



# **SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT**

1 June 2017- 1 June 2018

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# WHAT IS DIALOGUE IN THE DARK?

And what's the story so far?

01 / 06

**Dialogue in the Dark (D.I.D) is a sensory exhibition set in total darkness, designed to enlighten the public and raise awareness of low vision and blindness.**

Participants wander through a simulation of famous Melbourne settings in complete darkness.

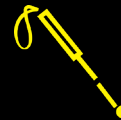
Founded in 1988, the Dialogue in the Dark exhibition has toured major cities around the world. The Melbourne edition is designed to replicate a person with low vision's experience in travelling our city.

Each experience is facilitated by a skilled guide with low vision or blindness and includes a candid Q&A session on conclusion.

Here's a quick snapshot of Dialogue in the Dark's achievements, both in Melbourne and around the globe:



**11,000+** VISITORS SINCE OPENING IN MELBOURNE



**20+** EMPLOYEES WITH LOW VISION OR BLINDNESS



**20** EXHIBITIONS CURRENTLY RUNNING



**489** VISUALLY IMPAIRED EMPLOYEES GLOBALLY



CONCEPT BASED ON **29** YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN MORE THAN **40** COUNTRIES



**500,000** VISITORS GLOBALLY

# WHAT IMPACT IS DIALOGUE CREATING?

What did the experience mean for visitors? How has the exhibition been received in general?

02 / 06

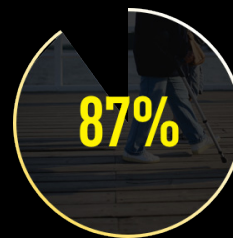
## Dialogue in the Dark seeks to inform and improve society's understanding of people with disability.

The exhibition is an experience to remember, share, and discuss. It's about sparking a greater social dialogue around blindness and low vision.

To measure the exhibition's impact, each participant is encouraged to complete a short survey before and after their experience.

The surveys are designed to record people's change in perception immediately after participating in Dialogue in the Dark. All the insights you're about to view were informed by the responses to these two surveys.

General public perceptions:



**87%**  
OF VISITORS **STRONGLY AGREE**  
'DIALOGUE' IS IMPORTANT FOR  
VICTORIA



**NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS)**

A 2018 INDUSTRY REPORT SHOWS  
THE BENCHMARK NPS FOR CHARITIES  
IS 27 – **DIALOGUE FAR SURPASSES**  
**INDUSTRY AVERAGES**



**97%**  
OF VISITORS **ARE COMMITTED TO**  
TELLING SOMEONE  
ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE.

People are talking.

**“A WONDERFUL, UNIQUE,  
TOUCHING EXPERIENCE  
THAT WILL ALWAYS BE  
REMEMBERED.”**

- Marion

**“I LEFT THERE FEELING  
SO DIFFERENT. I HAVE  
THE UTMOST RESPECT  
FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE  
BLIND.”**

- Gale

**“SUCH A HUMBLING AND  
INFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE.  
SOMETHING EVERYONE  
SHOULD TRY!”**

- Jeremy



**PERFECT 5-STAR RATINGS ON TRIP  
ADVISOR, FACEBOOK AND TICKETMASTER**

# CREATING CHANGE IN AWARENESS

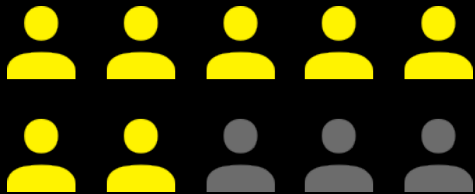
Did the experience reduce uncertainty and ignorance around issues that affect people who are blind or have vision loss?

03 / 06



**Before their visit, seven-out-of-ten participants didn't know any person with blindness or low vision.**

Dialogue had a significant effect on these people. Every visitor sits down to speak with their guide—a person with low vision—and can ask questions to expand awareness of the reality of living with low vision or blindness.



7/10 people didn't know a person with blindness prior to Dialogue

**“DIALOGUE MADE US VERY AWARE OF WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE BLIND.**

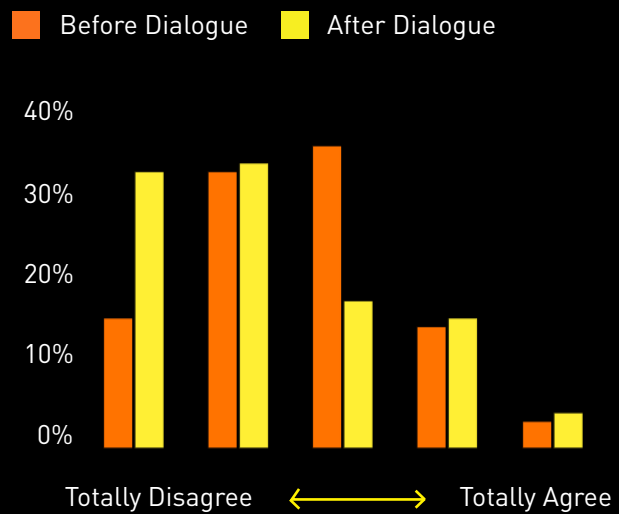
Now I realise why having a guide dog can make such a difference in a person's life.”

- Phillip

**When presented with the statement — “if a person who is blind doesn’t ask for help, it’s probably because they are too shy”, 35% of visitors weren’t sure whether they agreed or disagreed.**

Following Dialogue, however, these uncertain responses dropped by half, and strong disagreement with the statement doubled. From this, we can see visitors leaving with a greater appreciation for the independence of people with vision-loss and blindness, and their desire to have that independence recognised.

**AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT: “IF A PERSON WHO IS BLIND DOESN’T ASK FOR HELP, IT’S PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO SHY”**



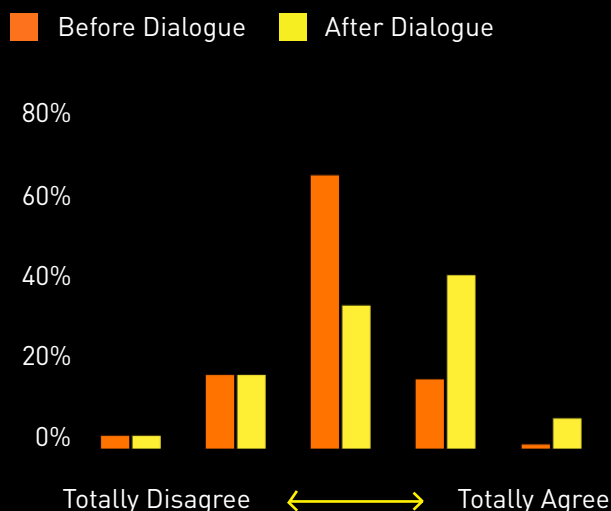
**Before ‘Dialogue’,  
63% of visitors  
weren’t sure whether  
Melbourne effectively  
accommodated people  
with low vision or  
blindness.**

Dialogue successfully reduced uncertainty around this issue. The number of visitors responding to the question with ‘not sure’ dropped by 47% after Dialogue.

Surveys also recorded a lift in agreement that Melbourne caters well for people who are blind.

It’s worth noting this lift came in ‘somewhat agree’ rather than ‘totally agree’ –perhaps indicating visitors feel more can be done around the issue of accessibility in urban planning.

**AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT:  
“MELBOURNE IS A CITY THAT CATERS  
WELL FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND”**



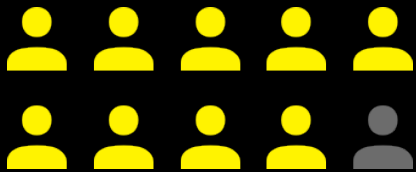
# CREATING CHANGE IN UNDERSTANDING

How did Dialogue affect visitor empathy for people with low vision or blindness? Are they more attuned to a person with blindness' experience?

04 / 06

**Nine-out-of-ten visitors—more than 10,000 people—agree it greatly improved their understanding of people with blindness.**

Less than 1% of visitors said the experience had no effect on them whatsoever.



9/10 of all visitors to Dialogue in the Dark—or nearly 10,000 people—agree it greatly improved their understanding of people with blindness.

**“A RANGE OF EMOTIONS FOLLOWED ME THROUGHOUT MY JOURNEY...**

“...thanks for allowing this opportunity to see as a blind person does..”

- Rachael

## Measures of emotion were used to assess the ways and degree to which Dialogue influenced empathy.

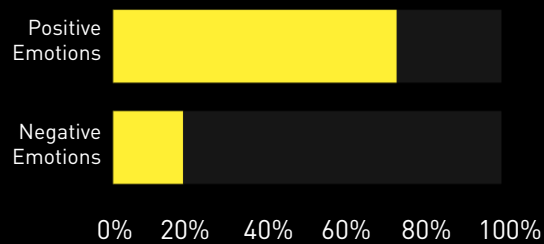
Following Dialogue, visitors were presented with a list of 20 emotions. 10 of these were positive in nature—such as excitement and attentiveness. The other 10 were negative—for example, shame and fear.

Visitors indicated the degree they felt each emotion during the Dialogue experience, ranging from 'not at all' to 'extremely'. The aim? Understand how visitors interpret the experience of being blind, and whether they feel it reflects a sense of control or, conversely, powerlessness.

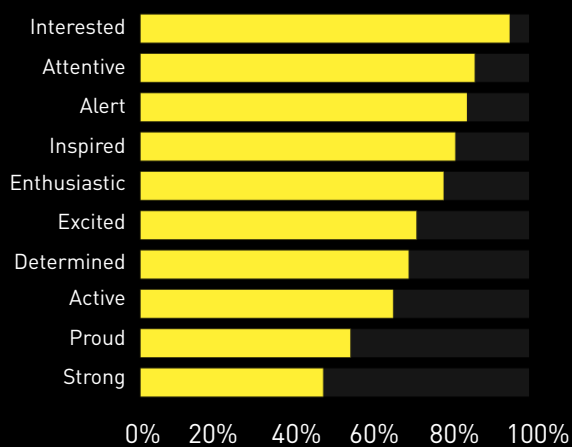
More visitors characterised their experience of Dialogue using positive, rather than negative, emotions: the most intense being 'interested', 'attentive' and 'alert'. Interpreting Dialogue in this positive way means visitors can better understand people who are blind, without necessarily viewing them as victims or suffering through circumstance.

### EMOTIONS FELT DURING THE EXPERIENCE

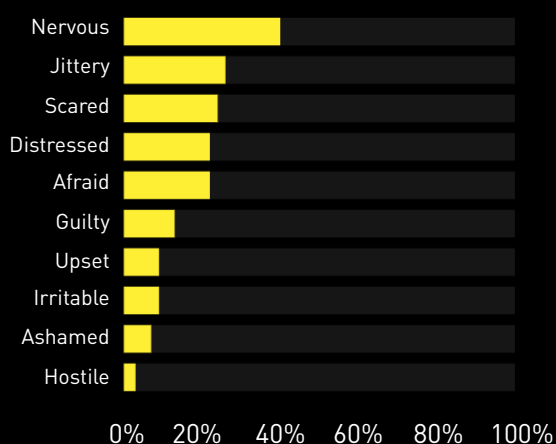
#### Overview



#### Positive



#### Negative



# CREATING CHANGE IN ATTITUDES

How did the experience change people's feelings, assumptions or behaviours relating to people with blindness or low vision? Are they more likely to interact with people with low vision in ways that are respectful and inclusive?

05 / 06

**Almost all visitors—more than 99%—agree the exhibition helps change attitudes toward people who are blind.**

Before ‘Dialogue’, nearly half of all visitors agreed they felt sorry for people with blindness to some degree.

After the ‘Dialogue’ experience, these feelings shifted drastically.

After replicating a person with low vision’s experience in Dialogue, 50% more people disagreed with the statement ‘I feel sorry for people who are blind’.

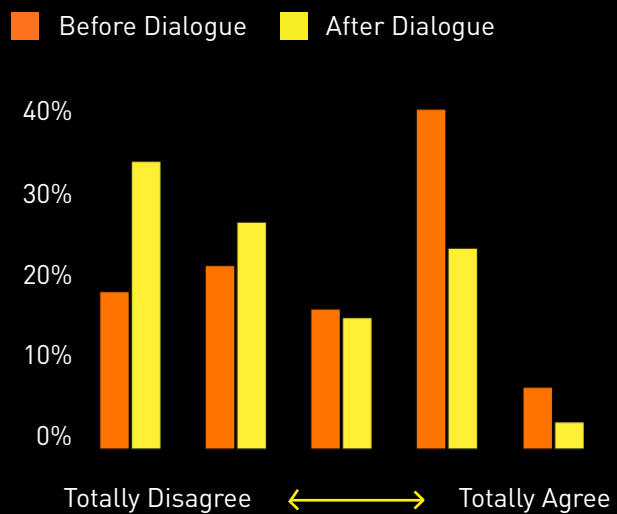
This is an excellent result! Pity implies a person is lacking, and casts them in the role of ‘victim’. It alienates people by isolating them from the majority.

Reduced attitudes of pity towards people with blindness represents a step to improved social integration.

**AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT: “DIALOGUE CAN HELP IMPROVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND”**



**AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT: “I FEEL SORRY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND”**





**Following Dialogue and the positive attitude shifts it created, 9 out of 10 people agreed they were more open to relationships with people who are blind as a result.**

This result, perhaps more than any other, speaks to the value of the Dialogue in the Dark exhibition. By removing barriers in understanding and comfort, it helps create opportunity for better inclusion and social integration for people with low vision and blindness.

**AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT: "I AM NOW MORE OPEN TO A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PERSON WHO IS BLIND"**



AGREE 89%

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Any dialogue, by definition, hinges on the concept of exchange: the trading of ideas, thoughts, and perceptions.

Based on these findings, Dialogue in the Dark is no different: trading unfamiliarity for awareness, exchanging indifference for inclusion, and replacing misunderstanding with empathy and compassion on issues of blindness and low vision.