

# Focus



Vision  
Australia

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

**150+**  
years of vision

Issue 2, 2020

Sam is  
off to  
a great  
start...

Go get 'em,  
Sam!

**Thank you!**

Your support is  
making a difference  
to kids like Sam.



# You mean the world to us

**I am constantly inspired by the generosity of our supporters and by people living with blindness or low vision within our community.**

**Your compassion and their determination to live a full life motivates me every day.**

You're helping children like Sam, born with low vision, to navigate school with confidence and giving honoured veterans like Dennis new opportunities to adapt after facing blindness later in life.

As the world changes around us during this challenging year our mission remains the same: we're here to support people who are blind or have low vision so they can live the life they choose.

The success stories that you will read in this edition of Focus are only possible because of you, and for this I am extremely grateful.

**Ron Hooton**  
**CEO Vision Australia**



## Ria is paving the way in the music industry



**Ria, a braille music proof-reader and transcriber, is using her talents to change lives.**

Thirteen years ago Ria fell in love with music and decided to study it at university. Through her studies, Ria has developed a method to help people with blindness or low vision succeed in the music industry.

*'Everything moves fast in rehearsals and a blind person can struggle to keep up. Through my own experiences as a blind performer, I have developed braille tools to ensure we have the same experience as everybody else. It helps us feel much more professional and confident,'* said Ria.

**Your support enables students with blindness or low vision to get the help they need to succeed while studying at university and into the careers of their dreams.**

Hi, my name is Sam and I am six years old!  
I have blue eyes and super cool white hair.  
Bright light and sunshine can hurt my eyes  
and I can't see very well so I always wear  
trendy glasses and a hat outside.

In the playground I find it tricky to see  
where my friends are when it's busy, so  
they call out to me. If I get up really close  
to you please don't be worried, I am just  
trying to see who you are.

I have to be very close to people and things  
like books and art work before I can see them.  
And I need special equipment in my classroom  
to help me see my work.

Most of all, I am excited to be in Year 1.  
I am making lots of new friends and enjoying  
the fun things we are doing this year.

Sam



## Thanks to you

### Sam can take on the world

Looking like any other other six year old, Sam can be seen running and jumping through the school playground. He's full of energy, loves taking risks and enjoys playing with his friends.

At birth, Sam was diagnosed with albinism. Although distressing for parents, Rebecca and Simon, they were already prepared for what lay ahead as their eldest son, Ethan was born with the same condition.

**Having albinism meant for Sam that he also had low vision. It is only thanks to amazing supporters like you that he was able to access early intervention services as a newborn.**

*'Sam is now in Year 1 and was ready to start school because of the help we received from supporters like you. Not only could he physically do the same as his peers, but he could also confidently use adaptive technology, which enabled him the same access to resources regardless of his vision,'* said Rebecca.

*'It's thanks to generous donors like you that Sam has settled into his new surroundings with confidence. With some extra support and specialised services he has all the tools he needs to thrive at school,'* Rebecca shares proudly.

Thanks again for your continued support of kids like Sam  
- you're giving them the best start to life!

# Dennis celebrates 100 years of generosity



**On celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in June, the WWII veteran proclaimed 'I have had a good life, especially with my wife Margaret. I have nothing to complain about. I'm blessed.'**

Dennis has macular degeneration and was diagnosed legally blind in 2004. With your help, Dennis has received specialised training to learn how to touch-type on a computer fitted with ZoomText, which can magnify print up to 18 times.

Dennis has gone on to use his newfound typing skills to record his family's life story – a treasured history that helped him navigate the grief of losing his beloved wife and recording his experiences during the war.

**All this is only possible because of supporters like you.**

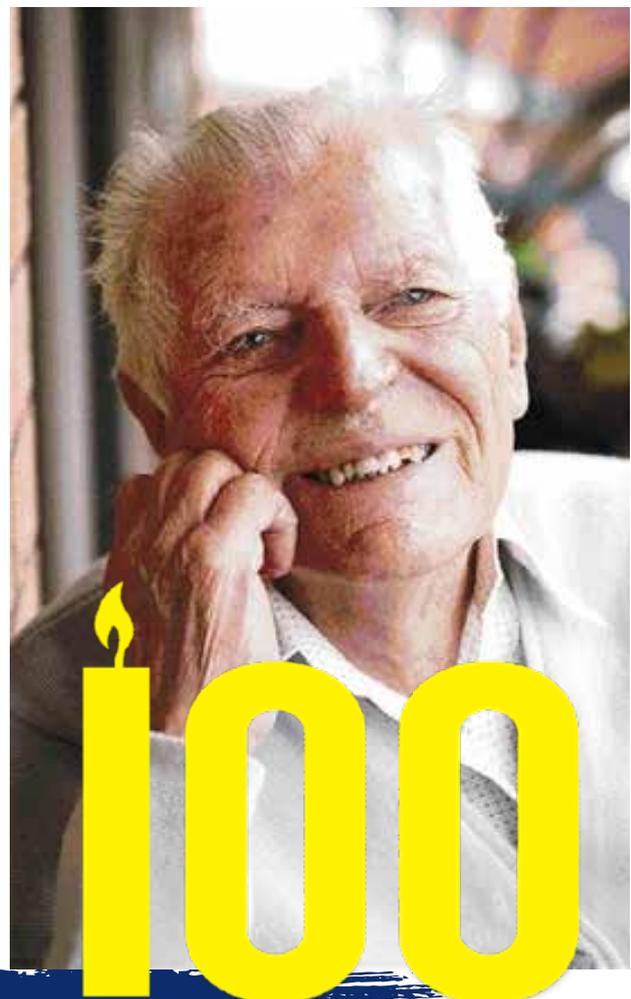
Since losing his sight, Dennis has also been an ardent supporter of Vision Australia, wanting to give back to others who are blind or have low vision. For over a decade, Dennis has expressed his great joy in supporting students through the Vision Australia Further Education Bursary; which provides successful applicants, who are blind or have low vision, with vital assistive equipment to pursue tertiary studies.

**Dennis loves knowing he is giving back to others.**

*'Being blind, I understand how difficult it is for students to attend lectures and learn if they do not have access to the latest technology and assistance from specialised staff.'*

*'I want to help people living with blindness or low vision use the best of their abilities to succeed and to contribute to society,'* Dennis said.

**Thanks to people like Dennis and generous supporters like you, students who are blind or have low vision can access tertiary education.**



**Thank you Dennis and a very Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.**

# 'We can now ride as a family'



*Thanks to supporters like you, Kai is doing amazing things.*

Kai (pictured here on the right with his brother) was diagnosed as blind at only eight weeks of age. At the time, Kai's family didn't know if he would ever be able to ride a bike or participate in activities safely.

He recently got a new tandem bike, and despite all initial fears, he can now enjoy going riding with his family. *'Kai loves it, and it is something we can all enjoy together,'* Kai's mum, Kelly, shared.

**Kai has been able to get life-long specialised support thanks to supporters like you. He is able to pursue his goals and dreams and enjoy his life to the fullest, like 15-year-old boys should.**



## Paul sings to millions on Christmas Eve

At 23 years of age Paul became the 2019 Carols by Candlelight Ambassador and sang to millions of Australians on Christmas Eve.

Paul was born with low vision which has continued to deteriorate over time, so much so that now he only has around 5 per cent vision. We were thrilled to find out that, as a life long client of Vision Australia, he now wanted to help inspire others.

*'As someone who has lived with severe, degenerative vision loss all my life, it meant the world to be given the opportunity to sing at Carols by Candlelight and give back to those that have supported me throughout my life,'* Paul said.

***With your support, Vision Australia has enabled me to live a life I would never have imagined possible for myself.***

*They have provided me with the specialised support I needed to build my confidence and get me out of the house attending organised social activities. I also learnt life skills through occupational therapy.'*

Paul became an overnight sensation in 2019 when he brought people across Australia to tears on the TV favourite Australia's Got Talent.

**There is nothing stopping Paul and he is inspiring others by showing them that living with blindness or low vision is not a barrier to a fulfilling and wonderful life.**



Fred with his daughter Belinda

# Fred lived small so he could be generous to others

The late Dr Frederick Shaw Burton, known as Fred, left an extraordinary legacy that will continue to live on through his generosity for many years to come.

After spending holidays in Nelson Bay, in the late 1960's Fred moved his family from Sydney to the small town to become the first full-time dentist there.

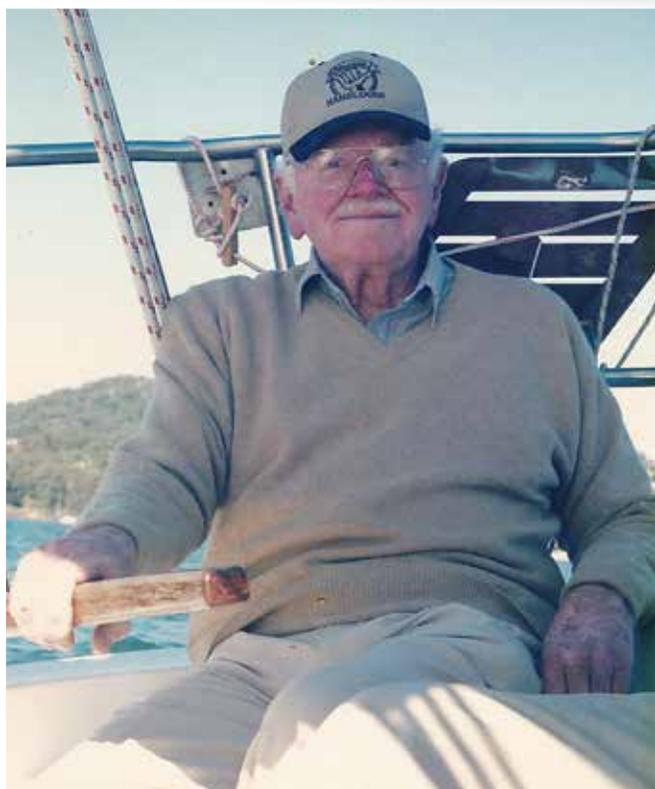
It wasn't long before Fred started to help families who couldn't really afford dental care. Fred would treat a whole family and be paid with a box of vegetables or a basket of seafood, which he always graciously accepted.

Fred had been a supporter of Vision Australia (previously the Royal Blind Society) since 1979.

**Not long after Fred passed, Vision Australia received notification that Fred had included a generous gift in his Will. Fred had made the thoughtful decision to continue to help future generations of people living with blindness or low vision.**

Fred's daughter, Belinda, describes her father as a man of great compassion, faith and kindness. He lived small so he could be generous to others.

**He was a man whose legacy continues to live on and inspire others.**



Fred loved sailing and was still out on the water until 94 years of age.

Yes!

I would like to make a life-changing gift of:

\$35  \$50  \$100  My choice \$.....

My payment method:

Please debit my credit card (details below)

Card type:  Visa  MasterCard  AMEX  Diners

Card no: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name on card: .....

Signature: .....

OR  Please find enclosed my cheque/money order payable to Vision Australia

My Details:

Title: .....

First name: .....

Surname: .....

Phone: .....

Email: .....

Address: .....

Suburb: .....

State: ..... Postcode: .....

Reference number (if known): .....

**Please complete this coupon and return to the below address.**

Vision Australia  
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Call 1800 42 20 77 or donate at  
[www.visionaustralia.org.au/donate](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/donate)

*Thank you for making a difference.*

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Occasionally we allow like-minded organisations to contact our supporters. This helps us reach additional generous Australians willing to support our cause. If you do not wish to receive communications from other organisations, please cross this box .

Your donation will help fund the services Vision Australia offers, helping people who are blind or have low vision to live the life they choose. ABN 67 108 391 831

Please read our privacy statement overleaf. If you do not wish to receive further information about the work Vision Australia does in the community, please call 1800 422 077.

VNLTL20-NL00A1N



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## Too late to say thank you

As an organisation, we are deeply grateful for the gifts we receive from people like Fred. We dearly would have loved to have had the opportunity to thank Fred in person, to recognise him during his lifetime and show him how his generous gift would be used to positively impact on the lives of many. Unfortunately, we couldn't, and it was too late to say thank you.

A gift in your Will is an extension of a lifetime of commitment to a cause you have believed in. For many it is the largest and most important gift they will make. A gift in your Will to Vision Australia will be deeply appreciated and ensure that our services for people who are blind or have low vision will continue for generations to come.

Please, if you have left a gift in your Will to Vision Australia let us know so we can say thank you. If you are thinking about doing so and have any questions, please call us on 1800 422 077.

All information will be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality.



# Thanks to you

## Josef regains his independence

By the time he was 21, neither glasses nor contact lenses were helping and he underwent his first of three corneal transplants.

**Josef unfortunately spent the majority of this difficult journey alone, with little to no additional help.** When doctors told Josef that his last transplant would only help temporarily, they recommended reaching out to Vision Australia for assistance. Until then, he had assumed that our services were only for people who were completely blind.

His vision loss had become so bad that he stopped going out at night, which started to affect his quality of life.

**Almost immediately, after beginning orientation and mobility training with Vision Australia, Josef's quality of life improved dramatically.** He is now confident to go out and manages going out at any time of the day! He also wears an 'I have low vision' badge and has had many wonderful experiences with people wanting to help him.

*Thanks to you, Josef has regained his mobility and his independence.*



## Transform a life

**\$35** can help towards orientation and mobility training so people can navigate their world safely and independently.

**\$50** can help improve literacy and educational outcomes for children by providing the resources they need.

**\$100** can help provide specialised teachers to lead vital early intervention services.

### PRIVACY STATEMENT:

Vision Australia respects your privacy and embraces the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). We obtained your personal information from you directly. When you return this form to us, we collect your personal information so we can process your donation, and contact you again with information about us and our related entities, our services, our fundraising campaigns, and how you can support us again in the future. We may contact you by email, mail or telephone, and you can opt-out at any time.

You don't have to provide us with your personal information; however without it we are limited in how we interact with you.

Our Privacy Policy is available at [www.visionaustralia.org/privacy](http://www.visionaustralia.org/privacy), and contains important information about (i) how we collect and handle your personal information, (ii) how you can access and correct your personal information, and (iii) how you can make a privacy complaint. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact our privacy officer by email at [info@visionaustralia.org](mailto:info@visionaustralia.org), or call us on 1800 42 20 77.



## Your support gives kids the best start

Most people associate speech pathology with sound, like stuttering or a lisp. However, for a child who is blind or has low vision, there can be challenges when developing communication generally and other social skills.

**That is why Vision Australia, speech pathologist, Keegan says it's so important that families have access to paediatric service providers in the early stages of a child's learning.**

Erin and other children like her, have to learn early how to interact in social settings and develop the skills they need to prepare them for school and work later in life. Therapists, like Keegan, work hard to provide early intervention to ensure children develop strong communication skills at a young age.

*Thanks to your support, children and families can work with the paediatric service providers on an individual basis to get the specialised help they need.*

**For more information call 1800 42 20 77 or visit [www.visionaustralia.org/get-involved/ways-to-help](http://www.visionaustralia.org/get-involved/ways-to-help)**