On the Move – 2nd Edition

# Tips for reading this newsletter

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

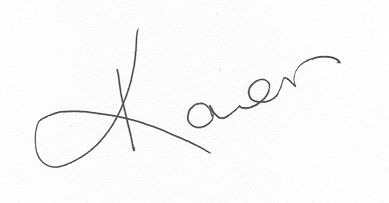
* Using the keyboard
  + 1. Press ALT+W, and then press Q.
    2. Press the TAB key repeatedly until the **Percent** box is selected, and then type a percentage or press UP ARROW or DOWN ARROW to select a percentage.
* Using the mouse
  + 1. On the View tab, in the Zoom group, click Zoom.
    2. Click 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 second edition of On the Move. With technology constantly changing and being developed, it’s not a surprise that in this edition you will find information on the latest gadgets available in the market. There is also some great news from the NDIA, as well as practical tips to keep your Guide Dog at a healthy weight.

Thank you for your feedback from the first edition, it’s been very encouraging to hear that the news and information we are delivering is useful to you, and we hope to continue this trend going forward. If you have any further feedback or suggestions for articles, please get in touch. I do hope you enjoy this 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

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# Events and diary dates

## Research

### Benefits of guide dog mobility – your chance to be part of new research

Over the next 12 months, GDV will be doing some research to understand what current guide dog clients seek, and gain, from having a guide dog. We want to promote accurate information about guide dog mobility from the perspective of clients, and tailor our services to meet real rather than imagined needs. We are working with Swinburne University to ensure the study is well designed and carried out.

Very little research has been done worldwide to represent guide dog mobility from the clients’ perspective and we are excited to be leading the way with this study.

If you are a guide dog client, you can expect a letter from us telling you more about the study. We plan to look into assessment reports and documents already on file at GDV. Individual clients won’t be identified in reports from this study, but if you don’t want your information included, you can call GDV reception and opt out – Phone 9854 4444.

We would also like to interview guide dog clients to get a better idea of what you gain, both from having a dog to support your mobility, and the lifestyle benefits out of harness. You can call GDV Reception if you want to take part. Lil Deverell (O&M specialist) will be conducting these interviews, and they can happen face-to-face, over the phone, or via email. An interview is completely voluntary and if you go ahead, you can withdraw at any time.

### The subjective well-being of people who are blind or vision impaired

An opportunity for you to have your say about what makes for a quality life.

Student researcher: Paula Hobley

Principal Researchers: Professor Beth Crisp and Assoc. Prof. Keith McVilly

* Are you aged between 18-34?
* Are you legally blind?
* Have you had vision loss since birth, or had your vision impairment assessed before the end of primary school?
* Do you feel that the personal challenges of people who are blind or vision impaired are often overlooked?

I am seeking people who are blind or vision impaired to give their opinions as to what contributes to or takes away from subjective well-being.  This is an online survey that is being conducted as part of the research for a PhD degree at Deakin University.

If you would like to participate, please go to the on-line survey located at: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/psychology/research/vi_delphi/phase2>

If you would like more information, please contact Paula Hobley:

Email: [phobley@deakin.edu.au](mailto:phobley@deakin.edu.au);

Telephone: 03 9244 3842

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## What’s happening at GDV

**Thursday 5th November** – ABI Client Day

**Tuesday 17th November** – Electronic Aid Day in Wangaratta. Come and explore the latest in electronic aids. A range of products will be demonstrated ranging from mobility aids to CCTV’s. Details are:

Where: Wangaratta Library, Community Meeting Room, 21 Docker Street, Wangaratta.

When: Tuesday 17th November at 11:00am – 3:00pm

Lunch will be provided.

Places are limited so contact John-Ross on 9854 4450 or [johnrb@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:johnrb@guidedogsvictoria.com.au) to reserve your spot.

RSVP’s close on the 6th of November.

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## External Workshops & Events

### The Department of Economic Development Workshops

The Department of Economic Development will be holding workshops across Victoria throughout November 2015 to hear what you think about improving transport for people with limited mobility.   
  
To register to attend a workshop, please click on your closest workshop location in the list below and submit your details. Alternatively, you can call us on 1800 064 887 and we will register you for your closest workshop.

**Workshop Location:** [Ringwood East](http://mptp-review-ringwood-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Wednesday 4 November

**Time:** 10:00am to 12:30pm

**Venue Details:** Maroondah City Council Karralyka Centre, Mines Road, Ringwood East, 3135

**Workshop Location:** [Traralgon](http://mptp-review-traralgon-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Thursday 5 November

**Time:** 2:00pm to 4:30pm

**Venue Details:** 71 Hotham Street, Traralgon Victoria 3844

**Workshop Location:** [Sunshine](http://mptp-review-sunshine-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Tuesday 10 November

**Time:** 10:00am to 12:30pm

**Venue Details:** Victorian University Sunshine Campus - Gate 1, 460 Ballarat Road, Sunshine, Victoria 3020

**Workshop Location:** [Geelong](http://mptp-review-geelong-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Wednesday 11 November

**Time:** 2:00pm to 4:30pm

**Venue Details:** 10-14 Eastern Beach, Geelong, Victoria 3220

**Workshop Location:** [Ballarat](http://mptp-review-ballarat-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Thursday 13 November

**Time:** 10:00am to 12:30pm

**Venue Details:** 121 Lydiard Street North, Ballarat 3550

**Workshop Location:** [Bendigo](http://mptp-review-bendigo-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Wednesday 18 November

**Time:** 2:00pm to 4:30pm

**Venue Details:** 50 View Street, Bendigo 3550

**Workshop Location:** [Wangaratta](http://mptp-review-wangaratta-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Monday 23 November

**Time:** 2:00pm to 4:30pm

**Venue Details:** 33-37 Ford Street (Cnr Ford & Ovens Streets) Wangaratta Vic 3677

**Workshop Location:** [Melbourne CBD](http://mptp-review-melbourne-workshop.eventbrite.com.au/)

**Date:** Wednesday 25 November

**Time:** 6:00pm to 8:30pm

**Venue Details:** 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne 3000

### Join in the Vision-Quest!

You are warmly invited to take part in a specially designed walking challenge Melbourne’s first Vision-quest!

A community event hosted by local visually-impaired author, speaker and advocate for the blind, Maribel Steel.

Date: 11am Sunday 8th November 2015

Meeting point: The Atrium at Federation Square

Vision-quest aims to:

* demonstrate the ART of living with vision impairment
* demystify what it means to be blind or vision-impaired
* offer the unique experience of seeing through ‘blind eyes’ for a day
* provide an opportunity for people to share lived experiences
* raise awareness and increase understanding of all abilities

What happens on the Vision-quest?

* we will meet at the Atrium at Federation Square 11am Sharp
* teams will be formed consisting of 3 people: a blind or vision-impaired person, a sighted person and a team coach - to keep each team on target
* each team will be given a selection of cryptic clues
* the clues will direct the teams around the mapped out course, and to points of sensory interest
* time estimated to complete the Vision-quest circuit is 2 hours (11.15am – 1.15pm)
* don’t rush away we have prizes to give away! (BYO Lunch 1.15 – 2pm)
* what to bring: water bottle, comfortable shoes, sense of fun and adventure!

Registration is Essential

RSVP by 5th November to <mailto:mmaribel@springstudio.com.au> or call: 0417 755 413

Info and Updates at <http://www.touchinglandscapes.com>

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# Updates from Guide Dogs Victoria HQ

## Peer Support Program

Guide Dogs Victoria is providing a Peer Support program throughout Victoria called “Reach Telephone Support”. This 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.

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# Client Profile

Our new Peer Support program aims to provide mentoring sessions for people living with a vision impairment. We’d like to introduce Leanne, one of our Peer Support Volunteers:   
  
“I am married with three adult children and two grandsons.

My eye condition is Retinitis Pigmentosis. Even though I wore glasses for most of my childhood, it wasn’t until my late teens that I was diagnosed. My eye sight was limited for some time and then about 25 five years ago, I lost any useful sight I had. I have been using guide dogs for eighteen years and am currently working with my third dog. I have a Diploma in Community Services/Welfare and have worked in a variety of roles in the community sector. I am looking forward to being a peer for Guide Dogs and hopefully being able to assist other people by sharing my experiences.”

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# Guiding Tech – Technology and Gadget news

## HumanWare Launches the Trekker Breeze+ More Accurate for More Informed Travel

HumanWare is excited to announce a new travel tool to add to the navigation toolbox. The Trekker Breeze+ is the next generation of HumanWare’s popular Trekker Breeze talking GPS. Based on the feedback received from vision impaired travellers, the new improved Breeze+ is the most accurate, intuitive, and effective navigation aid designed for travellers who are vision impaired.

Based on popular user feedback, the Breeze+ uses the same effective design as the original Trekker Breeze while on the go. With well pronounced tactile buttons, all device functions can be operated using one hand, leaving the other hand free for your white cane or dog guide.

The Breeze+ uses the latest in GPS technology to provide you with the fastest, most accurate travel information when and where you need it. Updates include:

* Significantly improved GPS acquisition time
* Greatly improved performance in built-up city environments
* Improved GPS accuracy
* Higher quality GPS signal

Other features include:

* Breeze+ provides you specific walking or driving instructions as you travel.
* Use the “Where Am I Button”. This button tells you your current cardinal direction, next intersection, nearest address and current street.
* The ‘What’s Around’ feature lets you know what interesting points of interest are around you.
* Simply drop a landmark in front of your house and Breeze+ will walk you back to that exact spot whenever you want.

For more information about the Trekker Breeze+ contact John-Ross Barresi at Guide Dogs Victoria on 9854 4450.

## Borrow Box- Audio books for everybody!

The BorrowBox app is a fantastic way to access a huge range of free audio books from many different libraries around Victoria. The app can be downloaded free of charge from the iTunes store for apple products or Google play for android. Many public libraries are now using this app to provide access to their collection of audio and e-books. The app will allow you to browse, borrow, read, listen and more.

If BorrowBox is available through your local library you can simply login with your member details to access the library’s collection of eBooks and eAudiobooks. You can find out if your library uses audio books by checking their website or giving them a call.

## “Blindsquare” navigation App. By David Simmonds

Until quite recently the only exposure I had had to GPS driven navigation technology was using Google Maps on my iPhone and relying on the voice over to read out the instructions.

Given the app I was using wasn’t specifically designed with the vision impaired user in mind, I found it was announcing distance to turns quite frequently and this in turn seemed to be exhausting my phones battery at an alarming rate.

By chance I bumped into a fellow Guide Dog Client recently, we both happened to be waiting for a taxi at the GDV Kew site and I heard his phone chatting away to him. He introduced me to an app he’d been using, that I hadn’t previously heard of, called “Blindsquare”.

Based on how impressed my fellow client was with the performance of this app, I decided to purchase this app for myself and give it a try.

My primary concern prior to using this app was that it would drain my battery too rapidly, potentially running my phone flat and leaving me without the use of my phone, which itself over the years has become a vital component of my independent travel, so to be without the use of my phone was certainly not a desirable outcome and one I would definitely wish to avoid occurring.

First time out using Blindsquare was a successful outing. I started with a short journey and one that I felt I couldn’t go too wrong with.

I was to travel to a business meeting at 555 Bourke Street from Southern Cross Station.

In preparation for this journey, during my train travel towards Southern Cross I entered the street address as my destination. I did this by simply selecting the search feature on the opening screen and then entered the address information as required.

I must add at this point some details of the device I am using and what accessibility features I have selected on my phone. It is an iPhone 6 and I have voiceover activated and I always have my screen curtain on. Given I can’t see the screen of my phone, having the screen curtain on conserves the life of my phone battery considerably.

After entering address details of the destination I wish to search for, the app suggests an address that it believes is a match for the destination you are searching for. I double tapped on this location and then selected the “start tracking” feature when I had reached Southern Cross and I was ready to commence my independent navigation.

As most of you would be aware, unless you have a taxi drop you at a specific address, it is quite difficult to identify a building street number, that’s where I found Blindsquare very handy indeed.

I knew that the Bourke Street concourse at Southern Cross station was essentially in line with the end of Bourke Street, so as I mentioned I had started with a pretty simple journey just to test the technology in a relatively safe environment.

First thing I noticed was the information Blindsquare was providing me, the fact that I was approaching Spencer Street, as well as providing a description of various businesses and landmarks nearby, it was like having my very own tour guide! Except this one would never get tired of letting me know what is around me.

I was also kept informed of how far away my destination address was as well as being warned of upcoming cross roads and their names which I also found very useful.

From a practical sense, I held my phone in my right hand and just every now and then held it up to my ear to get an update of how far away my destination was.

Upon reaching 555 Bourke Street my phone chimed an alarm to warn me that I had arrived at my chosen destination. At this point I turned my Guide Dog to be perpendicular to the kerb (i.e. the road was behind me) and I asked my dog to find the door and I had arrived, yeah!

This was a very rewarding first experience and I would recommend starting with something nice and simple to allow you to become confident with the app.

I definitely felt a sense of achievement arriving at my destination without having to ask any member of the public where I was or to request they tell me what street number I was at.

I must let you know that this is not a free app however at the time of me writing this review the app was priced at sub $40, which I believe represents good value given the independence I think it has provided me in such a short time of using the product.

## The Blind Mice Megga Mall By Mel Stevens

For clients who are interested in having access to films for free with Audio Description, this is the perfect link for you. The Blind Mice Megga Mall is an online shop which specialises in selling products for the Blind and Vision Impaired community. The shop’s possibly most attractive attribute is their online Movie Vault, which is a collection of audio described films. These films, all have audio description, but do not have the video of the film attached. This means that you are able to download the files of your movie or TV show in an MP3 format and listen to the film on any device which will play MP3 files. If you are interested in having a look for yourself, go to [www.blindmicemegamall.com](http://www.blindmicemegamall.com) and sign up for free. Please note, to download any of these films, you must sign up as a member, for copyright reasons.

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# Messages from the Vet

## IDEXX Pathology Supporting Guide Dogs.

Idexx pathology is generously providing Guide Dogs Victoria and our Guide Dog users with pathology testing at no cost. When your vet requests pathology tests for your dog it is important that you ask then to send the sample to Idexx with your Guide Dogs medallion number. Idexx forms were sent out to each guide Dog user some time ago and these also should be taken to your vet for completion if testing is required. Replacement/additional forms can be obtained by telephoning Jenny Black at Guide Dogs Victoria.

## Maintaining your dog’s health via healthy weight and diet

Nutrition is the single most important environmental influence on your dogs’ health and well being

Both underweight and overweight dogs are considered to be receiving poor nutrition.

The health importance of obesity lies in the effect on mortality and morbidity of associated diseases. Problems to which obese companion animals may be predisposed include orthopaedic disease, diabetes, cardiorespiratory disease, urinary disorders, cancer and dermatological diseases.

Obese animals show a life expectancy lower than those who do not endure it.

When training with your Guide Dog your Instructor will advise the appropriate feeding quantity for your dog to maintain its ideal weight.

Changes in age, lifestyle, exercise and type of food mean adjustments may be required over time.

Your vet can help you assess your dog’s ideal weight and develop a customized feeding plan to help reach and maintain your dog’s ideal weight.

### Tips for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

* Provide regular exercise.
* Feed a quality diet remembering quality is more important than quantity.
* If feeding treats to your dog ensure that they are also of high quality and that the dogs’ daily meal is reduced to allow for these extra calories.
* If on a weight loss program aim for your dog to lose between 0.5% and 1% of its body weight per week.
* A 20% reduction in the quantity of food being fed is a good starting point for a weight loss diet.
* Weigh your dog frequently to monitor the effectiveness of the diet and ensure weight loss is neither too fast or too slow.

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# News from the NDIA

GDV welcomes the news that the National Disability Insurance Scheme is expanding into Metro Northern suburbs in mid-2016. This provides opportunity for Guide Dogs Victoria’s clients to access funding for supports that they require as a result of their disability.

GDV will be inviting clients to workshops in their region to learn what the NDIS will mean for them and how to plan for their needs. The ability to verbalise your needs to the National Disability Insurance Agency, and make an effective plan is highly important in ensuring that your needs are fully met.

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# Children’s Mobility Services Update

## Jaryd Clifford

At just sixteen years of age, Jaryd Clifford has the world at his feet. He also doesn’t let his vision impairment get in the way of his passion for sports, especially in cross country running.

Jaryd was diagnosed with Juvenile Macular Degeneration at age 3, which leaves him with severe central vision loss. He began receiving services with Guide Dogs Victoria at age 4.

He began his running career during primary school. But it wasn’t until he qualified for his first National Cross Country Championships at age 13 that he began his serious training with Coach Max Balchin.

Jaryd says, “I enjoy distance running as it gives me the feeling of freedom, that I can do anything! I love to run, if I’m not running I’m studying my idols or my rivals.”

Jaryd already has many awards under his belt. He won the School Sport Australia National Cross Country in the 3km, 16-19 years category at the Monee Valley race course with an impressive time of 9 minutes 9 seconds. He was also part of a winning team who won the Australian School sport 4 x 1km relay race.

More recently, Jaryd’s dream of representing Australian on a global stage has come true. He has been selected to represent Australia at the International Paralympic championships in the Vision Impaired 5000m category in Doha, Qatar in October. He will be one of the youngest competitors in the field. Though he’s nervous, he’s looking torward the future, “Doha will be a major step in my chances to qualify for next year’s Paralympic Games which will be in Rio.” This is extremely exciting and we want to congratulate and wish Jaryd the best of luck for the race.

## Can Children be successful Guide Dog handlers?

By Paula Foote



For over 50 years in Australia, vision impaired adults have enjoyed the freedom and independence of Guide Dog mobility.

As instructors, we often get asked questions regarding the minimum age prerequisite for Guide Dog users. Our response has reflected our understanding of a child’s maturity, physical strength, and emotional resilience. In the past, we believed that the minimum age for a Guide Dog applicant would be around 18 years of age. The applicant would need to have finished school and fulfil the Guide Dog assessment criteria.

During the past 5 years our understanding of children’s mobility needs has changed and to meet the needs of our clients, Guide Dogs Victoria has run a variety of day and multiple day introductory Guide Dog programs.

In 2012 we developed a set of training modules whereby children could work through the Children’s Mobility Guide Dog training program in their own time at home. The modules were designed to support children learning the practical skills and theoretical aspects of Guide Dog mobility. In 2013 Guide Dogs Victoria ran our first Guide Dog class for two students that were still attending school.

In June 2014 I worked and observed a children’s Guide dog training program at the MIRA Foundation; a Guide Dog organization in Quebec Canada. The MIRA Foundation have been training children as young at 10 years old with Guide Dogs for over 20 years and this program continues to be a great success. During my month long experience I was delighted to have all of my prejudices related to children’s Guide Dog mobility dispelled.

Guide Dogs Victoria continues our journey into children’s Guide Dog mobility with collaboration, support and innovation between the Children’s Mobility Team and the Guide Dog Mobility Team. We are currently developing individual training plans to cater for a younger cohort of Guide Dog handlers. The future may see children as young as 12 or 13 working their Guide Dogs in Victoria.

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# Share your story!

If you have a story you’d like to share about your vision loss, 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 look-out 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 vision loss or blindness. If you are comfortable with sharing your story, please email the Marketing team at [marketing@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:marketing@guidedogsvictoria.com.au)to get in touch.

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# 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)

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