DGHA Newsletter Winter/Spring 2024

Hello DGHA members and supporters. We’re going to ‘spring’ over the bit where we missed the Winter newsletter, and it’s now the next season! We hope everyone is well and looking forward to some warm weather.

# Community advocacy resources

In our last newsletter, we talked about some Member Meetings we held earlier in the year, where we brainstormed the messages we want to share in our communities to raise awareness and understanding of Dog Guide Handlers.

Out of that brainstorming came the following four posters.

1. Be Mindful poster gives six points to be mindful about to ensure the safety of people with vision and hearing loss who use Dog Guides.
2. Pet Friendly Business poster gives three points to remember so that Dog Guides and pet dogs can exist in harmony when visiting the same business.
3. The Difference poster explains the difference between a pet dog and a Dog Guide.
4. Why You Shouldn’t Interact poster gives two good reasons to not interact with Dog Guides.

I’m happy to announce these resources are now ready for you to use and available on [the DGHA website Resources page](https://dgha.org.au/resources/) and in the files section of the DGHA Facebook group. If you’re not able to download from there, please email [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au) or hit reply to this email and we’ll email them to you.

There are four files which are all A4 sized, are screen reader friendly and perfectly suitable for you to print and share in your community. There is a PDF print version of each, as well as a jpeg version for sharing on social media. The PDF posters should be printed in colour as they all contain the blue in our logo as well as a photo of the late Hailey, Golden Retriever Guide Dog of DGHA member, Jeanette Newell from NSW. Some of the posters also have other colours, yellow, orange and purple. The colours were chosen because they are colour blindness friendly and high contrast.

The posters are suitable for hanging in coffee shops and eateries, shops and offices and any other businesses you use. They could be laminated to help them last longer, we’ll leave that up to you. Anyone can download, print and share these posters. We hope they will be useful, and we encourage you to share your experience with using them in your community.

# Access cards

We’ve also been busy updating the Access page on our website and creating some access cards for Members to use at those times when we are being refused entry. Of course, we hope this doesn’t happen, but we know that some business owners, service providers and the public need a little more education.

The cards are business card size, 90mm x 54mm, and there will be a hole in the front top left corner to help you know the card is up the right way.

The DGHA logo is on the glossy side above text that says: Dog Guides are allowed everywhere in Australia under federal law. The reverse side says: Follow the QR code to find information on federal and state Dog Guide Access laws within Australia. There is a QR code to the right of this text. The QR code will take the reader to the [Access page on the DGHA website](https://dgha.org.au/access/) which has information about federal and state laws relating to Dog Guide Access rights.

### Order Access cards

If you’d like a set of 10 access cards, please email [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au) with Access Cards in the subject line and your name and postal address in the body of the email and we’ll send you the cards.

# Thank you for spreading the word about DGHA

Over the last few months, we’ve had several schools from across Australia share our invitation to join DGHA through their client channels. Thank you to those schools who have shared, we appreciate your support. If you haven’t seen our invitation come through your school’s communications, please reach out to them and ask them to share the document with new and existing Handlers. This invitation is attached to this email and available in the files section of the DGHA Facebook group for those who would like to share with Handlers they know who are not yet members.

# Would you like to join the DGHA committee?

The DGHA AGM is scheduled for Monday 11 November this year, and we have a few committee members who have finished their six-year term as board members. We’re always keen for new blood, new skills and new perspectives. Please have a think about joining our very friendly committee.

We meet on the 2nd Monday evening of each month at 8 pm Sydney, Melbourne time, 7.30 pm Adelaide time and 6 pm Perth time, via Zoom. You’ll need to get yourself into a Zoom meeting and be available on these evenings for around two hours. There are other responsibilities depending on your position and what you volunteer for which may take up to an hour per week at the maximum. There is a little more work to do when we are organising a conference.

You will receive notice of the AGM and positions vacant in the next few weeks.

FYI, we’ve given a summary of board responsibilities below.

## Chairperson

As chairperson your duties will include running the meetings, ensuring meetings run smoothly and that everyone can participate. Representing Dog Guide Handlers Australia at external meetings, advocacy, and attend events

## Deputy Chairperson

As Deputy Chairperson your role will be to support the Chairperson and complete allocated tasks and functions

## Secretary

As secretary you will be required to deal with correspondence, take accurate minutes of meetings, ensure members are invited, Plan the agenda and agenda forwarded and informed of all upcoming events and activities

## Treasurer

As treasurer, you will be required to manage figures, money and accounts as required and provide financial reports.

## Committee Member

Attend and participate at Board meetings and contribute to the growth of the Dog Guide Handlers Australia.

# A message from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.

Guide Dogs Australia (GDA) is the umbrella membership body of the federated guide dog organisations. Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia have formed a federated partnership to strengthen their collective representation of Australians who are blind or have low vision at a national level.

The Guide Dogs Australia Advocacy and Policy team works to influence government policy and the federal level and liaises with government departments on issues like reducing Rideshare refusals and influencing reforms within the NDIS.

DGHA Member, Lee Kumutat has recently joined the GDA Policy and Advocacy team, as a lived experience National Policy and Advocacy Manager who is working with the National Head of Government Relations, Jeremy Anderson.

Lee worked in sales, marketing and training for an assistive technology provider in Australia, before moving to the UK where she pursued a career in journalism at the BBC. There she produced radio programmes that brought issues around blindness and low vision to mainstream radio audiences.

After 12 years in the UK, Lee relocated to San Francisco, California, to take up the role of director of communications for a blindness agency there.

In 2023 she moved back to Australia and Joined GDA in July this year.

Lee says she is passionate about listening to, and representing the interest of, people who are blind or have low vision.

“I want to do what I can to bring knowledge and understanding, amplify and promote the limitless capabilities of the blind and low vision population and highlight the anomalies, injustices and challenges that remain our responsibility as a society to overcome. Whether these are within employment, equal access to services, information and the built environment, accessible transport infrastructure, or social and economic injustice among others, much progress has been made, and yet there is much work to be done. I hope that, within time, I can be a small cog in the collective endeavour to bring about more positive change for Australians who are blind or have low vision.”

Should you wish to be kept updated on GDA activities, policy work and campaigns, please email: [advocacy@guidedogs.com.au](mailto:advocacy@guidedogs.com.au) to add your name to our mailing list.

# Oh Crap partnership

When you [purchase Oh Crap products through this link](https://www.ohcrap.com.au/?ref=dgha&utm_source=partner), you receive a discount, and DGHA gets a small percentage of the payment as well.

## Have you updated your contact details lately?

If you’ve moved house, changed your email or phone number, been matched with a new Dog Guide or know another member who has, please email new details to [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au) so we can update you on our database.

## Sign up for this newsletter.

If you know someone who may be interested in receiving 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](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au). We'll add them to our list.

## Contribute to this newsletter.

We welcome your input into this newsletter. Whether you’re a member or an associate member, or you work for a Dog Guide School, or an associated organisation, If you have a story, an idea, or a review of a doggy product you love, don't hesitate to email us at [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au) to discuss your contribution.

## Dog Guide Handlers Australia

Email: [dgha@dgha.org.au](mailto:dgha@dgha.org.au)

Website: [www.dgha.org.au](http://www.dgha.org.au)

### \*\*Disclaimer:

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