

# VISIONS

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## A woman's best friend

How your support helped to change a mother's life



*Beth White cuddles a new Guide Dog recruit.*

**B**eth White does the morning school run with her three children, loves to go water skiing and is studying to be a massage therapist. Beth is also blind. However, Beth's disability does not dictate her choices, and her Guide Dog Teena plays an instrumental role in the active and busy life that Beth leads.

Diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa at age five, Beth's sight gradually deteriorated until she had no vision at all. At age 21 Beth received her first Guide Dog, Oakes, and their relationship truly helped to open up the world again. "You might lose your sight, but losing your confidence is devastating. It has a big impact on your state of mind. Getting a Guide Dog gave me my life back. I felt safe," says Beth.

Teena, Beth's current Guide Dog, is an established member of the White clan – but she's also a trusted working dog. Teena accompanies the family to school, the shops, Beth's college, swimming lessons and everything in between. Beth and Teena's bond is one of absolute trust.

"She's always keeping us out of trouble! She genuinely loves to work and be a part of whatever we are doing. In the case of Teena and myself, I place my life firmly in her paws," Beth remarks.

Beth recently shared her story with the media for International Guide Dog Day, and you may recognise her as the face of our May Appeal. Beth maintains an 'attitude of gratitude' and believes that her Guide Dogs have changed her life: "Your generosity gives people like myself a level of independence we simply can't get any other way."

*Beth White's Guide Dog Teena helps Beth to enjoy an active, outdoors lifestyle with her young family.*

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## NEWS AND EVENTS

Here are some important happenings in the Guide Dogs NSW/ACT calendar. To stay even more up-to-date, visit our website: [www.guidedogs.com.au](http://www.guidedogs.com.au).

**Friday 15 - Saturday 16 July**  
Mudgee Field Days

**Friday 22 - Sunday 24 July**  
Sydney Retirement & Lifestyle Expo, Rosehill Gardens

**Tuesday 16 - Thursday 18 August**  
Agquip Field Days in Gunnedah

**Sunday 14 August**  
Sun-Herald City2Surf

**Sunday 28 August**  
Open Day at Guide Dogs Centre for Puppy Pals



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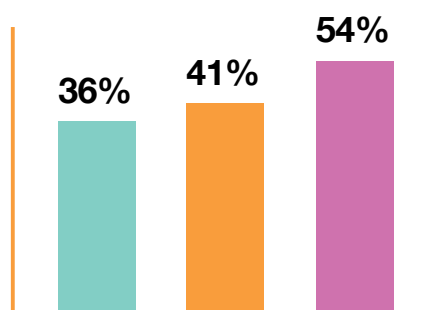
# Chief Executive Officer's message



Every year, supporters of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT donate the funds necessary to provide high quality services for thousands of people with impaired vision. Generous donations are the lifeblood of the organisation.

The number of people with impaired vision will double in the next twenty years. Ensuring our services are available to all of them is going to be a huge undertaking. It is essential we listen to the opinions of people like you, on whom we will rely to meet this challenge.

For that reason, in February of this year, we sent out our second Supporter Survey. The insights provided will help ensure we remain on the right track as we strive to meet this goal. To all those who completed the survey, thank you for taking the time to send in this vital information. Many people also sent donations along with the survey. For those who contributed in this way, my personal thanks for your support.



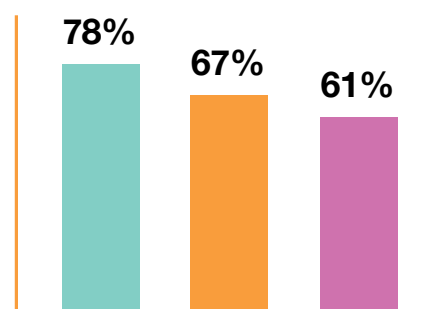
### Supporters who didn't know Guide Dogs NSW/ACT ...

- Receives no government funding
- Doesn't charge for its services
- Provides free mobility aids

The Survey provided many useful insights, some of which I can share with you here. More than 50% of donors did not know that we provide mobility aids such as canes, miniguides and Guide Dogs entirely free of charge. In addition 41% of supporters didn't know that we also provide free training and support for our clients too. This information will help us promote our services to new people who could benefit from them.

### Supporters are passionate about ...

- Guide Dog Services
- Pets As Therapy
- Children's services



The Survey also revealed which services you most like hearing about and we promise to keep sending you articles about Guide Dogs, the Pets as Therapy program, children's services and other wonderful stories from the people you help.

This *Visions* newsletter will keep you informed of the wonderful work you make possible every day.

Thank you for your commitment.

Graeme White  
*Chief Executive Officer*

# Billie and Jenna

Jenna, a Pets as Therapy (PAT) dog, is playing a special role in young Billie Fabig's life. After seeing the boost in Billie's spirits, her mum, Heike, ran in the first Sydney Morning Herald SunRun to raise funds for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, who provided the dog for free.

Mrs Fabig said Jenna had brought a lot of joy and companionship to her four-and-a-half year old daughter, Billie, who relies on an electric wheelchair to move around.

"We are just thrilled with Jenna," said Mrs Fabig. "Being in a wheelchair makes it hard for Billie to interact with other children at her pre-school, but Jenna is a real drawcard, which helps to involve Billie."

Guide Dogs' PAT program trains dogs to be companions for people who may be disadvantaged because of age, illness, disability or isolation.

To find out more about the PAT program visit our website, [www.guidedogs.com.au/guide-dogs/pets-as-therapy](http://www.guidedogs.com.au/guide-dogs/pets-as-therapy).



*Heike Fabig's daughter Billie has a new buddy in Jenna, her Pets As Therapy dog.*

## Help raise money for Guide Dogs by entering the City2Surf

It's time to pull on your running shoes and get your heart racing for a good cause. Sunday 14 August is the annual Sun-Herald City2Surf. By signing up to raise money for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, your sweat (and hopefully not tears!) will go towards supporting someone in need. You too could help brighten the lives of people like Billie – or allow a pup like Izzy to take the next step in her Guide Dog journey.

To raise funds for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT at this year's City2Surf, register at [www.everydayhero.com.au](http://www.everydayhero.com.au) or call our Fundraising team on 9412 9300 for more information.

## Introducing ... Izzy!



Gorgeous Izzy has just turned five months old and is absolutely loving life as a puppy. However, Izzy has also embarked on a special journey – one where she could help enhance mobility and independence for a person who is blind or has impaired vision. Izzy is a Guide Dog recruit.

From the age of eight weeks, Izzy was matched with her puppy raising family in Sydney's North West, who couldn't wait for her arrival! Izzy is now totally settled into her new surroundings, and gets along really well with her "doggy siblings" Nala, the Staffy and Gemma, a Rottweiler. Izzy's relationship with Trolley, the family cat, is a slightly different story ... Izzy is always ready to play, but Trolley wants nothing to do with her!

At the moment, Izzy is concentrating on mastering her commands, and she's already particularly good at waiting for permission to eat – which is quite a feat for a food-focused Labrador! Izzy is also enjoying getting out and about, and is regularly visited by a Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Puppy Raising Officer who takes her on short training walks.

Are you interested in learning more about puppies like Izzy, and all the happenings at the Guide Dogs Centre? You might like to join our Puppy Pals program. You can sign up using the coupon on page 6 of this newsletter, or on our website: [www.guidedogs.com.au](http://www.guidedogs.com.au).

# Remembering Robin



**O**n 24 May, we paid tribute to a very special lady called Robin Somerville who was born on this day in 1929.

Robin ('Robbie' to her friends) spent much of her childhood on her family's property in the Warrumbungle region near Coonabarabran, rounding up sheep

and spending time with horses and dogs. She went on to complete an Arts degree at Sydney University, and became a beautiful and dashing society lady. In later life she lived in Spain, where she saved the lives of many dogs by adopting them.

Robin died there in 1994, and, unbeknownst to us, included a gift in her Will to Guide Dogs. It was that legacy that enabled us to kickstart our wonderful centre in Glossodia where dogs like Olivia, Orinda and Oregon, pictured to the right, received their training.

It was too late for us to say thank you to Robin for her commitment, but we remember her with great gratitude. Her gift made our work possible, and it continues because of the thoughtful generosity of supporters who, like Robin, have included a gift to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT in their Will.



*Orinda, Olivia and Oregon are sitting pretty in this photo. They have just graduated as fully-fledged Guide Dogs. This trio can look forward to interesting and busy careers as working Guide Dogs. They will provide their handlers with the gift of independence for the next eight to ten years.*

## Youngsters get a clear picture

**T**en-year old Aboudi is no different to other boys his age; he likes playing games but he also takes his schoolwork seriously. However, being extremely short-sighted presents him with some obvious hurdles – walking safely to and from school being just one of them. That's why he was excited to be able to attend our Low-Vision Clinic's "Eyewise" Open Day at the end of March. Aboudi and his family were able to check out the latest technologies and electronic aids displayed by a range of vision aid companies invited on the day.

Children of all ages, with a variety of vision impairments, brought their families along for a day of playing, learning and discovering. The day allowed the kids and their parents to gain an insight into the latest magnifiers, computer software and specialised eyewear.



*Sophie Amerongen from Berowra is shown how to read using an electronic maximising scanner by instructor April Harris.*



*Aboudi Sawan (left) was excited to trial the latest technologies to assist with his studies. Aboudi has also been receiving mobility assistance from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT in how to safely walk to school by himself.*

*Playing a game with one of the latest magnifiers is made that much easier for Sam White (right), who has a vision condition called Retinitis Pigmentosa.*



# Neil just rolls on ...

Albury's Neil Mackay hasn't let vision loss stop him from doing the things he loves. Eight years ago Neil was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa after noticing changes in his vision, especially when driving. His remaining vision is now progressively deteriorating.

With the help of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Neil made changes around the house to make it easier to negotiate. He now uses a variety of mobility aids, including a long "guide" cane to assist in getting around Albury and surroundings.



As a regular user of public transport in his work as a financial advisor, Neil's cane has been critical in helping him maintain his independence and quality of life.

Showing that vision loss doesn't have to limit your independence, Neil participated in the Guide Dogs' tandem bike ride from Bright to Wangaratta in early April, allowing him to spend quality time with his 15-year-old son Nathan.

"It was my first tandem bike ride and it was a great opportunity for me to spend time with Nathan. It's also been a great way to meet other people with vision loss and offer support through sharing my experiences," says Neil.

"Being vision impaired doesn't have to stop you from doing the things you love and enjoy and being engaged in life. You may have a disability but that doesn't have to stop you."

When not running his business or bike riding, Neil loves cricket and was recently announced as Head Coach of the Australian Blind Cricket team.

*Pictured (from back left) are Guide Dogs Regional Manager Ross Still, Kristen and Peter Rees, Guide Dog Instructor Warren Hawley, Neil Mackay's son Nathan Mackay, Suzy Buchan and (front) Guide Dogs clients Neil Mackay, Tim and Alex Rees and Daniel Searle.*

## Database upgrade

In order to minimise our administrative processes, Guide Dogs has recently undertaken a database upgrade. If you find any errors in your details, please call our fundraising team on 9412 9300 and we will be delighted to update our records accordingly.

# NZ Guide Dog steady on shaky ground

As the city was falling down around him, one Christchurch resident was lucky enough to have a fearless friend by his side to lead him out of trouble.

Blind office worker Blair McConnell was caught stranded in a building during the recent earthquake that shook New Zealand's third largest city and destroyed much of its landscape.

After the earthquake struck Blair grabbed Kiwi's harness, and his faithful Guide Dog bravely led him down the stairs and out of the building. Blair's colleagues at Telecom then helped the pair escape from the area.

"Kiwi was fine. Some of that has got to do with the bond, they will do exactly what is required," McConnell said. "Some dogs feed off the emotion of the handler and the emotions of people around them but, fortunately, Kiwi puts what he needs to do above that."

Amidst the chaos, Kiwi proved that Guide Dogs are not only essential for everyday independence, they also save lives.



*Blair McConnell with Kiwi, the Guide Dog whose calm under pressure led him to safety.*

# Yes, I would like to help Guide Dogs ...

Contact name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like information about:
- leaving a gift in my will to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
  - fundraising
  - services for people with impaired vision

Our Privacy Policy is available at [www.guidedogs.com.au](http://www.guidedogs.com.au). To help our fundraising, we may make our list available to like-minded organisations. If you prefer us not to share this information, please tick this box .

I am sending a **single gift** of:  
 \$25    \$50    \$100    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (my chosen amount) Or

I would like to be a Puppy Pal by donating a **fixed monthly gift** of:  
 \$15    \$20    \$30    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (my chosen amount)

Please find enclosed a (**for single gifts only**):  
 cheque    money order (payable to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT)

Please debit this card:  
 MasterCard    Visa    Amex

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete this form and return in an envelope (no postage needed) to:  
Guide Dogs NSW/ACT  
PO Box 496  
North Sydney NSW 2059

All donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible. Credit card donations can be made by phone (02) 9412 9300 or online at [www.guidedogs.com.au](http://www.guidedogs.com.au). Thank you.

## Guide Dogs merchandise - great products, delivered to your home

To order, phone 1300 362 922 or visit [www.guidedogs.com.au/shop](http://www.guidedogs.com.au/shop).  
Many more quality products are available!

### Entertainment Books

The Entertainment Book is your guide to the best restaurants, hotel accommodation, attractions and sports and leisure activities all with 25 – 50% off or 2-for-1 offers! Each book contains over \$10,000 in valuable offers and by purchasing one you'll also be supporting the invaluable work of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. Sydney, Sydney North, Sydney Greater West (formerly Parramatta), Newcastle, Central Coast & The Hunter and Canberra books available.



### Guide Dogs Pens

Boxed set of 2 refillable ball point pens.



### “Snapshot” Polar Fleece Throw Rug – new design!

100% fleecy polyester throw rug, featuring eight gorgeous Labrador puppies sitting together in a park.

Size: 160 x 130cm



### Guide Dogs Rubber Backed Floor Mat

This polyester blend, rubber backed floor mat is ideal as a special mat under your pet's bowls.

Size: 69 x 45cm.

