

# The Bulletin

Number 13, Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014

## Professional Development Activities for Term 3-4, 2014

Fliers for the SVRC Professional Learning programs can be downloaded from the SVRC website.

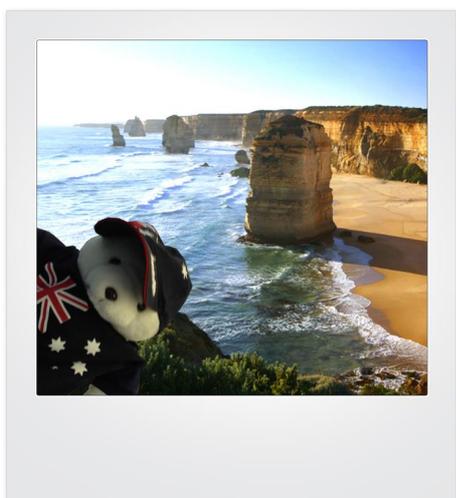
**Please note:** the SVRC encourages attendance in person or via video link – please be in touch if you'd like to “virtually” attend any of these sessions.

Event	Date
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> – Please note changes to what's on offer! 9:11:00 iPad students with low vision in the Primary Years - Emily Concurrently with JAWS for absolute beginners - Garry 11:30-1:00 iPad for students who are Blind in Primary Years – Emily Concurrently with Victor Reader for beginners - Garry 2:00-3:30 Pearl and Open Book and Zoomtext - Emily	Wednesday 20 August
<b>Dot Power</b> – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 9 September
<b>Space Camp</b> – Huntsville, Alabama	20-25 September
<b>No SPEVI Day this year</b> Please come to the SPEVI Conference instead!	Not this year
<b>Vision Australia TEXPO - Kooyong</b>	October 10 & 11
<b>Dot Power</b> – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 18 November
<b>Educational Expo for Students with Vision Impairments</b>	Monday 24 November
<b>Xmas Morning Tea – all invited – please RSVP</b>	Wednesday 3 December

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## SPEVI Conference – Update 2 – only 152 sleeps away!!



SPEVI bear has been getting around Victoria. Here he is on the Great Ocean Road looking at the Twelve (or is it eleven?!) Apostles.

In the coming weeks, SPEVI bear will be getting involved in some of Victoria's educational services for students with vision impairments.

Watch this space!!

AND from the SPEVI President:

Dear SPEVI members and colleagues,

Melbourne is abuzz with preparations for the SPEVI Biennial Conference that will be hosted in Melbourne from 12-15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at the Melbourne Conference and Training Centre. Talk on the street is dominated by rumours about the exploits of SPEVI Bear, the conference mascot, and whether or not he is winning the hearts and minds of Victoria's educators.

The Conference Organising Committee, chaired by Rachel Morgan, is working closely with All Occasions Management (OAM) to ensure that the conference program and social functions offer delegates a wide range of opportunities for professional learning, networking and knowledge sharing. The conference registration brochure will be available on the SPEVI website early next week. The brochure includes information about the conference venue, program overview, registration form and fee information, and accommodation options in Melbourne. Please consider booking your accommodation early as the Australian Open Tennis Championships will commence in Melbourne on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January (the week after the SPEVI conference).

In response to the conference theme of "Together towards tomorrow: Families and professionals – a vision for success", we have attracted well over 100 abstracts for oral presentations and workshops. The Conference Organising Committee has established a Scientific Committee, chaired by Paul Pagliano, to review conference papers submitted for peer review.

The conference keynote speakers are Dr Karen Wolffe, Dr Lauren Ayton, Shiralee Poed and Susan LaVenture. Karen, Lauren and Shiralee will address current national and international research in the areas of expanded core curriculum, ocular motor function and the bionic eye, and curriculum adjustments for learners with vision impairment. Susan LaVenture is an internationally renowned advocate for parents of children with impairment and will address her work in developing education and advocacy programs for families.

The conference will be held in conjunction with the SPEVI-ICEVI Pacific EFA-VI Forum that will be hosted on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> January at the Heritage Room, University College, Melbourne University. The Forum is designed for Pacific Island, Australian and New Zealanders professionals and parents who provide support for children and youth with vision impairment across the Region.

On behalf of the SPEVI Committee of Management and Conference Program Committee, I warmly invite you to join us at the SPEVI Biennial Conference in January 2015.  
Cheers, Frances

**Dr Frances Gentle**

Lecturer, RIDBC Renwick Centre & University of Newcastle NSW;  
President, South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI); and  
2nd Vice President, International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)  
Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC)  
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AND follow us on Twitter #SPEVI2015

**Thank you to the Insight School** for becoming another major sponsor of the Conference.  
**Thank you also to Vision Australia** who have become Gold sponsors of the conference.

The more sponsors we have the more we can offer in the conference and the lower the cost for families. We are still diligently chasing sponsorship, so do let the committee know whose arm/s we can twist!

Early bird registration will be due by November 10.

**Next Skill Power Day – August 20 – with Emily White & Garry Stinchcombe**

1<sup>st</sup> session 9:30 – 11

iPad for students with low vision in the primary years: Teaching the use of Zoom and other accessibility features plus some app recommendations.

- Please bring your own iPad and external keyboard if you have one; iPads and keyboards will be available for borrowing during the session if you do not have one, but it is best if you can bring your own.

And CONCURRENTLY

- JAWS for absolute beginners – with Garry Stinchcombe

2<sup>nd</sup> session 11:30 – 1pm

iPad for students who are blind in the primary years: Teaching the use of VoiceOver and other accessibility features plus some app recommendations.

- Please bring your own iPad and external keyboard if you have one; iPads and keyboards will be available for borrowing during the session if you do not have one, but it is best if you can bring your own.

And CONCURRENTLY

- Victor reader for beginners – with Garry Stinchcombe

3<sup>rd</sup> session 2 – 3:30pm: Pearl, Open Book and Zoomtext – with Emily White

## Two levels of Eligibility for Support for Students with Vision Impairments in Victoria

There is often confusion in schools about eligibility for support on the grounds of vision impairment. Families can also be confused by the terminology we use e.g. ‘my son is eligible for an aide’ when actually he is eligible for a Visiting Teacher.

All assessments for eligibility are done with the child’s best correction (spectacles if prescribed) and using both eyes. You sometimes see the acronym ‘BEO’ – Both Eyes Open - in an eye report. It is false to say a child is ‘legally blind in one eye’. Children use both eyes to function, and this is how their eligibility is assessed.

There are two levels of eligibility in DEECD:

1. Children in the ‘partially sighted’ range are eligible for VT Vision support, Equipment grants and alternative format resources from SVRC.  
Partially sighted children have BEO corrected vision worse than 6/18 **OR** visual fields of less than 20°.
2. Children in the ‘legally blind’ range are eligible for VT Vision support, Program for Students with Disabilities funding and alternative format resources from SVRC. (Also eligible for Disability Support Pension at age 16.)  
Legally blind children have BEO corrected vision of worse than 6/60, **OR** visual fields of less than 10°.

It is important to note that these criteria state that vision is ‘worse than’. If a child can see the largest 6/60 letters on an eye chart, s/he is not legally blind.

### Vision Australia Further Education Bursary

The Vision Australia Further Education Bursary is now open for applications for 2015. These Bursaries provide assistive technology, laptops, magnification, audio or Braille devices tailored to the individual student’s needs. To be eligible applicants need to be an Australian citizen or permanent resident and be applying for, or enrolled in a tertiary course graded Certificate IV or above including undergraduate and post-graduate degrees. The closing date for applicants is 31 October 2014.

Please share with your senior students. Information and forms are available on the VA website: [www.visionaustralia.org/bursary](http://www.visionaustralia.org/bursary)

### VTAC at Vision Australia Kensington

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre staff members are coming to the Kensington office of Vision Australia to assist future further education students who are blind or have low vision with their VTAC applications, including SEAS and Scholarship applications for study in 2015.

**Where:** Vision Australia, 346 Macaulay Road, Kensington Vic 3031.

**When:** Tuesday 26 August 1 pm to 4 pm.

Please contact Max Bini Tertiary Education Consultant Tel 03 8378 1223 if you wish to attend or have more questions as there are a few things you will need to bring along eg VCAA number for current Year 12 Students and documentation.

## PE PD Day – report from August 10th



Twenty-five athletic-looking people spent a very active day with Emily White and co. at the latest PD offering from SVRC. The group were in the Gym, saw a great display of equipment (as pictured), did a tour of SVRC, played Swish and Goalball and heard all about Blind Cricket, Paralympics and other Blind sports.

Thanks to the many people who supported Emily on the day: Charlie, Garry, Rob, Daniel, Darren, and Karen.

Comments from evaluations sheets included:

‘FANTASTIC day – but I worry about all the PE teachers who weren’t here!’, ‘Really enjoyed the day and got a good deal of info. Good presenters, venue and resources’, and ‘AWESOME DAY! Emily – such a great/enthusiastic presenter!’

## Exxopolis by Architects of Air – Walk-through art experience

Exxopolis by Architects of Air is a monumental sculpture whose labyrinthine tunnels and cavernous domes entice visitors to immerse themselves in bright colourful light. Direct from the UK, the inflatable structure spans 53 metres in length and nearly nine meters in height. It occupies the space of half a football field and is constructed using 3,000 square metres of plastic. WOW! Journey through the cathedral-like spaces and experience its awe-inspiring sense of wonder. Presented in association with Insite Arts.

NB: This is an outdoor event. In the event of extreme weather conditions the Exxopolis may need to be temporarily closed. Please check the What’s On Stonnington Facebook page for notification or call 8290 1333.

Jam Factory rooftop car park, 14 – 24 August,  
Daily, 12pm – 9pm  
Pre-purchased tickets available \$15 (+  
transaction fee)

<http://glowfestival.com.au/program/exxopolis-luminarium-13/>



## School Holiday and After School Workshops in Animation

Here’s a novel idea for a school holiday and after school activity. ‘Animachin’ are offering workshops at various locations (such as Princes Hill Community Centre and Balwyn Library) in ‘stop motion animation’ or ‘claymation’ just like on Wallace and Grommet! This was sent in by a parent whose son loves this creative activity and we thought making clay models might be a wonderful activity for kids with vision impairments.



Future Oscar Winners (animation): Giles and McGregor created a movie that you can view on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/dLthrKanons>

## Braille Mobile Phone

OwnFone has launched Australia's first braille mobile phone. OwnFone specialises in simple, customisable mobile phones suitable for young children or seniors, who don't want the complexity of a Smart Phone.

The company uses 3D printing to create braille buttons customised for every customer.

The phones are designed to be affordable and extremely easy to use, providing outgoing calls to three pre-programmed numbers of the user's choice and 000, and receipt of incoming calls. Each of the six buttons on the phone is labelled in braille.



Users in Australia can design their personalised braille phone on the OwnFone Australia website – [www.ownfone.com.au](http://www.ownfone.com.au). They will need to provide up to three contact names, which will automatically be converted into braille. These names are then printed on the front of the phone in braille.

Here is the very simple OwnPhone (without the braille).

More information and online ordering are available on the ownfone website.

## Learning UEB braille online or on your iPad

Created by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children's Renwick Centre, 'UEB Online' is a free training program for sighted people to learn Unified English Braille (UEB). The program is suitable for classroom and specialist teachers, parents, teacher aides and other professionals supporting children and adults with vision impairment.

AND Launched last Friday - the 'Braille Tutor app' for iPad, was created (by the parent of one of our students!) to provide an accessible and interactive experience learning Grade-1 and Grade-2 braille (Unified English Braille).

The App is made for the iPad (with iOS 7.0 or later) and can be used with onscreen keys or the home keys on a Bluetooth keyboard. It is self-voiced, but also works well with iOS accessibility. The App is compatible with a refreshable braille display for reading braille. Feedback for the learner on their progress is immediate. Useful hints are provided within the lesson to aid learning.

A year ago, one of our parents, Ray was unsuccessful in his search for an accessible iPad app to help his son, Micah to learn Braille (especially those tricky grade-2 contractions). He believes literacy (and therefore braille literacy for the blind and low vision) is key to success in the classroom and workplace, as the majority of blind people who are braille literate are employed.

He has developed the Braille Tutor app for the iPad with the help of a number of visiting teachers and educators, to help other braille learners pickup braille skills or consolidate their knowledge. The Braille Tutor App for iPad was created to provide an accessible and interactive experience learning Grade-1 and Grade-2 braille (Unified English Braille). For more information, please visit <http://ienabletechnology.com/braille-tutor/>

The app is free to download with 19 lessons for Grade-1 braille. In-App purchase is available for the remaining (72) Grade-2 lessons for the price of a song.

## **AND you can get the Official ABA Certificate of Proficiency (if you sit the exam!)**

The Australian Braille Authority is pleased to announce that the 2014 Trans-Tasman Certificate of Proficiency in Unified English Braille will be conducted in Australia in the first week of October, from 1 to 8 October.

Please note that the examination will be held over one week only. Unlike previous years, there is no choice of examination period.

The Australian Braille Authority strongly encourages all those who transcribe, teach and produce braille to strive to attain this certification, which is the only form of accreditation offered to Australian braille specialists.

We urge all interested in sitting the examination to first attempt the sample test, which can be obtained from the ABA website.

## **Google Glass and Telstra come to the help of the disabled**

Although Google Glass is not yet available in Australia, the recent article ‘Google Glass and Telstra come to the help of the disabled’ talks about how Telstra is exploring its potential to hand people with disabilities a new measure of independence. Kelly Schultz, who is 31-years-old and 97 per cent blind since birth, works for Telstra and is part of the trialling process and says that Glass has huge potential.

## **Beyond doubt: the experiences of people with disabilities reporting crime**

On 21 July 2014 the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission published research into the experiences of people with disabilities reporting crime to the police in Victoria. The report is entitled *Beyond doubt: the experiences of people with disabilities reporting crime*.

The report highlights that the level of crime experienced by people with disabilities is substantial. This is in spite of – and sometimes the result of – systems that are designed to provide justice and safety. We know that some people are at greater risk, including people with intellectual and mental health disabilities, communication disabilities and women with disabilities.

Our study found that people with disabilities face significant and multifaceted barriers when it comes to reporting crime to police. For those living in environments that are socially isolating additional barriers exist, because these crimes occur behind closed doors.

People with disabilities and the people who provide care and support to them lack knowledge of how and when to report a crime, whether the conduct is criminal and knowledge of their rights. Some are fearful of repercussions if they report a crime.

One of the strongest messages in this study is that people with disabilities fear that they will be seen as lacking credibility when they report a crime to police. In some cases police members refuse to accept reports. In other cases reasonable adjustments, which are especially important for people with communication disabilities are not made.

The report found that when police have a good understanding of disability, believe victims and take the report seriously, higher levels of satisfaction with police practice is reported. Throughout our

research it became clear that there is a critical need to provide clarity on the roles and expectations of police working with people with disabilities – a victim cohort with specific needs.

The justice system does not operate in isolation. Police practice is affected by, and affects, practices in other systems. Although there are departmental policies in place for disability services, there is a lack of clarity within services about when and how to undertake internal investigations and action. This leads to inconsistency in response.

The report makes 16 recommendations to various government departments and agencies, including the Victoria Police, Department of Justice, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Judicial College of Victoria, Court Services Victoria and the Office of the Public Advocate.

I hope that *Beyond doubt* will contribute to police, government and community efforts to ensure that Victoria has an accessible, consistent and comprehensive system to respond to the experience of crime for people with disabilities, and to improving safeguarding for people using disability and health services.

More information about this project can be found at

<http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/reportingcrime>.

Kate Jenkins, Commissioner , Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission  
Level 3, 204 Lygon Street | Carlton 3053 | Victoria, Australia

## Matthew wants to go to Space Camp in 2016!!

Matthew J has already set his sights on attending Space Camp in the US in 2016 and after a family holiday in Africa last year, he and his Mum have produced a set of greeting cards from photos.

The cards are currently on sale at SVRC, with proceeds going towards Matthew's trip to Space Camp. Please come and look at these fabulous cards and feel free to order or purchase several. The cards are \$3 each and there are many more than those pictured here. Maybe your Christmas cards could have an African theme this year?!!



## News

- **Catherine Harris** who works at St Columba's Catholic Primary school in Ballarat and **Christine Haber** from Keilor Downs College, have both completed the SVRC Braille by correspondence course. Way to go Catherine and Christine!!! (And 'thank you' to Zhi for all her support!)

## **August is ES MONTH – please find a moment to thank the production staff at SVRC**

The Australian Education Union has nominated August as the month to especially recognise and celebrate the contribution of Education Support staff to all schools. As well as expressing a special ‘thank you’ to ES staff in your schools, we’d love you to also take a moment during August to think about the contribution the SVRC production team makes in support of your students and schools.

Feel free to email, telephone or have a quick word when you are in. The AEU also has ES Month events and ideas listed on their website at [www.aeu.asn.au/esmonth](http://www.aeu.asn.au/esmonth).

### **Finally**

The editor, Marion Blazé, would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Frances Gentle, Garry Stinchcombe and Emily White.