DGHA Conference 4, 5 and 6 August 2023 Draft Program

Please note: session topics and times may be subject to change.

Venue: Royal on the Park, 152 Alice St, Brisbane City QLD

Phone number: 07 3221 3411

[Website](https://www.royalonthepark.com.au/)

For program and conference enquiries email [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au)

Program

To find out more about a session, click on the link below.

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[Nina Smith, founder of TravelPaws and AACTRS, accessibility advocate for the low vision and blindness community, Annette Ferguson, Chairperson DGHA and Jeremy Anderson, National Policy and Government Relations Advisor, Guide Dogs Australia - Stop Taxi and Rideshare Refusals.](#_Toc141609053)

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[James McFarlaine, Founder, Cocky Guides – Take the lead to improve hotel standards.](#_Toc141609065)

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[Jeremy Anderson, Guide Dogs Australia, National Policy and Government Liaison – Update on Dog Guide warranties under NDIS.](#_Toc141609067)

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[Open floor, Dog Guide war stories and tales, what are your favourite dog products? your chance to have your say.](#_Toc141609071)

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[Cocky Guides sensory tourism activity - St Helena Island Day Tour.](#_Toc141609081)

[Forward Thinking Dog Training workshop “How dogs say yes’.](#_Toc141609082)

# Acknowledgements

## Financial and other support

The DGHA Committee would like to acknowledge and thank the following organisations for generous financial and in kind support for this conference.

* [Guide Dogs Victoria](https://vic.guidedogs.com.au/) – Major sponsor: Connected Together Grant
* [Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs](https://seeingeyedogs.visionaustralia.org/about-us?gclid=Cj0KCQjwqNqkBhDlARIsAFaxvwyJSmVp55cQH6pejRIsJ6xHcslVXjc6qf57mLdI722gshf10Ve_YCcaAmpVEALw_wcB) – Major sponsor: financial support, presenters
* [Guide Dogs NSW/ACT](https://nsw.guidedogs.com.au/) – [Accessibility training](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flearn.guidedogs.com.au%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cannettef%40guidedogsvictoria.com.au%7C4ef2b408d5b2420c036508db8826a1e1%7Ca6800737cbb84b5784ba683f3ac4f8cc%7C0%7C0%7C638253471735767465%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=I44yc2Bov83368G55at2QhhuS%2B8tr0Wpwt61E3HauxE%3D&reserved=0) for presenters, presenters and O&M support
* [Guide Dogs Queensland](https://qld.guidedogs.com.au/) – Human Guide training for venue staff and volunteers

We thank the following organisations and individuals for providing orientation and mobility assistance for our attendees on Friday afternoon 4 August for our conference attendees, as well as training for hotel staff and volunteers.

* [Guide Dogs NSW/ACT](https://nsw.guidedogs.com.au/)
* [Stapell Working Dog](https://stapell.com.au/)
* [Forward Thinking Dog Training and Mobility](https://www.forwardthinkingdogtraining.com.au/)
* [Vickie Anderson and Associates](https://vickieanderson.com.au/)

We thank the following organisations for their generous donations:

We’d also like to thank our secondary sponsors:

* [GAM Industries](http://gam-industries.com.au/)
* [Cocky Guides](https://www.cockyguides.com.au/tours/)
* [Forward Thinking Dog Training](https://www.forwardthinkingdogtraining.com.au/)
* [Bunnings](https://bunnings.com.au/)
* [ar FUM Australia](http://arfum.com.au/)
* [Body Shop Greenhills](http://thebodyshop.com.au/)
* [Dermal Therapy](http://dermaltherapy.com.au/)
* [Ka Pod](http://kapod.com.au/)
* [Kong](http://kongs.com.au/)
* [Maskco](http://maskco.com/)
* [Natio](http://natio.com.au/)
* [No Pong](http://nopong.com.au/)
* [Taste of the Wild](http://tasteofthewild.com.au/)
* [TGI Friday](http://tgifridays.com.au/)
* [White Glo](http://whiteglo.com/)
* [Tantalising Tours](http://tantalisingtours.com.au/)
* [Blind Bitch Designs](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057336134582)

## Volunteers

The time and support offered from the following volunteers in assisting our conference attendees with various tasks over the conference weekend is very much appreciated:

* Helene Johansen
* Dianne Shaddock
* Mary Chapell
* Jason Stankoski
* Dale Lindley, Photographer [OHDE](https://ohde.com.au/)

### DGHA Committee

The Dog Guide Handlers Australia Committee is made up of a diverse group of passionate volunteers who are all Dog Guide Handlers. There are members from most states, some young, some not so young, some experienced in governance practice and others well on their way to learning the ropes. They’ve all juggled work, family, health issues, personal goals and life while putting this conference together. The common thread for this group is the learning and comradery they’ve all benefited from in the DGHA community. They hope you enjoy the same at this conference.

# Friday Evening 4 August

## 6 pm – 8 pm

### Early registration and Expo in Southern Cross Pavilion

#### Exhibitors:

[Guide Dogs NSW/ACT](https://nsw.guidedogs.com.au/)

[Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs](https://sed.visionaustralia.org/?_ga=2.147113015.160453902.1687518544-1799847586.1681542743&_gac=1.121400826.1687518545.CjwKCAjwhdWkBhBZEiwA1ibLmDByLn-6ywIh3H_CYK38YlaeF0dOAcz_ZC9J0yp_ahsPaaBu5IVGDRoC_nYQAvD_BwE)

[BindiMaps](https://bindimaps.com/)

[Pacific Vision](https://au.1lowvision.com/)

[Quantum](https://www.quantumrlv.com.au/)

[Humanware](https://www.humanware.com/en-australia/home)

[Vickie Anderson & Associates (Vision Rehabilitation Therapist)](https://vickieanderson.com.au/)

## 7 pm – 9 pm

### ‘Dogtail’ party generously sponsored by GAM Industries

Enjoy making new friends and catching up with old mates with canapes and an ice breaker in Southern Cross Pavilion. Dogtail menu in accessible formats (Braille and large print) with prices will be provided.

# Saturday 5 August

## 7 am

### Breakfast with friends

Meet in the lobby and walk to a nearby café for breakfast with a group.

## 8.30 am - 9 am

### Registration, Catalina Dehavilland

## 9 am – 9.15 am

### Acknowledgement of country – Murray Stone

### Welcome to conference, housekeeping and roll call

### – Annette Ferguson

## 9.15 am – 9.45 am

### Keynote Speaker: Iain Edwards, executive leader with lived experience of blindness and a Dog Guide Handler, current Director of Operations at Peninsula Health, Victoria – Leadership with lived experience in our Dog Guide Schools and the importance of using your voice in formal and informal leadership roles.

#### Bio:

Iain specialises in operational, strategic and governance leadership of public health, disability and Not For Profit (NFP) organisations, delivering tangible results for stakeholders through purposeful, process-oriented, authentic leadership.   
   
With more than a decade of senior governance experience, including as Chairperson of one of Victoria’s most iconic NFP brands (Guide Dogs Victoria), he connects risk and opportunity and leads executive teams to achieve high performance outcomes. This includes providing decisive and effective leadership through times of crises and change and in complex operating environments.   
   
With a passion for performance, he has a track record of building high-performing, successful executive teams and guiding significant change initiatives to deliver on the vision of the organisations he is involved with. He values integrity and has a deep sense of justice and passion for ethical and equitable service provision in health care and disability services which has underpinned his leadership style. He has a proven ability for formulating and implementing strategy, redesigning models of care, providing excellence in customer service and delivering equitable access to health care and disability services for diverse, vulnerable and marginalised populations.   
   
As a highly qualified professional, he has a long track record of delivering operational and strategic outcomes and being deeply involved in the communities he serves.   
  
Outside of work Iain can be found on a ski boat with friends and family, on the beach, walking to Machu Picchu or keeping fit.  
  
Presentation overview:

Iain will share insights from his professional life as a leader with lived experience of blindness and as a Dog Guide Handler. He will discuss the importance of Handlers using their voice through formal and informal leadership roles to help shape a more accessible world for Dog Guide Handlers.

## 9.45 am – 10.15 am

### Leigh Spillane and Chelsea Cosgrave, Guide Dog Trainers from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT - Research on Ruffwear Harness

#### Bios

#### Leigh Spillane

Leigh Spillane has worked for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT since 2009. She was initially involved with the breeding program in kennels and assisting the Therapy dog team. It was here she found her passion to be a Guide Dog Trainer and has worked as a trainer since 2017.

Leigh is an International Guide Dog Federation qualified Guide Dog Trainer as well as having a Certificate IV in Companion Animal Services from Delta Society.

Leigh's passion for helping people and her love of animals make working at Guide Dog NSW/ACT a winning combination.

#### Chelsea Cosgrove

Chelsea Cosgrave is an International Guide Dog Federation qualified Guide Dog Trainer. She began working as a Guide Dog Trainer with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT in early 2019.

Chelsea has a passion for education and teaching of both the canine and human learner and has brought these together in her current role of supervising a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor trainee to train Guide Dogs to the standards required by the International Guide Dog Federation and Guide Dogs Australia.

Chelsea holds qualifications in companion animal services (from the Delta Institute) and animal behaviour science and technology (from the Companion Animal Science Institute) as well as being a Karen Pryor Certified Training Partner.

#### Presentation overview

In 2018, in response to feedback from handlers about the aesthetics, function and ergonomics of their Guide Dog harness, a study was conducted.  This study included seeking feedback about the current harness as well as a trial to investigate possible alternative harnesses that would meet both handler and their dog’s needs.

In 2022 Guide Dogs NSW/ACT began making the Ruffwear Unifly harness available to handlers for use with their Guide Dogs.

This session will give a brief overview of the harness trial as well as present some benefits and disadvantages of different harness types with a focus on the Ruffwear Unifly.

Handlers will be encouraged to participate in this session and share their own experiences with different harnesses.

## 10.15 am – 10.45 am

### Morning tea

## 10.45 am – 11.15 am

### Bryce Tolliday, Senior Access Consultant, Wayfinding Australia – A disability discrimination advocacy case study with a positive outcome.

### Bio

Bryce is the Chief Operating Officer and Founder of Wayfinding Australia Pty Ltd, which trades as Access All Ways Consultants, a Company based on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.  Wayfinding Australia provides professional consultancy services, nationally, in the fields of Disability Access, Wayfinding Design, Environmental Graphic Design, Research, Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA Housing) and Livable Housing.

As an accredited SDA Assessor, Bryce and his firm are currently assessing around 400 SDA projects mainly within the eastern states of Australia.

Bryce has been an accredited member of ACAA (Association of Consultants in Access Australia) since 2001. He is a qualified access consultant and is also a professional member of the Society for Experiential Design (USA). He has also been a member of the ACAA Management & Membership Committees and represents ACAA on the AS1428.4.2 Wayfinding Standard committee where he was a member of the principal drafting subcommittee and is also currently assisting ME64 on the AS1428.6 drafting group.

Major projects which he has consulted to include Gold Coast University Hospital ($1.1b Teaching Hospital), Moreton Bay Rail Link, Queensland Cultural Centre, Commonwealth Games Village – Gold Coast and Cross River Rail.

Over the years Bryce’s knowledge, particularly in the area of sensory wayfinding has resulted in his involvement in a number of research projects including Main Roads Queensland – Pedestrian Line Marking, CRC – Construction Innovation – Wayfinding in the Built Environment and the Queensland Health – Wayfinding Collaborative. He was also on the drafting committee for the Queensland Health Wayfinding Design Guidelines.

Bryce is a strong advocate for the rights of people with disabilities, having provided support, assistance or acted as an expert witness in numerous complaints taken under both the Queensland Anti Discrimination Act and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act. His most recent involvement has been in the Ryan V SCHHS complaint, a complaint made by a Blind man who alleged discrimination in access to the built environment, which was eventually heard in the Federal Circuit Court in Brisbane.

#### Presentation overview

**Ryan v SCHHS - non-compliant hospital costs Queensland taxpayers millions**

A landmark court ruling in Queensland ordering the rectification of numerous poor design aspects of a multi-billion dollar hospital has established a long overdue precedent for people who are legally blind under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1991 and will hopefully lead to substantial changes in the way major public buildings are designed to assist vision impaired people.

On July 7 2021, Judge Jarrett of the Federal Circuit Court in Brisbane handed down his decision in the Ryan v SCHHS complaint. The complaint was made under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1991 (DDA) by Mr Peter Ryan, a man who was legally blind. He complained that he had experienced disadvantage and discrimination in the way access was provided for him to and within the Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH), a hospital that was constructed under a Private Public Partnership (PPP) and purportedly complied with the National Construction Code (NCC) and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (DAPS) at a cost of almost $2 billion. The building won numerous awards for its design including the F. D. G. Stanley Award for Public Architecture from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA).

Mr Ryan alleged that the SCHHS in constructing the SCUH breached s.6, 23, 24 and 32 of the DDA. Further he alleged that the SCHHS also breached parts of the DAPS. It is interesting to note that the DAPS also mirrors some parts of the NCC. The building was issued with a certificate of classification by a building certifier, meaning this building certifier deemed that the SCUH complied with the NCC.

This landmark decision established a long overdue precedent for people who are legally blind under the DDA, raises some serious questions about some Australian Standards, the NCC and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards. It also firmly and clearly established the Disability Discrimination Act (Clth) 1991 as the primary and minimum compliance mechanism for access to premises for people with disabilities.

This presentation will provide a background to Mr Ryan’s complaint and will review the decision of Judge Jarrett and the impacts this decision should have on access for people who are legally blind within the built environment.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-31/sunshine-coast-hospital-posthumous-lawsuit-man-blind/100410382>

## 11.15 am – 12.30 pm

### Panel discussion – Technology for navigation - three presentations followed by question and answer session.

### Speaker 1: Damian McMorrow, Access Technology Manager, Vision Australia - Wearable technology for navigating with low vision or blindness

#### Bio:

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Information Technology from Griffith University Damo McMorrow has spent over 24 years in the IT industry in a variety of roles, from running his own adaptive technology business, to managing technical and service delivery teams across the Education sector. During this time, he has relied upon adaptive technology and equipment to help overcome a wide range of barriers and issues. Damo then brought his experience and passion for technology to Vision Australia, previously as an Access Technology Specialist, where he assisted clients in the use of technology for work, education, travel and leisure, and currently as national Access Technology Manager, leading Vision Australia’s Access Technology Service. In his spare time, he is a broadcaster on the internet radio station Mushroom FM, a keen cook, amateur radio operator, and 4-wheel-drive and camping enthusiast.  He has been a dog guide handler since 2005, and is currently working with his third Seeing Eye Dog, Ebony.

#### Presentation Overview:

In the last couple of years, we have seen a number of wearable technologies enter the market, all of which use artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist with text recognition, person recognition, and scene description.  Furthermore, we are now seeing services such as Chat GPT, which allows to ask all sorts of questions, from descriptions of photos, to information about all manner of people, places and objects.  How useful then is all this technology to the blind or vision impaired traveller.  This short presentation looks at some of these technologies, and their effectiveness in helping us navigate our environment.

### Speaker 2: Vivian Bell, Assistive Technology Specialist, Humanware - using Braille display, audio display and GPS technology for navigating outdoors with low vision or blindness

#### Bio and Presentation overview coming soon

### Speaker 3: Tony Burrett, Chief Product Officer and Co-Founder of BindiMaps, - indoor navigation with low vision or blindness.

Bio:  
Tony is the co-founder and Chief Product Officer of accessible wayfinding startup BindiMaps, responsible for developing and managing the BindiMaps products including Android and iOS apps, BindiWeb and BindiMaps Kiosk. He joined after five years as the COO of startup accelerator BlueChilli, where he helped build and mentor more than 50 startups. He founded and ran startup studio the New Agency, was the founder of [Carsguide.com.au](http://carsguide.com.au/) and has extensive experience in media, marketing and publishing.

Presentation overview:  
Accessible wayfinding is stuck in the 1960s, but we can find our way back. Tony will talk about how new technology like BindiMaps is bringing wayfinding up to date, and providing true independence to users.

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm

### Lunch

## 1.30 pm – 2.30 pm

### Public Interest Advocacy Centre - Complaints and discrimination claims; durable solutions for taxi and rideshare companies to adopt. Hosted by Katie Butler

#### Bios

#### Mitchell Skipsey

Mitchell works within PIAC’s NDIS strategic litigation practice, within which he runs anti-discrimination claims and systemic advocacy for equal access to transport for people with disability. He also leads a project designed to advocate for fairer decision-making outcomes and policies for NDIS recipients in relation to housing and supported accommodation.

Mitchell’s professional experience has centred on assisting marginalised communities and groups obtain fair and just treatment from governmental bodies. He has previously worked in refugee law at the Refugee Advice and Casework Service, overseeing casework, law reform, and litigation matters, as well as administering a multi-disciplinary practice in conjunction with social work, health and employment professionals from the Asylum Seekers Centre to deliver holistic outcomes for people seeking asylum.

Mitchell holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of International and Global Studies from the University of Sydney.

#### Michelle Cohen

Michelle joined PIAC as a Senior Solicitor in 2014 and became a Principal Solicitor in 2019.

Michelle has more than 15 years’ experience working a lawyer in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. She has expertise advising and representing clients in a broad range of areas of civil law, including managing complex civil litigation in the areas of discrimination and human rights, administrative law, the NDIS, consumer rights, child protection, police accountability and native title. Michelle is also experienced in policy development and analysis, and regularly contributes to regulatory, legislative and systems change reform processes.

Michelle currently supervises PIAC’s work on:

* A Fairer NDIS: to improve outcomes under the scheme for people with disability and ensure it lives up to its promise of providing choice and control for participants. This includes policy work, advocacy and litigation in relation to the Scheme;
* Equality and non-discrimination: Michelle leads PIAC’s strategic litigation work on discrimination and has acted for clients in unlawful disability discrimination claims, including against the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Coles, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Michelle represented Mr Graeme Innes in his landmark disability discrimination claim against NSW Trains, Innes v Rail Corporation of NSW (No 2); and
* Climate change and social justice.

Before joining PIAC, Michelle worked at the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission and as a child protection solicitor in Melbourne. Prior to this, Michelle worked at Cape York Land Council where she played a key role in the negotiation of native title and Indigenous Land Use Agreements, and set up land holding corporations on behalf of her clients. Michelle has also worked as an Associate in the Federal Circuit Court.

## 2.30 pm – 3 pm

### Keynote speaker: Amanda Muller, Associate Professor, College of Nursing and Health Science, Flinders University, Adelaide - Shifting the burden of Dog Guide refusal from victim to perpetrator and the PawsRight App.

#### Bio

Dr Amanda Muller is an Assistance Dog researcher, handler, and nationally accredited dog trainer.

She holds the position of Associate Professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Flinders University in South Australia. Dr Muller has assembled a group of handlers to conduct Assistance Dog research, focusing on issues of legal frameworks, access refusals, and user- perspectives of living with assistance dogs. She works with dog handler organisations to find solutions to national areas of need. Her consumer-lead research group is currently conducting a legal scoping review of how assistance dogs are defined and regulated, what are the differences in responding to refusals across states/territories, the onus of proof on refusal claims, and obtaining evidence of assistance dog access refusals.

#### Presentation overview

Dr Muller will present her current work on collating handler reports on refusals to access in the land transport, retail, food, and accommodation domains. She will introduce a new national reporting app and explain the rationale behind it. She will also talk about her activities with Assistance Dog groups to collate hard evidence about refusals, such as how many, where, and who, to push for change in policy and how perpetrators of refusal are treated. Currently, the system places the burden on the ‘victim’ of an unlawful act through self-advocacy, and the focus needs to change to being on the ‘perpetrator’ by seeking suitable deterrence and responses to refusals. Dr Muller will explain how the hard evidence base of the strategy she is collaborating on should result in real change over time.

## 3 pm – 3.30 pm

### Afternoon tea

## 3.30 pm – 4 pm

### Group photo of all attendees followed by a social walk in the park

Complimentary photography by [Ohde](https://ohde.com.au/)

## 6.30 pm for 7 – 10 pm Conference Dinner in the Southern Cross Pavilion

### Dinner, inclusive raffle (with large print and Braille tickets) and presentation of the Judith Killen Golden Harness Award in the Catalina Dehavilland room.

### Raffle tickets $5 each. Please bring exact money to purchase tickets on the night.

# Sunday 6 August

## 7 am

### Breakfast with friends

Meet in the lobby and walk to a nearby café for breakfast with a group.

## 8.15 am – 9 am

### A good morning, wake up walk around the park across from Royal on the Park. Meet in the lobby.

## 9 am – 9.15 am

### Acknowledgement of Country, housekeeping, announcements in the Catalina Dehavilland room.

## 9.15 am – 9.45 am

### AGM

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Roll Call.

2. Approval of 2022 DGHA AGM Minutes.

3. Approval of 2023 Annual Reports.

4. Voting on Election of Positions for DGHA Committee.

5. Any Other Business.

6. Meeting Close.

## 9.45 am – 10.15 am

### Nina Smith, founder of TravelPaws and AACTRS, accessibility advocate for the low vision and blindness community, Annette Ferguson, Chairperson DGHA and Jeremy Anderson, National Policy and Government Relations Advisor, Guide Dogs Australia - Stop Taxi and Rideshare Refusals.

#### Bio

Nina Smith is a volunteer advocate for Assistance Dog Handlers working with corporate and government stakeholders. She has considerable business experience in a range of senior management and consultancy roles across industries in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors.

In 2005, Nina acquired a permanent disability which left her retired, legally blind and reliant on an Assistance Dog. Her first dog guide was Seeing Eye Dog Walter and now Guide Dog Nixon. Since retiring, her passion is volunteering her background and expertise by supporting and advocating for Assistance Dog Handlers in travel.

You may have heard of her volunteer initiative, TravelPaws, which provides information to handlers on travel obligations, public access experience / laws / responsibilities, transport policies and booking systems.

Nina is now working on bringing key stakeholders together to address the devastating reality that taxi and ride share refusals have been ongoing for years without resolution.

#### Presentation overview

**Stop Taxi & Rideshare Refusals**

In her presentation, Nina will outline a recent initiative in which senior members of 5 key organisations will come together to form an Advisory Group to provide stakeholders recommendations to address taxi and rideshare refusals. These organisations include:

* DGHA
* Guide Dogs Australia
* Assistance Dogs Australia
* Blind Citizens Australia
* TravelPaws.

Nina is Chairing this committee and Annette Ferguson will represent DGHA.

The Advisory Group will be co-designing with a joint working group comprised of Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, Department of Transport & Planning and the Regulator, Safe Transport Victoria.

Nina will outline how these initiatives came about and how they will address this key issue.

## 10.15 am – 10.45 am

### Dr Nicola Cotton, Veterinary and Reproduction Manager Vision Australia - How Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs assesses and selects dogs for breeding in order to produce a continually improving quality of dog for Clients.

#### Bio:

As Veterinary and Reproduction Manager at Seeing Eye Dogs Australia (SEDA), Nicola oversees the SEDA breeding program, veterinary care of the organisation's dog population, reproductive health and neonatal care. Nicola has been with Seeing Eye Dogs for over nine years, before this having worked as a veterinarian for the RSPCA and as an emergency veterinarian.

Nicola is enthusiastic about using data to promote continuous improvement in success rates and animal welfare within the dog guide industry, and exploring the interactions between these concepts. To advance this cause, she has taken on several roles in the industry, being a member of the International Guide Dog Federation Animal Welfare Special Interest Group and the Assistance Dogs International (ADI) Breeding Standards Subcommittee. Nicola also led the recent development of the Seeing Eye Dogs Animal Welfare Strategy and headed Seeing Eye Dogs’ participation in the ADI Oceanic Breeding Co-operative as a founding member; she currently sits on the ADI International Breeding Co-operative Steering Committee.

Outside of work Nicola enjoys travelling, experiencing local cuisines around the world, and spending time at the beach with her dog Toby, a kelpie.

#### Presentation overview:

A dog guide breeding program should aim to continually produce better quality dogs with each generation. To achieve this, Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs (SEDA) takes a comprehensive approach considering many factors. These include understanding what constitutes a high-quality working dog that meets the preferences and requirements of clients both now and into the future, what traits are causing the highest proportion of failure in the program, and how to apply selection pressure to improve traits whilst maintaining genetic diversity.

Traditionally, dogs have been assessed phenotypically, which means they are evaluated on their observable external characteristics (traits) and quantitative health screening measurements. The phenotype gives an estimate of the genetic make-up (genotype) of a dog. However the accuracy of this estimate can vary widely depending on the interaction of environmental and genetic factors that influence the expression of any given trait in each individual dog.

To improve the accuracy of the estimate of a dog’s genotype in order to accelerate improvement throughout breeding, SEDA can use estimated breeding values (EBVs) to more successfully estimate the genetic potential of each dog overall, or by specific traits. EBVs take into account not only the dog’s individual measurements but also those of all of its relatives, enabling accelerated genetic improvement.

In this presentation, Dr Nicola will explain how SEDA assesses and selects dogs for breeding in order to produce a continually improving quality of dog for clients. By carefully considering a range of factors and using data collection and analysis throughout all stages of the program, SEDA aims to produce dogs that are ideally suited to their role as working dogs, whilst ensuring to maintain genetic diversity for the sustainability of breeding for many generations to come.

## 10.45 am – 11.15 am

### Morning tea

## 11.15 am – 12 pm

### Anna Gigliotti-Skret, Professional Dog Trainer, KPA CTP, Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Forward Thinking Dog Training - Baby steps, setting dogs up for success

#### Bio

Anna is an internationally qualified Dog Guide Instructor and Certified Orientation and Mobility specialist with extensive experience in the field since 2002. Anna’s Dog Guide traineeship was completed at Vision Australia’s Seeing Eye Dogs in Melbourne and she has worked for Guide Dogs Victoria, Guide Dogs SA/NT and Light into Europe in Romania. Currently living and working independently in Adelaide she can provide remote consults and may travel interstate for work (with prior arrangement). Anna has completed studies into dog behaviour and also consults privately with people and their pet dogs.

#### Presentation overview

“Never work with children or animals”, or so the saying goes. Both can be unpredictable and can prove to be a challenge to communicate easily with at times. This session will aim to give you some strategies to avoid mishaps and to put useful boundaries in place. We will discuss dog body language, displacement signals, trigger stacking and patting consent tests. The aim today is to gain a deeper understanding of your individual dog and discover how your dog can communicate whether they would like to interact or if they prefer not to.

Also see below, How dogs say Yes - optional workshop Monday 7 August.

## 12 pm – 12.30 pm

### Paul Adrian, Training Manager, National Programs, Vision Australia - The International Guide Dog Federation, who are they and what do they do?

#### Bio

Paul has been a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor since 1984 when he started as a trainee with Guide Dogs Victoria under the tutelage of luminaries such as Eric Hatchley, Ray Joyce and John Gosling. In 1987 he obtained his qualification in Orientation and Mobility to round out his professional training.

His career has included roles in direct service provision, service and dog training management as well as senior and executive roles in a number of organisations. Paul has also worked in a number of organisations outside of Australia and had his own dog guide organisation in Germany for many years where a system similar to the NDIS has been in existence for decades.

He has held a number of roles with the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) including as an assessor of Dog Guide schools, a member of the committee that accredits dog guide organisations for membership of the IGDF and also as Chair of the IGDF Education Committee.

Pauls current roles are Seeing Eye Dog Advisor for Strategy and Change at Vision Australia and a Consultant for See Differently with Royal Society for the Blind in South Australia.

#### Presentation overview

The International Guide Dog Federation: Who are they and what do they do?

The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) was formed in 1989 and currently comprises around 95 member organisations from all around the world. Member organisations share the purpose of serving people who are blind or have low vision by training and providing dog guides.

Learn how organisations attain membership and how membership supports organisations to improve the services they provide. Discover how Australians have contributed in a very substantial way to the work of the IGDF in the past and present and what initiatives the IGDF is planning for the future.

## 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm

### Lunch

## 1.30 pm – 2.15 pm

### James McFarlaine, Founder, Cocky Guides – Take the lead to improve hotel standards.

#### Bio

James ‘Buck’ McFarlane entered the Australian tourism market fresh out of a corporate role in financial services in 2008 and honed his craft as a tour guide connecting young overseas travellers to Australia’s diverse East Coast and Outback with brands like Oz Experience, Adventure Tours Australia and G Adventures.

During a trip with G Adventures in March 2014, Buck led a group which included a person with disability. This trip was a success and required plenty of planning and adaptation for the traveller's benefit. This process made Buck think about travellers on previous trips and how he adapted tours for other travellers with needs like mobility impairment and deafness. That is when Buck realised he never met a blind traveller.

After a short stint in an operations role at Grand Circle Travel, a global leader in international travel for Americans Over 50’s, Buck learned the importance of focusing on a specific market. Buck wanted to start his own business, serving a large community of travellers that the tourism industry underserved. He made it his journey to create memorable and bucket list experiences for blind and low-vision Australians by founding the award-winning tour business Cocky Guides.

Since launching in August 2018, Cocky Guides have specialised in providing unique, multi-sensory adventures for the blind and low-vision community. Over 1,200 travellers have enjoyed sensory experiences at more than 60 destinations across NSW and Australia. Cocky Guides was the proud recipient of the Silver Award for Excellence in Accessible Tourism at the 2022 NSW Tourism Award.

Buck also serves on the Tour Guides Australia board, focusing on coordinating the association’s strategy and external communications.

#### Presentation overview

In this session the audience will brainstorm, debate and discuss the top ten most important attributes that make accommodation accessible for Dog Guide Handlers. This information will be used to create a resource that can be shared and used by Handlers and the tourism industry.

## 2.15 pm – 2.45 pm

### Jeremy Anderson, Guide Dogs Australia, National Policy and Government Liaison – Update on Dog Guide warranties under NDIS.

#### Bio

Jeremy Anderson is the National Policy and Government Relations Advisor at Guide Dogs Australia. He has had extensive experience working in senior advisor and chief of staff roles with State and Federal Governments in portfolio areas including health and transport and disability. Prior to joining Guide Dogs Australia, Jeremy worked at  the NDIA as an Assistant Director on government relations within the Ministerial and Parliamentary Branch.

#### Presentation overview

There has been debate surrounding the application of guarantees under Australian Consumer Law when issues arise for Dog Guides not performing to agreed service standards. With the NDIS Review well underway, Jeremy will give an update and insights on the NDIS Assistance Animal guarantees and the NDIS dog guide advisory group discussions that are currently taking place in regard to assessments and service standard provisions.

## 2.45 pm – 3 pm

### Afternoon tea

## 3 pm - 4 pm

### Open floor, Dog Guide war stories and tales, what are your favourite dog products? your chance to have your say.

## 4 pm

### Conference close

## 6 pm

### Dinner – free transport courtesy of Cocky Guides to Mary Mae’s at the Brisbane Powerhouse – bookings essential.

Cocky Guides have generously donated free transport from Royal on the Park to Mary Mae's at the Brisbane Powerhouse. Bookings are essential! You can [view the menu](https://marymaes.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2023/06/MM_Menu_A5_MAY23_LunchDinner_vDA.pdf) here and make a [booking for transport and pre order meals here](https://www.trybooking.com/CKGWF). Numbers need to be confirmed on Saturday so please book early.

# Pre and post conference activities

## Saturday 5 August

### Southbank parkrun with support from Achilles Brisbane TBC. Express your interest by 17 July by emailing [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au).

## Sunday 6 August

Dinner with Cocky Guides

## Monday 7 August

### Cocky Guides sensory tourism activity - St Helena Island Day Tour.

More details and bookings [here](https://www.cockyguides.com.au/tours/).

### Forward Thinking Dog Training workshop “How dogs say yes’.

Location: Royal on the Park, room TBC

Time: 10 am – 12.20 pm (2 hours with 20 minutes break, eg. 50 mins, then break, then 50 mins).

Price: Working position (Max 4 participants) - $80, auditing - $40

Cancellations:Free cancellation if cancelled on or before 31st July, 2023.

Full cost will apply if cancelled after 31st July, 2023.

To book, contact Anna by email: [anna.gig22@gmail.com](mailto:anna.gig22@gmail.com)

[www.forwardthinkingdogtraining.com.au](http://www.forwardthinkingdogtraining.com.au)

[www.forwardthinkingmobility.com.au](http://www.forwardthinkingmobility.com.au)

[See Anna’s bio above.](#AnnaGig)

For those wanting a deeper dive into dog body language, we will explore how to recognise when our dog is comfortable or not, as well as how to perform a patting consent test. Providing tips and training ideas to support the ongoing comfort and handling of your dogs, such as naming their body parts prior to handling, as well as how to teach a chin rest or paw shake for enhanced co-operation during grooming and handling procedures.

There are four working positions where you and your dog can get an opportunity for some hands-on training and exploration that is overseen by Anna in real time. This will be verbally described to the audience during the session so that both the handler and the larger group can learn from the experience of the participants and their individual dogs.

There are fees associated with this workshop. Please review your funding sources to confirm if the workshop can be claimed according to your goals.