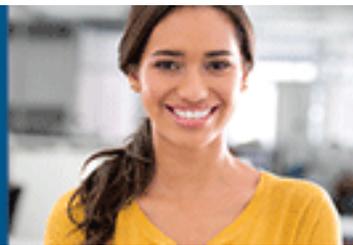




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Playing his own tune



Musician Phillip Chalker hasn't let the deterioration of his eyesight hinder his music career. The talented guitarist, who is legally blind, leads community music workshops in Victoria's Gippsland region, teaching

participants how to play the ukulele and sing.

“I have been singing and playing guitar since the age of 18 and started playing the ukulele in 2012,” says Phillip.

“As a legally blind performer I love the ukulele as it’s a small instrument which is very portable and easy to get around.”

The ukulele - rather than guitar - is also a plus when it comes to Phillip’s Seeing Eye Dog, Roddy, as it doesn’t obstruct his ability to communicate with his dog.

“With a guitar I don’t have a free hand to give my dog commands, however with the ukulele I can just fling it over my shoulder and off I go.”

Phillip says though the ukulele can be difficult to master, with the right support and encouragement the instrument can be learnt by people of all ages and abilities.

“If they are taught by someone who is blind it encourages them to learn because they think ‘if he can do it, we can’.”

Despite the success of Phillip’s workshops his musical journey hasn’t been without setback.

“I have been legally blind since the age of five and am currently tackling the impact of further significant deterioration of my eyesight,” says Phillip.

“I have had to identify, secure and learn new approaches that will work for me as a musician. I am determined to ensure that this does not permanently impact on my career and am currently building my skills as a performing and recording artist.”

Phillip is also a passionate disability advocate, campaigning for improved disability access in his region. He also volunteers with Community Music Victoria, encouraging people to form music groups in their area.

For more information on Philip and his workshops visit www.latrobemusic.com

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