

Focus



Vision
Australia

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

150+
years of vision

Issue 1, 2026

Magic and wonder for Eddy!

(See page 2.)



Thank you!

Your support is
making a difference
to kids like Eddy.



Thank you

Welcome to 2026!

Every day in my new role, I discover more about the incredible power of your kindness for people who are blind or have low vision. People of all ages are doing what they love, connected with community, learning and growing.

Robyn once felt 'a little lost' – but recently stepped out with delight to take on a solo international trip.

I'm delighted to share the wonderful work of our dedicated orientation and mobility specialist, Sharon, just one of the amazing team who delivers services thanks to you.

And I hope that you will be proud of the impact that your support has had over the past 12 months.

Your kindness means the world to us.

Thank you!



David Williamson
Chief Executive Officer



Eddy's adventures have only just begun!

Eddy may only be two, but he's already living a full life. Now your big-hearted support will take him even further!

Thank you so much for your heartfelt response to the story of little Eddy in our recent Christmas Appeal. Eddy's parents, Lauren and Chris, were thrilled to hear of your generosity.

Finding out their new baby – and first child – was blind was a huge shock. Lauren and Chris needed expert guidance, and Eddy needed specialist early intervention to give him every chance to thrive.

Eddy has blossomed with support from Vision Australia and the love and devotion of his family.

Thank you for helping kids like Eddy discover the magic and wonder of their world.



Your compassion gives Eddy, and children like him, vital early intervention support – and helps parents like Lauren and Chris see a bright future ahead. Thank you for caring so much!

Living life to the full, thanks to you

When Robyn was diagnosed with macular degeneration, she was determined to continue living her life to the full. Thanks to your generosity, and with the help of Vision Australia, Robyn has found almost anything is possible.

Her diagnosis came as no surprise. Robyn's mother, grandmother and great grandmother all suffered from various forms of vision loss, so she took her vision issues seriously, and sought help right away.

Like many Australians suffering with deteriorating eyesight, Robyn admits feeling a little bit lost in the beginning. "I didn't know how bad exactly my sight would get... you get in that space where you look for things that might cure it outright," she said.

After support from a Vision Australia psychologist, Robyn was able to work through her feelings and sought further help, including orientation and mobility support. With early intervention, she had the tools she needed, thanks to initial funding by kind people like you.



Robyn



Robyn

Robyn's journey to greater confidence has been amazing. She recently embarked on a solo international trip to visit family members.

Now retired, Robyn says she wanted to do something useful and find a way to volunteer with her diminishing vision. Her desire to give back has resulted in her joining Vision Australia's Client Reference Group, sharing her lived experience with the Vision Australia board to help with decisions that benefit the blind and low vision community.

Donors like you give people like Robyn the confidence and opportunity to conquer their fears and contribute to the Vision Australia community. Thank you for supporting Australians like Robyn!

"I love helping people believe in themselves."

Sharon began her work with Vision Australia as a senior orientation & mobility specialist in 2023 and has since given so many people the confidence they needed to step out into the world.

She works with people of all ages – from very young children right through to 100+ years old – helping them develop compensatory skills for safe and confident mobility, as well as self-confidence to achieve their goals.

Training with Sharon can include sessions within a person's home or community, training in the use of a mobility aid such as a white cane or navigation apps, or public transport.

Sharon enjoys exploring different places and loves the variety that comes with working both indoors and outdoors. But what she values most is meeting people and being part of their journey – especially when she gets to help them achieve things they once thought were out of reach.

Sharon's passion for her work comes from the inspiring people she's had the chance to work with, like:

- people who suddenly lost their sight and despite their whole world changing, have gone on to reach incredible achievements.
- children who were scared of the world, but with support, become eager to explore, learn and experience everything.



Sharon

- people who experienced an acquired brain injury, transformed from being unable to find their way around their own home, to walking to the shops independently for their grocery items.

"I love helping people believe in themselves, and their potential," she said. "I often meet people who, after losing most or all of their vision, feel deep grief and fear about the loss of their independence.

"It is a really special feeling to be thanked for your efforts. I get to be in a beautiful and unique position of working closely with families, becoming a support person and helping people grow their confidence. Not a lot of jobs offer this, and for that I am really grateful," says Kaylie.



The incredible work of therapists like Sharon is possible because of you. Thank you for transforming lives!

Inclusive education promotes social mobility, employment and confidence

Loyal supporters of our donor-funded Further Education Bursary program, Michael and his wife strongly value education as a force for good.

"We knew a vision impaired child at the local primary school, and our association with her inspired and helped motivate us to support the bursary program.

"Aside from our own tertiary qualifications, we regularly work in education and see the benefits it provides for social mobility, employment, and confidence," Michael says. "We have been lucky in life through the commitment our own parents made towards our education, and this has put us in a position to make charitable donations to causes we support."

With a love of dogs and a cherished corgi named Rocket, Michael says the admiration his children had for dog guides helped form their initial decision to support Vision Australia.

Following their attendance at our Iris Circle Bequest Society 'Thank you' event, Michael and his wife chose to include a gift in their Wills to Vision Australia.



Michael and Rocket



Michael

"Hearing the uplifting stories from Vision Australia clients first-hand further inspired us to support these courageous people who have not let their vision impairment stop them from doing the things they love to do," Michael concludes.

Our Philanthropy team is deeply grateful for the support of donors like Michael and his family, who make a significant difference through the provision of bursaries. Their generous contributions help lift the barriers that might otherwise prevent people who are blind or have low vision from following their chosen career paths.

If you would like to support programs that benefit Australians who are blind or have low vision, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact us at philanthropy@visionaustralia.org

Supporting the future: Joyce's Gift to Vision Australia

Joyce's life has been deeply shaped by vision loss. Living with macular degeneration herself, she watched her parents face a similar journey, while her dear cousin Terry adapted to losing all his sight later in life.

Terry's vision loss began as a baby when he became cross-eyed. The doctors did their best, but he went blind in one eye and lost half his vision in the other. Unfortunately, a childhood prank further damaged his remaining vision. Despite this, he finished school and successfully led the family business. Retirement brought an unexpected blow when a car accident left him completely blind. Joyce reflects, "What stays with me is Terry's unshakable spirit and love for life."

Joyce remembers that as her father's vision faded, he often attended Vision Australia's social gatherings and peer support meetings. "Those meetings gave dad comfort and a sense of belonging. I carry that with me as I navigate my own vision loss." Joyce has supported Vision Australia for over 30 years and included a gift in her Will, making her a proud member of the Iris Circle Bequest Society.

She treasures the Melbourne 'Thank you' events and was inspired by Kala's story from the Children and Young People's Program. With Vision Australia's support from infancy, Kala is now thriving in high school.

Joyce says, "Her story is one of hope and shows why it's so important to continue these programs for future generations."



Joyce

She adds, "Including a gift in my Will honours my family and gives back to the community that helped my dad and now supports me. A gift in your Will can make a real difference for people who are blind or have low vision."

We are so grateful to supporters like Joyce. Please consult the enclosed brochure if you would like more information about including a gift in your Will to Vision Australia.

Festive fun (and fundraising)

Melbourne's Tan Track lit up red and white for the Santa Fun Run last November. With almost 1,000 participants, we raised over \$100,000 for our Children's Services through registrations, fundraising and support from major sponsor Kay & Burton Foundation. Christmas music, giveaways and festive cheer made it our most joyful Fun Run yet!

The year ended on a high note with another spectacular Carols by Candlelight, presented by AAMI at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, and what a night it was! With Christmas magic, talented performers and our incredibly generous community, our largest annual fundraiser was a night to remember. A beloved tradition across the nation, and we're already counting down the days until Christmas 2026 and our 89th Carols by Candlelight event.

All proceeds from Santa Fun Run and Carols by Candlelight support Vision Australia's Children Services, providing an important safety net to families whose children are either born blind, or newly diagnosed with low vision.



The magic of Carols by Candlelight, beautifully illustrated by Melbourne artist Annie Davidson

Vision Australia's Children Services provide access to early intervention services and supports, such as learning specialists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists. These services help to create a safe, supportive environment to connect children, young people and their families with their peers, so they can grow and learn together.



Thank you for being part of our generous community and enabling children who are blind or have low vision to experience their wonderful world fully.

Donor-funded technology transforms lives

Vision Australia's woodwork program enables clients with varying degrees of vision loss to come together to learn, create and connect.

Guided by woodwork trainers Brett and Matthew, and supported by volunteers, the program fosters inclusion, confidence and promotes good mental health and wellbeing.

Thanks to the generosity of the Cecilia Kilkeary Foundation and Trotec Laser, the program recently acquired a Trotec R-series laser cutter, opening new creative possibilities and expanding the curriculum.

"We're proud to support this initiative," said Reece Moore of Trotec Laser. Greg Sharp of the Cecilia Kilkeary Foundation added,



"The program plays a vital role in supporting social welfare and is a cornerstone of our philanthropic grants program."

With the laser cutter embedded within the program, clients' creations are becoming more elaborate, demonstrating what's possible when community, creativity and compassion come together.

Thank you to our generous partners for making these opportunities possible for our woodwork community.

See what you've done in 2025!

What a difference you helped make over the past 12 months! Your generosity supported vital services, resources and opportunities for people who are blind or have low vision.

Thanks to your support:



The Vision Australia team delivered **243,921** hours of support to clients, including **44,503** hours for children and young people.



Had more than **400,000** monthly listeners to Vision Australia Radio.



A whole new world opened up to **70** people, who were assisted to find meaningful employment.



Audio description services were provided for more than **100** live performances and productions.

Thank you for your care and compassion toward people who are blind or have low vision, and your belief in giving everyone a chance to live their life the way they choose.

For more information call **1800 422 077**

or visit www.visionaustralia.org/get-involved/ways-to-help