

## What are low vision services?

There are approximately 180,000 people living in Australia with severe vision impairment. This number is expected to double within the next ten years. Low vision services are provided by low vision organisations, some optometrists and ophthalmologists. These services can assist you to make the most of your available vision and adjust to vision impairment by learning new ways to carry out everyday tasks.

### What do low vision service providers do?

Low vision service providers should be consulted when vision can no longer be improved to a satisfactory level with glasses or other medical or surgical treatments. It is important that you seek assistance from low vision services at an early stage in order to learn to use available devices and services most effectively.

Low vision services can advise on ways to continue living independently, safely and confidently in your home and community. Most importantly, low vision services help you to continue leading a happy and fulfilling life.

### How can these services help?

Low vision services provide information about visual aids and rehabilitation if you are living with vision impairment. The provision of aids such as large print numbers on telephones, magnifiers for reading and tactile markers for ovens and microwaves can improve everyday tasks around the home and allow you to remain independent and safe in your environment.

Counselling, peer support and group program activities are also available, which offer social, creative and cultural interaction.

The Vision Initiative ACT would like to acknowledge the support of:



For more information about the Vision Initiative please contact Vision 2020 Australia on (03) 9656 2020 or visit [www.visioninitiative.org.au](http://www.visioninitiative.org.au)

## Low Vision Referrals – Australian Capital Territory



The following organisations provide low vision services in the Australian Capital Territory. If you seek advice or assistance from a low vision service provider, it is important that you also maintain regular appointments with your eye health professional.

#### 1RPH

1RPH provides various radio programs, features readings from daily newspapers, books and magazines for those who are print handicapped including people with low vision.

Address: Barton Highway, Gungahlin, ACT 2912  
Telephone: (02) 6241 4076  
Website: [www.radio1rph.org.au](http://www.radio1rph.org.au)

#### Canberra Blind Society

The Canberra Blind Society provides home assessments, low vision aids and equipment, information and supportive counselling. Individual and group programs including daily living skills, cooking, Braille tuition and transcription is also available.

Canberra Blind Society also offers peer support groups, leisure activities, seminars and workshops for clients and general public.

No formal referral is required and family, friends and health professionals can make appointments.

Address: Gene Street, Canberra City, ACT 2601  
Telephone: (02) 6247 4580  
Website: [www.users.tpg.com.au/canblind/](http://www.users.tpg.com.au/canblind/)

#### Guide Dogs (NSW/ACT)

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT provides mobility training to Australians of all ages living with vision impairment. Training is provided in the use of canes, guide dogs and other aids to improve mobility, increase independence and enhance quality of life.

No formal referral is required and family, friends and health professionals can make appointments.

Address: 18 Napier Close, Deakin, ACT 2600  
Telephone: ACT (02) 6285 2988 NSW (02) 9412 9300  
Website: [www.guidedogs.com.au](http://www.guidedogs.com.au)

#### Optometrists Association Australia (NSW)

Optometrists Association Australia is the peak professional body for optometrists in Australia and assists optometrists to deliver quality eye and vision care services across Australia.

The Optometrists Association Australia can provide information regarding optometrists with experience in low vision services.

Address: PO Box 33, Five Dock, NSW 2046  
Telephone: (02) 9712 2199  
Website [www.aaansw.com.au](http://www.aaansw.com.au)

#### Vision Australia

Vision Australia offers a wide range of services to assist people who are blind or vision impaired.

Available services include general information about vision loss, low vision aids, adaptive technology, voice software for computer use, life skills, counselling, home visits and dog guides.

To assist health professionals refer clients, please visit the Vision Australia website to download a referral form.

Address: 22 East Row, Canberra City, ACT 2600  
Telephone: (02) 6247 1000 or 1300 847 466  
Website: [www.visionaustralia.org.au](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au)

#### Other considerations for the vision impaired

##### Austrroads

A vision impaired person may not be fit to continue driving.

For more information visit:  
[www.austrroads.com.au](http://www.austrroads.com.au)

##### Centrelink

If you are vision impaired you may be eligible for a Disability Support Pension.

For more information please visit:  
[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

##### Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

For more information visit:  
[www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/concessions](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/concessions)

##### Vision Australia

If you are vision impaired you may be eligible for taxi or spectacles vouchers.

For more information visit:  
[www.visionaustralia.org.au](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au)