

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 16

Friday 20th October 2006

This issue was edited by Marion Blazé, Education Officer, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

PD 2006

Note two new dates added to our program for 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 NEW	Skill Power for VTs, aides and teachers – Jaws workshop – Leanne Nagel, VT Eastern	Wednesday November 22
Term 4 NEW	Skill Power for VTs, aides and teachers – Workshop on the new Unified English Braille code – Leona Holloway, Transcription Coordinator, Vision Australia	Thursday November 23
Term 4	Educational EXPO 2006 – Assistive Technology Options ALL WELCOME	Friday November 24

Two New Workshops before our EXPO

We have set tentative dates for two exciting new workshops on the two days before the EXPO. After the success of Leona Holloway's workshop at the SPEVI day, she has offered to run a longer workshop on the new Braille code. Also, after the success of our Skill Power program for students in 2005, we have decided to offer a Skill Power day for VTs, aides, teachers, parents – this one is a workshop on teaching kids to use the Jaws software. Leanne Nagel has generously agreed to run this workshop. BYO laptop, of course. See dates above and more details within this Bulletin.

Inside This Issue

1	PD 2006, SVRC Educational Expo, Two new workshops before our Expo
2	JAWS Scholarship, PD Program for 2007, Skill Power Program for VTs, Fabulous website on albinism
3	MyReader Review
4	Jot-a-Dot, Mimio
5	A Good News Story, Vision Australia School, Useful and fun website, Paralympic Talent Search
6	Audio Description Online Newsletter, Vision Australia Study Group, Making it! Successful Transition Competencies for Youth with Visual Disabilities, Braille Aide needed
7	Dates for your 2007 Diary
8	Paralympic Talent Search Fact Sheet
9	Paralympic Talent Search Fact Sheet, cont.
10	APC Talent Search Registration Form

JAWS SCHOLARSHIP

Quantum Technology have extended the deadline for applications for this year's scholarship!!!

If you are a student or you know someone planning on full-time university, TAFE or college studies in 2007 and an Australian or New Zealand citizen who is blind or vision impaired this is the scholarship for you.

Applications must be made in writing and in 500 words or less, tell us why you need a Freedom Scholarship and how it will assist you in your tertiary studies. Your scholarship prize will be one copy of JAWS Professional. There are 8 copies available to win.

2007 must be your first year at a tertiary institution.

Send your applications and enquiries by email to info@quantumtechnology.com.au or via mail to Quantum Technology PO Box 390, Rydalmere NSW 2116 Australia.

Applications must be received by Friday 1 December 2006, and winners will be notified by e-mail and announced in the next edition of LiveWire. Good Luck!

PD Program for 2007

Are you ready to start thinking about next year? Well we are and we've already set dates for our PD program for 2007. For your handy reference, these dates are all listed on a page of this Bulletin. Of course there will also be half-day workshops to add in later. Stick this page in your 2007 diary as soon as you have one. If you're a real teacher, you won't be able to wait to get your coloured highlighters out and fill in your year planner and diary dates for the whole of 2007!!! Start the year right!!

Skill Power Program for VTs, Aides and teachers

Last year we ran a 'Skill Power' program for students. This year we want to empower YOU. These are two days (three if you count Expo) which Visiting Teachers should not miss. We've put these days in the one week in case there are people who want to come and stay overnight in Melbourne. If this isn't the best arrangement for you, please let us know and we'll try (??) to make it work for the majority or think about our program for next year. Of course, these workshops are open to VTs aides, parents or teachers, but are not really directed toward students.

- **Teaching Jaws** – with Leanne Nagel, VT Eastern – BYO laptop and learn how our students SHOULD be using this very powerful software. We are proposing this session from 10am to 12.30pm, on Wednesday, November 22, and then you can have lunch before heading off or sticking around to practice your newly-learned skills. (Flier attached to print copy of Bulletin.)
- **Unified English Braille Workshop** – Leona Holloway, Transcription Co-ordinator, Vision Australia – BYO brailers, if you can, and learn all about how our braille students will now be doing their literary and maths Braille, now that Australia has adopted the Unified English Braille Code. This workshop will be from 9.30am to 2pm, on Thursday, November 23. (Flier attached to print copy of Bulletin.)

Fabulous Website on Albinism

Have a look at this website. Bianca is a teenager with albinism and has set up her own terrific website. She offers a description of how she sees, information about albinism, photos Q&As and her parents' point of view. There's even a page of photographs of albino animals and a section on how albinos have been depicted in movies. Very interesting stuff. Just type Bianca albino into your search engine or go to home.clara.net/knowlton/family/Albinism/bianca.htm.

myReader Review

Article by Scott Freeman, Humanware Low Vision Consultant

The myReader has certainly had a great impact on the low vision community since it's release. No more so than for one family in Bell Post Hill, Geelong.

Jane was one of the original Victorian users of the myReader and thanks to the generous contribution of the Variety Children's Charity, her two children Jacob and Kate now have myReader's of their own at school.

Jacob and Kate attend Rollins Primary School and are in grades three and one respectively. The myReader's are set up in the classroom and allow Jacob and Kate to read, write and draw at a level and speed which would be unattainable without the use of low vision equipment.

Jane explains the impact myReader has for her two children.

"It has improved their work a lot. The myReader allows them to do things more easily and to feel independent. They don't have to have work blown up and can work at a similar pace to the others."

The beauty of the myReader with children of this age is that it can support them as their workload increases. The myReader started out primarily as a writing and drawing aid for Jacob and Kate, which they used to do small amounts of reading with. As they get older and there is a shift towards reading greater volumes of text, the myReader's auto-reading and scrolling abilities will be utilised.

The myReader is more 'fun' than anything at the moment for Jacob and Kate, but the serious developmental impact it will have will be felt through to the end of their schooling and beyond.

Scott Freeman (photographed below with Kate and Jacob) can be contacted on (03) 9855 2365 or mobile 0413 993 265



Jot-a-Dot

Excerpts from an article by Bronwyn Davies, Quantum Technology

There are 42 million people in the world who are blind. Approximately 90% live in developing countries and constitute one of the world's most invisible and poorest minorities. For all blind people, braille remains the foundation of written communication and is a true literacy medium that cannot be replaced by computer speech or listening.

Jot-a-Dot is an exciting new concept in braille writing that uses modern design principles and fabrication methods to achieve a robust, small braille writing tool suitable for all blind people. Developed in Australia by specialist manufacturer Quantum Technology, it represents an investment in the future and importance of braille.

Jot-a-Dot is a truly portable device weighing in at just 350g (12 oz). It has a regular braille keyboard that has been designed to fit a wide variety of hand sizes, and incorporates excellent ergonomics.

Very young children can use it for scribbling before they begin formal education, as well as using it to jot down quick notes right through their school years. Many adults use Jot a Dot for the myriad of small notes that sighted people will jot down on a piece of paper, such as a phone number, reminder, or receipt number when paying bills over the phone.

Existing braille writing tools such as the slate and stylus etc are still providing valuable service, however Jot-a-Dot is the first device in a very long time that offers alternatives and options for the simple act of writing a note.

Jot-a-Dot (shown right being used by a young student) has been designed to withstand many different environments and it is hoped that it will also be useful in developing countries where braille writing options are often non-existent.

For further information visit

<http://www.jotadot.com>

Contact: Bronwyn Davies

Email:

bdavies@quantumtechnology.com.au

Phone: (02) 8844 9888



Mimio

In issue 12 of The Bulletin I noted that there was a new pen available for the Mimio – these pens are not designed for use with the software that is being used by our students (sorry if this led to confusion). Mimio parent company Virtual Ink is, however, looking for feedback as to how the software could be improved to assist students with vision impairments so please send your feedback to Peter Goldie at IBS Audio Visual:

11 Florence St, Burwood 3125

Tel (03) 9888 8987 or 0425 710 789

<http://www.ibsav.com.au>

A Good News Story

Sean Rich, star of page 3 in The Age Education Supplement 09.10.06, is a little boy with CHARGE association and he is becoming a real trail blazer when it comes to innovative programs. Not only has his school, St Anne's Primary School in Seaford, won the ER Noble Award for advancing opportunities and options for deaf people, but the Frankston City Council has given the school a grant to establish an Auslan play group. This school community has embraced Sean with his unique educational needs with enthusiasm and creativity. St. Anne's also provides an Auslan coffee club, where parents can learn to communicate with Sean, so when he attends other children's birthday parties all know how to communicate with him.

Vision Australia School

Information provided by Sue Coull, Principal, Vision Australia School

The Vision Australia School, which is part of the Burwood Education Services, is still accepting enrolments for the 2007 school year. A variety of flexible short and long term enrolment options for children who are blind or vision impaired are offered including:

- curriculum based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards [VELS] and the Curriculum and Standards Framework [CSF II]
- specific attention given to the Expanded Core Curriculum which targets the unique learning needs of children who are blind or vision impaired.
- full-time or dual placement – a grade 3, 4 and 5 class will be offered two days a week in 2007 at the Burwood site
- reverse integration program – there are 8 Vision Australia students and ten sighted Grade One students from St Scholastica's enrolled for this innovative class in 2007
- senior class – for students aged 12 to 15 years of age with a focus on activities of daily living, survival reading and practical maths
- transition program - for students 16 to 18 years of age, offering support to those who are seeking an alternative to the VCE or VET programs

Expressions of interest are invited from families, who are welcome to visit the school at any time by making an appointment with the Principal.

Contact: Susan Coull (03) 9808 6422

Useful and fun website

www.brainpop.com - you can get a free 14 day trial. Lots of health and science stuff including about eyes. The movies work wonderfully digitally projected onto a whiteboard for the whole class to watch and discuss and to do the quizzes afterward.

Paralympic Talent Search

The Australian Paralympic Committee is again looking for talent to maybe go to Beijing in 2008. Sporting tests will be conducted at the Warrnambool Stadium (The Arc), Caramut Road, Warrnambool from 10am to 2pm on November 11. For further information, contact Tim Matthews on 03 9614 6800. A fact sheet and registration page are included with this Bulletin.

Audio Description Online Newsletter

You've all heard about Audio Description?? It's where Movies, DVDs, Videos or Plays are given an audio track so that visual things are described to people with vision impairments. Well, there is now a newsletter which you can access through a website or have sent by email. It will keep you up to date with developments regarding this service. Go to www.audiodescription.com.au.

Vision Australia Study Group

The next Vision Australia Study Group for 2006 will be held on Wednesday 18th October 2006. Bookings are essential so please RSVP to advise whether you wish to attend.

Topic: "Methods for reading using alternative formats"

Time: 1.30 - 4pm

Venue: 201 High Street Prahran in the Board Room

For more information, feel free to contact Renee Williamson, Tertiary Education Coordinator on 03 9520 5555.

Vision Australia, 201 High Street, PRAHRAN VIC 3181, Ph: 9520 5555, Fax: 9521 3685

Email: renee.williamson@visionaustralia.org, Web: www.visionaustralia.org

Making it! Successful Transition Competencies for Youth with Visual Disabilities

You might remember from the last Bulletin, that Annette came back from a conference in Sydney all fired up to share new ideas on developing the skills our kids need post school. We will definitely share this with you through our PD next year, but if you would like some holiday reading by way of Dr Karen Wolffe's article, let us know and we'll post or email you a copy. Here is the first paragraph to whet your appetite.

"This article is based on a presentation given at the 1999 Texas AER conference. The presentation focused on the essential elements of successful programming for preparing children and youth with visual disabilities for life and adult responsibilities. There are numerous skills that all young people must master, in order to leave school prepared to contribute to their communities and participate fully in life activities. A youngster with a visual disability who masters the skills outlined here will be ready to meet those demands."

Braille Aide Needed

Fairhills SC requires an integration aide with braille skills – time fraction can be negotiated. Please call Barbara Forehan on 0412 302023.

Finally

Thanks to Renée Williamson, Mike Steer, Annette Godfrey-Magee, Scott Freeman, Bronwyn Davies, Sue Coull and Geoff Bowen for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to my fabulous proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

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

Marion Blazé (who can be emailed at marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au).

Dates for your 2007 Diary

Victorian School Terms

Term I	Jan 30 to March 30
Term II	April 16 to June 29
Term III	July 16 to Sept 21
Term IV	Oct 8 to Dec 21

Public holidays (which don't fall in school holidays)

Labour day	March 12
Anzac day	April 25
Queen's Birthday	June 11
Cup day	Nov 6

Statewide Vision Resource Centre Professional Development Program

Term I	
Visiting teacher PD day	Feb 12
New VT day	Feb 13
PD day for teachers of blind students	March 2
PD day for teachers of low vision students (in P-Yr8)	March 15
Term II	
PD day for teachers of low vision students (in Yr8-12)	April 20
PD day for teachers of multi-impaired	May 15
Visiting teacher PD day	June 18
Term III	
Visiting teacher PD day	Aug 8
Term IV	
Educational Expo 2007	Nov 23

Other activities

Proposed date for Eccentric viewing assessments	March 26
SPEVI Combined agencies PD day	Oct 8
SVRC Xmas 'Thank you' morning tea	Dec 5

VCE exams

June written examinations	June 12 to June 14 (GAT)
October performance/LOTE Oral examinations	Oct 8 to Nov 4
November written examinations	Nov 2 to Nov 23



Paralympic Talent Search Fact Sheet

1. What is the aim of the day?

The Talent Search Program is a new initiative of the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC). Its main aim is to identify people with physical disabilities and vision impairments who display the athletic potential, to one day make it to Paralympic level competition.

2. Who is eligible to take part in the day?

The Talent Search day is only open to people with disabilities which would enable them to participate in events currently on the Paralympic Games schedule.

This includes but is not limited to amputees, people with cerebral palsy, limb deficiencies, people in wheelchairs, people who are blind or have a vision impairment.

The age group that is being targeted is 12 years and above, however this is not exclusive.

3. What is the current status of the inclusion of events for people with intellectual disabilities on the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games program? And how does this affect the APC's National Talent Search Program?

A decision on the inclusion of Athletes with an Intellectual Disability at the Paralympic Games was made by the IPC on June 23, 2006.

“The Governing Board (GB) of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) decided that athletes with an intellectual disability will not be eligible to participate in IPC events or be part of the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games.”

Due to this decision, the APC are not able to endorse the participation of athletes with an intellectual disability in the Talent Search Program unless they also have another disability which would enable them to be classified for Paralympic competition.

For further information please contact Tim Matthews on 03 9614 6800.

4. What sports can I try out for?

On the day we will be conducting general sporting tests and trials, plus some sport specific tests for the sports where we offer a Paralympic Preparation Program (PPP). Currently we are potentially recruiting for the following sports: Archery, Athletics, Boccia, Cycling, Equestrian, CP Soccer, Goalball, Judo, Powerlifting, Rowing, Sailing, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Tennis and Wheelchair Rugby.

Participants will be encouraged to take part in all relevant activities. Unfortunately we can not guarantee that testing in all PPP sports will be available at all Talent Search Days, however information can be provided to enable individual follow up in the chosen sport. We will also forward the results from the tests to our coaches from these sports and should there be a match, we will be in touch with you. If you require further information on any of these sports, please go to www.paralympic.org.au.

5. What do I need to do before the day?

Participants are required to complete a registration form which has been circulated through many disability service organisations, sporting groups and schools. It is also available from:

- Website www.paralympic.org.au
- Request form by email: tim.matthews@paralympic.org.au
- Request form by phone: 03 9614 6800

6. Where do I go on the day?

Map and directions to be provided once registered.

7. What should I bring with me?

Participants will need to wear clothing that is suitable for participating in sport. Suggested items to bring are:

- Shorts or tracksuit pants and a t-shirt
- Swimmers & towel
- Running/jogging shoes
- Lunch

8. If there is follow up with me after the day, does this mean I'll make the next Paralympic team?

No. This is the first step in the process of identifying people with disabilities who display the potential to make a future Australian Paralympic team. In most cases it will take years of training and preparation to reach the standards required to compete at a Paralympic level.

Teams are selected for international competitions, including Paralympic Games, according to pre-determined selection criteria (usually available from the APC website or the relevant NSO website). A minimum requirement would be that you are competing at the sport's national championships at an international standard for your respective disability classification at the time of selection.

People who are identified as showing potential will be encouraged to take the next step in their sporting endeavours, which will vary from sport to sport and person to person. Examples of what these next steps may be include:

- Committing to a regular training program with an identified coach
- Joining the relevant local sporting club and taking part in regular competition
- Displaying a high level of commitment and dedication to achieving goals

Further details will be discussed with you in the following weeks by the relevant Paralympic coach to identify your personal plan of action.

9. I already compete in events for athletes with disabilities. Should I attend a Talent Search Day?

The fact that you are already competing and are "in the system" is good. As you can see from point 8, the direction and feedback for you following the day may not differ that much from what you are currently doing.

You are more than welcome to attend and participate in the Talent Search Day as it may provide an opportunity for interaction and feedback from coaches who you have not worked with in the past. However, please keep your expectations of what happens following the day in line with what is outlined above.

10. What happens if I'm not chosen for follow up?

The reality of competitive sport is that not everyone is destined to make it to the top. Some people may not possess the physical attributes, the competitive spirit or the desire to reach an international level. Some people may love sport and want to continue their involvement at a recreational level.

If this is the case, there are many organisations and sporting groups that can assist with your sporting goals and may present new opportunities for you to pursue.

Feel free to call 03 9614 6800 if you require further information about your local and state sporting organisations.



AUSTRALIAN
PARALYMPIC
COMMITTEE

APC TALENT SEARCH REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete one form per person

EVENT Warrnambool Talent Search – Warrnambool Sports Stadium

November 11, 2006

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name:

Date of Birth:

Age:

Contact Address:

Postcode:

Contact Number:

Email Address:

Emergency contact person & phone number:

How did you hear about this event?

Occupation:

If student, what school/university do you attend?

ABOUT YOU:

What is your disability/ies?

Will you be using a wheelchair for this event?

Yes

No

What sports do you currently play (if any)?

If applicable, which events?

At what level do you play/compete?

Are you a member of any sporting clubs? Please list them:

What do you like about playing sport?

Have you previously been classified?

Yes

No

If yes, in which sport & what is your classification?

Have you snow skied before?

Yes

No

Are you interested in alpine or cross country skiing?

Yes

No

What sports specific testing would you like to undertake?

- Athletics Archery Boccia Equestrian Fencing Cycling Goalball Judo Powerlifting Rowing Sailing Shooting
 Soccer Swimming Table Tennis
 Wheelchair Basketball Volleyball Wheelchair Tennis Wheelchair Rugby Winter Sports

Please return this registration form to:

Tim Matthews

Australian Paralympic Committee

PO Box 277, COLLINS ST WEST, VIC, 8007

Ph: 03 9614 6800

Fax: 03 9614 3074

Email: tim.matthews@paralympic.org.au

*Please ensure that you have read the "Fact Sheet" for information on the day, including what to bring. If you have any questions, please contact Tim Matthews on the details above.