

# VISION AUSTRALIA

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE  
2016 – 2018



**Picture:** Sarah lost her sight nine days after giving birth to her son, Archer. Read her story on the Vision Australia website.

**“AS LONG AS YOU  
PUT YOUR MIND TO  
IT AND YOU PUT THE  
WORK INTO IT, THERE  
ISN'T ANYTHING YOU  
CAN'T DO.”**

**- SANTIAGO VELASQUEZ  
18 YEAR-OLD VISION AUSTRALIA BURSARY RECIPIENT.**

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## **OUR NAME AND MISSION REMAIN THE SAME:**

**“VISION AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND  
OR HAVE LOW VISION TO LIVE THE LIFE THEY CHOOSE.”**

We are a for purpose organisation that aspires to have a positive impact on the lives of people who are blind or have low vision.

Our area of expertise will always be blindness and low vision, and our expert reach will extend into the health and broader disability sectors.

Our future services will be focussed on achieving a positive impact with particular focus on education, employment, independence and social inclusion.

Our values will always guide our interactions with each other; govern how we work with our clients, and our partnership.

This will require a heightened sense of anticipation, enterprise and leadership courage.

We will be our brand. We will be clear about our identity.

# **INTRODUCTION**

**In 2013 Vision Australia made a promise:**

**We said the Strategic Plan (2014-18) set a clear new direction...with client choice and control central to the organisation's purpose.**

**That the reason Vision Australia exists will not change.**

**That the way we do things will change, and keep changing.**

**Since December 2013, Vision Australia's transformation has put us in a better position to deal with a volatile political and financial environment.**

**We have changed our approach to services with equal relationships between professional staff and clients. Staff, volunteers and supporters are coming together behind one clear principle – putting clients at the centre of everything we do.**

**We have taken on big government reforms like My Aged Care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme – restructuring teams, improving staff skills, investing in professional development.**

**We have invested in new processes and systems, mobile technology, and participate in the digital economy.**

**We are now distributing services across 19 regions, including Western Australia; building our presence in Northern Queensland, redeveloping Vision Australia's city hubs and rural centres. We are supporting 326 NDIS clients; investing in new business opportunities and forging new partnerships.**

**There is a solid base on which to build.**

**Now we must start to change the way we do things. Improve what we do well; develop new services and products that support clients live a rich and independent life, keeping in mind that every person is different.**

# CORE SERVICE: PERSONALISED SERVICES

Our Strategic Plan stated that Vision Australia would provide a 'Lifetime of Support,' working with people that are blind or have low vision through all stages of life.

We have listened to clients and they have told us that they want to:

- Have ready access to lifelong learning
- Independently seek, gain employment and develop their careers
- Participate in open and welcoming communities
- Contribute and feel included in every aspect of society

These client goals are now our goals.

We will support and remove barriers so people who are blind or have low vision will achieve their goals and live the life they choose.

As we build toward the depth and breadth required of new services, activities and programs, we will stay close to clients, current and future.

## WE ASPIRE TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE, AND FOCUS ON:

### EDUCATION

Providing ready access to lifelong learning for people who are blind or have low vision so they can achieve the same or better education outcomes as their sighted peers.

### EMPLOYMENT

Supporting people who are blind or have low vision to independently seek, gain employment and develop their careers, participating at an equal or better rate as their sighted peers.

### INDEPENDENCE

Ensuring people who are blind or have low vision have choices on how they live their lives and face no barriers to being full and independent participants within their communities.

### SOCIAL INCLUSION

Advocating for people who are blind or have low vision so they can choose to have meaningful and active participation in society.

**Each of these priorities are inseparably linked  
- dependant on each other so we can achieve great outcomes with clients**

# THE NEW APPROACH

Early collaborative development work has identified three program streams that combined, will offer compelling and experiential support so our clients achieve their personal goals in education, employment, independence and social inclusion.

Here are some great ideas that could be further developed and work across all four priorities, no matter what the stage of life, aspiration or personal need of the individual.

## EDUCATION

– creating **Vision Australia Classroom**, a virtual and real entity that teaches and partners with schools, tertiary education institutions and corporates, creating awareness, and offering peer mentors to blind and low vision students and their networks.

## EMPLOYMENT

- creating an **On Time and Ready for Work** intensive experience, that includes emotional and peer support, social skills development, wardrobe care and style advice, starting with the fundamentals like getting to and from work, what to wear and real-life work situations.

## INDEPENDENCE

- creating a **My Vision** client portal/app/helpline in which accessible information is available 24 hours a day, including Vision Australia specialist advice.

## SOCIAL INCLUSION

– creating **Click and Connect** within the portal that offers a social activities menu, accessible TV or theatre shows listings, dating opportunities, recreation and fitness camps.

Products, services, activities and hands-on experiences will be developed across programs like these examples and will be developed, offering a lifetime of supporting people who are blind or have low vision, their networks, families and friends.

Success measures will be developed. Benchmarks and targets will be set as we develop, plan and design.

## **BRINGING THE STRATEGY TO LIFE**

As we build toward the depth and breadth required of new services, activities and programs, we have to continue to stay close to people, especially our clients, current and future.

Listening to what they have to say, understanding how they want Vision Australia to offer the supports they want – to learn, get a job, have a career, run a business, be part of an inclusive society, make life choices and have a sense of self-determination.

By 30 June 2017, we will have a framework for the programs and will have spent time working with clients on the activities, lifestyle supports and goals they want to achieve. This will clarify understanding of the impact Vision Australia will make. The way we work together on this will reflect our values.

Our leaders across the organisation are stepping up, collaborating and taking responsibility in a new way. Since 2013, Vision Australia has employed many high performing managers and professional staff, adding new skills and experience to the talent pool.

## **OUR NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS ARE AMONG US NOW.**

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## **OUR ACCOUNTABILITY LEVEL IS AT ITS HIGHEST EVER.**

# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CLIENTS?

## LIFETIME OF SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Vision Australia provides seamless support across three enabling programs, so people who are blind or have low vision, whatever their circumstances can:



### MAKE INFORMED LIFE CHOICES



### LEARN AND PREPARE TO PARTICIPATE



### PARTICIPATE IN ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES

#### I MAKE INFORMED LIFE CHOICES BY

- Defining my identity beyond being blind or having low vision, including my hobbies and interests, if I want a job and what sort, and how I spend my time.
- Having the means to make life choices - where I live, my safety, my finances and budgeting, where I go and what I do.
- Being confident about my ability to make decisions, solve problems, form social relations and take risks.
- Knowing what my options are – in a way that is compelling, attractive, and with an awareness of consequences.

#### I LEARN AND PREPARE BY

- Developing the skills I need to participate, both vision-specific skills and the particular skills and knowledge to get a job or learn a new hobby or recreation activity.
- Understanding how I learn - intensive or self-paced; individual or group; by Vision Australia or the community or blended; virtual or in person.
- Discovering how technology can support what I want to do.
- Having ready access to the information I need.
- Accessing timely and relevant supports that I want.

#### AN ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY...

- Is confident and aware of my needs and supportive and welcoming of me.
- Creates “Disability Friendly Places” so the physical environment, technology systems, information and practices are inclusive.
- Can access the support they need to aid my participation.
- Empowers me to be an activist for myself and my rights.

## MAKE INFORMED LIFE CHOICES

- ✓ I have found my identity as a person with vision loss
- ✓ I have the means and confidence to make choices
- ✓ I am aware of my options

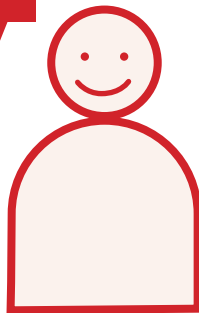
## LEARN AND PREPARE TO PARTICIPATE

- ✓ I have the skills I need as a person with vision loss
- ✓ I learn in a way that suits me and supports me to achieve my goals
- ✓ I have ready access to technology, information and supports I need

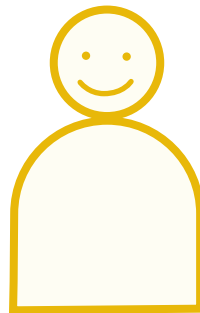
## PARTICIPATE IN ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES

- ✓ The community is confident and aware of my needs
- ✓ Community practices, services and structures support my participation
- ✓ I am empowered to be an activist for myself and my rights

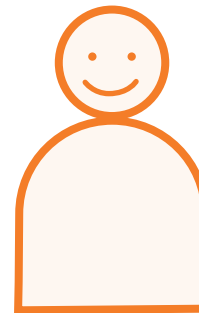
I have a great job and a rewarding career.



I am active in my community and make a meaningful contribution.



I am always learning new things and developing new skills.



## TEN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- PERSON CENTRED
- VALUES DRIVEN
- AGREED GOALS
- EVIDENCE-BASED
- CLEAR LANGUAGE
- BUILD ON STRENGTHS
- CONNECTED SUPPORTS AND SERVICES
- BEST PRACTICE
- POSITIVE EXPERIENCE
- CONTINUOUS LEARNING