

Victorian Deaf Education Institute e-newsletter

Issue #1 | January 2011



Welcome to our first newsletter

Our first newsletter not only marks the beginning of a new year, but also a new beginning in the Victorian Government's deaf education reform strategy. Our aim is to share with you all the latest news and developments in relation to the Victorian Deaf Education Institute, and to provide an avenue for feedback and follow up. Please note that this newsletter will be uploaded on the VDEI's website and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Ultranet.

The Department's review of deaf education, *What is my future? – A Review of Deaf Education in Victoria*, involved broad community consultation and identified the reforms needed to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students complete school with learning and wellbeing outcomes equivalent to those of their hearing peers.

A key idea emerging from the Review was to explore the feasibility of establishing an institute for deaf education. The Review identified that a Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) would be pivotal in achieving the workforce capacity required to improve educational outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing children.

What is the Victorian Deaf Education Institute?

VDEI is set to become the centre of excellence in deaf education in Victoria. With Victorian government funding of \$9.2 million over the next four years, VDEI's goal is to provide professional learning opportunities across the disciplines involved in deaf education, to facilitate research and innovation into best practice, and to enable improved access to learning through technology based solutions. Ultimately through VDEI, the Department is committed to improving educational outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing people from birth to 18 years throughout Victoria.

VDEI will enable hundreds of professionals each year including mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech pathologists, psychologists, and speech and language support staff to have the

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The extensive review of deaf education identified five broad areas of reform:

- **High-quality educational support**
- **Early diagnosis and family centred support**
- **Equity and fairness in access to services**
- **Ongoing support, monitoring and intervention 0-18 years**
- **Ensure that there are enough appropriately trained professionals to meet the needs of Victorian children**

opportunity to build their expertise in providing improved learning support to the 3000 Victorian children and young people with hearing loss.

In 2011, and in partnership with schools, universities, early childhood and deafness professionals, VDEI will:

- Launch an innovative professional learning program for teachers and allied health professionals involved in the delivery of education programs for deaf and hard of hearing children. The 2011 program will include international speakers and a Masterclass series which will enable Victorian education professionals from oral, signing and bilingual environments the opportunity to enrich their skill base and teaching strategies.
- Strengthen access for deaf students and education professionals to learning programs and curriculum through the use of digital technology and a pilot program enabling the use of iPads and real time captioning in classrooms.
- Implement a research program to enable classroom innovation and evidence based practice. Key priorities will be to develop effective literacy strategies, a research project examining models of best practice in education service delivery and an exploration of ways to improve deaf students' school completion rates.

Technology hub

In the longer term, the plan is for VDEI to be a technology hub, allowing workshops and seminars to be beamed to teachers and students in remote and regional areas across Victoria via high density information technology. This will ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students get the best educational opportunities regardless of location.

Scholarships

The Institute will partner with universities to provide scholarships to teachers seeking postgraduate qualifications in deaf education. Twelve applications were received and teachers will commence their studies during 2011-2012.

Professional learning calendar

Our professional learning program will commence in February 2011, with programs available to all Victorian government schools as well as Catholic and independent schools. Please see the right hand column for our February sessions. For more information, please contact Karyn Barrasso email barrasso.karyn.k@edumail.vic.gov.au

Research into literacy and deafness

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Review of Education (2009) identified studies that cite average attainment in Year 12 of Year 4-5 literacy outcomes.

In partnership with VDEI, Melbourne University have commenced a literature review which will enable a comprehensive overview of

Professional Learning Calendar

Tuesday 1 February 2011, 11am

Mathematic teaching techniques for working with deaf students in secondary schools with Jeremy Brett, Victorian College for the Deaf.

Wednesday 2 February 2011, 10am

Challenges faced by deaf students in post secondary education with Cathy Clarke, NMIT – Centre of Excellence for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Wednesday 2 February 2011, 11.30am

Reading For Meaning Using Australian Sign Language (Auslan), (a follow-up session from 2010) with Janelle Giffen, Guthrie St Primary School, Shepparton Deaf Facility.

Wednesday 2 February 2011, 2pm

Using a validated diary technique to monitor early language milestones in young children with severe-profound hearing loss with Pauline Nott, Manager Research, Assessment and Education, Taralye.

Register soon for Term 2 sessions

www.guidetoinnovation.ning.com/events



international and national practice and trends in literacy assessment, teaching strategies and outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children. The literature review will identify examples of successful strategies in assessing and planning literacy intervention. It will also provide a strong foundation on which to base further research into the current situation in Victoria in terms of outcomes achieved, and an improvement model for assessment and intervention.

Consultation and Expert Advice

Since VDEI's commencement in November, we have met with organisations and individuals with an expertise in deaf education. This has included The University of Melbourne, NMIT, the Centre of Excellence for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, ASLIA Victoria, Australian Hearing, La Trobe University, the Victorian Deaf Education Network, the Royal Children's Hospital, Renwick Centre, The Victorian Infant Screening Program, early learning professionals from Aurora, Taralye and the Early Education Program, the Catholic Education Office, Arts Access Victoria, the Victorian Council of Deaf People, Deaf Australia, Deaf Children Australia, Deafness Forum and others.

Sector discussions are providing an opportunity to explore connections between the priorities of the Institute and work currently being undertaken in other organisations, and to commence effective planning processes.

Themes emerging from these conversations will inform the Institute's strategic plan moving forward. Thank you to those organisations who contributed their ideas. If you have any more feedback, please contact us at the emails below.

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Staff Profile

Esperanza Torres
Research Officer



Hi, my name is Esperanza Torres and I am a research officer at the VDEI. I have a number of projects underway - to map the number and location of deaf and hard of hearing children in Victorian schools; to report on the educational support needs of children and families in two rural locations (Barwon SW and Gippsland); and to identify current research relating to deaf students' educational outcomes.

I have a Bachelor of Behavioural Science and a Master of Applied Social Research, and have previously worked on projects for Monash University and Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE). My research areas have included: equal access to appropriate support programs for disadvantaged students; disability access; and the effectiveness of measures such as the Paid Parental Leave and Out of School Hours Care, in supporting working parents.

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