

The Bulletin

Number 9, 15 June 2018

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Dates for Your Diary – 2018

Here is a list of our planned PD and other activities:

Dot Power: 19 June (for Year 1 to 3s)

Maths Inclusion Workshop for Supporting Students with VI: 29 June 9am-12 noon [now full – but we hope to video the sessions]

Circus Workshop and Audio Described Performance of Circus Oz: 29 June 1.30-7.40pm

[**Braille Music Camp:** 30 June to 7 July in NSW]

Term 3

Dot Power: 7 August (for pre-school and Foundation/Prep)

Educational Support for Students who have Low Vision: Tuesday 14 August

Dot Power: 11 September (new date for Year 1 to 3s)

[**Space Camp:** September-October in USA]

Term 4

Dot Power: 30 October (for pre-school and Foundation/Prep)

Dot Power: 13 November (new date for Year 1 to 3s)

Technology Expo: Tuesday 27 November

Christmas Morning Tea: Wednesday 5 December [no need to register – just come at 11am!]

Programs and registration are available on the SVRC website! Online payment is also available!

If you can't find the PD you need, please contact Lea Nagel or Marion Blazé to request a session.

2018 Blind and Low Vision Conference – Thank you!

Approximately ninety teachers and allied professionals from across Victoria participated in DET's 2018 Blind and Low Vision Education Conference, held on 12th June at the Vision Australia Conference Centre in Kooyong. The theme of the day was "Promoting inclusion and achievement for learners with blindness or low vision through multi-tiered systems of support".

The conference brought together Visiting Teachers and other professionals for a day of engaging, insightful and practical professional learning from leading state and national experts in blind and low vision education, coordinated by the Statewide Vision Resource Centre. Todd Macbeth, Director of the Inclusive Education Professional Practice Branch, provided an overview of the multi-tiered approach and outlined how this framework can support professionals working with students who are blind or partially sighted. Attendees were challenged to consider evidence-based teaching strategies by blind and low vision expert, Dr Frances Gentle AO and inclusive technology specialist, Greg Alchin, amongst others.



Todd Macbeth, Director of the Inclusive Education Professional Practice Branch, provided an overview of the multi-tiered approach and outlined how this framework can support professionals working with students who are blind or partially sighted. Attendees were challenged to consider evidence-based teaching strategies by blind and low vision expert, Dr Frances Gentle AO and inclusive technology specialist, Greg Alchin, amongst others.

The conference provided a unique and powerful opportunity to bring a large number of professionals into the one place, all focused around learning effective strategies to promote access and achievement for students who are blind or have low vision. We hope to coordinate more days like this in the future – We'd love feedback around how we can provide more relevant and useful professional learning opportunities in the future. Please contact us if you have any suggestions or ideas!

Matt Trotter, Transition Manager, Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Art for Action: Competition

Source: [Art for Action](#)

The Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) is holding an art competition for people with disability. The winning artwork will feature on the Victorian public sector's first ever Disability Employment Action Plan. VPSC is developing the action plan in close consultation with government departments, agencies and offices. The plan is a collective commitment by the sector to provide flexible and sustainable employment for people of all abilities, lifting representation to 6% by 2020.

The art competition is open to Victorian residents with disability. Artworks must be designed around the theme "a fully inclusive workplace" and be less than two metres in size. Refer to the [Art competition terms and conditions](#) for more detail. There is a prize purse of \$5000 to be won. This includes \$2500 prize money and a \$2500 licence fee for use of the artwork.

Be sure to submit your artwork by 5:00pm on Friday 6 July.

For further information contact: Elizabeth Parkinson on (03) 9651 0845 or elizabeth.parkinson@vpsc.vic.gov.au

Low Vision PD Day (Term 3)

When: 14 August 2018 from 9.00 to 3.30pm (registration from 8.30am)

Where: Statewide Vision Resource Centre 370 Springvale Rd Donvale

Intended audience: Class and subject teachers, ES and integration staff, Visiting Teachers and others who support students with low vision

Registration essential: <http://svrc.vic.edu.au/pd/ed-support-low-vision/>

Cost: \$88 (\$44 for family members and VTs)

Feelix Library Membership for VTs, Teachers and School Librarians

From Toni Chilton, Feelix Library Liaison & Access

Did you know that Visiting Teachers, Classroom Teachers and School Librarians can become members of the Vision Australia Feelix Library to borrow story kits to use with students who are blind or who have low vision?

Each kit contains a print picture story book with clear braille overlay, (contracted and uncontracted version), a CD, small tactile handbook and materials to enhance the enjoyment and engagement of the blind/low vision student.

Membership and postage is free. For further information contact FeelixLibrary@visionaustralia.org or phone 9864 9545 (Toni) or 9864 9546 (Louise).



Tactile Maps at Vision Australia's Kooyong Office

Source: [Vision Australia website](#)

Vision Australia has recently refurbished its national head office in Kooyong, Victoria, implementing best practice in accessible design. Way-finding practices have been purpose fit for the building, which not only meets Disability Discrimination Act requirements (section 23) but also aims to exceed them.

Vision Australia project manager for the Kooyong refurbishment Jennifer Smith said one of the way-finding measures is a tactile map at entrances to the building.

The entrances features tactile maps with large print, high contrast tactile elements and braille. There is also audible content that activates with touch.

To read the full article, visit the link above.

Upcoming Dot Power Day for Students in Year 1-4

If you'd like to sing The Cane song in your classroom, here are the words and chords for guitar. This is another original song, created by Lea Nagel, for the Dot Power program.

The Cane song!

C G7 C G7 C

Tap tappity tap I'm getting on a train

C G7 C F G7

Snap snappity snap I'm folding up my cane

C G7 C G7 C

Tap tappity tap I'm going up the stairs

C G7 C G7 C

Snap snappity snap my cane goes under my chair.

C G7 C

I can find my way to school ...

G7

My cane's my favourite safety tool ...

C G7 C

It even helps me find the loo ...

G7 C

And as I grow ... my cane does too!

C G7 C

When I'm older I'll use my cane

G7

To catch a bus and catch a plane

C G7 C

I'll catch a taxi when it rains

G7 C

I can travel ... I've got my cane.

Big Arts Day 2018 Report

Report from Garry Stinchcombe, Co-ordinator, Support Skills Program

19 students along with staff from the SVRC and Guide Dogs Victoria spent a fabulous day in the city exploring the Arts and experiencing the vibe of the Melbourne Art's precinct.

After checking in our bags at the NGV Cloak Room , students had twenty minutes to get a taste of the Australian Music Vault in the Foyer area of the Victorian State Theatre. Students explored just a little of the history of Australian Rock and Roll music, enjoying some of the surround-sound music and various digital exhibits and displays of memorabilia, before moving onto the Hamer Hall.

Our first appointment was with the MSO and Tripod at Hamer Hall. We were seated in the very front row. Students and staff had been issued with Audio Description units prior to being seated. Sadly the units didn't work as they had been tuned to the wrong channel. Will McRostie from Description Victoria has apologised and is putting in place procedures to ensure it doesn't happen in the future. Dan Thorpe who was the Audio Describer caught up with the group at the end and was able to share some of the prepared information.

The concert itself was fantastic. The theme was "Incongruous". Tripod and the MSO Orchestra set out to demonstrate this using a variety of musical genres and approaches. The Conductor Ben Northy was dressed in a suit but wearing a t-shirt with a chicken on the front! "Incongruous!"

Being so close to the orchestra and to feel the power of the music was sensational! Tripod included lots of subtle jokes and clever comments! It was 50 minutes of musical indulgence. Such a great experience!

At the conclusion of the concert the group were invited back to meet 3 of the MSO musicians who had just played in the concert. Sylvia Hosking who lead this session introduced Craig Hill to the group. Craig played the Clarinet and handed around his concert instrument along with 2 other Clarinets. Craig demonstrated each instrument and explained when and why he had played that particular clarinet during the concert. Sylvia then introduced Trinette McClimont, one of the 4 French Horn Players. Students were once again able to feel the instrument and Trinette demonstrated the instruments range and the various subtleties of how it is played.



Finally, John Arcaro, the Percussionist and most definitely the noisiest of the 3 musicians brought along a box of wonderful instruments which were used to perform sound affects! This was extremely popular and "very noisy"!

Thanks to Sylvia and these wonderful musicians who were so generous with their time and knowledge.

The group quickly assembled and headed back out for lunch in the Great Hall at the NGV. This was a slightly shorter lunch as our time with the MSO and Dan from Description Victoria had run overtime!

At 12:50 the students broke into their 2 groups. Group 1 headed off with the Guide Dogs Victoria team. The group walked back along Saint Kilda Rd negotiating the lunch crowd, manoeuvring around the bollards and other fixtures on the footpath. They were encouraged to move independently so having to take responsibility for themselves. When they arrived at the station they then met up with the Staff from Metro. They then explored Flinders St Station paying particular attention to the support services including Traveller's Aid and the Information Centre. The group also toured around the station looking at the layout of the platforms and the general access. Flinders St Station is such an important travel destination when students begin independent travel using public transport.

At the conclusion of their tour the group returned to the NGV to switch over with the other group. Again, the group negotiated the pedestrian traffic of a busy Friday afternoon. With the support and encouragement of the GDV O&M team.

After lunch Group 2 stayed at the NGV. All the students had to wash their hands carefully and remove any jewellery so that they wouldn't scratch any of the art works being touched. Michael Donnelly divided the group into 2 and one went with Emma Hewett and the other went with Liz Gage the two NGV Educators. After a look and discussion about the mosaic stained-glass ceiling by Leonard French in the Great Hall the groups went in the special lift reserved for moving art works and we went to Level 2 where our touch tour really began.

5 art works had been identified by Marika Strohschnieder, Senior Conservator. These included:

- Jacob Epstein's *Sunflower*, Stone Carving
- Henry Moore's *Half Figure*, Stone Carving
- Edgar Degas' *Dancer looking at the sole of her right foot (Second study)*, Bronze
- Edward Long's *Queen Esther*, Painting
- August Rodin's *The Thinker*. Bronze



The students were able to touch the carvings and sculptures and then compare them to the tactile drawings Michael had prepared. Emma and Liz provided the group with background information while encouraging the students to ponder the meaning of the works. While students weren't able to touch the painting Emma had brought in samples of the fabric depicted in the painting, making a link with the painting and the description being provided. Students with low vision were encouraged to use the iPads to take a photo of the painting and then zoom in to increase their access to the art work.



Marika also showed the students the tools a sculptor would use to carve a stone figure.

Some of these art works were over 100 years old and to have touch access was very special.

Lots of planning had gone into this component of the program and we'd like to acknowledge the support and willingness to ensure students had a truly inclusive and positive experience. A special thanks to Emma and Liz who were fantastic in accommodating the needs of our groups and being so proactive.

At 2pm the groups swapped over with everyone having the same opportunity and range of experiences.

3:15pm found all the students congregating back at our original start point for collection. The students said they had a great day and headed off with family members.



The Big Arts Day Out has become a feature of the Support Skills Program for our younger groups. It isn't just about a day out having fun but rather an opportunity to experience some formal activities in an inclusive and targeted manner. Making a connection with the orchestra and being able to experience precious art works in a meaningful manner is both enriching and empowering. I like to think that these positive experiences lay the foundations for future exploration and self-expression.

A huge thanks to everyone concerned in organizing the program. Thanks to Cassandra Chadwin-Smith from the First Call Fund who organized the funding for the day. The wonderful Guide Dogs Victoria O&M Team, the MSO Staff and Orchestra members, Description Victoria, The NGV Educators and the Staff from Metro who Supported the O&M activities in the afternoon. Also to the great SSP staff who always help plan and support these fabulous educational opportunities. A truly great Team Effort by all concerned!

Sensory Scientific Exhibition and Discovery Day

Monash University hosted an event recently "specifically aimed to be accessible for the blind and low vision community with tactile, sound, olfactory and low vision accessible displays and exhibits."

Bai Yang had the following to say about his experience:

Monash University Visit Report

My visit to Monash University was very fun.

I got to see and feel some models of some immune cells and pathogens.

I got to look at some machines scientists use like a hot machine that heats up chemicals and a machine called a vortex that spins the chemicals around.

I got to look at 3D printed life size models and a silicone brain.

I also got to make a model of a cell myself with a Styrofoam ball for the cell body and pipe cleaners for receptors. (But I wasn't making a neuron).

The visit ended at 1 PM and I got back to class at 1:30 PM. Code club starts at 1:45 PM so I got there in time. I also got 3 ticks or good points for putting the chairs up and plugging in the computers.

Thanks for reading.

The End

Australian Lions: Grant Opportunities

The Australian Lions Visual independence Foundation is offering grants for the ID Mate talking barcode scanner. For further information email info@visualindependence.org.au or telephone 1300 787 469. [Click here to download a grant application](#)

RIDBC Course: Teaching and Learning Strategies for Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired in the Sensorimotor Stage of Development

When: Thursday 26 July to Friday 27 July 2018 from 9am to 4pm

Presenter: Natalie de Wit

Where: RIDBC Renwick Centre or via digital access

Cost: \$425 (full registration) or \$395 (digital access)

This workshop will offer practical teaching strategies for students for with visual impairments and multiple disabilities in the sensorimotor stage of development. Through lectures, videos, discussions, readings and case studies, participants will develop integrate knowledge, which can be applied to their own students.

Participants will demonstrate an understanding of the unique needs of the students with visual impairments and multiple disabilities at the sensorimotor level of development and how these students can be taught meaningful routines which become a foundation for learning new concepts. For further information, visit the [RIDBC website](#).

Braille on the Menu!

Restaurant chain Hog's Braille Café introduced braille menus company-wide in 2000 as part of allowing people of all abilities to enjoy the experience of eating at their restaurants. See more on the [ABC website](#).

Frances Gentle AO

Well-known to us all through her extensive work in SPEVI, ICEVI and RIDBC Renwick Centre, Dr Frances Gentle was awarded the Order of Australia in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours "for distinguished service to people who are blind or have low vision, particularly in the area of special education, and to policy development and practice on inclusiveness and standards."

We are delighted for Frances and wish her the very best.

Staff News

Emily White emailed an updated photo of baby Theo festooned in the hand-knitted blanket lovingly created by many hands at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre. Emily says she misses her Fridays at Support Skills and looks forward to her and Kirsten visiting to introduce Theo sometime soon.



Finally

This is probably the last issue for term 2 so we wish you a great winter break! See you next term. – Deb Lewis (Ed)