

The official newsletter for Guide Dogs SA/NT

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**Message from the CEO, Aaron Chia.**

Time flies when you're having fun!

As we delve further into 2018, and my 15th month as Chief Executive Officer, I can't tell you how much I enjoy leading this wonderful organisation. I'm so proud to work alongside such a talented and dedicated team, as well as our magnificent dogs, to transform and enrich lives across the South Australian and Northern Territory communities.

**It is a great honour that Guide Dogs has been voted Australia's Most Trusted Charity for the sixth year in a row.**

The trust you have placed in Guide Dogs makes us even more determined to continue to grow and adapt as an organisation to meet the needs of people living in our community. Thank you for your continued support.

This year our Client Services team has been working hard to effectively adapt to the ever evolving National Disability Insurance Scheme, with the introduction of new systems and processes, and increased support to ensure our clients continue to receive the best possible life-changing services.

Thank you for your trust and support of Guide Dogs.

Without you, Guide Dogs could not provide support, safety

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and inclusion to people living with disability and their families.

This newsletter is dedicated to sharing the wonderful outcomes for our clients that is only made possible by your support.

I hope you enjoy reading about the lives you are helping to change, as much as I did.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a series of loops and a wavy line ending in a short horizontal stroke.

**Aaron Chia**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Guide Dogs SA/NT

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**Meet your team.**

Guide Dog Services – the people behind our amazing dogs.

The Guide Dogs Fundraising team sat down with Guide Dog Services Principal Clinician, Susan, to find out more about the important role of the Guide Dog Services team.

**Describe the Guide Dog Services team in a nutshell...**

We are a dynamic team who believe in having fun! We're dedicated, passionate, and enthusiastic about what we do.

**What is the overall role of the Guide Dog Services team?**

Our role as a wider team is to raise and train our puppies and dogs to become Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, or Therapy Dogs, and match them with people living with vision loss, and children living with Autism and their families.

We are responsible for the health and wellbeing of our puppies, dogs-in-training, brood dogs (Mums) and stud dogs (Dads). It is our responsibility to maintain a healthy and enriched environment for our puppies and dogs-in-training to grow and develop, providing them with the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

Our team provides regular communication, dog behaviour advice, education, and resources to our Puppy Raisers and Dog Boarders.

**Who are the faces within the Guide Dog Services team?**

Susan - Principal Clinician Guide Dog Services

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Lisa, Mike, and Natalie - Guide Dog  
Mobility Instructors

Kath – Guide Dog Trainer

Jasmine - Vet Nurse and Puppy Raising Advisor

Kirsty - Puppy Raising Advisor

Sandra - Puppy Development Coordinator

Sarah – Therapy Dog Program Coordinator

Bec, Charne, Hayley, Karen, Natalie, Pat, and Sharon –  
Puppy Development Centre Staff

Plus, a number of wonderful Guide Dog Services  
Volunteers!

### **What is the best part of the job?**

The dogs, puppies, and the people! We get the best of all worlds. We love seeing the development of the puppies, seeing them exploring the world, and just being a pup! Then once they have graduated we love seeing them enjoy the responsibility of a working role.

### **What is the most challenging part of the job?**

We get asked all the time “how could you let them go?” The truth is we’re lucky because we get to see the first spark of a relationship developing with a dog and a client. It’s amazing to see the connection and the difference the dogs we have trained have made to people living with sensory disability, so it’s pretty easy actually.

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Without your support the Guide Dog Services team could not raise and train our amazing puppies to become Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, and Therapy Dogs. Donate online today at [guidedogs.org.au/donate](https://guidedogs.org.au/donate) or by calling (08) 8115 6060. Thank you.

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**Vespa is one paw closer to becoming an Autism Assistance Dog.**

Thanks to your support, Vespa is in the final stages of his training, and is currently being matched with a family in need.

You may remember Vespa from this year's Tax Appeal. Vespa is an intelligent, beautifully natured, two year old Labrador currently going through advanced training to become an Autism Assistance Dog.

To become an Autism Assistance Dog, Vespa is required to complete two years of specialised training, and this training requires time, expertise, and money. With limited Government funding, the Guide Dogs' Autism Assistance Dog program needed your support to continue Vespa's training, and change the life of a family in need.

As ongoing supporters of Guide Dogs your response to this appeal was incredible! Your donations directly funded the Guide Dogs' Autism Assistance Dog program, and now, thanks to your support, Vespa is in the process of being matched with a little boy named Josiah.

Josiah lives with severe Autism and Down Syndrome. Josiah has no sense of danger, and will run away, across roads, and out of buildings. He is obsessed with water, and will run and jump in if he sees it. Going out with Josiah

would cause extreme stress for parents Mark and Cathy, so they couldn't leave the house with Josiah.

*"The thought of going out with Josiah is too overwhelming, so we usually have to split up because someone always has to stay home with Josiah. With Vespa, we will be able to go out as a whole family,"* Cathy explains.

Vespa and Josiah are currently going through the intensive matching process, where Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Lisa, determines whether Vespa is the right dog for Josiah and his specific needs.

The first stage of the matching process was the 'Meet and Greet', where Vespa, Josiah, and his family met for the first time. This was to see how Josiah responds to Vespa, and whether Vespa would fit in to their family life. Vespa and Josiah instantly made a connection. They played fetch together, and Josiah giggled non stop!

The second stage of the matching process was the 'Trial Walk' where Vespa and Josiah had their first walk together with Lisa. This went very well, with Josiah walking calmly, attached to Vespa. Vespa did a great job of walking at a gentle pace, slowing down whenever Josiah needed to.

Vespa and Josiah are currently going through their final stage of training, which includes a number of attachment walks. This is where Mark and Cathy, as handlers, will walk

around their neighbourhood with Vespa and Josiah, and complete the day-to-day activities that they usually would, under Lisa's supervision. This can include going to their local park, to and from school, and to the shops.

Once they have completed their attachment walks successfully, they will graduate as a team, and Vespa will graduate as a fully-qualified Autism Assistance Dog!

The matching process also requires Mark and Cathy to complete a dog-handling course to ensure they are capable of managing Vespa in public spaces, and ensure Vespa responds to their commands. Mark and Cathy have both successfully completed the course!

To provide ongoing support, Lisa will then complete regular follow up visits to the family home. This usually happens one month, three months, and six months after graduation, followed by annual visits from then on.

What a difference Vespa will make to Josiah and his wonderful family. It is thanks to your ongoing support that Guide Dogs can continue to train more Autism Assistance Dogs like Vespa. Your support changes the lives of children living with Autism and their families.

To further support our amazing Autism Assistance Dog program, donate online today at [guidedogs.org.au/donate](https://guidedogs.org.au/donate) or by calling **(08) 8115 6060**. Thank you.

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**Top dogs raising funds in South Australia**

In March, 12 top executives from across South Australia donned blindfolds, undertaking a full day of work in total darkness, to raise awareness and funds for Guide Dogs, as part of the 2018 Boss' Blind Date.

Guide Dogs SA/NT Chief Executive Officer, Aaron Chia, was the first to participate, leading the way for the remaining 11 bosses to take on the challenge to raise much needed funds to support people in the community living with vision impairment.

The event was a great success for Guide Dogs, raising \$60,000 towards our vital services (exceeding the \$50,000 target)!

Participant and top fundraiser Tony Perugini, Regional Executive for ANZ, explained why he decided to participate in Boss' Blind Date; "I became involved as I wanted to experience a day in the life of a vision impaired person and to support an ANZ client in a worthwhile fundraising activity. This is not something I would normally do – I'm not the type of person who usually puts myself out there."

Each participant nominated a 'human guide' to assist them on the day, and both attended training at Guide Dogs to

ensure they were well equipped to navigate the challenge safely and confidently.

Tony's trusted human guide for the day was colleague Claire Pinson. With a family history of supporting Guide Dogs (her dad was a Discovery Centre volunteer and her parents were Puppy Raisers), Claire was more than happy to help with the event.

Tony's day involved carrying out day-to-day activities blindfolded, such as withdrawing money from an ATM, attending a team meeting, going out for lunch, making phone calls, and replying to emails (with Claire reading them out and Tony dictating the response).

Tony experienced the challenge of trying to engage with staff without the assistance of the visual cues we take for granted – not knowing who was in the room, or whether the person he was talking to was paying attention!

The staff at ANZ really supported the cause, making generous donations at the morning tea events that were hosted at two of their office locations (featuring special guests Aaron Chia and Ambassador 'Tempo'), as well as online via Tony's fundraising page. Claire also coordinated a push for external donations via the ANZ social media

accounts, and Tony sought individual donations from his business contacts and networks.

Looking back on the day, despite being out of his comfort zone, Tony found the experience incredibly rewarding and valuable; *“I now have a fantastic understanding and appreciation for what people with a vision impairment have to live with every day. It was certainly not easy going without sight for a day, and it reinforced for me that the work Guide Dogs does is extremely worthwhile and absolutely worth supporting.”*

Claire also found the experience enjoyable and insightful, *“we are so lucky to have full vision and take for granted that we can navigate our way safely through our days without relying on support from someone else. Tony and I had a great day, and we look forward to being involved in the 2019 Boss’ Blind Date!”*

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## **Put Your Best Foot Forward**

The results are in for our specialised research project 'Best Foot Forward' for children living with vision impairment.

Late last year, Guide Dogs SA/NT conducted a special research project for children who had issues with balance and gait, due to their vision loss. Our Vision Services team developed a unique program where a group of children worked closely with our dogs, and dog simulator called 'Buddy' to walk confidently and straight.

### **The problem**

Due to a lack of early movement experiences, children with vision impairment can develop inefficient motor patterns. These children can often be seen to walk and run with a backward lean, shorter stride length, slower step speed, and a decreased motion of the hip joint.

This inefficient gait leads to extra energy being used to complete daily tasks, lower levels of fitness, as well as simply making the child tire more quickly due to the way they move.

### **The participants**

In conjunction with the South Australian School for Vision Impaired (SASVI), four students who were indentified with potential gait, posture, or balance issues were asked to take part in the Best Foot Forward project.

### **What was measured**

Pre and post intervention measures were obtained through four different tests; ten metre walk test, six minute walk test, posture test and the balance test. These tests included measures like walking speed, cadence (steps per minute), velocity (metres per minute), average step length, distance, posture analysis, balancing, and much more.

### **What was done**

The children participated in eight, 30-40 minute weekly sessions which involved alternate sessions of walking with a few of our Autism Assistance Dogs-in-training, and a dog simulator. During these walks individualised physiotherapy intervention occurred, where the Guide Dogs staff would assist the children in improving their pace, posture and balance, subject to their individual needs.

### **The results**

The results were amazing! It showed that walking with a dog guide can improve gait, balance, and posture in children living with vision impairment. Although there were noted limitations like weather, impairment level, illness, and noise, each child showed improvements in three of the four tests assessed from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Their confidence and engagement increased dramatically over the duration of the project. The greatest improvement was in the six minute walk test where all of the children increased their distance walked!

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The Vision Services team were thrilled with the feedback they received from the children’s parents, “I’ve specifically noticed an increase in stride length. and posture is more upright. He has even started doing exercises at night before bed!” and “I have seen a major improvement with confidence and independence when walking within the house.”

### Where to from here

Thanks to your support the Guide Dogs Vision Services team were able to conduct this research project, and incorporate the interventions and findings into their current service offerings. ‘Buddy’ the Dog Sim will be used regularly as a unique and novel form of therapy for children.

For more information on our Vision Services phone **1800 757 738** or email [yoursupportline@guidedogs.org.au](mailto:yoursupportline@guidedogs.org.au).

It is only with your support that Guide Dogs can run specialised research projects for children living with sensory disability like ‘Best Foot Forward’. To further support Guide Dogs donate online today at [guidedogs.org.au/donate](http://guidedogs.org.au/donate) or phone **(08) 8115 6060**.

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**The power of music**

Bringing people together with the Guide Dogs' Music Appreciation Group.

The Music Appreciation Group enables our clients and other people living with sensory loss to enjoy music and share experiences with others. The group run by our Sensory Services team meet once a month to enjoy the sounds of a variety of musical genres.

Afternoon Tea is provided at each session and is a great way for the group to be entertained while catching up with fellow clients, and music lovers.

*"I love coming here, so does my Guide Dog Indigo. I love music and I love to sing. I don't just like coming here for the entertainment but I also thoroughly enjoy catching up with other members of the Guide Dogs community. It's also about having quality time with other vision impaired people, I don't see them if I don't come here,"* Client and Music Appreciation Group regular, Pam, explains.

Each session is different, with volunteers offering their musical talents, such as a choir or solo performance. The group has been entertained and educated by a number of guests like the Sing Australia Choir, or Harpist Emma Horwood, acoustic duo Adrienne and Peter, and many more. The group also participate in regular musical

quizzes, discussions around the history of music and music styles throughout the ages, and have enjoyed special Christmas-themed sessions where they sing-a-long to Christmas carols.

*“I have enjoyed every session so far, even when we have the quizzes where we have to guess the titles of songs, that’s quite fun!”* Group member, Brian, shares his favourite part of the Music Appreciation Group.

Zuzia, the group’s youngest member, and talented singer, conducted an experiment with the group for a research project she is doing at school, “helping people and music are my two biggest passions so I decided to combine the two and choose Music Therapy as my experiment.” The group enjoyed helping Zuzia with her project, listening to a variety of different types of music and sounds, both recorded and live, analysing adjustments in their moods and feelings.

The Guide Dogs Music Appreciation Group is always on the lookout for volunteer performers, so if you have a particular musical talent or know someone who does, phone Rosemary on **1800 757 738** or email [yoursupportline@guidedogs.org.au](mailto:yoursupportline@guidedogs.org.au).

It is only with your support that our Sensory Services team can run the Music Appreciation Group. Your support enriches the lives of people living with sensory disability.

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To further support Guide Dogs donate online today at [guidedogs.org.au/donate](https://guidedogs.org.au/donate) or phone (08) 8115 6060.

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**Chelsea Bartlett – Young Citizen of the Year 2018!**

Congratulations to Chelsea Bartlett who was named the City of Adelaide's Young Citizen of the Year for 2018.

You may remember Chelsea from our 2017 Christmas Appeal – Chelsea is an active young woman who doesn't let vision loss stand in her way. Chelsea has Bardet-Biedl syndrome, a disorder that caused her vision to deteriorate from three years of age.

As one of our clients, Chelsea has received a number of services from Guide Dogs over the years, including Vision Services, and Orientation and Mobility services. Chelsea is so grateful of the services she has received, that she has been volunteering her time at Guide Dogs SA/NT for over two years.

Chelsea hosted school groups, the public and businesses for tours of Guide Dogs' former Discovery Centre. With the interactive activities in the centre, Chelsea could share the impact significant vision loss can have on a person's life. Chelsea also educated people on how to interact and engage with people living with vision loss in the community.

Chelsea volunteers her time in the Guide Dogs SA/NT office, working independently on quality documents, using a Job Access With Speech (JAWS) screen reader and

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Magic magnifying software to work on a computer. She also converts files to audio for the Guide Dogs SA/NT website.

*“It means a lot for me to be able to give back to the organisation that has provided several services to me for many years, and to share my experiences of living with vision loss,”* she said.

Earlier this year Chelsea was awarded the City of Adelaide’s Young Citizen of the Year for 2018. Chelsea was presented the award by the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Martin Haese, at a ceremony at the Adelaide Town Hall.

Chief Executive Officer, Aaron Chia, is thrilled for Chelsea, and is so grateful of her hard work and contribution to the Guide Dogs community, *“Guide Dogs is proud to have been part of Chelsea’s life journey through providing white cane training and independent living skills and witnessed her achievements. We are all touched by her generosity of spirit in wanting to give back to others. She is truly a role model to all staff, clients and the community.”*

Congratulations Chelsea from all at Guide Dogs!

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## A Litter Graduation

A huge thankyou to all the A Litter Puppy Sponsors who supported the A Litter through their Puppy Development journey!

Thank you to those who made it to the A Litter Graduation in June to help celebrate this massive milestone. The A litter were head over paws to see the amazing level of suppawt!

A special thanks to Hotel Grand Chancellor for their pawsome suppawt!

*A few words from the A Litter*

### Ace

Hey pawsome people! My name is Ace, I just graduated to basic training! It was so much fun walking up on stage and seeing everyone at graduation. I'm so excited to continue to learn new things, and to hopefully one day become a Guide Dog, Autism Assistance Dog, or Therapy Dog. To relax, I like to hang out with my brothers and sisters.

### Apollo

Did you hear? Me and my siblings graduated to basic training! I'm so excited I can't stop my tail from wagging! I love learning, I'm always smiling and love cuddles too! It's so exciting to be on this journey knowing one day I could

help someone who really needs it.

People always call me handsome, I don't know what that means, but it sounds nice!

### **Alvin**

Woohoo! We graduated onto basic training! My names Alvin, I feel extremely lucky to work for Guide Dogs. I love putting on the harness and following in the footsteps of some amazing working dogs. My Puppy Raising Advisor says I'm a very good listener, I just sit there and smile.

### **Alaska**

Hey lovely suppawters, my name's Alaska, and I'm a sweet but confident girl. I just graduated to basic training! Can you believe that one day I could be a fully qualified Guide Dog, Autism Assistance Dog, or Therapy Dog. When I'm not training, I love a very long belly rub. Woof!

### **Aura**

My names Aura, my brothers and sisters think I'm sneaky! I decided that Guide Dogs wasn't the right career path for me and retired early. I now live with the most amazing loving family as a pet. My family gives me constant cuddles and I love going to the beach with them! My best friends are chickens! They're so funny!

Join the Puppy Sponsorship program. By sponsoring our new brothers and sisters today you are helping them on

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their exciting journey to become a Guide Dog, Autism Assistance Dog, or Therapy Dog.

Join online at [guidedogs.org.au/puppy-sponsorship](https://guidedogs.org.au/puppy-sponsorship) or call (08) 8115 6060.

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**It's easy to fundraise for Guide Dogs!**

Guide Dogs is excited to announce the launch of our new community fundraising platform.

Each year, kind supporters from across South Australia and Northern Territory host their own fundraising events to raise money for Guide Dogs. With our new platform, it is now easier than ever to jump on board and support Guide Dogs!

The new platform allows you to create your very own personalised fundraising page, where you can take donations, add pictures, post event updates, and share your event on social media with the click of a button!

As a fundraiser, you can track your fundraising progress via your personalised page, and even send individual thanks to each of your sponsors! You will also have access to loads of helpful resources, including posters, fundraising tips, and more!

All money raised through the website is sent directly to Guide Dogs, and everyone who sponsors a fundraiser is instantly emailed a tax receipt for donations over \$2.

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Rest assured that the team at Guide Dogs is still here to help each individual with their fundraising event; this new website simply allows the team to easily support a larger number of fundraisers across South Australia and the Northern Territory. This means we can raise more money to support people living with sensory disability and children living with Autism and their families.

*'Hosting a fundraising event is a great way to have fun while raising money for Guide Dogs, and our new fundraising platform makes it easier than ever to show your support!'*

Visit [fundraise.guidedogs.org.au](http://fundraise.guidedogs.org.au) to check out our new platform and start fundraising!

If you have any questions about fundraising for Guide Dogs, please phone the team on **(08) 8203 8302** or email [fundraising@guidedogs.org.au](mailto:fundraising@guidedogs.org.au).

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## PAWGUST

Our new dog friendly event is sure to get tails wagging!

A recent survey amongst our supporters showed that less than 20% of pet owners walk their dogs during winter. Guide Dogs' is all about keeping our dogs healthy and happy, so the PAWGUST challenge was created to encourage people to get active with their dogs during winter.

So far thousands of Australian's have registered to put their paws to the pavement and show their support!

The participants will walk 62km with their four legged friends during the month of August (that's 2km per day!), which is no small feat in the winter weather! It is the perfect excuse for them to spend some quality time with their dog, while supporting Guide Dogs' vital services. All of the funds raised will go towards helping our puppies on their journey to becoming Guide Dogs or Autism Assistance Dogs, that will one day change the life of someone living with sensory disability.

If you want more information, or would like to see how the event is going, visit [pawgust.com.au](http://pawgust.com.au), or get in touch with our PAWGUST team on **(08) 8203 8302** or [pawgust@guidedogs.org.au](mailto:pawgust@guidedogs.org.au).

Designer can have a play with approved Pawgust graphics above.

### **Have you heard?**

OTRGive is here!

Customers of OTR can now support Guide Dogs with each purchase made through the OTR App. Follow these 3 easy steps to help people living with sensory disability in South Australia:

- 1) Download the free OTR App to your smartphone via the App store or Google Play.
- 2) Launch the OTR App and select Rewards. Under OTR Give, choose Guide Dogs as your Cause.
- 3) Your account is now linked! Each time you purchase fuel, snacks, coffee and more with the OTR App, simply scan the barcode to earn rewards and OTR will automatically generate donations to Guide Dogs SA/NT.

Visit [www.ontherun.com.au/otr-app](http://www.ontherun.com.au/otr-app) to learn more and start sharing the benefits with OTRGive.

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## **What's on at Guide Dogs.**

### **Disability, Ageing and Lifestyle Expo**

Guide Dogs SA/NT will have a stall at this year's Disability, Ageing and Lifestyle Expo.

With focus on improving the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of people living with disability and those on the ageing journey, this is an event that is not to be missed.

Visit us on Thursday, September 27 at Adelaide Showground, from 10am to 4pm, entry by gold coin donation.

### **City - Bay**

Guide Dogs SA/NT is the charity partner for this year's City to Bay fun run on Saturday, September 16! Help raise much needed funds for people living with sensory disability, whilst being active! And this year you AND your dog can be part of this great day by participating in the 3km Dog Walk. For more information, phone Tassy on (08) 8203 8302 or visit [guidedogs.org.au/city-bay](http://guidedogs.org.au/city-bay)

### **Pawsome Art Trail**

Throughout the month of August, 100 South Australian businesses will be participating in the Pawsome Art Trail, displaying their own uniquely painted dog bowl in their window. So keep an eye out for these bowls in shop windows in the CBD and across North Adelaide.

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## Beau's Pet Hotel

Planning your next holiday? Book early to ensure your pet gets to have a holiday with us while you have yours! Visit [beaus.org.au](http://beaus.org.au) to make a booking or phone **(08) 8115 6080**.