

# Guide Dogs.

## Retired Guide Dog Financial Support Program.

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Most Guide Dogs retire between the ages of eight and ten years old, though each dog is different. Retirement is influenced by factors such as age, health and temperament. Just as they choose their own career paths, many Guide Dogs often signal when it's time to hang up their harness.

Many Handlers choose to keep their retired Guide Dogs as pets, a decision that benefits both the Handler and the dog, as they can stay with someone who loves them in a familiar environment.

To support this transition, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT offers a Retired Guide Dogs Financial Support Program, which helps Handlers to manage age-related expenses such as veterinary care and food. All Guide Dog Handlers are eligible to apply.



## Guide Dog, Darcy has a well-earned retirement.

A Guide Dog's life is filled with joy, adventure, purpose, and of course, love. So, when it's time for them to retire, they deserve to be comfortable and surrounded by the people they love. Most importantly, their Handler.

Guide Dog, Jonti retired in October 2024. This was a big moment for his Handler, Ben, as Jonti was his first Guide Dog, his companion, his "eyes, and his best friend". Ben's life is extremely fast paced and busy, as he runs his own business, studies at university, travels interstate and overseas, goes to concerts and festivals, and hangs out with family and friends. Jonti was his support through it all, has also done his fair share of travelling and has even met celebrities! As Jonti became older, he would slow down and become tired easily, so that's when Ben knew he was ready for a well-earned retirement.

However, as much as Ben wanted to keep Jonti living with him, he couldn't as he lived in a small apartment in student accommodation at his university. He needed to find Jonti a loving home for his retirement. "I had to retire Jonti really quickly and really suddenly, which was

emotional in itself," says Ben. "I wanted to make sure he had a good home with people that loved him, and I found that he would be given the retirement he deserved if he lived with my friends from university. I wanted him to have the same standard of care that I gave him. If he got sick, I wanted him to know he was in safe hands."

When Jonti went to live with Ben's friends from university, he felt relieved knowing they could rely on the Retired Guide Dogs Financial Support Program (or as Ben likes to call it, the "Guide Dog pension"), to provide them with the support they needed to care for Jonti.

Financial support is a large piece of the puzzle when it comes to a Guide Dog Handler's ability to keep their retired Guide Dog, as many people with low vision or blindness are unable to work, or only work part-time. Not having the financial means to keep two dogs is the reality, and the support from the Retired Guide Dog Program really helps with vet bills, food, and medical care. "They've been your eyes for so long, you're not going to toss them aside like an old pair of sunglasses," said Ben.



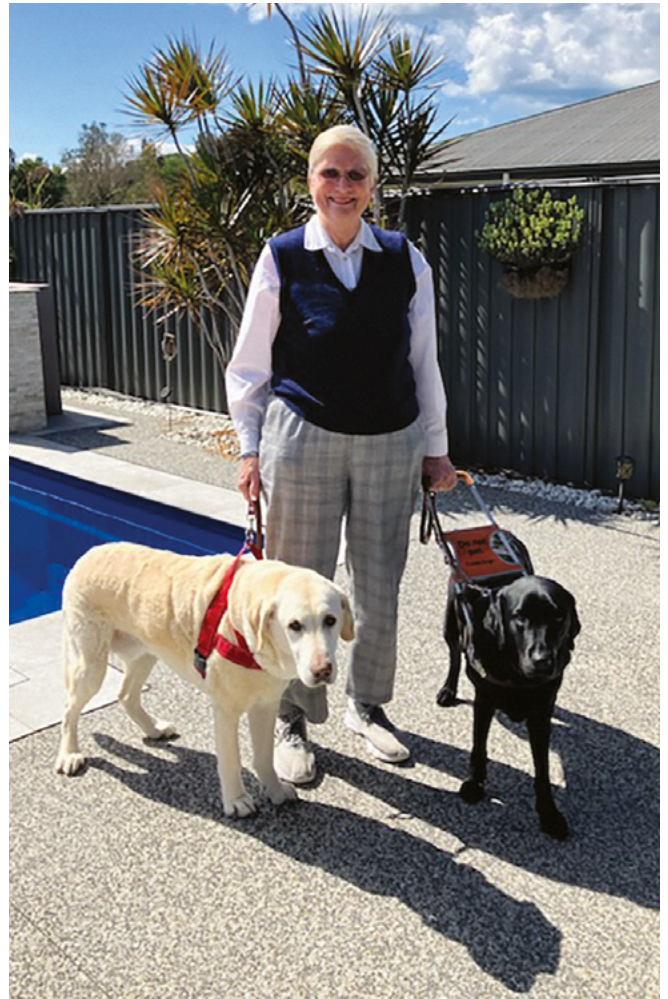


## Honouring a lifetime of loyalty.

Guide Dogs dedicate their lives to helping Handlers navigate the world safely and independently. When it's time for them to retire, they deserve to do so in comfort, surrounded by the people who love them most.

Elaine, a long-time Guide Dogs Client, has partnered with three Guide Dogs throughout her life and has retired two of them. Her first Guide Dog, Evelyn, transformed her life. "For the first time since I lost my sight, I could walk upright and at a speed I wanted to walk at," Elaine recalls. From that moment on, she says she never felt alone.

The bond between Elaine and Evelyn was built on trust, freedom, and companionship. When Evelyn retired, Elaine was devastated to lose her as a working companion but delighted to keep her at home where she could enjoy her well-earned rest.



**"After all they've done for you, you have this very special bond with them. You want them to be able to spend their retirement with you in a familiar environment surrounded by loved ones," she says.**

Many Handlers choose to keep their retired Guide Dogs as pets, a decision that benefits both the Handler and the dog. "From the dog's perspective, they stay with someone who loves them. They don't have to adjust to a new family or unfamiliar surroundings," Elaine explains.

Thanks to the Retired Guide Dogs Financial Support Program, Handlers like Elaine can continue caring for their loyal companions, ensuring that every Guide Dog is supported not only during their working life, but also through a well-deserved retirement.

## Your support for our Retired Guide Dog Program will help fund:



**\$10,000**

Provides primary sources of nutrition and food, including specialised diets for each dog's individual needs and to support any health concerns.



**\$20,000**

Funds preventative and prescriptive medication, including vaccinations and tablets to help keep retired Guide Dogs healthy and happy.



**\$60,000**

Covers veterinary expenses, including emergencies and routine procedures as dogs age.

## How it works.

Guide Dog Handlers or friends and family that house the retired Guide Dog can claim up to \$1,000 each financial year of reimbursement for costs associated with maintaining the health and wellbeing of their retired Guide Dog.

Your donation will contribute to the financial reimbursement package for Guide Dog Handlers and their friends and family.



## Do you want to support retired Guide Dogs and their Handlers?

Reach out to our friendly team at [yourimpact@guidedogs.com.au](mailto:yourimpact@guidedogs.com.au) or call 02 9412 9354 to make a donation.

