Audio Sound Recording – **KAREN KNIGHT** – Move to Coorporoo 12th July 2010

Hello – my name is Karen Knight – I’m the regional manager for Queensland and Northern Territory for Independent Living Services at Vision Australia and I’ve been in this role for 3 years.

I’ve been blind since birth and my blindness was caused from a recessive gene condition called Lebers Congenital Amaurosis but I didn’t know that it was due to that condition until I was well into my 20’s. My parents were told it was just one of those things that happen.

I went to blind school and after school I went to university and became a psychologist. Through my life I’ve adapted very well to being blind. I was taught to learn braille when I started school at 5 years old and braille is a definite passion of mine. I learnt to do my maths at school on an abacus and I still have a picture of an abacus in my head when I am trying to work out my maths.

Life always has its challenges but there are plenty of ways to overcome a challenge and being determined certainly helps. I have studied at university and in my current job I use a programme called JAWS which speaks to me what is on the computer screen. This means I am able to read documents and emails and I can use a mobile phone that also talks to me. I can use it as a calendar and I can use it for text messaging.

There is a lot of little techniques that assist someone like me who is blind to live life independently. There is a gadget called a liquid level indicator so that when you pour a cup of tea you don’t burn your finger. It’s important to have things labelled and to put things back in the same place so things aren’t easily mixed up. There is also equipment such as a colour tester. Fortunately, I tell the colour of my clothes by the way they feel. I make sure that I buy things of different textures that assist me do that.

Vision Australia is about to move into a new era in service provision. We have built a new state of the art building at Coorporoo and we are all excited about the transition. This will help us have a state-wide headquarters where we can deliver services to people in a facility that is built for purpose. We have had a great time at Kent Street and we have loved being part of this precinct – but now we are moving into a new era and we are really happy about it.