

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

**Number 11**

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

This issue was edited by Marion Blazé, Education Officer, Statewide Vision Resource Centre. Deb is doing well but now has a cold!

### PD 2006

The SVRC PD program for the rest of 2006 is below.

For the complete list of activities for 2006 and where available downloadable programs, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2006.htm>

All activities offered by the SVRC are open to class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, careers teachers, therapists, parents VTs, students etc.

**Please register by:** tel (03) 9841 0242, fax (03) 9841 0878 or email [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au).

Term	Event	Date
3	<b>Term 3 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day</b>	Tuesday 8 August
3	<b>Magic Workshop</b> – BYO Laptop Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Wednesday 16 August
3	<b>Mountbatten for Users Workshop</b> – BYO Mountbatten Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Monday 21 August
3	<b>Scanning Options Workshop</b> – BYO Laptop Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Monday 4 September
4	<b>SPEVI Combined Agencies PD Day</b> Vision Australia Kooyong	Monday 2 October
4	<b>O&amp;M Morning - Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community</b> Phone Alicia Madden (03) 9854 4493	Thursday 26 October
4	<b>Educational EXPO – Assistive Technology Options</b> ALL WELCOME!!!	Friday 24 November

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## Vision Loss Support Group Meeting

Saturday, September 2, 2006 at SVRC. Please copy the enclosed flier and give to families. Geoff will be covering a very important topic for families of our students. Tell parents who have never been to these meetings before, that this is a very friendly group. Annette and I are always there and baby sitting is provided for littlies, so parents can be free to listen and discuss issues. If families are at all reluctant to come, suggest that you'll come too. The more, the merrier!

## Spelling – it needs to be taught!

Workshop at La Trobe Uni, Saturday, August 19, 2006, 9.30 to 3.15 - \$140. Marion attended this day last year and it was great. For more information, email [pwelham@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pwelham@bigpond.net.au) or telephone 9499 2065 or 0402 421 864.

## How to 'Play' the Media - Workshop

attended by Marion Blazé – Leader Newspapers July 18

How do you get positive news coverage for your school or service? This was the topic in the minds of participants at this half-day workshop provided for Eastern Region personnel.

Some top tips I heard were:

- 'pictures are gold'. If you can give journalists an idea for a great photo, they will sell papers (and they'll probably come to your 'event')
- papers need at least two week's notice of an activity in order to cover it
- stories need to be interesting, quirky or 'things which affect people'
- study your local paper and see what stories they cover (and on what page)
- if a controversial topic is currently in the news, offer your paper an 'expert' opinion on it – how it affects you or your students
- the amount of publicity you get *is* proportional to the number of contacts *you* make with the papers

## Google more accessible to the blind

Google has released Accessible Search, a Google Labs product aiming to rank higher pages which are optimized for blind users. Basically it brings pages with better design, no flash graphics and less tables to the top of the list plus gives a few minor changes to the search page itself, like less useless junk and no ads.

Thanks to Lea Nagels' network for alerting us to this info.

## Video docs light way for blind bush kids

Technology is overcoming the tyranny of distance to give deaf and blind children in rural and regional Australia new skills and new hope. An article in The Australian, July 18, 2006, outlines how video conferencing, teleconferencing and regular care packages are allowing specialists at the Royal Institute for the Deaf and Blind (Sydney) to reach out to disabled children across the country. For the full article, go to:

[www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,19825581-2702,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,19825581-2702,00.html)

Thanks to Mike Steer for sending this our way.

## New Centre for Vision Independence

A new division of Guide Dogs Victoria, the Centre for Vision Independence, was launched recently to help people with Low Vision regain their independence and confidence. The Centre can give free advice on services and devices to help and how to find these. It is located a 'short walk' from the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, East Melbourne and their number is 03 9639 4401.

## Department travel costs??

Excerpt from 'Visions & Realisations' – History of the Victorian Education Department  
“Some men in charge of large areas faced travel difficulties. The Western District officer, whose diary for July 1878 disclosed his mode of transport to be a buggy and pair, learnt that he must be content with one horse or travel by horseback. When confronted with his costs of twelve shillings for accommodation and five shillings for horse-feed during a one night stop at the Hermitage Hotel, Harrow, officialdom frowned and replied that ‘the Department cannot continue to allow expenses at this rate’.”

Some things never change! Thanks to Geoff Bowen for this excerpt.

## University Open days

Open days are coming! If you were buying a car, wouldn't you check it out first? Considering the cost and time spent on post-school education, it is sensible to check that out, too. Dates coming up are:

- Sat 5 Aug – Chisolm TAFE (Frankston) & Monash (Gippsland, Parkville, Peninsula)
- Sun 6 Aug – ACU (Ballarat), Chisolm TAFE (Dandenong), La Trobe (Bendigo), Melbourne (Burnley, Dookie), Monash (Berwick, Clayton, Caulfield) & Deakin (Melbourne)

## How to get the most out of Open Days

Thanks to the Koonung Secondary School newsletter for this useful information.

- Most universities have Open Day Programs. These are probably available from careers teachers but are also on the web, e.g. [www.swinburne.edu.au/studentrecruitment](http://www.swinburne.edu.au/studentrecruitment) or [www.latrobe.edu.au/openday](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/openday). Get a copy beforehand so you can plan.
- Check the program for times of lectures, displays, etc. so you can attend at appropriate times.
- Allow yourself several hours at each campus.
- Before you go, write down questions you want answered and find staff to answer them, e.g. what can I 'major' in? Are there limits on numbers in any subjects?
- Ask questions about career prospects of graduates. What are graduates doing?
- Talk to current students about their course.
- If you are concerned about obtaining the ENTER for the course you want, ask staff about the possibility of transfer after 1<sup>st</sup> year. What do they recommend?
- Look at the facilities available and make comparisons between universities offering similar courses. Where would you prefer to be?
- Find out about clubs and societies.
- Consider transport issues. Try out the mode of travel on the Open Days, which you are likely to use in the long term. Could you cope with three/four years of travelling that far?
- Look at accommodation and find out costs.
- For our VI students, make contact with the 'Disability Liaison Officer' on campus and find out what support is available.

## New website on teaching VI kids

Some of you may remember Dolly Bhargava, a Speech pathologist who specialises in communication for severely multiply disabled kids, who spoke at the Melbourne SPEVI conference. Well she, along with Mike Steer, have contributed to some very useful looking handbooks available on line. Look at <http://www.trinity.edu/prg/sensoryimpairments/>

## Accessing information from a microscope

A new device from Haines Educational will capture microscope images to your computer and allow you to magnify them and add your own information. At the cost of \$209 it could be just the thing for some of our science students. We'll see if it can be demonstrated at our Expo.

Thanks to Lee Clarke for this info.

## Brita-fun big game equipment

There is a new web based brand of educational products which might be useful for our students. Brita-fun make BIG toys like giant chess sets, balls, dice (and I mean big!). You can see their catalogue on line at [www.britafun.com.au](http://www.britafun.com.au) or call 1300 369 527.

Thanks Jeni Blake for passing this on.

## SEAS Applications

For those of you with students applying for the Special Entry Access Schemes (SEAS) the dates are below. This is an online application process and it was quite involved for those who applied for it last year. If you have a student who wishes to apply for special entry to a tertiary course it may be worth a visit to the VTAC site to familiarise yourself with the process. The link is <http://www.vtac.edu.au/seas/index.html>

The information on the site at the moment is from last year but is will be updated at the end of July for this year

Please ring Lyn if you have any questions.

## Important Dates for VCE Students

Please note: these dates are not final until 31 July 2006

Action	Time	Day	Date
<u>Applications for entry into tertiary courses 2007</u>			
Opens	9am	Monday	31 July
Closes for Timely applications	5pm	Friday	29 September
Closes for Late applications	5pm	Friday	10 November
Closes for Very late applications	5pm	Friday	8 December
<u>Applications for Special Entry Access Schemes (SEAS)</u>			
Opens	9am	Monday	7 August
Closes	5pm	Friday	6 October

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<http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au>

## Driving Camp 2006

This year's driving camp will be held at the Charlton driver education centre on Thursday the 30th November to Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. Only 9 places are available. Please register your interest ASAP so that organisation can be done before the exam period. Email is preferred:

**Helen Caldwell**

**PO Box 201, Nunawading 3131, Tel (0409 381 723, Fax (03) 9841 0878**

**Email [caldow.helen.f@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:caldow.helen.f@edumail.vic.gov.au)**

**Mobile 0409 381 723**

## Dot it light

This is a cute little light which would be great for inside lockers. It runs on batteries, uses three extra-bright LEDs (which take hardly any power) and is turned on and off with just a push. Comes in many groovy colours. It retails for between \$10 and \$15, including batteries. To have a look go to the Osram/Sylvania website. [www.sylvania.com](http://www.sylvania.com) and look for 'Dotitlights'.

## Low Cost Braille writer

Engineering students at John Hopkins have invented a low cost alternative to the Perkins Braille. Their goal was to make something which could be sold for less than \$50. Apparently it is not quite in production yet, but we look forward to the day that it is. Thank you, Mike Steer for this info.

## SVRC News

- Shane Spowart, who attends Pyramid Hill Secondary College, was recently awarded the Lions Club 'Children of Courage' Award. He features in a 'Student Profile' article in the latest 'Get About Newsletter' from Guide Dogs (included with print copies of this Bulletin).

## Finally

Thanks to Lyn Robinson, Mike Steer, Lea Nagel, Jeni Blake, Helen Caldwell, Geoff Bowen, Lee Clarke, Dolly Bhargava, and the Koonung newsletter for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Perhaps the list would have been shorter if I'd named the people who didn't contribute! Thanks also to our fabulous proof-readers, technology trouble-shooters, stuffers and mailers. And to Lyn Robinson and Lea Nagel for getting the electronic versions out there.

## If you have something you would like included in 'The Bulletin', please contact:

Deb Lewis (who can be emailed at [deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au)).

# Parent Support Group

Saturday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006

Statewide Vision Resource Centre  
**370-380 Springvale Road Donvale**

(In the grounds of Heatherwood School - second driveway on the left after heading north from the Eastern Freeway)

Time: 2:00 till stumps

## Siblings and Disability

**Speaker:** Geoff Bowen, Educational Psychologist with the Statewide Vision Resource Centre, will explore the affects disability can have on siblings and how to minimize the impact. Stay for afternoon tea and a chat after Geoff's talk.

For more information call Annette Godfrey-Magee or Marion Blazé on 9841 0807.

John and Judy Bowen: 9842 5103

Leigh Heaven: 9857 0152 or 9878 4477

Baby Sitters and afternoon tea provided.  
Hope to see you all soon.