

Guide Dogs.

2024

NSW/ACT Annual Report.



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Acknowledgement of Country.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we live and work.

We pay our respects to Elders both past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Overview.

Our vision.

A world that is inclusive and accessible for everyone with low vision or blindness.

Our purpose.

Break the boundaries that limit people with low vision or blindness.

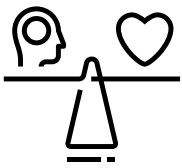
Our mission.

Create opportunities and champion the rights of people with low vision or blindness. Build a community of individuals who share our mindset and ambition for accessibility and inclusivity.



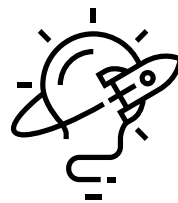
Our values.

Our Clients come first in everything we do. Our values are all underpinned by our focus and dedication towards those in our communities who need us the most. We believe everyone should have access to the support and tools required to live a free and independent life.



Lead with head and heart.

Forever focused on our purpose and mission, we combine care and careful planning to deliver successes worth celebrating.



Never stop exploring.

We're fearlessly creative. We've always asked and answered the tough questions and if there's a better way, we'll find it.



Walk the talk.

The buck stops with us. So we keep our word and keep going, no matter what.



Lift each other.

From a guiding hand to a high five, we unleash and acknowledge everyone's potential.

Report from our Chair.

On behalf of the Board of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, I am pleased to present my first report as Chair, highlighting our achievements and exciting plans for the year ahead.

We remain committed to delivering our 2030 Strategy to support our vision, purpose and mission and to maximise impact for our Clients so they may continue to live the life they choose.

One of the key deliverables of our Strategy is to eliminate systemic barriers to participation and inclusion. Earlier this year, our advocacy efforts were successful in restoring screen reader capability to the popular 'Hazards Near Me' application which provides critical alerts for hazards such as fires and floods.

Our Social Change team also received industry recognition at the ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards, winning the Sue Salthouse Award for Excellence in Human Rights and Equality, for the significant work they are doing to tackle access refusals for Guide Dog Handlers. This recognition is well deserved and we are incredibly proud of the team, which includes three Clients and Guide Dog Handlers.

Another key deliverable of our Strategy is to support more people with low vision to achieve their

goals. Aligned to the Strategy, we have targeted additional efforts and resources toward the unmet needs in the moderate to low vision sector. This year we commenced our low vision pilot programs to reach more people earlier in their vision loss journey through one-to-many supports and services. This will allow us to reach more Clients and deliver more sustainable care for those who need it most.

We have continued to strengthen our internal governance capabilities and are committed to ensuring the funds we raise are used in the most responsible and effective way to support our Clients. Like most organisations, we are faced with increased administration, insurance and governance costs. The cost of doing business continues to rise and this is reflected throughout our financial statements.

Charities continue to be at risk of cyber threats and we have a responsibility to safeguard our information and data. The team has been upgrading our technology and investing in staff training to enhance data privacy and cyber security and minimise risks.

Our social responsibility includes the dogs in our care and extends to those who have completed service as a Guide Dog. To help alleviate the

rising cost of living pressures faced by our Clients, we recently launched a Financial Assistance Package to provide support with the ongoing cost of care for retired Guide Dogs, who often stay with their Handler after retirement.

We continue to strive to be an employer of choice for people with disability and have made significant investments in our people, processes and systems to advance our accessible workplace and inclusive practices. We take pride in hiring individuals with low vision or blindness and offering opportunities to those with crucial firsthand experience. Our group of 14 Lived Experience Presenters is a wonderful example of this.

This year we farewelled Directors Ian Jamieson and Liz Ward and welcomed Cheryl Hayman to the Guide Dogs family. We also said goodbye to our Chair, Kieran Lane, who after 12 years of dedicated service, retired from the Board. Kieran has left an incredible legacy, including our 2030 Strategy that I know he is, rightfully, incredibly proud of. On behalf of everyone at Guide Dogs, I would like to thank Kieran for his sound strategic leadership and stewardship.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members and the members of our Customer Advisory Panel for their expertise and guidance, and the trust they have placed in me as Chair. I would also like to thank



Karen Knight for her support as Deputy Chair. I am privileged to be working alongside such a passionate and committed team.

I congratulate our Chief Executive Officer, Mr Dale Cleaver, for the leadership he has provided throughout the year. I look forward to working with Dale and his Executive Leadership Team as we continue to bring our Strategy to life.

To our staff and volunteers, I thank you for the care and compassion you bring to your work and extend to our Clients. Finally, to our supporters, I thank you for your unwavering generosity. Together, we continue to break the boundaries that limit people with low vision or blindness and lead the charge towards an accessible and inclusive world.

Jacqui Jones

Chair, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Board of Directors

Message from our CEO.

It has been a massive year for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and I am pleased to share some of the key initiatives we have progressed this year.

Our Social Change team continues to effect positive and meaningful change. While we have made great progress to address access issues, it continues to be a global problem. To support this, Assistance Dogs International has created its first Global Advocacy Committee and Tamara Searant, our General Manager Social Change, has been selected to be the Inaugural Chair of this Committee. This is a great opportunity to share international policy ideas and strengthen partnerships.

We are investing in our regions to better serve our Clients and strengthen community ties. This year, we opened new offices in Canberra and Newcastle, both featuring accessible and inclusive designs. Additionally, we upgraded the Guide Dogs Centre at Glossodia with solar panels for sustainability and are planning significant improvements to our Administration building next year.

Our Fundraising team does an exceptional job connecting with our incredible supporters to ensure we can deliver services for our Clients. They were recognised at the Fundraising Institute of Australia

National Awards for Excellence in Fundraising for our unique and engaging Gifts in Wills supporter events. I congratulate them for this outstanding achievement.

Our Marketing team continues to connect with our community and raise brand awareness through our 'Boundless' awareness campaign, which won 'Best Non-Traditional Campaign' at the Mumbrella Comms Com Awards. The campaign features our Clients as they discuss key misconceptions about being blind or having low vision. It also highlights the importance of digital accessibility for online platforms, including social media, and encourages people to make content more accessible.

I am also proud to note that Guide Dogs was awarded 'Highly Commended' in the Charity Brand category for the 2024 Reader's Digest Annual Trusted Brand Awards, once again recognising us as one of Australia's most trusted charity brands. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Our culture is driven by our values and our efforts to champion a work environment that embraces and enables diversity, inclusivity and accessibility. This is demonstrated through our work to progress our Disability Inclusion Action Plan and our Reconciliation Action Plan. We also provide staff with

opportunities to learn and connect through our wellbeing events.

I continue to be humbled by the loyalty, generosity and kindness of our supporters. Despite the rising cost of living and economic uncertainty we all face, our donors have continued to provide us with financial support to maintain our vital work to support Clients. I am incredibly grateful for the continued trust you place in us.

Thank you to the Board of Directors and the Executive Leadership team. You all bring diverse skills and talent to the table and I feel very fortunate to work with such a passionate group of people. My special thanks to Kieran Lane, who has made an incredible contribution to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, including eight years as Chair. Kieren

led the organisation through some challenging times and was the key driver of Strategy 2030. It has been a privilege and honour to work with Kieran and I am grateful for his guidance and support.

Finally, to our staff and volunteers who so generously gift us their time and talent, I thank you. Your dedication, enthusiasm and commitment allow us to achieve so much for our Clients. I am so proud to lead this organisation during such an exciting time and I look forward to the year ahead.

Dale Cleaver

Chief Executive Officer
Guide Dogs NSW/ACT



Our joint Patrons.

A message from Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC Governor of New South Wales.

As joint Patrons, Dennis and I have been proud to witness the achievements of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, over the period covered by this report. Of particular note was the impact of Strategy 2030, which has already begun to make a real difference for people with low vision or blindness.

We recently met with the Executive Leadership team to discuss the progress of the Strategy, including the achievements of the newly formed Social Change team who uphold the rights of people with low vision or blindness by advocating for systemic change. Regaining appropriate access to the 'Hazards Near Me' app, and the taxi and rideshare refusal campaign resulting in an increase from \$330 to \$1,000 in on-the-spot fines for refusing a Guide Dog Handler, are but two examples of the success of this advocacy.

Another commitment of the Strategy, to expand Guide Dogs NSW/ACT reach to support more people with low vision to achieve their own goals, including through the low vision project, means more people are



being assisted earlier in their vision loss journey with the provision of information, advice, and the support they need.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is also making a significant investment into its people, processes and systems to ensure it becomes an employer of choice for people with disability through the provision of an accessible workplace and inclusive practices.

None of this important work could be done without the generosity of donors and community support. As Patrons, Dennis and I offer our sincere thanks for your contribution. Each of you are making a significant difference in the lives of others.

Congratulations, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT for your achievements over the year which have helped to break the boundaries that limit people with low vision or blindness.

**Her Excellency the Honourable
Margaret Beazley AC KC**

Governor of New South Wales

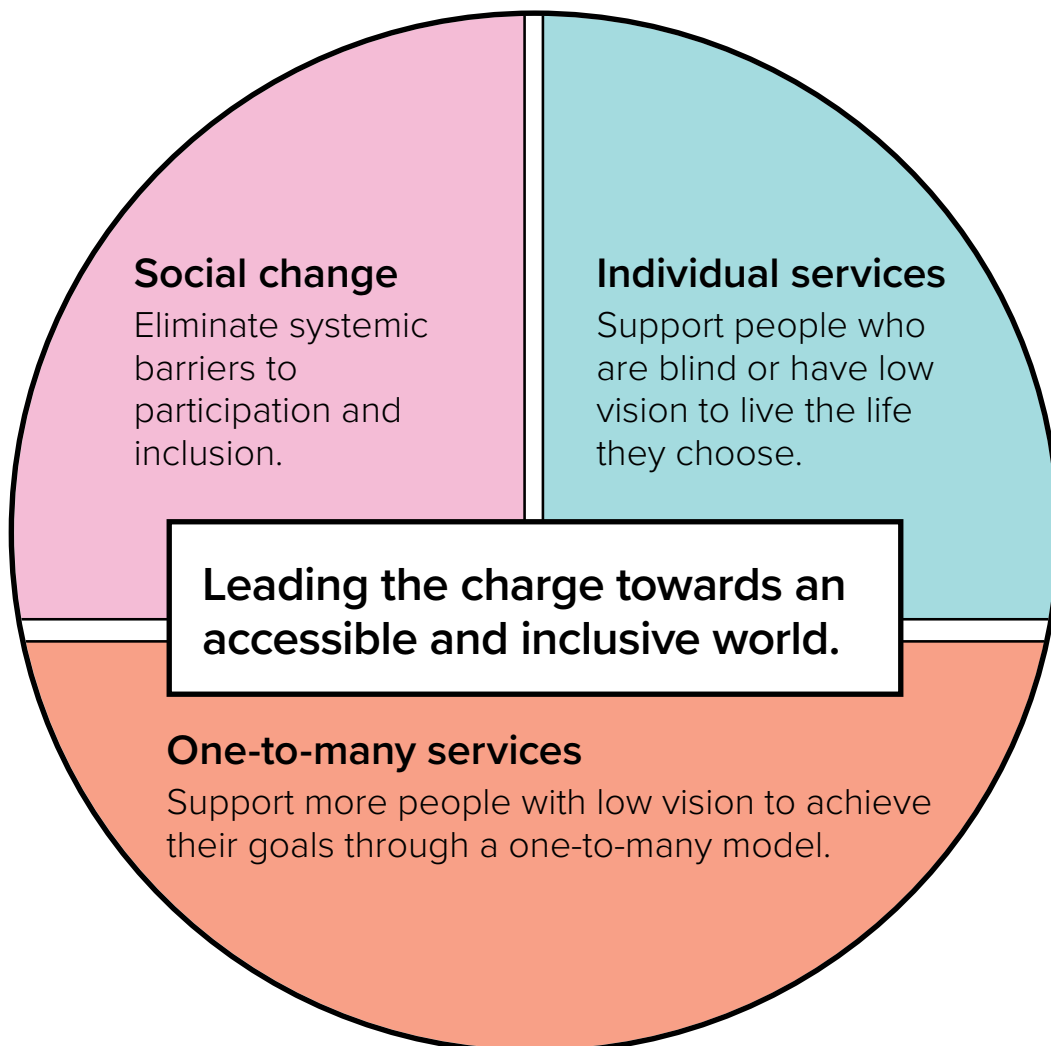
Mr Dennis Wilson



Our Strategy.

Our vision is to create a world that is inclusive and accessible for everyone with low vision or blindness. Our Strategy 2030 outlines the key initiatives we will invest in as we strive to achieve this over the next six years.

Practically, this involves focusing our efforts and resources to expand our reach and improve access to low vision services for those who need it most. This significant financial investment in our people, processes and systems will maximise our impact for our Clients through the following three pillars:



To deliver on our **Strategy**, this year we have:

- Expanded our Social Change team and increased our advocacy efforts to break barriers, raise awareness and connect with the community to advocate for positive change. We have shared our messages and garnered support from the community through advocacy and awareness campaigns, targeted advertising, media and strategic partnerships.
- Commenced our low vision service pilot programs to broaden our reach and serve people earlier in their vision loss journey. These one-to-many supports and services aim to improve the experience for people diagnosed with low vision, assisting them to receive the information and support they need, when they need it.
- Continued to build capability in our people and invest in accessible systems to actively encourage, value and welcome staff with a disability, ensure our built, digital and communication environments are accessible and embrace inclusion for our staff, Clients, and stakeholders.



Our Clients.

About our services.

When social, physical and digital environments are not accessible or inclusive, people with low vision or blindness can face barriers to living the life they want. We work with our Clients, their families and caregivers to increase their skills, confidence and access to support and accessibility tools, giving them more choice for how they go about their day-to-day lives and get out and about.

This is achieved through the following services and supports:



Assistive Technology Service.

Supporting Clients to use hearing and touch to continue accessing print and electronic information from the world around them.

Connections Services.

Supporting Clients to connect with others with similar lived experiences to share and enjoy activities and stories together.

Guide Dog Mobility.

Supporting Clients to partner with a Guide Dog to access the community with confidence.

Low Vision Orthoptics.

Supporting Clients to understand their level of functional vision and providing techniques and options for accessing visual information.

Occupational Therapy.

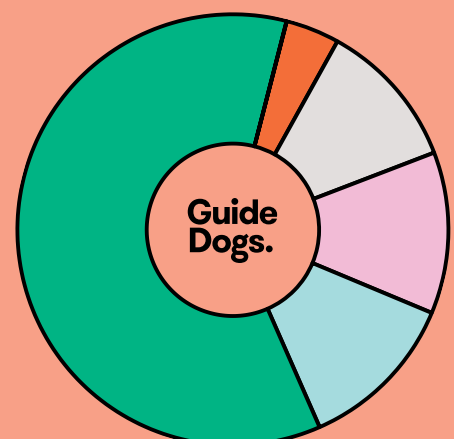
Practical skills for everyday living, regardless of age or level of functional vision.

Orientation and Mobility Services (adults and children).

Everyday travel skills to keep Clients moving with confidence.

Service breakdown by type:

	Assistive Technology	4%
	Guide Dog Mobility	11%
	Low Vision Orthoptics	12%
	Occupational Therapy	13%
	Orientation and Mobility	60%



The Paralympics is the goal.

Goalball is a sport created for people who are blind or have low vision. Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Client and Lived Experience Speaker, Zara, has experienced the adrenaline rush of playing at an elite level for the last few years. She's competed in the NSW Goalball team since 2019 and internationally for the Australian women's Goalball team, the Aussie Belles, since 2022.

[Read Zara's story here.](#)

“I want to go to the Paralympics one day. That's been my dream for as long as I can remember.”



Our impact.

We support our Clients to pursue meaningful activities that are important to them and to build and maintain strong relationships and connections to help them feel more positive about the future. This is the

second year we have surveyed our Clients as part of our Social Impact Measures Framework. This year we were excited to include Clients under the age of 15.

72%

of Clients say they have more of the skills and knowledge they need to do daily activities with more independence.

“I now have tools to help me read - simple things like a food package or a magazine. I’ve been supported to return to my sport and I’ve got audio books to keep me entertained. Life-changing.”

76%

of Clients have the skills and knowledge they need to get out and about with more independence.

“Having a Guide Dog has given me the confidence to be a lot more independent and do the things that I love to do that I wouldn’t otherwise be able.”

71%

of Clients feel more confident in themselves and what they can do.

“I have support and professional advice to help me navigate the difficulties I face now and know I will have continued assistance as my sight deteriorates further. It gives me confidence to face the future. It is less frightening and frustrating as I am no longer alone.”

Colin stays connected.

Colin has retinitis pigmentosa and is legally blind. At 88 years young, Colin is a long-time Client of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and has accessed a range of services over the last 40-odd years. Thanks to the support and training he has received from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Colin is able to remain confident in his abilities to get involved in the community activities that are meaningful to him. Whether he is volunteering, getting involved at his church, discussing current affairs with his men's group, or performing at the local theatre, Colin strives to stay as engaged in community life as possible.

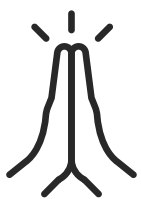
[Read Colin's story here.](#)



“Without the Orientation and Mobility training I don’t know what my life would be like. It has given me basis for the life that I enjoy at the present time, that is, being involved and being active.”

Achieving outcomes together.

We work with Clients to understand what they want to achieve and set goals to support them. We seek their feedback to know how we've done assisting them to achieve their goals. Sometimes, a Client may not fully achieve their goals due to health or environmental reasons, in this case we will work with them to reset their aspirations.



72%
of Clients met or exceeded their goals.

18%
of Clients partially met their goals.

10%
of Clients had other outcomes.

Our outputs.



2,296
Client programs delivered.



47,092
hours of Client services delivered including 24,228 hours for regional Clients.



2,993
pieces of equipment distributed such as white canes and accessories.

Bodie knows no bounds!

Everyone has a different idea of fun. For some people, the perfect day involves going to the movies, curling up on the couch with a book and going for a walk by the beach. For others like Bodie, it's sleeping in a bivy in the middle of the bush while it buckets down with rain!

At 14 years old, Bodie went to his first Outward Bound camp with Guide Dogs in 2022. He experienced what it was like to sleep in the bush, cook outdoors on a fire and participate in team games and activities like high ropes and abseiling. From then on, he was hooked and attended another camp the year after. For Bodie, the best part of camp is the opportunity to meet the most wonderful people.

[Read Bodie's story here.](#)

**“I learned the
motivating power of
music, how to accept
help when you need
it and I've made
long-lasting friends.”**





The Centre for Eye Health.

The Centre for Eye Health (CFEH) has two components: low vision services and early detection.

Low vision services.

As part of Strategy 2030 we are excited to begin our low vision services to broaden our reach and serve people earlier in their vision loss journey. These one-to-many supports and services aim to improve the experience for people diagnosed with low vision, assisting them to receive the information and support they need, when they need it. We are currently piloting a number of services that will be developed further during the upcoming year:

Navigate your Journey.

Navigate your Journey is a web delivery platform that provides individualised information to people who have low vision so they can access the advice, supports and services that best meet their needs. The innovative use of technology to customise the experience is a key feature of the future state platform to be built.

Digital Literacy Skills.

A Digital Literacy Skills program will support people with low vision to learn how to improve their digital skills and confidence through in-community programs. Our research has shown that confidence can be one of the key barriers to learning digital skills, along with access to supports and equipment. This program aims to address these needs so people can engage with the many aspects of everyday life that are increasingly digitised.

Psychosocial Supports.

The Psychosocial Supports program aims to provide people who have low vision with support to address the changes resulting from their low vision. These supports may include accessible information, peer social groups, and individual counselling.

Early detection.

Our early detection services provide advanced ocular imaging and diagnostic management services to patients who meet the vulnerability criteria related to socio-economic disadvantage or ageing in NSW.

6,689

patients examined
for glaucoma.

2,923

patients examined for
macular degeneration.

540

patients examined for
diabetic retinopathy.

624

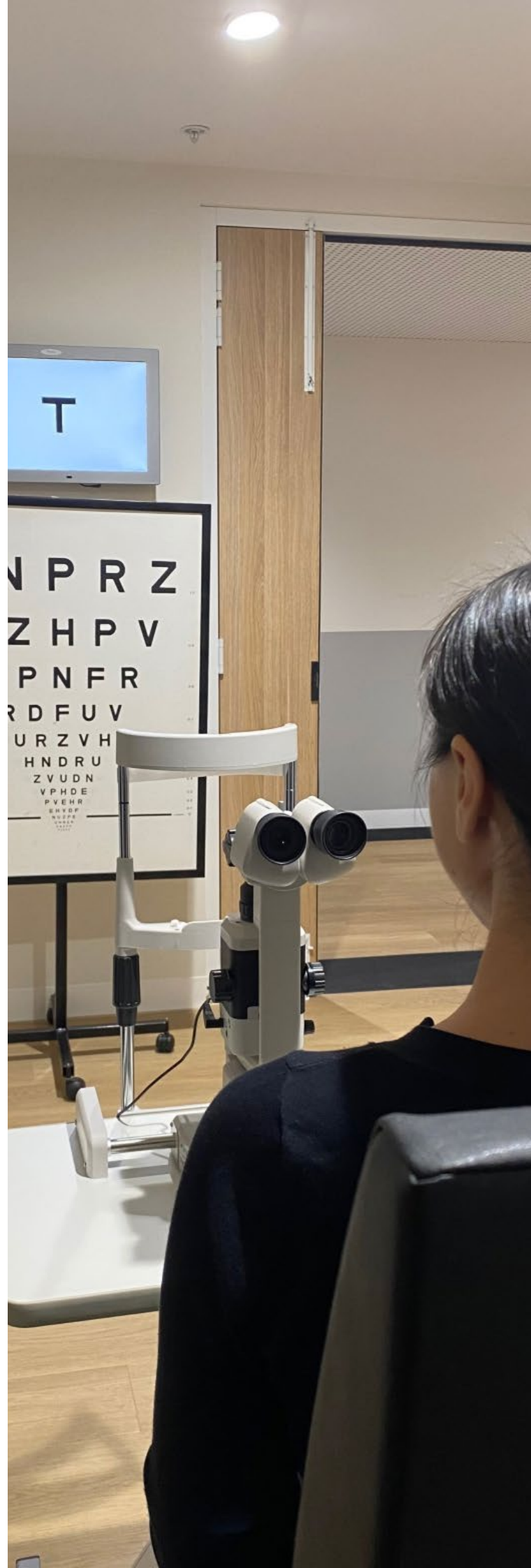
patients examined with
optic nerve concerns.

12,109

diagnostic and management
appointments booked.

1,333

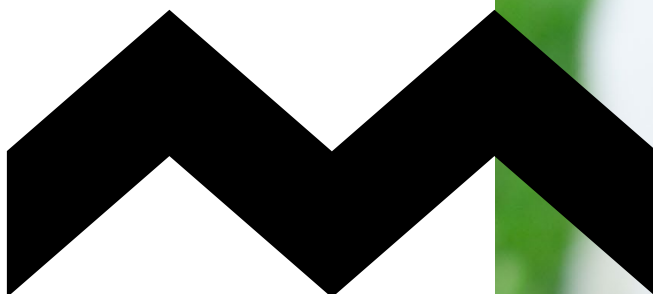
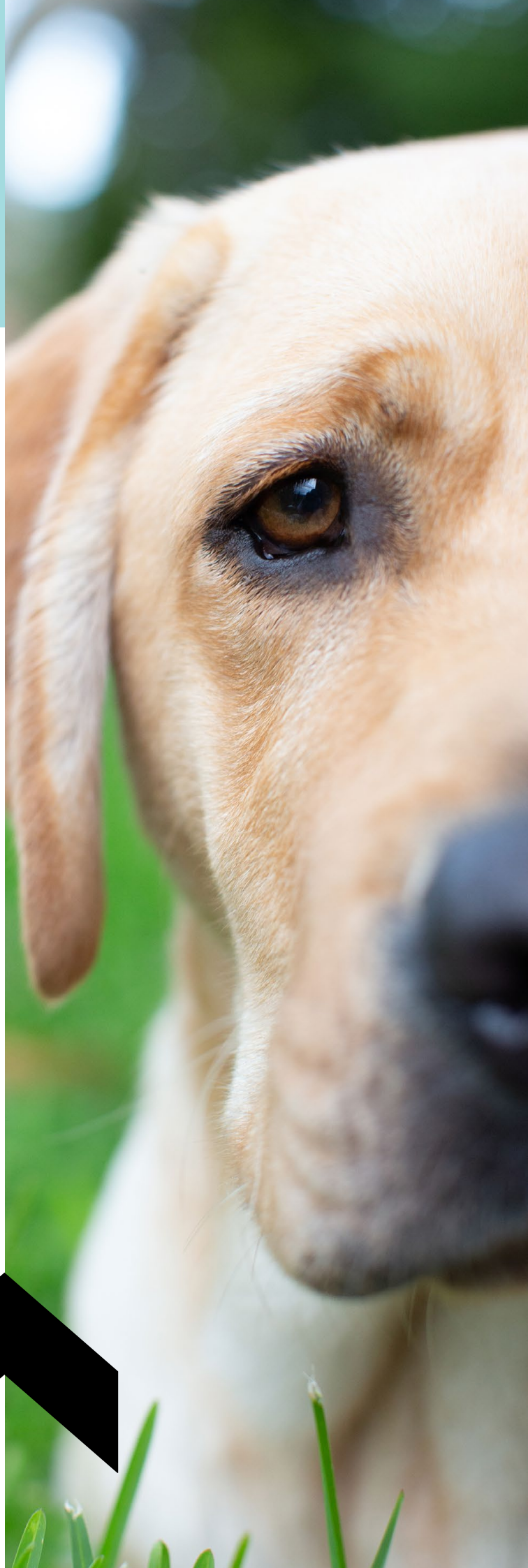
patients examined with other
conditions requiring eye care.



Our Dogs.

A Guide Dog can create a profound change for people with low vision or blindness by offering the perfect blend of independence and companionship. It takes a very special dog to become a Guide Dog. Each dog is assessed for their confidence, resilience, adaptability to new environments and their responsiveness to training.

While many of our incredible dogs graduate to become Guide Dogs, not all dogs are suited to the role. Some choose alternative career paths that are better aligned to their strengths and temperament, where they can have a greater impact.



Therapy Dogs.

Many of our dogs go on to provide love, companionship and emotional support to individual people or facilities as Therapy Dogs. Our Therapy Dog program for facilities currently includes our Canine Court Support programs to provide support for victims of crime attending court. We are excited to be expanding our Therapy Dog program to include other facilities such as schools, aged care, and emergency and frontline services.

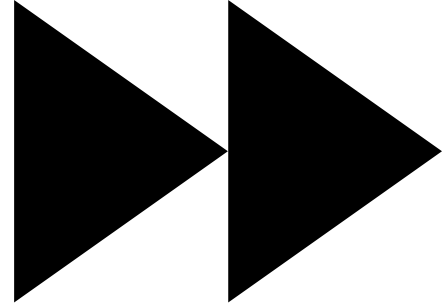
Breeding Stock Dogs.

Guide Dog puppies are carefully bred to inherit the characteristics they need for the unique requirements of a Guide Dog partnership. Our Breeding Dogs are selected for their excellent health and temperament to bring the next generation of Guide Dog pups into the world.

Ambassador Dogs.

Our Ambassador Dogs help us raise awareness about Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and the important role we play in the lives of people with low vision or blindness. They are happy, social dogs that love meeting new people, and they play a crucial role in promoting our organisation and its mission.





Our impact.



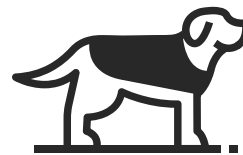
284
working Guide Dogs
in the community.



183
puppies born.



152
dogs matched with their
new Handlers:



15
Courts serviced.



42
Guide Dogs

92
Therapy Dogs

44
Canine Court dogs
in the community.

17
Breeding Stock Dogs

1
Ambassador Dog



2,063
Canine Court Support
program hours.



The power of a Therapy Dog.

Imagine having nightmares almost every night, or finding it difficult to leave the house by yourself, run errands and socialise because of the trauma you've experienced? This was the reality for Rachel, until she was matched with her Therapy Dog, Keanu.

The journey to getting a Therapy Dog is one that takes patience and perseverance. For Rachel, the wait was worth it.

[Read Rachel's story here.](#)

“I have PTSD and nightmares all the time. Since being matched with Keanu, I have only had one nightmare within a month of having him.”

Puppy raising is pawsitively rewarding.

It takes a special person to be a Puppy Raiser; to love, nurture and teach a puppy for a year or more, then say goodbye, hoping their loyal friend will go on to change the life of a Client.

Margaret's journey as a Puppy Raiser sparked from her unconditional love of her pet Labrador who had a hard battle with cancer. At that time, her vet suggested she consider becoming a Puppy Raiser for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT as part of her healing process. Two decades later, Margaret is currently raising pups 26 and 27, Taji and Ossie.

[Read Margaret's story here.](#)

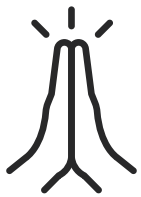


“Puppy raising is a chance to give back to the community and change someone’s life. Whether your pup becomes a Guide Dog or a Therapy Dog, it’s a special feeling knowing they will be life-changing for their Handler.”



Our People.

Our impact.



264.7

full-time equivalent employees:

178

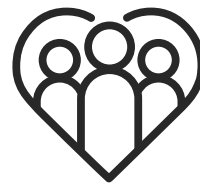
full-time

55.7

part-time

30

casual



628

volunteers:

201

active volunteer Puppy Raisers

53

Canine Court program volunteers

74

Guide Dogs Centre volunteers

143

in-home dog support volunteers

157

other volunteers across the organisation



Staff milestones.

45 years.

Shan Rowledge
Receptionist.

30 years.

Ewa Borkowski
Practice Coordinator.

25 years.

Brett Smyth
Therapy Dog Specialist.

15 years.

Angela Hayward
Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Cindy Wilson
Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Daniel Searle
Community Mobiliser.

Karen Carrigan
Area Manager, Metro South.

Leigh Spillane
Guide Dog Training Team Leader.

Lisa Williams
Puppy Development Advisor.

Rebecca Dunkley
Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

10 Years.

Dianne Shaddock
Access and Advocacy Advisor.

Patrick Shaddock
General Manager, Client Services.

Sally Biles
General Manager, Planned Giving.

Sunethra Karunaratne
Data Supervisor, Fundraising.





Shan celebrates 45 years!

Last year, Shan Rowledge was presented with her Long Service Award by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT after an incredible 45 years of service.

Shan has worn many hats since she started with Guide Dogs in 1978 - from Assistant to the CEO to Client Services Administrator and now Receptionist - but regardless of her role, the one constant for Shan has been the altruistic nature of the organisation and its people.

[Read Shan's story here.](#)

“The culture and the rationale and the Strategy of how we operate has always been what I admire.”

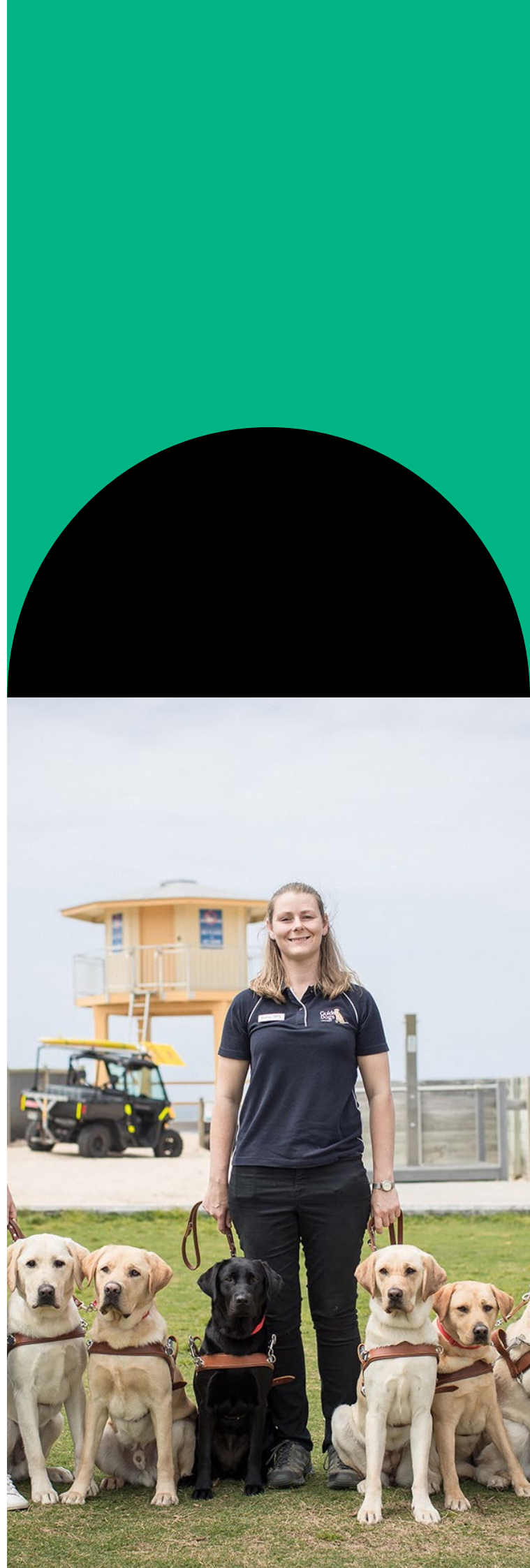
The Joe Finucane Perpetual Award.

The award is named after former CEO, Joe Finucane, who served for nearly 20 years and retired in 2009. Joe is remembered as an innovative and progressive leader with a gentle, yet determined, approach. Each year, we seek nominations from staff for the award.

Last year we were incredibly fortunate to have long-time supporter and Joe's wife, Dorothy Finucane, attend our AGM to present the award, which was given to Training and Dog Supply Manager, Melinda Bowden.

Melinda's career with Guide Dogs began in 2004 and spans almost 20 years, working with both Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and Guide Dogs Victoria. Melinda was nominated for her continuous focus on dog outcomes and team development through education and knowledge sharing. Known for embodying our value of 'walk the talk,' Melinda's actions speak louder than words and she is described as a fearless leader, mentor, guide, and inspiration. Her selfless dedication to her team, Clients, and the organisation, coupled with her creativity, humility and kindness, makes her a deserving winner of the award.

Congratulations Melinda!



Our commitment to equity, access and inclusion.

We strive to be recognised as an employer of choice through our people, practices and leadership. We continue to implement accessible and inclusive workplace practices, policies and systems through our [Disability Inclusion Action Plan](#) and [Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan](#).

We actively encourage, value and welcome staff with a disability.

- We are proud to report 11.5 percent of our workforce self-report they identify as having a disability. By 2027, we aim to meet or exceed our ambitious target of 15 percent.
- Our Disability Employee Network provides a place for team members with lived experience and allies to connect, network, share experiences and raise awareness about working with disability in a welcoming and supportive environment.
- We released our Workplace Adjustment Policy to ensure people with disability, illness or injury can participate fully in all aspects of employment to the best of their ability.





Ensure our built, digital and communication environments are accessible.

- Following the success of our accessible and inclusive flagship office at St Leonards, we continue to apply learnings and prioritise accessibility when renovating and fitting out new premises.
- We upgraded our employee management system, visitor and employee sign-in software, contact centre and telephone system to enhance accessibility for staff and Clients.
- All new Guide Dogs staff must take digital accessibility training to learn how to create accessible content. They also undergo practical sessions to assist people with low vision or blindness. Staff confidence levels rose from 3.10 to 4.27 out of 5 after taking the course.

Embrace inclusion, innovation and diversity.

- We were thrilled to launch Donna Purcell's Churchill Report into Leadership Models that remove barriers to employment for People with Disability, with a specific focus on accessible technology design.
- We continue to progress the goals of our Reconciliation Action Plan by acknowledging and honouring Indigenous cultures and promoting cultural understanding through NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week events.
- We were proud to once again participate in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. This year, our team of over 40 Clients, their family and friends, staff and volunteers marched to celebrate pride and highlight the importance of accessibility and inclusivity for all.

Thank you to our incredible volunteers.

Our volunteers are at the lifeblood of our organisation. They selflessly give their time, care, expertise and energy to allow us to continue our vital work to support our Clients. For this generous gift, we say thank you.

Our volunteers are remarkable people who contribute to all aspects of our organisation. At a strategic level, our Board of Directors and members of our Customer Advisory Panel provide expertise and guidance to help shape and govern the organisation. At an operational

level, our volunteers support us with fundraising, marketing, advocacy, administration, transport, gardening, maintenance, events and all things dog-related! They assist us in all facets of our Dog Services including breeding, kennel cleaning, feeding, walking, grooming, temporary caring and of course, puppy raising.

This year we are developing a volunteer strategy to grow and diversify our volunteer opportunities so we can continue to support our Clients to live the life they choose.



Gulliver's travels.

Gulliver, or Gully for short, is our much-loved, giant 4.3 metre tall, fibre-glass yellow Labrador Guide Dog mascot. How does he get around? Gully's Handler (driver) Paul, of course! Paul has been a volunteer with Guide Dogs for 12 years and Gully's personal chauffeur for 10 of them.

[Read Paul's story here.](#)



“It is so much fun driving him around. I have an immense feeling of joy when I drive Gulliver and see the smiles on people’s faces when he passes by. Everything about Guide Dogs manifests in Gulliver and I love to educate people about low vision or blindness when they ask me about him.”

Our Reach.

Using our voice.

Through our social change, education and advocacy campaigns, we aim to break barriers, raise awareness and connect with the community to advocate for positive change. We share our messages and garner support from the community through advocacy and awareness campaigns, targeted advertising, media and strategic partnerships.

Advocating for systemic change.

Our Social Change team has already achieved outcomes for our community, including working with the NSW Government to regain screen reader accessibility of the 'Hazards Near Me' app and lobbying to increase the on-the-spot fines for Taxi and rideshare refusals.

They also worked with the ACT Government to produce accessible education materials on complaint and enforcement processes that Guide Dog Handlers can follow when they encounter access refusals. The team will now focus their advocacy efforts on mandatory reporting, so Handlers know their complaints are being recorded and addressed.

The team recently launched an Inclusion Ally program, where members of the community can subscribe to keep informed about our current campaigns and join us in our efforts to create a more accessible and inclusive world. [Sign up to be an Inclusion Ally today!](#)



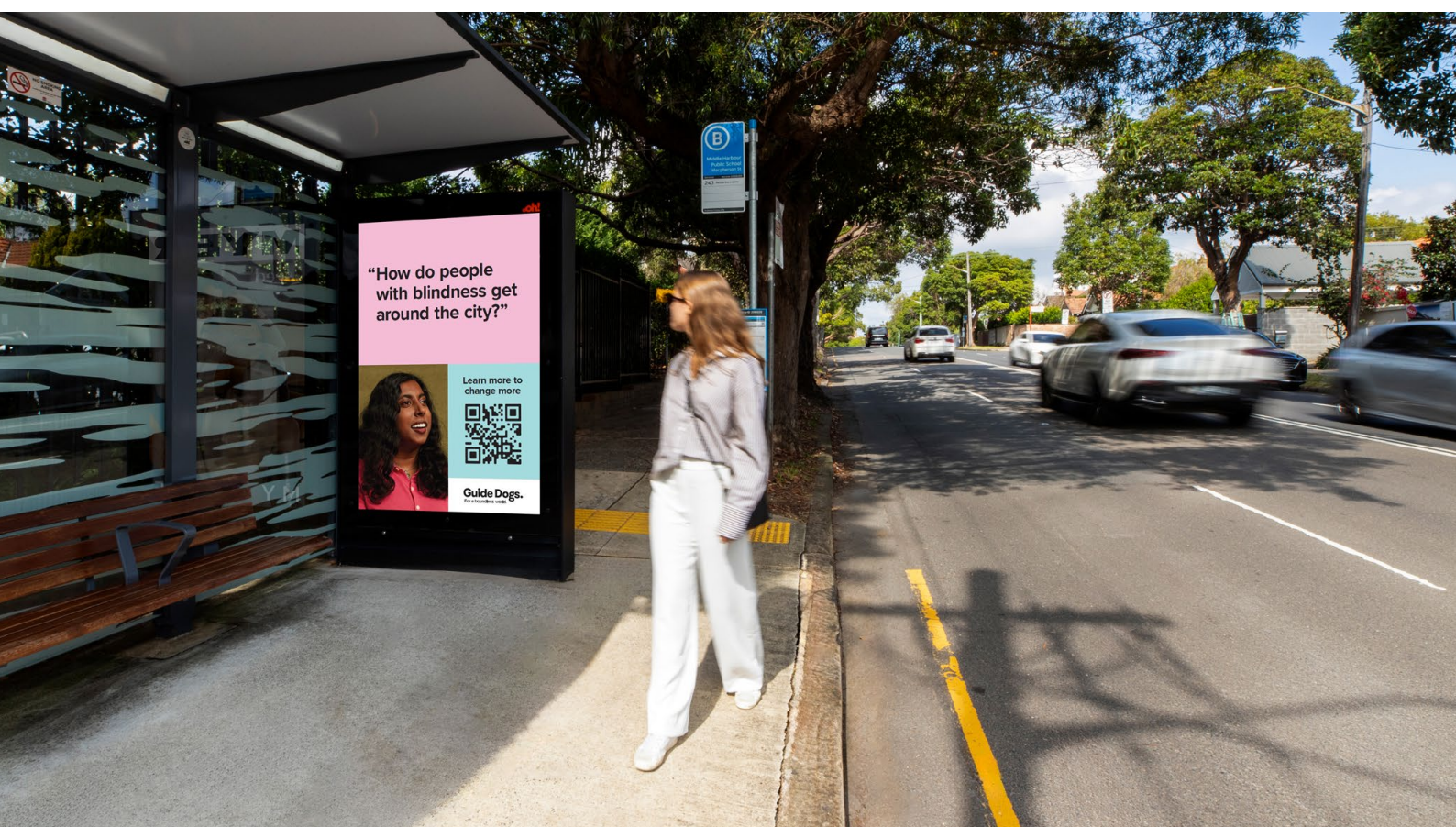
Access advice and industry training.

Our Access and Industry Training team provides access advice on the best functional outcomes to various Government and private industries to help improve community access to places, spaces, and services. The team delivered 123 sessions to 1,723 participants across multiple industry bodies to improve frontline staff capabilities in supporting people with low vision or blindness. Participants complete a pre-and-post course evaluation to rate their confidence to be able to assist people with low vision or blindness. After attending the sessions, confidence increased from 2.45 to 4.61 out of 5.

Accessible Communities.

Last year we launched Accessible Communities, an online hub dedicated for businesses and organisations that are committed to creating inclusive spaces and services for people who are blind or have low vision.

Our e-learning platform features a combination of free and fee-based courses on digital accessibility. In FY23-24, we had 430 enrolments, a 300 percent increase from the previous financial year. We recently launched our 'assisting people with low vision or blindness' course and we look forward to releasing more courses in the coming year.





Partnerships with impact.

Sydney Airport.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT was incredibly fortunate to be selected as the Sydney Airport Charity Partner for Christmas. Our team worked with Sydney Airport to increase awareness about access rights for Guide Dogs, as well as the needs of people with low vision or blindness. We began the collaboration with extensive press coverage on access rights in the lead up to Christmas, followed by a public awareness event and education event for staff to learn about accessibility and give them some practical guiding experience. A special pup-up café raised funds to support and train a litter of five puppies named in honour of Sydney Airport's rich flying history - Kingsford, Aero, Amelia, Pax and Syd.

Sydney Metro.

Our team were key advisers to the Department of Transport and the Sydney Metro team to inform the design of the new metro system. Guide Dogs staff and Clients were given the opportunity to explore the new Crows Nest station and familiarise themselves with the layout before it opened to the public. The teams will continue to collaborate to develop common principles and guidance for accessible design for Sydney Metro West.

Westpac OpenAir Cinema.

Blind and low vision movie goers had an easier time heading to the movies in Sydney as we helped to make Westpac's OpenAir cinema accessible. The cinema premiered the movie TOUCH, Australia's first feature-length motion picture without pictures. Our team worked alongside the staff at OpenAir to make the venue as accessible as possible for people with low vision, including the creation of 2D maps of the venue to support the use of the wayfinding digital app BindiMaps. Staff of OpenAir also received training on how best to offer support and assistance to people who are blind or have low vision attending the event.



Campaigns for change.

For a Boundless World.

There are a lot of misconceptions about blindness and low vision – what it is, what it's like to experience it, how people navigate it, or how to help. Our **Boundless awareness campaign** tackles key misconceptions, addressing the questions our Clients are asked on a daily basis. We published their responses in a campaign featuring Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Clients.

The second stage of the campaign used Client insights to address a key challenge – accessible social media. Clients share some of the best practices that make content more accessible, while encouraging people to learn more.

Our Boundless campaign secured results, with 59,494 visits to our campaign pages. External tracking also showed a 28 percent relative increase in awareness of Guide Dogs amongst our target audience, as well as improvements in awareness of our range of services.





Wherever you can go, Guide Dogs can go too.

We celebrated International Guide Dog Day with a 'pup-up' café event hosted at our St Leonards office. Members of our local community were invited to meet our team, Guide Dogs Clients, Therapy and Court Companion Dogs and pups-in-training for a coffee and learn how they can help spread awareness of Guide Dog Handler access rights through our key campaign message 'Wherever you can go, Guide Dogs can go too'.

Clear the Way.

We celebrated International White Cane Day with Clients by hosting a trip from Circular Quay to Manly, where participants enjoyed lunch followed by a walk along the Iconic North Head Walk. Staff also enjoyed a 'Paws for thought' event hosted by Lived Experience Coordinator, Sarah Hirst who interviewed Lived Experience Presenter and white cane user, Charlie McConnell who talked about the need to 'Clear the Way' to allow for better access and inclusion for people with low vision or blindness.

Our Supporters.

None of the important work we do for our Clients could be achieved without the generosity of our incredible donors and the support of our community.

Many of our supporters choose to make a donation at Christmas or Tax time. There are many other ways you can get involved and support Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.



Community Fundraising.

Whether you are part of a support group, host an event, ask for donations for your birthday, do a fun run or sell cupcakes, you can choose to fundraise your way, in your own time.

Merchandise.

We have a range of items available in our shop, including seasonal items like Christmas cards and Calendars, and of course, our most popular item, tea towels!

Donation Dogs.

Host one of our nationally iconic Donation Dogs and provide a way for the wider community to support our work.

Partnerships.

From workplace giving to corporate partnerships, we offer a range of ways for organisations to get involved with us and create change in the community.

Gifts in Wills.

Leaving a gift in your Will can have an enduring and profound impact on the life of someone with low vision or blindness. Discover how to help Guide Dogs and leave a lasting legacy.

Puppy Pals.

Become a Puppy Pal today and help train more puppies to become life-changing Guide Dogs. A small, regular, monthly payment can go a long way in changing someone's life.

Major Giving.

As a donor of Major Gifts, you choose which Guide Dogs' program you would like to support, while receiving benefits suited to the special way you contribute to our cause.

Volunteer.

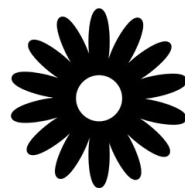
Volunteer with us and discover new skills and experiences while helping to change the lives of people with low vision or blindness.



**Thank you for changing the
lives of people living with
low vision or blindness.**



\$37M+
raised from over 32,000
supporters.



251
new Daisy Foundation
members.

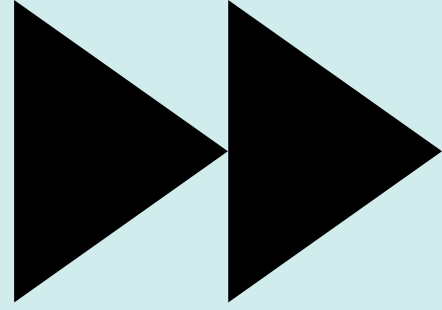
The Daisy Foundation was established to honour the generosity of our wonderful friends who have included Guide Dogs NSW/ACT in their Will.

Generosity spans generations.

Last year we received a visit from three very special young Guide Dogs NSW/ACT supporters who raised money by selling handmade bracelets and drawings to their friends and family. The children visited our St Leonards office and met Ambassador Dog Nancy and off-duty Guide Dog Bess, who were thrilled to receive their donation of \$15.70.

The children told us their great grandmother supported Guide Dogs and they wanted to do the same. It is always heartwarming to meet our young supporters who are inspired to give by the generations before them. Every dollar counts and we are so grateful for every donation, big and small.





Gifts in Wills.

Thank you for your generosity.

In grateful memory of our very special friends whom we cannot thank in person and whose life-changing gifts were received during the past year.

Gloria Allan	Nancy Brown
Janet Allen	William Brown
Gwendolyn Allis	Mary Burgess
Gwendoline Amery	Gina Burke
The Anderson Family Bequest	Barbara Burr
Evaline Antonsson	Winsome Caldwell
Joyce Ashley	Jack Company
Una Atwell	Florence Campbell
Robert Barrett	Margaret Carr
H.M. (Bill) and C.J. (Joy)	Peter Carroll-Held
Barrie Foundation	Frederick Carter
Theodore Barrington	Eva Casson
Alexander Bartos	Kerry Charleston
Prudence Beggs	Joan Cicolini
Peter Birch	Rhonda Clark
Leslie Blackshaw	Barbara Clarke
William Bolger	Joan Cole
Verna Bomford	Stanley Cooper
Patricia Borham	Rosemary Cork
Mary Boyd	Alice Crabtree
Denis Bradley	Audrey Davies
Michael Bray	Bessie Davis
Gwendoline Brian	Margaret Dawson
Lois Brodie	Joseph Ditmars

Margaret Dooley
Wendy Doueal
John Downs
John Durrant
John Edwards
Neville Ellis
Ingrid Farkas
Bruce Fathers
Gweneth Foote
Peter Fox
Christopher Freemantle
Judith Galea
Christopher Germann
Robyn Gorman
Norma Grant
Ann Gray
Margaret Grebby
Leanne Grimstone
Gregory Gulliver
Patricia Hall
Elaine Hallett
Lynette Hammonds
Ian Harbison
Catherine Harding
Phyllis Hart
John Hartley
Shirley Harvey
James Harvie
Betty Hessling

Clive Hewlett
Douglas Hillson
Beryl Hinkley
John Hinson
Yvonne Holden
Maureen Holmes
Patricia Hookham
Raymond Hope
Shirley Hopkins
Mavis Horton
David Houghton
Clare Humphries
Barbara Hunter
Helen Ingram
Noella Irish
Warren James
Marjorie Jessop
Connie Johnson
John Johnson
The Kemvan Trust
John and Connie Kennedy Trust
Frank Keston
Denis Klein
Keith Knight
Elizabeth Knox
Yvette Korman
Dianne Krummel
Laurie Kunkler
Purples Lam

Rosemary Leitch

Leone Liapis

Beverley Loades

Dorothy Luke

Dugald and Judith
Mactaggart Bequest

Cherilyn Maric

Shane Marshall

Ruby Mathews

Margaret McCullough

Shirley McInnes

Judith McMinn

Patricia McNally

Joyce Mead

Denise Melane

Jacqueline Merlino

Irene Michelutti

Elizabeth Mihic

Barry Milne

Sally Mitchell

Neryl Moore

Anne Morgan

Catherine Mortiboy

Colin Moss

Archibald Moyes

Priscilla Myles

Alison Naylor

Noelene Newman

William Nixey

Shirley Noble

Dominick O'Connor

Boris Opic

Thelma Parker

Esme Parker

Ralene Paul-Furley

Robert Pauling

Fiona Payget

Betty Peadon

Joan Perkins

Ernest Perry

Jonathan Persse

Joscelyn Pescott

Joan Petersen

Patricia Petersen

Beverly Petrie

Lorna Phillips

Lorraine Phillips

Linda Phillpott

Pamela Powell

The Prance Family Trust

Mostyn Pugh

Ronald Purdon

Igor Rada

Lucy Rayhill

Elizabeth Read

John Reed

Robyn Rich

Beverley Ricketts

Sheila Rivers

Olive Robinson
Margaret Rodgers
Simon Roodenrys
Judith Rossiter
Maxwell Rowland
Eileen Sandy
Miriam Saxon
Clare Schmitzer
Josephine Schumann
Elizabeth Scully
Miriam Segal
Christopher Sharp
Raymond Sharpe
Paula Simmonds
Karina Skovsgaard
Eleanor Smith Trust
Suzanne Snelling
Maria Sotriadis
Audrey Stamp
Alice Stavrides
Eric Stevens
James Stewart
Marian Stone
Sigrid Stribul
Joan Styles
Phyllis Sullivan
James Sunter
Jan Swift
Georgina Taylor

Myrle Thatcher
Ingrid Thompson
Ruth Triggs
Anne Tulley
Robert Turner
Eric Tweedale
Elizabeth Van Veen
Susan Venn
Lois Verrall
Helen Vost
Betty Wade
Claude Wagner
Mary Wakefield
Garry Walker
Carol Watt
Walter Watterson
Alice Wheat
Elizabeth White
Dorothea Whittome
Lloyd Williams
Ian Wilson
Judith Wilson
William Wilson
The John and Elizabeth Woodrow
Memorial Fund
The Bruce and Barbara Wright
Bequest
Yoshiko Wright
Johanna Wyld
Lois Wylie-O'Brien

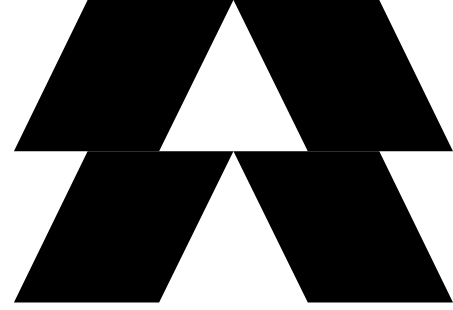


Angela is a true community champion!

Being almost totally blind holds no bounds for Angela. Over the past 15 years, she has made a significant contribution to a range of fundraising and public awareness activities as a Guide Dog Handler, Lived Experience Speaker, fundraiser, member of the Central Coast Support Group and bequestor.

[Read Angela's story.](#)

“I would hope that by leaving a bequest, somebody else down the road will have the same life, freedom, independence and confidence that I get with my Guide Dog.”



Thank you.

We would like to thank the following trusts, foundations, groups and organisations for their generous support*:

Aged Persons Welfare Foundation

ACT Government Community Services Directorate

Bagnall Endowment Fund

The Builders Club

Bunderra Foundation

Burwood RSL Club

Walter Campbell Memorial Trust

Commonwealth Bank Community Grants

S and J Cook Family Foundation

Duchen Family Foundation

The Elliot Family Trust

The Gregory Patrick and Marie Dolores Farrell Foundation

The Graf Family Foundation

The Judith Hodge Fund

John and Enid Lane-Brown Endowment

Lockie Family Endowment

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation – Eldon and Anne Foote Trust

McNally Foundation

Mounties Group

Mundy Family Charitable Foundation

Newman's Own Foundation

Orange Ex-Services Club Ltd

The Perini Family Foundation

Perpetual Trustees

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

Rali Foundation

Ravenmill Foundation

William Rubensohn Foundation

Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club Ltd

The Ruth Marie Sampson Foundation

Sibley Endowment

Skipper-Jacobs Charitable Trust

Summerbell Foundation
(David and Fee Hancock Foundation)

The John and Lois Turk Charitable Gift

TPG Telecom Foundation

Tregaskis Foundation

Viva Energy

Victoria Shakespeare Trust

*Donations \$5,000 and above in FY23-24.

Our National Corporate Partners.

We could not support our Clients in the multitude of ways we do without our generous and passionate Corporate Partners, who assist us through donations, products and in-kind services, volunteering, staff fundraising and workplace giving. We are proud to partner with all of them.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is a federated member of Guide Dogs Australia, which runs our National Corporate Partners program. The benefits of the program are shared across all participating states.

Our National Corporate Partners throughout the past year include:



We thank all of our partners for their ongoing commitment to our important work and their passion for supporting Australians living with low vision or blindness to reach their full potential.

A decade of supporting people and animals.

This year we celebrate ten wonderful years of partnership with the Petstock Foundation, who are committed to empowering a better future for pets and people.

Over that time Guide Dogs has received over \$1 million from the Petstock Foundation so that we can enact that positive change and realise our mutual goal of empowering people through their

connection with animals, in our case, our world-class Guide Dogs and Therapy Dogs.

Partners such as the Petstock Foundation do so much more than provide funding. During their time as a valued Guide Dogs partner, the team at Petstock have encouraged suppliers and customers to participate in raising awareness and support through in-store and online fundraising campaigns, hosted puppy raising drives and supported our Puppy Raising Program.

Our thanks to the team at the Petstock Foundation and Petstock team members for sharing our vision for empowered futures.



Pro bono support.

Thank you for your support.



Hicksons Lawyers
Sydney and Newcastle



Hall & Wilcox
Sydney



Baker McKenzie
Sydney



Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation
Sydney



Our Governance.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Statement.

ESG is a framework that measures the environmental, social and governance performance of an organisation. By following ESG principles, we can ensure that we are responsible stewards of our resources, we respect and support our Clients, staff, volunteers and partners, and we uphold high standards of ethics and accountability in our operations.

ESG aligns with our mission and demonstrates our commitment to making a positive difference in the world. It helps us to communicate our value proposition to our stakeholders, donors and supporters.

View our [ESG Statement](#).

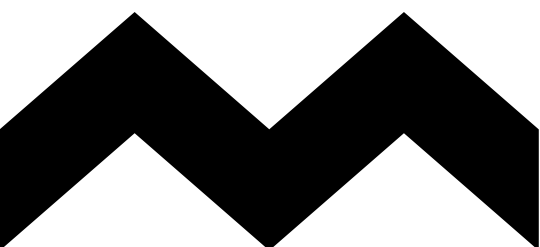
Corporate Governance Statement.

Our Corporate Governance Statement promotes fairness, transparency and accountability across Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.

The Statement describes our key governance practices and articulates how decision-making is guided to meet stakeholder expectations of sound corporate governance, meeting Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Governance Standards and acknowledging our responsibilities to members, donors, Clients, staff, volunteers and the communities in which we operate.

The Corporate Governance Statement is reviewed annually and is approved by the Board.

View our [Corporate Governance Statement](#).





Board of Directors.

As at 30 June 2024.



Chair

Jacqui Jones

B.Ec (Soc Sci), M.A.,
Grad Dip Ed, MAICD.

“I love that we are focussed on ensuring that people with blindness or low vision have independence so they can get on with achieving their life goals!”



Deputy Chair

Karen Knight

BA, G.Dip.Psych, M.Psych.Ed,
MBA.

“Being a Director enables me to bring my lived experience and extensive knowledge of the blindness sector to assist people who are blind or have low vision to have access to the supports and services to live the life they choose.”



Breanna Davies

BComm (Journalism) LLM.

“I am passionate about ensuring an inclusive world where everyone can thrive.”



Cameron Evans

BE, GAICD, Grad.Dip.App.Fin, BE ME, MBA.

“I am passionate about building a more inclusive society that enables everyone to reach their life goals.”



Cheryl Hayman

FAICD, FGIA.

“Social purpose and inclusion, a more diverse culture and ensuring equity and success for every Australian, underpin my values and ethos of putting people and their needs front and centre.”



Robin Low

BCom, FCA, GAICD.

“I have loved Guide Dogs all my life. My role is made most rewarding because of the way Guide Dogs bring together our Clients, our people, our dogs and technology to enable better lives.”



Darryl Newton BCom, CA, GAICD.

“I love being part of a group of people that make a profound difference in people’s lives.”

Thank you from Kieran Lane.

It has been a few months since I retired as Chair of the Board in February this year and with the benefit of hindsight comes some clarity about why I was so passionate about this organisation. There have been so many notable moments, from celebrating Client success to leading tough discussions, that have been part of my journey, but the common theme has always been the fantastic people I have worked with along the way.

Together, we have modernised our organisation, navigated the challenges posed by COVID-19, relocated to our award-winning site at St Leonards, and weathered the fluctuations of an ever-changing economic landscape with calmness

and clarity. I have had the opportunity to work with many fantastic Directors alongside a passionate Executive with a key focus on our Clients and impact. I am grateful to have been part of an organisation that prioritises Client outcomes. Collaborating with the Board on the 2030 Strategy and helping to shape the future of the organisation has been a privilege.

A successful Chair must have a great relationship with the CEO, and I am deeply grateful for the strong, respectful relationship between Dale and myself and, likewise, our Board and the Executive team. This harmony has been foundational to our achievements and will continue to drive our success.

My thanks go to the Board, Executive, staff, volunteers, and donors for their unwavering support, trust, and enthusiastic engagement. The implementation of our 2030 Strategy is crucial, not only to safeguard our core services but also to ensure that Guide Dogs remains relevant by continually adapting to new challenges.

I will, of course, closely follow the organisation's progress and eagerly anticipate seeing Strategy 2030 come to life, ultimately benefiting those who matter most, our Clients.

**Mr Kieran Maurice Lane,
LLB Hons, LLM**

Former Chair, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Board of Directors











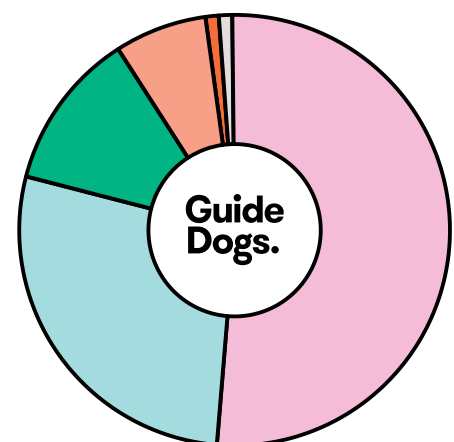
Key Financials.

Revenue.

Income	Amount
Gifts in Wills	24,364,570
Donations and other fundraising activities	13,164,711
NDIS, Medicare and other government revenue	5,749,156
Income from investments	3,117,266
Contract services income	276,935
Other income	290,140
Total revenue	46,962,778

Percentage of Income.

	Gifts in Wills	52%
	Donations and other fundraising activities	28%
	NDIS, Medicare and other government revenue	11%
	Income from investments	7%
	Contract services income	1%
	Other income	1%



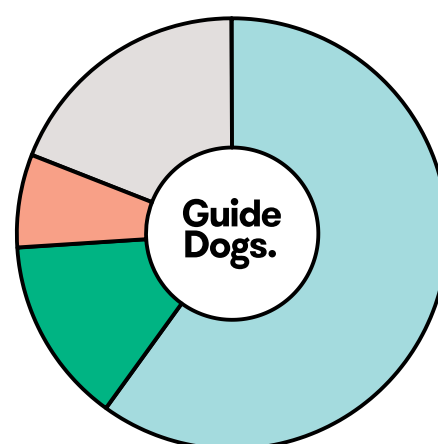
Expenses.

Expenditure	Amount
Client and community services	28,282,094
Costs of fundraising and Gifts in Wills	6,736,574
Marketing	3,285,090
Governance, finance and administration	9,024,739
Total expenses	47,328,497

Staff costs are included in each category.

Total of Expenses.

	Client and community services	60%
	Costs of fundraising and Gifts in Wills	14%
	Marketing	7%
	Governance, finance, and administration	19%

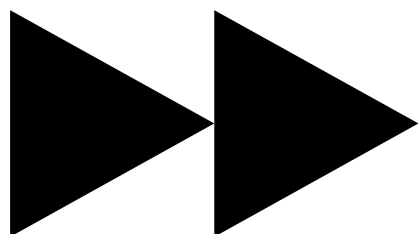


Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Comprehensive Income	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Income		
Bequests	24,365	21,886
Donations	13,106	11,033
Sale of fundraising merchandise	59	96
Investment income	3,117	3,160
NDIS, Medicare and other government revenue	5,749	5,024
Contract services income	277	236
Other income	290	553
Revenue	46,963	41,988
Other gains/(losses)		
Net gains on financial assets including the fair value movement through profit and loss	2,756	1,229
Net gain on disposal of non-current assets	11	266
Total income	49,730	43,483
Expenses		
Client Services costs	(28,064)	(26,960)
Community education and advocacy	(218)	(4)
Fundraising overheads including:		
• Fundraising donor management	(3,130)	(3,602)
• Planned giving expenditure	(1,417)	(1,114)
• Appeal costs	(2,189)	(3,046)
Marketing	(3,285)	(1,869)
Governance and administrative services	(9,025)	(7,679)
Total expenses	(47,328)	(44,274)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	2,402	(791)
Other comprehensive income	–	–
Total comprehensive surplus/(deficit) for the year	2,402	(791)

Statement of Financial Position.

Financial position	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	7,861	4,845
Trade and other receivables	1,374	1,133
Inventories	90	134
Other financial assets	1,748	6,667
Other current assets	537	337
Total current assets	11,610	13,116
Non-current assets		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	73,776	69,522
Property, plant and equipment	16,573	16,340
Right of Use assets	3,447	2,484
Intangibles	3	12
Total non-current assets	93,799	88,358
Total assets	105,409	101,474
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	3,743	3,120
Leasehold liabilities	1,800	1,222
Employee leave provisions	2,112	2,076
Contract liabilities	-	418
Leasehold make good liability	284	276
Total current liabilities	7,939	7,112



Statement of Financial Position, continued.

Financial position	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Non-current liabilities		
Employee leave provisions	734	498
Leasehold liabilities	1,654	1,183
Total non-current liabilities	2,388	1,681
Total liabilities	10,327	8,793
Net assets	95,082	92,681
Accumulated funds		
Accumulated surplus	93,726	91,325
Reserves	1,356	1,356
Total accumulated funds	95,082	92,681

The key financials are extracted from the Audited Financial Report year ended 30 June 2024.

[View the full Audited Financial Report on the website.](#)





**We're here whenever
you need us.**

📍 7-9 Albany Street,
St Leonards NSW 2065

☎ 1800 436 364

🌐 www.nsw.guidedogs.com.au

Guide Dogs.

ABN 52 000 399 744