

See
D!fferently.

Annual Report
2021/22



WITH THE
ROYAL
SOCIETY
FOR
THE BLIND





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**The Royal Society for the Blind of South
Australia Inc. trading as See Differently**

ABN: 37 680 837 839

The Royal Society for the Blind is Registered
as a Charity by the Australian Government
Charities and Not-for profit Commission.





From the President

Welcome to See Differently.

Momentum is a word that encapsulates our activity over the past 12 months. From small changes to some very bold steps, we've pushed ahead with energy and focus.

Most visible has been the launch of our new brand. For many years we used 'See Differently' as a tagline, but it's come out of the shadows to be our primary trading name. It is a powerful statement of our intent. It is about the way we deliver services, the way our clients see their potential and the way our supporters and partners work with us.

It also acts as a catalyst for growth in years to come. We are extremely proud to be one of South Australia's oldest charities, with 138 years of being here for people who are vision impaired. We are also firmly focused on the future and we felt our brand needed to be bold, modern and inspirational to reflect all of the work we do.

But passion and purpose amount to little without direction and leadership. In the past year we have strengthened our executive team and developed a new Strategic Plan for the next three years.

The future brings together the holistic services we offer for South Australians with low vision, as well as the latest technology that is transforming the way people with low vision live their lives. Our clients range from children to people over 100 and every age in between. Every client is different, and we offer individual support as and when we are needed.

Our expertise gained through our well-known guide dogs program has also led to the expansion of our assistance dogs program, which now supports veterans with PTSD and children with autism. Our employment program also supports people with a wide range of disabilities. These programs are changing lives with demand that is only growing.

We are in a sustainable financial position and are preparing for further changes to aged care funding in coming years. While many of our services receive government funding, we continue to rely on fundraising and corporate support to deliver our full range of programs. We cannot express how grateful we are to our community for the support they offer.

Lastly, but most importantly, we have a fantastic team. From our Board to our leadership group, to our highly skilled team and our passionate volunteers, we have a shared purpose for making life better for people. Together, we are excited to See Differently.

Kate McKeough
President



From the Executive Director

See Differently is our new brand but in the past year we have also embraced the concept of working differently. We are more collaborative, better at listening to our clients and trends, we have a keener focus on inclusivity and creativity. It's about working smarter and delivering the right mix of services for our clients.

Community is something we talk about a lot at See Differently. Our volunteers, our corporate partners, the health specialists we work with, our generous donors, all allow us to do the work we do and make a difference. This year we recruited many new volunteers to help us raise our puppies and we revitalised our Client Advisory Committee. These ten clients with different backgrounds and experience are helping us shape our communication, advocacy program and services.

One of the things that people new to See Differently, whether they are staff or clients, often remark on is the wide range of services and technology we offer. Our manufacturing and packaging team is one of those services. At our facility at Gilles Plains we employ more than 60 people, many with low vision and other disabilities, to package products and produce a range of thermoformed products. We offer a high-quality service, a great place to work with competitive salaries and our client base is national and rapidly expanding as customers source local supply.

Our client services have expanded this year, with new optometry clinics operating from Noarlunga, Gilles Plains and our new city Low Vision Centre. Our Low Vision Centre also provides clients the opportunity to try the latest and largest range of vision assisting technology in South Australia.

We continue to be the leading provider of guide and assistance dogs in South Australia. We have delivered guide dogs for the vision impaired, assistance dogs for veterans through our OPK9 program, a facility dog at the Jamie Larcombe Centre and we have expanded our animal assisted therapy program for children with autism.

We've continued to support South Australians with disabilities to find and keep a job, as well as helping the companies that employ them to better understand the practical needs of the people they have employed. It is a fantastic program that delivers life changing results and promotes independence.

Our fundraising efforts have delivered strong results, not only financially to support the delivery of our work, but also in bringing our community together and educating the community about the people we support every day. Without this incredible support from many individuals and companies we could not operate the wide range of services that support so many South Australians to live the best lives they can.

We are looking forward to the coming year and doing even more to support our clients and invest in our people and services.

Damian Papps
Executive Director





Strategy

Our vision

We exist to make the best lives possible for South Australians who are blind or experiencing vision loss.

We are led by a strong set of values.

1

We are collaborative.

We value teamwork and are in it together with clients, volunteers, funders and partners.

2

We are inclusive.

We value everyone's unique experience and work hard every day to ensure opportunity for all.

3

We are creative.

We value intelligence and problem solving and are open to new ways of working.

Strategy

In the past year we've developed a new Strategic Plan, involving our teams, clients, the Board and stakeholders. It's been great to re-focus on what matters and what needs to be done. We're delivering against four strategic pillars.

1

The right team

Most of our services are health and specialist services delivered by our highly trained team. Making sure we have the right people, the right structure and the right learning is fundamental to our success. We're focused on always improving and being a fantastic place to work.

2

Build an integrated business

Like a lot of health and charity businesses, we tend to focus more on people than systems, and ours need some investment. It's all about ensuring we have better technology and systems to support our delivery of client services.

3

Be known for quality services

We've modernised our brand and introduced some great new partnerships, but we're always looking at how our services can improve. But we're also ensuring that the South Australians who can benefit from our services know what we do and how to access them.

4

Allow innovation to grow

Innovation is a big and wide word, but for us innovation is all about embracing new services and technologies. We're looking at how we better meet the needs of the growing aged care market and how we advocate for the needs of all vision impaired South Australians.



Client Services

We are the largest and most experienced low vision services provider in South Australia. But what really sets us apart is the range of services we offer. We know that every one of our clients is unique and has different needs, so we're able to package together the right services and products and technologies for everyone.

Some of the services we offer include: low vision optometry, occupational therapy and mobility instruction, counselling, support coordination, support workers, braille instruction, animal assisted therapy and assistive technology advice and products. We work with South Australians of all ages and in every corner of the state.

New city Low Vision Centre

We didn't move very far, in fact straight across the road, but our new Low Vision Centre at 212 Pirie Street is streets ahead of our old digs. It's open and modern and we have the biggest and best display of the latest technology for clients to come and try and talk to the team about it. We also have new optometry consulting rooms and plenty of meeting space to learn braille or update a support plan with our team.

Expansion north and south

Demand for our services continues to grow, so we expanded our specialist low vision optometry clinics to Noarlunga Downs and Gilles Plains. Our optometrists are experts in the needs of people with low vision, providing guidance on the preservation of existing vision and explaining the services and technology that can assist.

Our occupational therapy team continues to grow, with our OT's helping clients to live, work and enjoy life. Not only have we employed additional OT's and offered work experience placements throughout the year, we've also combined our therapy and independent living services, to offer a more holistic service for our clients.

The triumphant return of TechFest

After a two year hiatus, our annual technology event for clients and health professionals, TechFest was back in mid-2022. Assistive technology is amazing and it's always changing and developing. TechFest brings together all our major tech suppliers for two days to showcase their latest products and to give clients and their families a chance to try them out and learn more about them. More than 250 people came along, we talked to the media about technology, and most importantly, a lot of our clients have accessed technology that is changing their life for the better.

Introducing our new Client Advisory Committee

In the past year we've reinvigorated our Client Advisory Committee, with a new group of client representatives appointed to represent the needs of their peers. Meeting quarterly, the committee is especially looking at advocacy and policy and how we ensure key politicians at all levels understand the needs of people with low vision. They are also involved in client communication and the co-design and introduction of new programs.

The committee is chaired by Michael Hutchinson and members are: Alana Tiller, Ashleigh Stodden, Barry Clarke, Christine Davis, David Olney, Domenico Trimboli, Lisa Cundy, Malcolm Lobban, Michelle Howse, Mike Linscott and Patrick Edwards.





7,680

clients supported by
See Differently

253



people attended
TechFest



Our **youngest** client



number of **optometrists** and
ophthalmologists to whom
we delivered training



Our **oldest** client

5,300

assistive technology products
sold in the last year – from high
tech wearables like the eSight
through to OrCam Read Smart
for improved reading, to large
print Scrabble games.



11,510

hours of **occupational**
therapy provided to clients



3,332

hours of **counselling, support**
coordination and **support work**
provided to clients

A photograph of Michael Hutchinson, a man with a grey beard and hair, wearing a brown blazer over a patterned shirt and dark trousers. He is standing on a tiled floor, holding a black leash attached to a light-colored guide dog. The dog is sitting and looking towards the camera. In the background, there is a glass wall with text including "Welcome", "We're", "8", "ntly.", "WITH THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF THE BLIND", and "Differently.org.au".

“The Client Advisory Committee has members with a broad range of skills, mixed age and gender, life experiences and representation of both metropolitan and rural communities, acknowledging the diversity of See Differently’s customer base.”

Michael Hutchinson



**Our low vision
optometry clinics
expanded to
Noarlunga Downs,
Gilles Plains and
the new premises
in the city.**







Employment Services

As well as working with people with blindness or a vision impairment, See Differently's employment programs support people who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals affected by Neurological, Acquired Brain Injury, Psychological, Intellectual or Learning Disabilities.

In April 2022 See Differently also launched an exciting new program for young people, aged 16-22, the School Leaver's Employment Support program (SLES). SLES offers an employment pathway to help school leavers develop a clear career direction. Practical support and skills covered in the program include computer literacy, resume writing, and interview skills as well as skills in communication, organisation, and workplace expectations.

With offices covering metropolitan Adelaide, See Differently Employment Services is supporting job seekers and employers where they are. In 2021-22 the team delivered more than 6,000 hours of service to our caseload of 233 clients.

6,000

hours of service
to job seekers

233

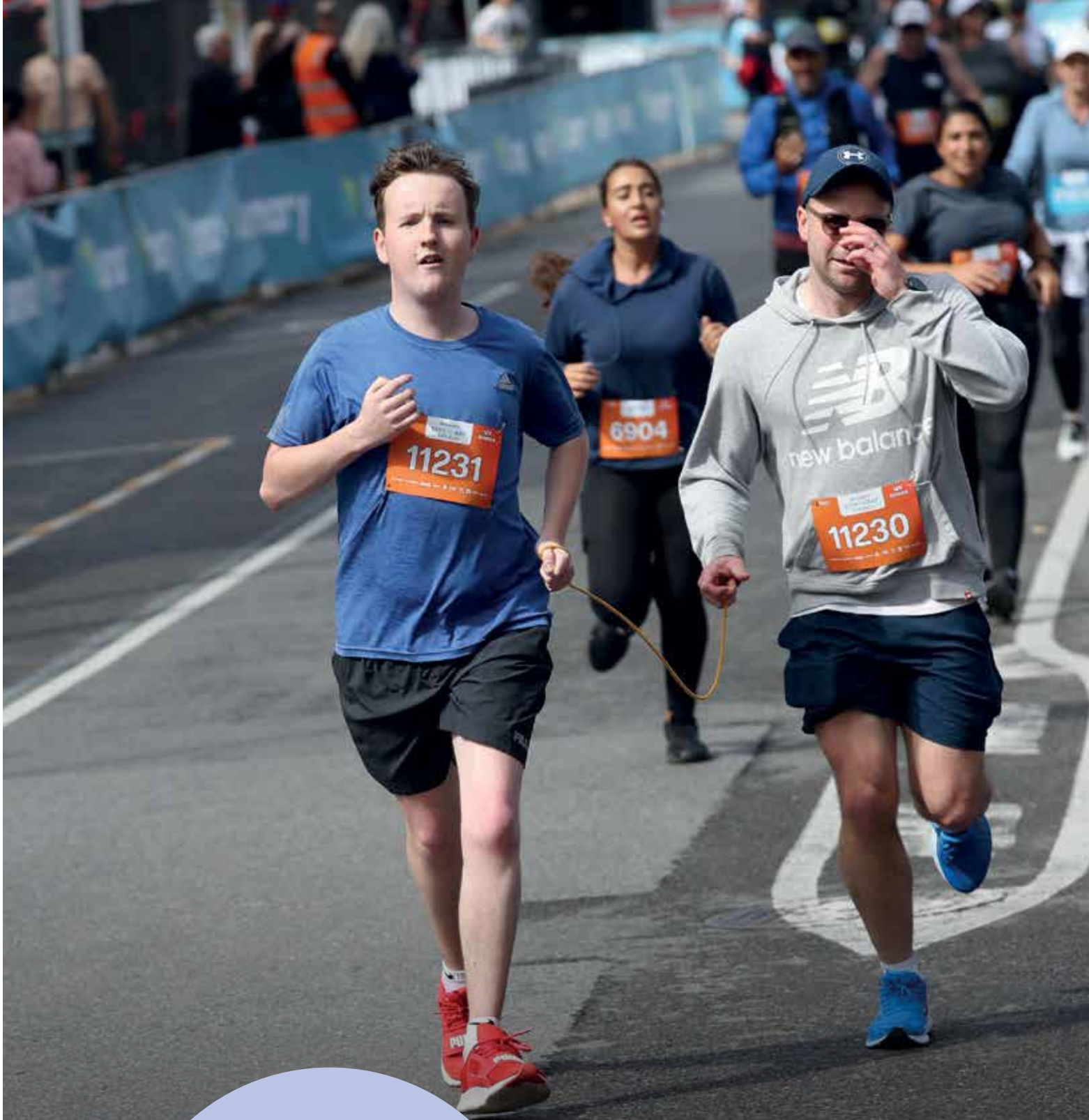
customers

“SLES has helped me gain my confidence and increase my independence to manage my future safely.”

Lucy

Lucy is a bright and shy 21-year-old SLES participant. Lucy, who is legally blind, is currently volunteering at Puddle Jumpers as an administration assistant, which she LOVES. In 2023 Lucy will be attending TAFE where she'll be studying for her Certificate 3 in Administration and Business with the support of See Differently. ►





▲

Thomas is a vibrant 18-year-old SLES participant who is currently enrolled in a double degree of Law and International Politics at University SA. Thomas has Retinitis Pigmentosa and lost his sight at the age of 12. This year, Thomas with exercise physiologist Andrew completed the City to Bay 12km run in 1 hour and 45 minutes! The pair were connected by a cord around their wrists which they use to communicate through. Next stop – New York Marathon 2023!

“Being involved with SLES with See Differently has given me the ability to increase my independence and grow as a person as it’s flexible and beneficial for my future.”

Thomas



Guide & Assistance Dogs

South Australia's leading Guide and Assistance Dog provider

We are a leading Australian provider of Guide and Assistance Dogs, with an internationally accredited program that delivers great outcomes for the range of people who benefit from our support and top-quality dogs.

See Differently programs change lives. Our Guide Dog Program gives blind South Australians greater independence, mobility and freedom. Our OPK9 Program supports veterans with post traumatic stress disorder to move forward positively. Our Animal Assisted Therapy Program is giving children with autism the tools to improve communication and emotional regulation. And lastly our Facility Dog Program provides an onsite wellbeing focus for health and education facilities.





◀ No dry eyes!

Our annual guide dog graduation ceremonies are always a highlight. When our graduates take to the mike to share their stories it's a mix of tears and laughs. What always comes through is the partnership they have with their dogs and the freedom their dog gives them.

Congratulations to our graduating class of 2022 – Peter, Val, Rachael, Jeanette, Janet, Violet, Vera and Marilyn (and of course their beautiful dogs!).

He has saved my life ▶

In his own words, Brad says he wouldn't be here today without his assistance dog Bunji. Brad is a veteran who has battled PTSD. But with the 24/7 support of Bunji, Brad is moving forward, and sharing his transformative experience with an assistance dog.

This year we reached an incredible milestone with our OPK9 Program pairing 50 veterans with assistance dogs. The demand for this program is strong and continuing to grow.



◀ Hello Quattro

This four-legged champion is Quattro and he started a new job this year. He's the facility dog at the Jamie Larcombe Centre where veterans receive support and care. He's been trained to work with the veterans at the centre, to specifically respond to stress cues and alleviate anxiety. He's not only a clever highly-trained dog, he's also very loved by the team at the JLC.

He's there thanks to the generosity of the Defence Teaming Centre and their members. As their charity of choice at their gala dinner in 2021, they raised \$35,000 for the OPK9 program to place Quattro at the JLC. Thank you.

The puppy midwives of See Differently! ▶

All of our guide and assistance dog team are busy, but our puppy team have been run off their feet this year, with a flurry of four-legged deliveries. In fact we've welcomed more than 35 puppies this year.

We do it all. We breed our own puppies, they are raised in volunteer homes and we do all the training at our Gilles Plains campus. Our puppy volunteers are nothing short of amazing. They care for these lovely little puppies, they start their training, and then they have to hand them back when they're ready to go to school and work.







See
Differently.



50th

OPK9 partnership
celebrated

A circular arrangement of light blue paw prints surrounding the central purple circle.

10,000km

walked by the team
training dogs

16
tonnes



of dog food
consumed

A teal circle containing the number 35.

35

puppies born



Manufacturing & Packaging Services

People first in a profitable year for the See Differently manufacturing team.

Against the backdrop of COVID-affected labour and raw material shortages, the growth and increased profitability for the manufacturing and packaging division was significant in 2021-22.

The Thermoforming division, which produces sustainable RPET trays (such as those used in biscuit packaging) experienced an upturn in production, with many existing clients now sourcing 100% of their packaging requirements from See Differently. The challenges of increasing material costs and supply delays for raw materials led the team to sourcing their own bulk raw materials ensuring there was no disruption to production for customers.

In packaging, See Differently also experienced growth, with new customers jumping on board and existing contracts increasing their volume. Customers include major national retail chains, international food suppliers as well as many local iconic South Australian products such as Fruchocs!

The people of the Manufacturing and Packaging Division at Gilles Plains – the employees and the customers – are at the heart of what we do.

In 2021-22 staff numbers were maintained, with supported employees benefiting from greater NDIS supports, allowing more workplace flexibility and the ability for employees to achieve their workplace goals with upskilling and training opportunities. Manufacturing and Packaging staff have also been valuable participants in the formation of the See Differently strategy, providing input and feedback throughout the process.







32

tonnes of recycled materials used to manufacture food grade packaging

99,732

combined production hours from the manufacturing and packaging team

1,000,000
plus

Over 1 million food products packed

Operations

A fresh start for See Differently

Following the sale of Knapman House, in December 2021, See Differently relocated to a modern office and retail centre at 212 Pirie Street, right across the road from our former premises.

See Differently's newly refurbished Low Vision Centre has an expanded range of retail products, modern consulting rooms and office facilities.

See Differently Gilles Plains was rejuvenated in financial year 2021-22, providing improved office facilities for staff and clients. The upgrade to the wider campus has seen the increased utilisation of buildings on the site and the introduction of new tenants, ACH Group.

The refurbishment at Gilles Plains has also been a win for clients based in the north-east with more services now available, including Client Support Services, Counselling and Optometry.

See Differently is committed to providing high level low vision services to all South Australians and we maintain sites across metropolitan Adelaide, whilst also providing services via tele-health and regional clinic visits.

Our locations

- Adelaide
- Gilles Plains
- Noarlunga Downs
- Smithfield
- Port Adelaide
- Westbourne Park





Our Team

American disability activist Helen Keller absolutely got it right when she said *'Alone we can do so little, but together so much.'*

Our Team is pretty amazing!

We've dealt with COVID (again), we moved into a new city office and consolidated many of our team to our Gilles Plains campus, we've launched a new brand and delivered even more services than previous years.

A few team highlights include:

Our **Therapy and Independent Living Team** has expanded to meet the increasing demand for occupational therapy and mobility training.

We have offered extremely well-attended professional development sessions for **optometrists and ophthalmologists**.

Our new **Service Partners Team** has brought together counselling and support coordination services to better meet the needs of NDIS clients

Our new **Quality Systems** team has brought in new methodologies for continuous improvement and worked through a number of audits and inspections.



Shenade is one of See Differently's friendly and experienced Occupational Therapists. With qualifications in Occupational Therapy, Health Science and Disability Studies, Shenade is passionate about supporting her clients to reach their goals, big or small and helping them to participate in what is meaningful to them. ►

◀ Our See Differently braille trainer Michael Zannis is also a highly accomplished Australian cricketer. He again represented his country at the highest level this year in the Commonwealth Bank International Cricket Inclusion Series, beating New Zealand.





Board of Directors (Left to right): Barry Clarke, Kate Berry, Pieter Haverhoek, Damian Papps, Ian Campbell, Kate McKeough, Richard Starling, Brad Gay, Dr Celia Chen and Jane Ford (Absent: Dr Grant Raymond). (Front) See Differently Guide dog in training, Obie.

Executive team (Left to right): Jody Martin-Rankin, Effie Salonoklis, Damian Papps, Dwayne Edwards and Sally Raphael





Volunteers

From caring for little puppies, to taking clients to appointments and cooking the snags at our community events, our volunteers are awesome.

Some get their hearts broken

A love of dogs and a desire to give back to the community is the only commonality required with our puppy volunteers. We have singles, couples, retirees and families, all helping us to train these very special guide and assistance dogs of the future.

Even our puppies are bred in homes by volunteers. We know that the love and care these puppies get in the first 12-15 months of life sets them up perfectly for their formal training and ultimately their life as a working dog.

But it's absolutely true – even our longest serving volunteers can find it hard to say goodbye to the puppy when the time comes for formal training.

We're always on the look out for volunteers and there's lots of ways to get involved. Register your interest online and come along to an information session.





“We started puppy volunteering as we transitioned to retirement. It’s not easy to hand the puppies back, but when you see the difference they make and meet the person who needs them, that’s what it’s all about.”

Merrawyn, volunteer for 15 years

◀ Merrawyn and Lindsay





Corporate Partnerships

We may have a long history and be one of South Australia's oldest charities, but we are by no means one of the largest.

It means our corporate partners are very much part of our community and we work together to achieve amazing outcomes for South Australians. Our corporate partners provide us with funding and in-kind support, and we're there to meet the teams, to educate and engage.

Defence community side by side with veterans

The defence community has been a major supporter of our flagship OPK9 program. Last year the Defence Teaming Centre nominated us as their charity of choice at the annual gala dinner and awards ceremony, raising \$35,000 in just one night.

We are also extremely grateful to have some incredible corporate support for this program including from Masonic Charities Trust, Daronmont Technologies, Navantia, SA Power Networks, Redarc and Studio Pilates.

Drives and dishwashers

The team at Amorini Kitchens have been personally impacted by a serious eye condition affecting sight. They rallied up all their friends and personal connections to host a super fun and successful golf day, raising more than \$70,000 for See Differently and a mental health charity.

But even that wasn't the end of this fabulous contribution. They also donated considerable time, effort and skill designing and building a brand new kitchen for our community hall at Gilles Plains. Along with Bunnings Warehouse Windsor Gardens, Trade Point, Beaumont Tiles, SA Appliance Warehouse and KT Electrical, they transformed a very dated kitchen into a brilliant space we are using for clients, veterans and fundraising events.

Flying high with Virgin

Training our guide and assistance dogs to be comfortable in a range of situations is really important. We train our dogs on trains, buses and cars, but plane travel has always been a bit trickier.

This year we've teamed up with Virgin Australia to change that. The team at Virgin are allowing our dogs and their trainers on their planes every quarter to make sure they know how the plane works, the ins and outs of boarding and even experiencing some of the sounds and sensations of flying. It's a great partnership.







Fundraising & Events

Our incredible fundraising community enables us to support more people with blindness or low vision in South Australia.

Some of See Differently's marquee events for 2021-22 included our sold-out quiz night, Gala OPK9 Dinner and Wags Trail – Torrens Walk and Family Fun Day. As well as raising much needed funds, our events provided an opportunity for staff, volunteers, corporate partners, donors, and the public to come together, share experiences and have a good time!

Our third-party fundraisers also donated their time and expertise, hosting brunches and golf days, running marathons, holding market stalls and lots more, all in support of our programs.

Led by our successful direct mail-out campaigns, our fundraising efforts were up on the previous year. These fundraisers demonstrate how impactful our client's stories are and how generous the community is. Our philanthropy program also received several bequests, adding to our fundraising revenue, and again, demonstrating the incredible generosity of our supporters.



The Year at a Glance

2021



July

- Operation Unity commences – 365 days of walking for OPK9



August

- Year 9 student Abi raises \$1,000 for OPK9
- Perspectives – Technology sessions for clients
- Guide Dog Graduation – Congratulations class of 2020-21!

September

- Volunteer Thank You Awards and Luncheon



October

- OPK9 Gala Dinner at the South Australian Museum
- Wags Trail – Torrens Walk and Family Fun Day
- Amorini Golf Day
- Disability and Ageing Lifestyle Expo



November

- Guide and Assistance Dog Open Day at Gilles Plains



December

- Defence Teaming Centre Award Night Charity Partner
- Charlotte's Bingo Day

2022



March 2022

- See Differently OPK9 Graduation Ceremony



April 2022

- Jean's 80th Skydive for OPK9



May 2022

- Velvet and Cosi put the call out for volunteers!



June 2022

- Techfest returns bigger than ever
- The Big Quiz
- 2021-22 Guide Dog Graduation Ceremony – Well done all!



Treasurer's Report

See Differently's consolidated financial statements have been prepared in accordance with relevant Australian Accounting Standards, inclusive of Reduced Disclosure Requirements under AASB1053. Accounting firm, BDO, has audited these statements and a full set of accounts, including an unqualified audit report, will be tabled at the See Differently Annual General Meeting or made available on request.

The 2021-22 Treasurer's Report has been prepared to provide a concise summary of See Differently's consolidated financial results.

Operating Results

The operating surplus for 2021-22 was \$188,100 prior to the change in fair value of financial assets. The net deficit for the year is \$1.47m and compares to a net surplus of \$8.20m for the previous financial year. The prior year result was impacted by a revaluation of land and buildings.

Net Assets

The consolidated Net Assets of See Differently as at 30 June 2022 are \$38.11M compared to \$39.58M for the previous financial year. The decrease in Net Assets was due to the decline in market value of financial assets noted above, and the increase in Right of Use liabilities associated with the lease of the new Pirie St office following the sale of Knapman House.

Operations

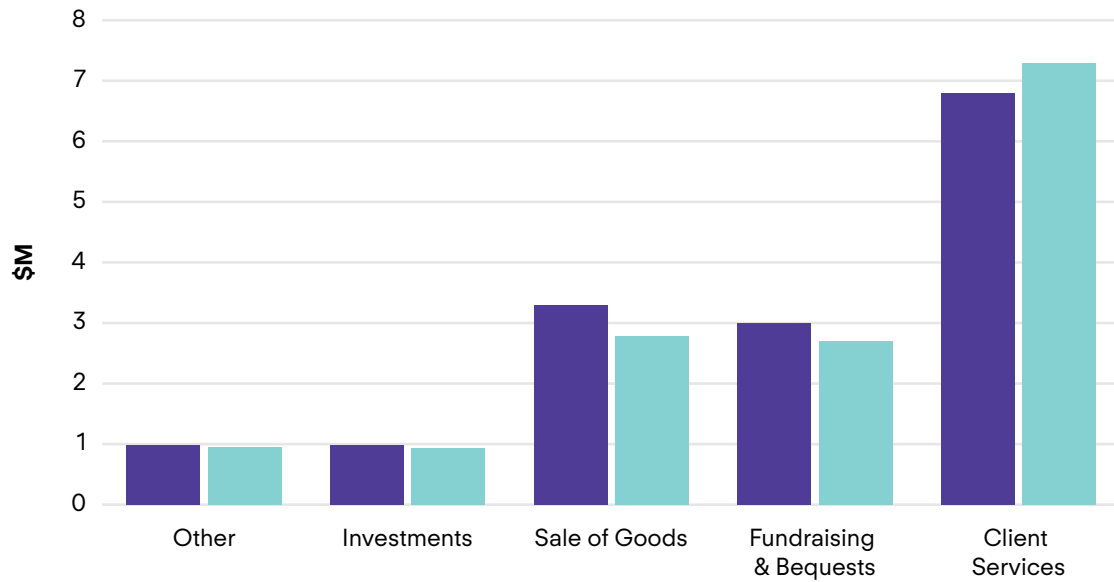
During 2021-22 See Differently continued to refine the operation of key divisions, with improvements in the quality and efficiency of services provided.

The Manufacturing and Packaging Division has continued to expand, with strong growth and new partnerships particularly in food packaging and as offshore markets improve for our clients' products. Our Guide and Assistance Dogs division has increased their revenue base with increased services for Assistance Dogs. The Therapy and Independent Living Team continues to expand to meet client demand, and our Employment Services team has grown to accommodate the School Leaver Employment Support Program. The Assistive Technology team continues to work closely with our international suppliers to ensure we provide clients with access to the latest relevant technology.

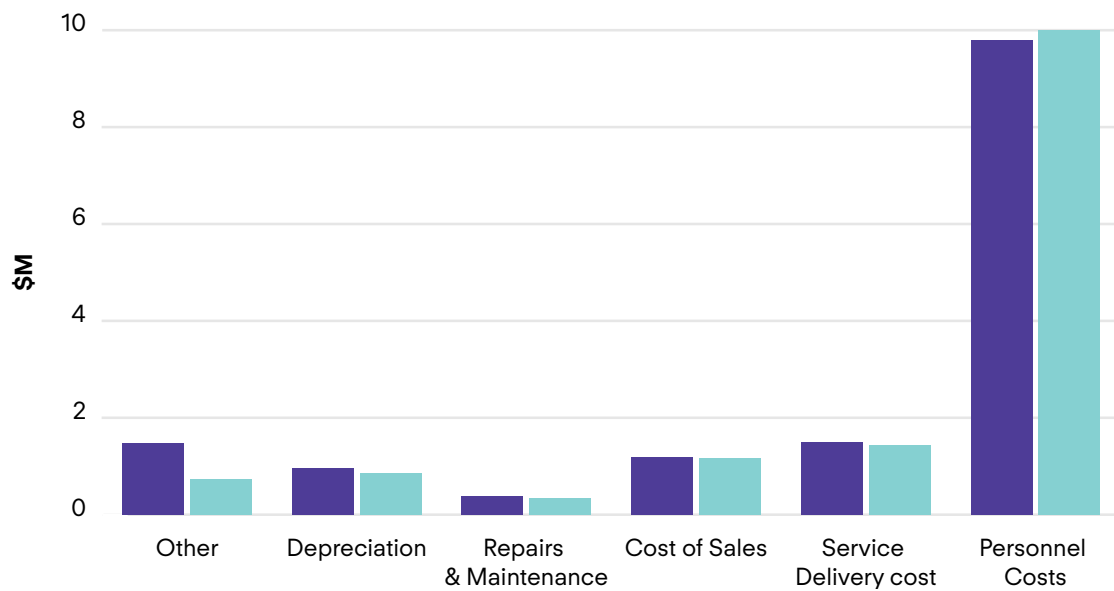
On behalf of the Board, I would particularly like to recognise the importance of benefactors, supporters, corporate partners, staff and government in assisting See Differently to remain the provider of choice for the blind and vision impaired community of South Australia.



Revenue from Ordinary Activity



Expenses from Ordinary Activity



FY22 FY21



**We walk side by
side with South
Australians with
low vision.**



Accreditation





1300 944 306

contact@SeeDifferently.org.au

SeeDifferently.org.au

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