

**QANTAS**  
presents

## RVIB Carols by Candlelight - celebrating 65 years!



Australia's favourite Christmas Eve tradition, RVIB Carols by Candlelight, will again be held at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl on Christmas Eve.

For 65 years RVIB Carols by Candlelight has been a treasured part of the Australian culture - and a proud chapter in the history of RVIB.

More than 30,000 people annually join in the festivities at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl and millions across Australia watch the live telecast presented on the Nine Network.



The event raises funds to help children and adults who are blind or vision impaired.

Proceeds from ticket sales, candle sales, merchandise sales and donations make this event the biggest fundraising activity on our calendar.

RVIB Carols by Candlelight attracts Australia's finest performers, who join corporate sponsors, community groups and volunteers to make this event a huge success.

Just a few of the artists lined up to perform at this year's Carols, hosted by Ray Martin, include: Daryl Braithwaite, Vanessa Amorosi, Hi-5, Denis Walter, Marina Prior, Visnja, Santa and both the National Boys Choir and the Australian Girls Choir.

The event will be broadcast live by sponsors, the Nine Network and Radio 3AW, on Tuesday 24 December, starting at 8:30pm with the Hi-5 Christmas Concert and then RVIB Carols by Candlelight at 9.00pm.

Further details about the event can be found online at [www.rvibcarolsbycandlelight.com.au](http://www.rvibcarolsbycandlelight.com.au) and tickets are available from Ticketmaster7 on 136 100.



*RVIB Board, staff and clients wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*

## contents

CEO's MESSAGE	2
BRaille BOOK LIBRARY	3
SOUTHERN CROSS GAMES	4
RVIB COLLEGE	5
FOR SIGHT WEEK	6



### RVIB

> Vision: To be the leading provider of services, resources and information which enable people who are blind or vision impaired to maximise their independence and quality of life.



With the festive season fast approaching it is an opportune time to reflect on the year that was. Whilst 2002



has been a challenging period, with world events creating an atmosphere of insecurity and apprehension, it has nevertheless been a positive one for RVIB.

Over the course of the year RVIB has continued its commitment to Victorians who are blind or vision impaired. As an organisation we continue to offer the highest quality services, assisted by our loyal and professional staff, auxiliaries, volunteers and donors.

This dedicated team effort continues to change what it means to be blind or vision impaired in Victoria and my appreciation and thanks goes out to everyone. It is a contribution that can only be measured by the smiles, independence and continual outstanding achievements of our clients.

The past twelve months has seen a number of accomplishments at RVIB. Notable inclusions, among many, are the ongoing trials of the new Audio ATM in collaboration with the National Australia Bank, our successful For Sight Week awareness campaign and the awarding of nine RVIB Further Education Bursaries.

At an organisational level we continue to strive for business 'best practice' and in recognition of this we received an upgrade to ISO

9001:2000 accreditation - one of the few Victorian charities to hold this grading.

Looking ahead, 2003 promises to be even more significant for blind and vision impaired service provision as Project Nexus continues to review the feasibility of a national blindness agency.

RVIB Carols by Candlelight, the biggest fundraising event on our calendar, is fast approaching and once again looks as though it will be a memorable evening for everyone who attends as well as the hundreds of thousands of Australians who will view it in their lounge rooms via the Nine Network telecast.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for the contribution you have made to RVIB and may the New Year bring health and happiness to you and your family.

Yours sincerely,

Doug Kent  
Chief Executive Officer, RVIB

# News from RVIB School



*Five students who are vision impaired had the trip of a lifetime recently when they visited the NASA Space Camp in Alabama. Fifteen-year-old Katy Webb, an RVIB visiting teacher service client from Traralgon, reports.*

During the September holidays I travelled to the US to attend NASA Space Camp for vision impaired students, which was a fantastic experience.

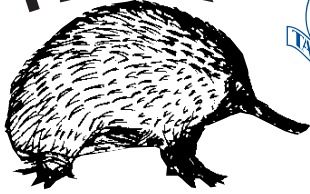
During the week we competed against the other teams in various space missions and activities. On our first space mission I was the cabcom which means I was responsible for all the communication between the cabin crew and the ground control. In our second mission I was a station operator and went out of the space station and put on a space suit. We were put into so-called '5 degrees of freedom' chairs, which move you around and simulate the feeling of having no gravity.

During our stay in the US we also went to the Texas School for the Blind and local Austin High School, which was interesting and exciting.

## In other news...

- Congratulations to Karen, Lachlan, Paul and Kristy who have graduated from RVIB School.
- The annual School Concert will be held on 19th December.

FEELIX



# I can feel the words

Extract from an article written by author Hazel Edwards for a group of international children's authors and illustrators.

SPECIAL FEATURE

## I can feel the words

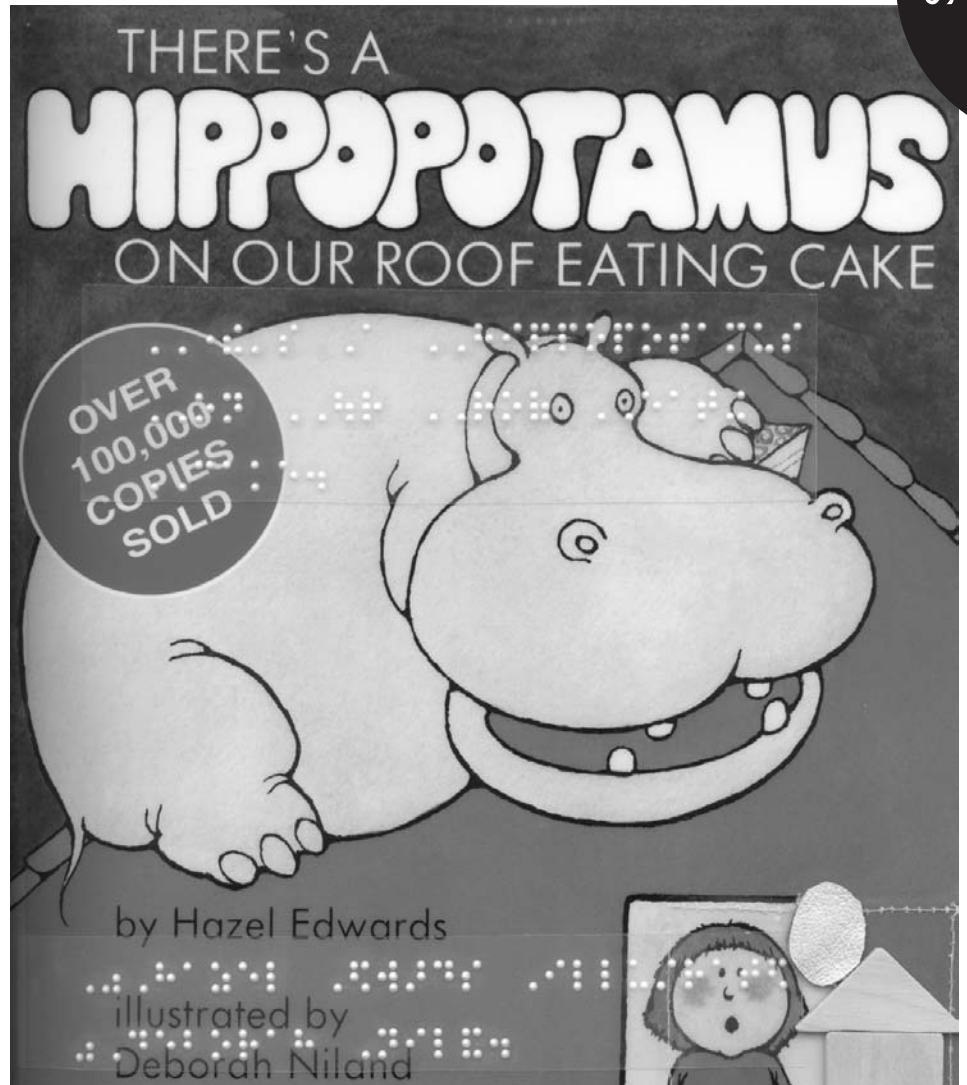


■ The RVIB Early Childhood Braille Book Library is a newly created resource for families of children who are blind or vision impaired between the ages of one and six. Individual storybook kits are posted out to families containing a storybook with Braille, a tape or CD, some tactile aids to help the child enter the world of the story and a small handbook with only tactile pictures for imaginary story telling. Our symbol is an echidna called Felix. Each child will receive a hand held echidna with their name attached as their borrowing card. This project has been possible through the generous funding of Tattersall's and a memorial donation in honour of Helen Smith.

Having my books in Braille with tactile enhanced 'feelie' illustrations means entering another dimension where touch matters more than sight. This is the international translation, which has given me the greatest pleasure although when I was first asked permission for my picture books to be translated into Braille, I said, "They're picture books. You can't translate pictures for children who are blind."

Fortunately, I was wrong.

Recently, my book 'There's a Hippopotamus on our Roof Eating Cake' (Hodder) was included in the Felix Braille project to familiarise blind pre-schoolers with the concept of books. In a bright yellow case, (delivered free by Australia Post) there is a picture book, with either Level 1 or 2 Braille text added, a hand-made mini book with feelie pictures to read and a soft toy hippo with cake to cuddle. In addition, there is an audio tape of the story and original hippo music. These cases are available for a period of three



weeks for families with a sight-impaired pre-schooler.

So I do regard these 'Felix' books as translations which travel.

When 'There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake' was first published in 1980, an earlier Braille version with tactile enhanced pictures was produced and widely used. I showed it in schools to sighted students who were fascinated by the feel-reading concept in a book which has both the print page plus an inserted page of Braille which could

be shared simultaneously with a sighted parent or sibling. Often I would wind a scarf around a sighted child's head and get them to read with their fingers while the class looked at the print. More than the story was being translated.

Now I am literary mentor to Karen, a legally blind author, and I'm convinced that any translation provides insight into another culture, especially Braille.

For further details about RVIB's Early Childhood Braille Book Library contact Louise Curtin on (03) 9522 5216.



## Help RVIB by shopping at Ritchies

It's that easy. Do your grocery and liquor shopping at a Ritchies store and 1% of the money you spend will be donated to RVIB. Just complete a Ritchies Community Benefit Card, nominate RVIB as your charity and each month RVIB will automatically receive your shopping credits.

For more information on this simple way to help RVIB raise much needed funds, please call Kerri Guyett on (03) 9522 5232.

## Community Spirit Alive and Well

Friday, 25 October was not just another day in the office for employees of research specialist AC Nielsen. This was the day designated as their annual Community Day which saw staff volunteer their services at various organisations.

RVIB and the National Information and Library Service (NILS) were lucky enough to benefit from volunteer assistance when a group of hard working corporate volunteers participated in a joint NILS/RVIB activity.

All our AC Nielsen volunteers were enthusiastic and extremely efficient. RVIB relies heavily on volunteers, particularly at this time of the year, and NILS CEO, Jane Evans, joined AC Nielsen's NILS team for lunch to express thanks.

AC Nielsen's Community Day has assisted many organisations over the years. **Well done AC Nielsen and thank you.**

# Let the games begin!

RVIB is finalising preparations for the Southern Cross Games - a five-day sporting event for children who are blind or vision impaired. The Games - to be held at the RVIB School in Burwood from December 2 to 6 - are expected to attract 200 eager participants and the support of 100 staff, parents and volunteers.

Originally held in the 1970s, the Games which are now open for students living in the Pacific region has grown significantly, and this year will include 11 teams from around Australia, Fiji, Samoa and the Solomon Islands.

Serious training and skills development are integral to the games, which will cover various sporting events such as goalball, athletics and swimming. Competition aside, there will be plenty of other fun activities such as a gala procession, and evening activities including a bush dance and cultural night.

The Games are a fantastic opportunity for students to mingle with other people their age who are blind or vision impaired. Attending a

local school as a vision impaired person can be an isolating experience, but at these Games the students are just part of the crowd. They can share experiences and even form life long friendships, remaining in touch via email.

The Southern Cross Games will also be the first time that many of the students take part in competitive events.

There have been a number of students from

previous Games who ended up representing Australia in the Paralympics, so who knows where the Games may lead!

Staff, students, parents and volunteers are all looking forward to five fantastic days of sporting events, team spirit, making new friends and plenty of fun.

“*It's going to be great. I've never been in a swimming race before. I hope I can win a medal to show my family and friends.*”

*(Jamie aged 9)*



# New RVIB College

*Providing Pathways for the Future*



▲ Chris Edwards, Manager RVIB College looks forward to an exciting first year of operation

The vision for the new RVIB College at 201 High Street Prahran is to be a leading provider of quality accredited training for people who are blind or vision impaired and to those who support and/or teach people who are blind or vision impaired.

The training is designed to provide students with greater independence and an enhanced quality of life through the provision of skills, which lead to pathways for employment, independent living or further education in addition to promoting a philosophy of life long learning.

Students are assisted in achieving their learning outcomes with the provision of the latest adaptive technology and teaching techniques. Materials for all courses are provided in each clients preferred format including Braille, electronic format, large print or cassette.

Courses provide Adaptive Technology Training, which assists students to read newspapers/stock market reports/letters/pamphlets and bills.

Computer skills enable families to keep in touch via email, and a new world of information is opened through the Internet.

Adult Literacy programs enhance student's communication skills and Braille courses give parents the opportunity to read their child a favourite bedtime story.

Attending to home maintenance or even making a coffee table becomes a reality through the provision of Industrial Skills training.

Courses are also available to support those who teach people who are blind or vision impaired. These courses enable students to develop orientation and mobility support skills training; to understand disability legislation and the impact this has on the workplace; to develop the skills and tools necessary to teach people with a vision impairment; to understand common eye conditions and; to learn how to read Braille.

For details call **(03) 9520 5555**.

## Upcoming RVIB Events

**RVIB Carols by Candlelight**  
**24th December 2002**  
**Sidney Myer Music Bowl**

► Enjoy the festive spirit while you relax under the stars on the lawn at Australia's favourite Christmas Eve tradition - Qantas presents RVIB Carols by Candlelight. For tickets call Ticketmaster7 on 136 100. For more information visit our website at [www.rvibcarolsbycandlelight.com.au](http://www.rvibcarolsbycandlelight.com.au).

**Dare to Date Ball**  
**14th February 2003**  
**Albert by the Lake**

► We'll do the organising, then it's up to you - and the stars... Go on, be daring... Hundreds of over-28, fun loving Melburnians are expected to turn out to RVIB's Dare To Date evening to find their long lost Valentine. By completing a questionnaire guests are computer-matched to tables of 10 like-minded people. Then, amidst good food, fine wine, music and dancing the magic begins... Further details will be available on our website in the new year at [www.rvib.org.au](http://www.rvib.org.au).

**RVIB Gold Ball**  
**10 May 2003**  
**Melbourne Town Hall**

► This exclusive black tie dinner and RVIB fundraiser will feature a live auction of specialty items, together with a host of top entertainment to make this a night to remember. Further information and booking details will be announced in the next edition of RVIB News.





▲ Speakers Steven Bradbury and Kirstie Marshall at RVIB's 'See the World through their Eyes' Corporate Breakfast.



▲ Singer and RVIB client Lauren Hayes was one of the performers at RVIB's High Tea at the Windsor.



▲ Melbourne Lord Mayor, Mr John So and RVIB CEO Doug Kent at RVIB's free vision screening at Bourke St. Mall.

# RVIB spreads the word during 'For Sight Week'



Fifty per cent of cases of blindness and 70 per cent of vision impairment can be avoided through proper attention and care - that is the message RVIB spread throughout Victoria during 'For Sight Week' from October 7 to 13, 2002.

RVIB worked hard to present a fantastic range of activities and educational initiatives to highlight the issue of vision loss as a serious and, in many cases, preventable health problem.

We are pleased to report that the events and activities during For Sight Week were all well supported. The main events were are follows:

## High Tea at the Windsor

The High Tea was held to celebrate RVIB For Sight Week on Thursday, 10 October at the Windsor Hotel. 160 RVIB guests attended and were treated to a wonderful afternoon. The following nine Auxiliaries were represented: Portland, Kongwak, Essendon, Sorrento, Willaura, Belgrave, Leongatha, Central Council and Park Street Ladies. Other country visitors came from Catani, Geelong, Koo Wee Rup, Pakenham and Yarra Glen. The guests enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea and were entertained by talented performers including singer and RVIB client Lauren Hayes, violinist, Eddie Zavod, pianist Allan Zavod and accompanist Joy Findlay. Speakers were Doug Kent and RVIB Board Member Don Draffin.

## 'See the World Through Their Eyes' RVIB Corporate Breakfast

The 'See the World Through Their Eyes' RVIB Corporate Breakfast, held in celebration of For Sight Week, was a tremendous success with Steven Bradbury (gold medal olympian), Kirstie Marshall (world champion freestyle skier), Gerrard Gosens (paralympic blind distance runner) and John Murphy (Carlton & United Breweries) all sharing their visions for success and the future. The MC for the morning, Tony Leonard of 3AW, was brilliant in generating some laughs and contributed to a well-received event. Thanks to CUB and 3AW for helping make this event a success.

## Rural Doorknock Campaign

The For Sight Week Doorknock received excellent results. Four auxiliaries participated in the Doorknock including Benalla (assisted by students from Benalla College), Skipton, Gisborne and Kyneton. Awareness of RVIB created through For Sight Week has also led us to receiving the funds from an annual community group raffle, which is a wonderful result.

RVIB thanks all those who gave their support during For Sight Week. It is with the help of corporate sponsors, community groups and volunteers that RVIB can continue to provide services to people who are blind or vision impaired throughout Victoria.



**RVIB**

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