

The Bulletin

Number 11, Friday 15th July 2016

Inside This Issue

Please find the following topics below:

- **PD:** Low Vision Day, David Hornsby & Deb Sukama Literacy sessions
- **Technology:** Win a free copy of Ballyland!, Build with Lego Using Accessible Instructions, VoiceOver Help – Gesture Practice on an iOS Device
- **From the Field:** Roll Out of NDIS, ABC Interview: Julee-Anne Bell
- **News:** Write a Letter to the Paralympic Team, Support Skills News, Braille Music Camp, Student News

Check [The Bulletin archive](#) for back issues!

SVRC Professional Development 2016

Glen Morrow and Emily White had a great Apple in Education for VI where participants had the opportunity to enjoy Macbook and iPad accessibility and skills that they learned on the day! We are grateful to Emily for coming out to Donvale from her other life as a doctoral student at Melbourne University to fill in for Lyn who is currently on leave.

Upcoming SVRC workshops and PD days include:

- Low Vision Day: Tuesday 9 August

Please register online for workshops and PD or phone (03) 9841 0242.

Go into the Draw and Win a Free Copy of Ballyland Magic App!

Go into the draw and win a free copy of Ballyland Magic app.

Ballyland Magic App is a new, educational and fun iPad game specifically designed for children with vision impairment to learn and practice touch gestures for VoiceOver, Apple's built-in screen reader. Supportive and entertaining games enable them to gradually develop touch gesture skills, understand the concept of VoiceOver, and to become confident with this special navigation that is required for the effective use of an iPad or iPhone. The app uses built-in self-voicing with real voices, rather than VoiceOver. The app is also accessible for parents and teachers who are blind and who want to support a child in using the app. The app has been very well received and is available from the App Store. More information can be found here: <http://www.ballyland.com/mobile/ballyland-magic-app.php>. The Ballyland Magic app is developed by Sonokids, not-for profit developers of accessible educational software based in Queensland.

Students of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre, readers of the Bulletin and members of the SVRC Facebook Group can now go into the draw to win one of **two free copies** of this fun app!

To enter, please send an email to support@sonokids.org with subject "SVRC Competition".

Competition ends 20 July 2016.



Official Roll Out of the NDIS Has Begun!

Source: SPEVI listserv with thanks to Phia Damsma

On 1st July the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has officially started and has begun rolling out Australia wide. There is a mammoth task ahead for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to get the expected 450,000 people into the scheme over the next three years. Because of the sheer size of the task at hand, people will enter the scheme at different times according to their geographical location.

Check out [when your location will start to enter the NDIS](#).

Self Managing NDIS Plan / Budget

The NDIA have developed some new resources along with some new language for those thinking of self managing some or all of their NDIS funded supports. This is now called self managing budgets.

The following two modules are available:

[Understanding and self-directing my NDIS plan](#): an overview of what self-direction means, talks about choosing service providers and options for managing your budgets.

[Self-managing budgets in my NDIS plan](#): information around what self-management is and how to go about doing it.

For more information visit <http://www.ndis.gov.au/participant/self-managing-budgets>

Videos

There are a number of new and updated video resources worth taking a look at on the NDIA website.

[Working with the NDIS](#): a concise overview and timeline of the NDIS

[About the NDIS](#): key information about the NDIS including what it is, if you can access it, when it will be available, and why it's important.

[Reasonable & Necessary/Permanent & Significant Disability](#): what the NDIS means when they talk about "reasonable and necessary supports" and "permanent and significant disability"

[My NDIS Pathway](#): guide to becoming an NDIS participant. This video will help you understand the path you will travel as the NDIS begins to work with you. It will provide an overview of what to expect at each stage.

[Getting Ready for the NDIS](#): the five simple steps you can take to get ready for the NDIS

Building with Lego Using Accessible Instructions

Source: Perkins School for the Blind eLearning website

Matthew Shifrin, a high school student who is blind, together with his sighted friend, has invented a system which enables people with vision impairment to build Lego sets independently. By writing out text-based instructions in sequence, they make building elaborate sets with Lego accessible for screen reader users. They have created accessible instructions for 20 sets of Lego so far (set numbers available on website, as well as two free samples of instructions). Matthew notes that building with Lego is a great way to improve spatial awareness and spatial reasoning.

There are instructions for Hogwarts Castle, Luke's Landspeeder, Arctic Snowmobile and lots more!

Visit: [text-based instructions for building Lego models](#).

VoiceOver Help – Gesture Practice on an iOS Device

Here's a handy way to practice or learn [VoiceOver gestures on your iOS device](#).

Ensure that VoiceOver is turned on then double tap with four fingers. This starts VoiceOver Help. Then practice gestures on the screen. Every time you perform a gesture, VoiceOver tells you what gesture you just did and what it does.

To exit VoiceOver Help – just double tap again with four fingers, or perform the scrub gesture (it is sort of like a Z action with two fingers). Or if you have an external keyboard connected, just press ESCAPE.

ABC Interview: Julee-Anne Bell

The ABC's Richard Fidler recently interviewed Julee-Anne Bell about her use of echolocation or "flash-sonar" for navigation in the environment. Julee-Anne, Managing Director of World Access for the Blind Australia, has been blind since birth.

Julee-Anne describes her use of echolocation including describing the type of click that she uses to "interrogate the environment" for cues and says that is the way she gains information when she wants it – so she is in control.

She says that she focuses on the spaces between objects to move around safely. "I'm not interested in finding all of the light poles on the street. I'm interested in NOT finding the light poles on the street. I'm interested in navigating such that I don't have to encounter all the light poles, the trees, the wheelie bins on the street".

This is a terrific interview which I highly recommend. You can listen or download the interview – [Julee-Anne Bell's vision is sound](#) – from the ABC website.

Write a Letter to the Paralympic Team

Source: Australia Post

The Australian Paralympic Committee is preparing to deliver more than 170 athletes across 15 sports, from every Australian state and territory to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, which begin on September 7.

Paralympic Team, Australia Post's Letter Link program provides parents, teachers and students with fun, interactive and educational activities to mark the special sporting occasion.

With less than two months to go until the games kick off, children can begin writing and posting their letters to: PO Box 24433, Melbourne VIC 3001. Letters with a \$1 stamp received by the end of October 2016 with names and return addresses clearly marked on the back will receive a postcard reply from the team.

Australia Post Chief Customer Officer, Christine Corbett, said Australia Post's Letter Link program is a good way for children to learn and practice their letter writing skills.

"We also encourage teachers to take advantage of [Letter Link](#) with a range of free educational resources available on the site, including Paralympic Games fact sheets, letter writing tips, lessons plans and student activity sheets," Ms Corbett said.

Letters can be placed in any Australia Post red post box or in-store at selected post offices. Don't forget to include a \$1 stamp with your name and return address clearly marked on the back.

Professional Development: Literacy and More

David Hornsby and Deb Sukama offer a range of highly regarded professional development days at the Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre. Examples include Aspects of Writing, Teaching the Craft of Writing, Comprehension – Developing Deep Level Thinkers and Grammar P-6.

[Download the 2016 Program](#) or phone Paula Welham on 0402 421 864 for details or bookings.

Support Skills News

New PE and Sports Space for Support Skills: Up until this year we have been able to use the Heatherwood Gym for our PE and Sports sessions. The class numbers at Heatherwood have grown so we found that we no longer were able to use their facilities. Marion Blazé approached Donvale Primary School which is only 5 minute walk from the SVRC out the side gate and down the path. Lena Clarke their Principal was very accommodating and so we now have access to their Gym on a Friday. This means students will walk down to this facility for their PE and Sports sessions. We have set in place an orientation program with Guide Dogs, Charlie Roberts and Emily White so that students will be able to access this new facility as quickly as possible. Students will always be in the company of a staff member when moving to or from the Donvale Gym.

We have had an ongoing involvement with Donvale PS with Michael Donnelly's ceramic and clay creations from the Art sessions being fired in the Donvale PS kiln. We appreciate their generosity and flexibility always making our staff and programs very welcome.

National Braille Music Camp: Jordie Howell and Lea Nagel plus some other volunteers and parents accompanied twelve Victorian students to the Mittagong National Braille Music Camp. It ran in the first week of the school holidays. Around 50 students from all states and territories plus two students from New Zealand spent a great week singing, performing and learning braille music. Eleven of the twelve Victorian students who attended are either current or former Support Skills students. It was the first time for Emily, Emmanuel and Ella and by all reports, they had a great time!

All the staff who attended this camp volunteered their time whether to assist with the travel or to contribute to the teaching program itself. Thanks to all these volunteers and I know the students who were fortunate enough to attend will have been involved in a positive and valuable learning opportunity.

Student News

From the Ivanhoe Primary School newsletter:

At Ivanhoe Primary School we don't have to go far to find a student who works hard to do their best but this week we celebrate one student's particular achievement at the SVRC Statewide Vision Resource Centre Swimming Carnival at Genazzano College in Kew.

Lilly, Grade 4, participated in freestyle, kickboard and backstroke winning first place in all three events. She also was first swimmer in the relay squad and joined in the fun of the bombing competition.

Lilly was cheered on by her grandparents and reported to me that it had been a long, tiring but enjoyable day.

Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin and wish the readers a satisfying and learning-filled term 3!