

8 June 2018

Wicking Trust managed by Equity Trustees supports Vision Australia's digital transformation with \$4.4m over four years

One of Australia's most significant charitable trusts, the Wicking Trust managed by Equity Trustees, has committed \$4.4m over four years to support a Digital Transformation initiative at Vision Australia.

The life changing potential of digital technologies on people who are blind or have low vision is the focus of discussion at the Open Day at Vision Australia's Wicking Centre today (8 June) where the latest technology, devices and facilities will be on display.

Equity Trustees' Managing Director, Mick O'Brien and members of the Equity Trustees Philanthropy team responsible for managing the Wicking Trust join Their Excellencies Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) and Lady Cosgrove, Member for Higgins, the Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP and City of Stonnington Mayor, Cr Steve Stefanopoulos at the Open Day.

"Equity Trustees is proud to manage the legacy of John and Janet Wicking, who together were successful, active, generous people. They left behind the J.O. & J.R. Wicking Trust and entrusted Equity Trustees to manage their legacy in perpetuity," said Mr O'Brien.

The [Wicking Trust](#) was established in 2002 from the Will of John Wicking and now distributes more than \$4 million annually in grants.

John Wicking began his lifetime connection with Vision Australia in 1961 (then called the Association for the Blind) when he volunteered to help with fundraising. The commitment lived on after he passed away through instructions in his Will to provide ongoing funds.

"Part of the digital transformation of Vision Australia included an earlier philanthropic grant from the Wicking Trust to begin digitising its 'talking' library. Around 30,000 books are now available for download, and more are being added every year making them more accessible to more people who are blind or have low vision," explained Jodi Kennedy, General Manager, Charitable Trusts and Philanthropy, Equity Trustees.

"This latest project grant will assist Vision Australia to implement a digital transformation program to co-design more innovative products and services with their clients, and empower staff to deliver superior customer service," she said.

It will include the introduction of new digital platforms and tools, and create communities that connect clients with support. This work builds on previous initiatives which were also supported by the Wicking Trust, including the i-access® program (library content, playback capabilities and IT infrastructure), the Adult Services Model project which enabled the development of a 'person-centred' delivery model in readiness for the NDIS, and the Enterprise Architecture Project which delivered new systems and infrastructure that emphasise accessibility, mobility and the delivery of personalised services for clients.

Media Release



“The Wicking’s had the foresight to see that they could empower change well beyond their lifetimes – this funding for the Vision Australia digital transformation project is probably not something they could fully imagine in their lifetimes, and yet they have made it happen,” said Mr O’Brien.

“Our role as trustee is to make sure their philanthropic vision lives on, making a real difference and empowering change. [Equity Trustees](#) sees our role managing the Wicking Trust, and promoting the work it supports, as a real privilege,” he concluded.

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