



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024





# STRIVING TO CREATE IMPACT

Australian Lions Hearing Dogs provide essential support, from alerting to sounds and scents, to retrieving items, to redirecting anxious behaviour. However, beyond their practical skills, they also bring confidence, companionship, and a renewed sense of freedom to recipients in need.

For many Australians facing physical, emotional, or cognitive challenges, an Assistance Dog is more than just a helper, they are a gift of independence.

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**More than a  
helper, a gift of  
freedom.**

# HOW WE ASSIST

**In over 40 years, Australian Lions Hearing Dogs (ALHD) has gifted more than 700 Australians their life-changing Assistance Dog. This is just the beginning.**

This program is made possible by the unwavering support of our generous donors, dedicated supporters, and Lions Clubs across Australia.

Australian Lions Hearing Dogs traces its roots back to 1980, when PDG Bob Allen and PDG Brian Carter, both proud Lions members, were introduced to the International Hearing Dogs program during a Lions Convention in the United States.

Inspired by this vision, they brought the concept to Australia, gaining support from Lions Clubs across Australia and the Lions Clubs International Foundation, which endorsed the establishment of Australian Lions Hearing Dogs.

Today, our services are more important than ever. We aim to serve a broad range of individuals using the skills and knowledge formed throughout our rich history. Whether it be someone who is Deaf or hard of hearing, an individual living with type 1 diabetes, or a returned serviceman or woman living with PTSD,

**we are committed to  
changing lives through  
the provision of  
professionally trained  
Assistance Dogs.**



# OUR PATRON

## Mr Rod Buntten

### **The Australian Lions Hearing Dogs received a very welcome present just before Christmas.**

Maple, a Border Terrier, gave birth to her first litter of seven gorgeous, health puppies – Rex, Clive, Bobby, Kayla, Ricki, and Pappy.

These energetic puppies spent their first few weeks learning the ropes from mum and the Australia Lions Hearing Dogs breeding staff.

These puppies didn't know they were destined to do remarkable things. They were just learning to explore their new world, play with their brothers and sisters and be guided by Maple who taught them puppy manners as only a caring mother can.

Now they are exploring a wider world, having been placed with loving volunteers who will assist in the journey to becoming life-changing assistance dogs.

And that's the story of Australian Lions Hearing Dogs - the wonderful support staff alongside dedicated volunteers who enable these dogs to become the ears and companions of people living with hearing impairment.

Maple's pups were among the 35 puppies welcomed into the world through the puppy breeding program last year. Across Australia there are now 153 active assistance dogs. Alongside that 28 puppies entered the training program.

Australian Lions Hearing Dogs continues to evolve because the need is great. Four medical alert dogs and the first psychiatric assistant dog were placed this year with those who need them.

In its newest venture, the organisation is now a chosen provider of psychiatric assistance dogs for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under this program assistance dogs will provide safety, companionship, and a sense of security to veterans or their dependants living with post-traumatic stress disorder. To that end, four psychiatric dogs were in training in early 2025.



To compliment this growth, the new National Training Centre project will be making big steps towards the redevelopment taking place this year. The project will see the Australian Lions Hearing Dogs Training Centre become one of the largest assistance dog organisations in Australia and the Southern Hemisphere, and it will be in the Adelaide Hills of South Australia.

Of course, demand on Australian Lions Hearing Dogs is continues to grow. Applications last year were more than could be accommodated. Alongside the staff and volunteers, the generous supporters and donors ensure that as much as possible, people can find help and companionship through these amazing assistance dogs.

Currently, more than 400,000 Australians are suffering from severe or profound hearing loss and about 350 children are born with permanent hearing loss each year.

I thank everyone who makes up the Australian Lions Hearing Dog family. Your support is very much appreciated.

*Rod Bunten*

**Government House  
ADELAIDE**



# CHAIR'S REPORT



**Australian Lions Hearing Dogs (ALHD) was initially founded in 1980 when the program was voted on and passed by delegates during the Lions Multiple District Convention held in Canberra.**

With funds raised by Clubs across Australia and a grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), our Training Centre in Verdun was purchased, and the first Australian Lions Hearing Dog, Amber, was delivered in 1982. Since then, over 700 Hearing Assistance Dogs have been placed Australia-wide, at no cost to the recipient.

In 2020, we developed our Medical Alert Dog Program and successfully delivered our first Diabetic Alert Dog under this program that has continued to expand with 4 placements made in 2024.

During 2024, we secured a long term contract with the Department of Veteran Affairs to train and deliver Psychiatric Assistance Dogs on their behalf. Several recipients have been identified, and training and delivery of these Assistance Dogs will commence in 2025.

An onsite veterinary clinic, to look after the welfare of our Assistance Dogs, was also established in 2024. This will considerably

reduce the cost of caring for our dogs and in due course will generate additional income from clients.

We managed to place 34 Assistance Dogs during 2024:

29 Hearing Assistance Dogs, 4 Diabetic Alert Dogs, and 1 Psychiatric Assistance Dog.

35 puppies were born within our breeding program. All of our active Assistance Dogs require regular public access tests which are performed by the staff to ensure that they still meet the high standards required of all Assistance Dogs.

Our training centre at Verdun currently has limitations and we have reached the maximum capacity for the number of dogs that can be trained.

Plans for redevelopment of the site have been approved by the local council however fundraising for the upgrade of the centre has been slow due to a number of factors, and we



are still in the process of seeking grants to complete the redevelopment. We have sufficient reserve funds to complete stage one which we hope to commence this year. Once completed, we will have a state-of-the-art facility which will allow us to train over 100 Assistance Dogs per annum and provide adequate working facilities for all of our current staff as well as additional staff that will be required in due course.

Arrangements will be made to ensure that we are able to continue to operate, train and place our dogs during the course of construction.

Recent years has also seen further development of a number our programs:

- The Volunteer program sees our band of enthusiastic volunteers working with our staff and dogs in training. We would not be able to provide the level of service we do without their assistance and we are truly grateful for their ongoing support.

- Our Puppy program is very successful, where puppies are fostered with local volunteers until they are mature enough to start regular training.

The outlook for 2025 onwards is positive with the ongoing success of the program being attributed to the commitment and passion of all of our staff, our volunteers, the Board of Directors and of course the Lions Clubs of Australia. We are grateful to them all for their continued commitment to improving the program.

Yours sincerely,



PDG Norm Alcock  
Chairperson





# CEO'S REPORT

**Over the last several years, Australian Lions Hearing Dogs has grown from strength to strength, and 2024 continued this tradition.**

For more than 40 years, ALHD has provided Hearing Assistance Dogs free of charge, and this milestone only cements the organisation's important role not just in the Assistance Dog industry but in the community that depends on the service of our quality-trained dogs.

2024 also marked the next phase in ALHD's growth, with the start of a partnership with the Department of Veteran Affairs to provide Psychiatric Assistance Dogs to those who have served our country. The varieties of breeds that ALHD offers, means a more customised offering to servicemen and women. The first Psychiatric Assistance Dog placement will occur in early 2025.

Our Diabetic Alert Dog program continues, with four more placements in 2024. This year, we extended our services outside of South Australia for

the first time with great success.

Demand for the program remains steady and the program continues to develop.

An important part of our program is the supply of quality dogs who will be future Assistance Dogs. Our breeding program welcomed a record number of puppies into our program and included the first litter of Border Terriers, who entered the training program at the end of the year. Ensuring that our puppies have the best start to their lives is our dedicated Puppy Socialisation team, who support our volunteer carers as they guide our young pups through the trials and



**A highlight of  
the year was the  
placement of our 700<sup>th</sup>  
Hearing Assistance  
Dog, Yannis.**



tribulations of growing up. The areas that we drew our volunteers from this year extended beyond the Adelaide metropolitan area to include the South-East of South Australia, with plans to include the Riverland in coming years.

Progress was made on our Training Centre redevelopment which inches ever closer to breaking ground. Expectation is that will occur prior to the end of 2025.

The strength of Australian Lions Hearing Dogs is the team of dedicated professional staff who make what we do a possibility. From our Training, Breeding, Fundraising, Client Services, Puppy, Admin and Kennel Teams, everyone at the Training Centre plays their part and puts in a huge effort to get each and every Assistance Dog we train to a person in need.

Yours sincerely,



CC David Horne  
Chief Executive Officer



**As we look towards 2025, I can't predict exactly where we will be, but I know we will follow the tradition of the past few years and it will only be a positive result.**







Yannis was born just before Christmas 2022 amongst a litter of five and was sponsored and lovingly named by the Lions Club of South Vermont Inc. He was delivered to his recipient in April 2024, just in time for National Hearing Dog Day celebrations. With the hard work and dedication from the Lions Club of Southport, who supported through the follow up program, Yannis' placement was a success and he continues to provide life-changing support and companionship to this day.



# 2024 SNAPSHOTS



## JEM

### Hearing Assistance Dog

Delivered to Western Australia in December 2024

## AIRLIE

### Medical Alert Dog

Delivered to Victoria in April 2024



## SIMBA

### Psychiatric Assistance Dog

Delivered to South Australia in June 2024



## SHERBET

### Hearing Assistance Dog-In-Training

Joined the Puppy Program in February 2024





# OUR IMPACT



In 2024, together with our partners, volunteers, and supporters, our team achieved:



65

Applications for an Assistance Dog received.



34

Assistance Dogs delivered.



The inception of our Psychiatric Assistance Dog program.

## PSYCHIATRIC ASSISTANCE DOG PROGRAM

Through this program, we will provide Assistance Dogs to Veterans of the Australian Defence Force who have a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The program aims to utilise the skills harnessed in our Assistance Dog team and across the organisation over many years of service provision, providing crucial support to Veterans in need.





## OUR DOGS

153

Active Assistance  
Dogs all over  
Australia.

35

New puppies were  
welcomed into our  
world through our  
breeding program.

28

Puppies entered the  
training program and  
matched with their  
Trainer.

## OUR PEOPLE

19

PERMANENT  
STAFF

108

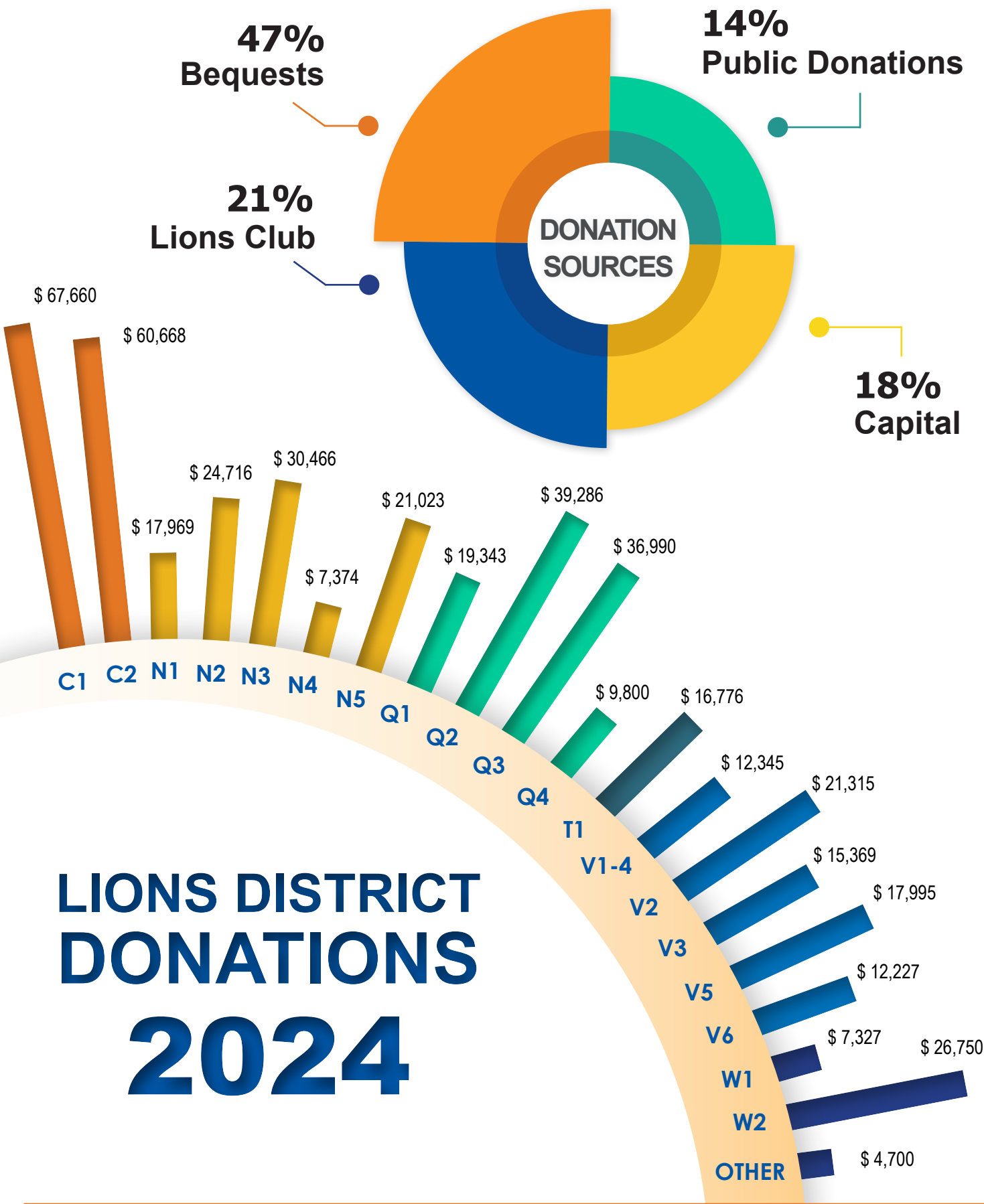
ACTIVE  
VOLUNTEERS

344k

VOLUNTEER  
HOURS



# DONATIONS & LIONS SUPPORT





# FINANCIAL REPORT

2023		2024
	<b>OPERATING INCOME</b>	
\$ 569,926	Donations - Lions Clubs	\$493,518
\$ 443,106	Donations - General Public	\$335,670
\$246,906	Donations - Capital Campaign	\$406,444
\$393,548	Donations - Bequests	\$1,085,535
\$ 0	Professional Services	\$57,871
\$12,186	Profit - Merchandise Sales	\$24,776
\$308,609	Other	\$14,304
<b>\$1,974,281</b>	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$2,418,118</b>
	<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	
\$1,164,985	Staff Expenses	\$1,355,784
\$633,839	Other Operating Expenses	\$741,581
<b>\$1,798,824</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,097,365</b>
<b>\$175,457</b>	<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>\$320,753</b>



# BOARD & GOVERNANCE

Our Patron, Board, and District Chairpersons provide continuous oversight and guidance of the strategic and operational development of Australian Lions Hearing Dogs.

## *Patron*

Mr Rod Bunten

## *MANAGEMENT BOARD*

PDG Norm Alcock

**Chairperson**

Lion Dr. Scott Pedler

**Deputy Chairperson**

PDG Megan Butler

**Treasurer**

2VDG Margie Thomas

**C Districts Coordinator**

Lion Sari-Elle Kraemer

**N Districts Coordinator**

Lion John Holliday

**Q Districts Coordinator**

Lion Geoff Clow

**T Districts Coordinator**

2VDG Maria Baade

**V Districts Coordinator**

PDG Alan Hawkins

**W Districts Coordinator**

## *DISTRICT CHAIRPERSONS*

**C1** Lion Vanessa Malycha

**C2** Lion Debra Gabel

**N1** PDG Kevin Thornton

**N2** Lion Richard Vanderbom

**N3** Lion Renae Terrell

**N4** PDG Bob Smith

**N5** Lion Jason Li

**Q1** Lion Jenny Rainbird

**Q2** Lion John Holliday

**Q3** Lion Cheryl Orton

**Q4** Lion Juanita Goodland

**T1** Lion Geoff Clow

**V1-4** Lion Gita Khatri

**V2** 2VDG Maria Baade

**V3** Lion Flynn Collier

**V5** Lion Glenys Needham

**V6** Lion Robyn Harrison

**WA** PDG Alan Hawkins



# RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

Thank you to our team of volunteers and staff that dedicate their time to the day-to-day operations of our Assistance Dog service delivery.

A special mention to the following people on their significant milestones:

## PUPPY CARERS

### 3 Puppies

Lenara Scandrett and Daniel Pople  
Simon and Lyn Sickerdick  
Mary-Jane and James Quinn  
David and Melissa Horne  
Nicole Goethals  
Provis Family  
Gordon and Jacqui McLean

### 4 Puppies

Amanda Kearton  
Veronica Seedhouse

## STAFF

### 5 years or more

Dayna Hill  
Nick Liemandt

### 10 years or more

David Horne  
Jodie Snudden  
Luiza Ziembicki

### 5 Puppies

Steve and Belinda Trigg

### 6 Puppies

Denis and Meg Haseldine  
Paul and Leonie Bok

### 8 Puppies

Bronte Cameron

### 20 years or more

Belinda Henschke  
Darren Coldwell  
Mary Knight

## VOLUNTEERS

### 100 hours+

Hannah Whittaker  
Helen Westermann  
Jane Kuchel  
Margaret Fort  
Sarah Lang  
Shannon McCune  
Tamara Lane

### 300 hours+

Christine Martin

## LIONS VOLUNTEERS

In 2024, Lions volunteers contributed 1,224 hours supporting each Lions Assistance Dog placement Australia-wide. Our program is only made possible with the financial and hands-on support from each Lions Club and their members.



# PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous supporters and partners for their commitment to helping us provide Assistance Dogs to the many people we exist to serve.

Whether their support provides services to Australian Lions Hearing Dogs, gift-in-kind, or financial, it is with their kindness and contribution that our Assistance Dogs can continue to be provided, free of charge.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



## **Australian Lions Hearing Dogs**

2024 Annual Report

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