



The high cost of not keeping warm

We all complain about the cost of electricity and gas. However, as winter draws on the impact of trying to keep warm means many people with a disability will have to go without, especially if they are at home all day.

It is unbelievable that more people die from the cold in Australia than in Sweden. Research from medical journal The Lancet revealed that the cold contributed to about 3.7% of deaths in Sweden compared to 6.7% in Australia. The constant exposure to low temperatures increases blood pressure and the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Australian houses are designed to keep cool rather than warm (some homes aren't good either way). The trouble is that if you are on a fixed pension it is difficult to find the extra money required to maintain a comfortable temperature during the winter months.

Listed below are some useful tips on how to reduce your energy bills:

- Use the sun for free heat, open the curtains on your north-facing windows during winter days to bring free heat into your home. Close your window coverings when the sun goes down to keep the heat inside.
- Rug up, this is one of the easiest ways to save on your heating bill. Instead of turning the heat up, put on an extra layer. Keep throw blankets on your couch, and add a rug to insulate the floor.
- Use ceiling fans to your advantage. Homes that have better ventilation and airflow can be more energy efficient in the summer and winter months. Ceiling fans can be used to achieve better airflow: counter-clockwise will push hot air up in the summer and clockwise will trap heat inside to keep your rooms warmer during colder months. Turn your ceiling fan on a low setting to gently push hot air back down.
- Adjust the thermostat at night, you can save about 10 per cent per year on your heating bills by turning your thermostat down 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours. Consider investing in flannel sheets or blanket.
- Only heat the rooms you use. If you have rooms that you never use close and seal off the vents to be more energy efficient and direct the flow of air to the rooms you use most.

It's an important reminder that keeping your home warm in winter is not just for comfort but is for your health's sake too.

David's story



Vision loss inevitably results in lifestyle changes for the person affected and has a significant impact on the lives of family members and friends.

Each person's story and how they managed with their loss of vision is different. This is David's.

David, an IDS client since 2016, believes his earliest memories are typical of any kid growing up in country Victoria, plenty of freedom and fresh air – "Much more than the kids of today". His father ran a concreting business, second generation and was part of an extended family. There was plenty of comings and goings in the family home with neighbours, family friends and customers calling in.

David was born with a sight problem, by the time he was six he had undergone surgery to remove cataracts in his right eye. However, David's sight continued to deteriorate to such an extent that the local school felt they were

unable to cater for his "special needs." "This was after all the early seventies, and people with a disability were not afforded the level of individual support they receive today.

The decision was made to send David to a "special school for the blind". Unfortunately, the best one available was in Burwood, a mere 550 kilometres from David's hometown of Mildura. The move meant David had to board during school term going home once every three weeks for a weekend and school holidays. "For the first two and a half years Mum used to catch the train down on Thursday and return with me on Monday, nearly four full days of travel".

"Because I did not know anyone who had profound sight loss and I was in a new environment where I faced many challenges, I was very disorientated as I tried to figure out what was happening in my life".

"There was a string of failures, just doing ordinary activities overwhelmed me. The focus at school was to teach life skills, the things that most people take for granted with a transition to let your hands be your eyes. I knew I needed to use my hands and fingers combined with my other senses."

Peter Evans, the school principal is someone David remembers with fondness. "He made a significant impact on my life during my schooling. To give you an example Peter arranged for me to fly up to my parents, instead of catching the train, putting everything in place from transport to Tullamarine right through to the flights, as you can imagine my Mum was delighted".

About the same time as David left school, his parents sold their property in Mildura and moved down to Warrnambool. David in turn moved into a Boarding House run by Villa Maria and took up employment with the Royal Victorian Institute For the Blind (RVIB).

The RVIB was known for the excellence of the products from its factories – especially its mats, baskets and brooms. It was here David worked. He takes great pride in the fact he was part of Melbourne's history and continued to work at RVIB for nearly 20 years until 2005. Working through the transition from RVIB to Vision Australia.

The factory was to cease business in 2014. During this time David worked in many different areas including making furniture and household items. However, it was his time working "on the mats" he enjoyed the most. "Interesting times and interesting characters" recalls David. In particular, Martin Stuart who was heavily involved in working to improve the wages and conditions of the staff. "If it wasn't for Martin's work the factory would have closed much earlier than it actually did" says David.

Following the closure of the RVIB factory David moved to Warrnambool, however, he felt stifled by the lack of opportunity and limited outlets. It was not too long before he was looking to return to Melbourne. This was his introduction to IDS.

The IDS team worked with David and Housing Choices to find an apartment. David now lives in a modern complex in the centre of Melbourne. We continue to provide support staff, assisting with community engagement and meal preparation. David has nothing but praise for our team, acknowledging they have a difficult job. "However, they always leave me with a smile on my face".

Work has always been important to David; he currently works two days a week at Brights in Craigieburn and two/three days a week selling the Big Issue in Bourke Street. I love the fact I can determine how much I do and the independence a few dollars in my pocket makes to my life.

David is about to be the father of the groom. His son Christopher is a regular visitor catching up at least once a week. "Someone who is blind can still do all the same things someone with sight does. The only difference is how they do it. This has been a good year will soon become even better" were his parting comments to me.



Invictus games coming to Sydney soon

From October 20 Australia will host more than 500 athletes from Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, the UK and the US.

The Games were created in 2014 by Prince Harry, who was inspired after he attended a similar event for wounded veterans in the United States a year earlier.

The Duke of Sussex saw the positive impact sport has on recovery and rehabilitation of wounded, injured and ill servicemen and women. The Invictus Games Foundation was established and in 2014. London hosted the inaugural Invictus Games, 400 competitors from 13 nations.

The second Invictus Games took place in May 2016 in America and built on the excitement of the London Games with more than 500 competitors from 15 nations. The Invictus Games will continue in 2017 in Toronto from 23 to 30 September before heading 'down under' to 11 adaptive sports and will recognise and thank families and friends for their role and the challenges they share in supporting our

Competitors will compete in a range of sports that include: athletics, archery, driving challenge, indoor rowing, powerlifting, road cycling/road para-cycling, swimming, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby and for the first time in Sydney, sailing will be added to the program.

Staying ahead of the pack



The team at IDS is dedicated to providing the highest level of support to our clients'. This is why we continually seek your feedback. It is important that you can make suggestions on how our services could be improved or can make a complaint without any fear of reprisal. Feedback (positive and negative) is always used to improve the services we provide.

We are committed to your wellbeing and work to ensure that:

- You are introduced to our staff who are going to provide support.
- Staff know what is expected of them and have the required skills, knowledge and qualifications to provide support that meets your needs, working with you towards achieving your goals.
- Staff treat you with dignity and respect. They develop trusting relationships with you and demonstrate concern for your wellbeing.
- You are always asked to give your consent to support in a way you understand. If appropriate and, if required your friends and family are also involved in decisions about how your support is provided.
- Staff know about your health needs and personal preferences and involve you in decisions about your support and treatment, giving you as much choice and control as possible.
- Your support requirements are set out in a written plan that you, and your family (where appropriate), are involved in developing this plan and it reflects your personal choices.
- Your plan is updated as your needs change.
- Staff providing support know about your background, likes, hopes and needs.
- You have access to advocates.
- Your concerns and complaints are taken seriously and where required investigated.

We are committed to our staff and work to ensure:

- They know what is expected of them and are provided with the information they need to support our clients as required.
- They are supported by their managers and are given the opportunity meet other staff members to share views and information.
- Staff have the confidence to report any concerns they have about colleagues, carers and other professionals involved in your support provision. When this happens they are supported and their concerns are thoroughly investigated.