



What you can access now without funding

You don't have to wait for your funding
to begin to get the support you need



Introduction

If your vision is changing, it's normal to feel unsure about what to do next.

You may not know what support is available, or you might think you need to wait until funding is approved before getting help.

The good news is that you don't have to wait.

There are free services, practical information, and people ready to support you today.

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What you can access right now with no funding

There are many ways to begin adjusting to vision loss before your funding is approved. Starting early can help you build confidence, stay connected and continue doing the things that matter to you.

Keep reading

For many people, one of the biggest concerns after losing vision is whether they will still be able to enjoy reading.

The good news is that there are many ways to keep reading.

The Vision Australia Library is free to join for people who are blind, have low vision or have a print disability. It offers thousands of audiobooks, newspapers, magazines and podcasts, which can be accessed through a range of accessible methods.

Your local public library can also provide free access to audiobooks, large print books and other accessible resources. Library staff can also help you borrow items, access digital collections and use accessibility technology, such as screen readers and large print keyboards.

Many libraries offer extended loan periods for people with accessibility needs, and some also lend assistive devices and everyday items through their “Library of Things” collections.

You may also be eligible to join specialist accessible library services that provide books, magazines and newspapers in audio, braille, large print and digital formats.

Stay connected

Keeping up with the news, your favourite programs and what's happening in your community is just as important as staying informed.

Accessible radio services, podcasts and audio news make it easy to enjoy information and entertainment in a way that works for you.

Learn new ways to do different things

Living with blindness or low vision often means learning different ways to complete familiar tasks.

Free online resources, factsheets and videos can introduce practical techniques, assistive technology and everyday tips to help you continue doing the things you enjoy.



Connect with people who understand

Adjusting to vision loss can feel isolating, but you don't have to do it alone.

Peer support programs and community groups provide opportunities to ask questions, share experiences and learn from people who have faced similar challenges.

Stay involved in your community

Staying active and connected can have a positive impact on your confidence and wellbeing.

Community centres, libraries, neighbourhood houses and local groups offer opportunities to meet people, learn new skills and continue participating in the activities you enjoy.

Explore your funding options

Funding through the NDIS or My Aged Care can provide access to ongoing support, but they are not the only options.

Depending on your circumstances, there may be other government programs, concessions or community supports available. Speaking with a service provider can help you understand what assistance may be available to you.

What happens next

Waiting for funding can feel slow and uncertain. If that's where you are right now, know that there are ways to understand what lies ahead and access support in the meantime.

Funding fundamentals

Many ongoing services and supports are delivered through government-funded programs such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or My Aged Care. You may need to apply for funding before Vision Australia or another provider can deliver some services without you paying the full cost yourself.

The right funding pathway will depend on things like your age, circumstances, and support needs. Our experts can help you understand your options, identify the most appropriate pathway, and take the next steps.

The process usually involves:

- applying for funding
- waiting while your application is assessed
- choosing a provider and arranging your services once funding is approved
- working with your provider to tailor your supports to your daily life, needs and independence.

To learn more about your funding options and how Vision Australia can help, visit: www.visionaustralia.org/services/funding.

Meet your support team

Depending on your goals and needs, you may work with a range of professionals who each bring different skills and expertise.

Your support team may include:

Optometrists: Primary eye health care providers who prescribe glasses and contact lenses. They also screen for, diagnose and manage eye disease and prescribe a range of therapeutic medications. They can refer clients directly to an ophthalmologist if more complex treatments are required.

Orthoptists: Allied eye health practitioners who specialise in the assessment, diagnosis and non-surgical management of vision and eye conditions.

Ophthalmologists: Eye doctors with additional specialist training in the diagnosis and management of eye conditions, who can also perform medical and surgical treatments and procedures.

Orientation and mobility experts: These experts will work with you to develop the skills you need to independently and safely navigate at home and in the community.

Access technology specialists: Assessing your current skill levels and areas that require some help, these specialists will train you to use technology like screen readers, magnifiers and voice-to-text speech.

Occupational therapists: Working with those living blindness or low vision, occupational therapists are there to help you improve your independence and continue living your everyday life.

Each person brings different skills and works with you to find practical solutions that fit your everyday life.

You might need more than you think

Many people first seek support for one specific challenge, such as reading more easily or finding a better magnifier.

What they often discover is that there are many small changes that can make everyday life simpler.

“I thought I just needed a magnifier, but after my first appointment I found there were also easier ways to cook, read and use my phone.”

— Vision Australia Client

Simple tools, new techniques and small adjustments can have a big impact on your confidence and independence.

Many of these strategies cost little or nothing to try, and they can help you continue doing the things you enjoy while you wait for funded supports.

There are even practical, low-cost items available like a self threading needle tool that can make everyday tasks feel more manageable and help you stay in control.

Things you can do today

- ☐ Visit your local library and ask about accessible books or audiobooks
- ☐ Download a screen reader or magnifier on your phone or tablet
- ☐ Join a local community group or peer support group
- ☐ Listen to accessible radio, podcasts or audiobooks
- ☐ Write down the everyday tasks you're finding difficult so you can discuss them with a service provider
- ☐ Tell family and friends how your vision is changing and what support would help you
- ☐ Keep doing the activities you enjoy, even if you need to do them in a different way.

Helpful resources

Living with blindness or low vision

Vision Australia

Videos, factsheets and practical guides covering everyday living, tech, communication, funding, adjustment to vision loss, and support for families and carers.

 **Website:** <https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/helpful-resources>

 **Call:** 1300 847 466

Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs

Breeds, trains, and provides specialised dog guides to Australians who are blind or have low vision.

 **Website:** <https://sed.visionaustralia.org/about-us>

 **Call:** 1800 484 333

Blind Citizens Australia

Australia's national consumer organisation for people who are blind or vision impaired, providing advocacy, peer support, information and resources.

 **Website:** <https://www.bca.org.au>

 **Call:** 1800 037 773

Vision 2020

Australia's national peak body for eye health and vision care. Find resources on vision loss, mental wellbeing and links to eye health organisations and support services.

 **Website:** <https://www.vision2020australia.org.au>

 **Call:** (03) 9656 2020

Funding and support

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Learn about eligibility, applying for funding and how the NDIS can support your independence.

 **Website:** <https://www.ndis.gov.au>

 **Call:** 1300 311 675

My Aged Care

Information about government funded aged care services, assessments and support for older Australians.

 **Website:** <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au>

 **Call:** 1800 200 422

Vision Australia

Understand the different funding pathways available, including the NDIS, My Aged Care and other funding options for people who are blind or have low vision.

 **Website:** <https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/funding>

Reading and accessible information

Vision Australia Library

Access thousands of audiobooks, braille, large print and digital books, newspapers and magazines in accessible formats.

 **Website:** <https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/library>

 **Call:** 1300 654 656

Your local public library

Ask your local library about accessible collections, audiobooks, large print books, accessibility software, home library services and Library of Things collections.

Everyday technology

Apple Accessibility

Discover built in accessibility features such as VoiceOver, Magnifier, Zoom and Spoken Content for Apple devices.

 **Website:** <https://www.apple.com/accessibility>

 **Call:** 1300 365 083

Android Accessibility

Learn about TalkBack, Magnification, Lookout and other accessibility features available on Android devices.

 **Website:** <https://support.google.com/accessibility/android>

Everyday living products

Vision Store

Browse magnifiers, daily living aids, assistive technology, kitchen tools, lighting and other products that support independent living.

 **Website:** <https://shop.visionaustralia.org>

 **Call:** 1300 847 466 and ask to speak to someone in the Vision Store

Staying connected

Vision Australia Radio

Listen to news, interviews, podcasts and different kinds of entertainment in accessible formats.

 **Website:** <https://radio.visionaustralia.org>

 **Call:** 1300 84 74 66 and ask to speak to someone in Radio

Peer support

Connect with other people who are blind or have low vision to share experiences and ask questions.

 **Website:** <https://visionaustralia.org/services/find-services/social-recreation-wellbeing>

 **Call:** 1300 84 74 66 and ask about the social groups you can join

Blind Sports Australia

Find inclusive sport and recreation opportunities across Australia.

 **Website:** <https://blindsportsaustralia.com.au>

 **Call:** (03) 9864 9409

Your local community center or Neighbourhood House

Many offer social groups, classes, volunteering opportunities and community activities.

Wellbeing and mental health

Beyond Blue

Information, advice and support for anxiety, depression and mental wellbeing.

 **Website:** <https://www.beyondblue.org.au>

 **Call:** 1300 22 4636

Lifeline Australia

24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

 **Website:** <https://www.lifeline.org.au>

 **Call:** 13 11 14

Carer Gateway

Information, counselling and support for family members and carers.

 **Website:** <https://www.carergateway.gov.au>

 **Call:** 1800 422 737

Concessions and everyday support

Companion Card

Find information about the Companion Card program in your state or territory.

 **Website:** <https://www.companioncard.gov.au>

State government concessions

Speak with your service provider or visit your state government's website to learn about transport, utility and other concessions that may be available to you.

Your next step starts today

You don't need to have all the answers before asking for support.

Whether you're waiting for funding, exploring your options or adjusting to changes in your vision, there are people, services and communities ready to help.

Everyone's experiences are different, but taking that first step can make all the difference. The earlier you begin exploring your options, the sooner you can build the confidence, skills and support to keep doing the things that matter most to you.

Your support starts now.



Contact us

Find out more about how our services and support can help you and your family today.

Call us on 1300 84 74 66

Vision Australia has metro and regional centres around Australia. Call us or visit our website at visionaustralia.org to find out the one closest to you.

 [@visionaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/visionaustralia)

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