



Contents

- 3. Vision and Values
- 4. President's Report
- 5. CEO's Report
- 6. Thank you to all our supporters
- 7. Our Supporters
- 13. Puppy Sponsorship
- 15. Breeding and Puppy Raising Program
- 16. International Guide Dog Services
- 17. Client Services at a Glance
- 19. Guide Dog Mobility
- 20. Training Kennels and Veterinary Clinic
- 21. Graduates
- 22. Client Story – Liam Haven
- 25. Children's Mobility Service
- 26. Client Story – Tyrone Curtain
- 28. Orientation & Mobility
- 29. Client Story – Ron Williams
- 30. Occupational Therapy
- 31. Client Story – Meindert Withoff
- 32. Acquired Brain Injury
- 33. Client Story – Trevor Mouat
- 34. Fundraising and Marketing
- 36. Bequest story – Gail Bradley
- 36. Vale Holly Rechter OAM
- 37. Volunteers
- 37. Capital Appeal
- 38. Centre for Vision Independence
- 38. Telemarketing
- 39. Our People
- 39. Occupational Health and Safety
- 40. The Road Ahead

Vision and Values

Vision

Provide high quality mobility training and support to every blind and vision impaired Victorian who needs assistance to achieve their maximum independence.

We Value:

- Service
- Integrity
- Respect
- Excellence

We are committed to behavior that upholds these values. We will:

- Focus on our clients
- Provide high quality services
- Continuously improve
- Work Together
- Communicate effectively
- Operate efficiently



President's Report

As the population ages, there is an increasing demand for the high quality services our committed team of professional staff provide to Victorians who are blind and vision impaired. With an increased demand for services, the challenge is to meet that demand by operating in the most efficient and effective manner and maximising our revenues to finance the additional costs of providing those critical services.

During 2010/11, while we were impacted by the state of the economy, we continued to maintain the number of programs provided and clients assisted, and finished the financial year with a deficit of \$14,000.

Thanks to the great work of the Capital Appeal Committee, chaired by Betty Amsden OAM, and the generosity of our donors, we were also able to complete the expansion of the Kennel Centre project in October 2011.

During the year, the Board agreed on a strategic plan for Guide Dogs Victoria covering the next three years. The plan outlines our vision, values, key organisational behaviours, strategic goals, key strategies and key performance indicators. Our strategic goals are to:

- Provide high quality client services
- Deliver high quality Guide Dogs
- Maximise our fundraising and marketing
- Nurture our staff and volunteers
- Strengthen our financial position and business processes.

In addition, the governance framework has been strengthened with the establishment of charters for the Board and the various committees which complement the Memorandum and Articles of Association under which we operate.

During the year, the Board decided to withdraw from the joint Chief Executive project with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT as we sought a greater focus on our Victorian operations. However, the Board is keen that collaboration continues and is enhanced across all State Guide Dog organisations.

There has been a significant change to the composition of the Board over the past twelve months. Three new members of the Board were elected at the Annual General Meeting last year and further changes occurred during the year. Under the new Board, there has been a change in emphasis for the organisation as outlined above.

In June 2011, Dr Graeme White announced his resignation as Chief Executive Officer. We accepted his decision and appreciate the work he

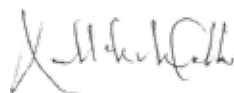
has done over a period of around six years. Until we appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, we engaged Ken Swanson in an interim role. I would like to thank Ken for his contribution to Guide Dogs Victoria while acting in the role.

Subsequent to the end of the 2010/11 financial year, Karen Hayes was appointed as our new Chief Executive Officer, effective from 14 November 2011. Karen brings to the role a wealth of experience in both the private and not for profit sectors. On behalf of the Board, I congratulate Karen on her appointment and wish her every success in her leadership of Guide Dogs Victoria.

Following around 19 years as a Member of the Board, and close on five years as President, Murray Walker stepped down as a Member of the Board in October 2010 due to health reasons. We wish Murray the very best for the future and thank him for his considerable contribution to Guide Dogs Victoria over such an extended period.

Further, our long standing Chief Financial Officer, Vladimir Hinrichsen has been absent due to a major health issue. Our thoughts are with Vlad and we wish him the very best.

Finally, we are extremely fortunate to have a very dedicated team of professional staff covering all aspects of our operations. In addition, we are very dependant on the support of a large group of passionate volunteers, our donors, bequestors and other supporters. On behalf of the Board and Members, I would like to thank you all for your significant contribution to Guide Dogs Victoria and ultimately to the services we provide to Victorians who are blind and vision impaired.



Russell A Walker
President



CEO's Report

It has been a pleasure to act as the Chief Executive Officer of such an iconic organisation as Guide Dogs Victoria in the period between Dr Graeme White's departure and the new era under the management of Karen Hayes. Guide Dogs Victoria has a very bright future and I look forward with interest as it grows and further evolves.

Over the 2010/11 financial year, we continued to maintain the number of programs provided and clients assisted. The services provided included Children's Mobility, Orientation and Mobility, Acquired Brain Injury Mobility, Occupational Therapy, Low Vision Advisory and Guide Dog Mobility.

Completed programs totalled 2517 while the number of clients assisted was 1561. Of the clients assisted 475 were new clients. During the financial year we were able to partner 32 new guide dogs with clients. In total there are 187 clients with Guide Dogs, an increase of 12 over the previous financial year. I would like to thank the committed and dedicated staff, who are ably supported by a large group of passionate volunteers, which enabled these great results to be achieved.

All the services are supplied at no cost to clients, from children through to senior Victorians. Further, Guide Dogs Victoria receives no government support for the breeding, raising and training of Guide Dogs. Accordingly, we are very dependant on our loyal supporters including donors, bequestors, puppy sponsors, and those who purchase Guide Dog merchandise. I pass on an enormous thank you to our supporters who gave so generously during the year.

While in 2010/11 there continued to be tight economic conditions we were able to generate additional funds, when compared with the previous financial year, which was mainly derived from bequest and finance revenue. Even though we continued to maintain service levels and standards during the year, the costs incurred for the provision of services to clients increased. Overall, we operated at a deficit of \$14,000.

The Collection Dog program celebrated 50 years of fundraising in Victoria, and achieved a record income of \$623,000. The result is due in no small part to the trust and respect that the general public has for this well known fundraising vehicle. We are now in the third generation of families and their children who regularly "feed the dogs". The on-going success of the program is due to its high profile presence in two major supermarket chains, Coles and Woolworths, as well as at a myriad of large and small retail businesses and hotels. We would like to acknowledge and thank these valued

supporters.

In February 2011, Guide Dogs Victoria paid tribute to Professor David de Kretser AC, to mark the end of his tenure as Governor of Victoria and our valued Patron, at a gala fundraising event held at 9 Darling Street, South Yarra. The event raised over \$40,000 – thanks to the hard work and generous financial support of the organising Committee headed by Miss Betty Amsden OAM and Mrs Prue Gillies.

During the financial year, construction commenced on the Kennel Centre expansion project and was completed in October 2011. A special thank you must go to the great work of the Capital Appeal Committee and all the donors who generously gave to the Appeal to finance these important capital works.

Further, a new organisational structure is being implemented with a significant reduction in the number of direct reports to the Chief Executive Officer. All aspects relating to client and guide dog services now report to a new general manager. The objective of this important change is to facilitate the coordinated delivery of client and guide dog services to enhance the whole of life support experience of clients.

In conclusion, in the limited time I have been at Guide Dogs Victoria, I am confident that the staff, volunteers and supporters remain committed to realise our vision which is to "provide high quality mobility training and support to every blind and vision impaired Victorian who needs assistance to achieve their maximum independence".



Ken Swanson
Acting CEO





Thank You to All Our Supporters

Guide Dogs Victoria would like to thank its many supporters, including donors, volunteers, puppy raisers, staff and sponsors, for their valued contribution and hard work.

Your passion and dedication to our cause has ensured that we can continue providing assistance to blind and vision impaired Victorians. We really couldn't do it without you.

Our Supporters

Estates

Alford, James
Anderson, Alice Violet Louise
Attwater, Lorraine
Barber, Ann
Beck, Dorothy Pearl
Benson, Margaret
Bird, Ruby
Bowes, Laurence Geoffrey
Braid, James
Bremner, Doris May
Bridges, Dorothy
Brown, Neville
Bury, Ann
Cahill, Joan
Casey, Shirley
Chambers, Beverley Estelle
Collins, Peter Ross
Collins, Joan Margaret
Cook, Laurie
Cummins, Ellen
Cunningham, Patricia
Curwen-Walker, E
Davies, Betty
De Bavay Trust Fund, Marie
Digby, Moyra
Dodd, Ian William
Doyle, Josephine
Dungan, Sylvia Mary
Eger, Andrew
Ellis, Elizabeth Evelyn
Evans, Irene
Games, Joyce Margaret
Hamon, Molly
Hayes, Marjorie Louisa

Hayes, George
Heaney, Thomas Francis
Hearne, Oswald
Hedge, June Kathleen
Huf, Oswald Reuben
Hutchinson, Della
Iles Gordon,
James, May Olive
Jeffrey, Florence Jean
Jones, Mary Veronica
Kemp, Edith Grace
Kobold, Martin
Little, Jeanette Rosemary
MacKay, Frances
Mackennal, Phyllis
Mason, Joseph
Matthews, Annie Gladys
McClaren, Greta
McComas, Meredith
McPherson, Malcolm
Meyers, Arthur
Miller, Gwenneth Elsie
Millins, Mary
Mitlan, Elanor Lyle
Moller, Max
Morrison, Ian Frederick
O'Leary, Patricia Maureen
Osborne, Marjorie Frances
Pittman, Victor Russ
Poynton, Lola
Pratt, Rose Myrtle
Pryde, George
Sandell, Douglas
Schwartz, Winifred
Seed, Mary

Sheppard, Bridget May
Shipperlee, William
Spencer, Bruce
Steen, Eveline Ruth
Taylor, June
Tregoning, Laura May
Tully, John Neville
Vontom, Russell Herbert
Wandin, Enid Lenore
Withers, Ada
Wood, Katherine

Visionaries

Atiken, Edith
Amsden OAM, Betty
Anderson, D R
Andrews, Bardie
Aspinall, Bill & Sue
Bain, Peter
Bamford Family Foundation
Barlow, Joan
Barradell, Joan
Bates, John & Lorraine
Baxter, Anne
Blair, Ross
Bousfield, Brian & Ruth
Brand, Judith
Braslis, Karl
Burgess, Edith
Burrows, Robin & Carolyn
Calder, Winifred
Cameron, Beverley
Clarkson, Noel
Coles, Lois
Collins, Mark
Schilling-Collins, Carol
Davidson, David & Pat
Davidson, Jim
Davies, John
Dishon, Noel
Doig, Peter & Gillie
Edwards, Roy S
Evans, T
Foote, Anne
Graham, Trevor
Hedges, Jean
Harris, Lea
Hastings, Norm & Carol
Hetheron, Michael

Hogg, Russell J
Holmes, Patricia
Jones, Marie
Justice, Robert M
Kearney, Brian & Wendy
Keddie, Margaret
Kel & Rosie Day Foundation
The Laver Family Foundation
Limb Family Foundation
Lowell, Kim
Marsh, Irene
Matheson, Alan
Mathieson, Ian & Mary
McCallum, Christine
McIntyre, Patricia
McLendon, Ted
Morgan, David
Moth, Jacqueline
Murdoch AC DBE CBE,
Dame Elisabeth
Nance, Cynthia
Newman, Valerie
Orloff Family Charitable Trust
Peart, Winifred
Petrie, Michael & Angela
Prowse, Anthony
Reed, Wynsome
Rogers AM, Murray
Ross AM, Margaret S
Rogers, Robyn
Rusden, Merron
Russell, Liz
Segue Financial Services
Smith, June
Smith, Neville A
Southey AC, Lady Marigold
Stradwick, Richard
Taig, Betsy

Tappenden, Merv & Pam
Tisdall, Gwenda
Tulloch, James
Turnbull, Christopher
Turner, Margaret
Watson, Jim & Lynn
Watts, Patricia & John
Whyte, Arthur
Williams, John
Wing, Geoff
Wucherpennig, G
Yeung, Carly







Trusts and Foundations

Alan Shaw Trust
Amelia Eliza Holland Charitable Trust
Danks Trust
Deloitte Foundation
Erica Foundation Pty Ltd
Foster's in the Community
Gras Foundation Trust
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation – Youth in Philanthropy Program
Mars-Stride Trust
Olive Woods Trust
RACV
Russell and Womersley Bequest
Scobie and Claire Mackinnon Trust
The Dawn Wade Foundation
The Russell Foundation
Trust Company of Australia Ltd
VIC Community Foundation – Ruth Fagg Foundation

Clubs and Groups

All Souls Opportunity Shop
Australian Bike Friday Club
Beta Sigma Phi – Kappa Master chapter
Green Acres Golf Club
Horsham Guide Dog Auxiliary
Ladies Evening Group – Frankston Uniting Church
Littlewood Charities Club Inc
Maroondah Daylight Lodge No. 607
Rotary Club of Dromana
Rotary Club of Highton
Rotary Club of Kew on Yarra
Rotary Club of Rosanna
The Pups

Top Collection Dog Sites

Best Individual Sites - Top 3

I.S.S. Security – Melbourne Airport International Departures
Yering Farm Wines Cellar Door
Shepparton Marketplace Shopping Centre – Christmas Wrap Program

Other Top 3 Sites

Coles Supermarkets

Victoria Gardens, Melbourne Central, Princes Highway Dandenong

Woolworths Supermarkets

Murray Road Preston, Ivanhoe, Moonee Ponds

FoodWorks Supermarkets

Gisborne, Thomastown, Tatura

Pets Paradise Stores

Greensborough, Doncaster, Chadstone

Blockbuster

Wantirna South, Ivanhoe, Rowville

Video Ezy

Kew, Noble Park, Shepparton

7-Eleven Stores

St Kilda, Port Melbourne, North Geelong

Spotlight

Bayswater, Essendon, South Melbourne

Wiltja Dog Obedience Club

Metropolitan Hotels

Harp of Erin, Kew East; Diamond Creek Tavern; Royal Oak Hotel, Richmond

Regional Hotels

Breakwater Hotel, Breakwater; Commercial Hotel, Ballan; Golf View Hotel, Geelong

Guide Dogs Australia Corporate Partners

Corporate Supporters

ADVANCE

Coles

Deloitte

Hall & Wilcox

PricewaterhouseCoopers

Ritchies

Woolworths

Key Promotional Partners

Leader Community Newspapers

Channel Ten

Capital Appeal

Major Appeal Supporters

Susan Alberti AO

Betty Amsden OAM

John & Lorraine Bates

Rita Burkitt

Roy S Edwards

Carrillo Gantner AO

Judy Goy

Newman's Own Inc

Norm & Carol Hastings

Ramona Mandy

Barbara Manton

Ann Miller

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, DBE

Dr Bruce Munro

John O'Connor

Margaret S Ross AM

Liz Russell

Richard Stradwick

Margaret Turner

Russell & Marlene Walker

Arthur Whyte

Organisations

Aero Manufacturing Australia Pty Ltd

Percy Baxter Charitable Trust

Equity Trustees Limited

Geoff & Helen Handbury Foundation

Government of Victoria

Lyngala Foundation Pty Ltd

Ian Potter Foundation Ltd

Douglas Walker International Pty Ltd

Yarra Guide Dog Auxiliary

Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd



Puppy Sponsorship

Full Guide Dog Sponsors

Deloitte Foundation
GHD
Leader Newspapers
Arthur Whyte
John W Downer
Anne Foote

Sponsored Dog's Name

Dashar
Denver
Kora
Lexie
Rosie
Truman

Exclusive Puppy Sponsors

Margaret McDonald
ABC Tarps
Jill & Graeme Sinclair
Jenny Nunan
Maroondah Daylight Lodge
Sackville Grange Retirement Community
Ritchies
Keiran & Rita McAuliffe
Lateral Building Design
Telecommunications Industry Ombudsmen
Tupperware Australia
Freehills
Lisa Butcher
Jeanette Brookes – Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
May Lee
Joel Brown
Mr Brian J Sutton Foundation
Mr Brian J Sutton Foundation
Joel Brown
Dunmoore Foundation
Judy Goy
Peter Boag & Jennie McDonald
PSG
Deloitte Melbourne
Judy Goy
Yarra Guide Dog Auxillary
Group Link

Sponsored Dog's Name

Chiquita
Darcy
Dusty
Eli
Ella
Grange
Grover
Gypsy
Hadiya
Heidio
Henderson
Hendrix
Ike
Iska
Jacinta
Kadu
Kara
Kendra
Kit
Lily
Lana
Lynton
Mason
Mocha
Myles
Nikki
Otto

Exclusive Puppy Sponsors

Strathmore Foundation
Isla Derrick
Rotary Club of Rosanna
Frank Busch Inspection Pty Ltd
Abeles
A.I.S. Insurance
Gertrude Fink
UME Australia
Orloff Family Foundation
Phillip Garrett
Jean Hedges
Stratagens Accountants
Michael Vitale & Susan Keyes-Pearce
Betty McKinnon
Wilbow Group

Sponsored Dog's Name

Penny
Perry
Rarjee
Reubin
Robyn
Rowena
Roza
Salima
Sari
Solly
Taylor
Tiki
Viva
Wendy
Willow



Breeding and Puppy Raising Program

The Breeding Centre at Guide Dogs Victoria welcomed 162 puppies into the world this financial year, comprising 26 healthy litters. From that figure, 32 puppies were sent to other Guide Dogs Australia schools, and two are to be transferred to the puppy raising program in Taiwan.

At seven weeks of age, each puppy is placed in the care of a Puppy Raising family who commit to socialising the pup in all aspects of its behaviour for 12 – 14 months.

This year our hard working Puppy Raising Advisors conducted 101 puppy classes and workshops, made 1,133 visits to Puppy Raising homes and interviewed 83 prospective new families to join the program as volunteers. Classes this year included visits to a farm, train trips and a tram ride, in which a record number of pups participated. Twenty two pups aged between 1 – 10 months rode the tram with their respective families.

The Puppy Raising Department has worked extraordinarily well in handling over 150 puppies on the scheme at any given time throughout the year. This is a significant number and we are very thankful for the positive contribution our Puppy Raising volunteers have made to assist in maintaining this level of support in preparation for Guide Dog training at the Kew centre.

We look forward to another successful year of providing a world class socialization program. Our puppies are given every opportunity to ensure they become confident Guide Dogs to support more vision impaired clients.



International Guide Dog Services

Guide Dogs Victoria is a member of the International Guide Dog Federation and is committed to producing the highest quality pups through our in-house breeding program.

Guide Dogs Victoria, with five other Guide Dog schools (from the UK, Holland and three in the US), is a member of the International Cooperative Breeding Group. We assist other Guide Dog Schools in their Guide Dog programs through the provision of dogs, brood stock, and frozen canine semen.

Guide Dogs Victoria has assisted numerous Guide Dog Organisations over the years, including the Guide Dog & Service Dogs Association of Japan and the Taiwan Guide Dog (Pingtung) Association. Both these organisations achieved Applicant status in the International Guide Dog Federation. This allows them access to IGDF support services as they prepare for full membership.



In July 2010, John Gosling, International Services Manager, was elected by the membership to his third four-year term on the International Guide Dog Federation Board. John was appointed Chair of the Development Task Force and then to the Board and Development Committee Liaison role.

John participates in monthly Board teleconferences and in November attends a face-to-face Board meeting in France. He is responsible for the IGDF twice yearly magazine, 'The Visionary' and is a member of the IGDF 2012 Paris Seminar Program committee.



IGDF Board Members

The Board Members of the International Guide Dog Federation are:

Jane Thornton

Chairwoman, Chief Executive, Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind

Christine Baroni-Pretsch

Vice Chairperson, Director, Western Switzerland Guide Dog Association

Ellen Greve

Treasurer, Chief Executive, Royal Dutch Guide Dog School

Takahoshi Nakano

Board Member, Japan Guide Dog Association

Dr James Kutsch

Board Member/Accreditation Committee Liaison, President & Chief Executive, The Seeing Eye Inc. USA

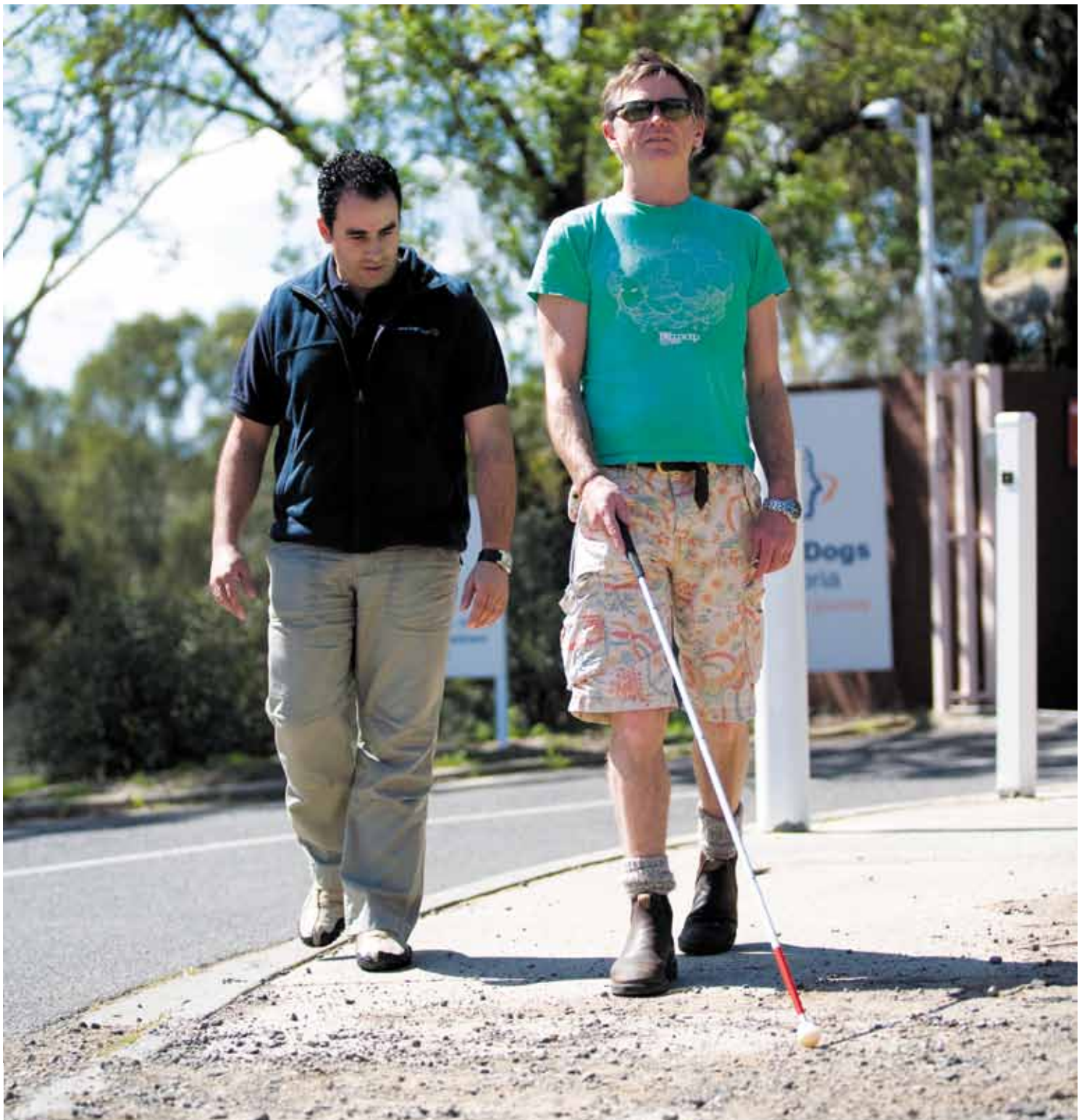
Hans Damn

Director, Association Les Chiens Guides d'Aveugles de l'Ouest, France

John Gosling

Board/Development Committee Liaison, Manager International Guide Dog Services, Guide Dogs Victoria



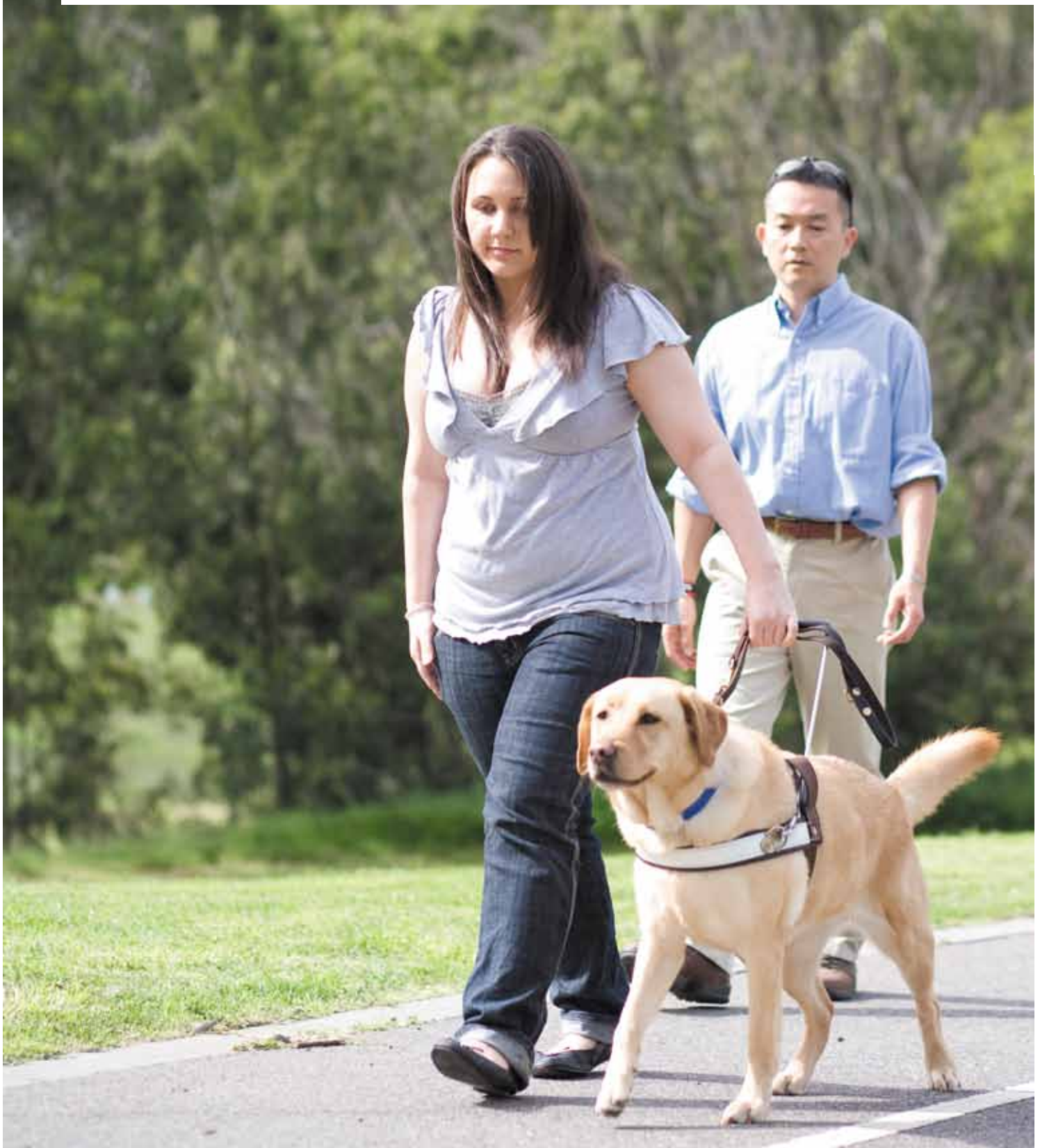


Client Services at a Glance

Completed training and support programs	2,517
Clients assisted	1,561
New clients assisted	475
Referrals	1,195
Contact, Support and Travel hours	26,504

Guide Dog Stats

Graduate Guide Dogs	32
Current Victorian Guide Dog users	187
Dog Training hours	9,002
Guide Dog pups born	162



Guide Dog Mobility

It has been an exciting year in the Guide Dog Services team. We have been busy enhancing our systems and processes to improve the services we provide every day to our clients. Our focus for the year has been on achieving critical results in the areas of safety, quality and the timely supply of services to our valued clients.

This has been achieved by reducing the average waiting time for acquiring a Guide Dog from 209 days down to 119 days. The Guide Dog Services team has also developed an outcome standard procedure which details the quality level required for a team to work effectively in the community. This is currently being incorporated into our documentation and quality assurance system to enable a reproducible and consistent quality of service to our clients. This document is the first of its kind within the industry, and we are setting the benchmark globally as an organization.

The team has also undertaken a series of workshops to explore what Guide Dogs Victoria's values mean to them and how they can be applied to daily interactions with clients and stakeholders. There were a number of values identified, with staff rating the top five as:

- Professionalism
- Honesty
- Innovativeness
- Delivering a quality service
- Recognizing the good work undertaken by our team, clients and stakeholders.

We have again exceeded expectations and now have a record number of working Guide Dog teams in Victoria, with 187 partnerships (up from 175 in 2009/10). Demand has continued to increase and we are delivering more fully trained Guide Dogs to keep waiting times down. This year we partnered 32 new Guide Dog teams in Victoria and ended the year with 19 clients on the waiting list. In addition, there were 10 dogs placed as assistance dogs through our Pets as Therapy and Companion Dog programs.

An additional six dogs were sent to Guide Dog schools nationally and internationally to assist the development of other schools within the International Guide Dog Federation. The Guide Dog Mobility team ran a total of 563 programs for 254 clients requiring initial or ongoing mobility training in and around their home and work environments.

Guide Dog Mobility Stats

Number of Programs	563
Clients Assisted	254



Training Kennels and Veterinary Clinic

The Training Kennel and Vet Clinic department ensures the safety, temperamental and physical wellbeing of our dogs housed in the on-campus kennels throughout the year. Our dedicated team of 24 full time, part time and casual staff remain more committed than ever to providing high quality care to all of our puppies and dogs.

The redevelopment of the kennels, which began late last year, has been completed. This new expansion will provide an additional 20 kennel spaces, which meet and exceed the recommended industry standard. Dogs will be well catered for as each space is fitted with a viewing window, floor heating for cold days, and evaporative cooling for those hot summer months.

A significant milestone was reached by Professor Emeritus Virginia Studdert, who retired after 28 years of dedicated service at Guide Dogs Victoria as a Consultant Veterinarian. Her departure was honoured with a wonderful presentation by the GDV staff and CEO. In February 2011, our veterinary team welcomed her successor, Dr Elaine Ong from the Box Hill Veterinary Clinic, who has been working effectively with Guide Dogs Victoria's volunteers, Guide Dog users and staff.

One noteworthy initiative was introduced this year, the Volunteer Environmental Enrichment Team, which aims to enhance the mental wellbeing of our kennel dogs. All dogs have their own temperament and some of them find staying in kennels for extended periods challenging. This new team will provide the dogs with one on one time, massages, lead walking and extended play time. We are very excited about this new initiative and trust it will be of great benefit to our Guide Dogs.

We'd like to also thank all of our supporters who contributed to the Wish List this year, allowing us to purchase essential items such as winter coats for kennel staff, new plastic kennels for admission yards, hoses, pools and interactive toys to further enhance dogs' wellbeing and provide mental stimulation. It has been an exciting year overall with the team looking forward to continue improving the service provided to all our stakeholders during the next financial year.



We Feed and Recommend ADVANCE

With 162 puppies born in our breeding centre this year, we have a lot of hungry mouths to feed. Keeping our dogs in optimal condition throughout their life is a key part in raising them to become working Guide Dogs.

We are very fortunate to have the ongoing support of ADVANCE which provides high quality super-premium dog food made in Australia. It is ideal for our growing Guide Dogs, from birth to adulthood. ADVANCE supplies us with the right food for every stage of our dogs' development.

Thank you ADVANCE for your continued support.



Graduates

Guide Dog Graduates

Barney

Bart

Daphne

Donna

Haley

Helga

Hetty

Hughie

Imrod

Inca

Innis

Magnus

Max

Ned

Oman

Pippa

Queena

Rindy

Robbie

Sereeta

Trapper

Trooper

Valli

Vanya

Virgil

Weylin

Willa

Xavier

Yasmin

Zeke

Zelia

Zen

Pets as Therapy Dogs

Owning a Pets as Therapy dog provides an opportunity for children who are blind or vision impaired to learn to care for and relate to a dog. As a wonderful companion providing unconditional love, the dog enables the child to feel more confident and less isolated.

Cadel

Ronan

Companion Dogs

Our Companion Dogs program provides gentle, patient dogs for children and adults who have a physical or intellectual impairment. Companion Dogs bring enjoyment to the whole family, offering unconditional love to their owner and the benefit of regular exercise and responsibility.

Adam

Hogan

Steffi

Carlyn

Odeene

Vidar

Delia

Sharrod

Ambassador Dogs

Our Ambassador Dogs are specially chosen dogs who just love attention! These dogs help Guide Dogs Victoria by attending public events and allowing people to get up close for a cuddle, without removing a working Guide Dog from their duties.

Walton

Oliver (retired August 2011)



Private Haven Loses Sight, Not Vision

At only 19 years of age, Liam Haven was left virtually blind as a result of his service in the Iraq war as a soldier. Today he is 23 years old and has the reliable support of Guide Dog Omen to help him get about. Although he initially turned down suggestions of getting a Guide Dog, he now admits that it was the best decision he could have made for his safety and independence.

In what can only be described as extraordinary bad luck, Liam was scheduled to leave Iraq 14 days after the vehicle he was travelling in was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device (a road-side bomb). As a result, he received cuts to his face and cheeks, but undoubtedly the most damaging impact was to his eyes. After receiving initial treatment on the ground, Liam was shipped off to Germany where doctors removed his left eye which had been severely damaged. He also became virtually blind in his right eye.

When he returned to his hometown of Perth, Liam had reservations about getting a Guide Dog as he felt it wouldn't suit his lifestyle. He explains how he wasn't interested at all and was happy to get about with his white cane. However, after moving to Melbourne for work and study purposes, he realised it would be much more efficient to have a Guide Dog.

"It's also made getting about a lot faster and I don't have to rely on holding onto someone like I did before. Having a Guide Dog also means I have an all access pass – I can go everywhere



with him. And of course people offer me help when they see that I have a Guide Dog," he says.

Liam admits that Omen likes to sleep a lot. However, when it's time to get on the move, Omen is happy to get out the door and take long walks. He says that Omen gets teased sometimes for walking Liam into door frames. Liam is quite tall and robust, so walking together they cover a substantial space and occasionally he bumps his shoulder on the door. But despite this, Liam praises Omen as a great dog, as well as a terrific Guide Dog.

Liam may have lost his sight, but he certainly hasn't lost his vision. He is currently learning Portuguese and is preparing to study Psychology at University next year. His goal is to specialise in post-traumatic stress disorder. "Having gone through this, along with having a Psychology degree, I think I'd be quite useful in this area to Defence and other organisations," he says.





Children's Mobility Service

Guide Dogs Victoria provides a specialised service for vision impaired and blind students. We believe Orientation & Mobility training should be an ongoing part of a child's development in order to enhance their confidence, develop age appropriate skills and achieve their highest potential in all aspects of life.

The Children's Mobility Service (CMS) instructors continue to provide Orientation & Mobility training in students' homes, school and local community environments. The instructors work very closely with parents and carers to develop a specifically tailored program for the individual child in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. The majority of the programs are completed in the student's local community.



Children's Mobility Service camps and group programs have remained a highlight of activities in the team. Throughout the year, a number of group programs and camps were run which provided an opportunity for students to come together and learn more about safe and independent travel. Guide Dogs Victoria marks this collaborative learning with other students who have vision impairment as an important objective of the program. Our highly trained instructors work to ensure these programs remain enjoyable as well as educational, and we try to keep students as engaged as possible.

Each group program has a different focus and is targeted at different age groups. This year we ran group programs for both junior and senior students, including visits to the Grampians and the University of Melbourne. Our two junior programs, 'So you think you can Move!' and 'Choose your own adventure', helped to develop their problem solving and decision making skills. It also increased their personal confidence in areas of public transport and self-advocacy skills.

The CMS team supports programs run by the Statewide Vision Resource Centre (SVRC). We provide Orientation & Mobility for children who attend the Support Skills program at SVRC.

Guide Dogs Victoria runs Orientation & Mobility courses in conjunction with La Trobe University. In 2010, three students completed the La Trobe University Graduate Diploma in Orientation & Mobility, and a further four students will complete the course by the end of 2011.

We recognise the wonderful support of RACV Community Partnerships funding for children's group programs at Guide Dogs Victoria.

Children's Mobility Stats

Number of Programs	537
Clients Assisted	287



Facing the Future With Confidence

At 12 years old, Tyrone Curtain is facing more challenges than your average child. Tyrone was born with a vision impairment caused by Retinopathy of Prematurity, which means he has no vision in his right eye and reduced acuity in the left. Two years ago, on the advice of his orthoptist, his right eye needed to be removed as it was causing him severe headaches. There was no other viable treatment available.

Like most children, Tyrone frequently changes his mind about what he wants to be when he grows up. From a policeman, to working with computers, to working with Guide Dog puppies, Tyrone won't let his vision loss affect his dreams. As he seeks more independence, his love of dogs could lead him down the path of one day having a Guide Dog of his own.

Tyrone has been receiving mobility assistance from Guide Dogs Victoria's Children's Mobility Service (CMS) for the last six years, including help in gaining confidence and improving his skill using a long cane. Other practical support involved an environmental assessment of Tyrone's school by an instructor who made simple but effective recommendations which could make the area safer for him to navigate, such as painting the stair edges yellow to make them more visible.

When he was in Grade Four, Tyrone had initially been excited about a school camp at Philip Island. However, at the last minute, he decided not to go because he said "he felt scared" and didn't have the confidence he has today. So this year, before a school camp to take place at Sovereign Hill, his Mobility instructor took him to the site prior to the camp, allowing him to get a feel of the place and be able to navigate safely with his long cane. This significantly boosted his skills and confidence, ensuring he could enjoy the camp as much as everyone else.

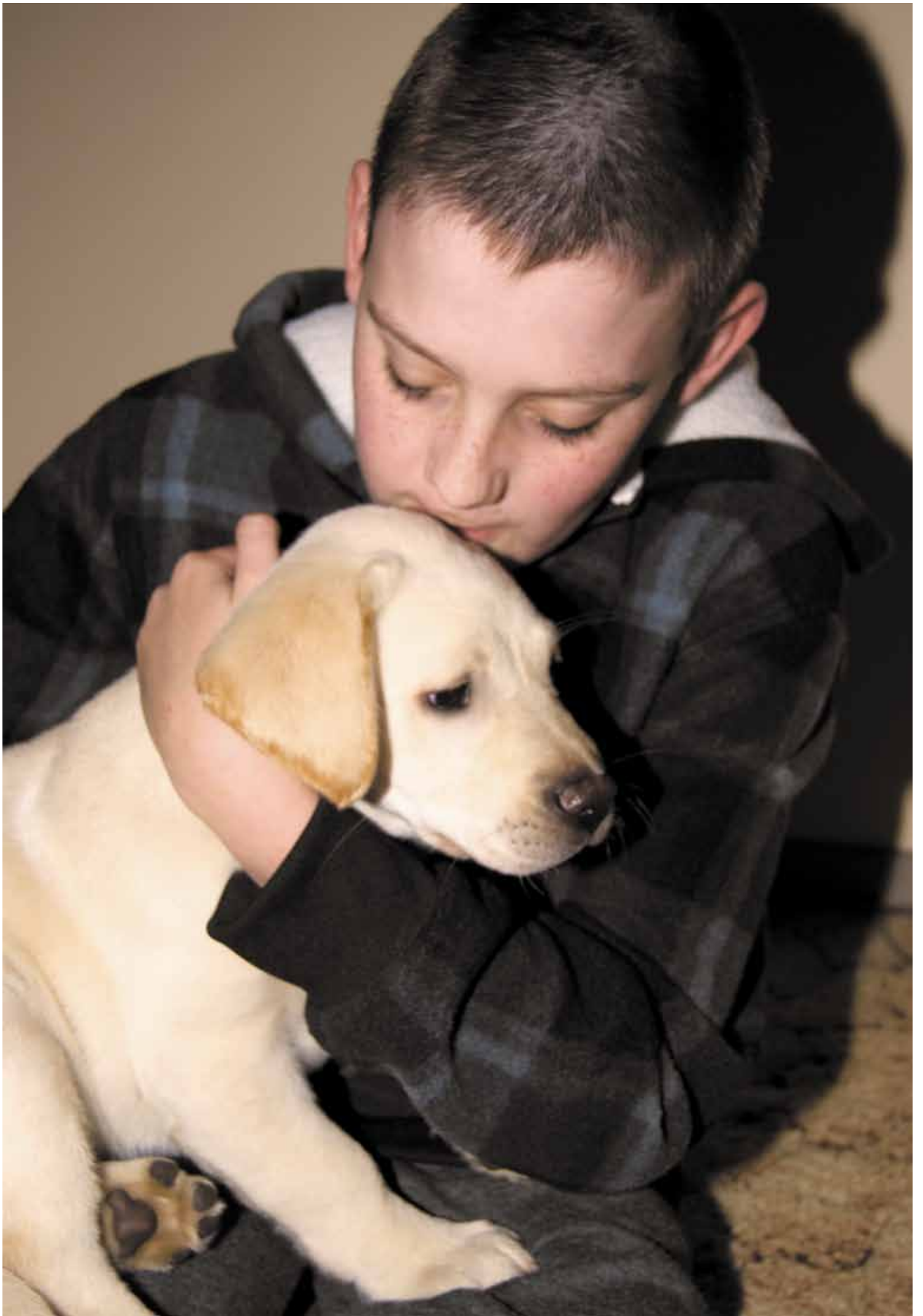
Tyrone's mother, Michelle has always encouraged him to attend GDV's children's camps to increase his independence. He has attended three CMS camps over the last few years and is planning to attend the one in September. Michelle says that by participating in such camps, Tyrone has learnt to be more independent and he enjoys the opportunity to associate with other children who are vision impaired. "Everyone's the same - there's no hurtful taunting of 'you're blind' or 'you've got one eye' or 'you're a freak'," she says.

Michelle recalls she didn't know Tyrone would be eligible for any help from Guide Dogs Victoria or how they could assist him. "When Tyrone's vision first started to deteriorate, I just thought, 'What

can we do to help him?' His Occupational Therapy instructor gave us some great ideas – practical advice on tying his shoelaces, using his cutlery, hygiene, showering and toileting. And it definitely reduces the family's stress - that burden of not knowing what to do. And even now, I know I can get on the phone when I'm stuck and GDV is there to support us," she says.

Guide Dogs Victoria will be there for Tyrone as he matures and faces different challenges – such as his transition to high school. He could need specific orientation sessions to help him navigate around his new school grounds and training in how to use public transport to get to school safely and independently. Guide Dogs Victoria, through our Children's Mobility Service will be there for Tyrone, helping him meet any future challenges with confidence.





Orientation & Mobility

Orientation & Mobility (O&M) Instructors can make a real difference by providing an alternative travel route, strategies for safe travel within the environment or advocating for modifications if they are essential for safety. Over the last 12 months, Guide Dogs Victoria delivered 417 Orientation & Mobility programs, a jump of 34 from the previous year. We assisted and provided services to 291 clients across the state.

In this time, the department's instructors collectively spent their time on direct client activities equipping people who are vision impaired to move safely and independently in their own environments.

The O&M team utilised several resources to give vision impaired adults every opportunity to move about confidently using their mobility aids, such as long canes and electronic devices. A new DVD for the service, titled, "A Journey to Independence" was launched in September and will be made available to health professionals, prospective clients and their families. We'd like to thank Jacqui Stevens for the editing and voice over recording of the DVD, as well as the Alana Shaw Trust for funding the project, and John-Ross Barresi for his hard work in overseeing this initiative.

There remains a great interest in and need for the Young Adults Program (YAP), which marks its fourth year in operation this year. Three events were run in the program, including a Melbourne Food Lover's Tour, Melbourne Chocolate Hunt, and the YAP Dinner and Meeting. A total of 33 clients participated in the Young Adults Program this financial year.

A paper co-authored by Shane McSweeney and Sophie Mebalds titled "Health and Wellness Program", was presented at the Australasian Mobility Conference in Sydney in November 2011 and gained excellent feedback. The conference provided an opportunity for our O&M instructors to network with other colleagues and instructors.

The O&M team gathered in Sydney at the Alliance meeting with their counterparts from NSW/ACT and Tasmania to discuss a Group Program concept whereby states could share resources, ideas and even co-run programs in the future. Another topic of interest was how the use of GPS and electronic aids could enhance clients' orientation and mobility.

Through increased focus, Guide Dogs Victoria was successful in negotiating changes to access points to achieve safer mobility outcomes for clients in various municipalities. Frankston City

Council worked with the O&M team to observe the challenges facing vision impaired people with road crossings and was even given the opportunity to see firsthand what it would be like to be vision impaired under a blindfold walk with a long cane. This resulted in a full school crossing upgrade and installation of two sets of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs) to assist clients travelling in the Frankston area.

In collaboration with Vision Australia, Guide Dogs Victoria was also able to influence the Department of Transport to make changes to the Dandenong Bus Interchange. Five TGSIs were installed to indicate the location of bus bays and one obstructing pole was removed. Our O&M instructors were involved in training programs run by the Department of Transport, where they shared their knowledge in accessibility issues and challenges facing people with vision impairment.

Orientation and Mobility Stats

Number of Programs	417
Clients Assisted	291



Ron Gains Confidence With Cane Training

Cane training is an important part of gaining confidence and independence for anyone who is blind or vision impaired. Guide Dogs Victoria has always encouraged its clients to keep up their cane skills as much as possible in case they don't have access to a Guide Dog. One client, Ron Williams, discovered just how important this was, when his beloved Guide Dog Dez passed away.

After Ron was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), he began training with a long cane which he used for 10 years. He decided to apply for a Guide Dog after his family encouraged him to do so and says it was a "fantastic" decision.

Ron and Dez worked together for nine years, until late April this year when Dez passed away from spinal cancer. Whilst waiting to receive a new Guide Dog, Ron wanted to maintain the same level of freedom and independence he had experienced with Dez, so he dusted off the long cane he had been so comfortable with all those years ago.

"I didn't think I'd need a cane if I had the dog. But when Dez passed away I had to go on the Guide Dog waiting list and back to using a cane," he says.

Despite Ron being highly trained and experienced in using the cane, he says his self confidence had gone and the fear of going outside had settled in

his mind. "I thought what was I going to do? How was I getting out of here? I had that fear of going out the front door. I don't know why. I just didn't have the confidence," he says.

To overcome these fears and resume his highly independent life, Ron contacted Guide Dogs Victoria to brush up on his cane skills. Ron's Orientation and Mobility instructor helped him to re-learn some of the basics he'd forgotten from all those years ago.

With his updated skills, Ron can now find different ways home, and predict and avoid obstacles, ensuring safe and independent travel. Ron says his recent re-training with the cane has helped boost his confidence and his Orientation and Mobility Instructor has been a huge support to help reinforce the skills needed in independent travel with the long cane. He understands now why it is so important to keep up regular cane practice, whether you have a Guide Dog or not.

"You should still have the cane up to date – remember the techniques, such as keeping the cane displayed in front of you," says Ron.



Occupational Therapy

As part of Guide Dogs Victoria's commitment to help clients enhance their personal freedom and confidence, we offer a specialised Occupational Therapy service for people who have difficulties with daily life skills as a result of vision impairment and associated cognitive, sensory and motor limitations. During the year, our Occupational Therapist conducted 266 programs and assisted 116 clients throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria.

We provide a range of services and client-specific training programs that can occur in the home, school, workplace, or other community facilities. The assessments and training reflect individuals' personal goals and needs. This may include training to teach or re-learn skills in preparing meals, domestic management, money handling and payment of bills, home assessments, and upper limb and hand therapy.



In addition, the Occupational Therapy service attempts to maximise therapy resources through specialised group programs that promote learning, development of independent living skills and maximise meaningful human participation in the local community. The QJ's (Over 35's) Program specialises in re-engaging human activity for clients who primarily experience vision impairment in their adult years such as Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) related vision loss. The chief purpose of the group is to create opportunities for clients to develop problem solving abilities in order to resume previously enjoyed activities and interests. Our highly successful young men's program, Adrenaline, is in its fourth year and aims to develop each member's awareness of leadership, responsibility and logistical planning.

Earlier this year, we had the honour of presenting our research from the Adrenaline Men's Program to the International Society of Physical Rehabilitation Medicine Conference in Puerto Rico. The research focused on understanding each member's initial

capacity to carry out several living tasks as tested through standardised assessments prior to completing their first Adrenaline Program. The presentation was able to portray the strengths and limitations experienced by young men with vision impairment in comparison to a similar age group of men with no vision impairment.

Guide Dogs Victoria has continued to develop a relationship with the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH), thus allowing our Occupational Therapist to have frequent contact with Doctors, Physiotherapists, other Occupational Therapists and nursing staff in order to discuss mutually beneficial opportunities. Discussions include offering associated vision impairment diagnoses, support assessments, enhanced RMH staff awareness of the full range of Guide Dogs Victoria's mobility services and creating referral opportunities from RMH to Guide Dogs Victoria.

Occupational Therapy Stats

Number of Programs	266
Clients Assisted	116



Family Life Returns

Meindert Withoff, a husband and father of four, was 45 when a stroke paralysed the left side of his body, also causing significant vision loss. The stroke left him with a hemianopia (reduced visual field) in his left eye and no vision at all in his right. Before this occurred, he had a promising career as a mechanical design engineer, but losing his vision brought an end to the work he thoroughly enjoyed. He approached Guide Dogs Victoria to assist him in resuming the things he loved doing, including fishing and gradually returning to work.



He started working with Guide Dog Victoria's (ABI) Orientation & Mobility instructors in early 2009 to help him move independently around his hometown, including going to the shops safely. But he also wanted to be able to do the usual 'dad' things he used to do, such as washing dishes, cooking family meals, and showering and dressing himself. Meindert has successfully progressed towards achieving these goals with additional help from GDV's Occupational Therapist.

The home program provided by our Occupational Therapist has also helped to improve the function of Meindert's paralysed upper limb. Specialised stretching and strengthening exercises assist in creating helpful movement patterns to support his daily activities and personal goals. He is currently

also working on his time management skills, re-learning computer skills, problem solving, catching public transport and getting back to helping out in the kitchen.

Since Meindert has been working with Guide Dogs Victoria's Occupational Therapist, he says, "I am more independent with showering and getting dressed. Before, I would need the help of a carer. Now I do it all on my own. You don't know the effects a stroke has on you, you don't know what you can and can't do and you become very insecure. It looks like life is empty. But this training has brought back meaning to my life".



Acquired Brain Injury

The Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Mobility Service provides a specialised assessment and training program for clients who have vision loss caused by a brain injury. Our highly trained and professional Instructors completed 408 programs in the last 12 months and assisted 302 ABI clients.

Along with the Occupational Therapy and Orientation & Mobility department, the ABI team was also present at the Australasian Mobility Conference and the Alliance Meeting with other Guide Dog associations in Sydney. The main topic of discussion was the ageing equipment we are operating with and the associated challenges.

To address this, our ABI instructors took the lead on a new project called the Vision Assessment and Training Tool (VATT) Mark 2. The VATT is used for assessing a person's visual neglect/inattention as a result of a brain injury affecting their functional vision, in addition to training a person to compensate for a visual neglect or field loss.

A series of seminars was conducted for clients throughout the year, once again attracting great interest from our client group. The format of the program has continued to evolve through feedback from our clients and has resulted in us continuously improving the quality of

information and outcomes for the clients, their families and carers.

Another set of seminars aimed at health professionals has proved to be popular. Three sessions were conducted during the year to better inform Health Professionals about our ABI Mobility Service. The format of the program has been continuously improved and includes a client speaker detailing their story of how rehabilitation services have changed their lives for the better.

Acquired Brain Injury Stats

Number of Programs	408
Clients Assisted	302



Simple Techniques Make a World of Difference

When Trevor Mouat suffered a right parietal stroke this year, it changed his whole world. He was three months short of retiring when it happened, forcing him to end his IT career at the City of Melbourne earlier than he had planned.

Trevor mistook the moment of the stroke for vertigo (a sensation that one's self or the environment is moving) – which he had often experienced. He therefore brushed off any suggestions of going to the hospital. "Nah, I'm a bloke," he said. However, later at night he started having trouble seeing people's faces. The next morning he felt a strange tingle in his left fingers and bottom lip. That was the moment he realised something was wrong. As a result of the stroke, he developed a left homonymous hemianopia (left visual field loss in both eyes), a slower speed of processing information, his spatial awareness was reduced and he became unaware of things on his left side.

There is often a misconception that this kind of vision loss occurs through direct damage to the eye. In fact, people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) often experience vision loss because the brain is unable to correctly interpret visual information. The ABI Mobility Service at Guide Dogs Victoria worked with Trevor to help him regain his confidence and independence despite his loss of left peripheral vision.



Trevor admits that the biggest impact on him has been the sudden inability to drive his car. "My wife and I both love our motor homes and caravans – that was our thing. But it also means a fairly large loss of independence which affects us both," he explains. Trevor was someone who typically had a good sense of his surroundings. Now, he often finds himself getting lost in familiar environments. Processing too much information at once has also become arduous. He describes it as if, "the autopilot's been turned off," and everything he does now requires conscious thought and consideration.

Guide Dogs Victoria's ABI Mobility Specialist has been working with Trevor to help him achieve his number one goal – to independently access his community, and in particular, safely take public transport to Bunnings. As an avid handyman, he yearns for the days where he could jump in his car and pick up any last minute materials. The vital thing for him to develop during his mobility training is to carry out a compensatory scan of his environment to ensure he does not overlook things on his left side. "There was a period of time when I thought I wouldn't be able to travel independently again, but I now know that's not true. The techniques I have learnt have helped me a lot in my particular situation," says Trevor.

Marketing & Fundraising

Despite a difficult economic environment, the Victorian public continued to provide generous support to all Marketing and Fundraising activities. Innovation during this period of tightly controlled expenditure, and commitment from staff, ensured growth was maintained in many areas. Highlights during the year included:

- Introduction of a new fundraising event, Victoria's Biggest Dog Wash, which has huge potential for growth in future years: over 240 dogs were washed on one day, raising over \$10,000.
- A "Gold for Goldie" day promoting awareness of our Collection Dog program in the CBD. Gold coin donations increased by 74 per cent on the day and over \$10,000 was raised.
- Unaided brand awareness within the community continued to increase at each survey period during the year.
- Increased volunteer hours contributed to the work of the Marketing Department and in various Guide Dog and Client Services programs.
- Significant increases in funding from Trusts and Foundations, including \$95,000 from the Erica Foundation for state-of-the art X-Ray facilities and \$80,000 from RACV Foundation to fund Children's Mobility Camps.
- Growth in membership of the Otus Fellowship program, those people who have chosen to include Guide Dogs Victoria in their Will.
- Increased fundraising by schools and community groups, which enabled many out-of-reach items to be purchased from our 'Wish List'.
- Direct Mail and Appeals income delivered strong results throughout the year, thanks to the loyalty of our supporters.

We are indebted to thousands of people and organisations for their generous financial and in-kind support which ensures we can continue to provide free services to our blind and vision impaired clients.

They include our major corporate partners ADVANCE, Coles, Kimberley Clark and Merial, which provide critical pro-bono, in-kind and financial support that is directed to our Guide Dog and client services. Media partners the Herald Sun, Network 10 and 3AW, all continue to be great advocates for our organisation, and we appreciate their support.

The Marketing team would like to thank our most passionate and committed supporters: members of our Otus Fellowship, regular donors, corporates and Trusts & Foundations. They loyally contribute in so many ways – by funding specific items, to responding to our various appeals, including the loyal members of our Puppy Sponsorship program.



Run Melbourne



Dog Wash Day



Gold for Goldie Day



Collingwood player Leigh Brown with puppy Leigh

Will to Leave an Enduring Legacy

Gail Bradley's support for Guide Dogs Victoria has no boundaries. She joined the Puppy Raising program 15 years ago and has raised six Guide Dog puppies during that time. Gail and her husband Keith Francis, are currently helping to raise and socialise black Labrador Tammy. She has also generously chosen to leave a Bequest in her Will to ensure future prospective Guide Dogs have every opportunity to succeed.

After a parachuting accident left her with multiple broken bones and months of painful rehabilitation in hospital, Gail had a profound realisation. Although she had suffered, she was remarkably lucky to retain her sight. Gail began to wonder what she could do to help those with vision impairment.

This new found drive and a love of puppies led her to the perfect decision of becoming a Puppy Raiser. "It suited my love of dogs, but it also met my need to give people some sort of sight back," she says. And she knew just who to ask. Her sister Trish had already raised 15 wonderful Guide Dog puppies. It seemed the love of our cause ran in the family.

With no children of her own, Gail saw her six Guide Dog puppies whom she helped raise, as "her beneficiaries". So leaving a Bequest to Guide Dogs seemed to be the natural and obvious decision. She explains how there's an enduring element in leaving a legacy through a Bequest. "What I've worked for in my life is going to go on helping the thing that has meant more to me than almost anything else."

Most Puppy Raisers will admit that giving up their dog for assessment is difficult. Gail agrees that there's certainly that absence in the beginning, but seeing them pass and continue through the stages of becoming a Guide Dog is well worth the initial sadness of saying goodbye.

She says, "Later when you see them again, matched with the vision impaired person, they're not your dog any more. The difference is now you admire, love and look at someone else's dog. Although your own connection with that dog is diminished, it is never broken. I have an incredible bond with Tammy. She and I have bonded at the heart."



Vale Holly Rechter OAM

Known to family and friends as Holly, Edith Holford Rechter was a loving mother, wife and philanthropist. Her involvement in community work was extensive, but she will notably be remembered for her involvement, with her husband Ken Rechter, in the establishment of the National Guide Dog Training Centre in Kew - now Guide Dogs Victoria.

In recognition of her voluntary community services, Holly was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1983, in particular for her service to the City of Caulfield, Caulfield Grammar School and Guide Dogs Victoria.

Holly dedicated fifty years as a member of the Toorak Ladies Auxiliary for Guide Dogs Victoria,

and was its long serving President. In recognition of her services, she was appointed Vice Patron of Guide Dogs Victoria in 1998.

Holly passed away peacefully in March 2011 surrounded by her husband and family. She has left a significant legacy to both her family and the community as someone who made a difference to the lives and welfare of others.

Volunteers

Guide Dogs Victoria is extremely grateful for the valuable contribution its Volunteers make by assisting with various activities, including administration, gardening and maintenance, walking dogs, helping with collection dogs and tours, Puppy Raising, working in the kennels, and assisting with the client recreation program.

Currently, we have 168 registered campus volunteers. This past financial year, campus volunteers worked 9617.50 hours, which equated to nearly five full time workers.

Our 288 puppy raisers make a huge contribution by socialising our beautiful puppies over a period of 12 to 14 months.

Our special event volunteers also offer their time to assist at our major events, including Open Day, Dog Wash Day and Gold for Goldie Day.

Volunteer Support

Open Day	140
Dog Wash Day	63
Gold for Goldie Day	30
Puppy Raising	288



Capital Appeal

On 6 November 2011, we will celebrate the opening of the new kennel facility. This will be the culmination of two years' hard work by the Capital Appeal Committee, Chaired by Miss Betty Amsden OAM, and her team. We would again like to thank all those individuals, companies and foundations for their generosity in contributing over \$1.7 million to the Appeal. We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Victorian Government through their grant of \$20,000 towards the facility upgrade.

With the wide range of facilities at our Kew campus, the need to identify and address areas that require upgrading, repainting and repair must continue to ensure we maintain our high standard of operations, including in dog hygiene welfare, and to support staff effectiveness throughout our whole breeding and kennel facilities at Kew. To this end, donations for capital purposes are always welcome.



Centre for Vision Independence

The Centre for Vision Independence (CVI) has seen another very busy and productive year. We are pleased to see growth in our client contact, with our client base growing to almost 300 and more than 350 client programs being delivered.

The number of Victorians who are blind and vision impaired requiring our services looks set to increase in the future, which is why we strongly focused on consolidating and expanding CVI services amongst community groups and the broader community of health professionals.

Strong emphasis has always been placed on the fact that CVI is a free service that provides low vision equipment at cost price, and its popularity is reflected in the return visits made by our clients. The smooth transition from CVI services to GDV services operated effectively throughout the year for those who required them. We are looking forward to further growth in the year ahead.



Telemarketing

In its 29th year, Guide Dogs Victoria's Telemarketing function continues to prosper despite the retail slump. This is thanks to our loyal existing and new customers who support us. Once again, our Guide Dog Calendar won 1st Prize in the Printing Industries' Craftsmanship Awards in Victoria for 'Excellence in Print'. Forty-five thousand were sold in 2010 as well as 22,500 packs of Christmas Cards.

Our range of products includes Australian made towels and tea towels, including manchester with puppy borders, kitchen specialty products, children's books and activity sets, cook books, AFL licensed product, MasterChef licensed product, and much more.

Sales of our branded goods have continued to increase over the year with new designs in our puppy throw rugs, cushions, ironing board covers, picnic/travel rug, GDV umbrellas, and caps. Loyal customers just love our products with Labrador puppies.

Opulence pillows have continued to sell well for the second year and we are headed towards our second milestone of 7,000 when Specialty Quilts will again give us 100 pillows for every 3,500 sold.

Livinia Skincare is a new product for us which is handmade in Narre Warren, Victoria and includes all natural and organic skincare products.

Our strong relationship continues with major suppliers such as Australian Weaving Mills, Dryen, Linen House, Killarney, Morris & Morris Consulting, St Alban's Textiles, Ashdene, Bambury, Specialty Quilts, Custom International, Livinia Skincare, McPhersons, CA Australia, Global Printing, Tyrrell's Winery (Hunter Valley) and Yering Farm Wines (Yarra Valley).

Our People

This financial year, Guide Dogs Victoria employed 197 staff, 104 of them whom were full time, to support our blind and vision impaired clients. It was a year of staff consolidation to ensure we are able to meet financial objectives, yet retain our services to clients.

We have developed a plan to guide future Guide Dogs Victoria staff employment, aligning our people initiatives around:

- Retaining a compelling brand, a cause and workplace that attracts talented people.
- Strong and engaging leadership, in an environment that generates sustainable high performance.
- Accelerated people development, retaining talented people in a challenging future.

Continual improvements were identified through peer and manager reviews and in leading a benchmarking conference with other State and Territory Guide Dogs Associations.

We have retained accreditation with the International Guide Dog Federation and made further progress towards certification to reflect the "Standards for Disability Services in Victoria", ensuring people with disabilities maximise opportunities to take part in community life.

In partnership with RMIT, Guide Dogs Victoria has made a major investment in learning through the Diploma of Management Program. A Learning Plan has also been developed to extend relevant certificated training programs over the next 12 months.

Occupational Health & Safety

We remain committed to promoting a safe and healthy work environment for staff and visitors. We have also continued to provide an external support service, conducted online and face-to-face training programs, and implemented both an injury prevention and injury management strategy that engages our staff, creates a safe work environment, and partners with external stakeholders.

Our OH&S team has reviewed and improved the manual handling practices and revised the induction program.

We are also developing management capability to improve performance in OH&S. Given our systematic approach to OH&S risk management, our lost time injury rate for the year is 65 days (compared to 57 days last year). Our premiums retain favourable comparison with others in the industry, with latest data indicating a 15 per cent better than industry average, reversing the four per cent worse than industry average the previous year.

Taking the Lead

Message from Karen Hayes, newly appointed Chief Executive Officer

I am very much looking forward to taking up my appointment as CEO of Guide Dogs Victoria early in the new financial year. It is clear that GDV has an extremely talented and dedicated team who are committed to delivering high quality Guide Dogs and mobility services to assist blind and vision impaired Victorians.

The year ahead will see us take the organisation to the next phase of our growth and to further evolve in terms of the services we provide and the opportunities they create for our clients, employees and volunteers. We have a solid foundation to build on and our goal will be to "Take the Lead" in everything we do and to build on the great work that has been done over the past 54 years.

While we already assist thousands of people each year, we will be looking to broaden our reach to those whom we support, and to strengthen our relationships with those who so generously support us in the great work we do.

GDV is extremely proud of being recognised as a leader in our field and we will continue to invest in the organisation to enhance our already envied reputation. The further development of our people and our unique mobility services and training facilities will also be key areas of focus for us in the year ahead.

I am looking forward to leading this iconic organisation at this very exciting time and to working with the team to deliver service excellence and outstanding results.



Karen Hayes

