

# Focus



Vision  
Australia

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

**150+**  
years of vision

Issue 1, 2022



Thank you!  
for changing  
lives!

**Every girl needs  
play friends.**

Amelia with – Lucy, 'the doll like me',  
and a cuddly Seeing Eye Dog toy puppy.







Ron Hooton,  
CEO Vision Australia

## Thank you from Ron

**A new year means a new start, and what better way than to share with you some stories of achievement and inspiration that have been made possible thanks to your generous support.**

I hope you'll enjoy reading about Amelia and Harvey, who have overcome so many challenges already. But there are more children like them who'll need continued support to help them keep up with their peers.

You'll also meet Mick and Luke who've taken every opportunity you've helped to offer them in order to achieve in life: Mick through a career transition and his passion for sport; and Luke who's now holding down a position with a prominent accounting firm.

These stories are just a few examples of how your support is changing lives and helping give kids and adults who are blind or have low vision the skills they need to be independent and live the life they choose.

**I hope you enjoy reading more about how your donations are making such an incredible difference.**

Thank you!

Ron Hooton  
CEO Vision Australia

## Amelia loves Lucy, and Lucy helps Amelia to learn

**Thanks for your generous donations to our Christmas appeal which featured eight-year-old Amelia.**

*'Will our child ever see us? What's the road ahead? What kind of future will Amelia have?'*

These are just some of the questions that raced through the heads of parents Laura and Daniel when they were told that Amelia had oculocutaneous albinism.

This genetic condition which affects pigmentation in skin, hair and eyes, hadn't previously presented in either side of the family.

Thanks to supporters like you, we started working with Amelia at three months of age and we've been lucky to have shared all her 'firsts' in development with her.

Now that Amelia is at school, she still has regular sessions with our occupational therapist and her two 'helpers' – Lucy, a doll with a cane that she refers to as 'just like me', and a cuddly seeing eye dog toy puppy.

A great animal lover, for a long time Amelia dreamed of being a vet. Now having succeeded in an art competition, she's thinking of being an artist.

Whatever her final choice is – you will be part of her success. Your support is key to changing lives and helping give children like Amelia the chance to learn the skills they need to dream big.



## Ride the waves, wield the paddle, run the race, pedal like crazy, and achieve a Triathlon with Mick.



67-year-old Mick sadly recalls that his father wasn't able to accept his own eye condition, and in Mick's words, 'He became an angry person who chased away people who would have been happy to help him.'

Mick wasn't going to do that when he was diagnosed with hereditary retinitis pigmentosa. Instead, he changed his job, becoming a remedial masseuse running his own business and made time for a triathlon or two.

Here's Mick's winning philosophy:

*'Sport keeps you positive. It comes down to attitude in life on how to deal with challenges. Doing what you love is key, as is accepting help. Numerous members of my triathlon club take me on runs or ocean swimming which we do tethered. And Vision Australia helped to get me a tandem bike so I could cycle safely with a 'pilot'. So adapt, stay positive, and exercise to stay invigorated and uplifted.'*

With the help of our supporters like you, older adults can have access to a wide range of Vision Australia services to stay independent in their homes, to get around safely, to stay active, to get emotional support or receive specialised training to achieve their goals at any age.

## Luke – on loving Life, being open, and looking to the future

**Your donations make Vision Australia's help available at any stage of life.**

For Luke, a La Trobe University graduate in Accounting, that stage has been entry to the workplace, when he took advantage of our Career Start Program.

Through Vision Australia's employment services, Luke acquired the necessary tools to secure his position at Ernst & Young. This included support with his resume, information about the organisation culture, and comprehensive interview preparation.

And during a recent company staff wellbeing initiative, Luke was asked to contribute his advice to other people with a disability joining the workforce.

He highlighted the importance of sharing his vision condition with others to facilitate their adjustment and willingness to provide him with the support to perform at the best of his ability.

If you know someone who is blind or have low vision and are looking to join the workforce or need assistance with their current job, please contact our employment team on 1300 847 466.







*Together we've achieved so much in 2020-2021!*

Your generosity and kindness means men, women and children of all ages who are blind or have low vision have access to life-changing support and services in their homes, schools and communities. Thank you!



**35,285** people accessed our services across Australia.



**30,789** hours of service provided to clients aged 0-18.



**201,943** hours of service delivered (equivalent of 25,242 days)



**2,619** clients accessed 16,645 hours of orientation and mobility service.



**1,623** hours of early childhood services delivered.



**21,636** telelink hours accessed by 841 clients.



**23,469** hours of access technology services provided.



**6,069** clients accessed 17,169 hours of orthoptist service.



**7,071** clients accessed 44,685 hours of occupational therapy sessions.



**8,717** hours of employment service delivered to 489 clients.





# It was the first sign.



**How does a parent know when something 'isn't right' with their child?**

In Rebecca's case, it was the quick darting back and forth of baby Harvey's eyes that alerted her.

After checking with a friend who was an optometrist when Harvey was 9 weeks old, they were referred to a specialist, and learnt that he was legally blind. He could only see 10cm in front of him, and had photophobia (aversion to light) and ocular albinism (had reduced iris pigmentation needed for normal vision).

Harvey and his family came to Vision Australia. Intensive ongoing occupational and other therapies helped Harvey reach his milestones, and after five years of support from Vision Australia, Harvey is now preparing to enter the same mainstream school as his brother.

*Thank you for your generosity in helping other kids like Harvey to hit their developmental milestones and achieve their full potential.*





## Remembering a man of vision – Brian M Davis OAM your partner in philanthropy

We are proud to tell you about a great Australian philanthropist whose gifts benefited countless children and their families in the last decade.

**Like you, Brian M Davis cared about people who are blind or have low vision.**

His drive in life made him founder and sole owner of Décor Corporation, a homewares company in Melbourne which became recognised worldwide for innovation and quality.

In recognition of his success, Mr Davis was inducted into the Design Institute of Australia's Hall of Fame, and awarded an Order of Australia honour for his contribution to business and to philanthropy.

So generously provided through his foundation, Brian M Davis' philanthropic gifts have allowed blind and low vision children to gain priceless daily living skills, and opportunities to improve their literacy through the children's Felix Library.

Last year, during the Vision Australia school holiday programs, children had the chance to learn technology, woodworking, navigation, as well as health and beauty. All learning contributes to social inclusion and independence, which is vital to paving their way to meaningful community involvement.

Mr Davis passed away in February last year and he would have been proud to see these children grow, learn and enjoy life. And his legacy will continue through the lives that he continues to change as they grow up to be successful in education and their chosen career paths because of his charitable foundation's support.

Brian M Davis will always be remembered within Vision Australia as a committed philanthropist whose passion was making a difference in the lives of children who are blind or have low vision, and also their families.

We're honoured that Mr Davis believed in Vision Australia's work as valuable to the community. He will be missed, but we look forward to continuing our support of young clients in memory of someone with such compassion and vision.





# Sue's legacy—paying it forward

Sue's journey with Vision Australia began when she was four years old, having been born totally blind.

As advised by the authorities of the time, Sue began her formal education as a boarder at the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind's Burwood School. A mentor later introduced her to our Day Care activities at Kooyong.

Along the way, Sue embraced all the assistive aids and technologies on offer; from beginning with Braille, she has advanced to the most up-to-date suite of mobile phone apps available.

Vision Australia was formed in 2004 through the merger of four organisations; a milestone in Sue's journey was winning the Vision Australia Further Education Bursary in 2006, allowing her to attend Deakin University. This became the catalyst for her decision to include a gift in her Will to us.

Sue sees the name 'Vision Australia' as an inspiring, forward-thinking one, as it doesn't have the word 'blind' in it. Sue also sees all our Vision Australia donors as having 'vision for others'. A vision which allows her to keep using our programs like Telelink, attending Special Interest Groups and accessing our audiobook library.

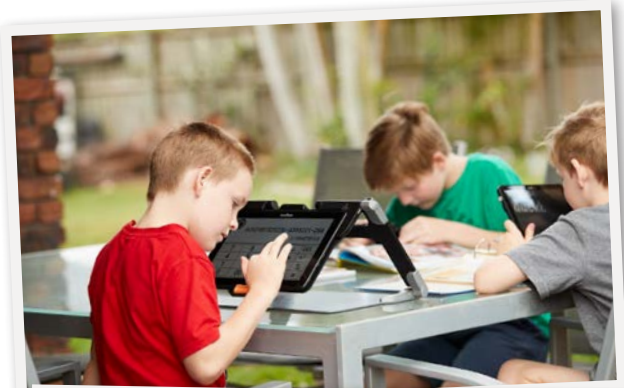
Everything she's received through the kindness of people like you, has empowered Sue to pursue her love of the outdoors, socialising, eating out, travelling and visiting theme parks, live theatre, and historic centres. Two favourites, greatly enjoyed by

Sue and her family, are Carols by Candlelight and The Iris Circle events.

As a much-loved client, and gift in Will donor of Vision Australia, Sue has the last word here:

*'Gratitude for the bursary I received prompted my gift in Will to Vision Australia – to give back, and pay it forward.'*

*'My legacy is important because it can be used to enhance services, programs, further education opportunities and activities run by Vision Australia. In this way, just as I have been helped, so will others be enabled to live out the vision of the lives they choose.'*



If you have included a gift to Vision Australia in your Will, please let us know as we would like to say 'Thank you'.

If you would like information on how you can include a gift in your Will, please contact our Gift in Wills team on **1800 422 077** or email [giw@visionaustralia.org](mailto:giw@visionaustralia.org)

## How your gifts bring essential skills to children who are blind or have low vision

Meet Courtney who is a Vision Australia paediatric occupational therapist.

Courtney's work with children who are blind or have low vision begins early. Her goal with each and every child is in supporting orientation and mobility; teaching personal care and daily living tasks; encouraging participation in active recreation and leisure for health; as well as developing motor skills.

All of these help a child or young person prepare for a future where they take an active part in their community.

Courtney also supports parents in understanding the impact of their child's vision, as well as building strategies between parents and children in the home environment, and beyond – especially when it extends to teachers and schools.

Courtney is there, every step of the way – and so are you.

*Thank you for your generosity which makes Courtney available to the children who need her.*



## Brighter together at Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight 2021 presented by AAMI



**Christmas is brighter when we all come together and nothing can compare to the sea of candles at Sidney Myer Music Bowl on Christmas Eve.**

We were thrilled to welcome back an audience to Vision Australia's 84th Carols by Candlelight in 2021, after COVID-19 restrictions required us to run a broadcast-only event the year prior.

The event is our largest annual fundraiser for our children's services, supporting kids who are blind or have low vision, to live the life they choose.

Whether you attended the event, donated or watched from home, we thank you for your support and hope you will join us again this Christmas Eve.

We would also like to thank our presenting partner AAMI for helping us spread the Christmas cheer.

## Ways to donate

 Online: [visionaustralia.org/donate](https://visionaustralia.org/donate)

 Call: 1800 42 20 77

 Post: Reply Paid 90505 Seven Hills NSW 2147