

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 15**6th October 2006**

The following issue of The Bulletin was prepared by Marion Blazé, Education Officer at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Welcome back for a long Term IV – hope you all had nice hols!

PD 2006

For the complete list of 2006 activities 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 remember to register: tel (03) 9841 0242, fax (03) 9841 0878 or email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

Term 4	O & M Morning – Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community Phone Alicia Madden (03) 9854 4493	Thursday October 26
Term 4	Educational EXPO 2006 – Assistive Technology Options ALL WELCOME	Friday November 24

SVRC Educational EXPO!!

When: Friday 24th November (always an excellent event – and this year there's a door prize!)

Where: Statewide Vision Resource Centre 370-380 Springvale Rd Donvale

When: any time between 10am and 3.30pm – come for as long or short a time as you like

No need to register before the day – just turn up on the day!

Driving Camp

Contact Helen Caldwell via email if you are interested in joining the camp which will be held on 30 November to 1 December this year: caldow.helen.f@edumail.vic.gov.au

Reading Recovery Volunteer needed for SVRC

Do you know anyone with reading recovery credentials who would be willing to look at our collections at SVRC and assign levels to young readers' materials? Please call Deb.

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SPEVI Combined Agencies PD day – October 2, 2006

Report by Marion Blazé

What a way to start Term IV! It was great to get together with the new and (dare I say) old faces from our field for a whole day of learning. The Plaza at Vision Australia Kooyong was filled with over 70 teachers and other professionals eager to hear from Deb Chen and the afternoon workshop facilitators. I especially liked the way Deb wove so many anecdotes into her discussions, to illustrate her points. For example, when speaking about the importance of home visits to understanding the culture of the family, she told us of a very young child who bumped into everything at school. When a home visit was made it was discovered that the family didn't have any hard furnishings, just cushions. Her videos demonstrating strategies for encouraging tactual awareness were also fantastic.

In the afternoon, I attended the workshop on the changes to Braille maths now that we have adopted the Unified English Braille code. It's now much clearer in my head (thank you, Leona!), but it will take a while before it is internalised!

A big thank you to the SVRC staff who helped run the day at Kooyong and to Diane Skillern who did lots of the administration before and after the event, and didn't even get to go!

SPEVI – are you a member??

The South Pacific Educators of the Vision Impaired is probably the only professional association for educators in our particular field of vision impairment. Membership is only \$99 for two years and gets you discounts on conference registrations, newsletters and a journal, and the opportunity to attend special events with your professional colleagues. For registration information go to:

<http://www.e-bility.com/spevi/join.php>

SPEVI Councillors

Each state and territory in Australia (and New Zealand) is represented by some councillors who act as the contact people for national issues and events, and conduct activities for SPEVI members within their region. Victoria has positions for three councilors. At the end of the SPEVI day, we held a meeting to discuss nominations for Victorian Councilors for the next year. Three people have been nominated: Garry Stinchcombe (Vision Australia), Lil Deverill (Guide Dogs) and Marion Blazé (Statewide Vision Resource Centre). If no further nominations are received, these will be our three representatives, otherwise members will need to vote on any further nominations. Please contact Marion or Deb if you wish to make additional nominations.

SPEVI Conference – 7 – 12 January, 2007 – Fremantle, WA

Don't forget our conference in January. Check out the program and registration details on <http://www.e-bility.com/spevi>

Eccentric Viewing Assessment Day

Eccentric Viewing is a strategy that maximizes the residual vision of students who have limited use of their macular. It is an evidenced-based method of identifying which viewing position best reduces the impact of a central vision loss

Monday 16th October will be our Eccentric viewing day. We have been inundated with requests for students to be assessed by Dr. Kerry Fitzmaurice. I have now asked Kerry to give us a second day before the end of the year to ensure that all students who need this assessment have the opportunity.

Dr. Kerry Fitzmaurice is head of the School of Orthoptics at La Trobe University. The resource center has a copy of her eccentric viewing program and following the assessment the visiting teacher can systematically work through this program, confident that the student's best eccentric position has been identified.

If you have any students that you would like to attend this second day please let Annette or Marion know on (03) 9841 0807.

Transition from School to Post-School life for students with vision impairments - Conference attended by Annette Godfrey-Magee.

Annette came back on the last day of Term III, from four days in Sydney, absolutely buzzing with excitement over this conference. I'll share some of her note-taking with you now, but anyone interested can request a copy of her more complete notes. We wanted to include them in The Bulletin, but she just couldn't stop writing! She is eager to present her learnings to all of us early next year.

So, from Annette:

"The title of this conference does not seem all that inspiring but the four days spent in Sydney were the best professional development days I have had in probably 30 years of attending such programs. The presenter was Dr. Karen Wolffe, a rehabilitation teacher, author, educator and all round "good egg." Karen was politically incorrect, factual, prescriptive, direct and on the money when it came to understanding what our low vision and blind students need to get employment.

There were four dominant assumptions underpinning her presentations:

- Work does not have special provisions
- Work is the greatest equalizer
- Work is one of the vehicles in which we participate in a full life
- Career education for students with visual impairments needs to begin as early as possible."

Her notes go on under the following headings:

1. Early "work" expectations
2. Well-developed socialization skills
3. Well-developed problem solving skills
4. Application of self-advocacy skills
5. Application of compensatory skills
6. Knowledge of career options and sources of information
7. An understanding of employers' concerns
8. Mastery of career counseling content areas
9. An understanding of levels of ability and impact with regard to placement
10. Evidence of participation in work experience opportunities

'Trekker' - New Mobility Aid from HumanWare

HumanWare is very pleased to announce the release of Trekker with Australian maps. Trekker is the smallest and most affordable GPS-based navigation system for people who are blind or vision impaired.

Trekker has been used by hundreds of users in North America and Europe over the past 3 years and has recently been endorsed by Leader Dogs for the Blind in the USA and will soon be endorsed by Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) in the UK.

Trekker will be of interest to people who are blind or vision impaired who are seeking a secondary, electronic travel aide, Orientation and Mobility Instructors, Guide Dog Instructors,

Occupational Therapists, Adaptive Technology Consultants, Adaptive Technology Trainers, and anyone with an interest in enhanced mobility for blind and vision impaired people.

Trekker is a palm-sized, revolutionary system that uses GPS and digital maps to help blind and vision impaired people find their way in urban and rural areas. Trekker users can pinpoint exactly where they are, learn about area attractions, and find out how to get to specific destinations. More information can be gained at www.humanware.com

Trekker with Australian maps will retail for \$2,420. The Trekker system can be enhanced with the Maestro applications, which provide access to indispensable functions of a PDA: agenda, text documents, vocal notes, contact directory, Daisy reader (Victor Reader Pocket), media player, email manager, calculator, and the choice of a second language. The Trekker with Maestro option will retail for \$2,850.

For more information contact Ramona Mandy Tel: 03 9686 2601 Mob: 0404 834 924 or come to the EXPO.

Victorian Election 2006 - ACCESSIBLE VOTING

The Victorian Electoral Commission is piloting electronic voting at the November election, to enable people who are blind or vision impaired to vote independently and confidentially.

A trial of the machines was held on 23 September and feedback provided to the VEC. It was a very positive experience for all concerned.

Over the next few weeks, all clients of Vision Australia's library in Victoria will be mailed information in accessible formats in relation to the election. General information will also be broadcast on Vision Australia Radio.

The VEC and Vision Australia will be promoting the 'E-centres' in the lead up to the election on 25 November. E-centres (or electronic voting kiosks) will be located in regional and metropolitan areas. Voters will be able to use the E-centres to cast an early vote from 13 November. On Election Day, Saturday 25 November, the E-centres will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Voters will be issued with an electorate card to use in the machines and this will only be issued upon arrival to vote. Please note these cards are only available from the E-centres.

Legislation restricts electronic voting to voters 'who because of visual impairment cannot otherwise vote without assistance.'

Further information is available at <http://www.13vote.com.au> or <http://www.vec.vic.gov.au> or by calling 13 86 83.

Audio and large print files are also available.

Online Mailing list for Educators of VI

The ICEVI Pacific Regional Committee has established an electronic mailing list for communication, networking and information sharing among people interested in ICEVI activities in the region, in particular the 'Education for All Children with Vision Impairment' Global campaign.

The Regional Committee invites you to join the mailing list. This can be done by completing the subscription form. Go to: <http://www.icevipacific.org.au/subscription.php>

Once you have lodged your subscription, you will then receive a confirmation email, requesting you to confirm your subscription by clicking on the 'reply' button.

If you have any difficulties with the subscription process, please contact Frances Gentle, ICEVI Pacific Regional Chairperson, at the Renwick Centre, Royal Institute for Deaf & Blind Children: Ph +612 9872 0808, Fax +612 9873 1614, or Email: frances.gentle@ridbc.org.au.

Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness

September 2006 issue out now.

This month's articles and features include:

- Relationships among Testing Medium, Test Performance, and Testing Time of High School Students Who Are Visually Impaired - Jane N. Erin, Sunggye Hong, Christina Schoch, and YaJu Kuo
- Psychosocial Intervention for Age-Related Macular Degeneration: A Pilot Project - Hans-Werner Wahl, Annette Kämmerer, Frank Holz, Daniel Miller, Stefanie Becker, Roman Kaspar, and Ines Himmelsbach
- Differences in Social Support among Employed and Unemployed Adults Who Are Visually Impaired - Verena R. Cimarolli and Shu-wen Wang
- Around the World: A First Look at Children and Youths Who Are Deaf-Blind in the Kingdom of Thailand - Saowaruk Sukontharungsee, Eugene Bourquin, and Mor Poonpit
- Plus, Editor's Page; A Look Back, 100 Years of Professionalism in Services for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, Richard L. Welsh; Book Review, Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius, Reviewed by M. Cay Holbrook.

School producing tactile books!!

Many thanks to Gary (the art teacher at Lalor Secondary College) and his students Damien, Stephanie, Jimmy, Michael and Sanjay for the fantastic tactual books that they have produced for us. This is the second group of Gary's students who have taken on this project and it is clear that a great deal of thought and effort has gone into their work. 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', 'The Big Book of B', 'Incey Wincey Spider', 'My School' and 'Numbers and Objects' will all soon be on the shelves at the Resource Centre ready to be borrowed.

(This message is from Toni Chiltern and the Braille Production team.)

Vision Australia Support Skills Program Try Day

From Garry Stinchcombe, Vision Australia

We have our Try Day for the Support Skills and Residential Training Program scheduled for Friday 17th November. This is for prospective students and their families to spend half a day at Burwood meeting the staff and experiencing some aspects of the program. Any of Visiting Teachers or school staff would be welcome to attend as well.

If any of the VTs or families of students would like to call Garry Stinchcombe to discuss the program they are more than welcome to do so.

The application form is attached to this bulletin.

Public Lecture on Low Vision Problems

"Low Vision Problems, Challenges and Solutions to Service Delivery"

On the eve of World Sight Day, Wednesday 11 October 2006 the Centre for Eye Research Australia will be hosting a Public Lecture in collaboration with Vision 2020 Australia and the Low Vision Service providers of Victoria. This lecture will feature presentations from Dr Serge

Resnikoff from the World Health Organisation Geneva, Professor Nag Rao from the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness and Associate Professor Jill Keeffe from the Centre for Eye Research Australia. This lecture is open to any members of the community.

Venue: Melbourne University ICT Building, 111 Barry St Carlton

Time: 6 to 7.30pm

Job for Teacher of VI in Darwin

The Department of Employment, Education & Training in the NT is currently seeking an 'Education Advisor Vision' (or a VT for VI in our language). Although based in Darwin, this position offers opportunities to travel all over the NT. For additional information call Student Services on 08 8999 8787 and quote position number 19223 or talk to Marion Blazé who had such a job in 2003/4 or call Christine Dinning on 08 8999 8704 or email at christine.dinning@nt.gov.au.

Make a splash – swimming with a disability

Swimming Victoria Inc. has developed an informative brochure and poster to promote multi-disability swimming in Victoria. SVI are able to offer assistance to disability organizations, parents and potential swimmers on how to become involved in the sport of swimming. If you would like brochures or a poster contact Swimming Victoria Development Department on (03) 9686 5222 or development@vic.swimming.org.au.

Vision Australia Summer Activity Program 2007

(GET IN QUICK for this one!!!)

There is an opportunity for 10 vision impaired people to participate in snorkelling activity at Ricketts Point with a Mentone based Swim, Snorkel and Dive company known as 'Aquability'.

Proposed itinerary for 'MARINE BIOLOGY SNORKEL' on Wednesday 17 January 2007, for Vision Australia as part of the Summer Activity Program 2007 by Coast Action/Coastcare.

- 9:00am - arrive at Mentone
- 9.30am - depart for pool
- 10:00am-11.30am (1.5 hours) - introduction to pool and snorkelling practice,
- 12:00 return to Mentone for BBQ lunch
- 1:00pm- 4:00pm (3 hours) - beach snorkel
- 4:15pm – departure for home from Mentone,

Based on 10 participants the cost would be \$96 per person.

For further information and to register your interest contact Di Hayward (Recreation Support Worker) Vision Australia Ph (03) 8872 7000

Student News

- The team returns from Space Camp – Students Peter, Michael, Andrew and Luke and chaperones Lee Clarke and Helen Young apparently had a fabulous time at Space Camp and Disneyland over the holidays. Here are some excerpts from emails received:
 “We had a great time in Disneyland and California Adventure. The boys went on all the death-defying rides, and they tell me their parents won't believe what they have done, but we have the photos to prove it. They went on some rides time and time and time again, but it was great. They particularly loved rides that involved water.”

And after mission training and simulations at Space Camp, Lee said:

“Helen and I are so proud of the boys. Their manners are impeccable. They are always prepared to assist others and are making new friends.”

Texts for 2007

Get those requests for alternative format materials in early. Now's the time to start collecting booklists and getting decision about what comes first.

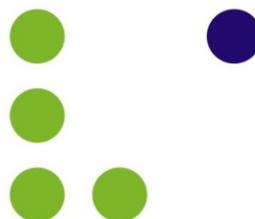
Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Francis Gentle, Annette Godfrey-Magee, Toni Chiltern, Jill Keeffe, Garry Stinchcombe and Chris Dinning for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to the fabulous proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

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

Deb Lewis who can be emailed at deblewis@svrc.vuc.edu.au.

Vision Australia Education Services



vision australia

blindness and low vision services

SUPPORT SKILLS PROGRAM - 'TRY DAY' APPLICATION FORM

Date:

Referred by:

Name of Student: D.O.B:

Address:

Parent's names:

Telephone Nos: (H) (W).....

Current School:

..... Grade Level

Contact Person at School:..... Tel No.

Visiting Teacher:..... Tel. No.....

Reading Medium: Print / Braille Print Size Grade 1 Braille / Grade 2 Braille

Independent Reader?: Yes / No

Vision Impairment:

Any additional Disabilities:

Any Medical Issues:

.....

Names of people attending:.....

.....

Please forward to: Program Co-ordinator
Vision Australia Education Services
333 Burwood Highway
BURWOOD VIC 3125

BY: 3rd November 2006

Please note: Attendance at Try Day does not guarantee you a place in the Support Skills Program for the following year