



Victorian Deaf Education Institute e-newsletter

Issue #4 | December 2011



Welcome to our December newsletter

As the year draws rapidly to a close we pause for a moment to reflect on the first year of work for the Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI). While much has been achieved there is so much more to do. Reform takes a long time and much persistence, and to be effective it requires strong collaboration and solid partnerships.

We would like to thank the many people who have worked hard in partnership with us this year to provide professional learning opportunities for the sector, to support the introduction of innovative technology into classrooms, to research the evidence that will underpin best practice – and who have generously shared their ideas, wisdom and time.

As we enter 2012 there are a range of new initiatives being developed. A very visible initiative is the building of the VDEI's state of the art video conferencing centre at 597 St Kilda Rd. Construction of the Institute is due for completion in late January 2012, and this will open up distance learning opportunities for the deaf education sector. For comprehensive information about all of our programs please visit the [VDEI website](#).

VDEI live captioning pilot featured in *Inspire* magazine

*Year 11 student Pallavi Singh is profoundly deaf, wears a hearing aid and has a cochlear implant. She attends Forest Hill deaf facility which has been taking part in a real time captioning in classrooms pilot since April this year. The aim of the pilot is to improve secondary deaf students' access to curriculum, promote full inclusion and enhance student outcomes. [Read the full feature](#) on page 40 of *Inspire* magazine. [Click here](#) to read the latest on the live captioning roll out.*



New dates for 2012!

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER, DR DONALD GOLDBERG



Current trends for children with hearing loss from birth to five years old

DATE: 31 May – 1 June 2012

LOCATION: VDEI, 597 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

PRESENTER: Dr Donald Goldberg PhD, CCC-SLP/A, FAAA, Cert AVT, Co-Director of the Head and Neck Institute's Hearing Implant Program.

HOW TO REGISTER

Registrations will be open in early 2012.

CONTACTS

Registrations -Trudy Smith ph: 02 9872 0302. All other event queries please contact Karyn Barrasso e: barrasso.karyn.k@edumail.vic.gov.au ph: 03 9637 2083

This seminar is a collaboration between VDEI and The Renwick Centre NSW.

ACCESS: Auslan interpreted, live captioned and hearing loop.

Video conferencing

One of VDEI's aims is to improve educational outcomes and curriculum access for rural and regional students and families. On the 24 June 2011 Minister Dixon announced the roll out of 300 video conferencing units to primary and secondary schools across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria.

DEECD and VDEI identified a number of metropolitan schools, rural and regional schools for their support and curriculum delivery to deaf children requiring Auslan. [Read more](#)

Scholarships

VDEI's scholarship program supports the capacity building of teachers working with deaf and hard of hearing children in Victoria. This year enormous interest was shown by teachers employed by DEECD or other sectors, or who are not currently working. A number of scholarships will be awarded to teachers both in metropolitan and country areas. Scholarships are now closed for 2012. It is anticipated that scholarships will continue to be offered in 2012.

[Read more](#)

Auslan courses

With the burgeoning use of technology throughout the sector, VDEI is exploring various ways to present their 2012 Auslan courses throughout Victoria. Further information about upcoming courses will be shared with you as soon as they become available.

For further information about Auslan courses please contact:
Kaye Scott at scott.kaye.m@edumail.vic.gov.au or
Karyn Barrasso at barasso.karyn.k@edumail.vic.gov.au

“Amazed at how much we learned in eight weeks!”

Jillian O'Neill, teacher, Forest Hill College

“The content was great. The level was good for beginners. And the teacher was fantastic - thank you!”

Kellie Addicoat, Administration officer, Victoria Law School, Victoria University

Captioning centre in regional Victoria

One of the innovations that arose from the VDEI resource development grants provided earlier this year was the establishment of a captioning centre in regional Victoria.

The centre is currently operating to support schools wanting to access captioned materials. This exciting initiative is all about access for deaf students, so please jump on board and let us know of any resources you would like captioned for your VCE 2012 students. Contact Kaye Scott at scott.kaye.m@edumail.vic.gov.au

Auslan workshops for educational support staff

VDEI, in collaboration with ASLIA Victoria, is offering Auslan workshops for professional educators and educational support staff who provide Auslan interpretation in classrooms. The equivalent of four professional learning days, the content was established in collaboration with ES staff, facility coordinators and principals.

EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST

Michelle Ashley, ASLIA,
education@asliavic.com.au
Other enquiries: Kaye Scott at
scott.kaye.m@edumail.vic.gov.au or
call (03) 9637 3114

[Click here for more information](#)



Mentoring program for educational support staff

VDEI, in partnership with ASLIA Victoria, will be providing a mentoring program for educational support staff working with children using sign language.

This program will be facilitated from a number of deaf education settings in 2012.

For further information please contact Kaye Scott on
scott.kaye.m@edumail.vic.gov.au or
call (03) 9637 3114

[Click here for more information](#)

Post school options - what are they?

How do deaf and hard of hearing students get on post school? What would help them to nail that job or successfully complete tertiary education programs?

VDEI and Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE (NMIT) hope to answer these questions and identify options that will improve support to school leavers.

NMIT and VDEI have invited students who are deaf and hard of hearing to participate in a pilot project that involved completion of a short survey. The confidential and anonymous survey asked for students' perceptions of the type of information they received in relation to available post school pathways and how this information assisted them to make decisions regarding their future career options. A survey pack was sent out to schools with information for both parents and principals.

Auslan Assessment tool development project

VDEI, in partnership with La Trobe University, will break new ground in the development of an Auslan assessment tool and an Auslan Developmental Scale. We hope this can be deployed nationally to support young deaf children and their families in language enrichment opportunities. A reference group for the project involving the researchers, members from the education sector and service providers was formed for consultation and collaboration.

Our second reference group meeting enjoyed great representation and we appreciate the support that this project is receiving. [Read more](#)

Classroom acoustics project

The Deaf Education Review highlighted the need for optimal acoustic environments for deaf and hard of hearing students. During 2011, we provided 27 Victorian schools with 67 soundfield systems. Dr Dianne Toe from The University of Melbourne is conducting an external review of the project. Schools and deaf facilities have provided VDEI with a great deal of positive anecdotal feedback including from one teacher who commented:

"We have three soundfields in the school now. Now we wish we had one in every classroom. We take it outside for sports rotations on Tuesday. They go for an hour and a half and it is so much easier to run them with the soundfield. I even used it for bike ed. I took it out on the road and the kids could hear me from one end of the block to the other, explaining points to them. It's fantastic!"

Individual learning plans

An area for focus that has emerged through our discussion with stakeholders is the development of good quality individual learning

Not receiving our event alerts directly?

Email your direct email address to us at vdei@edumail.vic.gov.au

Contact VDEI

Email: vdei@edumail.vic.gov.au

Website:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/vdei/default.htm>

Reaching new graduates

VDEI was invited to present in three forums within the La Trobe University Education Conference program. The conference was for students completing their Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) at its Bundoora Campus on the 2nd and 3rd of November. The forums included delivering a keynote speech, two workshops and providing information within the Conference Expo.

[Read more](#)

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER, DR ANU SHARMA

Exploring auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder and classroom programs with teaching professionals AND Exploring current audio specific issues within the audiology field

DATE: 26 July 2012 (teaching professionals) and 27 July 2012 (audiologists/speech pathologists only)

LOCATION: VDEI, 597 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

PRESENTER: Professor, Dept. of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

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e: barrasso.karyn.k@edumail.vic.gov.au
ph: 03 9637 2083

This seminar is a collaboration between VDEI and The Renwick Centre NSW.

plans. VDEI, in association with the University of Melbourne, is currently completing a research project entitled *The development and use of individual learning plans as a basis for intervention in school programs with deaf and hard of hearing students*. One of the aims of the project is to explore good practice in the use of assessments to inform individual learning plans. The key themes that emerge from the project will also help define professional learning needs and future areas of research. School principals and coordinators of facilities and services were invited to participate in the study. [Read more](#)

Professional learning activities

VDEI has planned an exciting 2012 professional learning calendar to support Victorian education and allied health professionals working with deaf and hard of hearing students across a range of educational settings. Please [click here](#) to see our up and coming events for 2012.



Last Masterclass for 2011: Pragmatic skills of school aged children with hearing loss - research outcomes and interventions

On 14 October 2011 the Victorian Deaf Education Institute hosted an afternoon Masterclass at Deakin University's Geelong Waterfront Campus. The session was presented by Dr Louise Paatsch - Senior Lecturer and Researcher in language and literacy at the School of Education, Deakin University, and Dr Dianne Toe - Senior Lecturer and Researcher in the development of pragmatic language skills at the University of Melbourne. [Read more](#)

Australia includes sign language in national curriculum

Sign language as well as 14 other languages would soon become a part of Australia's National Curriculum. This development is the result of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) issuance of a final paper which aims to have primary students spend 5 per cent of total teaching time learning another language. By the time Australian students reach years 7 and 8, the amount of time spent on learning a second language would go up to 8 percent. [Read more](#)

More events for 2012

MASTERCLASS WITH DR MICHAEL CARR – GREGG



DATE: 21 June 2012

An evening presentation on healthy adolescents including tools and strategies for teachers and parents on engagement and communication skills.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is one of Australia's highest profile psychologists and leading speakers. He worked as an Associate Professor in the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Melbourne, before going into private practice. He wrote his PhD on adolescents with cancer at the University of NSW which resulted in the formation of CanTeen - a support group for teenagers with cancer in 1984.

Michael is a founding member of the National Centre Against Bullying and for six years has been the agony uncle for Australia's biggest selling magazine for young women, Girlfriend. He has a high media profile working on national TV on Channel 7's Sunrise and The Morning Show as well as Fairfax Radio 3AW.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg has written seven books, including the best-selling *Princess Bitchface Syndrome: How to survive teenage girls* (Penguin, 2007) and his most recent, *Surviving Step-Families* (Penguin, 2011).

More up and coming events in 2012

15-16 November

Associate Professor Connie Mayer and Assistant Professor, Bevely Trezek will co-present a comprehensive two day literacy workshop covering language, reading and writing from a theoretical and practical standpoint, as well as literacy assessment strategies and visual phonics.

Associate Professor Connie Mayer



Dr. Mayer is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto, cross appointed to the Graduate Program in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. She teaches courses related to language and literacy learning in the graduate program and in the teacher preparation program in the education of deaf and hard of hearing students.

Assistant Professor Beverly Trezek

Dr Beverly Trezek is an Assistant Professor in Literacy and Specialized Instruction at DePaul University, College of Education Department of Counseling and Special Education in Chicago. She teaches assessment, instruction and practicum in literacy, leadership reading and learning disabilities, assessment, reading and learning disabilities, and remediation of learning disabilities.



3- 4 September

Bilingual Symposium featuring local experts and international speaker:

Professor Bencie Woll



Professor Bencie Woll holds the Chair in Sign Language and Deaf Studies at UCL. Her research and teaching interests embrace a wide range of topics related to sign language. These include the linguistics of British Sign Language (BSL) and other sign languages, the history and sociolinguistics of BSL and the Deaf community, the development of BSL in young children, and sign language and the brain. In recent years, she has begun to look specifically at acquired and developmental sign language impairments. She co-authored *Sign Language: the study of Deaf People and their Language with Jim Kyle*, and *The Linguistics of BSL: an Introduction with Rachel Sutton-Spence*, which was the winner of the 1999 Deaf Nation Award and 2000 British Association of Applied Linguistics Book Prize.

Introducing staff member, Karyn Barrasso

Karyn Barrasso joined VDEI in November 2010 as Communication Services and Program Manager.

Karyn is a Public Relations professional and project manager with multi-sector experience, including government, corporate, consultancy, agency, not for profit and small business. Karyn brings creativity and business savvy to the team with enthusiasm and a good sense of humour!



Karyn manages VDEI's Professional Learning Programs (PLP) and Communications. Currently progressing our six core streams for 2012/2013 programs including international speakers, masterclasses, mentoring and partnership programs and online learning, stakeholder relations, website development, sponsorship, event planning, marketing and promotions, evaluation reports and other projects.



Introducing staff member, Julie Postance

Julie Postance joined VDEI in September 2010 as the Communications Coordinator. Julie is responsible for advising on VDEI's communication plan and executing VDEI's media and marketing strategy. Julie covers stories directly related to VDEI, writes VDEI online and offline content, advises on VDEI related communications and assists with VDEI events. With a background in journalism and 13 years experience in communications for the corporate, government and not for profit sectors, Julie also brings to her role six years experience in the field of hearing loss.

Deaf Sports Day

VDEI was delighted to support the Victorian Deaf Sports Day on 27 October 2011 by providing Auslan interpreters for the day. This is an annual event which allows approximately 300 deaf and hard of hearing children to participate in athletic events or tabloid activities. Participants were bussed to the event held at the Doncaster Athletics Track Pavilion in Rieschiecks Reserve. [Read more](#)



**From the VDEI team,
we wish you all the
very best for the
holiday season and
we look forward to
working with you in
2012!**



VDEI's move to the new location

The new offices and learning spaces of the Victorian Deaf Education Institute are currently under construction, within the existing building of Victorian College for the Deaf (VCD) at 597 St Kilda Road. The project is due for completion mid January for the busy 2012 year and beyond.

VCD has been a generous and exciting partner to work with on this development. The college made room for VDEI in the eastern wing of their administration building.

Currently, internal walls have been shifted; electrical cabling and internal construction is taking place at a rapid rate.



Maureen Douglas, Principal of the college and her team have embraced the opportunities that present, and have shared many ideas on the changing needs of their students. They are determining how they will make use of the brand new teaching and learning spaces, mobile technologies and state of the art video conferencing capabilities to transform the interconnectedness between deaf students around Victoria, and education and wellbeing staff across sectors. In 2012 the Professional Learning Programs of the Institute will be hosted on site and shared with regional hubs and schools throughout Victoria.

VDEI is grateful for the encouragement received from its future neighbours including VCD, Deaf Children Australia, Wesley College and is invested in building great working relationships with these stakeholders and other deafness organisations.