

perceptions



**Guide
Dogs**
VICTORIA

summer 2014 / issue 23

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 23rd edition of Perceptions - our last for 2014.

In this issue, we feature a client case study on Janet Stumbo, living with an ABI and having completed Orientation and Mobility training with us at Guide Dogs Victoria. We also take a look at some events for the calendar in 2015; ways to get involved and learn more about what we do. Lastly, don't forget to check out our pick for the latest in smartphone apps for those with living with a vision impairment.

About Us

The Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and Adult Mobility Services provide specialised assessment and training programs for people who have a vision loss (ocular or as a result of a brain injury), which in turn affects their ability to mobilise safely and independently. Our programs aim to optimise the use of remaining vision, and in conjunction with other senses and cognitive skills, aim to regain safe and independent mobility.

Along with educating each client, their family and rehabilitation professionals about the nature and impact of the vision impairment; each client undergoes an initial assessment which aims to determine:

- Extent of vision loss and impact on independent travel skills
- Ability to move freely and safely through a range of environments
- Ability to route plan, orientate and problem solve
- Impact of other impairments on mobility (for e.g. memory, balance, attention and concentration)

We hope you are enjoying our new electronic format, finding the design easy to navigate and the content resourceful and informative.

For our regular readers, and for those receiving Perceptions for the first time, we always welcome your feedback, comments and contributions. You can contact Rachel Abdulla at rachel.a@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Regards,
Rachel and the AMS Team

- Ability to use public transport
- Need for a mobility aid

Guide Dogs Victoria can assist Victorians living in metropolitan and regional areas. Training can be provided within the client's home, work, school, local environment, in our residential training facility (Arnold Cook House in Kew), or a combination of both. The training environment is reflective of the person's mobility goals and needs.

Referring a Client to the ABI Mobility Service

We welcome referrals from individuals, family members and all health professionals.

Referrals can be made via our website at:
<https://www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/our-services/referral-main/>

Or contact Client Services Administration on (03) 9854 4467 or via email at referrals@guidedogsvictoria.com.au



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What's On

1. ABI Professional Days

Information workshop for health professionals wishing to know more about the ABI Mobility Service. The three hour workshop is held on campus at GDV and provides information on: who is appropriate to refer, how to refer, assessment process, training and outcomes. Information is also provided on other services offered by GDV including Children's Mobility and Guide Dog Mobility. Workshop dates for 2015 are:

- Thursday 19 March 2015
- Thursday 18 June 2015
- Thursday 17 September 2015

To register your interest, call us on (03) 9854 4467.

2. ABI Client Days

Information workshop for clients (and their carers) living with an ABI and Vision Impairment. The workshop takes a holistic approach to ABI and the impact it can have on mobility, cognition, mood and everyday living. The day runs from 10am to 3pm, with lunch provided, on campus at GDV.

Workshop dates for 2015 are:

- Thursday 19 February 2015
- Thursday 21 May 2015
- Thursday 13 August 2015
- Thursday 5 November 2015

To register your interest, call us on (03) 9854 4467.

Live Safe, Travel Smart

We recently held our annual Live Safe Travel Smart three day group program based on campus at GDV. Of the 15 attendees, seven were people living with an ABI and resulting vision impairment. Participants were able to learn and develop their public transport and personal safety skills in a supportive team environment. Included were talks and demonstrations from Metro trains, Yarra trams and Dyson Buses. With each provider organising stationary vehicles for people to explore and learn the layout and accessibility features within.



3. Group Programs

Keep a lookout on our Facebook page for news on group programs to be held in 2015. These programs provide great opportunities for consumers to learn and develop their orientation and mobility skills within the context of a fun, safe team environment.

4. Professional Workshops

We also provide workshops within any community health setting (hospitals, rehabilitation centres, ongoing care facilities, etc.) We can tailor the workshop to meet the needs of your staff and provide more information about our ABI service.

5. Enquiries

If you have any queries regarding referring to events or information listed on our noticeboard, please contact Client Services Administration on (03) 9854 4467

Each participant was given the opportunity to practice specific tasks that can often be quite challenging in "real world" situations; locating doors, boarding and disembarking safely, finding priority seats, etc.

Also provided was a three hour workshop on personal safety skills and self-defence run by Catherine Schnell (AIKI Centre, Hawthorn). This was partnered with a discussion facilitated by Carolyn Pethick - Community Liaison Officer from Kew Police station.



Case Study

Janet Stumbo - Veterinarian. Motor Vehicle Accident resulting in ABI.



Janet sustained bilateral optic nerve damage as well as other cognitive impairment after her car accident in 1984. She now lives with bilateral inferior visual field loss as well as other cognitive impairment (reduced memory, word finding difficulty, trouble with face recognition). Janet was only referred to our ABI Mobility Service in March this year. She originally presented with severe neck and back strain resulting from the need to tilt her head to scan the ground; also, frustrations from trips and falls. Subsequently, she had become less confident about moving around her environment and using public transport.

Janet was introduced to the Long Cane; completed an eight week training program within and around her local community and now gets about entirely independently and is not afraid to venture to new places.

A story about Janet was run on The Age as part of International White Cane Day on October 15. Watch it online: <http://media.theage.com.au/news/national-news/life-with-a-white-cane-to-guide-you-5880432.html>.

Keep App!

In keeping up with the latest and greatest in the prolifically expanding world of smartphone/tablet applications, here's one we have found useful for consumers with a Vision Impairment.

VisionAssist – Electronic Magnifier by Slinkyware (\$3.99)



VisionAssist transforms a smartphone into a handheld CCTV magnifier. It is designed to help people who are vision impaired with challenging reading/viewing conditions. It can be used on an iPhone or iPad for big easy to read images. It can also be connected wirelessly with an Apple TV or big screen TV/computer monitor for large screen viewing.

Here are some of the features that make this app really useful for someone with a vision impairment:

- Images can be enlarged up to 20x
- Images can be paused, revised, and saved to camera roll
- Display mode and contrast can be adjusted to suit one's vision
- Smart text – uses algorithms to highlight and enhance text particularly on uneven backgrounds. Great for reading newspapers or books.
- Uses autofocus to provide the sharpest images possible
- Fully compatible with VoiceOver
- Choose to use autofocus or fixed focus
- Phone's flash can be used as a torch to illuminate images

