

# The Bulletin

Number 1, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014

## Welcome Back One and All!

Can you believe it is almost February? Where on earth does the time go?

We have 24 new Preppies beginning this year and around the same number who completed their VCE at the end of 2013. Remember that we love stories about current and previous students – so send a paragraph, a photo or a news clipping so we can all celebrate!



Meanwhile, the staff of the SVRC wish you a year of excellence in your endeavours and we look forward to supporting your work with students with vision impairments throughout 2014.

## Professional Development Activities for Term 1 2014

Here are some dates for your diaries! Fliers are attached, including information about parking and also available from the SVRC website: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml>

**Please note:** the SVRC encourages attendance in person or via video link – please be in touch if you'd like to “virtually” attend any of these sessions.

Event	Date
<b>Educational Support for Blind Students</b>	Monday 10 February
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> 1. 9.30-11.00 Duxbury Translator & Romeo Embosser - Emily White 2. 11.30-1.00 JAWS - Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 3. 1.30-3.30 Maths and Tactual Graphicalacy - Emily White, SVRC	Wednesday 19 February
<b>Educational Support for Students with Low Vision</b> – offered twice	Monday 24 February <b>OR</b> Tuesday 25 February
<b>New Visiting Teacher Orientation Day</b> from 9.30am	Monday 3 March
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> 1. 9.30-11.00 Pearl and OpenBook - Trevor Boyd, Quantum RLV 2. 11.30-1.00 ZoomText - Trevor Boyd, Quantum RLV 3. 1.30-3.30 iPad - Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Wednesday 5 March
<b>Art4Kids with VI?</b> Please invite your Art teachers!	Monday 17 March
<b>Visiting Teacher Day</b>	Tuesday 18 March
<b>Dot Power</b>	Tuesday 25 March

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## Work Experience for Students with Vision Impairments

Students with vision impairments often achieve outstanding results at school and university, only to discover that obtaining paid work is an even greater challenge. This may be related to employer perception of people with vision impairments or it may be related to the prospective employees' work readiness – whatever the reason(s), competence in work-related skills is of paramount importance. It is vital, therefore, that students have the opportunity to become skilled in their use of access technology, social skills, orientation & mobility and so on. Individual and targeted instruction is vital for each student – and Work Experience for students in secondary schools plays an important part.

With this in mind, we asked the Visiting Teachers if they had suggestions and ideas for Work Experience for blind students and for students with low vision – here is what we came up with:

- aged care assisting with art and music; and hospitality
- laboratory technician in a school laboratory
- local charities such as St Vincent de Paul and Brotherhood eg feed the disadvantaged program – meal preparation, cleaning, packaging
- local radio – program planner and announcer
- local sport venue (which led to the offer of paid part time work)
- paintball factory – loading the paintballs
- retail eg Coles/Woolworths (one former student has moved into management at Coles since leaving school)

One VT commented that Work Experience works well if the student “is motivated and willing to use their equipment” and that students “get more interesting jobs as they demonstrate that they are capable”.

One student “needed 90 hours of Work Experience for his VCAL. He managed to find work with the Salvation Army who run a breakfast and social program at his school and then picked up more hours at their shop. He is loving it.”

Thanks to Jeni Blake, Helen Caldwell, Lea Nagel, Logie Onslow and Myriam Ash for suggestions.

## Employment News

“This is a good news story about persistence”, writes Annette Godfrey-Magee. Zac, a totally blind young man from one of our country regions, has recently secured a part time position. Zac has been a diligent participant in the Careers sessions offered in the Support Skills program and now he is “cashing in”. He has taken every opportunity to use his Work Experience placement, Vision Australia’s Employment Services, information he gained from the SVRC Careers day, his Visiting Teacher, and his local network (networking is a key component in obtaining work) to become a team member in a leading enterprise in his local town. Using his abilities to gain skills, seizing every opportunity offered to him, even if it meant spending a week during his school holidays in Melbourne to participate in Work Experience, O&M training etc, Zac presents himself as a “can do” person and one any organization would welcome. Well done Zac!

## Food for Thought by the Disability Rights Commission (UK)

Take a look: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3AeIFup1qY>

Ed: I’d make a comment, but I just wouldn’t know where to start...

## MSSD – Great New JAWS Training Videos

Lea Nagel and Cam Phillips have created a number of excellent basic training videos for those supporting beginning JAWS users. They have been created as four individual videos but can also be viewed one after the other as follows:

Video 1 Introduction to JAWS: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7\\_67n4NTkc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7_67n4NTkc)

Video 2 Listening to JAWS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b55ijS4I0Ws>

Video 3 Navigating a document with JAWS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTTb8DomNDU>

Video 4 Selecting text with JAWS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wmxNEaEbx>

Playlist of the four videos to play one after the other:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7\\_67n4NTkc&list=PLAKVIC\\_CWgq8TeBpk5N8BILh2vNwJmoht](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7_67n4NTkc&list=PLAKVIC_CWgq8TeBpk5N8BILh2vNwJmoht)

Lea introduces a nifty way of orienting the student to the location of the cursor within the text – representing a letter (or word or line or paragraph) by the student’s fingers. Take a look!

## MSSD National Partnerships: Updating our Records

Most of the equipment has now been allocated to students in schools and from the feedback we have been receiving it has been put to good use. In order to keep track of the equipment we do need to update our records if any of the following occur:

- Student transfers to a new school
- The equipment is allocated to another student

The forms to notify the SVRC of any changes are available from the SVRC website at [http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Anational\\_partnership.shtml](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Anational_partnership.shtml)

Could you please send the completed forms to Lyn at [lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au)

## A National Audio Description Calendar

Source: Vision Australia’s FYI, January 2014

This year over 125 live theatre Audio Described (AD) performances will be available, across theatres in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra and Wollongong.

Audio description brings the performance closer by communicating the on-stage action and allowing for deeper insight to the performance with pre-show notes and up-close and personal tactile tours.

Daisy formatted audio CDs of the schedule will be available from early February. Call 1300 847 466 or visit: <http://www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/events>.

## Learn UEB Online – Coming Soon!

RIDBC Renwick Centre is currently developing a free online training program in Unified English Braille (UEB) entitled “UEB Online”. The first version of the program will be for sighted learners and we are aiming for a launch date of end February or early March 2014.

The course will be self-paced and self-marking, with a Certificate of completion provided by RIDBC upon request for a small fee. So stay tuned for further updates in the New Year!

## Caring For Your Glasses

As you are aware it is important to have the right environment at school for students with low vision. The right seating and lighting play an important part in giving student's access to the curriculum but have you considered how well they look after their glasses? This article by Heidi Mitchell from the Wall Street Journal sheds some amusing light on how we look after our glasses.

### ***The Best Way to Clean Your Glasses***

Nearly 50% of Americans wear corrective glasses, according to the trade group Vision Council. And most of them are guilty of the biggest crime in lens care: Exhaling onto their lenses, then wiping the fog off with their shirt sleeves. But does this really damage your lenses? Teri Geist, an optometrist in Omaha, Neb., and chairwoman for the American Optometric Association, weighs in.

#### **Simple Solution**

Though there are countless products on the market claiming to wipe streaks away, the AOA recommends the most basic of options: kitchen-sink soap. The best way to clean your glasses, says Dr. Geist, is to run them under warm water and put a tiny drop of dishwashing detergent on the tip of your fingers to create a lather on the lens. Then rinse with warm water, and dry with a clean, soft cotton cloth.

"Everyone uses their shirt cloth – worst thing!" she says. "Your shirttail almost certainly carries dust, and that has the potential of scratching your lens."

#### **Glass vs. Plastic**

Of the 69.1 million Americans who bought prescription spectacles last year, most purchased plastic lenses; glass has gone out of fashion as safety concerns have arisen. Unlike that hard surface, plastic is soft and can scratch easily.

Once lenses are scraped up, "there is no way to buff that scratch out," says Dr. Geist. Attempting to clean glasses when dry only exacerbates the problem, since a wet surface is slicker than a dry one. "People breathe on their glasses then grab a Kleenex or paper towel or napkin because they're convenient, but the rough fibers that they're comprised of might leave debris behind," Dr. Geist says. She adds that special microfiber cloths are good for dry touch-ups during the day, but aren't a stand-in for a thorough, soapy cleaning. Neither is your breath.

#### **Reflecting on the Problem**

Lenses typically have some form of protective coating and should never come into contact with ammonia, bleach, vinegar or window cleaner. "Those chemicals can break down the coating or just strip them," says Dr. Geist. "You know those bubbles you sometimes see on your lens? Those are caused by 'cleansing' solutions." Avoid the problem by requesting anti-glare and UV coatings that are embedded within the lens, which can cost about \$100 more than regular-coated lenses.

#### **Clean Lines**

Natural oils from your hands, eyelashes and face can lead to a lot of buildup each day, reducing lenses' effectiveness. Leaving spectacles on a sink or vanity, where hair spray and perfume can fly through the air, adds to the residue. The AOA recommends washing glasses every morning, paying special attention to the frames and earpieces, where hair product and makeup tend to rub off.

Whatever you do, don't use the most handy form of water to clean your lenses. "Some people use spit, but don't," urges Dr. Geist. Though dirty glasses won't cause an eye infection, saliva "is not the best hygiene method, and it just won't work very well," she says. Soap, warm water and a dry cloth are all you need, once a day, to keep glasses optimally clean and functional. "I have had patients who say they can't see well, but it turns out it is just the scratches," says Dr. Geist.

Source: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323375204578269942300847314>

## Braille Screen Protectors for iPhone 5

The American Thermoform Corporation has produced transparent self-adhesive iPhone screen protector that is top-coated with a hypo-allergenic, non-toxic, Anti-Microbial agent.

Designed with the blind and visually impaired user in mind, a Brailled dot is located over each letter and touch function, which makes it easier to navigate through your phone, send emails and make calls. The cost is US \$15.95 for 2 protectors. Visit the American Thermoform website for more information at <http://americanthermoform.com/>

**Anti-Microbial Braille Screen Protectors**

Transform your iPhone 5

2 Protectors For Only **\$15.95**

**Free Shipping**  
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iPhone 5

## Apps – Selected Updates

### ***TapTapSee Now Charging***

TapTapSee, a great little app designed to identify objects from a photo, is now charging for the service. As you can imagine, this has caused quite a bit of discussion and debate in the VI community!

### ***Draconis – DoItWrite***

DoItWrite is an educational tool and game to teach vision impaired users of iOS 7's VoiceOver screen reader how to draw printed letters and numbers for use with VoiceOver's handwriting feature in iOS 7. Learn to draw lowercase letters, uppercase letters, and numbers for use with iOS 7's VoiceOver handwriting feature! This app is primarily intended for the blind or visually impaired, teachers or instructors of same, and other users of iOS 7's VoiceOver screen reader. It appears to be quite user friendly and accessible.

### **Free Window Eyes**

From Garry Stinchcombe

This offer is all the chat at the moment around the VI blogs and Tech services. Might be worthwhile a try for some students with vision impairments. Could save a fortune long term or at the very least, be a tool in the tool-kit! Go to the following link for more information at:

<http://www.windoweyesforoffice.com/>

### **PowerPoint Access via BrailleNote Apex**

KeySoft 9.4 offers PowerPoint access via the BrailleNote Apex. It is possible to view and edit the PowerPoint presentation via braille and/or voice output. Presenters can email the PPTX file to braille readers prior to their presentation.

To view the Humanware tutorial, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkU4pYnMtKk>

## Some of the Best iOS 7 Tips from 2013

From Adam Morris – ozios list

- **4 essentials everyone should know when getting started with iOS 7**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/09/18/four-essential-ios-7-tips/>  
 While some of iOS 7 stayed the same, some of it looked very different – there are some absolute essential tricks to familiarize yourself with the new experience.
- **5 simple usability tips to improve iOS 7**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/10/04/simple-usability-improvements-ios-7/>  
 A few adjustments can go a long way in improving usability and readability, and that's exactly what these tips aim to do.
- **6 tricks to speed up iOS 7**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/09/23/ios-7-slow-speed-it-up/>  
 If you felt that installing the new update slowed down your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, this is for you.
- **8 ways to increase the battery life of iOS 7 devices**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/09/19/ios-7-battery-life-fix/>  
 Sure the whizz-bang flashy eye candy features of iOS 7 look great, but they can also negatively affect battery life.
- **10 tips for using iOS Mail smarter and faster**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/07/10/10-mail-tips-ios/>  
 Email can be a burden, but these tricks are practically guaranteed to make you more productive when emailing from the mobile world of iOS.
- **Safari keyboard shortcuts for iOS devices with external keyboards**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/11/10/safari-keyboard-shortcuts-ios/>  
 If you use a Bluetooth keyboard with an iPad, these are must-knows.
- **The ultimate Siri commands list**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/02/05/list-siri-commands/>  
 Did you know that Siri could do this much?
- **95 funny Siri commands that are sure to make you laugh**  
<http://osxdaily.com/2013/12/29/funny-siri-commands/>  
 Keep entertained for hours by asking Siri a bunch of silly questions and commands, you're sure to get a chuckle out of the responses.
- **Braille Squad – A free game for emerging Braille readers**  
 The game uses the iPad paired with the refreshable Braille display. The link to the trial version is: <http://wwwx.cs.unc.edu/Courses/comp523-f13/braille/Menu.html>

## KeySoft 9.4 – Free Upload

An upgrade is now available for the BrailleNote Apex. Visit: [http://support.humanware.com/en-australia/support/brailnote\\_apex/software/keysoft\\_94](http://support.humanware.com/en-australia/support/brailnote_apex/software/keysoft_94)

## Podcast – Albinism: Pale & Interesting

Radio National's "Body Sphere" which will air on 2 February 2014 features the following program Albinism: Pale & Interesting

We're all into protecting our skin these days, but what is it like to be Australian, African or Pacific Islander and have to stay well out of the sun because you have albinism? Albinism is a genetic condition that gives you white hair and pale skin and impaired eyesight – but there are loads of myths and misconceptions about it. If you miss the actual date for the program it will be available as a podcast from the Radio National website.

## English Online Interview: Braille Materials

The English Online Interview assesses the English skills of students in Years Prep to 2. The Interview assesses students across the three modes of English in AusVELS (the Australian Curriculum in Victoria) – Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening. The English Online Interview is a one-to-one interview between a teacher and student, using texts and downloadable resources designed specifically for the Interview.

Copies of the testing materials are available to teachers in braille – please contact the SVRC.

## Scholarships for Space Camp 2014

From Dan Oates, SCIVIS

I am very excited to tell you about this amazing opportunity for blind and low vision students throughout the world. In cooperation with Space Camp and SCIVIS, the St. Louis Lighthouse for the Blind is offering full scholarships and transportation assistance to children of unique cultural diversity to attend SCIVIS 2014. The link below will give you the details of the scholarship program.

<http://www.tsbvi.edu/space/lighthouse.htm>



SCIVIS 2014, the 25th Anniversary, should prove to be an exciting year!

**Who:** Upper secondary students in DEECD schools

**When:** 2-3 weeks during September 2014

**Where:** Huntsville, Alabama (with excursions in Los Angeles and who knows where else!)

## Student News

- **Nathaniel** from Rutherglen will be studying Arts at La Trobe University in Wodonga this year and living on campus! All the best Nathaniel!
- **Zac** from Bendigo (photo right) received well-deserved recognition at the end of last year – highly commended for effort across all subjects in Year 10, and recognition for his year as house captain.  
Zac now has a part time job where he is working in the landscape and leisure industry with duties including answering phones and customer service – his grandmother comments, “As you can see, there is no stopping this young man!”
- **Please send other student news so we can all enjoy!**



## Braille Course News

- SWVR Visiting Teacher **Deb Davidson** has successfully completed the SVRC Braille Correspondence Course – fantastic work, Deb!!!

## Staff News

- **Charlie Roberts** will be taking a year’s leave from Support Skills – though will still be VTing in the Peninsula area.
- We have a new VT in rural SWVR (Warrnambool area) – **Claire Battersby** – welcome!

- **Emily White** will be replacing **Charlie Roberts** in the role of PE teacher on Support Skills this year.
- **Heidi Littleford** will be moving from Western Metropolitan area to NEVR – Eastern Metropolitan area.
- **Jenny Williams** has reduced her time fraction and will be working in just one region – NEVR.
- We have a new VT in rural NEVR (Albury area) – **Jill Poole** – welcome!
- **Jordie Howell** has successfully applied for the position of Braille Music Teacher for the 2014 Support Skills Program and we look forward to another great year!
- **Lea Nagel** will be working at the SVRC on Fridays for Support Skills in term 1 – we are hoping to replace her 3-4 days per week – we'll let you know!
- **Tracy Lancaster** is on Maternity Leave from NEVR – **Dean Johnson** is replacing her.

## ClearView – Free!

Quantum RLV has a colour ClearView unit (no screen) available for free! It will connect via video input (yellow cord) to a TV screen and may suit a student for home use. Please contact Deb at SVRC for further details.

## Tip: Extend the Life of Your Electronic Magnification Unit

This tip could be useful for people who have an older Electronic Magnification Unit with the old-style monitor (seen in top photo). You could get a much bigger and clearer picture by replacing the original monitor with a new wide-screen monitor (seen in lower photo). The new monitors generally have a better screen resolution and are much lighter and easier to store. This worked with the EMU we had at SVRC recently because the old monitor was easily dismantled from the unit, leaving a flat platform on the top. You would need to check the balance and safety of the new arrangement.

## Vacancies

South-Western Victoria Region currently has vacancies for VTs – Vision. Please contact Jane Jensen for further information: 0409 545794.

## Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson wish to thank everyone for their contributions to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Dianne Skillern, Garry Stinchcombe, Geoff Bowen and Lea Nagel.

