

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 5**Friday 3rd April 2009**

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2009

| Professional Development Event 2009 | Date |
|--|-----------------------|
| *Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students 1. Mountbatten – 10.00am to 11.30am Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 2. BrailleNote – 11.45am to 1.15pm Ramona Mandy, Humanware 3. Computer without the Mouse – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher | Wednesday 29 April |
| Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments This day is designed for teachers, aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support vision impaired students who have additional impairments (maximum participants: 60) | Friday 1 May |
| Education Week Activity – "Louis Day" (200 year anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille) | TBA May |
| *Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc 1. WindowEyes – 10.00am to 11.30am Ramona Mandy, Humanware 2. MAGic – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. Introduction to the SVRC 'Tool Kit' – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson, SVRC | Wednesday 13 May |
| Term 2 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day | Tuesday 19 May |
| *Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc 1. JAWS – 10.00am to 11.30am Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher 2. PACMate – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. A Week in the Life of a VT. Lea Nagel and staff of the SVRC. | Thursday 28 May |
| *Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students 1. Computer Without the Mouse – 9.45am to 11.15am Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher 2. ZoomText (Talking and Enlarging Software) – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. Setting up the Computer for Low Vision Users – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson, SVRC | Thursday 18 June |
| Dot Power for Kinder and Prep Braille Readers | Monday 22 June |

*All Skill Power days - BYO laptop and lunch.

For a complete list of the Professional Development offered by the SVRC go to:

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PD2009.doc>

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PD Day Report - VI Students in Secondary Settings: 20th March

From: Marion Blazé

The SVRC was busy again on Friday last, with 35 teachers, mainly from secondary schools, attending the PD day on 'Educational Support of students with low vision'. Thanks to our colleagues from Guide Dogs, Linden and Laura, all participants had a chance to be guided under blind fold or low vision simulation goggles. Also thanks to our colleague, Robert from the Catholic Education office for conducting a different activity using simulation goggles. As always these activities got participants buzzing with thoughts about their own students before settling down to a day of valuable information sharing. Overall comments on the day included "Best PD I've done in many years", "Excellent", "Will really inform my work with VI student". Comments also reflected the popularity and effectiveness of having our students present to teachers about their equipment and their special needs. "These guys were great", "The students were excellent", "Kids demonstrating equipment was fantastic".

Thanks again to our silent army of resource people who kept everything happening, including the lovely lunch!

Towards Success in Tertiary Study: Discovering Your Learning Style

Geoff Bowen has found a most useful booklet about studying at Tertiary Level called "Towards Success in Tertiary Study: Discovering Your Learning Style". The following is an extract from the booklet:

"This booklet has been written for students who are studying or intend studying at tertiary level and who want to learn more about their learning styles. The booklet builds on existing resources, both print and electronic media. Learning is an important part of life, and learning in an academic environment can be very challenging. Getting to know how you learn best will help you use the most effective study techniques which are an excellent start to tertiary study.

People learn and process information in a variety of ways. Some have particular strengths in some areas and weaknesses in others (for example, Einstein was dyslexic but excelled in Physics).

A **learning style** refers to how your mind receives and processes information. There are many different systems and inventories for determining learning styles. Some subjects tend to favour certain learning styles. For example, Philosophy may favour a more abstract thinking style compared with Art which may benefit from a more practical style.

Discovering your learning styles and preferences is an important step for success at tertiary study as it can optimise your learning efficiency.

The following sections introduce you to a range of quizzes that lead you to explore learning styles and temperaments. Each section provides you with study strategies based on your preferences. The outline for the booklet is as follows:

1. Discovering Your Learning Environment Preferences
 - Discovering Your Study Environment Preferences
 - Discovering Your Daily Rhythm Preferences
 - Discovering Your Task Processing Preferences
2. Discovering Your Sensory Preferences (Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic)
3. Discovering Your Learning Intelligence
4. Discovering Your Learning Styles
5. Discovering Your Learning Personality.

If you would like a copy please call Lyn at SVRC on 03 9841 0242 or go to

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/towardssuccess/>

ID Mate Talking Barcode Scanner

The ID Mate talking barcode scanner is a portable "all-in-one" item of equipment priced at \$1,990 that allows an individual to identify items using a product barcode. It has a database of over one million Australian barcode descriptions that provides the user with a huge head start in identifying the product and getting the information needed about the item. The ID Mate Omni talking barcode scanner also comes with an inbuilt recorder so messages can be recorded and applied to the user's personal bar codes.

Equipment Grant Opportunity

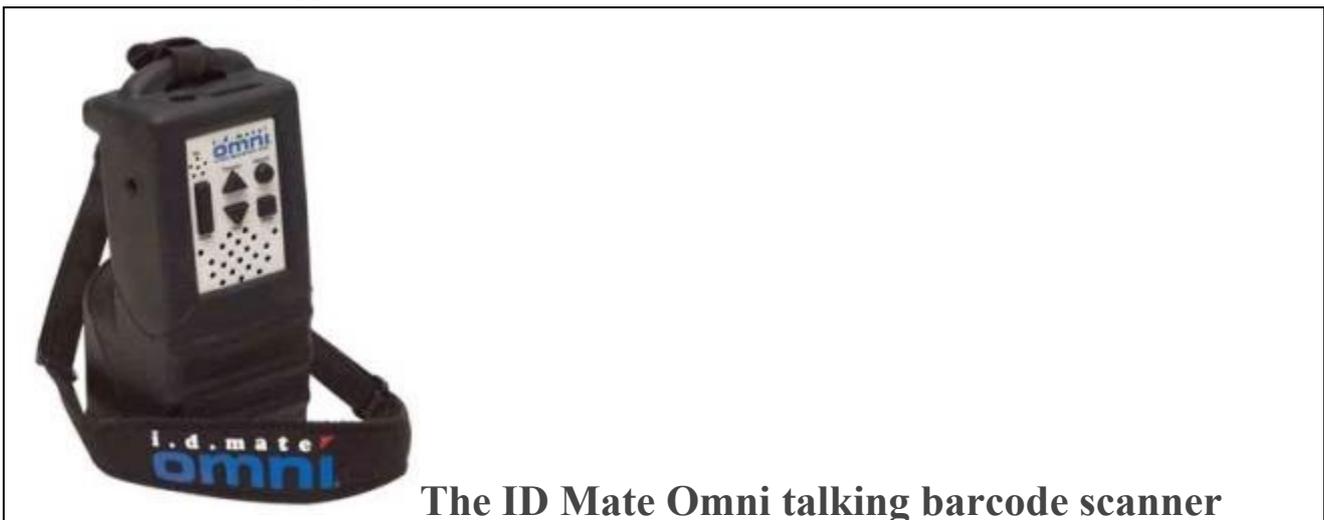
Visual Independence will provide grants to 15 applicants. The grants will subsidise the cost of the ID Mate talking barcode scanner. Applicants must meet objective selection criteria.

For more information about Visual Independence go to <http://www.visualindependence.org.au/>

Eligibility

- The eligibility of applicants is limited to those with incomes below \$10,000 (on top of any pension received).
- Priority in selection will be given to those applicants who clearly demonstrate that they have the greatest need and who are least able to afford the technology.
- Assessment will focus heavily on the applicant's need to identify items and the unavailability of in home support.

The closing date for applications is 31 May 2009.



Source: <http://www.visionaustralia.org/info.aspx?page=823&news=1023>

The BCA Ball

Join Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) on Saturday 9 May for a night of elegance, fun and romance for their inaugural charity ball. Live band, Cool Change, will entertain you throughout the evening with all your favourite music while you enjoy a great meal and dance the night away.

All proceeds go to Blind Citizens Australia to continue their important work of increasing opportunities for independence, employment and social inclusion for people who are blind or vision impaired.

When: Saturday 9 May, 2009

Where: Geelong West Town Hall 153 Pakington Street, Geelong West

Time: 7.00 p.m. to 12.00 a.m.

Music by Cool Change. Full table service dinner included, BYO Drinks

Contact the Blind Citizens Australia for more information (03) 9654 1400 or 1800 033 660

Round Table Conference: 30 May – 2 June 2009

The Round Table Conference is being held in Sydney this year commencing Saturday the 30th May 2009. The theme of the conference will be “Starting the Future Now” and includes a keynote address from Mr Bill Shorten, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services, Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction

The aim of Round Table is to facilitate and influence the production and use of quality accessible formats for and by people with print disabilities. As the end of the first decade of the 21st century draws near, service organisations that provide accessibility to information for people with print disabilities are managing the future in a variety of ways. Equally important is continuing to provide a viable service delivery to the people these organisations serve at present. The 2009 Round Table Conference will showcase what service delivery organisations are researching, developing and implementing for the future, while still maintaining the vital perspective of delivering the service needed for today.

The conference program and registration forms are now available from the Round Table website at <http://www.e-bility.com/roundtable>

Conference registrations close on Friday the 17th of April 2009

Funding is available for consumers and carers to attend the conference. FACSIA Funding

Applications close on the 3rd of April 2009.

Should you have any queries or require the documentation in an alternate format please do not hesitate to contact Tammy Axelsen, Round Table Administration Officer Phone: 0417 101 418 or 03 6265 1519 or email: roundtableadm@bigpond.com

Support Group Report

Saturday 28th March: Ian Speed came to speak to group of parents and several of our senior students about his life as a vision impaired student, athlete, husband and employee. He was very unassuming about his achievements and highly inspirational. It was very evident that his diagnosis and his visual acuity had very little to do with what he has achieved throughout his life it has everything to do with his no nonsense attitude to his decreasing sight, his ability to creatively problem solve and be strategic about future decisions and his participation in both able and disabled sports. He was an articulate and insightful speaker who provided both parents and students with much to think about.

Interpreting and Translating Services for Government Schools

Interpreting and translating services are available free to government schools, within guidelines, to ensure that parents and guardians who require an interpreter have access to school information. All Graduates Translating Services provide the following:

- On site interpreters
- Telephone interpreters
- Video interpreters
- Document Translations

Bookings for On site Interpreters

This service is available to schools to ensure that parents and guardians who require an interpreter have access to school information, and are better able to effectively communicate with schools.

To book an interpreter online go to the All Graduates website at www.allgraduates.com.au (request password from All Graduates - admin@allgraduates.com.au)

Bookings may also be made by phone or fax.

- Phone (03) 9605 3000 or
- Fax (03) 9600 0048

For more information contact Carmel Sandiford sandiford.carmel.m@edumail.vic.gov.au

Braille Proficiency Certificate Congratulations

From: Bruce Maguire - Chair, Australian Braille Authority

As you know, last year the Australian Braille Authority and the New Zealand Braille Authority conducted the first Trans-Tasman Braille Proficiency Certificate. Not only was this the first braille proficiency certificate to be offered simultaneously in our two countries, but it was also the first braille proficiency certificate to test candidates' knowledge of UEB.

Ten candidates undertook the test in Australia, and I'm delighted to report that all 10 achieved pleasing results, and have been awarded their certificates.

Special congratulations go to Kathy Riessen, **Maria Elford**, **Nola Houghton**, and **Toni Chilton**, all of whom achieved High Distinctions in the exam.

We are currently considering when next to hold proficiency certificate examinations. Please let me know if you are interested in undertaking the exam so that we can get an idea of how many candidates there would be if we were to offer it this year.

Congratulations again to the class of 2008.

Becoming a Proficient, Sighted Braille User

Braille is a critical skill which is important for literacy and life skills, enhancing communication and access to information to people who are blind of all ages. The aim of this course is to teach the sighted adult to read and write Braille from the letters of the alphabet to advanced concepts of formatting and typeforms. There are no pre-requisites for this course.

In 2005 Australia adopted the Unified English Braille Code (which varies slightly from the Australian Braille code) to allow a wider exchange of Braille material across many English speaking countries. Students work from the "Unified English Braille Primer (Australian Edition) and other supplementary materials.

Who should attend?

Any sighted person who would benefit from reading and writing Braille such as integration aides, visiting teachers, parents, volunteers or teachers and other professionals in the field of vision impairment or blindness.

Course Outcomes

This course presents a systematic approach to learning Braille. On completion of this course, participants should be able to:

- Read and write grade one and grade two Braille;
- Gain a basic knowledge of other Braille codes;
- Label household items and post a Braille letter; and
- Understand the uses of Braille notetakers and Braille embossers (printers).

Course Structure

This is an intensive course conducted over twelve weekly sessions of three hours duration and there will be at least two hours of homework each week. Texts and equipment are provided prior to the commencement of the course.

Dates: Thursdays from 7 May to 6 August 2009 (Excluding 2 and 9 July) 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm

Location: Vision Australia Training Room, 454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong

Cost: \$500 (Includes texts and materials, hire of Perkins Brailier and GST).

(Parents of blind children and carers please inquire about special rates).

To register contact: Trudy Williams on (03) 9520 5555 or email trudy.williams@visionaustralia.org

OZ-VISKIDS: A Register for all vision impaired children in Australia

A Letter from Jill Watson, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

It is one of those curious facts that in Australia we still do not know how many children with vision impairments there are. We do not know their location, their age, their current vision impairment status, their acuity, and also if they have any other additional disabilities over and above their vision impairment. Why is it important to know these things? Well, in order to have successful and targeted services, and by services I mean the whole range of education, health and social care, we need to know exact, precise and specific numbers and if possible have a detailed profile of the population we are to serve. 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 group.

All of us know childhood vision impairment has far reaching effects throughout life. It can impact upon a child's development, education, employment and social prospects. It can also lead to wide ranging effects upon the immediate family. Beyond the affected child and family, visual impairment creates financial implications for society, the provision of education, social and health services. Children with vision impairment require an integrated and tailored service provision that involves health, education, social work, and voluntary organisations. Accurate current data of the numbers, causes and level of vision impairment, and additional disabilities are required to plan and develop such a service.

So what is happening right now in order to find out how many children with vision impairment there are in Australia? Well, at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children a register of all Australian children with vision impairment (OZ-VISKIDS) has just been launched by Dr John Ravenscroft. The register works by parents of children with vision impairment telling registered staff that their child has a vision impairment. In return, children if they want to, can join the OZ-VISKIDS club. This is a very select club as only children with vision impairments can join. No parents allowed!!

The value of this register is not hard to see, once we know the precise numbers then we can target better services, redirect funding so that it better meets the needs of children with vision impairments and their parents.

If you are a parent of a child with vision impairment or know someone who is and would like further information please contact the OZ-VISKIDS register.

Jill Watson - OZ-VISKIDS
361-365 North Rocks Road
North Rocks 2001, NSW
Telephone: 02 9872 0303 or email: jill.watson@ridbc.org.au

Children's Mobility Service (CMS)

Included with this bulletin is a copy of a new publication from Guide Dogs Victoria's Children's Mobility Service. The booklet contains information about orientation, mobility, skills for independence as well as individual and group programmes offered by the CMS and the referral process. Please contact us at the Resource Centre if you would like additional copies for schools or families.

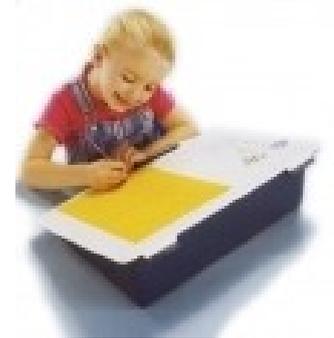
Writing Slope

If you are looking for something different in the way of readings stands for young students then the Writing Slope from Windmill may be worth considering.

Made of plastic, the Writing Slope is durable, portable and also doubles as a stationary and book storage unit. The lid can be used as a write-n-wipe board with whiteboard markers.

It is recommended for ages 5-8. The size of the writing slope is: 47 x 35 x 19cm high and it costs \$39.95. It is available from Windmill, 591 Whitehorse Road Mont Albert, 3127. Phone 03 9830 4336

Source: <http://www.windmill.net.au/5-8years/Writing-Slope.html>



Dot Power Day Term 1

SVRC was temporarily turned into an active little classroom with eight blind and low vision Prep and Grade 1 children attending our “Yukodoo” Dot Power Day. The emphasis was on the contraction IT which was great fun. We were very lucky to have Garry Stinchcombe and Gillian Gale join us for the day and assist with evaluating the day’s program. Their insights and knowledge about the Braille code are invaluable and very much appreciated.

All the children spent the day thinking about the contraction IT, making Yukodoo monsters and monster jelly, reading and writing braille and getting to catch up with old and new friends. Each child and their school will be getting a summary of the day’s program and an evaluation document with some suggestions for future programming.

Many thanks to the team and to Marion who provided a day long professional development program to the children’s parents, teachers and aides. Our next Dot Power day is June 22nd where the theme will be all about NUMBERS.



Grade 1 student Sam listens to the Yukadoo story at the recent Dot Power Day held at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Belgium's Blind Crime Fighters

Special Police Unit Is One of the Force's Most Effective Weapons Against Crime By Ben Barnier

Sacha Van Loo isn't allowed to carry a gun, but he is one of Belgium's finest weapons against drug-related criminality. Van Loo, 36, has been blind since birth, and because of the acute sense of hearing he developed to overcome his disability, he was chosen among dozens of applicants to be the ears of the Belgian Federal Police. Police recruited six blind men, including Van Loo, after observing early experiments in neighbouring Netherlands. Their mission is to transcribe and analyse wiretap recordings and real-time telephone conversations. They investigate some of the country's most critical issues including drug trafficking.

The transcriptions are used as evidence for criminal investigations and Van Loo's highly trained ears have proven to be a valuable asset. "They can hear things that you and I cannot," Paul Van Thielen, director general of the Judicial Federal Police, told ABC News. "They are particularly effective analysing background noises. For instance, they can tell whether a conversation has taken place in an airport or a train station." "I have been trained in echo location," Van Loo told ABC News. "I can hear the way a sound bounces off a wall or another object. I use this ability in everyday life. I just kept on doing it for my work."

Besides recognizing background noises and echoes, Van Loo is also an outstanding linguist. Raised in a family in which he spoke several languages, Van Loo today speaks Flemish, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Hungarian, Romanian, Farsi, and is learning Arabic. Van Loo can also precisely identify accents and dialects.

Despite his outstanding talents, Van Loo tries to keep a low profile. Call him a hero, and he shrugs it off. "When I hear people saying I am the blind Sherlock Holmes," said Van Loo, "it makes me laugh." "All we do is an administrative job," he said.

Van Loo even thinks that his unusual ability to recognize accents or background noises is not a gift, but just a matter of training.

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=3875889&page=1>

Braille Paper and Braille Label (Brailon)

We often get requests for braille paper and sheets of braille label (Brailon) from schools but unfortunately we are not able to supply these on an ongoing basis. We source our supplies from the following companies. If anyone else knows of any other good sources of braille paper, labels or thermoform please let us know.

Braille Paper

We use 150gms paper sheets: pack of 400@ \$62.00

Foremost Business Forms Pty Ltd

65 Rushdale Street, Knoxfield, Victoria, 3180 P.O. Box 900, Ferntree Gully, Victoria, 3156

Phone: 03 9764 0044; Fax: 03 9763 5930; Email: sales@foremostsolutions.com.au

Web: <http://www.foremostsolutions.com.au>

Braille Label (Brailon)

We use L1 labels: L1/0-0070 – 12 sheets/pkg @ US 14.15 + shipping

The address for the supply of Brailon is: The American Thermoform Corporation, 1758 Brackett Street, La Verne, CA 91750

Phone: 800 331 3676; Fax: 909 593 8001; Email: sales@americanthermoform.com

Web: <http://www.americanthermoform.com>

Order online from <http://www.americanthermoform.com/pricing.htm>

Demonstration Software

We currently have “fresh” supplies of demo discs for WYNN, JAWS, OpenBook and Zoomtext. Please contact Lyn Robinson on 03 9841 0242 if you would like a copy.

Staff & Student News

Nick Bisetto - Our new rowing champ. From Annette Godfrey-Magee

Nick did very well at the Nationals in Tassie over the Labour Day long weekend. He rowed in the adaptive double sculls with a very experienced rower and they won their race from a small field. Nick also raced in the single sculls and had to wear block out goggles for the first time. The procedure requires him to enter the water with his goggles on, jump in his scull and then row with the assistance of an official in a boat who guides him through the warm-up and gets him to the start and then through the race. The official is only allowed to give minimal feedback to help keep Nick straight and avoid any collisions with other rowers, trees, banks, pylons, etc.! Not as easy as it sounds. Nick took it all in his stride, displayed a very competitive but cool composure we have not seen before and actually won his heat which was a surprise to us. He then raced in the final in very difficult conditions where he could not hear his accompanying official due to the high winds but still managed to finish third and received the bronze medal! After Nick's race they actually closed the course as the conditions were so difficult.

Consequently Nick has been selected for the National Rowing Squad and Camp in Sydney next month. Attending the camp will be rowers and coaches from all over Australia and Nick will be rubbing shoulders with several Olympic Champions, world ranked rowers and paralympics rowers. Looks like we might see Nick heading towards London. Lets hope!

Message from Deb Lewis: Staff for the SVRC

Quite a bit of the etext that is used by your students is produced by casual staff, many of whom are studying at university. If you know anyone who is very slick on the computer, and particularly swift in Word, and would be interested in **casual** work please ask them to send in their CV so we can build up a contacts list and bring them in as required.

Also, if you know of anyone who is interested in unpaid **volunteer** work please get them to give me a call on 03 9841 0242. We have photocopying and binding that is always needed - but also the creation of tactual illustrations in books and kits etc. We are also in need of volunteer readers.

And if you know children/students who are involved with **Duke of Edinburgh** or enrolled in the **International Baccalaureate** and they'd like to be involved in producing little readers as PowerPoint Presentations, we have plenty to keep them amused! - again, give us a call!
Thanks everyone! Deb

Congratulations to Taryn who was the successful applicant for the recently advertised braille transcriber position at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.
Well done Taryn.

Finally

Thanks to Helen Caldow, Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Annette Godfrey-Magee and Dianne Skillern for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to all the fabulous proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

If you have something you would like included in ‘The Bulletin’, please contact: Lyn Robinson. Email: lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

presents

Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments

When: Friday 1st May 2009 from 9.00am to 3.30pm

Where: Statewide Vision Resource Centre

370-380 Springvale Rd Donvale

Parking: Next door at the Donvale Sports Complex (lower car park)

For: class and specialist teachers, integration aides and assistants, therapists, family members and visiting teachers.

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| 8.30 | Registration |
| 9.00 | Simulation of a Vision Impairment |
| 10.15 | Vision Impairment – What is it? How do we assess it? Marion Blazé - Education Officer, Statewide Vision Resource Centre |
| 11.00 | Morning Tea |
| 11.30 | Towards Independence: Let's Wash the Car Lea Nagel - Senior Visiting Teacher, Eastern Metropolitan Region |
| 12.00 | Strategies to Support Students in the Classroom Helen Caldwell - Senior Visiting Teacher, Eastern Metropolitan Region |
| 1.00 | Lunch – A light lunch will be provided |
| 1.45 | Tactical Communication and Making the Most of Remaining Vision Annette Godfrey-Magee and Marion Blazé Education Officer, Statewide Vision Resource Centre |
| 2.30 | Vision Impairment – Student, Family and School Perspectives Geoff Bowen - Psychologist, Statewide Vision Resource Centre |
| 3.30 | Close |

Cost: \$44.00 including GST (Visiting Teachers \$33.00)

Payment includes a light lunch

(maximum participants: 60)

Registration is essential – phone 9841 0242, fax 9841 0878 or

email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au