

# The Bulletin

Number 3, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015

## Professional development activities for 2015

Download fliers for the SVRC PD programs from the SVRC website.

Event	Date
<b>Cricket: World Cup Action Day</b> – information in issue 2	Saturday 14 March
<b>Family Futures Forum @ Vision Australia</b> 9.30am-12.30pm	Saturday 21 March
<b>Big Arts Picnic</b>	Saturday 28 March
<b>Art4Kids with VI? @ Heidi</b>	Wednesday 29 April
<b>PE Day</b> – more info in the next issue	Monday 18 May

## SVRC Big Arts Picnic – Saturday 28 March 2015

Join us for a picnic on day 1 of the holidays at the fabulous venue to the south east of Melbourne.

**When:** Saturday 28 March from 12 noon to 3.30-4.00pm  
**Where:** McClelland Gallery & Sculpture Park, Langwarrin  
**Who:** students with vision impairments and their families, SVRC staff and VTs



## PD Day Art4Kids with VI

A one day seminar and workshop to be held at the Heide MOMA's unique public art museum and Sculpture Park, in association with and input from Heide's Education staff. The seminar will investigate options, strategies and issues related to working with and teaching a student who is blind or has low vision in your art room or classroom art-making session.

- **Morning:** (indoors at Heide's Sidney Myer Education Centre) information on setting up or adjusting the room to better accommodate your student; issues of access to the visual arts; specialist techniques; budget options; and opportunities for "hands-on" art making; and then,
- **Afternoon:** (outdoors in the Heide Gardens & Sculpture Park) exploration of works of art under blind-fold; investigating the use of visual description, tactile diagrams and touch access.

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## SVRC: Braille code (UEB)

Do you need to find the latest documentation on UEB including:

- Rules of UEB
- Guidelines for technical material
- Literary code summary sheet
- Punctuation and symbols summary sheet
- Maths code
- Assorted guidelines
- Programs or courses for sighted learners or touch readers

Visit: [www.svrc.vic.edu.au](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au)

## SVRC: Braille music resources

This section of the SVRC website has recently been updated. You'll find:

- an overview of braille music in schools with links to general resources and the braille music files for ten public domain songs that can be embossed using Duxbury and a braille embosser
- cheat sheets and introductions to the braille music code

And remember, as a member of the Vision Australia library service, you can **download hundreds of braille music files for free**. Here's the address for the website, and if you don't have a library account, it is free for Australians to join: <http://i-accessonline.visionaustralia.org>

## Reflections: SPEVI Conference 2015

### ***Braille Challenge Mobile App: Fun and Games with Braille***

Reflections from Lea Nagel, SVRC

It was wonderfully refreshing and exciting to hear from the lovely Frances Mary D'Andrea, Educational Consultant & Instructor and recent Chair of BANA – Braille Authority of North America. Frances Mary reported on her continuing and infectious passion of braille literacy, and her involvement with the iBraille Challenge Mobile App. The app is currently in testing and development phase, and will be a fabulous assessment and teaching tool.

The iBraille Challenge Mobile App was the winner of the \$20,000 Louis Braille Touch of Genius Prize for Innovation in 2013. This genius app is designed for iPad to provide practice activities for the Braille Challenge® held annually by the Braille Institute, Los Angeles California. The student is free to spend as much time as they wish enjoying the variety of stimulating activities presented. But the power comes from what's going on in the background. Teachers can use an in-app dashboard to track student progress in accuracy and time spent practising. Data can also be sent to the app developers, providing statistics which will inform studies and development of educational programs!

The Braille Challenge® is an academic competition designed to motivate blind students to emphasize their study of braille, while rewarding their success with fun-filled, but challenging, local and national events throughout the U.S. and Canada. Approximately 1,000 braille reading students sit the preliminary, age-grouped tests in the categories of: speed and accuracy: dictation, spelling, proofreading, reading comprehension and chart and graph. Finalists are invited to compete in the Braille Challenge® Finals in Los Angeles. The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Braille Challenge is on this year!

Although it is not open to Australian children, perhaps our students can check their progress or run mini-competitions using sample materials that can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.brailleinstitute.org/braillechallenge-for-students/sample-contest.html>

### ***What's in a Name?***

Frances Gentle tirelessly continued her work towards developing national standards for teachers of students with vision impairments by leading several discussions during the SPEVI Conference. SPEVI members were then polled as to how we should be named in this documentation. Below, Frances describes the results of the feedback:

I am pleased to advise that we received 27 responses to our online SPEVI Poll and email invitation to members to identify their preferred name for VI professionals for use in the SPEVI national standards. As you are aware, there are currently a range of titles for VI professionals across Australia's states and territories.

The results from our online SPEVI Poll and email invitation indicate that the preferred title to be used in the SPEVI national standards is Specialist teacher (vision impairment).

First preference and percentage of responses

- Specialist teacher (vision impairment) – 46%
- Specialist teacher of students with vision impairments – 19%
- Specialist vision teacher – 11.5%
- Vision support teacher – 11.5%
- Teacher of students who are blind or have low vision – 7.5%
- Vision teacher – 3.5%
- Other: Support teacher: Vision impairment – 3.5%
- Specialist vision educator – 0%

Based upon member responses, I therefore recommend that SPEVI adopts this title in its national standards.

Thank you to everyone who provided input into the draft SPEVI national standards during January 2015. The SPEVI Committee of Management, with the support of Marie Fram, has aggregated all member feedback (thanks Marie).

We have established a working group to revise the draft standards in accordance with member input.

The SPEVI Committee of Management will be meeting via teleconference at the end of March. The meeting will include a review of the updated SPEVI national standards. Once approval is given by the Committee, we will share the document with members.

Dr Frances Gentle is Lecturer, RIDBC Renwick Centre & The 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).

## Research update: A special thank you

Since 2011 we have been collaborating with SVRC on the GraVVITAS project (<http://gravvitas.infotech.monash.edu.au/>), an ARC (Australian Research Council) funded research project. The project brings Monash University, Statewide Vision Resource Centre, Department of Education and Training, Vision Australia, jTribe, and Catholic Education Office together towards the aim of presenting graphics to people who have vision impairments.

Over the years we have made significant progress and developed an iPad app and a custom designed haptic ring. Our solution has been used by people to read various graphics such as diagrams, floor plans, maps, and graphs. Recently, GraVVITAS project was put under the commercialisation scheme at Monash University and will go further under the name of RaisedPixels ([www.raisedpixels.com](http://www.raisedpixels.com)).

First of all, we would like to thank the Department of Education and Training. We could not even start the project without their support.

Secondly, we would like to thank the SVRC staff for their collaboration in the development of our solution. They have been very supportive in all stages of the project, and gave us the opportunity to work with them.

And finally, a huge thank you to students and their parents who participated in our usability studies and gave extraordinary feedback. We believe that without their feedback we could not have achieved such a success.

Thank you,  
Dr Cagatay Goncu  
Research Fellow, Faculty of IT, Monash University  
Director, RaisedPixels

## Upcoming audio described performances

The following Melbourne performances will be audio described:

### ***What Rhymes with Cars and Girls***

Fairfax Studio, Arts Centre, MTC

Audio Described Tuesday 17 March 6.30pm and Saturday 21 March 4pm with Tactile Tour at 3pm

Tickets phone (03) 8688 0888

### ***Strictly Ballroom***

Her Majesty's Theatre

Audio Described Thursday 16 Apr 8pm and Sunday 19 Apr 3pm

Tickets 1300 364 001 or for further information email [groupbookings@ticketek.com.au](mailto:groupbookings@ticketek.com.au)

### ***End Game***

Sumner Theatre, Southbank MTC

Audio Described Tuesday 21 April 6.30pm and Saturday 25 April 4pm with TT 3pm

Tickets phone (03) 8688 0888

### ***Don Carlos***

State Theatre, Arts Centre Melbourne

Audio Described Saturday 23 May 12pm plus TT time to be advised  
 Tickets phone (03) 9685 3700; Companion Card bookings are accepted

### ***Alice's Adventures in OperaLand, family performance***

Playhouse, Arts Centre Melbourne

Audio described Saturday 23 May 11:30am; TT 10:50am

Tickets 1300 182 183; to book in for TT phone Melissa (03) 9012 6652

### ***The Lion King***

Regent Theatre Melbourne

Audio Described Session Times Thursday 4th June at 8pm, Saturday 6th June at 2pm; TT available

Tickets: call Marriner Group Box Office (03) 9299 9800; Companion card is accepted

### ***The Waiting Room***

Fairfax Studio, Arts Centre Melbourne, MTC

Audio Described Tuesday 9 June 6.30pm and Saturday 13 June 4pm with TT 3pm

Tickets phone (03) 8688 0888

### ***Anything Goes, presented by Opera Australia***

Princess Theatre

Audio Described Wednesday 17th June 1pm matinee performance; TT time to be advised

Tickets: phone (03) 9685 3700; Companion Card bookings will be accepted

For more information including performance overviews, visit: [www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/events](http://www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/events) – filter events by type (eg audio described) and state (eg Victoria) with drop down menu at the top of the page.

## **Bloggers encouraged to audiocast their posts**

Source: Media Access Australia <http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/>

A campaign has been launched to encourage bloggers and other online content creators to provide audiocasts with their posts. Speak Your Word, an initiative driven by filmmaker, photographer and writer Miguel Cano, seeks to provide the global blind and vision-impaired community with a more human experience of the web.

Audiocasts, also known as podcasts, are audio files commonly presented as voice recordings and broadcasts available to stream or download via the internet. Mr Cano said Speak Your Word was targeted at bloggers in particular because their passion to communicate their experiences – whether travel, film, technology or food – would more likely drive them to also make audiocasts available. Motivated bloggers would also be more likely to overcome any potential embarrassment in recording themselves speaking, as well as any technological barriers they might encounter.

“Nowadays almost every device can record decent-quality audio, even the integrated microphone of a webcam or a smartphone could be enough. The real key is to take care of the recording environment, ensuring a silent and steady setting and striving to speak your words in a calm, clear and connecting way,” Mr Cano said.

As the Speak Your Word initiative develops, it will also provide tutorials for bloggers to help them with basic voice recording, and would provide advice on different recording software and hardware. Bloggers who have created audiocasts can share these via the Speak Your Word Twitter account.

## New rehabilitation service

Source: Diversified Rehab brochure

Diversified Rehab is a specialist low vision, neurological and physical rehabilitation provider offering a range of specialised occupational therapy rehabilitation programs to help the client meet the variety of independent living goals they may have following an injury or disability.

Services can be provided at home, school, work, or a community venue and include:

Aids and equipment assessment

Children's therapy programs such as sensory motor, handwriting, classroom modification

Upper limb and functional mobility therapy

Companion Cards and other Government reports

Comprehensive initial assessment – to develop goals, priorities, and recommendations

Environmental assessments – of home, work, or school environments

Falls, balance, posture – assessment and education

Home assessment and modification

Home programs – family and client education to complete training when therapist not present

Independent living skills – such as cooking, dressing, cleaning, day management

Life coaching – disability and motivation

Lifestyle and behaviour modification

For costs and further information contact Shane McSweeney: mobile: 0403 087 893.

## Final date for Special Provision applications

Due to a review of Special Provision the final date for Special Provision applications is now **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March** – the last day of term.

We will provide an update about VCAA's Review Special Provision in future editions of The Bulletin.

## Volunteer position in Tonga

From: Christine Casey

If you've ever wanted to experience life in a different country, while sharing your expertise, this may just be the perfect opportunity for you.

**Assignment Title:** Teacher Trainer (Blind and Vision Impaired) Assignment Location: Nuku'alofa, Tonga

**Assignment Duration:** 18 months

**Applications close:** 21 March 2015

**Proposed start:** July 2015

**Host Organisation Description:** The Mango Tree Centre for People with Disabilities (MTC), established by the Church of the Nazarene in 2002, provides rehabilitative and family support services for people with disabilities. Tonga currently has limited services for children or adults with disabilities. The services offered at MTC include pre-braille and braille classes, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, wheelchair and equipment provision, home visits and parent support, and computer training. Many of the children with vision impairments attending Mango Tree Centre have multiple impairments and many children and adults living with vision impairment and blindness in the wider community remain unidentified and receive no specialised support.

For role description and further information, visit the Volunteering Australia website.

## Come & Try: Gymnastics

From: Maurice Gleeson, Blind Sports Victoria

Come and try a gymnastics class for children who are blind or have low vision will be supported by inclusive coaches. This is a great opportunity for children with a vision loss to participate in a gymnastics program.

**When:** Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April

**Time:** 10am to 11.30am

**Where:** Aerosport Allstars, 12 Essington Street, Grovedale

**Bookings:** (03) 5245 8777 or [aerogyndance@bigpond.com](mailto:aerogyndance@bigpond.com)

## Braille music / braille tutor available

If your child is a current or future braille user and:

- a budding musician;
- a reluctant braille reader; or
- in need of a little extra academic or English language support; some private tuition may be just what they need.

My name is Christine Casey and I am a fully registered teacher with a number of years of teaching experience both within Australia and overseas. I have taught braille to students aged 3-50 years and braille music to children as young as seven. I am currently a part-time teacher at a mainstream Primary School in Ivanhoe, where I teach the classroom music program. I have held this position since 2010, although took leave in 2013 and 2014 in order to volunteer as a teacher of blind and vision impaired students in the Pacific Islands.

Prior to moving overseas, I worked as a visiting teacher (vision impairment) and was the braille music teacher at the Support Skills Program (SVRC).

As a competent braille user myself, who struggled with braille literacy as a child, I have a strong understanding of the needs of young readers and braille learners. As a blind musician, I also understand the importance of braille music literacy and strongly believe that fluency in braille music reading and writing is essential, whether the budding musician intends to make a living from music or simply enjoy music-making as a hobby. I also believe that braille and braille music learning should be enjoyable and relevant to each individual student.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss how I may be able to partner with you in order to support your child, please contact me via the SVRC.

## News

- **Geoff Bowen** is working as SVRC Psychologist on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays this year.
- **Tracy Lancaster** is working again two days per week as VT in NEVR.
- **Heidi Littleford** will be off on family leave – we wish her well!
- **Charlie Roberts** will be taking a couple of weeks off on paternity/dad leave – we wish Charlie and his partner well also!
- **Chris Sinopoli** will be on leave at the beginning of term 2.

## **Vacancies through DET's Recruitment Online**

- **South-Western:** VT Vision/Generalist (1014619), VT Physical/Health & Vision (1014621), VT Special Education/Generalist (1014622), VT Physical-Health/Generalist (1014618).
- **North-Western:** VT Vision (1014774), VT Health/Physical (1014768), VT Generalist Swan Hill (1014759)

## **Finally**

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Christine Casey and Ann Crowley.