

# The Bulletin

Number 11, Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015

## Professional Development for 2015

Event	Date
<b>Skill Power</b> 9.30 Audacity + JAWS – Glen Morrow, SVRC 11.30 iPad solutions! – Lyn Robinson, SVRC 1.30 QuickTac+Duxbury+Embossers to tactual images – Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 12 August
<b>Skill Power</b> 9.30 O&M: Skill development – ages & stages – Guide Dogs Victoria 11.30 iPad solutions – Lyn Robinson, SVRC 1.30 Intro to Excel with JAWS – Glen Morrow, SVRC	Wednesday 26 August
<b>Dot Power</b>	Tuesday 16 June

## Celebrate 'The Reading Hour' in Alternative Format with SVRC!

All school-aged students with vision impairments in Victoria can register to participate in our Statewide Reading Hour and read in their preferred medium eg braille, audio, etext, magnified print!



To register with SVRC, email Marion Blazé on [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au) with your name, the date you are reading, what you intend to read, the alternative format in which you will read, and where we can post/email your certificate.

For catalogues of materials in alternative formats available for eligible students, please visit the SVRC website.

## Vision Australia's Further Education Bursary for 2016

Vision Australia will award Further Education Bursaries to a select number of students who are blind or have low vision for post-school study in 2016.

The Bursaries provide adaptive technology to help ensure that these students can fully participate and succeed in their chosen studies. Applications open on 1 August 2015

For more information, please visit [www.visionaustralia.org/bursary](http://www.visionaustralia.org/bursary) or contact Vision Australia's Vocational Consultant, Belinda Wilson.

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## Big Arts Day (Term 2)

Groups A and 1 were treated to a great day again as part of the SVRC Support Skills Program.

### ***Alice's Adventures in Operaland with touch tour and audio-description***

Report from Jordie Howell, Music Teacher

To kick off the Big Arts Day Out, the students experienced a very special version of the story of Alice in Wonderland presented by Victorian Opera's Masters students. We were transported, along with Alice and the White Rabbit, to each country where the seven opera scenes took place. Alice and the White Rabbit became a character in each operatic scene by putting on part of the costume. The singers performed in four languages and we met composers such as Mozart, Puccini, Rossini and Humperdinck.



Visual elements such as costumes, props and sets are not usually accessible to a low vision or blind audience, however thanks to audio description, students knew exactly what was taking place on stage.

Prior to the performance, the students (and staff) were able to handle some of the props and costumes that would be used in the opera. Items included a flute covered in glitter and gems which would be used in the scene from *The Magic Flute*, a long heavy coat and a lotus flower found in *Lachme* and the Flower Duet.

Our thanks to the audio description staff and Victorian Opera for providing access to the costumes in the tactile tour. A special thanks to Michael Petruccelli, the White Rabbit, (seen in the photo) who spent time with our students at the end of the show and told us that he attended St Scholastica's School as part of the RVIB Reverse Integration program. What a small world!

### ***National Gallery of Victoria with touch tour***

Report from Michael Donnelly, Art Teacher

After the exciting romp through Opera Land with Alice and the White Rabbit, students were welcomed to the NGV International for a touch access tour of selected artworks from the collection. The tour began at the Mouse Hole entrance and an introduction to the NGV Education officers, Jane Strickland and Jill Anderson.

Once hands were washed and bags cloaked students were guided into the Great Hall, sitting or lying on the colourful round cushions or on the carpet to take in the



wonderful Leonard French coloured glass ceiling, making use of a tactile image and / or an iPad camera to take in the overall design. Then it was out to the gallery's sculpture garden via a circuitous route due to maintenance work being done on the NGV moat. In the garden the students encountered cast bronze works by Henry Moore, "Seated Figure" and Willem De Kooning, "Standing Figure". With these sculptures, students had touch access to parts of the work that were in reach and were shown tactile images of the overall works with a relative scale for comparison, one of the works being almost 4 metres high. An amusing "spaghetti" bench and a large glass and marble mosaic by Fernand Leger were also investigated. Some of the students also viewed "Rock Melt", a contemporary installation involving living plants, slag and concrete by Jamie North, and managed a quick visit to the Third Floor to climb through a new rope sculpture by Ernesto Neto called "The Island Bird" (see photo). There was also the opportunity to explore the iconic "Water Wall" at the main gallery entrance in order to get wet fingers (and sleeves if not careful).



Too soon it was time to leave again. The NGV staff were very pleased to accommodate our visit and with the thoughtful responses of the students. Hopefully more and more artworks will continue to be identified as available for access. All students were told that the NGV was their Gallery and families are encouraged to listen out for future accessible events as well as contacting the gallery to enquire what else might be offered in terms of touch access and audio-described tours. A big thanks again to Jane, Jill and all the NGV staff who help make our Gallery visits positive ones.

### ***Flinders Street Station: O&M challenge***

Report from Alicia San Martin, Children's Orientation & Mobility Specialist, Guide Dogs Victoria

Did you know that Flinders Street station is the longest building in Melbourne? Or that there are three different ways to enter a Flinders Street platform? Or that platform 11 is now a trendy café?

The students who attended the Big Arts Day O&M activity learnt all this information and much more. Metro's Community Education Officer Peter Platky gave the students an excellent tour of station and the opportunity to explore a stationary train. We were able to find answers to how many doors there are on a train carriage and the location of the emergency buttons and how they work. During the activity emphasis was placed on the students walking independently while following verbal directions. This was to provide maximum engagement with the environment and give students the opportunity to practice their orientation and mobility skills. Many of the students were surprised with how many tactile tiles their canes were able to find and then follow to different areas within the station and how high the platform is raised from the train tracks. The Children's Mobility Service would like to say a big thank-you to Peter and Metro for their assistance during the activity.



## SVRC Competition 2015

In the spirit of our information-sharing philosophy this year's SVRC Competition is designed to gather information that we can share with others. The challenge is to write up something interesting that you think other readers of The Bulletin need to know in relation to technology or "work arounds" for students with vision impairments.

**What:** A paragraph or a set of instructions or a cheat sheet or a nifty and imaginative use of technology

**When:** Must be received by the end of term 3 (18<sup>th</sup> September 2015)

**Who can participate:** Victorian primary- and secondary-aged students with vision impairments

**Format:** Print or braille or electronic or audio

**Prizes:** The best entry overall will receive a copy of KNFB Reader Mobile for i-Device or Android. Runners-up will receive one of a number of audio books, donated by Bolinda.

Please send your best entries to SVRC Competition – PO Box 201 Nunawading 3131 or [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au). Please include your name, year level and VT name.

## Setting up the Sony Cybershot DSC-QX10 with an iPad

From Lyn Robinson, SVRC

Many students with vision impairments are using the Sony Cybershot DXC QX10 to view the whiteboard through the iPad. This is a very compact camera which is 6 centimetres in diameter. Combined with a tripod it stands about 22 centimetres in height and can be placed unobtrusively in front of the whiteboard and wirelessly connect to the iPad.

It has 10X optical zoom and 18.2 mega pixels. To use the Sony QX10 with an iPad you need to download the PlayMemories app which is free from the iTunes store. This app then allows you to connect the camera to the iPad using WiFi. The camera allows you to zoom in and out. You have the option of photo or video mode.

Here's how to set one up:

1. Turn the power to the camera off – on/off button is on the top of the camera
2. Charge the camera using the lead provided
3. Download PlayMemories from iTunes onto the iPad
4. Turn the power to the camera on
5. Turn on the iPad
6. Go to Settings
7. Select Wi-Fi
8. Type in the password which can be found on the cover of the instruction manual or on the inside of the camera's battery cover
9. Check that the Wi-Fi has connected to the camera – indicated by a blue tick
10. Press the Home button
11. Open PlayMemories and the image will come through to the iPad

For further information, refer to the camera's instruction manual:

<http://pdf.crse.com/manuals/4477311131/EN/contents/TP0000226076.html>

## **Review of the Program for Students with Disabilities**

Source: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/psdreview.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/psdreview.aspx)

The Victorian Government made a commitment to establish Victoria as the Education State where every Victorian has an equal right to the knowledge and skills to shape their lives. Part of this work is to promote inclusive practices in schools so they can better support all children and young people, including those with disabilities and special needs.

The Special Needs Plan is part of this vision because every child deserves a great education to reach their full potential, especially those with special needs who already face additional challenges in their lives.

A fair and inclusive system will enable every child and young person to learn in a safe, positive and supportive environment in the setting best suited to their needs.

Work is under way on each of the commitments in the Government's Special Needs Plan. These are significant commitments and we want to make sure we take the right amount of time to develop and implement the changes, to ensure we get the best outcomes for our children. The first major step is a comprehensive review of the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Australia's former Disability Commissioner, Dr Graeme Innes, is leading face-to-face consultations with parents, academics, practitioners, principals and teachers from mid-July 2015.

The Department welcomes feedback from parents, carers, students, principals, teachers and disability professionals and advocates on how the program can better support children with special needs. An online survey will also be available from September 2015.

### ***For parents/carers of a child with a disability***

Source: DET's Eduweb

As part of the Victorian Government commitment to make Victoria the Education State, the Department of Education and Training has begun a review into how schools can better support students with special needs – including those with autism and dyslexia.

The review into the Program for Students with disabilities includes the opportunity for parents to tell the Department what they think of the current program and how it can be improved.

Renowned human rights practitioner and Australia's former Disability Commissioner, Dr Graeme Innes, will lead face-to-face consultations for the review which is designed to guide and improve our Department's approach to providing support to students with additional needs.

You can get involved by taking an online survey which will be available from September via: [www.education.vic.gov.au/specialneedsplan](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/specialneedsplan)

Your responses will help shape the Education State and encourage creative solutions to providing outstanding special needs education in Victoria.

## Participants and Volunteers Wanted for Blind and Vision Impaired AIA Vitality MiniRoos Football (soccer)

Source: Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria

Blind and Vision Impaired AIA Vitality MiniRoos exists to allow children with vision impairments to develop an understanding of the game of football (soccer), whilst also developing a love of the game. These sessions can provide a pathway into club football teams, as well as adult blind football competitions.

### Why play?

- Enhances communication skills
- Improves orientation and mobility
- Heightens spatial awareness and echo location

**Where:** Barnestoneworth United Juniors (based in Williamstown), Collingwood City (based in Richmond) and Preston Lions Football Club (based in Reservoir).

**When:** Sessions will commence on Saturday 1st August 2015 from 10.30-11.30am and run for 6 weeks. Brothers and sisters are encouraged to register and participate alongside their sibling.

**Cost:** Registration cost is \$20. This covers insurance and registration with the club. Registered participants will also receive a playing shirt in club colours.

**Further information:** Please email [info@blindsports.org.au](mailto:info@blindsports.org.au) or phone 9822 8876 if you would like further information about the program or if you'd like to be a volunteer.

## Blind Citizens Australia's 'Parent News'

Source: Blind Citizens Australia

Blind Citizens Australia's Parent News newsletter will be changing to an online format for parents and professionals. The online format offers:

1. Faster access to relevant information as it happens
2. The ability to ask questions, or share information with other parents or professionals
3. Promote your own activities and programs to other subscribers

You do not need to be a member of BCA to join this group, and it is completely free to join.

If you would like to subscribe send an email to [bca-parentnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.au](mailto:bca-parentnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.au). You will then receive an email with further instructions.

Once subscribed, you can post a message to the group by sending an email to: [bca-parentnews@yahoogroups.com.au](mailto:bca-parentnews@yahoogroups.com.au)

You can unsubscribe from the group at any time by sending an email to: [bca-parentnews-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com.au](mailto:bca-parentnews-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com.au)

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact Hanna Mazzeo, National Advocacy and Policy Officer, Blind Citizens Australia: [hanna.mazzeo@bca.org.au](mailto:hanna.mazzeo@bca.org.au)

## Continuing Education: RIDBC

### ***Development of independence in students who are blind or have low vision***

**When:** Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 August 2015

**Time:** 4.30 – 6.30pm

**Cost:** Both sessions \$100; Single session \$50; Parent \$50

**Presenter:** Natalie Kaine, OT with the Sydney Children's Services team at Vision Australia

**Further information including how to enrol:** [www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/cpe-event/encouraging-independence-children-and-teenagers-who-are-blind-or-have-low-vision](http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/cpe-event/encouraging-independence-children-and-teenagers-who-are-blind-or-have-low-vision) or email [trudy.smith@ridbc.org.au](mailto:trudy.smith@ridbc.org.au)

### ***Braille Examination Techniques and Student Strategies***

**When:** Monday 14 September 2015

**Cost:** \$200; Parent \$50

**Presenter:** Josie Howse, Manager State Braille and Large Print Unit, NSW

**Further information including how to enrol:** [www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/cpe-event/braille-examination-techniques-and-student-strategies](http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/cpe-event/braille-examination-techniques-and-student-strategies) or email [trudy.smith@ridbc.org.au](mailto:trudy.smith@ridbc.org.au)

## VISCON

This biennial two day conference is designed for educators, school support staff, therapists and stakeholders who support students with vision loss. Presentation topics include curriculum, pedagogy, accessibility and orientation and mobility. One of the program highlights includes a 5-way web conference conversation with Dr Cay Holbrook, Dr Karen Wolffe, Dr Kelly Lusk, Dr Frances Mary D'Andrea and Dr Penny Rosenblum!

**When:** Thursday 17 and Friday 18 September 2015

**Time:** 9.00am – 5.00pm

**Cost:** Full registration \$300; single day and remote access available

**Presenters:** Tom Smith and a range of presenters from Canada, Australia and the USA

**Further information including how to enrol:** [www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/cpe-event/viscon](http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/cpe-event/viscon) or email [trudy.smith@ridbc.org.au](mailto:trudy.smith@ridbc.org.au)

## Seen This Movie?: Inside Out

From Michael Donnelly, VT and Art Teacher

I have recently seen the film Inside Out, as have most of our young(ish) adult children, and we would all whole-heartedly recommend it as a very thoughtful and enjoyable movie for children (8+) and older persons (probably not very young kids). I notice that Hoyts Central and Victoria Gardens offer a number of Audio Description (AD) sessions for the film, and others, so would recommend it for students and families. Other Hoyts outlets also offer Audio Description:

[www.hoyts.com.au/movies/audio\\_description.aspx](http://www.hoyts.com.au/movies/audio_description.aspx).

### ***From the Hoyts website:***

Audio description (AD) refers to an additional narration track for blind and visually impaired consumers of visual media. It consists of a narrator talking through the presentation, describing what is happening on the screen during the natural pauses in the audio, and sometimes during dialogue if deemed necessary. At the accessible locations the signal is sent to a receiver which as headset is worn by the user.

## Upcoming CMS Activities for Kids

Source: Get About, Issue 60 from the Children's Mobility Service (Guide Dogs Victoria)

### **Junior Mobility Group Program: "The Voice"**

**When:** 21-23 September 2015

**Aim:** To develop students' confidence in using their voice to advocate for their needs in a range of settings and environments.

**For more information:** [alicia.s@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:alicia.s@guidedogsvictoria.com.au) or (03) 9854 4442

### **International White Cane Day**

**When:** 15 October 2015

**Activity:** A walk in the city to let the community of Victoria know about the importance of white canes as a mobility aide for children with vision impairments and the services of Guide Dogs Victoria.

**For more information:** [alicia.s@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:alicia.s@guidedogsvictoria.com.au) or (03) 9854 4442

## News from the Community

### **Student in the News**

Source: Whitehorse Leader, 1 July 2015

Alexandra has been awarded as Whitehorse's Young Person of the Month for July for her outstanding contribution to her school and for her passion and achievements in music.

Alexandra – who has Cerebral Palsy which impedes on muscular control and movement – is a successful Year 12 student facing the challenges of this demanding year, as well as a keen participant in the school debating teams in the previous two years... Alexandra is also visually impaired and such, uses specialised equipment for reading and writing – BrailleNote. She is extremely competent and readily keeps up with her peers. In 2014, with great courage and self-determination, Alexandra volunteered to be part of the SPRVI Conference. She submitted a paper on Surviving Secondary School as a blind student, which was accepted and she was invited as a guest speaker to present her paper to an audience of professionals from the field of vision impairment and to parents.

**Ed:** Alexandra was also a significant and much-loved participant in the Support Skills Program and we all wish her well for her exam results and her future!

### **eSight Eyewear**

A former VT student wrote recently that a friend of his in the USA uses eSight Eyewear. She has Stargardts with vision of 6/60 and using eSight Eyewear she can read the newspaper on her lap. Apparently she "reckons they are amazing!"

See eSight in action on YouTube: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=-E2dcekXzts>

**YOUNG PERSON OF THE MONTH**

Alexandra Douros has been awarded as Whitehorse's Young Person of the Month for July for her outstanding contribution to her school and for her passion and achievements in music.

Alexandra — who has Cerebral Palsy which impedes on muscular control and movement — is a successful Year 12 student facing the challenges of this demanding year, as well as a keen participant in the Koonung debating teams in the previous two years.

With a passion for music, Alexandra has attended a number of music camps outside of Koonung and she revels in singing and takes voice lessons at school. In 2013, Alexandra was part of the composition team for the school play *Twelfth Night*. Drama and comedy are also her loves.

Alexandra is also visually impaired and as such, uses specialised equipment for reading and writing — Braille Note. She is extremely competent and readily keeps up with her peers. In 2014, with great courage and self-determination, Alexandra volunteered to be part of the South Pacific Educators of Vision Impairment Biennial Conference. She submitted a paper on Surviving Secondary School as a blind student, which was accepted and she was invited as a guest speaker to present her paper to an audience of professionals from the field of vision impairment and to parents.

Prior to this admirable contribution to our society, in 2008 Alexandra presented the opening speech on behalf of Vision Australia at the Victoria Day celebration. In 2012 she gave two presentations to trainee volunteers at Very Special Kids about her life and her involvement in Very Special Kids.

**Do you know an outstanding young person?**

Nominate them for Council's Young Person of the Month Award. Monthly winners receive a JB Hi-Fi voucher in recognition of their achievements and will feature in the *Whitehorse News*.



## Did You Know? Victorian School Statistics, 2015

Source: DET website ([www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/pages/factsandfigures.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/pages/factsandfigures.aspx)) and EVAC data

### Number of enrolments (full time equivalent)

	Government	Catholic	Independent
Primary	340,844	111,232	54,661
Secondary	221,458	95,394	76,738
Special/Language	13,705	559	566
Total	576,007	207,185	131,965

Total: 915,159

### Number of students with vision impairments

Total: 530

## Scholarships for Overseas Study

Source: [www.aof.org.au/TheAOFScholarship.aspx](http://www.aof.org.au/TheAOFScholarship.aspx)

The Australian Overseas Foundation Scholarship is available to Australians between the ages of 21 and 31 who have completed a trade apprenticeship or vocational traineeship to Certificate Level Three. Applicants should be exceptional in their fields of endeavour, are goal orientated and capable of leadership development. The study period is generally one to two years.

The AOF Scholarship provides:

- The opportunity to travel and work overseas.
- Return economy airfares.
- Some initial accommodation and cost for shipment of tools etc.
- Assistance in obtaining employment and work visas.
- Some assistance attending specialised training trade and industry forums.

Jeni Blake notes that this program offers study and career opportunities for students with vision impairments as students with disabilities or disadvantage are encouraged to apply.

For further information visit:

<http://aof.org.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JonoGN4ldQ8%3d&tabid=61>

## More from the Local Paper

Source: Maroondah Leader, 1 July 2015

### ***Federal Labor Candidate for Deakin Tony Clark launches a campaign slogan that makes reference to his blindness***

THE LABOR candidate for the Federal seat of Deakin is creating waves with his provocative campaign slogan.

Tony Clark launched his official poster on Facebook on Friday with the slogan “no sight, great vision”.

Mr Clark, 45, lost his sight at age 19.

He said the campaign poster had been widely shared and supported

**NO SIGHT  
GREAT VISION**



on Facebook with more than 100 shares and 401 likes.

“I hope people look at the campaign poster and think ‘gee, that’s a bit different’ and want to find out more’,” Mr Clark said.

One supporter wrote of Mr Clark’s official Facebook page: “that is the best campaign slogan I’ve ever seen. Go Tony!”

Mr Clark said he saw his blindness as a strength.

He is no stranger to politics and ran as the Labor candidate for Ringwood in last year’s state election.

“My blindness gives me a whole lot of experience and understanding,” Mr Clark said.

“I’m not afraid of it.

“Disability is not something to be hidden away or ashamed of.”

**Ed:** Another person with a vision impairment who sees “his blindness as a strength”!

## Staff and Student News

- **Marli Gernasoni** from Melba College has completed the SVRC Braille Correspondence Course – congratulations Marli!!!
- **Belinda McDonald** has been successful in gaining the role as Professional Practice Leader – Complex Needs for SWVR. She is finalising her work as VT – VI in that region and is scheduled to begin her new role on 3 August.
- **Dianne Skillern** will be on leave for three months – taking a well-earned rest and taking in some of the sights that Australia has to offer. The rest of us will attempt to carry on without her – know that we’ll be doing our best.
- **Emily White** has been checking out Spain and surrounds for the past month – we look forward to her stories!
- **Lyn Robinson** is also taking some time away from the office early this term but will be back on deck from mid-August.
- **Zhi Jin** has recently returned from her holiday in Europe – she had a wonderful time! Of course!

## Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin particularly Jeni Blake, Helen Caldwell, Lea Nagel and Zhi Jin.