

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 11

Friday 1 August 2008

This issue was edited by Lyn Robinson, Resource Teacher, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

### Professional Development Activities Term 3, 2008

For workshop sessions, please BYO laptop.

| Professional Development Event 2008           | Date                |
|---|---------------------|
| Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day | Wednesday 13 August |

To see the annual program and to download programs for professional development activities, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2008.htm>

### Australia Ratifies UN Disabilities Convention

Attorney General Robert McClelland announced on July 28 2008 that Australia had ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, making Australia one of the first Western countries to ratify the Convention. Australia joins 29 other countries around the world in a move that aims to promote a global community in which all people with disability are equal and active citizens.

Ratifying the Convention clearly demonstrates the Rudd Government's international commitment to ensuring people with disability are treated equally and not as second-class citizens, Attorney-General Robert McClelland said. This significant achievement is the result of substantial collaboration by Government and Non-Government stakeholders, Mr McClelland said.

Australia has a long-standing commitment to upholding and safeguarding the rights of people with disability and ratifying the Convention sends this unequivocal message to the world, said Mr Bill Shorten, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services.

The ratification, which took place overnight in New York, comes after the Rudd Government expedited its ratification processes. It also means Australia can participate in the inaugural election of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee will oversee the implementation of the Convention.

Source [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability\\_rights/index.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/index.html)

If you would like to know more about The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities visit the United Nations web page

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=12&pid=150>

### Inside This Issue

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | PD Activities, Australia Ratifies UN Disabilities Convention  |
| 2 | Feature Article: Professor Jill Keeffe OAM, Beijing Olympics: Educational Resources   |
| 3 | Profiling Children with Vision Impairment: The Development of a Childhood Register of Vision Impairment in Australia, RoboBraille |
| 4 | Event Reminder, When Blindness Is No Handicap, Quick Tips for Internet Explorer 7, Robo Braille.                                  |
| 5 | Exciting Offer from Publisher: Cengage Learning Australia, PM Gems Software.  |
| 6 | SVRC News   |

## Professor Jill Keefe OAM

Congratulations to Professor Jill Keefe, friend and colleague, who was recently promoted by the University of Melbourne to full Professor. Jill Keefe OAM is the Director of CERA's Population Health Division. This Division is a WHO Collaborating Centre for the Prevention of Blindness specialising in Low Vision and Health Services Research.

Professor Keefe began her research career with her PhD, "Assessment and Educational Implications of Common Causes of Low Vision in Children". This unique study combined her training and experience as a teacher of children with impaired vision with that of a paediatric ophthalmologist to document the broad impact of impaired vision.

Professor Keefe's post-doctoral research has taken her around the world, where she has shared her initiatives and knowledge with communities in Africa, South America, Asia and Pacific Nations. The outcome of her post-doctoral research was 'The Low Vision Kit', a cost effective low vision kit for use in developing countries, published by the World Health Organization and is available in 11 languages.

Professor Keefe is Co-Chair of World Health Organisation (WHO) Low Vision Working Group. This group have established a Resource Centre in Hong Kong to provide low cost low vision devices throughout the world and have developed curriculum for national leaders to establish low vision programs.

Professor Keefe also holds the position of First Vice-President of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), a global initiative seeking to provide education for all visually impaired people throughout the world. Further information about the ICEVI can be found at [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

Professor Keefe describes her work as taking research from the bench and translating it into public health initiatives within Australia and developing countries.

## Beijing Olympics: Educational Resources

Many of you will be looking for materials about the Olympics, Karen Goodall and Deb Lewis have found some of the following web sites useful.

Official site of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: <http://en.beijing2008.cn/>

Official site of the 2008 Australian Olympic Team: <http://www.olympics.com.au/>

Event schedule: <http://en.beijing2008.cn/schedule/>

Official site of the 2008 Australian Olympic Team's Educational Resources:

<http://olympics.com.au/Education/Resources/tabid/304/Default.aspx>

Internet resources for Olympic Games: [http://library.umac.mo/e\\_resources/olympics/Resources.htm](http://library.umac.mo/e_resources/olympics/Resources.htm)

Wikipedia Beijing Olympics: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing\\_Olympics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing_Olympics)

There are also three general Olympics-related documents here at the SVRC which are ready to go in your preferred format - please email your request to [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au):

- Olympics for Middle Primary Student - 1 regular print page
- Olympics for Secondary Students - 12 regular print pages
- Olympics for Upper Secondary Students - 18 regular print pages

# Profiling Children with Vision Impairment: The Development of a Childhood Register of Vision Impairment in Australia.

## Overview:

Children with vision impairment require an integrated and tailored service provision that involves health, education, social work, and voluntary organisations. Accurate and current data of the numbers, causes and level of visual impairment, and additional disabilities of children with vision impairments are required to plan and develop such a service. Yet it is one of those curious facts that in Australia we still do not know how many children with vision impairments there are. Meeting the needs of children with vision impairment is a very difficult and expensive business and as such surely having a system which identifies all children with vision impairment is a significant step in the right direction in order to meet the needs of this specialised target group.

Scotland has recently developed a parent led childhood vision impairment notification system where parents notify to a central location (Visual Impairment Scotland, VIS) information regarding their child's vision impairment. Parents receive the notification forms through their visits to eye clinics (via Orthoptists, Ophthalmologists) via Paediatricians and via Specialist Teachers of Vision Impairment. Through this method a significant and evolving profile of every vision impaired child notified is produced.

A major research project has been undertaken by Dr John Ravenscroft to build, develop and maintain a nation wide childhood vision impairment register. This register will collect data about the incidence and prevalence of childhood vision impairment throughout Australia through survey and active surveillance methodology. The register as a tool will help to investigate the cause and prevention of childhood vision impairment; and Australian service providers to more accurately plan for the present and future service provision needs of people with vision impairment.

This day course will detail exactly already existing registers of childhood vision impairment and will focus on specially the results from the VIS study and will discuss how a register of childhood vision impairment will work in Australia.

On completion of the course participants will have:

- an overall appreciation of the possible range of children with visual impairment
- an overall appreciation of the type of primary diagnosis children may present with
- an understanding of how a model of registration works
- an understanding of how registration of support service agencies, parents, and health boards work
- an appreciation of interagency working
- the opportunity to be involved in informative discussion about how these approaches would work in Australia.

## Presented by:

### Dr. John Ravenscroft

Renwick Centre, Senior Research Fellow in Special Education,  
formerly Head of the Scottish Sensory Centre, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

**Venue:** RIDBC Renwick Centre, 361 - 365 North Rocks Road, Sydney, NSW 2151

**When:** Wednesday 20th August, 9 am to 4 pm

**Course Code:** RC08C202V **Fee:** \$150

**Email:** Continuing Professional Education Team for further information [cpe@ridbc.org.au](mailto:cpe@ridbc.org.au)

**Phone:** Continuing Professional Education Team for further information (02) 9872 0207

## Event Reminder

These activities have been mentioned in recent Bulletins so this is just a quick reminder!. Flyers with more information attached to the end of this Bulletin.

**Camp Howqua** - all enquiries and applications need to be in by Friday August 15, 2008.

**Quantum Events** – A technology display with information sessions starting on Friday 22 August at Northcote then Yarraville, Malvern, Geelong, and Kilsyth

**SVRC Program** for Visiting Teacher Day–Wednesday 13 August 2008

## When Blindness Is No Handicap

Geoffrey Lee a 15 year old student from Yarram Secondary College who is blind features in an article in the July 18<sup>th</sup> edition of Education Times. Geoffrey recently embarked on a three day, 36 kilometre hike through Wilson’s Promontory with other Year 9 students from the school.

By day three with sore legs and weary muscles, Geoffrey says it was his determination alone that spurred him on. “I remember thinking: ‘I’ve nearly done it. I’m going to conquer the Prom’.”

Geoffrey also comments about the bonds made during the hike with fellow students.

“We usually see each other in class, but this trip provided us an opportunity to work together and connect in a different way, and in a beautiful environment. I really enjoyed the sense of camaraderie with the other students and teacher,” Geoffrey said. “On the last day, we also did an exercise where some of the students wore blindfolds and were led around by the others. This provided them an opportunity to see things from my world and to see how important trust is. Most importantly, though, now I know there’s no reason why a blind person can’t do this or anything else,” Geoffrey said. A Copy of the article By Fiona Basile is attached with this Bulletin,  
Source: Page 19 Education Times Volume 16, Number 11 July 17, 2008

## Quick Tips for Internet Explorer 7

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Cycle through the Address Bar, Refresh button, Search Box, and items on a web page | TAB        |
| Find a word or phrase on a page  | CTRL+F     |
| Open the current webpage in a new window   | CTRL+N     |
| Print the page   | CTRL+P     |
| Select all items on the page   | CTRL+A     |
| Zoom in  | CTRL+PLUS  |
| Zoom out   | CTRL+MINUS |
| Zoom to 100%   | CTRL+0     |

For more shortcuts <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/ie/quickref.msp>

## Robo Braille

If you would like something translated into braille and speech try RoboBraille.

RoboBraille automates the translation of text documents into Braille and speech. The service is available free of charge to all non-commercial users. With RoboBraille, you can:

- Translate documents into contracted Braille
- Translate documents into speech
- Translate text into visual Braille
- Convert text documents between different character sets
- Convert Braille documents to specific Braille character sets

Visit RoboBraille at <http://www1.robobraille.org/websites/acj/robobraille.nsf>

## Exciting Offer from Publisher: Cengage Learning Australia

Cengage Learning Australia can supply titles in an alternate format for students with a print disability. Students may order a word or PDF copy of the book from Cengage.

Proof of purchase is required so you will need to keep an invoice for the print book. Then simply fill out the request form online and the book will be delivered in electronic format. Allow approximately 14 working days for the delivery of the electronic version.

Whilst Cengage distributes for many different overseas publishers, they are only able to supply an alternative format for those texts published by Cengage Learning Australia. Requests for electronic texts can be made online at [http://www.cengage.com.au/2/397/1/alternative\\_for.pm](http://www.cengage.com.au/2/397/1/alternative_for.pm)

For further information and enquiries please contact Jane Johnston at [jane.johnston@cengage.com](mailto:jane.johnston@cengage.com) or local consultant Louise Ryan at [louisejryn@yahoo.com.au](mailto:louisejryn@yahoo.com.au)

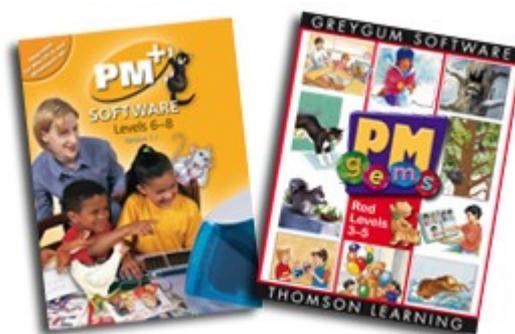
## PM Gems Software

### Also from Cengage

You may be more familiar with the name Nelson Publishing, now Cengage Learning, they publish a wide range of educational books including the PM series, Nelson Maths for Victoria and PM Writing. You may also like to let schools know that the PM series is now available on CD with an audio reading of the book.

**NEW in 2007! All PM Plus Software has been upgraded to ensure ongoing usability on PC and Mac systems.**

The *PM Gems*, *PM Library* and *PM Plus* Software focus on the educational objectives of the reading programs in both content and levelling. Each software package features books from the relevant colour level.



Children can choose the book they wish to read, view it on-screen and listen as it is read aloud. They can also interact with the story through activities that relate to all aspects of the text. Other features include teacher controls, individual progress reports, worksheets and student checklists.

The new *PM Gems* Software features all ten *PM Gems* books at each level with an additional two books from *PM Library* for Red, Yellow, Blue and Green Levels. Activities include: write your own version of the story, phonic spelling, sentence completion, high frequency word recognition and reading comprehension.

Find out more about these wonderful resources at:

<http://primary.cengage.com.au/category/490>

### Stop Press:

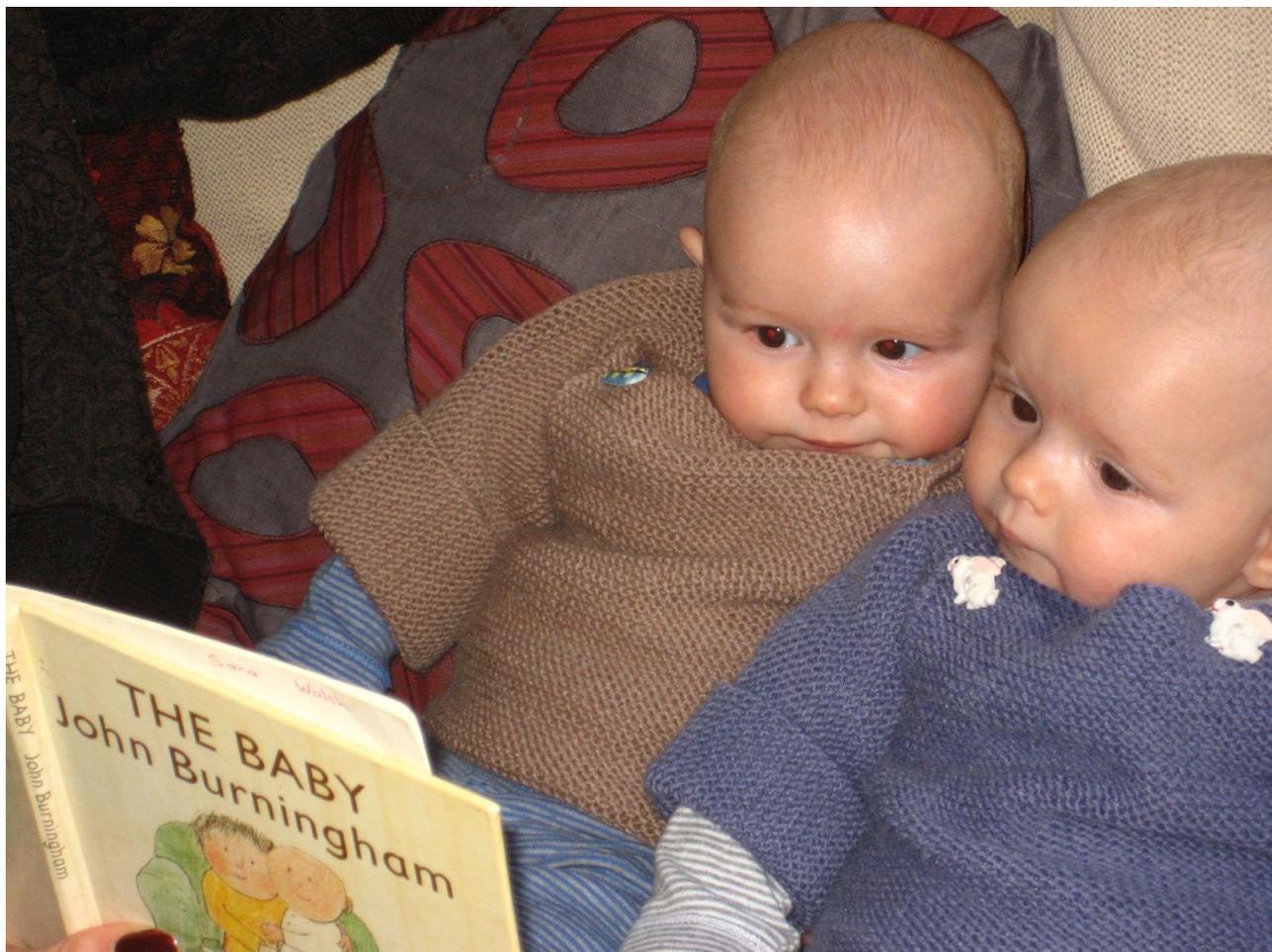
We have just confirmed that Louise Ryan from Nelson Cengage will be coming to the Visiting Teacher day on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> August to show us the PM Gems Software and talk to us about accessing their alternative format materials.

## SVRC News

Former VT Dianne Bennett has recently been in contact from her new home in Canada. She is now a "permanent resident" there and can finally work - she hasn't left the field of vision impairment, though - she is currently employed with a company that sells Mountbattens! We look forward to staying in touch!

Amongst those enjoying or about to enjoy Long Service Leave are Rita Farrelly, who is currently in Mongolia and will be travelling to Beijing for the Olympics; Jenny Williams who plans to travel to the U.S. and Europe; and Phillip McKenna who is off to Scotland, England, France and Italy. All have planned exciting adventures in various parts of the world and we wish them safe and happy travels. Just back from the U.K and France with lots of stories is Helen Caldw.

Baby News: Meredith is back from leave after spending time with her two beautiful new grandchildren, see picture below. Sam Oxley is currently on maternity leave awaiting the birth of her second child. Deb is about to become a grandmother, so if you hear the sounds of knitting needles, yes she does knit, you'll know why. All the best to Melissa as the big day draws closer.



## Finally

Thanks to Karen Goodall, Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Meredith Walsh and all those who contributed to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to the fabulous team of proof-readers, stuffers and mailers. If you have something you would like included in 'The Bulletin', or you would like to receive the bulletin by email please contact:

**Lyn Robison** (who can be emailed at [lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au)).