

# Client Information Booklet

November 2020



**Vision  
Australia**

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

# Vision loss? We're here to help.



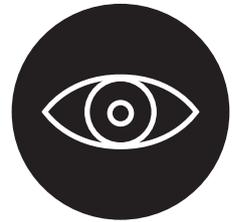
**Emotional support  
and groups**  
for social inclusion



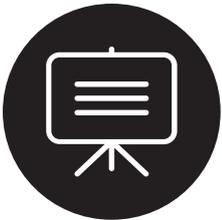
**Occupational  
therapists**  
for independence



**Mobility specialists**  
to stay safe  
and get around



**Orthoptists to**  
assess functional  
vision and make  
recommendations



**Education and  
employment  
support** to achieve  
aspirations



**Aids and equipment**  
from our shop to  
improve daily living



**Technology and  
training** to stay  
connected



**Early intervention,**  
children and young  
people's specialised  
services



**Seeing Eye Dogs**  
for independence



**Audio books and  
library** for leisure  
and learning



**Helpful information  
and advice** for  
clients and families



**My Aged Care and  
NDIS experts** to  
maximise funding

When vision loss starts to impact daily life, it's time to call Vision Australia. We are vision loss experts and work with people of all ages to maximise their remaining vision. We help people achieve independence, stay safe and increase their ability to participate in everyday life.

## For more information:

Call 1300 847 466  
Email [info@visionaustralia.org](mailto:info@visionaustralia.org)  
Visit [visionaustralia.org](http://visionaustralia.org)

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# Introduction

Vision Australia exists to support people who are blind or have low vision to live the life they choose.

This document covers key information about your rights and responsibilities, your privacy, services, and how you can provide feedback and make a complaint. It also includes a list of relevant contacts for your convenience.

For more information about Vision Australia

**Call 1300 84 74 66**

**Fax 1300 84 73 29**

**Visit [www.visionaustralia.org](http://www.visionaustralia.org)**

If you are deaf, have a hearing or speech impairment, you can contact us through the National Relay Service and ask for **1300 84 74 66** or visit:

**<https://nrscaptions.nrscall.gov.au/nrs/captionrelay>**

# Rights and responsibilities

## **As a client you have the right to:**

- Be treated with respect and dignity and have your privacy protected.
- Freedom of expression and self-determination, with your identity, culture and diversity valued and supported.
- Receive the information you need to help you make an informed decision, and take calculated risks.
- Receive information in a way that you understand, and is accessible to you.
- Have choice and control over the supports you receive.
- Choose the gender of your primary service provider.
- Give feedback or make a complaint about service provision without any retribution.
- Have a person of your choice, including an advocate, support you or speak on your behalf.
- Live without abuse, neglect bullying and harassment.

## **As a client your responsibilities are to:**

- Treat our service staff and other clients with courtesy and respect.
- Inform Vision Australia about how you would like your supports to be delivered to meet your needs and goals.
- Advise Vision Australia about any concerns you have regarding the supports provided.
- Provide a safe work environment for staff members who work within your home.

## **Vision Australia's responsibilities as a service provider are to:**

- Provide services in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidelines pertaining to your plan or package.
- Adhere to all relevant standards and codes of conduct including; NDIS code of conduct, NDIS Practice Standards, Charter of Aged Care Rights, Aged Care Quality Standards and the National Standards for Disability Services.
- Collaborate with you to provide supports that meet your needs and goals.
- Communicate openly, honestly and in a timely manner.
- Keep accurate records of any services provided to you.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and/or respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, abuse, bullying and harassment.
- Ensure you have choice and control over the supports you receive and how you receive them.
- Provide clear information about service options available.
- Inform you of your rights and responsibilities in relation to services and products.
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality and protect the personal and sensitive information provided to us.

Vision Australia believes you have the right to make an informed choice; to experience life and take advantage of opportunities for learning, developing competencies and independence and, in doing so, take a calculated risk. We will work together with you to look for solutions tailored to support you to live the way you choose.

Vision Australia recognises that no two clients' lived experience will be the same. We commit to listening to and understanding your personal experience, and working with you in an inclusive and respectful way, using our person centred approach and ensuring cultural safety for all.

# Protecting your privacy and confidentiality

All service users can be assured that Vision Australia are committed to maintaining the privacy of your personal information. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times in the collection, use, storage and access to your personal information.

Vision Australia is committed to its legislative responsibility to protect the personal information of its clients, carers, customers, donors, staff and volunteers. We will ensure all data is collected lawfully, fairly and with consent and is used for a lawful purpose.

## **Privacy and management of client records**

Vision Australia is required to maintain an accurate record of relevant information and services provided to you. Your information is managed under the terms of your written (or verbal) consent (or consent of person responsible or guardian).

The reasons for Vision Australia collecting, storing sharing/ exchanging your information will always be explained and made clear to you so you can make an informed decision. You can change or withdraw your consent at any time.

Vision Australia has an obligation to protect the personal information we hold on our clients, donors, members and others.

We must only use this information for the purposes for which we have consent to use it and we must not allow it to be accessed by any unauthorised persons.

Consent provided will be reviewed when:

- A client wishes to change how their data is to be shared or exchanged (inclusion or exclusion of various parties, health professionals or other service providers)
- A client who has previously exited services returns for new services
- When Vision Australia needs to use client data for purposes which are not covered under an existing/ current consent

Non-identifying information is provided to our funding bodies as required. You may be asked to provide feedback to our auditing bodies either face-to-face, via phone or online. It is your choice whether you choose to do so. If you do not wish to be involved in audits please let us know.

The principle of freedom of information is endorsed by Vision Australia. On written request, you will be provided with supervised access to your record.

All records are retained and protected in accordance with legislative requirements. A digital record will be retained indefinitely. This permanent record is a summary of all services received by you and associated notes.

# Complaints and feedback – tell us what you think

We value your feedback and it can help us improve our services to you. We would love to hear any suggestions, compliments or complaints you may have regarding your experience with Vision Australia. Feedback is managed fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution. We use your feedback to make changes and improve our services.

You can lodge a complaint through an external advocate at any time. Your choice of advocate will be respected by Vision Australia. An advocate is a person who can speak or act on your behalf, and could be a family member, friend, or through an external agency (see other contacts at the end of this booklet)

If requested, Vision Australia can assist you to access an advocate or language services specialist.

To provide feedback or make a complaint:

- Call **1300 84 74 66**
- Contact your local office and speak to any Vision Australia staff member
- Visit **[www.visionaustralia.org](http://www.visionaustralia.org)**

Clients also have the right to lodge feedback to an external third party; for example if you were not happy with how your feedback was dealt with at Vision Australia or if you didn't feel comfortable providing it to Vision Australia, you have the option of lodging it with a third party. A list of contacts is provided at the end of the brochure.

## **Human rights and freedom from abuse**

Vision Australia fully endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and believes that this Convention contains the clearest and most authoritative expression of the human rights of people with disability. We are committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and to the prevention of all forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect, violence and harm.

## **Working in partnership**

To deliver services that open up possibilities for people who are blind or have low vision, Vision Australia works in partnership with government, supporters, trusts and foundations, community groups, educators, health professionals, businesses, advocacy agencies and our clients.

### **Individual service agreement**

Vision Australia works in partnership with you (and/or your family, carer, advocate and others as required) to develop a service agreement to identify services that will support you to reach your goals. The service agreement includes your goals, what supports you will receive, the number of hours, the cost and who will be funding the services e.g. NDIS, My Aged Care, etc.

### **Client and consumer consultation**

Engaging clients and consumer groups in meaningful consultation in relation to all aspects of the organisation is highly valued.

We regularly contact clients to obtain feedback on the quality of our services and also seek input through questionnaires, discussion groups, consumer forums and advisory committees.

The Board of Vision Australia convenes a Client Reference Group to seek advice and feedback on specific matters relating to the experience of our clients and the direction of the organisation. This Group operates under Vision Australia's Client Reference Group Charter.

For more information visit:

[www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/client-reference-group](http://www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/client-reference-group)

## **Members**

Any person over the age of 18 years may become a member of Vision Australia. The annual fee is \$25 and membership entitles a person to be involved at general meetings, receive papers, and to vote on issues of importance.

## **Supporters and Volunteers**

Vision Australia relies on the generosity of people in the community to raise a significant proportion of the money needed to deliver our services. We appreciate any support, all donations go towards providing services to clients. Clients may receive marketing material in the mail giving them the option to donate. If you would like to discuss your marketing or communication preferences please call **1800 42 20 77**.

While many support us financially, others give their time and skills as volunteers. More than 2800 registered volunteers enable Vision Australia to reduce costs and devote more resources to deliver services to people who are blind or have low vision.

## **Advocates**

An advocate is a person who can speak and act on behalf of someone else. You may choose to work through an advocate of your choice to help make decisions or resolve issues. You may choose an advocate who is a family member, friend, or from an external agency (see Other Contacts). Vision Australia supports and respects the choice the client makes.

## **Service completion and service withdrawal**

Services are planned with you to ensure they meet your needs and goals. A service agreement is completed when your identified goals have been achieved or when you elect to cease services before the completion of the agreed services. You can remain connected with us by receiving a client newsletter, using our library services, visiting Vision Australia's website, listening to segments about Vision Australia on Vision Australia Radio or joining our Facebook page.

You can contact us when there is a change in vision, change in personal circumstances or when a new need arises. Vision Australia can support you with a referral to other assessment agencies like My Aged Care or the National Disability Insurance Agency, if required.

Vision Australia services may be withdrawn if the client no longer meets the eligibility criteria due to improved vision or where a client is unable to fulfil his or her responsibilities to meet agreed goals. If the client's behaviour is threatening or menacing, an agreed action plan is developed to support the client to continue receiving services. Where agreed client responsibilities and actions cannot be fulfilled, services will cease.

# Other Contacts

## **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

To raise concerns about the quality of care or services to people receiving aged care services.

Phone **1800 951 822**

Visit **[www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au)**

## **Australian Human Rights Commission**

The Australian Human Rights Commission can investigate and resolve complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Visit **[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)**

## **Blind Citizens Australia**

Consumer group that advances opportunities and advocacy for people who are blind or have low vision.

Phone **1800 03 36 60**

Visit **[www.bca.org.au](http://www.bca.org.au)**

## **Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres**

Provides short term emergency respite services.

Phone **1800 05 22 22**

Visit **[www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)**

## **Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors**

Client feedback regarding Disability Services in Queensland can be lodged via the complaints unit.

Phone **1800 49 14 67**

Visit **[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)**

## **Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women**

Phone **1800 08 04 64**

Visit **[www.csyw.qld.gov.au](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au)**

## **Disability Services Commission**

Clients can provide feedback to the Commission regarding disability services in Victoria.

Phone **1800 67 73 42**

Visit **[www.odsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.odsc.vic.gov.au)**

## **Elder Abuse Concerns**

Each state and territory provides information about abuse, abuse prevention and useful contacts via their website.

Phone **1800 20 04 22**

Visit **[www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)**

## **Health and Disability Services Complaints Office Western Australia**

Clients can provide feedback to the office regarding disability services in Western Australia.

Phone **1800 81 35 83**

Visit **[www.hadsco.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au)**

## **My Aged Care**

The gateway for older Australian's to receive services including information on aged care for you, a family member, friend or someone you're caring for.

Phone **1800 20 04 22**

Visit **[www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)**

## **National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline**

Australia-wide telephone hotline for reporting abuse and neglect of people with disabilities using government funded services.

Phone **1800 88 00 52**

Visit **[www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/hotline](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/hotline)**

## **NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)**

A scheme to ensure people under 65 years with a disability receive the support they need.

Phone **1800 80 01 10**

Email **[feedback@ndis.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndis.gov.au)**

Visit **[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)**

## **NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission**

An independent body that works to improve the quality and safety of NDIS services and supports. Complaints can be made to the NDIS Commission.

Phone **1800 03 55 44**

Visit **[www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)**

## **Office of the Public Guardian (QLD only)**

An independent statutory office established to protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of adults with impaired decision-making capacity, and children and young people in the child protection system.

Phone **1300 653 187**

Visit **[www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au](http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au)**

## **Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)**

A free, independent and confidential service supporting older people and their representatives to raise and address issues relating to aged care services.

Phone **1800 70 06 00**

Visit **[www.opan.com.au](http://www.opan.com.au)**

## **Sexual Assault Services throughout Australia**

A list of state-based organisations that provide support and information.

Visit **[www.sass.org.au/directory](http://www.sass.org.au/directory)**

# Government Support

Vision Australia would like to acknowledge the following government funding and support:

## **Federal Government**

- Department of Communications and the Arts
- Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Community Broadcasting Foundation

## **Australian Capital Territory**

- Community Services Directorate

## **Victorian State Government**

- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

## **New South Wales State Government**

- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- Department of Education
- NSW Ministry of Health

## **Northern Territory Government**

- Department of Education

## **Queensland State Government**

- Department of Education
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

## **Tasmanian State Government**

- Department of Education

## **Western Australia State Government**

- Department of Communities

Community Broadcasting Foundation supports Vision Australia radio.

# Contact us

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