

The Bulletin

Number 8, Friday 23rd May 2014

Professional Development Activities for Term 2 and 3, 2014

Fliers for the SVRC Professional Learning programs are available on the SVRC website.

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
Skill Power Workshops 1. 9.30-11.00 BrailleSense – Caz McGowan, Pacific Vision 2. 11.30-1.00 Braille Maths for Primary – Emily White, SVRC 3. NEW 1.30-3.30 Menstruation: How to talk to students – Presentation by Freya McGregor, Vision Australia	Wednesday 4 June
Dot Power	Tuesday 17 June
National Braille Music Camp	21-28 June
Skill Power Workshops - Please request a session	Wednesday 23 July
Skill Power Workshops - Please request a session	Wednesday 6 August
Including Students with a Vision Impairments in Physical Education, Recreation and Sport	Tuesday 11 August
Skill Power Workshops - Please request a session	Wednesday 20 August
Dot Power – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 9 September
Space Camp – Huntsville, Alabama	20-25 September

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Upcoming SPEVI Conference – 12 to 15 January 2015

I hope that you have the dates set aside – this conference is shaping up as the place to be in January!

Together Towards Tomorrow: Families and professionals – a vision for success!

The 2015 SPEVI Conference will emphasise the importance of students, families and professionals working together, and taking on the challenges that the future presents – new technologies, new literacies and new skills. Participants will be encouraged to think critically and creatively about the practices and philosophies they are engaged in each day and share this knowledge in order to meet these new challenges.

This four-day conference aims to engage all participants using innovative practice and new technologies and to share and develop knowledge.

Key Conference Initiatives/Conference Themes

- Vision impairment
- Innovation / creative ways to meet challenges
- Access technologies
- Transitions
- Family and professional partnerships
- Additional impairments
- Joining the workforce and becoming work ready

10 Great Reasons to Attend

The 2015 Biennial Conference of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment is the must-attend conference for the industry and is only held once in every two years.

Here are 10 great reasons to join us in Melbourne this January:

1. we have world-renowned keynote speakers
2. there are three concurrent streams featuring a wide variety of papers
3. you can enjoy networking opportunities
4. and see what's happening around the country and beyond
5. our presentations will inform, educate and entertain!
6. participants will include students, families, educators, professionals and researchers
7. we'll showcase the latest technology
8. there will be eye-opening vision-specific displays
9. we can all explore the latest trends, ideas, innovations and emerging issues
10. we all have the opportunity to present and share knowledge...

Conference Venue

Melbourne Conference and Training Centre, Level 1, 477 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Call for Papers (closing 2 June)

www.spevi.net/spevi/index.php?NoCache=1400548923&link=19&header=Call%20for%20Papers

Support our Conference

- Can you or someone you know support our conference financially?
www.spevi.net/spevi/files/SPEVI2015SponsorshipExhibitionProposal.pdf
- Become a member of SPEVI: www.spevi.net/spevi/join-spevi.php

Two-day Masterclass with Penny Rosenblum

Report by Marion Blazé

Penny Rosenblum, Ph.D., University of Arizona flew into Tullamarine Airport one Sunday in early May ... and was at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre presenting less than 24 hours later, having already been down to Phillip Island to see the penguins!

One participant's comments:

“There were so many things that I took away from both workshops that I would probably be rewriting the whole day's work and saying ‘this was what I thought was great’ if I were to write them all down.

So I'll say that the whole Masterclass was fabulous. Penny was funny, relaxed and very informative. I'd see her again in a heart beat. You guys made another great choice for Masterclass. Thanks. I loved it.”

Day 1 (May 12)

Developing braille literacy for young children, dual readers and children with additional disabilities

Penny shared with us a wonderful mix of theoretical, practical and entertaining information. What I loved were the constant photos and film clips in her presentation sharing things like dancing with a child to help remember the dots for braille contractions, or how to make your own ‘peek-a-boo box’ to keep children from watching their fingers. Her handouts were also amazing - I can see how our one-day presentation could have gone on for a week!

Day 2 (May 13)

We're all social: Ideas for facilitating social development & When you don't drive due to vision loss: Strategies for succeeding in a car-oriented society

Penny's own vision impairment gave her a unique insight into the effect of social skill development on a person's ability to have meaningful relationships and how critical this is in all aspects of life. Again, Penny provided a practical framework for teachers to encourage and model these skills in so many different ways.

Penny's personal experience also made the topic of the non-driver much more meaningful and practical.

Again from a participant:

“In particular, the information Penny shared with us on how kids can be actively involved with driving (pumping and/or paying for petrol, route planning etc). I have given this information already to students and parents that I have spoken to over the last two days. Also, ‘normalising’ public transport with families. Getting parents to travel somewhere regularly with the family to break down the barrier that only blind people travel by public transport. This was a great idea.”



And one last participant comment:

“I thought the two days were fabulous! I always leave those days on a high.”

Penny offered us ‘A selected list of children's books featuring characters with vision impairments’ – see the following page.

A Selected List of Children's Books Featuring Characters with Vision Impairments

Source: Masterclass presenter, Penny Rosenblum, Summer 2008

This is a list of SOME children's books containing characters with visual impairment.

Books for middle school / high school readers are denoted with a *. Though I haven't read all the books on the list, the ones I personally like are denoted in red text and have a ^ in front of the title.

- **^*Taking Hold- My Journey Into Blindness** (ages - 12-16) By: Alexander, S. H., Simon & Shuster, 1995, ISBN: 0027004023.
- **^*On My Own- The Journey Continues** (ages - 12-16) By: Alexander, S. H., Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1997, ISBN: 0374356416.
- **^Mom can't see me** (ages - early elementary, By: Alexander, S. H., 1990.
- **^Mom's best friend** (ages - early elementary), By: Alexander, S. H., New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992.
- The blind men and the elephant (ages – elementary), By: Backstein, K., Scholastic Inc., 1992.
- Sing to the Stars (ages - elementary), By: Barrett, M. B., Little Brown & Co., 1994.
- **^*Tangerine** (ages 12-16), By: Bloor, E., Apple Signature of Scholastic, 1997, ISBN: 0-590-43277-x.
- Arthur's eyes (ages – preschool / elementary), By: Brown, M., Chicago. Little Brown & Co., 1979.
- Gift of Gold (ages 12-16), By: Butler, B., New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973, ISBN: 671-29742-2.
- Light A Single Candle (ages 12-16), By: Butler. B., Simon and Schuster, New York, 1970. ISBN: 671-29758-9.
- **^*Seeing Things My Way** (ages - elementary / preschool), By: Carter, A. R., Albert Whitman & Company, 1998.
- See You Tomorrow Charles (ages - elementary), By: Cohen, M., Greenwillow Books, 1983.
- **^See The Ocean** (ages - preschool / early elementary), By: Condra, E., Ideals Children's Books, 1994, ISBN: 1571020055.
- Louie Braille - The Boy Who Invented Books for the Blind (ages – elementary), By: Davidson, M., Scholastic Trade, 1991, ISBN: 059044350X.
- **^Sees Behind Trees** (ages 9-13), By: Dorris, M., Hyperion, 1997, ISBN: 0-7868-0224-3.
- The Seeing Summer (ages - elementary), By: Eyerly, J., J.B. Lippincott., 1981.
- Out of Darkness: The Story of Louis Braille (ages – elementary), By: Freedman, R., Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
- Jenny's Magic Wand (ages - elementary), By: Hermann, H. & B. Franklin Watts, Inc., 1988.
- Helen Keller: Courage in the dark (ages - elementary), Hurwitz, J., Kent, D. & Quinlan, K. A., 1997.
- **^Best Friends** (ages - preschool / elementary), By: Hill, S., Creative Teaching Press Inc., 1998.
- **^*The Unfrightened Dark** (ages 13-17) By: Holland, I., Ballantine Fawcett Juniper, 1990, ISBN: 0-449-70383-5.
- **^*The Window** (ages 13-17), By: Ingold, J., Harcourt Brace, 1996, ISBN: 0-15-201264-8.
- Mandy Sue Day (ages - elementary), By: Karim, R., Clarion Books, 1994.

And 2 more for older readers:

- No Finish Line, By Marla Runvan, Berkley Pub. Group, New York ISBN-10: 04251861482004.
- Touch the Top of the World: A Blind Man's Journey to Climb Father Than the Eye Can See – Eric Weihenmayer, Penguin New York, 2001.

Support Skills and Dot Power Visit the MSO

Yes, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra! Most of the students met us in at Flinders Street Station – but an intrepid group trekked out from the Statewide Vision Resource Centre on bus and train!

Darren and Marnie from Guide Dogs Victoria had a fantastic activity planned which saw two groups of students exploring the Flinders Street concourse from one to the other! The competition to find Travellers Aid and an icecream shop; and to work out how many platforms there are and which platform(s) you would take to get to Belgrave and Lilydale, had the students moving increasingly confidently through the space.

Students received excellent assistance from “Information” and from “Travellers Aid” – the staff in both locations were terrific!

Lunch took place between the Arts Centre and National Gallery of Victoria Australia on the grassy knoll which is home to the sculpture, Forward Surge, by Inge King. Art teacher Michael Donnelly plans to study her work this term during Support Skills. Michael also located a great interview of Inga King, who is now in her late 80s: www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-02/celebrating-a-sculpture-giant/5427768

She says, “I think that Forward Surge does what it should. It is a sculpture ... people don't consider sculpture art. People use it, particularly the young people – they run up and down with their skateboards ... the authorities don't like it because it scratches the paint. But that is easily repainted. It is used and probably loved and liked by many of the young ones. ... That makes me very happy. Because I like to involve people with my work. Sculpture on the whole is rather an alien element in this community. And that really brings it into the community. And these big sculptures ... not all of them ... they should be used if they're in public space. Sculpture's not only whole sculpture. It's also for the people.”

After lunch and a walk to the ABC Building, we were joined by several of the Dot Power students and their parents / family members. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra were wonderful and the very entertaining emcee, Jay Laga'aia introduced the orchestra, and sang and danced his way throughout the performance!

One of our dads became Jay's prop for “We're going on a bear hunt” and Nick had the chance to conduct the orchestra – which he did very well!



Performers showed our students some of their instruments at the end of the performance – which was very generous, we thought. And Nick and Jay (see photo) played a solo on the ukulele!!!

Oscar sent his reflection of the day:

Hi everyone, just wanted to tell you that I had a lot of fun at support skills. ... We went to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. It showed me that I can do really big things in music but it's clear that I will have to do a lot of practice! ... I had a GREAT time and I look forward to doing it again!!!

I look forward to another visit to the MSO next year!

UEBOnline: Braille Training for Sighted Learners

Information from Frances Gentle, RIDBC

The UEBOnline program being offered by RIDBC Renwick Centre is now available! UEB Online is an ideal course for professionals, parents and community members who wish to learn braille. It may be used by classroom teachers as a project for their students, or by specialist and mainstream educators and support staff who wish to obtain a qualification in braille.

UEBOnline uses the information and exercises from the Unified English Braille Australian Training Manual, 2013, Published by the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities.



Whilst the original training manual contained exercises to be completed using a braille machine; the online version uses the keys on a standard computer keyboard (PC or Mac but not tablet) to enter braille online via any web browser (eg Safari, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome).

Modules and lessons

The course consists of Two Modules comprising 30 lessons. Both modules must be completed to learn braille.

- **Module 1** includes lessons 1-14. This module covers basics of braille, including the alphabet, some simple punctuation, simple word signs and group signs.
- **Module 2** includes lessons 15-31. Complex two-cell contractions, short forms, group signs, punctuation, numbers, print symbols, braille mode indicators and type forms, capitalisation and names and abbreviations are covered here.

Exercises and marking

Each lesson includes two exercises which must be completed with 100% accuracy before you can proceed to the next lesson. The exercises will generally require you to translate English text to braille for the first exercise, then braille to text for the second exercise. All marking of exercises is done automatically so learners receive immediate feedback and can monitor their progress through the course. Your work can be saved at any time by clicking the save button at the bottom of each exercise.

Certificate of completion

UEB Online is offered free of charge to users. A certificate of completion is available for \$50 per module. Once payment is made the certificate will be immediately ready to download.

Visit: <http://uebonline.org> to sign up and get started!

From the editor: I completed the first couple of lessons and enjoyed the luxury of:

- a course that is freely available to sighted users (accessible version coming soon)
- reading the lessons and completing my answers on my computer
- getting immediate feedback for my work
- having additional resources (eg videos) available if required

Many thanks to RIDBC Renwick Centre for a great resource!!!

SVRC: Dropboxing Books to an iPad

Cameron Phillips will be away on a well-earned post-National Partnership holiday... And being the organised and generous human that he is, before he left this week, he sent his instructions for using Dropbox to transfer SVRC books to a student's iPad.

On your iPad you will need:

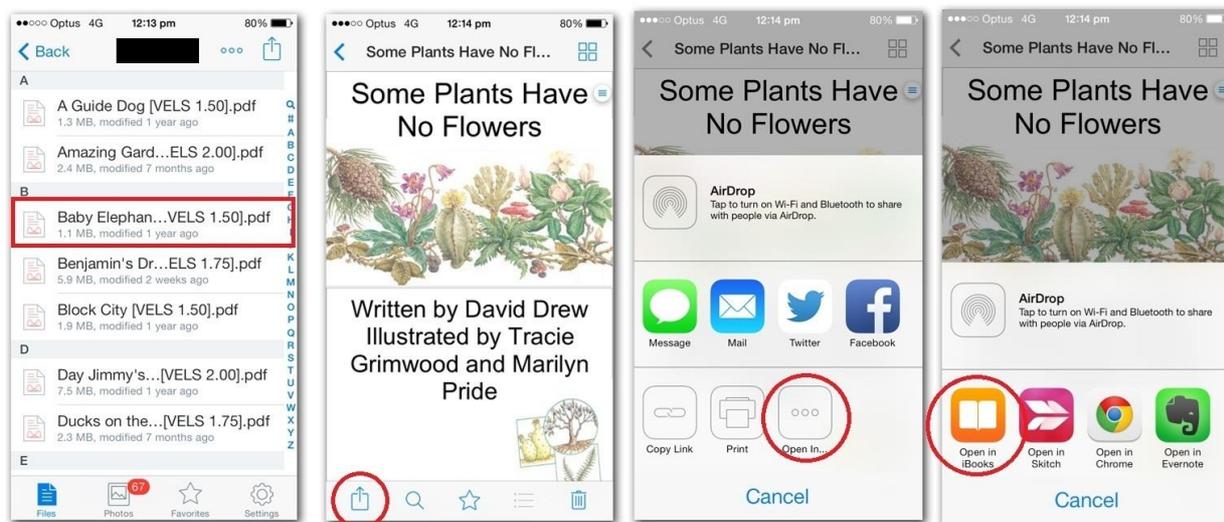
- Safari and an email account
- Dropbox
- iBooks

What happens:

- You request a book for iPad (eg pdf)
- We send you an email with a Dropbox link

So you open the download link that you find in the email on your iPad by either clicking the link, OR typing it manually into Safari web browser. Then (see pictures below):

1. Click on the title of the book you want to download to the iPad
2. Open the menu (or click the arrow icon in the bottom corner of the screen)
3. Choose "Open In..." and then "Open in iBooks"
4. Done! The book is now saved to the iPad and the student can access it at any time with the iBooks app.



1. Click the title of the book to download

2. Once the book has loaded, click the arrow icon in the bottom corner of screen.

3. Click "Open In..."

4. Click "Open in iBooks". The book will now be stored on  iPad

Drawing Pictures Using a Braillewriter

The Hadley School for the Blind's seminar program recently included a drawing pictures using the braillewriter session.

A transcript of the session (Word document) with instructions including how to draw a heart, diamond, sailboat etc can be found on the Hadley School website:

www.hadley.edu/SeminarTranscript/2013-06-19-Drawing%20Pictures%20Using%20the%20Braillewriter.doc

NVDA Training Resources

Need to brush up on your NVDA skills? NVDA is a great (and free) voice output alternative to JAWS; students may find NVDA a handy addition for their toolboxes!

New Zealand website SlingShot features an array of NVDA tutorials and training options including:

- text-based tutorials
- audio tutorials
- navigating around your computer with NVDA
- focussing NVDA and locating other programmes on Windows startup
- and much more

Visit: <http://homepages.slingshot.co.nz/~hurrikenny/nvda%20tutorials.html>

A comprehensive list of shortcuts can be found on the WebAIM website under the following headings:

- reading text
- voice rate
- headings and lists
- tables
- forms
- links
- other commands

Visit: <http://webaim.org/resources/shortcuts/nvda>

myGaze® Eye Tracker

This is a piece of hardware which attaches to a computer to assist people use their eyes to interact with software. This technology is now available from HelpKidzLearn and will work with many of its games. This information is from the website at HelpKidzLearn:

What can you do with it?

The myGaze® Eye Tracker will follow your eye movements so that you can move the cursor around the screen, select or 'click' on images by looking at them a little longer and drag the cursor around the screen. This means you can play lots of your favourite software games and activities, including:

- [HelpKidzLearn](http://www.helpkidzlearn.com) and ChooseIt! Maker 3
- Sensory Eye-FX
- Look to Learn
- The Grid 2
- Clicker 6
- Boardmaker Plus + Studio
- And many more!



For more information go to the HelpKidzLearn website:

<http://www.helpkidzlearn.com/shop/eye-gaze/mygaze-eye-tracker>

Upcoming Conference: “eBooks for Everyone”

The program of the conference "eBooks for Everyone! An Opportunity for More Inclusive Libraries" is online: <http://ifla-lpd2014.brailletnet.org/>

This conference will take place in Paris, from 22-23 August at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie (UPMC). The objective is to explore the 3-dimensional impact of eBooks for print-disabled persons:

- On content providers: how to produce content in an accessible eBook format?
- On libraries: how to provide inclusive services?
- On readers: how to take advantage of eBooks to facilitate reading?

You can register on the conference website: a discount is available until 31th May.

“The Joy of Accessing Books Fast”

Adapted from TechVision, www.yourtechvision.com/content/joy-accessing-books-fast

Technology is taking the bite out of the challenge of finding accessible books. There is a growing range of websites where students can find and download books ... quickly.

Wherever there is an internet connection, students can use their BrailleNote or laptop to swiftly search the internet and locate the book they require – and have the book on their device quicker than a sighted student can find the print book in their library!

Lessons and articles supporting braille reading can be found on the TechVision website:

- **Great braille readers:** www.yourtechvision.com/content/first-steps-great-braille-readers
- **Stop scrubbing:** www.yourtechvision.com/content/how-stop-scrubbing-while-reading-braille
- **Fast braille reading:** <http://www.yourtechvision.com/content/fast-braille-reading>
- **Learning braille in your teen years:** www.yourtechvision.com/content/tricks-learning-braille-your-teen-years-or-later
- **The synchronicity of braille & technology:** www.yourtechvision.com/content/synchronicity-braille-technology

Storybud: Accessible Children’s Story Website

Storybud may be of interest for young readers with vision impairments and their parents. Storybud is a children’s story website featuring stories from around the world.

The content is available in three formats – text, audio, text & audio – and the web author has been made an effort to present the material in a visually accessible manner.

Features:

- you can download free to your own computer
- stories are categorized by age, theme, continent and title
- you can send feedback using the contact us form

Visit: www.storybud.org

New Braille Phone

Source: www.bbc.com/news/technology-27437770

London-based firm OwnFone has released what it says is the world's first braille phone. The front and back of the phone is constructed using 3D printing techniques and can be customised.

The phone, currently only available in the UK, retails for £60 and according to its inventor Tom Sunderland, 3D printing the front and back of the device helped to keep the costs down.



"The phone can be personalised with two or four Braille buttons which are pre-programmed to call friends, family, carers or the emergency services," Mr Sunderland told the BBC.

VIBE Sponsorship Program – Learn to Ski!

Information provided by Peggy Soo:

VIBE Ski club are now accepting applications for our Super Skier sponsorship program, commenced in 2011, with the aim of providing financial support to assist the successful applicant to learn how to ski or improve their skiing abilities.

VIBE Ski Club Super Skier Package includes:

- Resort Entry to Mt Baw Baw Alpine Resort
- 1 personal lesson with a fully qualified ski instructor
- 1 day ski hire
- 1 day lift ticket

Note: The Super Skier Package must be redeemed at the VIBE Ski club Winter Weekend or at a weekend where a VIBE Ski Club Committee Member is present.

The application form is available on the Vibe Ski Club website: www.vibeskiclub.org.au.
If you have any enquiries, please email info@vibeskiclub.org.au.

Tactual Games

- **Altrix:** Ludo and Reversi are great family games which are available in wood: www.altrix.pl
- **Vision Australia Shop:** playing cards, dominoes, chess, Connect 4, scrabble, Uno, tic-Tac-Toe and more: www.visionaustralia.org/shop



Near Vision Test for Children

The revised edition of the NVTC is now available. This locally developed test of near vision for children includes:

- **Words In Context**
Each passage is 25 words in length so the examiner can compare the child's speed and fluency with various print sizes. Each passage contains commonly used grammatical structures and experiences and concepts familiar to children.
- **Word Matching booklet & card**
Useful for non-readers. Words have been chosen for their high frequency of use but restricted to 3 and 4 letter words with no ascenders or descenders.
- **Letter Matching booklet & card**
Useful for non-readers. Letters have been chosen for equal legibility and are presented in upper case.
- **Print size transparency.**
Overlay this transparency onto a page of text to determine the print size used.

Visit: www.nearvisiontestforchildren.com/

Brimbank Accessible Playground

The Brimbank Accessible Playground was recently visited by Emily White who writes:

“It has braille, tactile and Auslan signage (photo right), tactile life-sized sculptures of magpies (photo right), a blue heeler (complete with a pair of sculpted ‘muddy’ boots to stand in next to it!), giant tomatoes and peas in a pod, and lots of fun areas to explore for children with and without disabilities. Great swings and slides, etc too.

I loved the giant tree with a ladder inside to climb up to stand in the bird’s nest on the very top ... it even had tactile insects bolted all over the trunk!

Lots of curving pathways (photo right) which would be great for cane practice that lead to different areas and braille/ tactile image signs...”

For more information visit:

<https://www.variety.org.au/VIC/How-we-help/Brimbank-Park-Playscape-Project/>

Aide Available

Sue Drawbridge has recently moved to Melbourne from the UK where she worked as a Learning Support Assistant for students with vision impairments in a Resource Centre based within a mainstream school setting. Sue is available for work and is currently applying for a Working with Children Check. Please contact her via email:

sue.drawbridge@googlemail.com



Upcoming Camps Program: Children's Mobility Service

Register your interest for the upcoming Guide Dogs Camps:

- September School Holidays: "Ready, Set, Play" Sports Program
All ages
22-25 September
- January 2015: Family Mobility Program
All ages
19 January 2015

Contact Laura Hunt: laura.h@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Accessible Cycling

Cycling Victoria and Cycling Australia will be running a 10-week program to engage people with disabilities in cycling.

When: every Sunday between 9am and 11am starting from 1st June 1

Where: HA Smith Velodrome in Hawthorn

The program will offer coaching and support to all participants. Equipment will be sourced on a needs basis, as per the advice received in the registration form. Further information can be obtained from Ben Rogers, Inclusion Coordinator, Cycling Victoria via email ben.rogers@cycling.org.au or telephone 8480 3000.

Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Toni Chilton, Jordie Howell, Cameron Phillips, Garry Stinchcombe and Emily White.

If you would like to contribute to The Bulletin please email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

To read The Bulletin online, visit: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml

We'd like to invite you to Join SPEVI

The South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment

Eligibility

Full Membership of the association is open to anyone who is directly involved in the education of persons who have vision impairment. Membership is wide and includes more than just professionals working in the field.

Membership may come from any of the following areas:

- teachers
- orientation and mobility instructors
- orthoptists
- medical professionals
- optometrists
- therapists
- social workers
- teacher aides
- parents and family members
- case workers
- welfare agencies
- agencies for people with vision impairment

There are many individuals and groups in addition to those listed above who might like to consider membership.

Cost

All memberships are current for 2 years and are exempt from GST

Full membership: \$110 (no GST)

Pacific area residents (including PNG): \$11

Students and parents: \$44

Membership form

The membership form can be downloaded as a DOC (text) or PDF (print) format from the SPEVI website. Once you have completed the form, please mail it to SPEVI with your membership payment.

About SPEVI

South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI) Inc acts as the professional body in matters pertaining to the education and support of children and young people who are blind or have low vision within the South Pacific region. This includes children and young people who are deaf-blind and those with vision and additional disabilities.

For further information visit: www.spevi.net/spevi/about.php