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# **A Message from the Editor**

Happy Holidays to all.

Welcome to the summer 2022 DGHA Newsletter. I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter.

Please send any stories, articles or ideas to newsletter@dgha.org.au .

## **Farewell**

It is with a heavy heart that I advise our members and followers that this my eleventh newsletter is my last.

This decision was not one made lightly, but one I had to make as changes are afoot in my life and would be unable to continue producing the newsletter at the standard of which I set out to produce it at.

I thank the committee, members and supporters of DGHA during my time on the committee and as the newsletter editor. I have made many friends during my time and look forward to staying in touch with you all.

Cheers Bronwyn

**Who are we?**

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

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

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

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

# **Good Golly, Miss Mollie**

A new beginning, a move forward

Well the day has finally arrived and my new dog guide is here, and her name is Mollie. She is a tiny 25kg, and a milky white with a dash of caramel,

It has been a long 6 months, and at times I wasn’t sure getting another dog guide was the right thing to do, as my previous dog guide was retired after less than 2 years.

I am glad I didn’t let my worries about getting another dog guide sideline me as my new guide is just the polar opposite to my last. Mollie is just so cool, calm and eager to please.

Now my friends tell me not to compare her to my previous guide but how can you not, she is so different, oh so much calmer and an easy walk, she has already found that sweet spot as we walk.

Now we are only a bit over a week into training at the time of writing and oh WOW, what a difference she has made.

I feel this connection we have will endure as she grows and now she is my little girlfriend, my princess.

Now I will never forget my first guide, and have seen him since his retirement and will see him again, and yes he will meet Mollie in due course.

Once our training is finished the world will be at our feet, one step at a time as our confidence grows and we trust in each other.

Bye for now Scott and Mollie.

# **Image**



# **DGHA Chairperson’s report** November 2022, by Annette Ferguson

Hello members and followers,

As we wrap up the year and head into the silly season, please read on for an update of what’s been happening at DGHA and what we are planning for 2023.

## AGM

On Wednesday 9 November we held our AGM which included a very informative presentation from Paul Adrian, Training Manager at Vision Australia. As well as saying thank you to several committee members who have reached the end of their tenure on the committee, we welcomed some new committee members.

Paul’s presentation included a generous acknowledgement of the good work DGHA do in bringing members together and sharing information, acknowledgement of the Hatchley family for several generations and over 50 years of puppy raising for Guide Dogs Victoria, and an invitation to join Vision Australia for a retirement event on 18 December for Harry Vanderjagt after many years of service.

Paul also talked about the impact of COVID19 on Dog guide training, and three programs currently running at Seeing Eye Dogs. The programs were:

1. A youth program for 13 – 18 year old’s to learn about orientation and mobility and what’s involved in being a Seeing Eye Dog handler.

2. A specialised training program where dogs are trained to work with handlers who use wheelchairs which was guided and supported by colleagues in the UK.

3. And a trial bushwalking program planned in Victoria designed to help individuals develop skills for navigating complex environments.

We’d like to thank Paul for his always informative and captivating contributions to DGHA.

We bid a hearty farewell and big thank you to outgoing chairperson Kevin Murfitt, committee member Jamie Kelly and newsletter editor, Bronwyn Drew. All three have been very hard working and active members and made significant contributions in their time on the committee. Bronwyn has left big boots to fill as she steps down from the newsletter editor job. If you are up for filling these boots, we’d love to hear from you!

We’ll be discussing the future of the DGHA Newsletter at our next meeting on Monday 12 December.

We welcomed new members Margaret Booth and Murray Stone to the committee and are looking forward to getting to know them and the skills and experience they bring to the organisation.

We also welcomed Kirsten Busby into the vice chair role as one of our youngest committee members ever.

## Our current committee until the AGM in 2023 is:

Executive Committee Members

Chairperson: Annette Ferguson (NSW)

Deputy Chairperson: Kirsten Busby (NSW)

Secretary: Greg Madson (WA)

Treasurer: John Hardie (VIC)

Social Media: Erika Webb (WA)

General Committee Members

Francois Jacobs (VIC)

Margaret Booth (NSW)

Murray Stone (NSW)

Roslyn Matthews (QLD)

Stacy Hipwell (NSW)

## Dog Guide refusal form update

At the end of October our Dog Guide refusal reporting form has been online for 186 days from 27 April to 30 October and we have received 69 refusal reports. Below is a summary of some of the data we’ve collected with this form, and a full report will be published on our website separately to this newsletter <insert link>.

* Rideshare and taxi companies were the most commonly cited offenders with 13Cabs and Uber topping the list.
* The majority of the incidents occurred in Victoria and New South Wales recording 40 and 15 respectively. Queensland recorded 6, South Australia recorded 4, Western Australia 3 and Tasmania recorded 1.
* 48 of the refusals were by taxi and rideshare drivers, most commonly 13Cabs (25 refusals) and Uber (9 refusals), 8 at non specified locations, 6 occurred at eateries, 3 at retail or businesses, 2 on public transport and 2 at accommodation providers.

When describing the refusal incident, respondents most commonly used the following terms to describe their experience:

* Increased stress, anxiety and fear
* Humiliated and embarrassed
* Angry
* Powerless or disempowered
* Disrespected
* Vulnerable

The report gives de-identified details of the impact of refusals on Dog Guide Handlers in their own words.

Our committee acknowledge the extra time and effort involved for Handlers in reporting refusals. We understand that it can repeat the trauma of the incident and that it may seem like a wasted effort as refusals seem to become more frequent. We are aware that many refusal incidents have not been reported on our online form, but may have been reported to Dog Guide schools or authorities or not at all. Collecting this data and defining the problem is the first step in the systemic advocacy process. Without numbers, we can’t fight this. If there was a quick fix, it would have been executed by now and the problem would not continue to undermine our independence and freedom. We urge members to share this online form with fellow Handlers and encourage them to report refusals so that we can get a more accurate picture of how serious this problem is.

## Why are we called ‘Dog Guide Handlers Australia’ and not ‘Guide Dog Handlers Australia’?

This is a question I’ve been asked numerous times, so let me explain.

There are two major schools in Australia who train dogs who guide people with low vision or blindness. One is called Guide Dogs Australia, the other is called Seeing Eye Dogs Australia. There is also a school called Stapell Working Dogs in Queensland. We call ourselves ‘Dog Guide Handlers’ because we are an independent voice for all handlers regardless of which school trained and provided their dog, and so that we do not use the branded name of the Guide Dogs Australia school. The term ‘Dog Guide’ is generic and not associated with any particular school.

## 2023 DGHA Conference

You may have seen through Facebook or emails that we’ve well on our way to organising the 2023 DGHA conference! Our conference committee are currently meeting monthly to brainstorm and put together the best experience possible for our members.

The conference will be on 4, 5 and 6 August 2023.

Please save these dates in your calendar and come join us for some fun, friendship and learning at Royal on the Park, Brisbane.

Some highlights of the conference will be:

* Pre and post conference activities provided by various companies including sensory and supported tourism and dog trainers
* Cocktail party and expo on Friday evening 4 August
* A jam packed conference program on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August including a group walk around the Botanic Gardens next to the Brisbane River, ‘Be The Change’ workshop, and plenty of time to catch up with new and old friends
* A dinner on Saturday night which includes presentation of the Judith Killen Golden Harness Award

As soon as we’ve confirmed our presenters and their topics, we’ll let you know!

If there is a particular speaker or topic you’d like included in the program, please share your thoughts with us by emailing dgha@dgha.org.au.

If you’ve been to a DGHA conference before, you’ll know how much fun they are, please share this information with your Dog Guide Handler friends.

Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas

On behalf of the DGHA committee, I’d like to thank all who support our work and contribute to our community. We’re all looking forward to a great conference year in 2023 and we wish you a safe

# **Handy Links**

**DGHA Refusal Form:** <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd6Uq7CvPrFnq3kgx76HznGGKvN-WxahOQq2AfBI5QpPfQOyw/viewform>

**Please Don’t Pat Me – Business FAQs**

<https://www.pleasedontpatme.org.au/business-information/business-faq/?fbclid=IwAR3qPsfoT2Ytrl4gw0v_xSgF457WLzdA9_0cTt-mwe38UrbsKBJy7g34s_M>

**Catch Up** <https://catchup.guidedogs.com.au/login/?redirect_to=https://catchup.guidedogs.com.au/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA-JacBhC0ARIsAIxybyOKHVzKijNoNNhNWpGXNxRJEcenhMeuEPQIXGjMo75TUZ0UNQHFxpkaAvfxEALw_wcB>

# **The Rights of Dog Guides and Their Handlers**

[**http://dgha.org.au/dgha/access/**](http://dgha.org.au/dgha/access/)

Under the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Guide and Seeing Eye Dogs are covered by the term, Assistance animals.

While the Disability Discrimination Act includes a section on exemptions to access for assistance animals (Section 54A), it does not explicitly state the types of establishments where assistance animals are not permitted. As a result of precedents that have been established through case law, however, it is generally accepted that dog guides are not permitted in operating theatres, hospital burns units, commercial kitchens and some zoos.

Although dog guides are permitted in most public areas under law, it is important to understand that there are a number of responsibilities that come along with this. Under both federal and state legislation, it is not unlawful for you to be asked to produce evidence to verify that your dog is a registered assistance animal. It is also not unlawful for you to be refused access to public premises if your dog does not meet an appropriate standard of hygiene or is not under your direct control, or the control of another person.

## **Australian Capital Territory**

Primary Act: [Domestic Animals Act 2000](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2000-86/current/pdf/2000-86.pdf)

<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/View/a/2000-86/current/html/2000-86.html>

## **New South Wales**

Primary Act: Companion Animal Act 1998

[**http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol\_act/caa1998174/**](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/caa1998174/)

## **Northern Territory**

Primary Act: Anti-Discrimination Act 1992

[**https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/ANTIDISCRIMINATION-ACT-1992#**](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/ANTIDISCRIMINATION-ACT-1992)

## **Queensland**

Primary Act: Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dog Act 2009

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/2013-12-06/act-2009-004>

## **South Australia**

Primary Act: Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

<https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/__legislation/lz/c/a/dog%20and%20cat%20management%20act%201995/current/1995.15.auth.pdf>

## **Tasmania**

Primary Act: Guide Dog and Hearing Dog Act 1967

<https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1967-042>

## **Victoria**

Primary Act: Domestic Animal Act 1994

[DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994 (austlii.edu.au)](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/consol_act/daa1994163/)

## **Western Australia**

Primary Act: Dog Act 1976

[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc\_45453.pdf/$FILE/Dog%20Act%201976%20-%20%5B06-j0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_45453.pdf/%24FILE/Dog%20Act%201976%20-%20%5B06-j0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

# **Meet A Seeing Eye Puppy Carer IVY**

Ivy Harris is a puppy carer from the bayside region in Victoria. Having spent over a decade as a puppy carer, she has some valuable insights she wants to share with our readers.

**Why did you want to become a Seeing Eye Dogs puppy carer?**

I was looking to do some sort of volunteering, and had looked around at various organisations. Puppy caring was one that I thought would definitely suit me, as I did miss having a dog around. I work from home and I knew it would be a good way of getting up and away from the computer. All in all, no excuses really not to!

**What support do you receive from Seeing Eye Dogs?**

I’m in my 10th year now, Seeing Eye Dogs, as an organisation has grown and the support throughout, from the puppy caring team has always been accessible, friendly, responsive and pro-active through these changes. Support from your puppy development training is always there, no matter how mundane you may think your query or problem is.

**What do you love about being a puppy carer?**

I love meeting new pups! They have all been different personalities, with their own quirks, learning capabilities, liveliness, softness and taking them along their journey is so interesting. I always learn something new with each pup as they grow.

I love how they get me out and about. I hadn't been on a local bus here in Melbourne before I had a pup! Also, I regularly walk to the local shops rather than pop in the car. I go on the train and visit other local suburbs. I do lots of stuff that I didn't really do before. I know more people in my local community as well and especially all the local shopkeepers.

**What is the training like?**

The training is much as you would expect, if you have had a dog before. It is all about toilet training using the crate/den, establishing the basic building blocks of commands sit, wait, down etc, getting them out and about early to experience the world around us and exposing them to different social situations.

What is different with a Seeing Eye Dogs pup is that I try to be more consistent in getting the pup to react correctly, as the idea is to prepare the pup for its working life. I was probably content with my own pet dogs ‘sort of' doing a ‘sit’, however I am aware that the pup needs to be more responsive to commands for their potential future working role so I am never complacent about the training. The puppy development trainers are great for encouraging carers and sharing their knowledge and methods which invariably work!

**What is it like having the puppy in your home?**

At first, very energetic. Toilet training means keeping an eye on the pup, recognising the habit times and anticipating taking them out so you're up and down, out and in. The toileting guide that's provided is a big help if you haven't had much experience with a puppy or it's been a while. Much like having a toddler, you have to look for safety issues and the best thing is to remove those kind of things - again the advice from Seeing Eye Dogs is very helpful.

**How to you incorporate the pup into your social life?**

I try to incorporate all the pups into my life, so they very much become part my social activities.

All my close friends have welcomed the pups into their homes (very useful if they have a cat or another dog), the pups have all come along to Reformer bed classes (I take a bed with me for them to rest on), tennis (I take an old picnic mat as a bed), where skills are reinforced such as ignoring bouncing balls, being left at the side of the court with brief check in by me between sets, and golf - walking on grass and not sniffing, having to stop, wait, sit, stay whilst you're in a bunker or on the green putting (sometimes a fair distance away) and especially learn not to wander for a sniff as they are tethered to the buggy.

We also go to see NRL team Storm when they are at home, and AFL at the MCG, including other outdoor events like farmers' markets (always a tough one as there are lots of other dogs usually, never mind the food smells), and to the cinema and theatre as well.

**What is it like to have a puppy in the workplace?**

I work from home on my own business, so a lot of my time is in front of a computer or answering calls - especially at this time of year as my customers are schools and the education sector. I also have to pack our sales, and our packing room is our garage, so the pups soon learn to settle in the office, and while tethered in the garage with me.  I usually have the garage door up, put a couple of old beds down, give a couple of toys or a kong chew toy to the puppy. They sit and watch the world go by.

**How hard will it be to give the pup back? It is the hardest time, and it doesn't get any easier each time you take on another pup!**

When I'm asked this question by people, I'm honest and say it's hard, but you won't know how you will cope until you actually have to do it and we need people to take on this role as a carer.

My husband said I was crying my eyes out when our first pup Lenny went IFT (In For Training). "Look it's just like bringing your kids up, they become adults and they leave home for work or Uni. You've done the job you needed to do"

Maybe this is harsh, but true.

**Would you become a puppy carer again?**

Now in my 10th year, I guess I'm a serial carer now and yes, I hope to continue for a few more years with a new pup every year. From a selfish point of view, it is rewarding, bringing a pup up in the hope that it will change someone's life, and I enjoy the Seeing Eye Dogs community and believe in the work of the organisation.

Source: <https://sed.visionaustralia.org/news/2022-09-20/meet-seeing-eye-dogs-puppy-carer-ivy>

**Summer treat for your dog**

**Frozen Strawberry and Banana Smoothie Dog Treat**

How about a nice yummy summer time treat for your hard working dog guide. Help them cool down after a day of working in the warm summer weather

**INGREDIENTS**

* 2 cups of Sliced Strawberries or a 16 ounce bag of Frozen Strawberries
* 1½ cups Plain Greek Low Fat Yogurt
* 1 sliced banana (if you have two...use them both)
* ¼ cup of Coconut Milk
* 3 tablespoons of Honey

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Place all the ingredients in your blender
2. Turn on the blender to a medium speed
3. Blend for approximately 2 minutes
4. Pour into the molds of your choice or use ice cube trays
5. Freeze for 4 hours or more
6. Pop out of the molds
7. Ready to ENJOY!
8. Store in the freeze in suitable containers or Ziploc bags
9. Please note: You can use other fruits instead of Strawberries like Watermelon, Blueberries, Mango, Pumpkin and any other Dog Safe Fruit or Vegetable.

Bananas add a creaminess that no other fruit can offer. Tailor them to your dog’s tastes. They are the Pawfect Treat!

**5 FACTS ABOUT GUIDE DOGS**

1. Guide dogs don't watch traffic signals. They wait on their blind handler to give a forward command. The handler listens to traffic patterns and makes an educated judgment about the best time to cross the street.

2. Petting distracts guide dogs from their work. When a guide dog is in harness, his whole focus should be on his handler. If you're petting the dog or calling his name, you're taking his attention away from his handler and making his job harder.

3. Guide dogs get lots of play time out of harness. When you see a guide dog in public, he's working. But handlers give their dogs plenty of toys, love, massages, and running time.

4. A guide dog behaves differently when he's working in harness. He has been trained from puppyhood to understand that harness time is work time. When the harness comes off, you will often see a totally different dog. The harness also comes off for food, water, and potty breaks.

5. Guide dogs enjoy their work. You cannot force a dog to guide a handler. The dog has to decide that this handler is worth guiding. When you show a dog his harness, he often gets excited. If a dog does not love guide work, he does not become a guide dog.

The bond between a guide dog and handler is an intense stretching of the heart. Please respect our bond and our need to travel safely

# **A letter to My Dog Guide**

I just want to let you know that mummy is very sorry for not being a good handler.  I’m sorry that I don’t know my left from my right and you constantly hear my say “find right…..oh, I mean left”.  I’m sorry that I don’t give you a nice big brush or clean year ears every day like I promised.  I’m sorry that mummy is not at all fit and we don’t work as much as we should.  I’m sorry that I’m not a very social person and we stay at home as much as possible.  I’m sorry that I didn’t let you do your job when you first came into my life, when you were so eager to do your best work.  I bet you envisaged a very different life for yourself.

I know we have worked even less over the last few months and the other day you said to me, “Mum, I thought I was retired” but things are about to improve baby girl.  Mummy has recovered now and we are going to take on the world, you and I.  We will start slowly to build up our energy and so that it is an enjoyable experience for us both.  Things are going to be different now if you will still have me.  We are on the edge of a cliff and I’m hoping you will jump with me.

Always remember, I love you to bits and you have made my life complete just by being around.

Lots of love, always and forever,

Mummy

# **Guide Dog Poem:**

I know you only see a dog when you see me in the street,

But look a little closer before we get to meet.

You'll see I'm in my uniform, this harness that I wear,

Should tell you that I'm working, I have a human in my care.

The flash that shines upon my lead shouts out the job I do,

I'm guiding in my uniform, I'm steady and I'm true.

Now would you grab a policeman, a doctor, nurse or nun,

A fireman or a surgeon, so you could have some fun.

Would you want to hug them, distract them from their task

I'm not so very different, so THINK, is all I ask.

I'm doing such a special job, I'm being someone's eyes

Distracting me to make a fuss, really isn't wise.

Would you rush to hug a police dog, or a sniffer dog for drugs,

Or a guard dog barking madly, just to get some hugs?

I doubt they'd greet you kindly, their owners too may shout.

So please I ask you nicely, walk on and miss me out.

I'm working in my uniform, it's very clear to see.

So this I ask you kindly, don't attempt to distract me!

By Penny Parker

# **From a Handler**

PLS LEND A HANDLER!!

You know they say you should hug a dog a day!!

Because they give us the good germs!!

**What are the benefits of becoming a member of DGHA?**

Life time member one-off joining fee

Unite your voice with other dog guide users and have a say to service providers

Share your experiences as a dog guide handler and learn from other handlers

Join in 3 monthly online meetings to chat and enjoy presentations from experts on topics all about dog guides

Take part in the DGHA bi annual conference

**Are your Details Up To Date**

Have you changed your address?

Have you changed your email address?

Have you changed your phone number?

Have you updated your dog guide details?

If you answer yes to any of the above details shoot us an email, providing us those updates. Email us at dgha@dgha.org.au

# **From Our Reflections Page: A Momentous Decision**

One of the most significant moments in my life has been my decision to apply for a dog guide. I certainly never imagined the adventures that would transpire! I really wasn’t sure if getting a dog was such a great idea. After all, a dog takes a lot of work and money and it needs exercising no matter what; a white cane requires minimal attention.

Nevertheless, a dog seemed exciting to me. So, after a lot of thought, I applied for a dog. “Can I have a naughty dog?” I asked. ‘I know just the dog!’, declared Phil our instructor. ‘I’ll fix that cheeky woman!’, he decided, with a chuckle.

So off to training I went. We stayed in a luxurious unit right on the beachfront. My room overlooked the ocean and I could lie in bed and listen to the waves. It was delightful!

Even upon arriving for training, I was still questioning myself. The other trainee’s response of ‘You can always give the dog back’, shocked me. No way was I taking this on, with that thought in the back of my head!

Then a huge black cyclone called Watcher entered my life! It has not been the same since!

Training was incredibly hard. I had trouble remembering my lefts and rights. I fell over my dog causing much merriment for an interested passerby who was watching us. Phil rolled his eyes and sighed many times. On one occasion, Watcher and I nearly got run over on a pedestrian crossing. Poor Phil had to save us. Somehow though, we graduated and I took my cyclone home.

“I thought dog guides were supposed to be quiet!”, exclaimed my shocked son as the big black dog leapt, slobbered and panted. My cats, who had grown up with dogs, took one look at this crazed creature and hastily departed. My builder gasped as Watcher and the heavy timber table to which he was attached, charged noisily across the floor in an exuberant greeting. Expensive, lovingly-purchased toys were ripped apart within moments of being received! Paperwork was gleefully torn into shreds and I had to chase him around and around to retrieve hats and socks.

During a trip to Melbourne, a man stopped in front of me with his pet dog, totally blocking the way. Watcher was overcome with excitement and bounced and huffed crazily and loudly. The man wagged his finger at us, declaring to Watcher, ‘You won’t pass your test!’ I didn’t have the courage, as I struggled to control this bouncing, hyperventilating animal, to tell him he already had passed!

Other times I just couldn’t hold him. He was just so powerful. He’d take off leaving me behind or clinging desperately to the harness handle with one hand, lead clenched in the other, my handbag and shopping simply discarded on the ground or unceremoniously thrown at a friend. Once we were discussed by a friend and stranger who let his dog on a long lead, tangle with us. “Bad dog, bad handler!”, they both declared as I was battling to get Watcher back under control.

Often I came home feeling totally exhausted and felt my cyclone should have been named Satan instead of Watcher! But gradually, compliments on our teamwork started to outweigh the criticisms and we started work together instinctively and proficiently.

Our new found teamwork did not always mean life went smoothly though! Once I accosted two strangers in a dark city car park one night, never thinking of the implications of declaring I wanted grass until after much stunned stuttering from them. By this time my son had found me and was declaring it was not safe to wander around at night. I am not sure if he meant for me or other people!

Another time we came across another dog guide approaching us at an intersection. The two dogs careered excitedly towards each other, me skiing alongside Watcher on the slippery, wet pavement; the man being towed on his knees across the bitumen. The traffic was drawn to a halt as we disentangled our dogs and made off in opposite directions as professionally as we could!

Then there was the night Watcher decided to snatch a cane toad so smoothly and sneakily I had no idea he was carrying it in his mouth. It was only due to a friend’s vigilance I realised.

One time I was peering about wondering why Watch was so skittish only to be abused by a harsh female voice demanding to know what I was beep beep staring at! The humour of her irony made me chuckle!

Watcher also had quite a dramatic flair, we used to be invited to move forward in queues after his dramatic sighing and flopping to the ground as we stood waiting. He caused embarrassing disruptions at a conference in Sydney. His loud, human-sounding sighs of boredom caused multiple keynote speakers to falter and much of the audience’s heads to swivel, probably glaring at the rude person. I soon learnt to swivel my head and glare into the rows behind too, thereby totally shifting the blame!

A muffed road crossing was another opportunity for him to be dramatic. After I made him redo it, he persisted for months in veering extremely wide of a bin, then sidling along shop fronts as if he was a terrified, abused animal. He would lean so hard on the walls that he staggered and half fell at each doorway we encountered.

Now, when I think back over the past few years, I am delighted at what we accomplished and I relish our adventures and experiences. Working with Watcher became so easy I often forget just how darned hard it had been. I felt so confident as we set out each day. At home I laughed at his crazy doggie antics. He brought me joy, great companionship and unparalleled confidence and independence. I could not have had a better mate and don’t regret swapping a cane for a dog at all.

From DGHA member Ros

# **NSW Blind Target Shooter Recognised**

NSW blind target shooter Peter Holzigal from Inverell has been recognised by the Legislative Assembly of NSW with a Community Recognition Statement on the 9th November 20222.

Peter was recognised for his recent win at the NSW Small-bore and Air Rifle State Championships winning gold in the inaugural 10 metre Air Rifle Supported Vision Impaired event.

Peter with his dog guide Patsy regularly attends the Sydney International Shooting Centre (SISC) to practice and compete, travelling from his home in Inverell which is a 12 hour trip

Peter has recently appeared in his local newspaper and others, regarding his recent successes.

On any given club day at SISC up to 5 dog guides may be observed chilling as their handlers practice and compete.

# **Farewell and Thank you. From Scott N**

I would like to recognise Bronwyn Drew for all her hard work putting the newsletters together and keeping us all informed.

As we know this is her very last newsletter as she has decided to step down.

Out of this connection with Bronwyn I am so proud to call her my friend for life.

Enjoy your next chapter Bronwyn and a BIG thank you.

[**Last Words**](#_Last_Words)**.**

## **Join DGHA.**

Membership of DGHA is in 2 categories. Full Membership: $20.00. Any Australian who is blind or vision impaired, and who is a Dog Guide Handler or Associate Membership: $10.00. Any other person who is sighted, blind or vision impaired, who supports the objectives of DGHA.

If you are not already a member of DGHA and would like to be, please visit our

Website and fill in the accessible form. We welcome full memberships for dog guide handlers and associate memberships from dog guide trainers, puppy raisers and friends and family of dog guide handlers.  The joining page on our website is here:  <http://dgha.org.au/dgha/membership/>

**Sign up for this newsletter.**
If you know someone, who might like to receive this newsletter, for example a new dog guide handler, a puppy raiser or your instructor, please send their email address to us (with their permission) by reply email or to dgha@dgha.org.au and we’ll add them to our list.
**Contribute to this newsletter.**
we welcome your input into this newsletter.  If you have a story, an idea, a review of a doggy product you love, please contact Bronwyn via the newsletter@dgha.org.au email address to discuss your contribution.

## **Dog Guide Handlers Australia.**

Email [dgha@dgha.org.au](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cbronw%5CDesktop%5CDGHA%20NEWSLETTER%5CNewsletter%20in%20progess%5Cdgha%40dgha.org.au)

Website [www.dgha.org.au](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cbronw%5CDesktop%5CDGHA%20NEWSLETTER%5CNewsletter%20in%20progess%5Cwww.dgha.org.au)

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