

because people see things in different ways

Tiller steers Kirk in the right direction

Say “Ahoy there” to this sea-faring Guide Dog.

At the age of 16, Sydneysider Kirk Watson was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa. In Kirk, this inherited, degenerative eye condition eventually led to severe tunnel vision.

Kirk got by using what was left of his sight until six years ago, when his condition worsened and he rapidly lost most of his central vision. “I would stumble down the street trying to get my bearings, and looking at things in the shadows that weren’t there,” Kirk says. “I got myself into some embarrassing situations.”

It was at this time that Kirk sought help from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. He started using an identity cane, then a long cane and a Miniguide – a hand-held device that uses ultrasonic beams to detect obstacles.

Four years ago, at age 32, Kirk also got his first Guide Dog, Tiller. She’s named after Kirk’s love of sailing. He races his own boat, “Timeout”, and has also been involved in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

“Tiller loves my boat,” notes Kirk. “She’s always happy to walk down the wharf and get in.”

Kirk, a public servant, still uses his Miniguide for familiar routes at his workplace. “But I take Tiller if I’m going upstairs, or have a meeting in town,” he says.



Kirk Watson and Tiller enjoy an outing together on Sydney Harbour.

Tiller helps Kirk figure out what’s going on. Once, when he was waiting at a bus stop, Tiller knew something was wrong. Using her cues, Kirk deduced that the bus stop had moved.

Kirk’s latest challenge is running in *The Sydney Morning Herald* half-marathon on May 17. He has been training for the event since January.

Meanwhile, Kirk speaks highly of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. “They’ve been providing their services for more than 50 years, so they know exactly what they’re doing,” he says.

GUIDE DOGS EVENTS

We have a number of events planned in the next few months.

Volunteers and staff will be on hand to raise awareness of, and funds for, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.

Friday 15 to

Sunday 17 May

Canberra Retirement & Lifestyle Expo, Exhibition Park, Canberra

Friday 22 to

Sunday 24 May

General Practitioner Conference & Exhibition, The Dome and Hall 2, Sydney Showground

Friday 29 May

VBD Golf Fundraiser, Mereweather Golf Club

Friday 24 to

Saturday 25 July

Mudgee Field Days

Like to know more about the events above?

Visit www.guidedogs.com.au.

VISIONS ...

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Chief Executive's Message

As you enjoy the changing colours of autumn, consider the challenges that some people encounter every day.

Orientation and mobility aids allow people with limited or no vision to travel safely. Without these aids, some may simply choose to stay home.

Thanks to you, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT has been helping people for over 50 years. Your generosity allows us to provide a range of mobility programs free of charge.

Through your ongoing support, we'll continue to endeavour to enhance the independence of people with impaired vision, through safe access and improved mobility.

J P Finucane
Chief Executive



Congratulations to our new Guide Dogs!

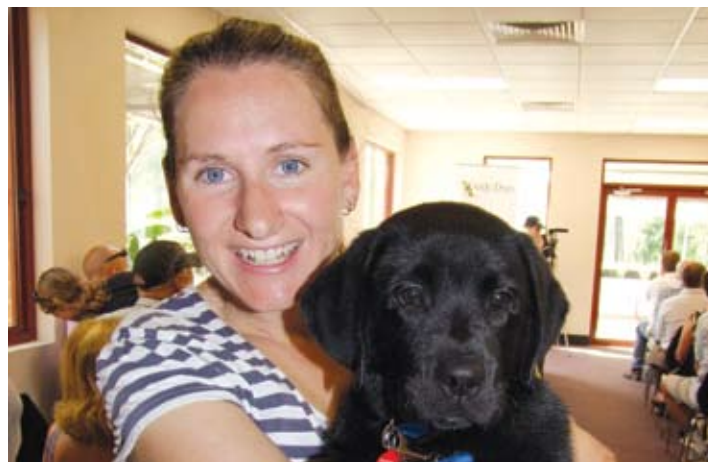
On March 20, the Guide Dogs Centre hosted around 150 supporters and staff to celebrate the graduation of 13 new Guide Dogs.

The proud graduates comprised ten Labradors, one Golden Retriever and two Labrador-Golden Retriever crosses. Some are already working in Sydney and regional NSW.

Highlights of the event included guiding demonstrations of the graduating dogs, and the introduction of two new Guide Dog puppies – Innes and Isaac.

Guest speaker Barbara Bonfield, a Guide Dog user, thanked the organisation's supporters. "All the help you give to Guide Dogs makes my life worth living," Barbara said.

Training a Guide Dog takes around two years and \$26,000. To learn how you can support our work, please visit www.guidedogs.com.au.



Nula, one of 13 new Guide Dogs, demonstrates her skills at the Graduation Day ceremony.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Puppy Raising Officer, Jo Lamont, showed off new puppy Innes to Guide Dogs supporters.

Saaya looks forward to a bright future

Guide Dogs is helping this ten-year-old get orientated for high school.

In many ways, Saaya Watanabe is like any other ten-year-old. She enjoys watching television and playing with her Nintendo DS. She also likes to play tee ball and cricket.

The thing that sets Saaya apart from many other kids is that she has limited vision. This is due to tumours on her retinas that were diagnosed when Saaya was just six weeks old.

Saaya was referred to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT two years ago by the support teacher at her school. She trains regularly with Orientation and Mobility Instructor, Alli Fagan, learning how to use her blue, pink and purple long cane.

Alli is also helping Saaya prepare for future challenges. "Next year Saaya will be going to high school, so we will need to learn the route to get there," Alli explains.

Chie Watanabe, Saaya's mother, says she appreciates that Guide Dogs NSW/ACT provides services and equipment free of charge. "Other equipment we need for Saaya is quite expensive, so it's really nice to know we don't have to pay for her cane or for Alli's ongoing assistance," Chie says.



Saaya Watanabe will start high school in 2010.



Saaya's instructor Alli Fagan provides some useful tips on cane technique.

Local help for Sally – whenever she needs it

People living in regional NSW often have trouble accessing quality medical and disability services - but this wasn't the case for Sally Jary when she needed help coping with her deteriorating vision.

Sally was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa at age 36. "As I became older, it started to make the simple things more difficult," Sally recalls. By the early 1980s, just getting around became a struggle.

At the time, Sally lived in Lismore. She contacted Guide Dogs NSW/ACT's Coffs Harbour office. "They brought me down from Lismore, gave me training on how to get around safely, and provided me with a white cane," Sally says.

Sally now lives in Woolgoolga, north of Coffs Harbour. She continues to receive free help and training from instructors whenever she needs it – such as when they matched her with a Guide Dog, Velvet.

"The confidence Velvet has given me is immeasurable," Sally notes.

Today, Sally speaks to local community groups about getting around with a Guide Dog, and advocates for others with impaired vision.

Coffs Harbour regional office manager, Jeremy Hill, says: "Sally has refused to let her vision impairment get in the way of her lifestyle, and is proactive about getting involved in the community."

Guide Dogs provides free services throughout NSW and the ACT.



Sally and her Guide Dog Velvet enjoy spending time along Woolgoolga's main beach.

Introducing . . . Ira!

Ira, a Guide Dog puppy-in-training, turned five months old on May 1. He's being Puppy Raised by a family in Sydney's south-west. They say he has a beautiful nature.

This cute little Labrador is also very smart. By the age of just three months, he'd already learned how to sit, stay and lie down on command.

Like many puppies, Ira sometimes chews things he shouldn't. "He steals and chews just about anything that's not nailed down," laughs his Puppy Raising mum. Ira is particularly fond of gnawing shoes.

Ira also likes playing in mud! His Raisers can tell when he's been doing this because he leaves muddy little paw prints on their white tiles.

If you'd like to learn about other puppies like Ira, why not join our *Pups with Promise* Club? It costs as little as \$5 a week. For more information, please call us on (02) 9412 9300.



Ira poses perfectly for the Guide Dogs photographer.

Colin gives back with a very special gift

When Colin Martin returned to Australia from a visit to Germany in the 1950s, he brought home a number of keepsakes – including one he could do without.

Colin had contracted Lyme Disease, a tick-borne bacterial infection. It was a major setback for a man who worked as a professional ice-skater.

At the time, Colin was advised that the condition may affect his vision as he got older. Eight years ago, at age 70, Colin experienced his first symptoms of vision impairment.

A friend put Colin in contact with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. "I was so pleased to have Guide Dogs there to assist me," Colin recalls. Our instructors taught Colin how to use a long cane and a Miniguide.

Colin, who lives in Sydney, has since become one of our most active supporters. He attends Guide Dogs Graduation Days, and has even appeared in a Guide Dogs educational DVD. "I felt like a real star," he laughs.

And there's another important way in which Colin is giving back to our organisation. In consultation with his solicitor, Colin chose to leave a percentage of his estate to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. A percentage-based bequest means that Colin's gift will hold its value over time.

"My involvement with Guide Dogs is something that makes me proud every day," Colin says. "I like the idea



Guide Dogs bequestor Colin Martin films a scene for our educational DVD.

that in the future, my gift will continue to help people with impaired vision."

If you would like more information about leaving a gift to Guide Dogs in your Will, please call (02) 9412 9300, or visit www.guidedogs.com.au.

Guide Dogs launches a welcome campaign

Access rights are on the menu for Guide Dogs users.

Imagine being refused entry to your local restaurant. What's more, imagine it's because you use a Guide Dog – the very source of your independence.

Refusing entry to a Guide Dog in harness is illegal and carries a heavy fine. Yet this still happens regularly to Guide Dog users.

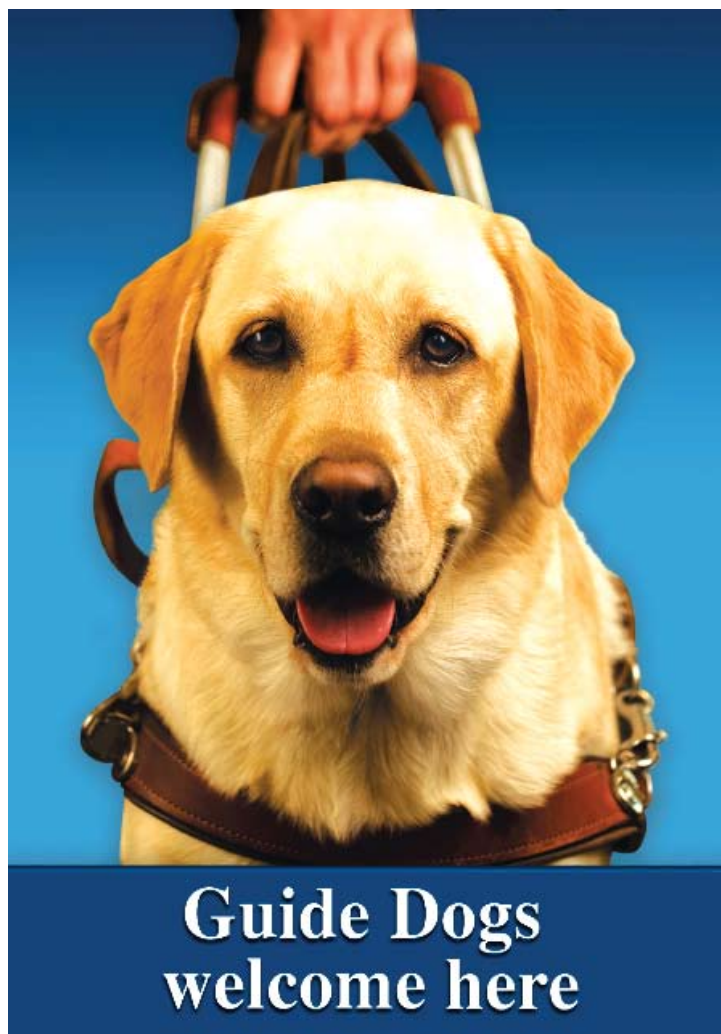
In response, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT has launched the "Guide Dogs welcome here" campaign to educate the hospitality industry about the rights of Guide Dog users.

The campaign gives hospitality outlets the opportunity to display a "Guide Dogs welcome here" sticker in their window – reminding staff and patrons about the law.

"I've had both good and bad experiences with restaurants," notes Leonie Wolff, a Sydney-based Guide Dog user, "but I think the hospitality industry needs to understand that the Disability Discrimination Act allows for Guide Dogs to go anywhere, including restaurants."

Guide Dogs are trained to sit out of the way — under a table or chair in restaurants. They should never be fed or patted by other patrons.

We've included a "Guide Dogs welcome here" sticker with this issue of *Visions*. You might like to ask your favourite restaurant to display it in their window. You can also request a free "Guide Dogs welcome here" kit by phoning (02) 9412 9300, or emailing welcome@guidedogs.com.au.



Did you know . . .

... that in 2004 alone, the cost of treating vision loss in Australia was close to \$10 billion – more than the cost of treating heart disease, stroke, arthritis or depression.[^]

By the end of 2010, hospital costs for eye care will reach \$1.45 billion. Cataracts alone will cost \$668 million per annum.[^]

The personal cost to Australians with low vision is approximately \$2,500 annually. Vision impairment increases three-fold with every decade of life after the age of 40.*

Globally, vision impairment is estimated to cost more than US\$28 billion per year.*

[^] Annual Report Visions 20/20 2007/2008.
* Report on World Sight 2002 Seeing is Believing.



© Stockphoto.com/Dr. Heinz Linke

I would like to know more about ...

- Legacies and Bequests
 - Fundraising
 - Orientation and Mobility Services
 - Community Education Seminars
 - Guide Dogs Speakers (Guide Dog user with his/her Guide Dog)
 - Volunteering
 - I would like to make a donation.*
- Enclosed is my cheque/money order for: \$ _____

No postage stamp is required to post this coupon – simply address your envelope exactly as follows:

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
Marketing and Communications Department
Reply Paid 496
North Sydney NSW 2059

Phone (02) 9412 9300
Fax (02) 9412 9388

* See coupon on covering letter for monthly credit card debit option

Contact name _____

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other)

Address _____

State _____

Postcode _____

Phone () _____

Fax () _____

Email _____

Phone Shop Products

Great products, delivered to your home



Australian-made Pure Linen Tea Towels

These beautiful puppy-themed linen tea towels have been designed and made by Rodriquez — a family-owned Australian company. The two designs included in this set — “Garden Puppies” and “Basket of Pups” — are part of the company’s special “Guide Dogs Collection”.

Size: 80 x 46cm

Price: \$25.00 (plus \$7 P&H)



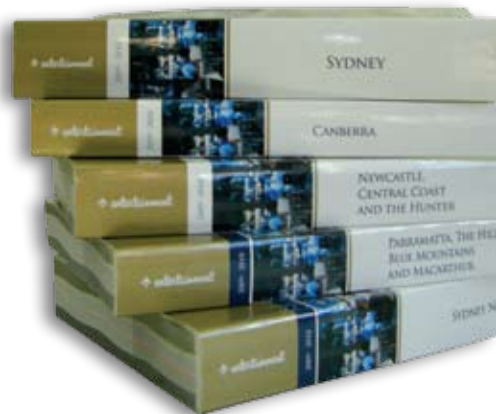
“Ocean Sounds of the Wild” Pop-up Book

Plunge into the world’s oceans and discover the magic of marine life with this hardcover book. It features stunning pop-up seascapes that are accompanied by sounds from the deep. Listen to the playful chattering of dolphins, the boisterous honking of seals and the haunting echo of the humpback whale’s song.

Size: 29 x 23cm

Price: \$24.95 (plus \$7 P&H)

Not suitable for children under 36 months due to small parts.



2009/2010 Entertainment™ Books

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT now has available the brand new 2009/2010 Entertainment™ Book for Sydney, Sydney North, Canberra, Parramatta, Hills and Surrounds, Newcastle, Central Coast and The Hunter.

The Entertainment™ Book is your guide to the best restaurants, hotel accommodation, attractions, sports and leisure activities — all with 25% to 50% off, or 2-for-1 offers. With over \$10,000 worth of offers, this is a terrific investment that will assist Guide Dogs NSW/ACT at the same time.

Price: from \$50.00 (plus \$9 P&H)

For more information about these or our other quality products, please call the Phone Shop on 1300 362 922 or visit our online shop at www.guidedogs.com.au/shop.