DOG GUIDE HANDLERS AUSTRALIA (Inc)

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Dog Guide Handlers Australia (DGHA) is a national association which provides a voice for Australians who are blind or vision impaired who are dog guide handlers.

DGHA is an independent registered association of dog guide handlers, and is not affiliated with any dog guide school.

### KEY OBJECTIVES:

DGHA strives to foster, represent, promote, enhance and protect the interests of Australians who are blind or vision impaired who are dog guide handlers.

DGHA draws on the experiences and varied knowledge of its members, to provide peer support, advocacy and information to dog guide handlers throughout Australia.

Members of the DGHA Committee are:

Kevin Murfitt – President

Claudia Stevenson – Vice-President

Francois Jacobs – Treasurer

John Hardie – Secretary

Roslyn Matthews – General Committee Member

Jamie Kelly – General Committee Member

Bronwyn Drew – General Committee Member

Erika Webb – General Committee and Social media

PRESIDENT’S REPORT: Kevin Murfitt

The 2019-2020 financial year has been a challenging one for members and the general community with the Covid-19 pandemic. As I write this, Melbourne has just hit 30 days of no new infections so thankfully Australia is starting to open up. Nonetheless, the 2019-2020 financial year has also seen important growth and development of DGHA.

Many of you have now also become part of the significant changes across the disability sector which have been taking place, and as My Aged Care (MAC) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reforms continue to roll out, I believe this dynamic environment is set to continue, making our peer support and collective voice even more important.

Regarding the NDIS, we held a member teleconference in November 2019 with NDIA representative Amber Young. The recording is available on the DGHA website for those who missed it: [www.dgha.org.au](http://www.dgha.org.au)

Our quarterly newsletter continued throughout the year edited by Annette Ferguson until her resignation in late 2019, and then Bronwyn drew from March this year. Our thanks go to them for the great work on the newsletter.

Regarding our ongoing advocacy work, we have continued to provide feedback and input into such issues as airline travel, access to taxis, ubers, and restaurants. Further information about these issues including tips around self-advocacy with taxi and/or Uber dog guide refusals were detailed in the newsletter. Our Facebook page continues to grow as you can see in the Social Media report from Erika below, and the DGHA Committee takes note of issues trending on our Facebook page to respond on Facebook where appropriate or record as potential topics for our member teleconferences or the DGHA Biennial Conference.

I would like to sincerely thank DGHA members for their ongoing willingness to contribute to DGHA’s pursuit of its principal objectives advocating for all of us as Dog Guide Handlers.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work that the Committee has done in this past year. Claudia, Joyce, Francois, Bev, Warwick, Jamie, Ros, Annette, John, Erika, and Cathy have all played a vital role in our continuing work. Special recognition to those committee members who either finished their terms this year or resigned for other reasons: Joyce Jones, Catherine Egan, Bev and Warwick Best, and Annette Ferguson. I would also like to thank Greg Madson for managing our website, and Erica Webb for managing our social media, in particular, our Facebook page.

It is also very important to note that all of the DGHA Committee members are volunteers and therefore we often need to make hard decisions regarding the work we do which is often constrained by our limited resources.

There are a variety of ways you can provide further support and momentum to your Organisation. Committee participation is a good opportunity, and so is simply providing feedback, suggestions, topics for consideration, guest speakers you’d like to hear or specific policy initiatives – the ways you can add value for all of us are boundless. In short, by getting involved in whatever way you can, strengthens our organisation and benefits us all and allows us to support more members in more ways. Our contact info is on the [www.dgha.org.au](http://www.dgha.org.au) website or you can email to [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au)

Yours sincerely,

Dr Kevin Murfitt AM

President DGHA

SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT:

Social Media Manager: Erika Webb December 2020.

**Dog Guide Handlers Australia on Facebook**:

Facebook followers is now 599 from 529 members in the Facebook group page in December 2019.

Link to Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DogGuideHandlersAustralia/>

Twitter Update:

1,691 Following down by 54 since December 2019.

1,403 Followers down by 46.

815 Tweets was 787 Tweets last year.

Link to Twitter <https://twitter.com/dghaustralia> as @DGHAustralia

**Facebook Topics Summary Since December 2019**:

Strategies for hot weather and dog guides, food and drink suggestions, not working the dogs, keeping the house cool.

New DGHA website page. Reflections - The reflections page is a place where we can share our reflections of our dogs. Perhaps you are a puppy raiser who has just sent a pup off for training or has had one that has career changed. New DGHA website page: <http://dgha.org.au/dgha/reflections/> . In Memoriam - On this page you will find tributes to those who have had a significant impact to the Dog Guide sector in Australia: <http://dgha.org.au/dgha/in-memoriam/> . Send stories to [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au).

Various dog guide refusals at cafes, restaurants, taxis and Uber ride share services.

Location of dog guide toilet facilities at various Australian airports.

Dog Guides and family dynamics during the Christmas and New Year season. Issues with family members and partners.

Looking at rental properties with or without your dog guide.

Coronavirus COVID-19 and social isolation and social distancing various posts.

Disclosure about dog guides for Job Applications and Job Interviews. When to disclose?

Advice sought about Pet Cemetery or Cremations.

Guide Dog funding under the NDIS for new or replacement dogs.

Audio from Guest Speakers members meeting on DGHA website at: <http://dgha.org.au/dgha/audio/>

TREASURER’S REPORT: Francois Jacobs

DGHA Financial Statement 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020

## ANZ Account:

Balance of ANZ Account as of 1 July 2019: $2,508.71

### ANZ Account Incoming from 1 July 2019:

Memberships: $170

Total Income into ANZ Account: $170.00

### Outgoing from ANZ account since 1 July 2019:

Website Aussie Broadband at $10.00 per month: $120.00

2 Dec: $39.60 DMIRS - ONLINE PAYMENT PERTH; Extension of Time to hold AGM - DOG GUIDE

HANDLERS AUSTRALIA (INC)

20 Apr: $44 VISA DEBIT PURCHASE CARD 9053 DMIRS; Request for Change of Rules

Total Outgoing from ANZ: $203.60

Balance of ANZ Account as of 30 June 2020: $2,475.11

## DGHA PayPal Account:

PayPal Account Balance as of 1 July 2019: $ 4055.11

Note this is $6.50 higher than the closing PayPal balance reported on the previous financial report due to erroneous deduction of a $6.50 fee reversal on the 2019 report.

### Incoming into PayPal Account from 1 July 2019:

Memberships: $40.00

Total income into PayPal: $40.00

### Outgoing from PayPal Account from 1 July 2019:

PayPal Fees: $1.64

Total Outgoing from PayPal: $1.64

PayPal Account Balance as of 30 June 2020: $4093.47

## Total balance for Accounts as of 30 June 2020:

ANZ Account: $2,475.11

PayPal Account: $4,093.47

Total Balances: $6568.58

The Association acknowledges and thanks Greg Madson for paying the annual Gravity Forms fee which was $29 US as a donation on behalf of DGHA.

Francois Jacobs

Treasurer

End of Annual Report