

The Bulletin

Number 15, Friday 9 September 2016

The Paralympics!!! ARE NOW ON!!!

Staff of the SVRC wish all competitors (but especially the Ozzies) the very best of good fortune in their Paralympic endeavours!

Seven Network and SevenTwo will screen 14 hours of the Paralympics every day.

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- **From the Field:** VA Bursary, STME Scholarship Program, ICEVI – New President, SunSmart App, Goalball, Paralympic Swimmer, Write to a Paralympian
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Check [The Bulletin archive](#) for back issues!

SVRC PD and Workshops

Please request a topic or session – contact us via email or phone.

Upcoming SPEVI Conference – 8 to 12 January, Brisbane

The SPEVI Biennial International Conference will be held in less than 4 months in Brisbane! “Shining the Light on Vision Education” aims to:

- share information about the latest developments in provision of accessible information
- provide information for people with a print disability
- enhance dialogue between users and providers of accessible information
- promote and enhance collaborative partnerships and peer support networks
- showcase and workshop examples of best practice in the provision of accessible information and technology for children and adults with a print disability
- explore person-centred policies, supports and services provided for children and adults with a print disability in work places, schools and educational institutions, and local communities

Early bird fees have been extended til 4 October 2016 – more information and register on the [SPEVI website](#). (And the photo above is of SPEVI Bear with the Conference on his mind!)

VA’s Further Education Bursary – Now Open

In 2017, Vision Australia will award [Further Education Bursaries](#) to a select number of students who are blind or have low vision. The bursaries provide adaptive technology to help the students fully participate and succeed in their chosen studies.

Last year was the 20th anniversary of the bursary program. Since 1996 Vision Australia has supported over 330 students on their tertiary education journey.

Applications are now open and close on 28 October 2016.

For more information, please visit the VA website or contact Vocational Consultant Belinda Wilson on (03) 8378 1223.



Support Skills Try Day

When: Friday 18 November 2016

We are once again offering a Come and Try Day for prospective students wishing to attend the Support Skills program in 2017.

Support Skills is for:

- Students who will be between Grades 4 and Year 10 in 2017.
- Students from any educational sector and enrolled in a Victorian School.
- Students who have been deemed eligible for additional support by EVAC.

The purpose of the Try Day is to allow prospective students and their families an opportunity to travel to the program and see where the program is conducted, participate in a range of sessions, meet the staff and partner organisations and generally assess the programs suitability.

Forms are now online – please visit the SVRC website.

Free SunSmart App from SunSmartVIC

Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation causes wrinkles and skin and eye damage, ultimately leading to skin cancer. UV cannot be seen or felt. It is not like the sun's light which we see, or the sun's warmth (infrared radiation) which we feel. Our senses cannot detect UV so it can be damaging without us knowing.

The free SunSmart app tells you when sun protection is recommended for your location using forecast information from [the Bureau of Meteorology website](#) and live UV data from [ARPANSA](#).

Available from the App store or Google Play.

New President for ICEVI: Dr Frances Gentle

Source: Greg Leigh, Director RIDBC Renwick Centre

This week the General Assemblies of both World Blind Union (WBU) and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) have taken place in Orlando, Florida – hosted by the National Federation of the Blind (USA).

ICEVI is a global association of individuals and organisations that promotes equal access to appropriate education for all children and youth with vision impairment so that they can achieve their full potential.

At the final meeting of the General Assembly of ICEVI, **Dr Frances Gentle from RIDBC Renwick Centre** was formally elected as **President of ICEVI**, taking over in the role from Lord Colin Low of the United Kingdom. It is an enormous honour for Frances, for RIDBC, and for Australia generally to hold such a prestigious position in the international field of education of children with vision impairment.

I am sure that everyone will join me in congratulating Frances on this honour and wishing her every success in this important role. In doing so I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution that Frances has already made to the international field in education of people with vision impairment. I would also like to acknowledge the important financial assistance that RIDBC has received from the Federal Government through the Department of Social Services to help support Frances' involvement as President of ICEVI over the next 4 years.

Frances said "I look forward to addressing the global challenge of bringing education to the many millions of children with vision impairment who live on the margins of society."

I know we all wish Frances well in that endeavour.

The Paralympics Came to Dot Power

This term's theme was the Paralympics with students jumping, running and throwing their way into their own Paralympic Passport. Students used a range of measuring devices to record their times and distances ranging from a knotted rope (knots every metre), tactile ruler, audio measuring tape, timer on the BrailleNote, timer on the iPad ... and more!

We looked at the symbol of the Paralympic Games which is composed of three "agitos", coloured red, blue, and green, encircling a single point, on a white field (right).



The agito ("I move" in Latin) is a symbol of movement in the shape of an asymmetrical crescent. The colours of the agitos with the white background stand for the three colours that are most widely represented in national flags around the world. The three agitos encircle a centre point, to emphasize "the role that the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has of bringing athletes from all corners of the world together and enabling them to compete".

The shape also symbolises the Paralympic vision "To Enable Paralympic Athletes to Achieve Sporting Excellence and to Inspire and Excite the World".

The students played a feisty game of Goalball towards the end of the day – we have footage and photos just in case these very same students appear in the Paralympics of 2024! We'll be able to say, "We knew them when..."

Photos in the next issue!

More Information on Goalball

The [Paralympic website](#) features Paralympic sports including Goalball:

"Goalball is a sport exclusively for athletes who have a visual impairment. It was invented in 1946 in an effort to rehabilitate the blind veterans from World War II and made its Paralympic debut in 1976 in Toronto.

Goalball competitions are set apart from all other Paralympic events due to the unique atmosphere inside the playing venue. The object is to roll the ball into the opponent's goal while the opposing players try to block the ball with their bodies.

Bells inside the ball help to orientate the players by indicating the direction of the oncoming ball. Therefore, while play is in progress, complete silence is required in the venue to allow the players to concentrate and react instantly to the ball.

Goalball is played by male and female athletes with a visual impairment and athletes wear "blackout" masks on the playing court. This allows persons with varying degrees of vision to participate together. The game consists of two halves of 10 minutes each."

Visit the website to read more about the Aussie Goalballers!

Paralympic Swimmer

Read about Jenna Jones, a 15yo competitor in the 2016 Paralympics, in a recent article in [The Age](#).

"Her coach says her best hope of winning a medal is the 50-metre freestyle: she recently swam 50 metres in 28:96 seconds against sighted swimmers making her among the top 30 swimmers, sighted and vision impaired, in NSW."

And on the Topic of the Paralympics: Write to a Paralympian and get a Reply in Braille or Enlarged Print!

Australia Post, together with the Paralympic Committee are asking kids across Australia to write letters of encouragement to our Paralympic team members. All letters received before October will receive a postcard reply – and if you request it, it can be in braille or enlarged print.

Go to the [Australia Post website](#) and find out where to send your letter. There are teaching resources there, too.

To receive a reply in braille or enlarged print, please write this request on the envelope to alert Australia Post to your alternative format requirements. For example, write – “**Please send reply in BRAILLE**” on the envelope. Also, could teachers/parents please send an email to the following email address so that Auspost can keep an eye out for your request: jenni.bolton@auspost.com.au?

Happy writing!! Let’s cheer on our team!

Braille Repair: Braillex

Need your Perkins Braille repaired??? (Repairers are as rare as hen’s teeth):

Ken McDonald
1 Amicus Street
Ocean Grove
Victoria 3226
Mob: 0418 341 388

Ken says:

Perkins Braille can be sent by Free Post, by labelling the box clearly with “Material For The Blind”. The post office would be able to advise you what is required plus the weight must be under 7 Kg, not usually a problem with a braille. Also paying around \$3.00 a package you would be able to track the package, this is very popular.

The braille would require at least 50mm of packaging between it the carton, especially the feed roller knobs as they can push through the carton and break.

In most cases the braille will require a complete wash out by removing the covers and many other parts, then assembling, lube and adjusting.

The cost is \$170.00 (5-6 hours labour) for this and any parts required will be extra cost, in most cases parts are not required. A quote is available if required.

Turn-around time at present is around 2 weeks.

Q&A

Question: What are the options for calculator use for students without a calculator?

Answer: For students with low vision the calculator that comes standard with laptops may be an option. They can be used in conjunction with the student’s enlargement (eg ZoomText etc). There’s the “standard” calculator which generally appears as a default, but under the View menu is the “scientific” calculator and other options.

For blind students, particularly in the upper secondary years, full access to the graphing feature of calculators is not possible. Students need to learn to work with a sighted person who can input data and provide access to the output as required.

Through My Eyes Scholarship Program for 2017

The See Through My Eyes (STME) scholarship program provides financial assistance to university students who have low vision or are blind, and who are working toward a sustainable and rewarding career in their chosen field.

Up to four scholarships of \$2000 each will be awarded to undergraduate or postgraduate students. Scholarships are for one year only. Funds awarded can be spent on the following:

- Payment of university tuition fees
- Payment of student contribution fees
- Purchase of textbooks and other course materials
- Purchase of adaptive technology
- Living expenses associated with study

For information about eligibility, selection criteria and the application process, please visit the [STME website](#).

Applications are now open and will close 30 November 2016

BrailleNote Touch: Print to Braille in Seconds

HumanWare is aiming to include KNFB Reader in a free BrailleNote Touch update this September. All existing BrailleNote Touch users will receive a notification on their device when this update becomes available and can initiate the wireless update immediately.



Support Skills News

As you are opening your issue of The Bulletin this fortnight, staff and students from the SVRC, Support Skills Program and Guide Dogs Victoria will be participating in our annual Big Arts Day in the city. We'll have photos and a report in the next issue!

Braille in the Community

Toni has been in England – as you can see from her latest “Braille in the Community” offerings!

Ed: I think my favourite so far is the tactile sharps disposal featuring a syringe, pin and razor blade!

Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin! And wonders if anyone has seen the new \$5 note yet? What do we all think of it???

