAbility, partnering with Assistive Technology Mentor Nicki Muir as her Guide Dog. The duo is now based at our Bunbury office in Lotteries House Complex.

Nicki supports people with low or no vision to find the right Assistive Technology (AT). This includes everything from simple magnifiers and white canes to screen readers and smart devices, so they can live with greater confidence and independence.

For Nicki, independence isn't just something she teaches, it's something she has built over a lifetime. A long-time VisAbility client, Nicki has used a white cane since she was 12. But, as her routine and travel needs evolved, she knew she was ready for a different kind of mobility support.

That's where Guide Dogs WA came in. After a careful matching process at our Perth headquarters, Nicki met Helen, and they had an immediate connection. With support from a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor they trained together to build trust, communication, and the skills needed for Nicki's real-world routes.

The final stage of their training happened in Bunbury, practising the journeys that matter most: home, work, and the everyday errands that keep life moving. Now, Helen is not only Nicki's mobility partner, but a reassuring presence beside her as she supports local clients at VisAbility in the South West.



Nicki Muir and Helen

## Paw-some Merchandise

Get in early and order some of our paw-some merchandise before we sell out!

Our new dog bandanas, modelled here by Ambassador Dog Greg, are a great addition to any pups wardrobe. Priced at \$20, it's the perfect gift. Scan the QR code to our merchandise shops below!



Shop WA now!



Shop Tas now!

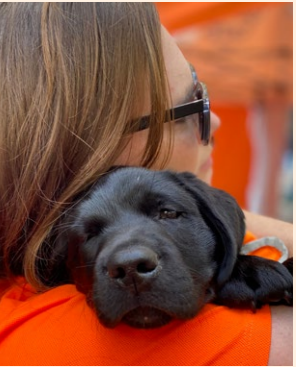


# WA and Tasmania turn orange for International Guide Dog Day



Today, Guide Dogs WA has around 200 dogs in its program and Guide Dogs Tasmania has more than 100, either working in the community or in training.

The impact our dogs have on peoples' lives is nothing short of incredible, providing independence, mobility, confidence, inclusion and social connection. **They really are life-changing gifts that aren't possible without generous donations and volunteer support.**



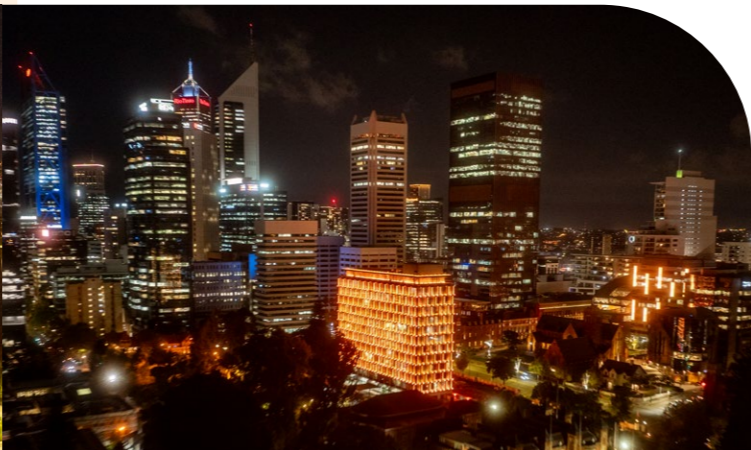
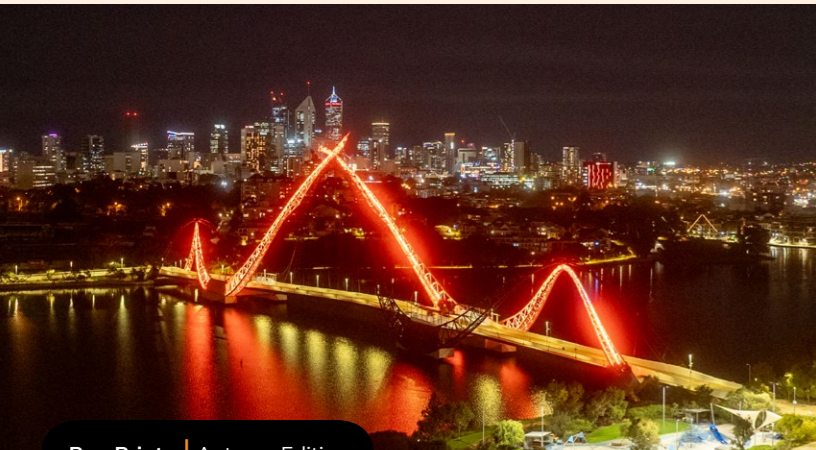
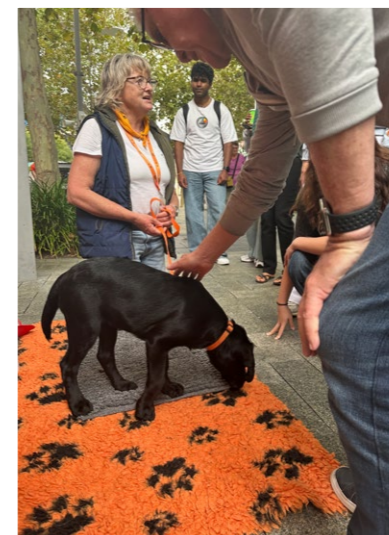
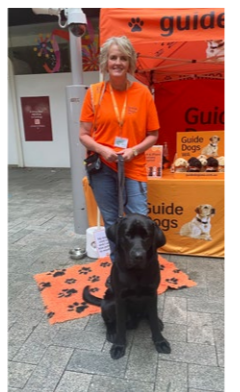
Communities across Western Australia and Tasmania came together in April to celebrate International Guide Dog Day, lighting landmarks orange and meeting the dogs that change lives every day.

From Murray Street Mall in Perth to Civic Square in Launceston, supporters stopped to learn about the journey from puppyhood to working dog, and to recognise the independence, mobility and confidence Guide and Assistance Dogs provide.

In WA, a sold-out Guide Dog trivia night at the Camfield helped kick off celebrations the night before. On the day, visitors to Murray Street Mall and Busselton Central enjoyed meeting dogs, staff and volunteers. When night fell, the Bell Tower and other landmarks across WA blazed orange.

In Tasmania, children enjoyed storytime with Ambassador Dog Cydee at Launceston Library; met dogs, volunteers and staff at activations in the centre of Hobart and Launceston; before landmarks lit up orange.

Behind every orange light-up is a two-year training journey, powered by community donations, dedicated volunteers, and (in WA) State Government support for the local breeding program.



Want to help create more life-changing partnerships?

Donate online via [guidedogswa/donate-now](https://guidedogswa/donate-now) or [guidedogstas.com.au/supportus/donate](https://guidedogstas.com.au/supportus/donate), or get involved through volunteering, fostering a puppy-in-training, or fundraising.



Help support those living with low or no vision to live with greater **Independence, confidence and hope!** 



**Thank you for your support in helping to change lives and make a lasting difference.**

We will send you regular updates on the impact of your support and an annual tax receipt at the end of the financial year.



**MY DETAILS**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**My monthly gift:**  \$25  \$50  \$100 **My choice:**  \$

**One-off donation:**  \$25  \$50  \$100 **My choice:**  \$

**PAYMENT DETAILS**

**1. Please debit the nominated amount from my bank account**

BSB: \_\_\_\_\_ Account number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Account holder name: \_\_\_\_\_

OR

**2. Please debit the nominated amount from my credit card:**

VISA  MasterCard  AMEX

Card number:

Cardholder's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Cardholder's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorise Guide Dogs WA to make monthly deductions until further notice.

Please tick here if you would like to opt out of receiving the updates on the impact of your donation. **Please return form via post to your state PO Box address as stated at the bottom of this page.**

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**What's On in WA and Tas**

- May 20 Volunteer Recruitment Open Day (WA)
- May 24 HBF Run for a Reason (WA)
- May 27 Pup Development Program Information Session (WA)
- June 15 Pup Development Program Information Session (Tas)
- June 25 Pup Development Program Information Session (WA)
- July 17-18 Aged & Disability Expo (Hobart)
- July 29 Pup Development Program Information Session (WA)
- Jul 31 – Aug 1 Ageing Well Expo (WA)
- August 14-15 Perth Disability Connection Expo (WA)
- September 29 Guide Dog Graduation (Tas)

**Guide Dogs WA**

 **(08) 6222 4922**  **info@guidedogswa.com.au**

**Guide Dogs TAS**

164 Elizabeth Street Hobart, Tasmania 7000  
 PO Box 82, North Hobart, Tasmania 7002  
 **(03) 6232 1222**  **admin@guidedogstas.com.au**