

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

**Number 4**

**Friday 16th March 2007**

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

### Professional Development Activities for Term I & II, 2007

- Mountbatten for Beginners Workshop – BYO Mountbatten  
Wednesday, March 21 – 9.30 to 12.30
- Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Secondary – Friday, April 20
- BrailleNote Workshop for students – BYO BrailleNote  
Tuesday, May 1 – 9.30 to 12.30
- PacMate Workshop for students – BYO PacMate  
Wednesday, May 9 – 9.30 to 12.30
- Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments  
Tuesday, May 15
- JAWS Workshop – BYO Laptop – Thursday, May 24 – 9.30 to 12.30
- O & M Morning – Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community - Wednesday, May 30
- ZoomText Workshop – BYO Laptop – Monday, June 4 – 9.30 to 12.30
- Term 2 Visiting Teacher PD Day – Friday, June 22  
(NOTE: this is not the original date advertised last year)

### Other Activities

- Eccentric Viewing assessment day – Monday, March 26  
Appointments available with Kerry Fitzmaurice from 10am onward, at SVRC.  
Contact Annette or Marion with names of students.
- Athletics Carnival & Picnic Day – Friday, March 30

### Athletics Carnival and Picnic day

Come along to this end-of-term activity and join in the fun!!! We are getting some takers for this activity, so don't miss out!

- When: Friday 30 March 2007 (the last day of term)
- Where: Bill Sewart Reserve Burwood East (Melway 62 C8)
- Two categories of participants: Championship and Achiever
- Free BBQ for lunch (if you don't like sausages – please bring your own)

Call Deb Lewis on (03) 9841 0242 to register and for more information.

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## Report on a very busy PD day – March 15



“Educational Support of Students with Low Vision – P to Yr 8” attracted a massive 80+ participants, but were we phased? - not at all! My hat goes off to the real workers at the SVRC who managed to rearrange the furniture in a radical way, split the crowds for morning tea and lunch, and generally keep a big bunch of people happy on a hot and potentially stressful day. So I hope you’ll all give a special thank you to all members of our magnificent SSO team.

Meanwhile the evaluations received at the end of the day were gushingly positive. On a rating from 1 to 6 (one being not so good and 6 being fantastic) we scored nearly all sixes for all sessions (with a couple of tens!). To quote a few written comments, this day provided ‘the best information I’ve ever received from a PD’, ‘practical, informative and motivating sessions’, and ‘will help my VI students and other students, too’. I think we did not too badly!!

### Air Travel with a Vision Impairment

Late last year, the ABF raised some instances of perceived discrimination of people who are blind or vision impaired air travellers. These related to ‘meet and assist’ services; dog guides; on-board safety information in alternative formats; and entry forms and visa details in accessible formats.

The following information has now been provided by the Service Improvement Manager of Qantas Airways.

‘Qantas provides Meet and Assist services to any customer that requests the service. Customers range from the elderly, people with vision impairments, unaccompanied minors and so on.

With the introduction of internet and kiosk check-ins, there has been no reduction in staffing levels for Meet and Assist services within Australia.

Qantas currently has no restriction on the number of service dogs allowed per aircraft.

In addition to the safety demonstration provided to all passengers, Cabin Crew on both Qantas and Jetstar flights must provide an individual pre-flight briefing to any passenger with a disability, including passengers who are blind or sight impaired. The pre-flight briefing must be appropriate to the passenger’s needs and should address the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency evacuation. As an additional service, Qantas had onboard safety information in the Braille format. The onboard safety books in Braille had become outdated, however, and therefore a process has had to be undertaken to update all onboard safety books. Qantas is working with Vision Australia to implement these changes, which are estimated to take the next six months or so to complete for all Qantas mainline aircraft.

Please note: Country entry forms and visa details in accessible formats will need to be followed up with Customs or relevant Airports, as this is out of Qantas’ control.’

For further information or to report any instances of perceived discrimination during your air travel contact Margaret Verick: Children’s Committee Coordinator & ABF Project Officer, National Disability Services (NDS)

Ph: (02) 6283 3214, Fax: (02) 6281 3488, Email: [margaret.verick@nds.org.au](mailto:margaret.verick@nds.org.au)

## Stargardt's Website (Correct Address)

<http://www.stargardts-au.org>

Stargardt's is the juvenile form of macular degeneration and Stargardt's Australia is a volunteer organization dedicated to increasing the awareness of this disease and investigating new methods of treatment. Their website covers detailed information about the disease as well as ideas on coping with low vision.

## Accessing Schools' Intranets

This very cunning hint comes from our ever-clever Lea Nagel. Lea visits a Secondary School where she has two students and she negotiated to be placed on their intranet so that she can access everything that the teachers can. At first this was not thought possible by the school IT people, because the teachers are automatically on the system through CASES. But they managed to log Lea on as a 'student teacher'! She might be a student teacher for a few years to come (being a slow learner – ha ha) because this has allowed her to email her students or their teachers, access their timetables, find out dates for curriculum days and excursions and probably lots more!

## Braille Equals Equality

These excerpts comes from a website which our Geoff Bowen found. It's at <http://www.fldoe.org> (the Florida Department of Education).

Could you imagine telling a class of six-year-old children that they don't need to learn to read anymore because computers can do it for them? Silly idea, isn't it? But every day, that's what some children who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind are told. For blind, visually impaired, or deafblind children, being able to read and write Braille is the key to literacy, successful employment, and independence.

All children need to be literate - to read, write, and count - in order to enjoy intellectual freedom, personal security, and equal opportunities when they grow up.

We must offer children who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind a real chance at equality. We must teach them Braille.

### Braille Equals Employment

Several studies have shown that people who are blind and know Braille are far more likely to be employed than those who rely on voice synthesizers. These are the hard facts of the workplace. Although technological advances now provide people who are blind with additional workplace tools in the same way technology has enhanced the efficiency of sighted people, computers, scanners, and voice synthesizers do not replace the need for Braille.

Braille, like print, enables a person to make notes, read a spreadsheet, take minutes at a meeting, file materials, label diskettes, and do a variety of other tasks efficiently and independently.

A person who knows Braille is statistically more likely to be employed. That is true today and will continue to be true years from now. Technology is wonderful, but it will never be a substitute for basic literacy skills.

### Braille Equals Independence

Braille is a building block of literacy. Literacy is a building block of independence.

Learning to read and write is challenging for most children. It takes time and practice. It takes the support and encouragement of family and teachers. That's true whether a child has a visual impairment or not. Children who do not read and write well have trouble succeeding in school and in the workplace. For children whose eyesight prevents them from reading and writing print, Braille is the route to literacy.

## Large Print Edition of Melway - Donation

In Bulletin number 2 we told you about the Large Print edition of Melway Street Directories. Well, the Ausway company has generously donated a Large Print Greater Melway to the Resource Centre. Now you and your students can see if this is a helpful thing for schools to buy. They retail at \$79.95 but are available to schools for \$58.60. A special thank you to Beth Wemyss of Ausway for this donation.

## Round Table National Conference 2007: Adelaide

When: 5-8 May 2007

Where: The Chifley Hotel, 226 South Terrace, Adelaide

Cost: \$420/\$525 (4 days) or daily registration \$115/\$145

What:

- 18 stand alone presentations
- 4 workshops
- 2 panel sessions
- 1 update paper (ABA)
- trade exhibition
- sponsor's tasting/promotion
- Conference Dinner (additional cost)
- fabulous networking
- wonderful Adelaide and parklands

For more information and to download the program, go to:

<http://www.ebility.com/roundtable/conference.php>

## Goal Ball - Players Needed

Blind Sports Victoria are looking for new members to join them at Scotch College, Hawthorn on Saturday mornings from 10am to play Goal Ball. The Goal Ball group regularly have 18 plus individuals attending and would like more members, and in particular would like to encourage more females to try the sport.

If you would like to know more about the exciting game of goal ball, contact Rob on 9568 5485 or mob 0407 550 219

## Social Walk & Fishing Day – April 3

Vision Australia are running a walk and fishing day on Tuesday, April 3 at the Jack Roper Reserve, Camp Road, Broadmeadows. A flier is attached and for more information, contact the Essendon Office on 9370 6111.

## Trip to Sand Sculpting at Rye – April 5

Vision Australia are also running a trip to see the fabulous 'Myths & Legends' sand sculptures at Rye. Pick up will be from Kooyong at 9.15am and return by 4pm. A flier is attached. For more information, contact Di Hayward on 8872 7000

## VA Study Group

When: Wednesday 21 March 2007 from 1.30-4.00pm.

Topic: "Oral presentations and tutorial discussions"

Where: 201 High St Prahran in the Board Room

RSVP: (bookings essential) – contact Renee Williamson tel 9520 5555 or email

[renee.williamson@visionaustralia.org](mailto:renee.williamson@visionaustralia.org)

## Student News

- There were eight lucky winners of a copy of JAWS Professional offered through the Quantum Technology / Freedom Scientific Scholarship Program in 2007. Former Balwyn High School student, **Lindsay** was one of the two Victorian winners – others coming from NSW, South Australia, Western Australia and New Zealand! Congratulations Lindsay!  
Source: JAWS Bytes E-Update 008
- Grade 6 student **Alex** (VT Rita Farrelly) has been voted in as school captain at his Albert Park school! Well done Alex!!!

## Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Geoff Bowen, Lea Nagel, Di Hayward, Margaret Verick, Tammy Axelsen and Rita Farrelly for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to our 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](mailto:marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au)).