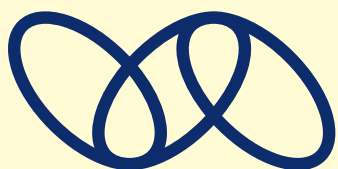




The impacts of vision loss



**Vision
Australia**

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

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Introduction

Adjusting to life with vision loss can be a challenging process, filled with a range of emotions and new experiences. Simple pleasures like watching the pages turn in a favourite book or driving to the shops to pick up some bread may seem like things out of your reach.

You may find yourself missing the ability to easily recognise a friend's face in a crowd, to watch a movie with clarity, or engage in hobbies that once brought you joy. It's important to remember that it's natural to feel overwhelmed and uncertain about the future.

Understanding and accepting vision loss is a process, and it's okay to take it one step at a time. While the path ahead may have its challenges, it is also filled with opportunities for growth, resilience, and discovering new ways to experience the world.

If you're not ready to join a social group, don't. If you want to put a halt on your book club meetings, do it. Your journey of vision loss can be done at your pace, in your time, in the way that suits you. You may just find in your future you will be ready. And when you are, Quality Living Groups will be here to support you, offering connection and community when the time feels right.

We have a Quality Living Group ready for you to join when the time is right about every topic that follows in this guide. Remember that you are never alone.

Know your vision loss does not define you. It is a part of your story, but it is not the whole story.

“ Vision loss can impact so many aspects of life. Come and share with and learn from others, and get the emotional and practical support that you need.”

- Nemoy Malcom, emotional and social support programs lead.

Reading isn't just about seeing words on a page. For many of us, it's a cherished part of life, filled with experiences that go beyond just getting information. When someone loses their vision, they're not just missing out on the ability to see the words, they could feel like they are losing more.



Keep your love of reading alive

The feel of a good book

For many, reading involves a range of senses. Think about the smell of a new book or the comforting sound of pages turning. These little details add to getting lost in a story. While sight may no longer be part of this experience, you can still capture it all in new ways.

Combine audiobooks with ambient sounds or scents, use textured book covers, and create sensory storytelling events that include touch, sound, and smell.

Emotional and cognitive engagement

Reading isn't just a visual activity, it's a mental and emotional one. Imagining scenes, understanding characters, and feeling emotions through words are all part of what makes reading so engaging.

Audio books can enhance this experience in wonderful ways. Vivid descriptions, interactive elements, and rich soundscapes can bring scenes and characters to life, keeping your connection to the story strong and fulfilling.

Social connections and shared experiences

Books often bring people together. Whether it's joining a book club or simply chatting about a good read, these social moments can be a big part of the reading experience.

Losing your vision does not mean you need to lose your social connections. You can join accessible book clubs and virtual discussions, which provide a space to share and connect with others over stories.

Escaping to new worlds

One of the best things about reading is the chance to escape into different worlds and explore new ideas. The visual aspect of reading can spark imagination in ways that are hard to replicate. Losing your sight does not mean you have to lose that sense of adventure.

Once you begin to embrace new ways of reading, you'll soon be enjoying your stories again, with your senses and emotions fully engaged. The [Vision Australia Library](#) can guide you through various accessible reading options and offer a wide range of materials to help you begin.

Losing the ability to drive after a vision loss diagnosis can impact not just your everyday life, but also your emotional wellbeing. It's not just about the practical inconveniences it can cause, it's about how it influences your relationships, social interactions, and sense of independence.



A new life without driving

Family time and social connections

Driving is often about more than just getting from one place to another. It's about the shared experiences and memories we create along the way. Family road trips, spontaneous dinner outings and visits to friends' homes are all moments that rely on the simple freedom of hopping in the car and taking off.

It's not just about missing out on these activities, but also the deeper sense of disconnection that can come with it.

But there are ways to stay connected and continue to make new memories. Plan regular family activities at home, use rideshare services for outings and tap into community and public transportation options. These can keep you close to your loved ones and maintain those important social bonds.

Running daily errands

Without the ability to drive, everyday tasks like grocery shopping or picking up prescriptions become challenging, often leading to a sense of lost independence. Relying on others for routine errands can take an emotional toll, making even simple activities feel daunting and impact your sense of self.

To simplify things, use delivery services and online shopping. Many stores offer home delivery, and subscription services can handle the essentials for you.

Changes to your professional life

Driving makes it easier when remote working isn't an option for you in your career. The convenience of hopping in the car for meetings, networking events, or community activities is lost. But this shift isn't just about the practical difficulties, it can impact your sense of purpose and opportunities in your field.

To remain professionally engaged, use local public transport and rideshare, and virtual tools like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. These resources can help you attend events and meet your responsibilities, keeping you active, mentally stimulated, and connected.

The importance of understanding and support

Adjusting to these changes takes time. Recognising both the emotional and practical challenges is so important. Reach out to your service provider to explore your options. They can offer strategies and resources to help. Additionally, you can lean on your family, friends, and community services. Losing the ability to drive is a major change and having a strong support network can make a world of difference.

For many, watching TV or heading to the movies is a beloved routine, full of shared moments and connections. But for those who are blind or have low vision, the traditional ways of enjoying visual media are inaccessible, leading to a significant loss beyond just the ability to relax on the couch with a cup of tea and watch your shows.



The impacts of inaccessible TV and film

The richness of visual storytelling

Television and movies are more than just moving images. Each frame, with its colours, expressions and techniques enhances the way we view things.

For those with vision loss, this is the experience that's different. Missing the landscape of a sunset or the suspense of a car chase means losing part of the storytelling.

Audio description ensures that everyone, regardless of their vision, can fully enjoy and engage with the entertainment that media provides. By narrating visual details and actions, audio description makes media more inclusive and accessible.

Shared moments and connections

Movies and TV shows are often a communal experience, bringing people together for movie nights and discussions about a popular TV series. Having to miss out on these activities can lead to a loss of shared experiences and bonding opportunities.

It's okay to miss curling up on the couch with your remote in your hand, searching for the perfect show to fill the evening, or playfully debating what to watch with a partner. It's not just about the content, it's about participating in conversations and creating memories with your loved ones. And just because you are having to now watch things in a different way, these things do not have to stop.


Audio description can make these group activities more inclusive by describing what's happening on screen. This way, everyone can join in and enjoy the experience together, whether it's movie night or a lively discussion around the dinner table.

The emotional impacts matter

Visual media has a unique way of stirring up powerful emotions. Whether it's the joy of a heartwarming scene, the laughter from a funny moment, the fear from a suspenseful twist, or the sadness from a touching farewell, these emotions are often shown through visual details.

Contact [Vision Australia's audio description team](#) today to discover how you can get back to enjoying your Friday night movies and that special bonding time with your loved ones.

Tuning in to [Vision Australia radio](#) is not only a great way to stay informed, but it also offers a sense of connection and community where you can catch up on the latest news, listen to engaging programs or enjoying music.



Cooking is more than just making food, it's a way to connect with our heritage and loved ones. For those who are blind or have low vision, the kitchen can become a challenging and frustrating place. We often take for granted the ability to cook freely and independently, without having to ask anyone for help, until vision loss changes this cherished part of daily life.

Keep the joy in cooking

The heart of the home

Cooking is a central part of our lives, filled with sensory delights like the aroma of a simmering pot and the sizzle of ingredients. Imagine the joy of preparing a family Sunday roast, a cherished ritual of love and creativity. It's the act of making the meal that often turns the entire day into something special.

Daily routines of cooking and dining together bring both structure and joy, making the kitchen a central and treasured part of home life. It's these moments of togetherness and celebration that turn the kitchen into a space where lasting memories are made and cherished.

To help, adaptive and accessible tools like [talking thermometers](#) and [colour contrasting measuring cups and spoons](#) can make a big difference.

The experience of cooking

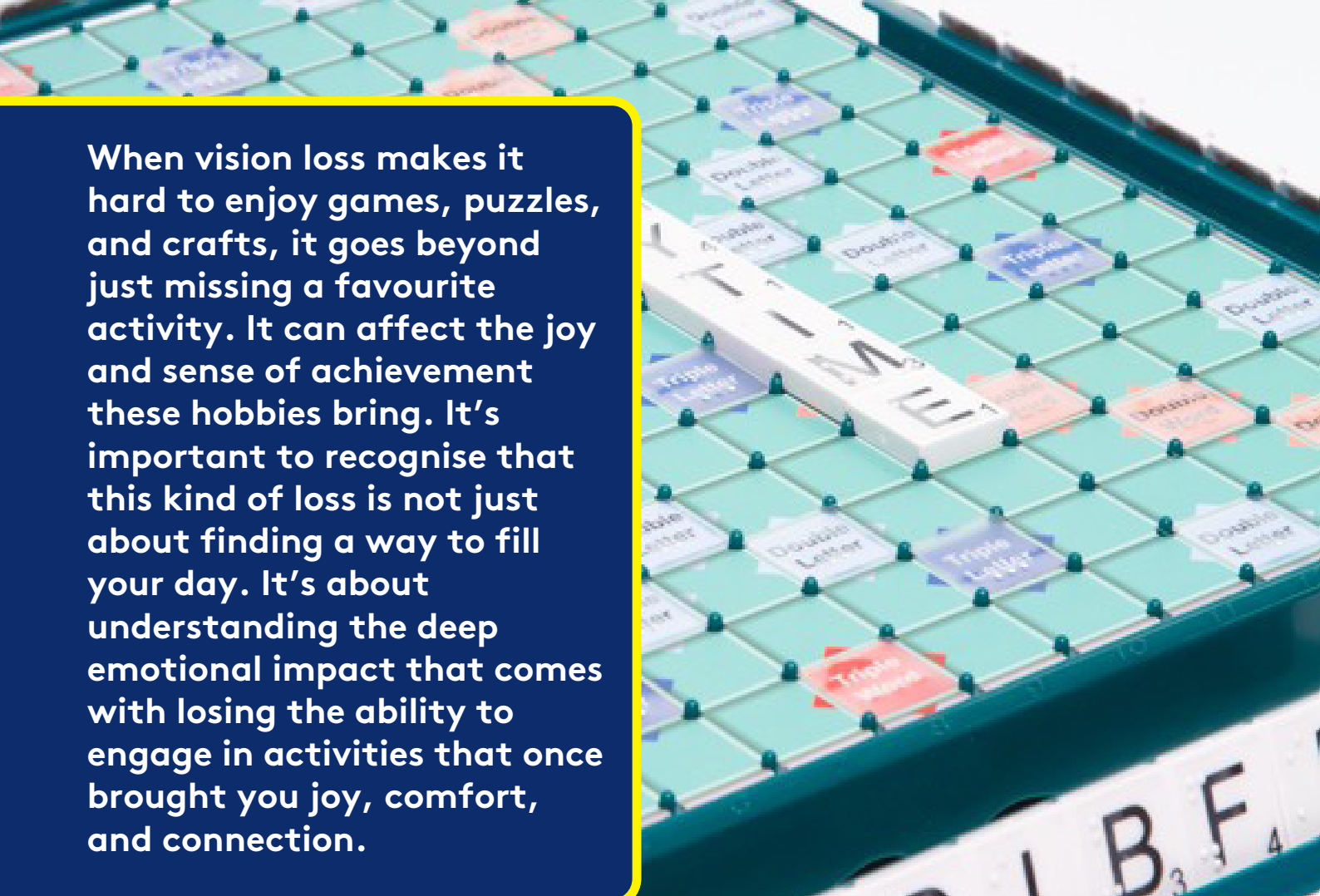
The feel of kneading dough, the smell of spices blending together, and the taste of a perfectly cooked dish are key when it comes to cooking. These sensory experiences bring life to the kitchen and transform meal preparation into a personal and rewarding activity.

For those who are blind or have low vision, these elements remain, but the challenge lies in navigating the kitchen and perfecting the little things, like achieving the perfect crispy pastry lid. The uncertainty in getting these details just right can make cooking feel daunting rather than delightful.

Smart assistive technology, such as [talking appliances](#) and audio apps can really help. These tools provide real-time guidance and support, making cooking more manageable and enjoyable, and helping to restore confidence and independence in the kitchen.

Beyond the kitchen

Cooking is an art that engages all our senses and connects us to our traditions and loved ones. Vision loss can change this experience, but with the right support, its joy remains accessible. By understanding both the practical and emotional impacts you are experiencing, the kitchen can once again become a place of connection and joy. The [Vision Store](#) is here to help.



When vision loss makes it hard to enjoy games, puzzles, and crafts, it goes beyond just missing a favourite activity. It can affect the joy and sense of achievement these hobbies bring. It's important to recognise that this kind of loss is not just about finding a way to fill your day. It's about understanding the deep emotional impact that comes with losing the ability to engage in activities that once brought you joy, comfort, and connection.

Games, puzzles and crafts are not lost

Puzzles are more than just pieces

Imagine the satisfaction of placing the final piece in a jigsaw puzzle as the image slowly comes together. For someone who has lost their vision, this once comforting activity becomes a frustrating challenge.

The texture of the pieces may still be felt, but without the ability to see the image on the box or to distinguish one piece from another, the puzzle loses its allure and can become an overwhelming task.

Tactile puzzles and audio instructions can help reignite your joy, allowing you to experience the rewarding thrill of completion once more.

Having to craft with a new perspective

Crafting is more than just a hobby, it's a form of expression and connection. Whether it's knitting, sewing, or scrapbooking, these activities allow people to create something tangible with their hands.

With vision loss, tasks like threading a needle, matching colours or seeing a finished project can become more challenging. This can lead to frustration as people miss that creative process that once brought them joy.

Our [Vision Store](#) offers the products like you need to continue to craft like a pro.

The impact of losing more than just fun

Games are more than entertainment, they're about connection. Card games, board games, and video games offer chances to socialise, challenge the mind, and share laughs.

When sight is lost, participating in these activities can become difficult, as something that once brought joy and togetherness becomes a reminder of what's now changed.

Many classic card and board games now have tactile or large print versions available. Joining local community groups or online forums focused on inclusive gaming can also help you connect with others who share your interests.

Contact your service provider or visit our [Vision Store](#) to find new ways to continue crafting and enjoying game night and puzzle time.

Imagine the freedom of taking a walk on a sunny afternoon, feeling the breeze, and seeing the changing colours of the world around you. For people who are sighted, this is a routine experience. For those who are blind or have low vision, navigating their environment can make simple activities like walking alone feel overwhelming.



Staying active to thrive

What staying active means for you

Staying active means different things to different people. For some, it's going to the gym and lifting weights, while for others, it's a walk through the shops with friends. Regardless of your choice, it's important to keep moving. Motivation can be a challenge for everyone, but when living with vision loss, it can all feel even more overwhelming.

Finding your path to connection and activity

Activities like taking an aerobics class or swimming at the local pool are often shared moments with friends. When you experience vision loss, joining in on these familiar routines can feel uncomfortable, especially if you are the only one to have gone through a change. It can be difficult and often overwhelming to find the motivation to participate in what once felt standard.

But accessible fitness groups and sports teams tailored for those with vision loss do exist. Use technology to create or join virtual social or fitness communities where people can engage in activities together, share experiences, and support one another.

Missing the joy of spontaneity

Spontaneity is a key part of staying active. The ability to decide, in the moment, to go for a run or take your kids to the park can be a significant part of maintaining an active lifestyle. Now, the casual nature of these kinds of activities is replaced with meticulous planning and a reliance on others. It can feel like this can really dampen the joy and freedom that comes with physical activity.

Instead, you can try creating a list of activities you have always enjoyed that a timer or alarm can remind you to do at random times. This is a simple way to stay active and keep things exciting.

Embracing physical wellbeing

Physical activity goes beyond exercise, offering significant mental and emotional benefits. Sighted or not, it's important we stay moving and enjoy the sunshine to maintain our overall health and wellbeing. To make things feel easier, set yourself small goals to start. Doing things in your own way, at your own pace, is how you can begin to feel the motivation to move once again. Speak to your service provider who can offer you ways to get you back to a healthier, active lifestyle.

Contact us

Quality Living Groups are here to support you in your emotional and mental wellbeing throughout your journey of vision loss. Visit us online today to learn more about the program and register for the groups that best suit you:

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/find-services/adults/social-recreation/quality-living-groups>

Find out more about how our services and support can help you and your family today.

Vision Australia has metro and regional centres around Australia.

Call us on 1300 84 74 66

You can also visit our website at www.visionaustralia.org or email us at info@visionaustralia.org to find out the centre closest to you.



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