

The Bulletin

Number 13, Friday 12th August 2016

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SVRC PD and Workshops

Upcoming SVRC workshops and PD days include:

BrailleNote Touch 9.00-11.00am Ramona Mandy from Humanware will present on this new piece of equipment that combines a refreshable braille display with a tablet-like screen	Tuesday 16 August
Skill Power – Focus on braille students 9:30-11:00 Including braille reading students in classroom and instrumental music sessions , Lea Nagel 11:30-1:00 PowerPoint with JAWS or NVDA , Lea Nagel	Wednesday 17 August
Skill Power – Focus on low vision	Tuesday 30 August

Please request a topic – choose your own adventure! – contact us via email or phone; and please register online for workshops and PD.

Units 3 and 4 Exam Timetable for 2016

The [VCAA Exam timetable](#) for this year is available on their website.

Key dates include:

- English will take place on 26 October from 9.00am
- The final exams will take place on 16 November

VCAA advise that students should arrive at least 30 minutes earlier than their start times.

For students who have been granted additional time and other special arrangements, please check with the school regarding any changes that have been made to the start and/or finish time of their exams.

Premier's Reading Challenge Ending Soon!

The [Premier's Reading Challenge](#) aims to inspire children and young people to read more books. The Challenge is now also open to school groups and individuals from pre-school to Year 10.

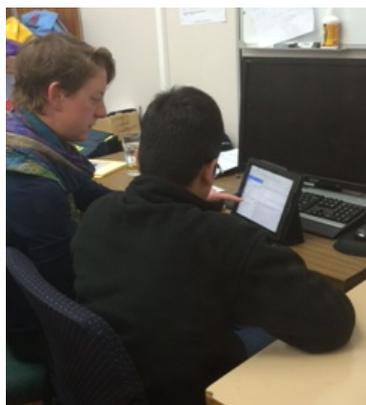
Since the Challenge began in Victoria in 2005, over two million students have read over 38 million books – some in alternative format from the SVRC!

The Challenge closes on 9 September this year.

Support Skills on a Tuesday!

From Marion Blazé

This year we have seen a number of secondary school-aged students at EVAC, who have had recent and dramatic loss of vision, most due to retinal dystrophies. Being in secondary levels, all these students were in need of rapid skill development in order to access their school programs. Most of these young people are in the “legally blind” range and most because of visual fields of less than 10 degrees, so accessing visual materials at school has become a huge challenge.



These students, their families and school personnel were invited to SVRC for a day of finding out about possibilities. The group (six students, six family members, two school personnel and one boyfriend) spent the day exploring and trying touch typing, JAWS, braille, tactile graphics, iPad or iPhone with VoiceOver, Pearl cameras, NVDA, Victor Reader Stream, Openbook and more. They (hopefully) found out how to transfer information

from a printed handout into a form they could access, how to request resources, who to turn to for help and what was possible. Then the wonderful folk from Guide Dogs Victoria came in to answer questions about mobility, Apps, concessions, long canes and sighted guide, to name a few.

We were thrilled with how positively these students and their families responded to being given a lot of information in a very short time, and kept an open mind about exploring options.

One parent, who at the beginning of the day had said what a shock this loss of vision had been, said as she was leaving “we can now see a way forward”.

One spin-off from the day was the support materials which were generated, to help these students retain and revise the information they were being presented with. These resources will be available on our website and shared in the next few editions of The Bulletin. The first is attached to this Bulletin: the “Skills Checklist”. This was a list given to each student so that they could ensure they were exposed to everything. It is a great list of the possible options for a newly vision impaired (or any vision impaired) student. Check out how many of these items your students know about!!

Thank you to Simon and Darren from Guide Dogs Victoria, Emily White and Deb Davidson, who came in especially to contribute to the program and the SVRC crew who did an amazing job putting together a fabulous program with only really one day to prepare (thank you Lea, Garry, Annette, Glen, and production staff for materials and meals).

Photos: iPad with VoiceOver, drawing kit, playing swish



Skills Checklist

- Students to start / continue touch typing**

PC computer settings:

- Windows high contrast (free!!) Alt+Shift+PrintScreen
- Mouse pointer (in Personalize)
- Windows magnifier
- Font settings, Font dialogue box (Control+d) set default
- reduce borders, increase document pane to size of computer screen
- Glass brick (requires an email address to log on – see email from Emily – see Emily for this)

PC with voice:

- NVDA
- JAWS
- ZoomText

Key commands:

- Select all (control+a), Enlarge text alt+shift+> or <
- Cut Paste Undo etc (see Computer without the mouse checklist)

Experiment: find favourite font and colour for background and text (control+d) tab around dialogue box

Getting and saving documents: (PC)

- How to get a document from teachers OR SVRC library, save it, open, edit, send to teacher with visual settings and / or voice.
- Dropbox
- Email
- Save to stick
- i-Access-online

PDF: (eg maths book)

- Enlargement
- Voice, navigation

iPad:

- VoiceOver – VO starter app, Blind Abilities app
- Zoom
- Speak Selection
- Reverse contrast, magnification
- iBooks, text access apps (ClaroSpeak + and VoiceDream)
- Sony QX10 camera (Wi-Fi camera for distance viewing)
- Dictation (speak text messages)
- Siri
- VA connect for iPad
- Talking scientific calculator
- KNFB Reader

PD by Popular Demand!!

From Marion Blazé

SVRC ran a bit of an experiment yesterday in more ways than one. After providing two PD days in Term 1 for teachers of students with low vision, we had a ‘waiting list’ of participants. We really can’t comfortably accommodate more than 60 people at SVRC, and even with the addition of about 30 people participating off-site, we could not meet the demand in Term 1. So, for the first time, we ran the same program in Term 3, yesterday. This proved very popular with 42 participants, one of whom attended the day remotely in Euroa. Many of yesterday’s participants had newly-identified students with vision impairments, and a team from one school had just found out about a student coming to them next year.

The second aspect of our “experiment” was the set-up of the room and some alterations to the program, mainly based on feedback after term 1. We set up the audio visual equipment quite differently, and apart from being a bit too low down, this seemed to work. The program had participants up and out of their seats at various times during the day.

Yet another experiment was our live Twitter feed. We had played with this idea before but yesterday dedicated our newest member of staff, Emma, to Tweet all day long! We were even retweeted by someone in the US! If you are on Twitter, take a look at #lowvised and feel free to follow SVRC@braillevision for some handy hints about supporting students with vision impairments from yesterday and to keep up with the latest. There are even links to some of the information and videos shared yesterday and notices of what’s coming up.

Our written evaluations are proof of the value of the day: “I am excited to implement many strategies and technologies within my classroom from this program”, “Fantastic seminar – very informative”, “Hugely beneficial – Term 3 timing ideal due to new student”, and (I like this one) “It was excellent hearing Geoff Bowen quoting Shakespeare: ‘There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so’.”

Thank you to Guide Dogs Victoria folk, Simon, Marnie and Darren for their ever-popular O & M workshops, to all the production team for managing printing, food, registrations (and more), to our fabulous AV guys, Michael and Glen, to Emma for tweeting, to our fantastic quality presenters, and to Lea Nagel for coordinating the day – well done all!!!



See Twitter feed (right) with evidence of retweeting (including by Wonderbaby) and liking of Emma's posts!

BrailleNote Touch Tutorials

Humanware have created a series of Snapshot video tutorials featuring their new BrailleNote Touch. Currently in the series you'll find:

[No.1: Tour of the BrailleNote Touch main menu and intro to the Playstore](#)

[No. 2: Editing Google Docs](#)

[No. 3: Creating, editing, and opening documents](#)

[No. 4: Searching in YouTube](#)

[No.5: Downloading and reading BookShare Books](#)

[No.6: Connecting to Wi-Fi](#)

[No.7: Adding, editing, and deleting appointments in KeyPlan](#)

[No.8: Creating, editing and deleting contacts with KeyList](#)

[No.9: Sending emails with attachments](#)

[No.10: Configuring Options and settings](#)

[No. 11: Configuring second voices and typing in another language](#)

More are due for release!

Ramona will be at SVRC on Tuesday 16 August to demo the new BN Touch.

Making PowerPoints Accessible

Media Access have recently uploaded "[5 top tips to ensure your PowerPoints are accessible](#)". In brief, their tips include:

1. Correct use of slide layouts
2. Alternative text for images
3. Ensure links within the PowerPoint are meaningful
4. Ensure the font size, colour and contrast are sufficient
5. Make embedded media accessible

For students with vision impairments wishing to create PowerPoint presentations using voice, please visit "[Using PowerPoint with JAWS or NVDA](#)", a cheatsheet compiled by Lea Nagel.

More on the Marrakesh Treaty

Maryanne Diamond speaks about her journey as a blind student, employee and mother at a recent TEDx event. She describes her experience of access to information and the [implications of the Marrakesh Treaty for sharing accessible materials](#).

She says, "The Treaty requires governments to have an exception in their Copyright Law to allow the production of books in an accessible format for blind and print disabled people without permission from publishers. And allows these accessible books to be shared with blind and print disabled persons and their organisations in other countries, again, without permission from publishers."

Meanwhile, the [Marrakesh Treaty has been ratified](#) by 20 countries and will come in to force in those countries (including Australia) on 30 September.

Hopefully, this will be the beginning of the end of the "book famine" for blind people and those with print disabilities.

Further information

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have a great brochure, [Main Provisions and Benefits of the Marrakesh Treaty](#), which is available for download.

T20 Blind Cricket World Cup in India

The BCA National Selection Panel & BCA Board of Directors have announced the following 17 athletes who have been selected to represent Australia at the upcoming T20 Blind Cricket World Cup in India from 28 January to 14 February 2017. The Squad features the following Victorians (or former Victorians):

- Christine Casey (B1)
- Ned Brewer (B3)
- Lindsey Heaven (Captain), (B2)
- Dan Pritchard (B3)
- Brendan Spencer (B1)

Staff and students of the SVRC wish the team all the very best and look forward to stories from our international athletes.

Music Education & Literacy/Numeracy Standards

Thanks Glen for this interesting link to an article that appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald recently: [Music education key to raising literacy and numeracy standards](#)

Excerpt: “The human brain begins life with the structures and functions that are then enhanced, changed and evolved by our life experiences. An integral part of our brain development from birth forward is the creation of neural networks. It is these networks that neuroscientists have found can be profoundly impacted by anything from educational practices to parenting styles to all forms of disadvantage.

“It is now commonly understood that the first seven years of a child’s life is the most important time for the creation of these neural networks. To use a crude but simple analogy, following on from the STEM focus, if something is wired right the first time, it is more likely to work well into the future. Get these neural networks established as well as we possible can from the beginning, and a child has a better chance of success, cognitively, physically, emotionally and at the pointy end of the argument, economically.”

For more, visit the link above.

JobAccess Website Launched

The Australian Government has launched the new Job Access website, which provides information and resources to support employment of people with disability. This includes information about supports available in the workplace and rights and entitlements of employees.

The site has three main sections, targeted at people with disability, employers and disability employment services.

The Job Access website is available at <http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/home>

Spectacle Earlocks or KeepOns

There is a huge range of colourful plastic gadgets that simply fit on the arms of spectacles and help them stay on little faces! KeepOns (also called Earlocks) are made of silicone or soft plastic and don’t hurt little ears. We have seen them from as little as 23 cents per pair – search online.



Ikea Laptop Stand

The [Brada laptop support from Ikea](#) is \$8.99. It is not adjustable, but has a rubber strip underneath to stop slipping, and a shelf to stop books sliding out of place. It comes currently in black or pink (see right).

Junior students have enjoyed the pink one in the Art room and then become more interested in using their adjustable reading/writing stand in the classroom.



Braille in the Community

Intrepid traveller, Toni, who is currently traipsing around the world, has challenged herself to find a tactile map in the cities that she visits. The collection so far – featuring examples from Hong Kong, Rome and Florence – appear from top to bottom (right).

Student News

We wait for news from four international travellers, **James, Josh, Micaela** and **Sana** all of whom are current or former Support Skills students. The group of 12 young people, sponsored by Vision Australia to attend Camp Joe in Canada, travelled with staff from VA.

The trip's aim is to help young people who are blind or have low vision gain pre-employment skills, develop skills in international travel, build social capacity, foster independence and improve self-confidence. And, according to their Facebook post, this has been achieved!

Camp Joe is an initiative between Vision Australia, New Zealand Blind Foundation and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Vision Australia is hoping to replicate the camp in Australia.



Staff News

We welcome our newest staff member to the Production Department of the SVRC. **Lauren Rouse** starts on Tuesday after moving south from Canberra!

Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin!

