



★★★★★ 20th June 2019

Dialogue in the Dark™ is a sensory journey set in total darkness. It's an incredible experience where you step out of your comfort zone and take on the challenges of a bustling,

simulated Melbourne in the dark. The skills acquired helped us overcome challenges and develop a new perspective: all in total darkness.

Only 5 of us took advantage of this amazing experience. We got "closer" together, both literally and figuratively, by the time our approximately one-hour tour was concluded. Not only did we bump and feel our groupmates often, but we also talked a lot.

Our tour began with a white cane to provide a sense of orientation and helps identify obstacles. Our tour guide (Russell) who is visually impaired showed amazing patience and humour, he knew exactly how to supervise and show us how to navigate the experience. Russell took us to Birrarung Marr, MCG, Victoria Market and an ATM. We crossed roads, tram lines and learnt about the Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs) the raised dots and directional parallel raised lines we would all have walked over. Dots – indicate safe road crossing points. Directional lines are for indicating direction path for travel.

During the journey we were challenged to use our hearing, smell and touch. We learnt to differentiate between the ground coverings (cobble stones, tan bark, grass etc); located a drink fountain and park bench, feel textures of plants, shops fronts, windows etc. Became aware of the tactile difference between rubbish bins (recycle/landfill using an ATM, crossing tram lines and roads. One way to hook a man - Rita managed to get her cane caught in Russell's shoe lace - hysterical, we all got a laugh!! When visiting the MCG we used our imagination when 'feeling' the bronze statue leg and football, a few ribald comments ensued.

Great outing and a BIG THANK YOU to the Deer Park Committee for organising it.
Marg Marden