

# The Bulletin

Number 14, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015

## Professional Development for 2015

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

Event	Date
<b>New: Mac OS X for People with Low Vision</b> via DET's Adobe Connect web conferencing site 10.00 to 11.30am	Tuesday 15 September
<b>Term 3 Dot Power:</b> for beginning braille readers	Tuesday 8 September
<b>New: Abacus!</b> with Charlie Roberts 11.30 to 1.00pm	Friday 18 September
<b>Term 4 Dot Power:</b> for beginning braille readers	Tuesday 17 November
<b>Support Skills Try Day</b>	Friday 20 November
<b>SVRC Expo from 10am to 2pm:</b> Access Technology for Students with Vision Impairments.	Monday 23 November
<b>SVRC Christmas Morning Tea</b>	Wednesday 2 December

## Skill Power Online: Mac OS X for People with Low Vision

**When:** Tuesday 15 September from 10.00 to 11.30am

**Where:** **Anywhere you like!**

**Topic:** Using Mac OS X for people with low vision including mouse cursor size, contrast options, display settings, brightness and the Zoom accessibility feature

**Presenter:** Glen Morrow

**You'll need:** A desktop computer connected to the internet, a set of speakers or earphones (especially if you're in an open office!) and an up-to-date version of Adobe Flash Player OR an iPad or iPhone with the Adobe Connect app downloaded for free from the App Store.

You just enter the URL <https://connect.vic.edu.au/skillpower> into your browser or the Adobe Connect app and enter the room as a guest.

If you'd like to trial your connection beforehand, give us a call and we can certainly help you out. The session is fully interactive. You can participate by asking questions and following along.

If you'd like more information, please get in touch.



## Inside This Issue

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## Better Start & NDIS Providers – Qualified Vision Teachers with SPEVI Membership

Information provided by: Frances Gentle, SPEVI President

Frances Gentle has been following up the request on behalf of SPEVI members for the addition of appropriately qualified teachers of children with vision impairments to the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel.

Director of Early Intervention Policy, Disability and Employment Sector Reform Branch of the Australian Government Department of Social Services, Vera Mitrovic, was approached and has indicated that Fran's application on behalf of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI) has been approved. This applies to qualified teachers of children with vision impairments who have signed up to SPEVI's new full membership category of "Qualified Specialist Teacher (VI) plus Professional Learning".

This new SPEVI membership category is open to specialist teachers with **tertiary qualifications** in education of persons with vision impairment, who complete a mandatory **minimum requirement of 15 hours of professional learning in vision impairment every two years**.

- **Tertiary qualifications** may include a fourth year major in an undergraduate degree, or postgraduate qualifications at the Graduate Diploma or Master's degree level. (Evidence of tertiary qualifications should be submitted, such as copies of academic transcripts.)
- **Professional learning** may include face-to-face or online lectures, workshops and courses, and engagement in accredited professional learning events. For information about mandatory professional learning requirements, please refer to the *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders*, and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2012; 2014).

**Note:** Applications for membership must be approved by the SPEVI Committee of Management, with new members agreeing to abide by SPEVI's Constitution, policies and Code of Conduct (see SPEVI website). Once approval has been granted by the Committee of Management, a *SPEVI Record of Professional Learning in Vision Impairment, Application for Currency* will be provided for completion and submission to the SPEVI President every six months (together with evidence of professional learning).

One of the implications of the Department of Social Services' approval of suitably qualified SPEVI specialist teachers (VI) applying to join the **Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel as "sole providers"**, is that **these SPEVI members will also be eligible to apply as service providers under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**.

SPEVI's membership form may be downloaded from [www.spevi.net/join/](http://www.spevi.net/join/).

For information about the Australian Government Department of Social Services, go to <https://www.dss.gov.au>

Please contact Fran if you are a current SPEVI member, or are interested in becoming a member, under the new SPEVI membership category of "Qualified Specialist Teacher (VI) plus Professional Learning".

## Update: PSD Review: Online Survey Now Open

Reference: Education department website

### **Key messages:**

- The Government is committed to providing all students with additional needs – regardless of where they live – with teachers, support and facilities they deserve.
- Every Victorian student and their family deserves nothing less than a great school in every community, excellent learning and teaching in every classroom and the promise of a bright future.

The PSD review will increase the capacity of Government schools to support and maximise the learning of children with a disability using a family friendly, strength-based approach.

There are several stages incorporated into the review, which will deliver its recommendations in November 2015 for the Government to consider.

Ideas and solutions are sought from students with a disability, parents, carers, teachers, specialist teachers, support staff and other community members through online consultation. This is an opportunity to get involved and have a say on how to improve the PSD.

Recommendations can be posted to:

PSD Review

Department of Education and Training

PO Box 6307

Melbourne VIC 3004

## **New Talking Calculator: Orion TI-30XS**

Source: <http://newscenter.ti.com>

Texas Instruments (TI) (NASDAQ: TXN), Orbit Research and the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) today unveiled the Orion TI-30XS MultiView Talking Scientific Calculator, the world's first fully accessible multi-line scientific calculator, created for students who are visually impaired, and available for the upcoming school year. Based on the popular TI-30XS Multiview™ scientific calculator from Texas Instruments, the Orion TI-30XS represents a breakthrough in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education for students with vision impairment.

The advanced, four-line scientific calculator, with higher-level math and science functionality, is ideal for middle school through college students. A clear, high-quality, recorded voice announces each key and the answer on the display, providing a choice of speech modes for quiet or verbose operation.

## Transition Lenses – New technology in glasses which get darker

By Marion Blazé, Education Officer, SVRC

Transition lenses, that get darker in sunnier conditions, have been available for years, but recent developments have seen many improvements in this technology.

Transition lenses can now get significantly darker out of doors, while maintaining better clarity indoors.

Advances in technology now allow greater temperature stability. These lenses used to work better in the cold, so on a hot sunny day, when you need the tint most, it would not get as dark. Not so now.

They are now more reactive to indirect light, so will even get darker when lighting is high indoors.



There are grey, brown or green tints available, and there is even a tint which is Polarised. Polarisation cuts out horizontal glare such as from the surface of water.

Even the speed in which these lenses react has improved and their ability to protect eyes from UV rays can be as much as 100%.

So if you have a vision condition which makes you sensitive to glare, make sure you ask your optician about the latest in transition lens technology.

## Hearing and Echolocation: Research Update from University of Southampton

The ability that some people have to use echoes to determine the position of an otherwise silent object, in a similar way to bats and dolphins, requires good high-pitch hearing in both ears, according to new research from the University of Southampton.

The study, published in *Hearing Research*, found that locating an object by listening to echoes, without moving the head, requires good hearing at high frequencies and in both ears.

Dr Daniel Rowan, lead author of the study, says: “We know that hearing echoes is very important in daily life for some blind people. Hearing loss, such as associated with getting older, usually reduces hearing at high frequencies in both ears. Some people can develop deafness in one ear. We wanted to get some insight into how much those particular forms of hearing loss might affect users of echoes to locate objects: our results suggest they would struggle.”

Dr Rowan adds: “Hearing aid services tend to focus on how well a person can hear speech. Our research indicates that those services also need to take into account whether someone needs to hear echoes in their daily life. For example, they might need hearing aids in both ears, despite the emerging trend in some parts of the country to only fit one.”

For further information visit: [www.southampton.ac.uk](http://www.southampton.ac.uk)

# Everybody In: Teaching Swimming and Water Safety to Children with Vision Impairments

## ***AUSTSWIM Recognised In House Recognition Workshop***

Professional Development Points: 3.5 points

Program Accreditation Number: IHR315034

Course provider: Blind Sports Victoria

This half-day professional development program will focus on the teaching and inclusion of children with vision impairments in learn-to-swim programs. Main topics will include:

- The importance of learning to swim and water safety for a child with vision impairments
- The impact of childhood vision loss on motor development, concept development and social-emotional development as it relates to swimming and water safety
- The philosophy of inclusion: what it does and doesn't mean in a learn-to-swim context
- Modification: what, why, when, and how?
- Teaching methods, strategies, equipment and resources to make your learn-to-swim program accessible for children with vision impairments
- Considerations for children who have vision impairments and additional disabilities or learning needs

Participants will engage in a range of theory and practical activities (wet/dry), including the simulation of vision impairment in an aquatic setting, developing and modifying learning activities and lesson plans, observing a live teaching demonstration with children with vision impairments, and a Q&A session.

Participants will receive 3.5 PD points and a certificate of attendance. Bathers are required. Tea and coffee are provided.

### ***Program Presenter:***

Emily White, B.Sc (Health/ Phys. Ed.) (U. of Virginia, USA, 2004), Masters (Teaching) (U. of Virginia, USA, 2004), Masters (Sp. Ed., Vision Imp.) (U. of Newcastle, 2014).

Emily has taught swimming and water safety for 11 years to children with and without disabilities, including in special and mainstream schools, specialist programs (including as Head Coach/ Consultant at Vision Impaired Swim Victoria), and in private and public swim schools. Emily has been presenting on teaching and including students with vision impairments in swimming and physical education since 2007, including for STREAM Metro 2013 and STREAM Regional 2012 and 2014, YMCAs, Vision Australia, and public, Catholic and independent schools. Emily has AUSTSWIM TSW, Access and Inclusion, and Infants qualifications. She is also a VIT-registered teacher.

**Date:** 18 October 2015

**Time:** Registration from 12:30 for 1pm start- 4:30pm

**Venue:** Ruyton Girls School Aquatic Centre, Fitzwilliam St, Kew.

Entrance to the Aquatic Centre is between Selbourne and Coleridge Roads, Kew.

**Cost:** \$40. Please contact us if you require assistance with payment.



**Blind Sports Victoria**

sport and recreation for blind and vision impaired people

**Spaces are limited so book today!**

## **New Apple Offerings**

From: Glen Morrow, SVRC

While most Australians were sleeping during the early hours of Thursday morning (10 September), Apple were holding an event in the US to launch new products and iOS 9, the latest operating system for iPads, iPhones and iPod Touches. Here's a quick summary of some of the things that may be of interest.

### ***The iPad Pro***

For a while there we wanted smaller iPads, but now we're getting a bigger iPad. The iPad Pro comes in at 12.9". There's also now an optional Apple keyboard that clips onto the iPad magnetically. There will also be an Apple Pencil which is a new stylus that can be used to move around the screen. The screen responds to the amount of pressure you put on it. The iPad Pro comes with iOS 9 and supports side-by-side app multitasking (so you can have two apps on the screen at the same time), it also comes with four internal speakers and will not ship in Australia until November. The Apple iPad Keyboard and Apple Pencil are optional extras.

### ***Apple TV***

There was a new Apple TV, with a touch screen remote that allows you to swipe and tap to move around the menus. The Apple TV also comes with a new operating system, tvOS and you can now use Siri to ask the device to do things for you like 'Play episode 4 of season 2 of Modern Family'.

### ***iPhone 6s and 6s Plus***

The new versions of Apple's iPhones have improved cameras, faster processors and something called 3D touch. This means that the screen recognises the difference between a tap, a press and other touch commands. Someone described it as a bit like right-clicking with a mouse. You can preview a link or email or take a picture without having to go into specific apps.

### ***iOS 9***

The new version of iOS comes out on September 16. I thought we'd take a quick look at a couple of new accessibility features and also the new multitasking feature available on the iPad version.

iOS 9 is more about stability and polish. That said, there are a number of new features that are worth talking about.

#### **Touch Accommodations**

Touch Accommodations allow you to adjust the sensitivity of the touch screen. It is most helpful if you (or someone you support) touches the screen accidentally or applies the wrong amount of pressure. When Touch Accommodations is turned on, there are several options, including Touch Duration, allowing you to adjust the amount of time before the device recognises the touch as a touch. This is handy for preventing accidental taps.

#### **Keyboard**

There is a new **Keyboard** option that allows you to change specific options for hardware and software keyboards.

Hardware keyboard options include changing key repeat and turning sticky keys on and off and also enabling slow keys.

The software keyboard option allows you to turn Show Lower Case Keys on and off. When turned on, the keyboard shows the keys as lower case or uppercase depending on the SHIFT key. Traditionally iOS on-screen keyboards show all letters as uppercase regardless of whether the SHIFT key is on or off.

The Touch Accommodations and Keyboard options are located in Accessibility under General in the Settings app of iOS 9.

For iPad users, the multitasking features of iOS 9 allow you to have two apps on the screen at the same time. Split screen gives you a divided view of two apps at once and Slide Over allows you to see one app as your primary window and the second app sits behind and you can quickly switch between both with a simple touch gesture.

Visit: [www.applevis.com/](http://www.applevis.com/)

## **mEYE World Photographic Competition**

Source: [www.meyephoto.com.au/home/.aspx](http://www.meyephoto.com.au/home/.aspx)

The mEYE World Photographic Competition, an initiative of Macular Disease Foundation Australia, is now open. Enter a photo which captures the competition theme *See My World* and be in the running to win. There are a number of categories including:

- Open – general public
- Macular disease community
- Health Professional
- Junior (Australian residents under 18 years as at 8 September 2015)

Entries close 8 September 2015 at 5pm.

## **Premier's Reading Challenge Closing Soon**

The Premier's Reading Challenge closes on 14 September 2015.

Schools are asked to finalise their data by this date to ensure all eligible students receive their Challenge certificates.

## **Bewt Website: AppleVis**

A community-powered website for blind and low-vision users of Apple's range of Mac computers, the iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Apple TV and Apple Watch.

AppleVis aims to encourage and support people in exploring the many ways in which these mainstream products and related applications can offer opportunities for personal enrichment, independence and empowerment for people with vision impairments.

The website can also be browsed using tags which include: accessories, bluetooth, braille, camera, gaming, GPS, iOS, iOS apps, iPad, iPhone, OCR, VoiceOver and more.

Visit: [www.applevis.com](http://www.applevis.com)

## Bewt Apps

Below are some apps that may be of use to students with vision impairments – we haven't tried them so if you do, please send a review!

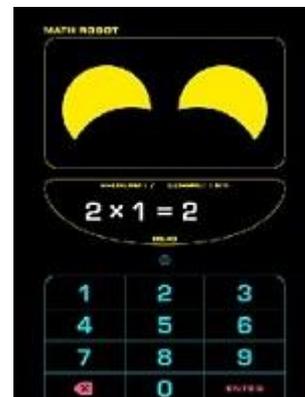
The information below comes from iTunes pages.

### **Math Robot™**

Math Robot by the American Printing House for the Blind was designed for use by students who are blind or have low vision and sighted students alike. Math Robot provides fun drills and practices for simple math problems. The app is both self-voicing and accessible with VoiceOver.

Math Robot announces each problem as it comes up. The low vision mode adds extra contrast. It may be possible to connect to a refreshable braille display and use this to read the question and enter the answer.

Teachers, parents, and students can set the range of numbers, the mathematical operations, the number of tries, and more.



### **CareerConnect**

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) has produced the CareerConnect App™, a tool for professionals, job seekers, parents and youth who are blind or have low vision.

AFB CareerConnect is a free online resource center specific to career exploration, job seeking skills, transition from school to work, e-mentoring, and navigating the employment process as a person with a vision impairment.



This app has been optimized for iOS VoiceOver and accessibility features and allows you to:

- find employment-related lesson plans for teachers and transition specialists who work with students who are blind or have low vision
- browse and read “Our Stories,” packed with informative personal stories from people who are vision impaired and successfully employed in various fields
- browse and read blog posts from the CareerConnect Blog, providing current info about navigating the employment process

### **AccessNote**

AccessNote is a free, accessible notetaker developed by the American Foundation for the Blind for the iOS platform and designed particularly for VoiceOver users.

In addition to being a low cost alternative to traditional note takers, AccessNote will allow users to combine efficient note taking with the countless other features and functions of the iOS devices.

AccessNote features:

- keyboard commands customized for input with QWERTY and refreshable braille display
- search features for finding text globally across all notes and within a note
- Keystroke efficiency - Less keystrokes to get the job done.
- efficient navigation throughout a note by page, paragraph, line, word, character

## Inclusive Schools Fund

Source and further information: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

The Inclusive Schools Fund is a \$10 million fund designed to help make Victoria the Education State, providing Victorian Government schools with quality new spaces and more inclusive facilities, based on best practice research and design.

Schools can apply for funding to build best practice inclusive school facilities. Funding is intended to:

- Increase participation and improve learning outcomes for students with disabilities through strengthening and developing inclusive government school environments.
- Promote universal design in classroom organisation and teaching approaches that are tailored to the individual needs of all learners.
- Create innovative models of inclusive best practice for other schools to consider in facility planning and design for students with disabilities.
- Maximise curriculum and building access to students with disabilities, including leveraging partnership arrangements to improve inclusive design elements where possible.

**Applications close:** 5pm Monday 16 November 2015

**Projects approved:** December 2015

**Building works commence:** Term 1, 2016

## SVRC Competition 2015 – Closing Next Week!

**What:** A paragraph or a set of instructions or a cheat sheet about 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

Please send your best entries to SVRC Competition – PO Box 201 Nunawading 3131 or via email. Please include your name, year level and VT name.

## News

- In more SVRC staffing news, we will be saying goodbye to **Andrew Chang** who has worked here for 4 years. Andrew has successfully applied for an IT position in Sydney. We will miss him and wish him all the very best!
- **Prue Gunner**, VT from South-western region is currently touring the USA and will return to work at the beginning of term 4.
- **Dianne Simpson**, VT from South-western region will be in Italy shortly! How very nice!
- A great day was had at the recent Dot Power – **Dakota** and her mum went straight home and cooked up a storm – see photo (right) and more in the next issue!



## Braille Transcription Then & Now; & Farewell (for now) to Nola

Things have changed quite a bit since **Nola Houghton** began working as a braille transcriber. That's Nola in the photo in the 1980s sitting in her office at Vision Australia (formerly RVIB). She's working on her Perkins Braille because all production was done this way in those days. In front of her sits a reading stand with the text book she is transcribing and beside her is a ready stack of braille paper...



These days in the transcription department, the Perkins Braille is still used – but only to label the covers of books ... and only because we can't stuff a braille book in the embosser!

Today we receive text books from publishers in PDF or scan them using the photocopier. Diagrams are extracted and edited in a drawing program; no longer do we rely on the light box to trace diagrams – or build collages using string, fabric and rice. Text is extracted and edited in another program – so if an error is made, the transcriber doesn't have to begin the whole page again!

Do we need another copy for a second student? No problem! Just send the file to the embosser, bind and pop in the mail!

The advent of the refreshable braille display means that overall less braille is being produced here at the SVRC – but not that less braille is being read by students. Students have access to text-based braille via their braille note-takers! And can still read the thousands of pages of hard-copy braille including the thousands of diagrams produced annually.

Nola began work for the Education Department at Vermont SC in 1991. From there, she worked with a number of totally blind students at Fairhills High School and Knox Gardens Primary School. Nola has been a valued member of the SVRC production team since 2004 and her speed, efficiency, accuracy and attention to detail has been an inspiration to us all. Nola's Perkins writing sounds like a freight train rushing through the Nullarbor!

Nola's love of the outdoors has permeated our space. Her beautiful screen saver slide show of self-taken photos of mountain ranges, snow igloos, Jess' beach volleyball and Matt's high country adventures has sparked many a conversation about adventure and physical activity.

Nola is planning some excellent adventures involving the bush, snow and the soles of many pairs of hiking boots!

## Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Glen Morrow, Garry Stinchcombe, Emily White.