

Focus



Vision
Australia

150+
years of vision

Issue 2, 2026

**You've made
sure Elkie is
never left
behind**

(See page 2.)



Thank you!

Your support is
making a difference
to kids like Elkie.



Thank you

Your support means both children and adults are learning and thriving with joy. What a wonderful thought!

In the pages to follow, read how early intervention has set little Flynn on the right path to a bright future. He is learning every day through physiotherapy and occupational therapy, made possible through donor funding.

When Vision Australia team member Karen discovered she could enjoy colouring in again with tactile pages, she was unprepared for the absolute joy she felt at such a simple passion. Karen wants you to know how much it means to her.

Your generosity is so important to so many people, every single day. Thank you!



David Williamson
Chief Executive Officer



"We're forever grateful to you!"

Do you remember little Elkie, who featured in our recent Appeal? Your response to the story of Elkie and her family was so wonderful, Elkie's mum, Lucy wanted to pass on a special message of thanks.

"Sharing Elkie's story was very important to us as a family. We want everyone to know that Elkie's life has been changed by donors and Vision Australia. In that first year, we really had no other support. Vision Australia got us through, and early intervention has given her the head start she needed.

"The response from donors, sending so many cards and well wishes to us, was just amazing. We are grateful that so many people care about our little girl and her future."



Thank you for helping children like Elkie access the early intervention support they need to learn, communicate, and thrive.

You've given Karen such unexpected happiness

In her role as Gifts in Wills Officer for Vision Australia, Karen travels across the country up to three times a month, meeting with donors who want to include Vision Australia in their Will.

She is delighted to have rekindled a favourite hobby, she enjoys in her travel downtime, with help from kind people like you.

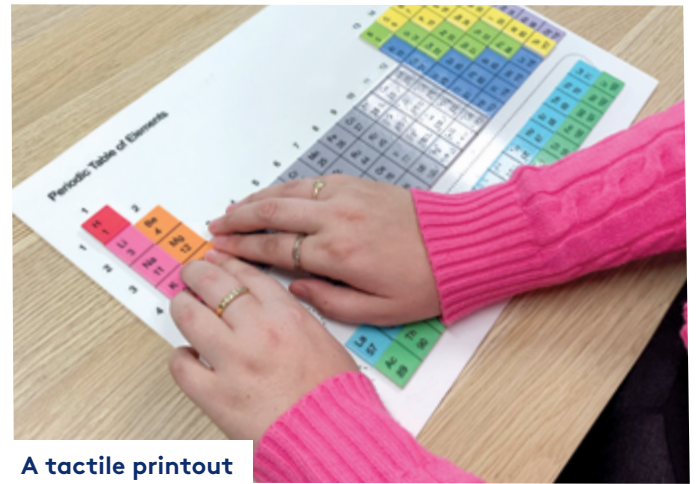
Karen was diagnosed with Stargardt's disease as a child. Now a 54-year-old mother of two, she has 97% vision loss. Karen has used Vision Australia's services for more than 30 years and loves meeting donors in person and sharing the impact of their generosity.

One of the most meaningful services Karen has accessed for herself is our Print Accessibility Service, which assists people who are blind or have low vision by providing texts, documents, and other items in accessible formats.

This talented team convert artwork into tactile pieces with UV printers, create tactile models, such as a table of elements to assist students undertaking STEM subjects, and even 3D models of maps and architecture for clients who travel, like Karen.



Karen viewing a range of tactile and braille maps



A tactile printout

"I carry examples of the many things the Print Accessibility team make when visiting donors. They created a tactile map for me, showing stops along my travel routes, even small waves along the edge to represent the shoreline! I had such an emotional reaction to this... delight and pleasure are the only two words I can think of.

"This map inspired me to ask if they could make tactile colouring pages, because I used to love colouring in. I was told I could have anything I want. We started with mandalas, repeating circle flower patterns. It has given me unexpected happiness."

"Thanks to generous people like you, Vision Australia continues to support people like me, to enjoy doing the things I love. Thank you."
– Karen



“This work means so much to me.”

While working as a physiotherapist, Gabby was looking for weekend volunteer opportunities and came across a role as a sighted guide with Vision Australia. Eight years later, she is a full-time paediatric physiotherapist with us and couldn't be happier.

“Working with children wasn't something I had considered, but a conversation at a volunteer thank-you event changed everything. I am so thankful my career has led me to where I am now.”

Gabby says the children and young people she works with never cease to amaze her in their resilience. And she loves the creativity her role encourages, not only in her clients, but in the way she performs the job. Gabby says she uses 'outside the box' solutions every single day.

“Working with children who are blind or have low vision means plans rarely unfold the way you expect! I've improvised with pillows when I didn't have balance foam, cut up my own lanyard to make a running tether for sighted guiding and I've been known to dance and sing. I've even done gait analysis, a way to evaluate walking or running patterns, using high contrast tape as a 'catwalk'.”

Gabby's typical workday starts at 4:45am with exercise and coffee. She likes to get in early, enjoying the “quiet before the storm”. When she is not in the office, she travels right across her region, including the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay.



Gabby with Vision Australia client, Lui

Away from work, Gabby loves running, playing piano and fussing over the latest mysterious ailment affecting her temperamental olive trees, Gino Bambino and Gino Jnr.

“This work means so much to me. It's about creating opportunities and ensuring everyone can experience the joy and confidence that physical activity and sport bring.” – Gabby



Vision Australia is fortunate to have staff like Gabby opening doors for our clients, and donors like you, committed to helping them deliver amazing outcomes.

“Always nice to receive, but learn to give.”

Jacob immigrated from Malaysia at the age of 17 and boarded at Ipswich Grammar School. Interactions with his partially sighted housemaster prompted Jacob’s awareness of people living with blindness and low vision.

While doing all manner of work at night to put himself through university, Jacob married Arja (Anita) who came from Finland, and he went on to qualify as a Chartered Accountant. Forty years ago, Jacob founded his own, successful business. Now in his early-eighties, Jacob only retired last year!

Diagnosed in adulthood with a rare, chronic condition called iridocorneal endothelial syndrome, Jacob was referred to Vision Australia for assessment. While his visual deterioration continues despite repeated surgeries to his right eye, Jacob keeps on making a difference.

When he discovered our Seeing Eye Dogs division, Jacob decided he wanted to do something to help. He chose to sponsor the training of a Seeing Eye Dog pup. In memory of his late wife Arja and their forever connection, he named the beautiful labrador pup AJ, a combination of the first letters of their names.

A humble philanthropist and client, Jacob’s children are supportive of his charitable giving. Instilled in them are his words to live by, “It’s always nice to receive, but learn to give.”

“I’ve done my dash and I hope someone young will benefit from what I gift,” Jacob said.



Jacob with Vision Australia staff at his certificate presentation

To thank him in person, acknowledge his kindness and illustrate the impact of his transformational gift, we invited Jacob to meet our colleague Nemoy Malcolm, Social & Emotional Support Programs Lead, and his Seeing Eye Dog, Benji. Nemoy shared his journey of vision loss and progress with Benji.

“Thanks to Jacob’s generosity, AJ will help someone else to move through their community with confidence,” Nemoy said.



Nemoy and Seeing Eye Dog, Benji

We are deeply grateful for the support of all our donors.

We’d love to hear about your philanthropy too! Please email us at philanthropy@visionaustralia.org

You're helping families like Wendy's through every stage of sight loss

When Wendy's mother was diagnosed with macular degeneration in her early 80s, her world slowly began to narrow. An avid reader, she found herself unable to read the printed word and one of the great joys of her life started slipping away.

That's when Wendy turned to Vision Australia. Her mother received a daisy player and a regular supply of recorded books to listen to, chosen to her own taste. And when her mother moved into a nursing home in her final years, those books became a lifeline, filling her days and many sleepless nights.

Vision Australia was also a constant source of practical guidance for Wendy herself, always ready with suggestions for aids and answers to her questions.

"They always knew what to suggest – and just knowing they were there made all the difference," Wendy says.

Wendy's mother lived a remarkable life, "She was an amazing woman," Wendy says. She was one of the first women in Tasmania to hold a CAMS racing licence, a passionate orchid grower and judge who travelled across Australia pursuing her love of the blooms. Vision loss couldn't dim that spirit, but it did change what she needed to keep going. And Vision Australia was there every step of the way.

Wendy's story is a reminder that vision loss rarely touches just one life. Today, her teenage step-granddaughter is also losing



Wendy's mother with one of her orchids

her sight. She's at the very beginning of that journey – a whole life ahead of her and once again, Vision Australia is there every step of the way, helping with the aids and support she needs to navigate daily life with confidence.

Every day, 60 Australians start to lose their sight. The need for practical, personal support is constant – and it changes across every stage of life.

That's why Wendy has been a regular donor to Vision Australia for many years. If you'd like to join her and help fund support for Australians at every stage of vision loss, please consider making a regular gift.

Because losing your sight shouldn't mean losing what you love.

To find our more or to sign up, scan the QR code, visit va.org.au/regulargiving, call 1800 422 077 or email vadonations@visionaustralia.org



Honouring Hilda's life through a lasting legacy

Barry's face lights up when he talks about his mother, Olive 'Hilda' Tucker. "Mum always found a way of moving forward," he shares. Orphaned as a child and widowed at just 32, Hilda raised three young children while running a mixed business.



"She was strong, independent and incredibly caring," Barry reflects.

In her 80s, Hilda's eyesight began to fade. She was diagnosed with wet macular degeneration and glaucoma and soon began specialised eye treatments. "It was confronting to watch," Barry admits. "You could see her world gradually shrinking."

But with the right care, Vision Australia helped Hilda widen her world again while she adapted to life with low vision. Barry fondly remembers his mum's visits to the Coorparoo Vision store in Queensland. "She always looked forward to seeing the staff, they were wonderful," he smiles. The care, kindness, and practical aids made a big difference to her confidence.



Barry, holding Jessie, with his wife, Carol

After losing Hilda, Barry decided to include a gift to Vision Australia in his Will, honouring her life and the values she lived by. "It's my way of paying it forward, thanking Vision Australia for supporting Mum and helping others facing vision loss receive the same compassionate care."

Through gifts like Barry's, that care can continue for future generations, supporting children like Eddy and his parents, Lauren and Chris.

"Support like this makes all the difference," they say. "It helps Eddy thrive and strengthens our community."

To learn more about including a gift in your Will, scan the QR code or contact our Gifts in Wills team on 1800 422 077 or email giw@visionaustralia.org



Flynn is on track thanks to the early intervention you made possible

Liz's baby son, Flynn, was just 10 days old when she learned he had vision loss. "We were in the NICU, dealing with other medical issues, when we were told Flynn couldn't see. It was a one-minute conversation."

After consultation with an endocrinologist and ophthalmologist, Liz made a call to Vision Australia and had a call back the next day. "I felt a wave of relief. Flynn was going to get the help he needed."

A few weeks later, Flynn had an assessment and began receiving physiotherapy and occupational therapy, all made possible through generous donors like you.



An occupational therapist herself, Liz is very aware of the importance of early intervention.

"We were given so much information and services through donations, and we are very grateful. Now we know Flynn can do things with the right support," she said.

Thank you for caring about children like Flynn, who need early intervention for a brighter future.

Changing lives through strides with 100K Your Way

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who took part in our annual 100K Your Way event or donated in support. We are so grateful for our incredibly generous community.

The Vision Australia community really went the distance, moving thousands of kilometres and raising over \$146,000 to help Australians who are blind or have low vision stay active, connected, and independent.

Our ambassadors showed us what this event is truly about. Little Lina was diagnosed with a severe form of albinism affecting her vision at just 20 weeks old. Her family found their beacon of light in Vision Australia – with early intervention services, playgroups, and a community

of families on similar paths. Last year, Lina's family walked, jogged, swam, and cycled 100K to give back. Meet other ambassadors at va.org.au/100KYWimpact.



**Will you join us again in April 2027 for the next 100K Your Way?
Team up with us for another record-breaking distance!**



For more information call 1800 422 077
or visit www.visionaustralia.org/get-involved/ways-to-help