

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 4

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014

**301 days till the SPEVI Conference in Melbourne**  
**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

### Professional Development & Activities for Term 1 & 2, 2014

Fliers for the SVRC Professional Learning programs are available can be downloaded from the SVRC website: [www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml)

**Please note:** the SVRC encourages attendance in person or via video link (via a DEECD virtual meeting room) – please be in touch if you’d like to “virtually” attend any of these sessions.

Event	Date
<b>Dot Power</b>	Tuesday 25 March
<b>**NEW – PE/Sport/Recreation Day – information coming soon</b>	Wednesday 30 April
<b>Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments</b> (max participants: 60)	Tuesday 6 May
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> 1. 9.30-11.00 NVDA – staff from SVRC 2. 11.30-1.00 Victor Reader – Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 3. 1.30-3.30 BrailleNote – Ramona Mandy, Humanware	Wednesday 7 May
<b>Visiting Teacher MasterClass presented by Penny Rosenblum</b> (Information coming soon)	Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 May
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> 1. 9.30-11.00 Combining SmartView 360 with iPad and ZoomText – Tony Wu, Humanware 2. 11.30-1.00 MAGic – Pacific Vision 3. 1.30-3.30 Please request a session	Wednesday 21 May
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> 1. 9.30-11.00 BrailleSense – Caz McGowan, Pacific Vision 2. 11.30-1.00 Please request a session 3. 1.30-3.30 Please request a session	Wednesday 4 June
<b>Dot Power</b>	Tuesday 17 June
<b>National Braille Music Camp</b> – email <a href="mailto:romad@westnet.com.au">romad@westnet.com.au</a>	21-28 June

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## Students found to be no longer eligible – EVAC procedures

There are many reasons why a student who has been eligible for support at school due to vision impairment, can have an improvement in their vision. Better correction or a reduction in nystagmus or even surgery can improve acuity findings and some children just get better at responding to an eye chart – all of which is great news!

Many ophthalmologists keep the EVAC team informed (with parental permission) about our students' regular visits to them. If the EVAC team receives information indicating that a student is no longer eligible, our first step is to consult Dr Susan Carden to interpret the medical information received. If she confirms that the student is no longer eligible, we then contact the VT or Regional Team Leader to discuss this information. At this point, the EVAC team will ascertain whether the VT believes that the family should be telephoned regarding this finding, and who should make this call (EVAC team or VT). You know your students best!

If it is the VT who has received information from an ophthalmologist, then we ask that this be shared with the EVAC team.

The EVAC team will write a formal letter to the school and the parents explaining that the student is no longer eligible for additional support due to a vision impairment. A copy of this correspondence is sent to the Regional personnel.

It is important to note that if a student is deemed no longer eligible, s/he is also no longer able to access the services of SVRC: Support Skills, VCE Special Provision through SVRC, activities such as Space Camp, and National Partnership funded equipment. Any National Partnership funded equipment will need to be returned to SVRC and this will be listed on the letter to the school and family. VTs can then negotiate when it would be appropriate to pick up equipment and return it to SVRC for re-allocation.

Annette Godfrey-Magee, Geoff Bowen and Marion Blazé

## Skill Power Sessions

Our Skill Power sessions – hands-on workshops in access technology – have kicked off well! To date, we have “skilled participants up” on Duxbury and Romeo embosser, JAWS, maths and tactual presentation of learning materials, Pearl and Openbook, ZoomText and the iPad. Feedback from participants has been very positive including this email from a rural Visiting Teacher:

“I would like to thank you for your PD on using Duxbury and the embosser. You made it very easy for us – really clear and uncomplicated. Also love and appreciate your humour and patience. The IAs from [the local school] were reassured and feel confident they will be able to use this program and equipment for [the student's] benefit. Great PD.”

Remember that if you'd like a session on a particular item of equipment or software, or how to use a student's package of equipment with greatest efficiency, just call up or email and make a time! You can come to us OR we can conduct a session via video conference – please make sure your unit is able to access a DEECD meeting room! ☺

Sessions are listed each fortnight on page 1 of The Bulletin – upcoming future sessions include: NVDA, Victor Reader, BrailleNote, MAGic, BrailleSense, and combining SmartView 360 with iPad and ZoomText! Or something that would assist you!

## SVRC Cheat Sheets as PDFs

With lots of VTs using their iPad as their mobile office, we have converted most of the word files on the SVRC website to PDFs. These can be opened more easily on the iPad. Cheat sheets can be found: [www.svrc.vic.edu.au/CS.shtml](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/CS.shtml)

The “Checklists, cheat sheets, curriculum materials and more” are grouped into:

- Braille and braille/audio technology (including UEB)
- Expanded core curriculum
- iPad
- PC/Windows technology
- Other helpful information (eg vision, optimising the learning environment)

There’s also a link to training videos and audio files.

## Special Arrangements for NAPLAN

Students are able to request alternative format test papers in large print or braille. This should be done by the end of February. The use of a reader, scribe and/or assistive technology needs to be applied for by the school on a form provided in the Handbook for Principals. This form needs to be completed and sent to the VCAA by 7<sup>th</sup> May.

Dates for NAPLAN Tests

- 13 May Literacy (Language Conventions, Writing)
- 14 May Literacy (Reading)
- 15 May Numeracy

Contact:

- Freecall 1800 648 637
- Fax (03) 9225 2334
- Website: [www.naplanadmin.vic.edu.au](http://www.naplanadmin.vic.edu.au)

Details about applying for special arrangements for NAPLAN testing can be found in the Handbook for Principals. The Handbook for Principals can be downloaded from: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/naplan/schools/2014/Handbook-for-Principals-2014.pdf](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/naplan/schools/2014/Handbook-for-Principals-2014.pdf)

## 2014 Victorian Premiers’ Reading Challenge

Source: DEECD communication S069-2014

The tenth annual Victorian Premiers’ Reading Challenge for Victorian students from Prep to Year 10 is now open and ends on 12 September 2014. The Challenge promotes the importance of reading among students in Victorian schools and early childhood settings. This year the Challenge will have a dedicated Facebook page with resources for parents, and the Challenge website will be updated with weekly videos to encourage students to stay motivated and read more throughout the Challenge.

On Tuesday 11 March, a poster size countdown calendar will be inserted into the *Herald Sun* so parents and children can track their reading progress, count down the time left and stay motivated throughout the Challenge.

For info about the Challenge: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/prc/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/prc/Pages/default.aspx)  
For etext, braille, audio or large print catalogues: [www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acatalogue.shtml](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acatalogue.shtml).

## VCAA Review of Special Provision and an Invitation to Complete an Online Survey

During 2014 the VCAA is reviewing its current policy and administrative procedures associated with administering Special Provision within School-based Assessment and VCE examinations (with a particular focus on the Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) and the Derived Examination Score (DES) processes).

The online survey will be open from Tuesday 11 March until Friday 4 April, 2014. The survey can be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/specialprovisionreview.aspx>

For further information see the attached flier or contact Wayne Condick, Project Manager, Special Provision Review, VCAA; tel: (03) 9225 2215; email: [condick.wayne.w@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:condick.wayne.w@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## New Vision Australia Graduate Diploma of O&M Mobility

The Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility is a nationally recognised qualification for people seeking employment as O&M Specialists.

The course is delivered full-time, face to face, over a period of 15 months. The course is based in Kensington, Melbourne.

Year 1: Monday 3 March 2014 - Friday 5 December 2014

Year 2: Monday 2 February 2015 - Friday 5 June 2015

Refer to the Course Handbook, Fee and Charges Schedule and RTO Student Handbook available at:

[www.visionaustralia.org/oandmcourse](http://www.visionaustralia.org/oandmcourse)

For further information, contact the Course Coordinator, Michelle Sharples: (03) 9381 6425 or email [O&Mcourse@visionaustralia.org](mailto:O&Mcourse@visionaustralia.org)

## 2014 Issue of JSPEVI: Call for Papers

You are invited to submit articles, reports and news items for this year's journal of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment, entitled JSPEVI.

Original manuscripts, reports and news items are sought for the sixth issue of the **Journal of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment**. The journal presents essays, quantitative and qualitative research articles and analyses, conceptual papers, literature and book reviews, case studies, policy analyses and innovative practice descriptions and evaluations as well as perspectives and opinions on a wide variety of issues and topics related to the education of children, youth and adults in the South Pacific region who are blind or have vision impairment.

The journal's editorial committee intends JSPEVI to be a vehicle for informing researchers, administrators and educators working in government and non-government education organisations, as well as specialist and generic teachers, O&M instructors, allied health professionals, parents and others in our communities about research, issues, policies and their implications for practice in the South Pacific Region (Australia, New Zealand, parts of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands).

To enable timely review and manuscript revision, it would be appreciated if authors could submit manuscripts by email, post or fax **no later than 30 June 2014**. Manuscripts, reports and news items should be sent to the Convening Editor, Frances Gentle: [frances.gentle@ridbc.org.au](mailto:frances.gentle@ridbc.org.au)

## Rights in Tertiary Education: Tips and Tricks

Students beginning or returning to their tertiary studies, article from the February 2014 edition of BCA Parent News by Thai Nguyen, Advocacy and Policy Officer

Transitioning from high school to university or TAFE can be a challenging time for students. For students who are blind or vision impaired, the challenges of entering university will be unique from those of other students. To ensure a positive learning experience, it is highly recommended that students plan ahead and engage with the right supports prior to starting the course. Below are some tips and strategies to consider when starting tertiary education:

### 1. Be prepared prior to starting

Seek out orientation and mobility instruction early to navigate around the campus and find out where your lecture rooms are located. Get in touch with your faculty, teaching staff and disability liaison unit officer before you begin any new studies.

Get to know who you should talk to and make a connection with them so that you will feel confident to approach them about any adjustments required during the course of your studies.

### 2. Discuss your needs

Make your learning needs known to receive adequate support and special consideration entitlements. By doing so, you will have an opportunity to find out about disability-related services, support, research and other information. This also creates an opportunity for educating others about disability and its impact. It may also be useful to seek an orthoptist report, as documentation that explains in plain English, your eye condition, functional vision and any other relevant advice on factors such as preferred formats and seating and lighting requirements.

### 3. Create a learning support plan

The disability liaison unit officer will be in charge of supporting your disability needs and will write up your disability learning plan that will be supplied to teachers and integrated into your learning. This learning support plan may include reasonable adjustments such as: receiving learning materials in alternate formats, assistive technology, time allowed to complete tasks, ensuring the environment is safe and accessible, environmental conditions (for example lighting and glare), and teachers verbalising visual activities (such as board writing, video presentations). As your needs may change over time, the learning support plan can be adjusted throughout your time of study.

### 4. Know your rights

It is useful to know your rights as a student with a disability. As a student with a disability you have the right to an education that is equal to your sighted counterparts. It is important to have a basic understanding of your rights under the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* and the *Standards of Education (2005)*. The *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* makes it unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against someone because that person has a disability, and ensures people with a disability have the same educational opportunities as everyone else. The DDA protects against discrimination in education in the following areas: admission (that is accepting a person with a disability as a student on less favourable terms or conditions than others), access and harassment.

The *Standards of Education* place a responsibility on education providers to make reasonable changes to accommodate the needs of a student with disability. You can use this as a guide to discuss what adjustments are required and reasonable for your particular circumstances. For instance providing written material in an alternate format (such as electronic text or braille) to allow a person who is blind or vision impaired to access a university lecture.

It is also important to be aware of your education provider's disability action plan. This is often located on the university website. The action plan is a way to plan for the elimination of disability discrimination and will be useful to refer to when advocating for your needs.

## 5. Speak up if your needs are not being met

If you find that your needs are not being met, take the appropriate actions to speak to the right person in a timely and appropriate manner and with a clear goal in mind. As many adjustments require time to prepare, an early conversation allows for ample time to implement adjustments and if necessary, time for you to remind relevant staff of adjustments in case they aren't made. You can have discussions in person, on the phone or over email, but it is good to get commitment to adjustments in writing from the disability learning unit officer or teaching staff. It is vital that you communicate clearly, are assertive and firm, while also being polite and respectful.

## 6. Making a complaint

If you continue to find that your needs are not being met and have brought up the issues continually, you are able to make a formal complaint through internal and external complaint processes. It is advisable that you exhaust all internal mechanisms within your university or TAFE before you escalate further to external means.

## 7. Get support and other perspectives

You could consider talking to others about what happened and their thoughts about what you might do about the situation. You might find it particularly helpful to discuss your issue with another person who is blind or vision impaired, who may have also encountered a similar situation. Utilising advocacy services or community legal centres may also be of assistance. Should you wish to obtain any advocacy support for an education-related issue, contact the Blind Citizens Australia National Office on: (03) 9654 1400 or toll free on 1800 033 660.

Below are some other examples of organisations that may be of assistance; please note that there may be other relevant organisations within your state or territory:

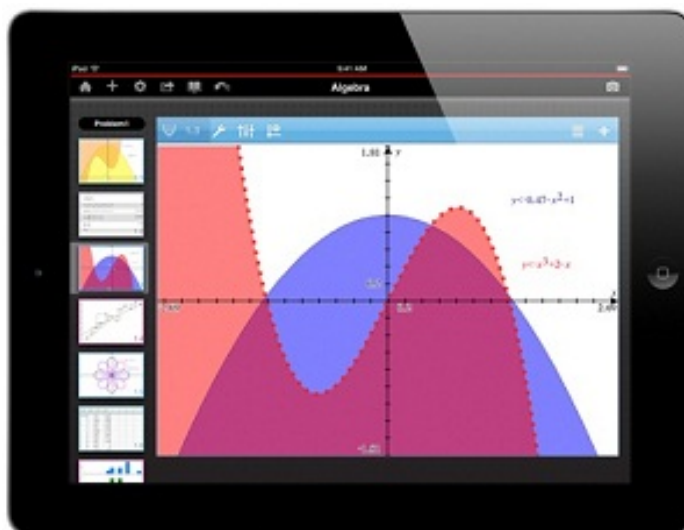
- **Youth Disability Advocacy Service:** is a Victorian advocacy service that provides one-on-one support through individual advocacy and that also works on broader social issues affecting young people with disabilities through systemic advocacy. For further information see their website: [www.ydas.org.au](http://www.ydas.org.au) or telephone: (03) 9267 3755 or toll-free 1300 727 176 (from outside of Melbourne) or (03) 9267 3733 (advocacy).
- **People with Disability Australia Incorporated (PWDA):** is a national peak disability rights and advocacy organisation. Their primary membership is made up of people with disability and organisations primarily constituted by people with disability. PWDA provides information, advice, referral and services, and short-term individual and group advocacy assistance for issues that affect people with a disability. For further information see their website: [www.pwd.org.au](http://www.pwd.org.au) or telephone: (02) 9370 3100 or toll free 1800 422 015.
- **The Australian Human Rights Commission** is the national statutory body that has the responsibility for investigating alleged infringements under anti-discrimination legislation, including breaches of the *Standards of Education*. For further information visit their website: [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au) or telephone: (02) 9284 9600 or **Complaints Infoline:** 1300 656 419.

**The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC):** is an association of state community legal centre organisations in Australia; its members are the state and territory peak bodies of community legal centres. Please note that the National Association of Community Legal Centres does not provide legal advice but has created a database of community legal centres in each state and territory. Community legal centres provide free legal services including information, referral, advice, casework assistance, community legal education, and policy and law reform. To find a community legal centre near you, visit their website: [www.naclc.org.au/](http://www.naclc.org.au/) or telephone: (02) 9264 9595 for further assistance.

## TI-Nspire Calculator App

TI-Nspire is one of the leading graphing calculators used by students for upper secondary mathematics – and it is now available as an app for iPad.

Costing US\$29.99, it is a much cheaper option than purchasing the hand-held equivalent and with the accessibility features on the iPad (eg tap and zoom), this may be a suitable option for students with low vision. If combining the pdf format textbook on their iPad with TI-Nspire, students could complete their maths using one device.



## Transferring books from i-Access to the Victor Reader Stream podcast

Source: Audio Braille Update, Edition 1 for 2014

David Woodbridge of Vision Australia has made two very helpful podcasts to assist people in learning how to get books downloaded from the i-Access Online library service and how to transfer the books to your Victor Reader Stream. The first podcast provides instructions and a demonstration on how to use the i-Access Download Manager to loan a daisy book from the i-access online catalogue. The second podcast gives an informative demonstration of transferring the DAISY book from the PC to the Victor Reader Stream.

- **Using the i-Access downloader to obtain a daisy book with David Woodbridge: part 1** <http://visit.humanware.com/e/3332/Type-22Podcast2226pagesize-100/35hwfb/663938517>
- **Transferring the daisy book from the computer to the Victor Reader Stream with David Woodbridge: part 2** <http://visit.humanware.com/e/3332/Type-22Podcast2226pagesize-100/35hwfg/663938517>

## Music Zoom: “Don’t let your eyes hold you back. Play on!”

Music Zoom is specifically designed for visually impaired musicians. Music Zoom enlarges your sheet music and scrolls forward using wired or wireless foot switches. If you’re a singer and have a free hand, you can also use the on screen buttons to scroll through your music.

If you find white on black easier to see, Music Zoom allows you to invert the colours of your music. Adding highlights and text annotations to your music is easy and can help draw your eye to important markings including dynamics, articulations, and accidentals ... or that rest that you always forget!

Adding a song to your music library is as simple as drawing a box around each line of music. Either take a picture of your music with the iPad’s camera or (for better results) scan your music and access the image via your photo library.

For more information and download: [itunes.apple.com/us/app/music-zoom/id823697054?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/music-zoom/id823697054?mt=8)

## iPad Stand: Latitude Arm Mounting Kit for iPad and iPad mini

Would your i-Life be easier if you didn't have to hold your iPad? Below is an interesting solution available from Spectronics – though there may be others or you may be able to make your own.

This Latitude Arm Mounting Kit sells for \$529-599 and includes:

- Latitude Mounting Arm
- Super Clamp
- iPad or iPad mini cradle
- Cradle mounting plate
- Quick Start Guide

Visit: [www.spectronicsinoz.com/product/latitude-arm-mounting-kit-for-ipad-and-ipad-mini](http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/product/latitude-arm-mounting-kit-for-ipad-and-ipad-mini)



## A Magnifier That Talks To You

Source: Livewire, Summer 2014

The Optelec ClearView+ Speech combines video magnification with accurate Text-to-Speech. It is easy to select what you want to read. Just point at the section on the screen and the ClearView+ Speech will read it for you.

It still has the simple “One-Button” control for all your magnification needs. And when you are ready to listen, all you have to do is touch the screen and then sit back and enjoy listening to your magazine articles, letters and books.



## Swish: Table Tennis for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Source: March edition of Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria Newsletter

Swish is open to everyone; you don't have to be blind or vision impaired, just come along and enjoy the fun. It is suitable for the young and old and most groups play all year round. Swish is based on table tennis, but the ball is hit under the net instead of over it, it can be played as singles or doubles. The ball has bells in it to allow people to hear it coming.

There are now four outer or regional groups running as well as the Thursday and Saturday groups at Kooyong. It would be great if you come to one of them.

For further information, please contact:

Mornington: Greg Price – 0400 520 411, [greg.price@petermac.org](mailto:greg.price@petermac.org)

Dandenong: Peter Fletcher – 0407 848 181, [mysportandrecreation@gmail.com](mailto:mysportandrecreation@gmail.com)

Mildura: Carmel Harris – 03 5023 9500, [Carmel.Harris@visionaustralia.org](mailto:Carmel.Harris@visionaustralia.org)

Bendigo: Steve Monigatti – [Steve.Monigatti@visionaustralia.org](mailto:Steve.Monigatti@visionaustralia.org)

Kooyong: Robyn Bousie – 0417 156 106, [robyn.bousie@vu.edu.au](mailto:robyn.bousie@vu.edu.au)

or Chrissy Brincat – 0400 073 246, [chrissybrincat@gmail.com](mailto:chrissybrincat@gmail.com)



## In the Drivers' Seat

“In the driver’s seat” is an initiative of the Warrandyte Lions Club and involves dual controlled cars and driving instructors allowing people with vision impairments to drive a car in a safe environment. And it is lots of fun too!

“In the driver’s seat” will be held this year on Sunday 4 May between 9 am and 4 pm at Sandown racetrack. Bookings are essential online at the following website:

[www.lionsclubwarrandyte.org.au/itds.php](http://www.lionsclubwarrandyte.org.au/itds.php)

## In the Cockpit (Sailing)

A sailing experience day is planned for people with vision impairments in Geelong, Victoria.

“In the cockpit” will be held on Sunday 23 March 2014 starting 9 am. Bookings are essential and all the information is on the following webpage:

[www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/events/event/2014/02/19/the-annual-in-the-cockpit-sailing-event](http://www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/events/event/2014/02/19/the-annual-in-the-cockpit-sailing-event)

## Vision Australia Further Education Bursary for 2015

Applications will be open between 1 August 2014 to 31 October 2014 for the VA Further Education Bursary for 2015. The VA Bursary provides adaptive technology to help ensure that students with vision impairments can fully participate and succeed in their chosen studies.

Vision Australia has a Tertiary Education Consultant to advise on course selection, study skills, student advocacy and funding opportunities. Phone 1300 847 466 for further information.

## iPad Survey

Visiting Teachers are invited to participate in an online survey to gather data about how students with vision impairments are using iPads in schools to access the curriculum.

In 2013 many students with vision impairments in DEECD schools were loaned iPads to use in the classroom as part of the More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership Program.

As this is a relatively new technology, the Statewide Vision Resource Centre would like to undertake a survey to gather information about how students with vision impairments use iPads in school to access the curriculum.

The information gathered will:

- be shared with educators to inform best practice
- assist in designing evidence based curriculum materials
- assist in understanding some of the advantages and disadvantages of using the iPad for this particular group of students

The research has been given approval by the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Branch.

If you would like any further information please contact Lyn Robinson at the SVRC.



## USA: National Prison Braille Network

Source: APH News, March 2014

Since 2000, when APH established a prison braille program in a women's prison in Kentucky, APH has served as coordinator of the National Prison Braille Network (NPBN).

There are currently over 35 braille production facilities in prisons across the USA. Inmates learn braille, earn certifications, and transcribe print materials into braille for people with vision loss across the country. Priority is given to textbooks and other educational materials for blind and visually impaired students.



Priority is given to textbooks and other educational materials for blind and visually impaired students.

For a snapshot of the prison braille program in South Dakota, check out this recent news video:

[http://www.kdlt.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=33757&Itemid=57](http://www.kdlt.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33757&Itemid=57)

## SVRC: Q&A

Every day, staff of the SVRC field any number of questions from schools, families and members of the wider community. Here are a couple of recent examples – and our answers...

### ***Large Print Dictionary***

**Question:** Can you advise where to get a large print dictionary from suitable for a grade 4 student with low vision?

**Answer:** My favourite, if the student has an iPhone or iPad, is:

- WordWeb – download for free or around \$1 depending on your device: [wordweb.info/free/](http://wordweb.info/free/)

The only large print edition I know of is:

- Oxford Large Print Dictionary (N16): Oxford University Press: \$29

There are other options on our website if you'd like to explore further:

[www.svrc.vic.edu.au/ATdictionaries.shtml](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/ATdictionaries.shtml)

### ***School Audio Resources***

**Question:** Our school has hundreds of tapes and CDs of stories etc. Can we legally convert these to MP3 and the more modern formats?

**Answer:** The Smartcopying website lists itself as “the official guide to Copyright Issues for Australian Schools and TAFE”.

There is information about “format shifting” in relation to schools on this page:

<http://www.smartcopying.edu.au/information-sheets/tafe/format-shifting>

From the info on the FAQ page, schools can “format shift” some copyright materials so long as they follow some guidelines which are listed on this page (particularly point 2):

<http://www.smartcopying.edu.au/faqs/format-shifting>

Another resource is the Vision Australia Library – they are funded to provide resources for students with print disabilities: <http://www.visionaustralia.org/living-with-low-vision/library>

## More feedback from the SVRC PD Program

Here is some lovely feedback we have received recently:

A lovely email that was sent by a participant of a recent SVRC Low Vision Day to a VT [thanks also to the VT for passing this on – it quite made our day!!!]

Just had to contact you to tell you again, what an impact the PD has had on me. Not only have I been more aware of glare and been able to bring it to teacher's attention but I have also been able to enlarge printed matter, speak with a teacher about very busy newspaper articles and been able to present [the student] with only the relevant matter an enlarged version, arrange for SAC's to be done on computer and I have even used resources on SVRC website (bold lined paper, graph paper)!!! Such a powerful PD!! Please pass on my thanks to the team at SVRC for 'opening my eyes'!!!

Another, after some over-the-phone tech help:

A thousand thanks for your help today. We have tried so many instructions and nothing was working. Thanks for giving us the time to see the whole process through. Your knowledge and expertise is mind blowing.

## Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Max Bini, Frances Gentle, Garry Stinchcombe and Emily White.

If you would like to contribute to The Bulletin please email [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au)

To read The Bulletin online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>



### **VCAA Review of Special Provision and an Invitation to complete an online survey**

During 2014 the VCAA is reviewing its current policy and administrative procedures associated with administering Special Provision within School-based Assessment and VCE examinations (with a particular focus on the Special Examination Arrangements (SEA) and the Derived Examination Score (DES) processes). These policies and procedures were last reviewed in in 2005.

The purpose of the review is to:

- Ensure special provision policies are in line with relevant Federal and State legislation.
- Address and/or respond to the concerns of key stakeholder groups.
- Develop a better process for ensuring consistency across provisions provided for school-based assessments and VCE examinations.
- Explore the possibility of approving provisions prior to the commencement of a student's VCE or VCAL program.

The review will involve four key stages.

#### **Stage 1 – Online Survey**

The first stage of the review will seek stakeholder feedback on current policies and processes via an online survey. This feedback will form the basis of focus group discussions, which follow later in the year.

The online survey will be open from Tuesday 11 March until Friday 4 April, 2014.

The survey can be accessed using the following link

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/specialprovisionreview.aspx>

We encourage schools and stakeholder groups to include the survey link on their website and to include the link in any newsletter or correspondence they may send to their communities.

#### **Stage 2 – Focus Groups**

The feedback from the online survey will help inform the development of focus questions and raise issues for focus group discussion.

Stakeholder groups will be asked to nominate a representative/s to attend focus groups.

The focus groups will take place during July and/or August. More detailed information will be made available once the program for each focus group has been confirmed.

#### **Stage 3 – Recommendations**

The VCAA will publish any recommendations for a change in policy or process at the conclusion of the focus group stage. The recommendations will be disseminated to the focus group attendees and other stakeholders seeking their written feedback. Where deemed necessary a particular focus group may be recalled to discuss the recommendations.

#### **Stage 4 – Policy Document**

The VCAA will publish its revised/updated policy documents and timeline for implementation. This information will then be made publicly available on the VCAA website and related publications e.g. VCE/VCAL Administrative Handbook.

#### **Contact**

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