

# The Bulletin

Number 20, Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015

The staff of the SVRC wish you a very Merry Christmas and/or a wonderful summer/holiday. Thank you for your assistance and contribution to the vision impairment community in 2015. We'll have a skeleton staff here over the holidays; and the SVRC will be back on deck for the beginning of the 2016 school year.



## Professional Development 2016

The PD calendar including downloadable programs: [www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml). There are more details including downloadable programs on the SVRC website.

Event	Date
<b>Term 1 – 2016</b>	<b>11 April to 24 June</b>
<b>Educational Support for Blind Students</b>	Monday 8 February
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b>	Wednesday 17 February
<b>Educational Support for Students with Low Vision</b>	22 Feb OR 23 Feb
<b>New Visiting Teacher Orientation Day</b>	Monday 29 February
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b>	Tuesday 1 March
<b>Including Students with Vision Impairments in PE &amp; Sport</b>	TBC Wednesday 9 March
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b>	Wednesday 16 March
<b>Family Futures Forum to be held at Vision Australia</b>	Saturday 19 March
<b>Educational Support for VI Students with Additional Impairments</b>	Monday 21 March
<b>Term 2 - 2016</b>	<b>11 April to 24 June</b>
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b>	Tuesday 19 April
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b>	Wednesday 4 May
<b>Art4Kids with VI?</b>	Wednesday 11 May
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b>	Tuesday 17 May

## VCE Special Arrangements

We've had a few calls regarding Special Arrangements for students in 2016. Helpful information can be found on the VCAA website.

This page details special examination arrangements for VCE external assessments – with sections pertaining to eligibility, types of special examination arrangements (extra time, alternative format, separate room, separate supervisor, reader, scribe, use of computer), and evidence required for students with vision impairments.

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## DET Equipment Grants Program

Guidelines and application forms regarding the Equipment Grants Program for students in Department schools is now available via Edugate.

Equipment grants are available to assist schools to purchase major items of essential, specialised equipment for students with mild vision impairments who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities.

The following information is required:

- completed application form signed by the principal (for a student not currently receiving PSD funding)
- report from the student's visiting teacher outlining the nature of the student's vision impairment and why the equipment is essential to support the student
- evidence of the student's visual condition
- quote for the item of equipment that specifies its name, make and model number and cost.

Applications close on 29 February 2016.

## Special Needs Plan: Building Teacher Capability for Inclusive Education

Source: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/specialneeds.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/specialneeds.aspx)

Building teaching excellence through pre-service and in-service training is central to making schools more inclusive and improving outcomes for students with a disability.

As part of the Special Needs Plan, the government is committed to supporting all teachers in Victoria to engage in professional learning activities to improve the quality of teaching in every classroom for students with disabilities.

To achieve this, teachers will be required to engage in relevant professional learning activities in preparation for renewal of registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching in September 2016 and in each year after that. The next generation of teachers will also be prepared to teach in inclusive education settings by completing training on teaching students with disabilities as part of their tertiary studies.

These new requirements apply to all Victorian teachers in government, Catholic and independent schools and early childhood settings.

Reflecting this change, registration as a teacher with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) now includes the requirement that teachers identify the professional development they have engaged in to build capacity to teach learners with a disability. This will be part of the 20 hours of professional development required to meet annual renewal requirements. Professional development can be online, external to or within the workplace, individual or as part of a team, demonstrations, professional reading, programs leading to a recognised qualification or inquiry based projects and research.

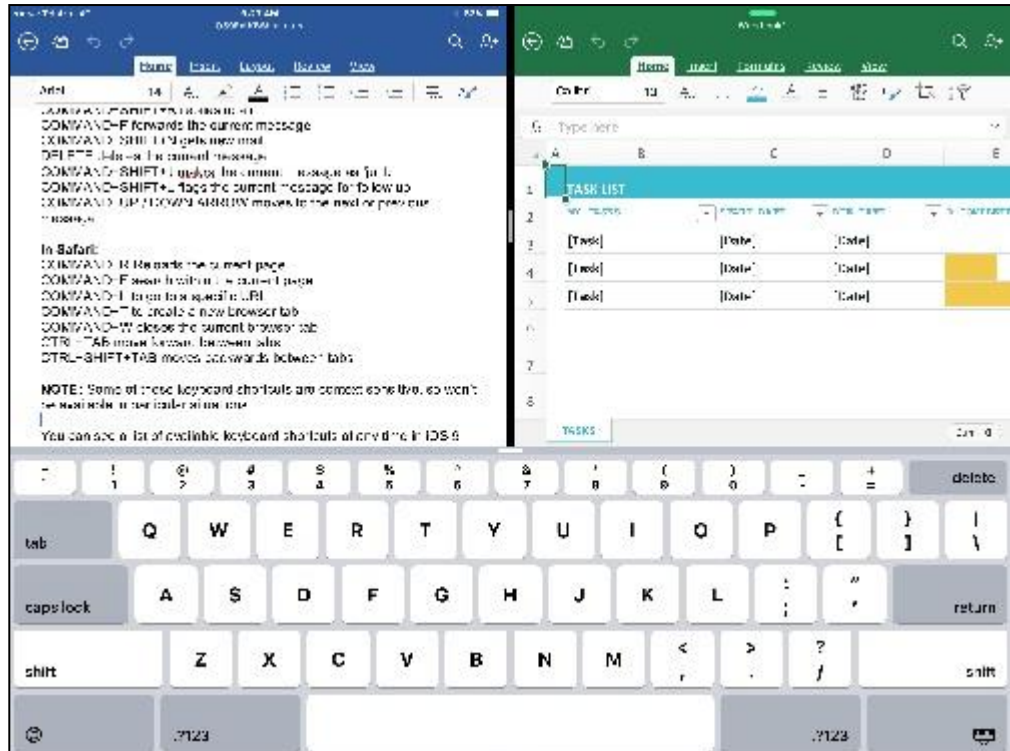
You may wish to consider attending professional learning activities offered by the Statewide Vision Resource Centre either onsite, via video conference or online.

You can view the range of options on the SVRC website [www.svrc.vic.edu.au](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au) or the SVRC YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/SVRCAus>.

# iPad Pro Review

by Glen Morrow

So I'm sitting on the bus a couple of weeks ago, on my way into work ... and there it is ... an email from Apple inviting me to purchase a new iPad Pro. I thought about it – asked all the questions you normally ask – do I need it? What does it do that the one I have now (iPad Air) doesn't do? Do I really need a bigger screen?



Then I just did it – punched in all my details and one week later here it is. I also took the plunge and bought a keyboard case because I love to type stuff. Actually I think in general, this is the easiest keyboard case I've used, the keys are full sized, the numbers are in logical places and if you touch-type, it just feels natural to use.

What I like about the onscreen keyboard is that it now provides the number row keys at the top without you having to change keyboards. It looks more like a standard physical keyboard now and is really nice to type on.

But for those times when you want to type for longer periods of time, you can use a physical keyboard. The iPad Pro has a connector at the bottom that both connects and powers an external keyboard so you don't need to charge or pair it. Currently there are two options available, an Apple keyboard and a Logitech one.

Split screen is a feature that is available on the iPad Air 2 and now the iPad Pro allowing you to have two apps side by side on the screen and you can either COMMAND+TAB or just tap on the app you want to work in.

The iPad Pro now comes with four speakers – the sound is quite nice and certainly considerably louder than previous generations of the iPad.

So who is this iPad aimed at? And is it a replacement for a laptop? It certainly helps if you have low vision but it isn't light, so holding it close to your face for periods of time may be tiring for some. But it does offer the ability to display more larger text at a distance. The iPad Pro is also expensive, for the 128gb cellular model, it comes in at \$1699. Once you add a keyboard and maybe even the Apple Pencil, you are hitting around \$2000.

But its screen size, split screen, keyboard functionality do make it a device worth considering.

## Borrow Box Library App

Ever wanted to download Bolinda eAudiobooks or eBooks from your local library and then listen to or read them for free? With the Borrow Box app and your local library membership, you can do it!

Browsing:

- Grouped by age category
- Browse by genre or by specially curated lists
- Quickly find new releases
- Search by title, author, narrator, series and genre
- Easily find similar titles you might want to read or listen to
- Read and listen to previews
- Get more info about the author and narrator



Borrowing:

- Borrow instantly or reserve for later
- View current loans and reserves
- View loan history
- Renew or return ebook and audiobook loans whenever you want
- Automatic deletion of expired loans, no overdue fees

Reading & listening:

- Offline reading and listening
- Automatically saves your current position in the ebook and audiobook
- Lock screen widget for quick and easy playback control of audiobooks
- Play audiobooks in the background while using other apps

## Vision Australia Library App

Source: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/vision-australia-connect/id1051618020?mt=8>

The Vision Australia Connect app allows you to read titles that are available through i-access®, the online library of Vision Australia's Accessible Information Service (AIS).

Through the accessible and simple interface you can listen to content such as books, magazines and newspapers from Vision Australia. You can read titles directly from your personal online bookshelf or download them to read later. The app bookshelf is synchronised with the online bookshelf.



To use this app you have to be a registered member of the Vision Australia Library. Contact the Vision Australia Library on 1300 847 466.

## Story Box Library

Described as an online “reading room”, Story Box Library connects children with literature through the complementary medium of film. Story Box Library provides a vibrant, interactive experience via a diverse range of everyday Australian storytellers.



Annual family subscription is \$29.95 with an additional subscription if you sign up before 25 December 2015. Visit: [www.storyboxlibrary.com.au/](http://www.storyboxlibrary.com.au/)

## Research: Post School Transition

Source: [www.cda.org.au/post-school-transition](http://www.cda.org.au/post-school-transition)

Children with Disability Australia have recently launched “Post School Transition: The Experiences of Students with Disability”.

From the website: “The transition from school is an important period. All young people should be supported throughout this time to access options which allow them to meaningfully participate and contribute to our society as adults. Many young people with disability however have extremely poor post school transition experiences. This report by CDA is based on the direct experience of young people with disability. It highlights key issues from current research, legislation and consultation with key stakeholders. It concludes with recommendations for improving outcomes and options for post school transition of students with disability.”

Download a PDF or Word version from the link above.

## Student Scholarships

The Department of Education and Training administers more than 25 different student scholarships which equates to approximately 250 scholarship awards (as some scholarships have more than the one award). The scholarships are offered to primary, secondary and tertiary students and range in value from \$300 to \$2500. Applications close on 1 February 2016.

These school scholarships are for students who are studying in Victoria (Australia) and who are citizens or permanent residents of Australia. They are generally awarded to students who:

- demonstrate academic achievement
- demonstrate participation in their school and local community
- are in financial need (determined by the parents/guardians being in receipt of a Health Care Card, a Low Income Health Care Card or a Pensioner Concession Card (Centrelink reference number required) or the students themselves receiving the Youth Allowance).

## Leisure Link – 1197am 5RPH Adelaide.

Source: BCA Parent News

Peter Greco’s latest interviews can be found on the RPH Adelaide website:

[www.rphadelaide.org.au/links/LL2.mp3](http://www.rphadelaide.org.au/links/LL2.mp3). Interviews include:

- Graeme Innes speaks about his book, “Finding A Way” and poses the question “Is access or attitude the bigger problem?” Graeme’s interview is about 10 minutes in.
- Glenn Martin speaks about the Gwenda Martin Scholarship, a \$2,000 Scholarship for applicants who are blind or have low vision and are involved with music, not necessarily studying it. Glenn’s interview is about 20 minutes in.

## Humanware Videos: Access to Maths

The Braille Note Apex with KeySoft 9.5 now allows users to notate Mathematics within a document and includes a UEB Symbol Selector (which behaves a bit like a Maths dictionary) allowing the user to look up the braille Maths symbols they require:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPKc0mAAjJU>

A second video shows how the user can export the above document as a Microsoft Word file which can be printed for the teacher: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNVoufgFk24>

## RIDBC PD 2016

For more information please visit the RIDBC website.

### ***Reading Instruction with SPARK!***

e-Learning Courses

Location: Online

Presented by: Dr Frances Mary d'Andrea

Reading is a fundamental skill for all students to master in school – including, of course, our students who have low vision or are blind. But do you ever hear your students say “I’m just not good at reading!” or “Can’t I just listen to this?” or “Reading is no fun”? Do you ever feel as though you have to drag your students through their reading and writing assignments?

#### **Lecture 1: Phonemic awareness: The sounds of language**

When: 12pm Friday 19 February 2016

#### **Lecture 2: Phonics and word recognition: “Hey! I know that word!”**

When: 12pm Friday 1 April 2016

#### **Lecture 3: Vocabulary: Goodbye to “Mad, Glad, Sad”!**

When: 12pm Friday 13 May 2016

#### **Lecture 4: Comprehension: Reading for a purpose**

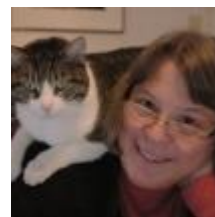
When: 12pm Friday 24 June 2016

#### **Lecture 5: Fluency: Reading on ice skates**

When: 12pm Friday 28 July 2016

#### **Lecture 6: Writing: Every Child an Author**

When: 12pm Friday 9 September 2016



### ***Lets Talk Sense***

When: 9am-3pm Thursday 9 and Friday 10 June 2016

Location: Brisbane

Presented by: Associate Professor Paul Pagliano



**Day One:** The senses and the emotional brain: In this workshop Paul will show how learned helplessness can be transformed into learned optimism through multisensory stimulation and explains how a program of support can be designed and modulated to match a person’s needs, interests and abilities.

**Day Two:** The senses, social wellbeing and quality of life: there will be an emphasis on the practical. We will examine an abundance of exciting multisensory stimulation ideas that can be applied to foster a feeling of ease with the environment, experience pleasure and happiness in their surroundings, kick start the desire to explore, and improve learning, social wellbeing and quality of life.

### ***Supercharging Education for Students who are Blind & Vision Impaired***

When: 9am-3pm Thursday 25 and Friday 26 August 2016

Location: RIDBC Renwick Centre

Presented by: Dr Kim Zebehazy

**Day 1:** Self-determined super thinkers: Promoting problem solving and critical thinking within the educational environment for students who are blind and vision impaired.

**Day 2** Graphical sense or nonsense? Supporting meaningful access to graphics for learners who are blind or vision impaired.



## Blind Soccer

Source: Sunday Age, 6 December 2015

For a nation with a proud Paralympic history, you may be surprised to know that Australia has never fielded a visually impaired soccer team at the games. While that won't change in Rio next year, two men who are intent on making sure that Australia does eventually get there are Dave Connolly and Tom Bevan. The pair founded Social Goal, an organisation seeking to promote inclusion in sport.

On Sunday, Docklands will host the inaugural finals for the Victorian B-League, which is the first blind and impaired vision competition in Australia. The league came about through the joint efforts of Social Goal, and Blind Sport Victoria. Connolly, a Tasmanian who moved to Victoria a decade ago, said he has loved the game since playing it as a child, and wanted to provide the opportunity for everyone interested. While not certain, Connolly suggested that somewhat paradoxically the quality of vision in Australian society meant there were fewer chances for vision impaired players. "We're pretty lucky that we have pretty good healthcare, and we don't have as many blind people as other countries have," Connolly told Pssst. But he also thought the relative weakness of soccer had been a contributing factor. "I'm not too sure, to be honest. I'd be thinking it's maybe to do with soccer [not having] been as big. You sort of look at soccer or football a bit more now, but I think maybe that's been left behind a little bit."

He said his long-term goal was to help create a pathway for vision-impaired players that could lead to a Victorian team, and ultimately a national side. Representatives from both Football Federation Victoria and Melbourne City will be on hand for the event, which is being held at Docklands' multi-purpose sports field on Harbour Esplanade. The day's first match kicks off at 1.30pm, and Connolly is excited. "Being able to provide [this] opportunity has been pretty amazing. We can make a fist and continue it, and grow it from here."

Photo (right): Vision impaired soccer players Steve Obeid and Shae Skinner have a kick to kick.  
Photo: Joe Armao



## Blind Cricket Championships

The Victorian Blind Cricket Association has announced the teams for the upcoming 33<sup>rd</sup> Blind Cricket Championships which will be held in Melbourne from 27 December 2015 to 7 January 2016.

Some familiar names who will play the 40/40 Competition include **Zac** (Bendigo), **Brendan** (Parkdale), **Daniel** (Upwey), **Nathan** and **Andrew**.

The T20 Competition includes the above-names players and Caleb from the Geelong area. **Caleb** will be in Year 8 in 2016.

Further information: [www.vbca.org.au](http://www.vbca.org.au)

## Braille Music Q&A

**Question:** How can we get braille music worksheets to a senior student at short notice?

**Answer:** Here are a range of ideas to try:

- The student to be encouraged to do some of his/her own transcription using Duxbury with a Brailliant or BrailleNote for writing and editing in braille – as a reference, have a listen to Glen Morrow’s “Stories of You” podcast with Dorothy Hamilton.  
<http://storiesofyoupodcast.com/wordpress/1/>
- The student to be encouraged to see that writing the music is a skill that needs to be practised to become quick and accurate – and also transcription becomes the introductory read-through of the braille music passage, offsetting the time spent writing it.
- See if there is a local braille music transcriber who would be happy to volunteer or be paid for transcription. A volunteer reader could read the print music OR someone from the school could read the music over the phone; files can be emailed and embossed at the school.
- The student to transcribe music with a classmate or other school community member – PSD funding could be used to pay this sighted reader for their work.
- Worded music sheets eg sets of questions such as “write a chromatic scale beginning on C” to be scanned for the student as a .doc.
- Tests/exams to be scanned and emailed to SVRC for production by an experienced braille music transcriber.
- The music teacher to be encouraged to select from existing braille music resources from the SVRC and/or VA i-access online. Titles available from SVRC include:
  - Practical Theory Volume 1 and 2
  - VCE Music Performance Musicianship Essentials 1, 2, 3, 4
  - Musicianship & Aural Training for Secondary Schools Level one
- PSD funding could also be used to pay for the school’s Music Teacher for one-to-one sessions with the student to either read the print music for the student to transcribe into braille OR to work on music extension.

## Learn to Surf!

Source: Penny Stevenson and <http://disabledsurfers.org/>

The Disabled Surfers Association of Australia is a voluntary organisation founded in 1986 by Gary Blaschke after he was injured in a motorcycle accident.

### ***Ocean Grove***

Registration is from 8am for participants, carers and volunteers at Ocean Grove Main Beach. Safety briefings for volunteers at 8.45 am. For group registration please call prior and book.

- Sunday 31 January 2016 – Ocean Grove Main Beach (surfing starts at 9am)
- Sunday 21 February 2016 – Ocean Grove Main Beach (surfing starts at 9am)
- Contact Nicole on 0422 066 734

### ***Point Leo***

- Saturday 16 January 2016 – Point Leo Beach (11am-3pm, registration opens at 10am)
- Saturday 5 March 2016 – Point Leo Beach (11am-3pm, registration opens at 10am)
- Contact Ash 0417 362 985 / Stewart 0418 101 645

## Fun Over Summer!

Garry Stinchcombe has put together a list of activities to keep students busy over the holidays – please find it attached!



## Support Skills News

From Garry Stinchcombe

Yet another year comes to an end. It is tinged with some sadness as we farewell 8 of our older students and their families after what hopefully has been a positive experience. I know some of these students have been involved in the Support Skills Program since they were in Grade 3 or 4. We wish them all the best for VCE/VCAL and hope their futures are bright and rewarding.

We'd also like to acknowledge the ongoing support of all the families who have been committed to getting their children to the program this year.

The program would also like to acknowledge the wonderful input and support we receive from our partner organizations. Guide Dogs Victoria, HumanWare and Vision Australia who have all actively contributed to the breadth and scope of the Support Skills Program. Alicia San Martin and Darren Moyle from GDV, Michelle Humphreys and Anna Buffon from VA and Ramona Mandy from HumanWare have been exceptional staff members in supporting the program throughout the year. I'd encourage students and families to contact these organizations and pass on to them your thanks and appreciation of these staff being made available to assist in the program.

To those students who are planning to return in 2016, we'll be posting out the Consent and Medical Forms with a calendar of dates for 2016 during the Christmas holidays.

We are looking forward to the release of the research Ben Whitburn has conducted on the Support Skills Program this year. This is thanks to the input from many of the Support Skills students. We look forward to Ben releasing his findings early in 2016.

If you haven't yet filled in the Support Skills Family Satisfaction Survey, it's not too late. Contact me and I will send you out a copy.

I would also like to thank all the Staff who work in the Support Skills Program. They are a great group of dedicated professionals who really work hard to make sure we provide a relevant and high quality service for the students who attend the program.

Wishing you all a healthy and safe summer break.

## Marrakesh Treaty News

Source: Ozbrl Listserv

Exciting news regarding ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to enable international sharing of accessible content.

Australia recently ratified the Marrakesh Treaty in Geneva which, when it comes into force, will make it easy to share accessible content (books and other publications) around the world and across international borders; something which current international copyright law makes problematic. Marrakesh will lead to a lot less duplication of accessible materials in different countries, and therefore, more accessible content all round.

Australia becomes the 12<sup>th</sup> country to ratify the Treaty. There are just eight more ratifications needed for the treaty to come into effect. Congratulations to everyone who has worked hard to achieve this!

## Remembering

Looking back,  
Travelling back in time,  
Remembering a long lost rhyme,  
Remembering,  
Looking back.

When you remember,  
You look upon the fun times,  
The good times.  
You also look at the sad times,  
The times you cried,  
Remembering,  
Looking back.

Fun and happiness  
The keys to a good life,  
Remember these times.  
The good times that make you laugh and smile,  
Remembering,  
Looking back.

Sadness and Distress,  
These emotions shape you,  
Make you who you are,  
Challenge you to push through,  
To have a better life,  
Remembering,  
Looking back.

When you remember  
You take a step back in time,  
To times that are past,  
Times that shaped you  
And made you who you are.  
These times are the most important times in life,  
Remember,  
Look back,  
Smile.

By Henry, Year 6

(Visiting Teacher: Odette Budge)

## News

- After 27 fun-filled years with the Statewide Vision Resource Centre, **Dianne Skillern** will retire at the end of the school year. Dianne has been the backbone of the Centre for a very long time – and it will take us all a while to get the hang of all the things she used to manage! We'll all miss her support, friendship and skill. We'll be having a farewell dinner during term 1 next year – please contact the SVRC if you'd like to join us!
- The SVRC have recently employed three part time production staff who will be working on braille and etext transcription, tactile diagram production, administrative support (and other things as we think of them). **Toni Chilton** returns after a number of years as an O&M Instructor, **Sherryl Orchard** has had many years of experience as a braille aide in schools, and **Kirby Nye** is being kept busy learning etext transcription, databases and braille all at the same time! Please welcome our new staff when you are in next!
- Visiting Teacher, **Denise Probert**, is re-retiring at the end of the year. Denise kindly returned to NWVR this term.
- Visiting Teacher, **Robert Aaltonen**, will finish up with the Catholic Education Office at the end of this year. Robert is fondly remembered as the only VT who has done his visiting on a bicycle! And we hear that he never claimed the 6 cents per kilometre travel allowance that was available.
- **Jenny Williams** retires at the end of the year – Jenny has worked in NEVR and SEVR with students with vision impairments as well as physical/health over a Visiting Teacher career of many years. We wish her the best for her retirement!
- **Helen Caldwell** will be taking Long Service Leave in terms 1 and 2 in 2016. She's hoping to get to India during that time – we look forward to the photos!
- Great news for **Thien** who has recently been awarded the Western Chances scholarship for braille music.

## VCE – The Results Are Coming In!

We have been hearing GREAT things from the students and their families. Here is a selection:

- **Jacob** from Geelong achieved an ATAR of 88.65 and he was named the DUX of Western Heights Secondary College. He plans to study Commerce at Deakin University.
- **Abby** from Glen Waverley achieved an ATAR of 99.8 – terrific work!
- **Alexandra** from Box Hill has featured in the Herald Sun recently. She says, “My absolute hope is to study arts at Melbourne University, which is an undergraduate requirement for law ... I can't wait to go to university.”
- Phone or email in your results!!!

## Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Geoff Bowen, Annette Godfrey-Magee, Jane Jensen, Glen Morrow, Lea Nagel and Garry Stinchcombe.