On the Move – 1st Edition

# Tips for reading this newsletter

1. 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.

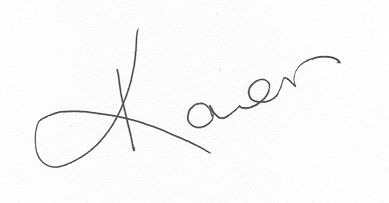
1. The contents below are hyperlinked. Some versions of word require you to press CTRL and click to access the link.

# Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of On the Move. I am so excited to launch this new quarterly newsletter. It’s packed with all the information you have been asking for - from news and events at GDV, to information about the services we offer, NDIS and industry news and not forgetting the latest in technology and useful gadgetry! We will also be delivering practical tips from our Orientation and Mobility Instructors and Guide Dog Mobility Instructors to help you get the most out of life beyond the sessions you have with us at GDV.

As this is our first edition, we welcome all feedback from you – in particular your preferred format, the length and the content. This is your newsletter so we want to get it right! In the meantime, I hope you enjoy our first edition of On the Move and I look forward to touching base with you again soon.

Warmly,



Karen Hayes  
Chief Executive Officer  
Guide Dogs Victoria

Contents

[Events and diary dates 2](#_Toc423446120)

[Workshops 2](#_Toc423446121)

[What’s happening at GDV 3](#_Toc423446124)

[Updates from Guide Dogs Victoria HQ 4](#_Toc423446125)

[Guiding Tech – Technology and Gadget news 4](#_Toc423446127)

[Technical Tips! 5](#_Technical_Tips!)

[Messages from the Vet 5](#_Messages_from_the)

[Industry news 8](#_Toc423446138)

[Client Profile 10](#_Toc423446141)

[Staff Profile 11](#_Toc423446143)

[Children’s Mobility Services Update 11](#_Toc423446145)

[Feedback 12](#_Toc423446146)

# Events and diary dates

## Workshops

### Traffic, off kerb and obstacle refresher workshop

Do you experience busy traffic situations or off kerb obstacles when working your dog? The Guide Dog Services team are running a one day refresher workshop where you can practice:

* Near and far traffic situations
* Entering and exiting driveway situations and
* Off kerb and partial footpath obstructions.

When – TBC

Time – 10am to 3pm

Cost - $10 for lunch

Where – meet at ACH at Guide Dogs Victoria

Transport – your cost and yours to arrange. Pick up can be arranged from Fairfield station.

Numbers are limited, so if you are interested, please contact Jenny Black on 9854 4473 or email [Jenny.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:Jenny.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au?subject=Traffic,%20off%20kerb%20and%20obstacle%20refresher%20workshop)

### Harness the Power of Targeting!

Do you need to introduce your dog to a new place? Have you had difficulties getting your dog to accurately find new destinations? A new internationally tested Guide Dog Handler workshop has been formulated to show you how to teach new destinations to your dog - and the best part is that your dog will learn very quickly and be highly motivated to find them next time.

This workshop is called “Self-Orientation with a Guide Dog – *Harness the Power of Targeting!*” The workshop focuses on learning targeting and back-chaining techniques to introduce new destinations or to improve the dog’s confidence and accuracy on existing ones. The technique can also be used to find things like doors, bins, counters, poles or kerbs.

Two workshops were run earlier in the year with great success. A further four will be run in July, September, October and November. Here are what some Guide Dog Handlers have said after completing the workshop:

“As a long time user of a Guide Dog I always had an aversion to food rewarding, but after seeing the results with what we did, it has changed my mind.”

“Being a Guide Dog user for over 40 years, I was more than interested to find out more about a new training method…I was amazed at the result in such a short time, even with older dogs.”

If you are interested in attending this workshop and have not yet registered, please contact Jenny Black on 9854 4473. For those who have registered, the dates and times will be sent out once finalised. We look forward to seeing you there!

## What’s happening at GDV

Sunday July 26th – Run Melbourne. Join Team GDV and help raise $60,000 to help the Children’s Mobility Services. Walk or run 5km, 10km or 21km. Contact us for more information on 9854 4444 or email [fundraising@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:fundraising@guidedogsvictoria.com.au)

Saturday August 22nd – Graduation Day. Celebrating class of 2015!

Saturday September 19th – Caulfield Charity Race Day. Time to frock up whilst raising much needed funds for Guide Dogs Victoria.

Thursday October 15th – International White Cane Day. Come and join us on International White Cane Day. We will be meeting a Flinders Street Station for a walk, tram ride and then morning tea. Further details to come.

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Updates from Guide Dogs Victoria HQ

## Peer Support Program

Guide Dogs Victoria is now providing a Peer Support program throughout Victoria called “Reach Telephone Support”. This new venture aims to provide practical support and mentoring to people living with a vision impairment from someone who lives with a vision impairment or blindness themselves. Our mentors have been selected on stringent criteria and have been trained on the best way to provide support by qualified counsellors who specialise in vision loss and rehabilitation.

You can self-refer to Reach Telephone Support by contacting the Programs Administrator via main reception 9854 4444.  For further information please feel free to contact the Programs Administrator – Naomi Wallace or Jenny Black.

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Guiding Tech – Technology and Gadget news

## RealSAM



RealSAM is a small handheld device, the size of a small mobile phone. Using natural spoken interactions, users can browse a vast array of media content, and ask RealSAM to read out articles, play radio podcasts, or give information on the weather, time and your current location. You can ask “Where am I?”, and RealSAM responds with a street address and the nearest cross street. You can say, "What's around here?” and RealSAM will tell you about points of interest nearby.

RealSAM also allows you to navigate and select from over 180,000 books and a huge range of newspapers from two continually updated libraries of information.

RealSAM is a standalone system with all content gathered online via 3G or Wi-Fi, so it doesn’t need to be connected to a computer. Once the unit is purchased, the user signs up to a data plan, just like a mobile plan. New media content is updated regularly. If you would like further information about RealSAM please contact John-Ross Barresi on 9854 4450.

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Technical Tips!

## Aircraft travel

Airlines have recommended that the safest option for both dogs and passengers is to tether Guide Dogs on a short leash to the leg of their seat rather than loop the leash through the seat belt. An even safer option is to fit a dog car harness (available from most pet stores), then tether via this harness rather than the dog’s collar.

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Messages from the Vet

## Allergies of dogs in the 21st Century

By Dr. Elaine Ong - Principal Veterinarian for Guide Dogs Victoria

Much like the human population, more and more dogs have allergies and often react to food proteins as well as certain preservatives and additives. Nowadays, Vets worldwide are better at diagnosing allergies. We now know up to 60% of dogs with recurring ear infections have food allergies and vets are more proactively managed. The 4 broad categories of allergies in dogs are:

### Flea allergy dermatitis

### Contact Allergies

### Food allergies

### Atopy Allergies

1. Flea allergy dermatitis

Flea allergy dermatitis is more prevalent at the base of the tail and back half of the animal

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Pictured: Dog with flea allergy dermatitis indicated on the back half and tail base |

### Contact allergies

Contact allergies are caused by direct skin contact with some plants and chemicals; usually on toes, tummy or where there is no fur. Skin looks inflamed before it gets itchy. It may postulate and then a Staph infection can set in.

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| --- | --- |
|  | Pictured: Dog paw, very red as affected by allergies |
|  | Pictured: Dog affected by allergies with red spots around mouth |
|  | Pictured: Dog’s belly affected by allergies – red spots on belly |

### Food allergies

Food allergies can occur all year round and are often as a result of yeast and bacterial infections in the ears, feet and tummy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Pictured: Ear of dog with chronic yeast infection in a food allergic dog |
|  | Pictured: discolouration of paw due to yeast infection on a dog with food allergies, due to chronic licking |
|  | Pictured: Discolouration of dog body with yeast infection due to untreated food allergy |

### Atopy

Atopy is an allergy acquired through inhalation or skin penetration. The most common causes are dust mites grass pollens tree pollens. The patient is itchy first, then skin lesions may appear later. This allergy tends to be seasonal (spring and summer). A new drug called “apoquel” will be available in 2016 that is safer than cortisone for dogs that need longer term use.

**Distribution**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Pictured: Diagram of dogs where atopy can occur- around eyes and mouth, ear infection, ‘armpits’, abdomen, area around anus and feet |

### Prevention Tips

1. Allergies are cumulative, so reducing the number of allergens your dog is exposed to will reduce the impact of allergies.
2. Feed your dog with premium food with sufficient Omega 3 fatty acids. Home cooked foods can be fed as long as they are balanced.
3. Wash your dog with moisturizing soap- free shampoos e.g. Blackmores Paw range or Oatmeal shampoos.
4. Keep track of every ear infection or lesion on your dog’s body to help your vet ake an accurate diagnosis.

**Please see your Veterinarian if:**

1. Your dog is between 1 to 9 years and has recurring ear infections
2. Your dog has itchy feet and/or an itchy tummy or has chronic yeast infection in the feet
3. Your dog has chronic irregular vomiting or diarrhoea

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Industry news

## NDIA - GDV and the first 18 months

By Peter Tomlins

It’s been nearly two years since the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial sites were launched across Australia. The scheme is being managed by the National Disability Insurance agency (NDIA). Eligibility for NDIS funding is for people under 65 with a permanent disability that impacts your communication, self-care or mobility.

The full rollout across Australia will kick off in in July 2016 and complete in July 2018. Currently the trial site in Victoria is in the Barwon area. Participant registration for the Barwon trial has now closed but will reopen as the scheme rolls out.

The NDIS will provide people with a disability with more choice and control in who they select as a service providers and also how services are delivered. As it is an insurance scheme, the aim is to provide tailored funding to increase a person’s ability to live independently, thus reducing their whole of life support costs.

For Guide Dog users the scheme will provide funds of up to $50,000 for each Guide Dog and around $3500 per annum for ongoing Guide Dog bills. Ongoing costs include food, vet bills, pet insurance, grooming, and replacement equipment that is deemed necessary for working a Guide Dog.

The NDIS will also fund Orientation and Mobility services for eligible clients. The amount you receive will be based on the goals you want to achieve in life. Once this is agreed, a plan will be developed that identifies the type of service supports you need and the number of hours it will take with an Instructor to achieve these goals over a 12 month period. The calculations are based on what follow ups, after care or orientations you require, and what hours are likely to be needed to complete the program.

Whilst change is often hard, many people have found the NDIA to be extremely helpful in supporting them to reach their goals. Effective planning prior to your first visit is really important and GDV is able to support you in that process.

GDV is fully in support of the NDIS and the choice and control will give to people we support, many of which have never received funding on this scale before. We have estimated that about 17% of clients we currently support will be eligible for NDIS funding. We aim to continue to be a provider of choice for blind and vision impaired Victorians providing high quality individualised services now, and into the future.

The additional funding for eligible clients will help Guide Dogs Victoria to spread our services further. Be reassured, GDV will continue to provide the same service to all clients whether they are funded by the NDIA or not.

We will be providing regular updates on the NDIS and other funding channels to ensure you keep up to date with current information. If you would like to learn more, the NDIS has a great website packed with info at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au). You can also contact GDV to find out information specific to your situation.

## Pacific Vision now in Geelong

Pacific Vision are now in Geelong and are located along side Guide Dogs Victoria and Yooralla at 199 Moorabool Street. Pacific Vision provide a wide range of assistive technology equipment suitable for people with low vision or who are blind. The Geelong office has many products set up for people to come in and try. These include CCTV magnifiers, desk top and portable as well as OCR and Braille notetakers and Daisy readers.

Pacific Vision take pride in offering the best service and most competitive pricing. They have over 60 years of combined experience in the Low Vision and Blindness field and travel to the world's largest Blindness and Low Vision Expo’s to source the best products for you. Visit their website at [www.lowvision.com.au](http://www.lowvision.com.au) to find out about new products and best sellers.

Can’t make it to Geelong? Call Pacific Vision on 03 5298 1111 to set up a time for Ranjit or Trish to bring assistive technology to you for an in-home demonstration.

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Client Profile

## Linda Blaik: My experience with NDIS plan...

It all seems so long ago now when I first heard of the NDIS. Initially, I decided that I didn't want anything to do with it.  However I was asked to be 1 of 20 participants to have their plans up and running asap, so that we could give feed back to the agency. I figured it was in my favour to do. Before I knew it, I was assessed and the ball started rolling.

My first thoughts were to seek advice from Guide Dogs Victoria and this proved to be the best thing I did. I went into the planning meeting with my husband and blank paperwork; we had no idea what to put on the form, even though I knew in my head what I thought I wanted to ask for. The planner asked what my goal would be at the end of 12 months, I had said a new Guide Dog, better access to the community, help around the home i.e., lawns, gardens and housework. Also I want to have someone assist me with my shopping and attending the gym.

We then discussed how many hours I might need and what sort of adaptive equipment I might find useful. Finally we moved on to the Mobility Allowance, this is something that most people seem to have a concern with, there is no need to. The MA is replaced with a taxi allowance which is generally equivalent to the mobility allowance.

I came away from the meeting rather relieved that the whole thing was over, I just had to wait for OT assessments and approval of my plan. This is the part that took the longest.

I was approved and it was a pretty good plan if I do say so myself.  There were some little issues with paperwork in regards to having claims put in to be reimbursed but they were ironed out fairly quickly. Every time I had something that was awkward for me to understand or handle I went to the NDIA office and 9 out of 10 times I was able to see my planner straight away or speak to her over the phone.

I have found my experience with all NDIA staff caring and they have our best interests in mind all the time. They aren’t there to advise who is the service provider to go to or what you should be asking for, their job is to assist in getting you the best plan possible.

I was able to change my plan or should I say tweak the plan as many times as I felt necessary, I added a few things that were missed and some were approved and some weren't. My 3rd plan is due in November and there has been many changes in the way things work since my first. I must say the changes are for the better.

I guess the thing you need to remember is that just because you have a vision impairment, your plan is your plan. If a vision impaired friend got something and you didn't that probably means that it wasn't suitable for your needs. The other piece of advice I would give is Its Your Plan and It’s Your Choice....     
  
Linda Blaik. 0400 456 774.

Geelong Guide Dog Office Volunteer Coordinator.  Victorian State Representative, Albinism Fellowship of Australia. AFA.

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Staff Profile

## Introducing: David Simmonds

Hi, my name is David Simmonds and I joined GDV on 1st of June as “Service Development Coordinator”. The new role is focused on promoting the broad range of services Guide Dogs Victoria has to offer, advocating for clients and developing new funding opportunities for clients with organisations such as the National Disability Insurance Agency.

I am a current client of GDV myself, having trained with “Merlin” for 8 years and now with “Olga”, for about 2 months. I live with my wonderful wife Nicole and our three beautiful children in Ballarat. Needless to say I am very accustomed to both commuting and cold climates!

I started my career as an electrical apprentice until my eyesight deteriorated. I then spent 15 years in a variety of sales and marketing roles in the Finance sector finishing with Ambulance Victoria, where I managed the customer contact centre teams for the last seven years.

Since commencing with GDV, I have been overwhelmed with the support from everyone here. I feel privileged to be part of a very committed and passionate group of professionals, all focused on delivering the highest level of client service.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you with any access related issues you may encounter, or funding queries you may have or if you require information about our Community Education programs.

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Children’s Mobility Services Update

It’s been a busy year for the Children’s Mobility Service. The team kicked off the year attending the South Pacific Educators of children with a Vision Impairment Biannual conference held in Melbourne. Six members of the team presented papers covering topics from family centred practice, impacts of sport on development, effective communication for partnerships in the school setting and Guide Dogs for teenagers and young people.

Our first ever Family Camp quickly followed at Lake Dewar Lodge in Bacchus Marsh. Nine families from across Victoria came together for 3 days to participate in a variety of Orientation and Mobility activities, team building activities and opportunities to play and learn from others. The program was a wonderful opportunity for families to build new support networks for the whole family and not just child with a vision impairment.

There have also been a wide variety of day programs across the state in different regions where students have got together with others in their local community to learn about the public transport and travel options in their local area. Programs ran in Geelong, Ballarat, Eastern Metro Melbourne, Frankston and Gippsland.

In April we held our Senior camp in Geelong and the Great Ocean Road. 15 students joined us for the 4 day program exploring Geelong and the town of Lorne. Students caught regional public transport every day travelling from Melbourne to Geelong by train and then bus to Lorne for a night of camping at the Lorne Caravan Park. Lots of fun was had and lots of great learning about checking out a new town and travelling safely somewhere you don’t know.

2015 is a special year for the CMS as we celebrate our 15th birthday! We are keen to celebrate this milestone by sharing stories of our past clients and seeing where they are now. If you are interested in sharing your experiences with the CMS and what you have achieved since then please contact Laura Hunt, Children’s Services Manager on [laura.h@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:laura.h@guidedogsvictoria.com.au)

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)

# Feedback

What did you think of On the Move? We’d love to hear your thoughts and suggestions! Please email feedback to Kristie Chan, Marketing & Communications Coordinator at [kristie.c@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:kristie.c@guidedogsvictoria.com.au)

[Return to contents](#ref_TOC)