

## CAREER INFORMATION SHEET

### GUIDE DOG TRAINER

Guide Dog Trainers are responsible for the assessment and training of guide dogs for people who are blind or vision impaired. Guide Dog Trainers ensure that guide dogs are ready to be matched to a client, under the supervision of a guide dog instructor. Guide Dog Trainers will also work in associated fields of guide dog training such as puppy development, breeding and kennels.

Guide Dog Trainers are trained through a cadetship program which complies with the standards of the International Guide Dog Federation. This is a worldwide organisation that promotes goodwill, information sharing and uniformity of standards among guide dog organisations.

#### **Cadet Guide Dog Training Program**

Cadetships are offered according to staffing needs and opportunity. Guide Dog Trainer cadetships are normally offered over a period of 18 – 24 months, comprising of practical and theoretical tuition.

#### **Practical component**

The main areas of practical training include temperamental assessment, guide dog training, canine husbandry, canine development and behaviour, puppy raising and breeding.

The Cadet Guide Dog Trainer begins by working under supervision with their own group of assessed dogs over a period of 6 months to produce fully trained guide dogs. With each successive group of dogs, the Cadet Guide Dog Trainer is required to demonstrate more independence in training their dogs to completion. It is required that no less than 12 guide dogs be trained, both under supervision and independently.

#### **Theoretical component**

Theoretical subjects are tested by written and practical examination, and can include topics such as:

- Canine anatomy and husbandry
- Canine/human interaction
- Guide dog history
- Basic breeding and genetics
- Guide dog training methodology
- Legal aspects of guide dog mobility
- Public relations

### **General requirements**

- Successful completion of year 12 is preferable
- Additional qualifications in relevant fields will be taken into consideration, ie vet nursing, kennel experience
- A current driver's license is essential
- A high level of respect and affection for animals, particularly dogs.
- Personal qualities of patience, tolerance and flexibility.
- The ability to work well within a team.
- Good communication skills.
- Good level of physical fitness and ability to walk 10km daily at a moderate to fast pace.

### **Employment opportunities**

Guide Dog Trainers are employed by Guide Dog organisations throughout the world. And while we encourage interested applicants with suitable qualifications to enter the guide dog field, it is important to be honest about the career path.

***Opportunities to gain entry to this role are very limited.*** Competition is always high and often positions are filled from within the organisation. The Guide Dog Trainer role is unique, with a very small turnover of staff and vacancies are rare.