



Guide Dogs | VisAbility

WA/TAS

My name is Helena, and I've known Patrick since he was about two years old. It has been a privilege to watch him grow, learn to walk, to communicate, to play, and to become more independent.

When you support children like Patrick, you support the whole family. I've seen his parents, Diana and Neil, navigate a very uncertain journey, while also raising two wonderful older sisters who are deeply involved in his progress and supportive of their adorable younger brother.

Over time, we've built a relationship based on trust, honesty, and consistency. **In many ways, I feel like part of the family when I visit.**

That trust takes time. It is also what makes progress possible.

Because of ongoing, connected support, families don't have to restart their journey every time life changes. They can keep building on trust, progress, and relationships already in place.

My role has included supporting Patrick's communication, mealtimes, and independence skills, alongside a wider team supporting his development.

I've also seen how important it is that when families are waiting for services or navigating changes in support, someone is there to help in the meantime, because life doesn't pause while you wait.

For Patrick and his family, that continuity means getting help when they need it the most, not months later. It means building on progress rather than starting over and having a team that adapts as his needs change.

When I think about Patrick's future, I feel hopeful.

I want him to keep building independence, confidence, and connection with the world around him, and I want his family to know they are not alone as new challenges arise.

We are here in the ways families need most. Sometimes that means ongoing support through periods of change.

At other times, it means stepping back while families practise what they have learned, knowing support is still there when needed. Patrick's story is one part of a much bigger picture.

Through Guide Dogs WA & Tasmania and VisAbility, families can access different kinds of support at different times, but the purpose is the same: **to help people build confidence, independence, and connection as life changes.**

Because life keeps changing, support should too. Families like Patrick's need more than one moment of help.

They need support that is lifelong, connected, and tailored to their individual needs, with the broader support of Guide Dogs WA & Tasmania and VisAbility helping ensure the right help is there at the right time, so they are never left to face change alone.

Your donation helps ensure families can access immediate support from people who already know and understand them, not months later, and not alone.

With sincere thanks,

Helena

