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PRESS RELEASE

Hailo Co-Founder Named Ambassador for International Day of People with Disabilities



Santiago wearing a red polo shirt and blue jeans kneeling next to Trey, his black labrador Guide Dog at a Bus Stop in Brisbane

Brisbane, QLD – December 3, 2025 – Hailo Solutions proudly celebrates the International Day of People with Disabilities and congratulates its Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer, **Santiago Velasquez**, on being named one of six official ambassadors for Australia.

Santiago's story is one of resilience, innovation, and leadership. At age 12, he emigrated from Colombia to Australia after his parents recognized that his opportunities as a person with vision impairment would be far greater here than in his country of birth. Arriving without speaking a word of English, Santiago not only mastered the language but excelled academically and socially. By the end of Year 12, he had become **Vice Captain of his school** and completed the gruelling **100km Kokoda Challenge**.



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Earlier this year, Santiago graduated from Queensland University of Technology as the **first blind electrical engineer in the Southern Hemisphere**, a milestone that underscores his determination to break barriers. His lived experience inspired him to invent a solution to a challenge faced by many people with disabilities: accessing public transport safely and confidently. That innovation became the foundation of **Hailo Solutions** (www.hailo.co), where Santiago now serves as CTO.

In recognition of his commitment to accessibility, Santiago was awarded a **Churchill Fellowship** in 2022 to explore best practices for accessible public transport across the world. His research continues to inform Hailo's mission to create inclusive transport systems that work for everyone.

Hailo is preparing to launch its groundbreaking platform designed to address many of the reasons people of all abilities won't or don't use public transport. This solution will benefit **people of all abilities**, making public transport more inclusive, accessible, and user-friendly.

*"Accessibility isn't just about disability—it's about creating systems that work for everyone," said Santiago Velasquez. "My hope for the future is that by **2027**, everybody can move around without barriers. And by the **2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games**, people will be able to arrive from anywhere in the world, speak any language, have any ability - and use public transport to confidently get to where they want to go."*

For more information about the International Day of People with Disabilities, visit www.idpwd.com.au. To learn more about Hailo Solutions and its upcoming launch, visit www.hailo.co.

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