Guide Dogs Victoria’s On the Move – May 2017 Bulletin

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# Tips for reading this newsletter

If you would like to increase the text size on your screen:

* Using the keyboard
	+ 1. Press ALT+W, and then press Q.
		2. Press the TAB key repeatedly until the **Percent** box is selected, and then type a percentage or press UP ARROW or DOWN ARROW to select a percentage.
* Using the mouse
	+ 1. On the View tab, in the Zoom group, click Zoom.
		2. Click the zoom setting that you want or type a percentage in the Percent box.

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# Editor’s update

During May we are all working hard to prepare for the June launch of our amazing social enterprise and Melbourne attraction – Dialogue in the Dark. This is such an amazing initiative and we hope that it will raise public awareness , along with providing some great job opportunities for many people who have low vision or who are blind, over the coming years.

In this edition of On The Move we report back on the award winners for our inaugural Community Access Award, which took place at the end of April. Thankyou so much for all your great nominations. You can continue to submit stories of great community access throughout the year to marketing@guidedogsvictoria.com.au, for the 2017/18 awards!

Look out for June’s edition in a few weeks with a report from our Grand prix experience winners!

Sophie Wild

Bulletin Editor

# Upcoming programs and events for your diary

* **Our Choice Expo for Eastern Melbourne & surrounds – please give it a go if you live in the area!:** 7th June 2017 10.30am-4pm, State Basket Ball Centre, Wantirna. Having attended many of these Expos around Victoria we at GDV highly recommend them, they are a great way of getting information about a variety of organisations that can support you with equipment & assistive technology, therapeutic supports, accommodation & housing options, rights & complaints info, personal care & community access, all under the one roof. Come and visit the Guide Dogs Victoria stand and talk with our experts about the upcoming NDIS and how we can help. Entry is free, no booking is necessary.
* **Meet Melbourne Mobility Group Program**: 27 – 28th June. Lock this one in! Two days, one night, and a whole lot of Melbourne Mobility Mischief! Contact CSAdmin@guidedogsvictoria.com.au or call 1800 804 805.
* **Understanding Acquired Brain Injury and Low Vision** – 24th May, 23rd August and 8th November. A one-day information program for people with vision changes secondary to an acquired brain injury (ABI).  The day will aim to help you and your family gain an understanding of how vision can change following an ABI, such as stroke, accident, surgery, tumour or other brain injury.  It will investigate how changes to the brain’s function can impact on mobility in unexpected ways.  The day will also provide an opportunity to share experiences with people of all ages, and their families, who have low vision or blindness from an ABI. Places are limited to so please book your place by emailing CSAdmin@guidedogsvictoria.com.au or call 1800 804 805.
* **Young Adults Program (YAP):** Connecting young people (approximate age 18-30) with low vision or blindness for discussions and fun activities. YAP sessions run bi-monthly throughout the year. Contact rachelh@guidedogsvictoria.com.au for more information.

**You’re invited! Social events**

* **22nd June – Trivia Night in aid of GDV at the Hellenic Republic in Kew:** Join us for a very special Trivia night with canapes on arrival and amazing Hellenic food throughout the evening. Cost is $500 per table of 6, or you can sign up individually at $100 per seat and we can allocate you to a table. This includes food, an entertaining evening packed with trivia and raffle prizes, and ambassador dog cuddles. Arrive at 6pm for a complementary glass of sparkling wine, trivia starts at 7pm and the evening finishes approx. 10.30pm. Email
carolinep@guidedogsvictoria.com.au, to book your place. Guide Dogs are welcome of course!
* **Coffee mornings every Friday in the Frankston area.** If you enjoy having a cuppa and meeting new friends, please join our casual client run coffee mornings. New members always welcome. For details please contact Robert on 0409 685 606 or email
rgsblind@yahoo.com.au

Following on from the success of our Frankston Coffee Club, we are currently canvassing interest **in similar programs being run in Mornington and Pakenham.** These catch-ups are a great opportunity to meet up and discuss topics such as transport, technology, the NDIS roll-out as well as a great excuse to have a chat and great coffee! If you or someone you know might be interested or has any further questions, please contact Tim Carter on (03) 9854 4448 or by email at timc@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

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# Winners of our Community Access Awards

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Thank you to everyone who nominated an individual or business for our new Community Access Award. We were quite overwhelmed by the number of wonderful stories and experiences you all shared – and it was difficult to come down to a final few winners.

In our eyes, everyone you nominated needs congratulating for the wonderful jobs they do, and we are sending out certificates to all the people and businesses who were nominated, along with a personal thank you letter from Karen our CEO, over the coming few weeks.

But, for our award ceremony at Government house we had to whittle it down to a major individual winner, and major business winner, as follows:

The 2017 Community Access Award for an Individual who has gone above and beyond to help people with vision loss access their community was given to Amanda Kwong. Amanda is the founder and President of Achilles Melbourne, a running club for people with disability that brings athletes and able bodied volunteers together to train in a supportive, friendly, and safe environment. Though this chapter welcomes people of all abilities, Achilles Melbourne has a particular focus on guiding and supporting runners who are blind or have low vision. In its first 12 months guides and guided runners together ran in Melbourne Marathon, Run Melbourne, and the Bellaraine Race The Train to name a few. Amanda received the most nominations of any one individual for her work changing the lives of people through fitness and community connection.

The 2017 Community Access award for an organisation goes to Metro Trains, with special commendation to their platform staff. Metro Trains continue to demonstrate a genuine commitment to improving accessibility; running numerous programs with GDV clients and investing the training of their employees around inclusion and access. The outcome of their commitment to building understanding in their employees is exemplified in Flinders Street Station platform announcer Malcolm Browning, who was able to attend the award ceremony. Malcolm was specifically named for the enthusiasm with which he makes the announcements, brightening countless peoples journeys, and how he has come to know and look out for our clients personally, even redirecting them to the right platform across the PA system.

There were also several nominations for the Southern Cross staff at Travellers Aid, and for Boroondara Council’s Access Officer, David Williams, and we were delighted to award these organisations jointly our 2017 Inspiration Award. The Inspiration award is awarded to a community or government organisation that proactively engages in activities that enhance independent outcomes for our clients.

David Williams, Metro Access Officer, has contributed to programs to improve personal safety, the ‘Cane to canine’ program and the ‘try before you ride’ day. David’s creative spirit and openness for feedback has driven outstanding results for our clients in the Boroondara shire.

Travellers Aid Southern Cross station staff were represented at the awards by Team Coordinator Rocco Fammartino. Travellers Aid is a not for profit with a proud 100 year history of helping people of all abilities get about safely and independently. Without the dedication of the staff at Southern Cross, many of our clients would not experience the freedom to navigate in and out of Melbourne, and their friendliness, warmth and professionalism was repeatedly mentioned in nominations.

Congratulations, and many thanks, to all our winners for their community spirit!

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# Client Service Update Reminder – 1800 804 805 for all enquiries

From now on, this one number – 1800 804 805 – should be used for ALL client enquiries – general, O&M, OT or Guide Dog. We will be able to make sure that your query gets through to the right person faster and is always followed up.

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# Metro trains introduces text messaging assistance service – 0428 789 329

Metro Trains is committed to continuously introducing options to ensure an accessible journey for everyone. Customers with communication difficulty or disability now have another option for obtaining information through the introduction of a text messaging assistance service.

The service launched as a 3 month trial **from 1 May** and aims to give customers access to information and assistance in a format that works for them.

***The service will be available only during Flinders Street InfoCentral staffed hours (7am – 7pm weekdays, 9am-5pm weekends and public holidays)***

The service (accessed by texting **0428 789 329)** should be used for general enquiries *related to Metro Trains* and information on service changes**.**

**In the case of an emergency at the station or on the train, please seek staff assistance in person or via the emergency button, or contact emergency services.**

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# Dialogue in the Dark opens in June – spread the word!

Launching in Melbourne in June 2017, Dialogue in the Dark TM is an experience designed to build public awareness and open up communication with people with vision loss. Visitors tour a ‘Melbourne experience’ in total darkness, relying on their other senses, and some of our very own clients as tour guides. Whilst there is no doubt this is a brief snapshot, research has shown it increases awareness of vision loss, and showcases how clients learn to adapt and navigate their environments.

Please encourage your family, friends and work colleagues to come and give Dialogue a try. It’s an experience not to be missed!

Tickets are on sale at [www.ticketmaster.com.au](http://www.ticketmaster.com.au)

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# Guide Dog Access at Zoos – clearing up confusion

All Guide Dog handlers have recently received their new Guide Dog Access cards, which can be used to explain to the public and business owners the legal right to access for your Guide Dog. The card describes the law, as expressed by the Victorian State Government website [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/guide-dogs-and-seeing-eye-dogs](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/guide-dogs-and-seeing-eye-dogs)

In response to requests we have tried to make this card able to cover interstate travel as well and there is some debate about the statement about zoo entry, as different zoos have different rules.

As a general guideline, always check by contacting a zoo before you visit, to see what its rules are about Guide Dog access. It’s ideal to do this well in advance of your visit. We have tried to collate info about some of the major zoos below, but this is not exhaustive and rules may change.

* Zoos Victoria (Melbourne, Weribee, Healsville) – welcomes Guide Dogs, but there are some restricted areas and exhibits. Staff can look after your Guide Dog if needed.
* NSW and Queensland zoos – generally far more restrictive due to quarantine requirements, but Taronga zoos can hold your dog at their Wildlife Hospital with prior notice, and their entry can be granted (with notice) to Function areas.
* Australia zoo – welcomes Guide Dogs by prior arrangement – call 5436 2000.
* Adelaide zoo – welcomes your Guide Dog to bring you to and from the zoo, and will keep it in a suitable sheltered area with water while you are at the zoo.
* Perth zoo – welcomes Guide dogs with 2 weeks prior notice. Some restricted areas or exhibits.
* National Zoo – Canberra. No service dogs allowed.
* Wildlife HQ (formally Queensland Zoo). No service dogs allowed.

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# Calling all gamers!

At Swinburne University we have a student who wants to develop an Orientation & Mobility (O&M) game, but he needs some guidance. Do you like online gaming? Do you travel with low vision or blindness? Do you have ideas about games that could help people to learn or practice O&M skills or concepts? If you’re interested in contributing ideas, testing prototypes or being part of the process in any way, please contact Lil Deverell on 0418 370 312 or
ldeverell@swin.edu.au Feel free to forward this information to anyone you think might be interested.

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# Jobs at Guide Dogs Victoria

Guide Dogs Victoria welcomes applicants who are blind or who have low vision to apply for vacancies.

Summaries of current vacancies can be found below. If you are interested in applying then please view the detailed information on our website – links are given next to each job summary.

### Guide Dog Mobility Instructor

Guide Dogs Victoria currently has a vacancy for an experienced professional to join our team in the role of Guide Dog Mobility Instructor on a full time permanent basis.

The purpose of this role is to assess and train guide dogs and to provide mobility programs to people with low vision or blindness that meet the needs of the individual, while at the same time adhering to Guide Dogs Victoria and IGDF standards. You will need a Guide dog Mobility Instructor qualification gained from a member school of the International Guide Dog Federation, and a recognized qualification as an Orientation and Mobility Instructor. Applications close 31st December 2017.

To apply, see full information and job requirements at <https://www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/careers/guide-dog-mobility-instructor/>

### Customer Service OfficersGuide Dogs Victoria currently has a vacancy for an experienced Administration Coordinator professional to join our Client and Guide Dogs Services Team as an Administration Coordinator.

You will need excellent skills across the range of Microsoft Office software packages, previous experience with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) packages, and a good working knowledge of Guide Dogs Victoria’s services. Applications close 25th May 2017.

To apply, see full information and job requirements at

<https://www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/careers/customer-service-officers/>

### Puppy Development Advisor

Guide Dogs Victoria currently has a vacancy for an enthusiastic person to join our team in the role of Puppy Development Advisor on a fulltime basis, managing a case load of Puppy Raisers and their puppies, ensuring effective instruction and monitoring of the puppies’ progress according to Guide Dogs Victoria’s Puppy Raising Program.

Essential to this role are qualifications from the National Dog Training Federation at a Certificate IV Level, and a Victorian Driving license, as you will need to be able to deliver pups and food to raisers, and travel on a daily basis to multiple raisers houses. Clients with enough vision to hold a driving license are welcome to apply. Applications close 31st May 2017.

To apply, see full information and job requirements at

<https://www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/careers/puppy-development-advisor/>

# Share your story

If you have a story you’d like to share about your low vision or blindness, your achievements, your experiences with our services or being matched with your Guide Dog, we’d love to hear from you. The marketing team are always on the lookout to feature our client’s stories in the media, to help spread the word about the wonderful work of Guide Dogs Victoria and to increase public awareness about people living with low vision or blindness. If you are comfortable with sharing your story, please email the marketing team at marketing@guidedogsvictoria.com.auto get in touch.

# Feedback

If you have anything to contribute to this newsletter, please feel free to contact us with your piece. We welcome all contributions.

Please either contact or email our client services administration team with your contributions as below:

csadmin@guidedogsvictoria.com.au or phone 1800 804 805.

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