

Post-secondary Education and Employment Support

Although responses to the Connections Project consultations and surveys from people of working age was less than anticipated, issues around employment support and post-secondary education were nonetheless raised as vitally important matters affecting many people who are blind or have vision impairment.

A few facts

- Approximately 8% of people who responded to the Connections Project surveys indicated interest in employment related matters.
- Over 5% of people who responded to the Connections Project surveys indicated interest in higher education.
- Of the people who responded to the Connections Project surveys, approximately 17% were between the ages of 19 - 59, that is, of working age or accessing post-secondary education.

The Industry Skills Centre

The Industry Skills Centre is located at the Association's Victoria Park premises and provides a safe and highly supported training environment for people who are blind or vision impaired. It is staffed by qualified trainers and supported by a technical, administrative and customer service team.

Small classes mean that you will get individual support and help. In addition, our equipment has been enhanced with assistive technology designed for the work environment, so that you will learn how to use the tools you need. We incorporate Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010 into our range of courses, which includes the following nationally recognised training courses:

- Certificate I in Information Technology
- Certificate III in Business
- IT Essentials I: PC Hardware and Software
- IT Essentials II: Network Operating Systems
- Cisco CCNA
- Braille Training

Half or full day workshops

We also run the following half or full day Assistive Technology workshops which are specifically relevant to people who are blind or vision impaired:

- JAWS Basics or Configuration
- Exploring ZoomText Magnifier or Reader features
- Surfing the Net with JAWS
- Searching the Net with JAWS or ZoomText

Prospectuses are published in Nov/Dec each year and provide detailed information about the courses offered by the Association. This information is also available from our website www.guidedogswa.com.au

What employment support services does the Association provide?

The Association has two main roles in supporting people with blindness or vision impairment in employment. This is an area that has undergone some changes of late so we hope that the following information provides some clarification.

Workplace Assessments

The Association has a team of staff that are approved assessors for 'Job Access', a National Government initiative under the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) Scheme. We can assess and make recommendations to you and/or your employer on any workplace modifications, equipment or software that you may need to improve your effectiveness at work.

Once the application for assessment is approved, 'Job Access' will cover the cost of your workplace assessment and may also contribute to or cover the cost of equipment/software purchases recommended. To find out more or to arrange an assessment, complete a 'Job Access' application form with your employer (available online) or contact the Association. People with compensation claims and non-Australian residents are able to access this support via a fee for service.

Workplace Intervention

The Association plays an active role in the provision of recommended equipment and follow up training to ensure that employees use equipment/software correctly and efficiently to maximise their working potential and independence. This follow up support is usually covered by the 'Job Access' application which means that you and/or your employer do not incur any additional cost.

Did you know?

Did you know that as part of our structured classes we provide computer laboratory access to ensure that you have access to the learning environment you need? We also offer training in some units for students who are unable to travel to the Centre.

Have you heard of 'First Clicks'?

'First Clicks' is a basic introductory computer course. We have held this course both in the Perth metro and in some regional centres to help a wide range of people develop basic knowledge, practical skills and confidence using computers. We will advertise any upcoming 'First Clicks' courses through our 'What's On' newsletter.

To receive a prospectus or information about upcoming training opportunities, or to register your interest in any of our courses or employment services, call (08) 9311 8202 and ask for the Duty Officer who will refer you to the most appropriate contact.

What we will do next

- We will continue to run 'First Clicks' training courses in metro and regional areas to introduce people to computer skills and terminology.
- We will explore the development of technology and training programs and courses to be accessed externally and via the Internet.