

R.V.I.B.

CLIENT NEWSLETTER

RVIB Client Newsletter

September 1997 Edition

Editor - Robyn McKenzie

LETTER FROM DOUG KENT

Chief Executive Officer of RVIB

Welcome to the first edition of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB) Client Newsletter. This newsletter will be available in September and March each year.

The future looks very bright for staff and clients of RVIB. We are undergoing many changes so that clients can receive greater access to our services. This newsletter will highlight some of the most significant changes occurring at RVIB.

I hope you find the enclosed information interesting. This newsletter aims to give you an understanding of the wide range of services, programs and publications available at RVIB.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

**Robyn McKenzie
Community Education Officer
Marketing Business Unit**

Please note:

The information contained in this newsletter is correct at the time of printing.

Unless stated otherwise, the telephone number for contacting any staff member at RVIB is 9522 5222 or toll free 1800 33 55 88 if you are calling from the country.

This newsletter is available in large print, braille, ASCII disk and audio cassette. Please contact me if you wish to receive future issues of this newsletter in your preferred format.

If you would like further information about any services or issues raised in this client newsletter, please contact me on telephone 0522 5222 or toll free 1800 335 588. Alternatively you may write to me in any format to:

**RVIB
557 St Kilda Road
Melbourne Vic 3004
email robynm@rvib2.rvib.org.au**

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INTRODUCING OUR SENIOR STAFF

RVIB has taken on a new look. On 1 July 1997 we merged all our client service departments into one large department, changed all the department names and centralised library and information services. It is important to note there will not be any change to services offered to you.

Our Adult Services, Children's Services and Vision 201 Employment Services have joined together to become the Client Services Business Unit. Len Stevens is the General Manager. Peter Cronin is the Manger of Central Client Services and he is deputy to Len.

MOVING TO THE SUBURBS

We are taking our services out to you. By the end of 1999, Client Services staff will work from regional offices based in the north, east, south and west suburbs. This means RVIB will have an office in four metropolitan and five country regions. Staff will be based in the region in which they provide services.

Each metropolitan regional office will have occupational therapists, visiting teachers, early childhood workers, orientation and mobility instructors, social workers and an educational resource unit situated in a local school. We hope this new structure will make it easier for clients to visit RVIB staff.

Country region offices will also see some changes in the

years to come. These are yet to be outlined but they will involve expansion of services.

CENTRAL SERVICES

This unit is managed by Peter Cronin and has three distinct teams. These are Central Training Services, Equipment Sales and Consultancy Services and Central Rehabilitation Services. The Central Services Training Team will provide instruction in braille, adaptive technology, switchboard and office technology. The team will include technical officers, computer trainers, employment counselling and placement staff. It will also include our ASSIST SkillShare program.

Equipment Sales and Consultancy Services will involve an amalgamation of the current Equipment Resource Centre based at St Kilda Road and VisTech, our retail outlet which sells computer technology at 201 High Street Prahran.

Central Rehabilitation Services will include a range of residential and sessional programs. The unit will house our orthoptists, school staff, education consultant and coordinator of volunteers. It will offer individual and group programs run by staff from metropolitan and country region offices.

RVIB ENTERPRISES

John Nettelbeck is the Manager of RVIB Enterprises often referred to as "The Factory". This was formerly a part of our Employment Services Department. RVIB Enterprises employs over 50 staff who are blind or vision impaired.

They undertake a wide range of packaging and assembly tasks on a commercial basis. Their work is highly valued by many product manufacturers and distributors in the retail industry.

In the immediate future our Occupational Centre will remain at Raleigh Street and continue to report to RVIB Enterprises.

A NEW NAME FOR THE TALKING BOOK LIBRARY

Have you telephoned the Talking Book Library recently? No, you didn't call the wrong number. It is now the Library and Information Services Business Unit. We decided to give the library a name which accurately describes the expanded services it offers.

Library and Information Services, located at 85 High Street Prahran, meets the information needs of clients with print disabilities as well as RVIB staff.

As a registered public library, services are provided free of charge to 6,500 people with print disabilities. A wide range of braille and audio books and magazines are available for loan. The library also produces audio cassette recordings of local English and community language newspapers.

Previously, alternative format production was shared between the Burwood and Prahran sites of RVIB, but now all audio, braille, disk and raised line drawing production will be offered at the Prahran site.

Linley Wallis is the General manager of Library and Information Services. Linley anticipates that the new library will be functioning with all staff and services under the one roof by the beginning of 1998.

SPECIAL REQUEST SERVICES

Library and Information Services offers a special which provides material in alternative formats to students request service and others with special information needs.

Materials are gathered from other libraries in Australia or overseas. If the information does not exist in an alternative format, the library can produce material in the required format.

TALKING NEWSPAPERS

RVIB Library and Information Services has over 600 volunteers who read local newspapers onto tape every week. If you wish to receive a talking newspaper, contact Reader Services on 9521 3400 or toll free 1800 33 55 88. The number is 9521 3400 or toll free 1800 33 55 88.

VOICE PRINT

Have you listened to Voice Print? This is a telephone information service which operates as part of Library and Information Services. It offers news about RVIB services, camps and courses, our library catalogues, a sports section, *The Age* newspaper, *Business Review Weekly*, *Australian Financial Review* and much more. All you need is a touch tone telephone, a little patience and a finger to dial. The number for Voice Print is 9525 1211. After you have dialled the number, you will hear a recording of John Blackman explaining the service.

If you have any difficulty using Voice Print, contact Reader Services at Library and Information Services on 9521 3400 or toll free 1800 33 55 88.

RVIB WEBSITE

Get yourself hooked up to the Internet and visit the RVIB website. Our address is <http://www.rib.org.au>.

TOUR OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The second Wednesday of every month is reserved for guided tours of Library and Information Services. Come and see how it works. We explain how a book is recorded, catalogued, distributed and stored. Visit the studios and meet staff responsible for meeting your reading needs.

It is essential that you book a place on the tour. Contact Jamie Kelly on 9521 3400.

WORLD FIRST

Library and Information Services and Australian Communications took an exciting step into the future with the recent launch of a new book in print, audio, braille and computer disk. The book *Public relations, newsletters and Internet usage for organisations* by leading business writer Nick Renton is a user friendly guide to effective communication for non-profit organisations. It covers everything from the art of public relations and writing newsletters to setting up key web pages on the Internet.

It is published in print by Kangaroo press and in audio, braille and on disk by RVIB Library and Information Services.

The simultaneous multi-format publication of this book is of crucial significance to producers and users of alternative format material. The time it takes to negotiate copyright permission to produce a book in other formats plus the production time involved means that people with print disabilities have to wait much longer than sighted readers for access to current books.

This is a world first, and we hope, will be the model for information provision in the future.

DID YOU KNOW?

- * Last year, RVIB Library and Information Services loaned 158,274 talking books, 108,516 talking newspapers and 50,300 talking magazines to its 6,485 borrowers.**
- * Eighty percent of the adults and one hundred percent of children who receive orientation and mobility instruction in Victoria are trained by RVIB.**
- * Braille instruction was introduced to RVIB in 1873.**
- * RVIB has a panel of speakers who are vision impaired which provides community education about vision impairment and RVIB services. The panel speaks to professional groups, industrial organisations, schools, TAFE colleges and customer service staff throughout Victoria.**

MORE ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

In July, the number of orientation and mobility instructors at RVIB increased by four. The Royal Guide Dogs Association reduced their orientation and mobility services and the instructors came to us. We are now able to provide more clients with orientation and mobility instruction than ever before. And of course waiting lists are now only half as long!

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY

The following article is taken from a fundraising leaflet produced by RVIB on 21 February 1944. It is a sign of the times when words such as "physical darkness" and "thanksgiving for your sight" are used to provoke sympathy. Fifty years ago, RVIB was particularly reliant upon donations to survive.

"Many of the blind babies were under the age of twelve months when admitted. Our Nursery is the only one in the Southern Hemisphere for sightless infants.

Born into a world of physical darkness, through which they will probably have to travel for about 70 years, they depend upon our supporters for LIGHT through education and training. As a thanksgiving for your sight please send a donation to the Institute to help our little ones who cannot see.

Out of the shadow of ignorance into the sunshine of happy useful citizenship!"

THE YEARS BETWEEN

In 1993, Alan Nuske, a former resident at the school when it was based in St Kilda Road, produced an oral history of RVIB called *The Years Between*. Clients who were residents when our St Kilda Road campus was a live-in school and nursery for babies and children talk about their experiences on tape.

The two track recording is available for loan from Library and Information Services. Contact the Reader Services Department on 9521 3400 or toll free 1800 33 55 88.

RVIB FURTHER EDUCATION BURSARY

Attention prospective post-secondary students! Each year RVIB offers a Further Education Bursary to students entering their first year of university, TAFE college or VCE study.

The aim of the bursary is to offset the costs of purchasing adaptive technology. Up to \$4,000 is available to each successful applicant.

The 1997 RVIB Further Education Bursary winner is Heather Lade. She is studying psychology at Monash University in Gippsland. Heather purchased a scanner and large print screen software for her computer with the money she received from her Bursary prize.

Contact Narelle Staub, Education Consultant for further information.

PRINT ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION SERVICE OF AUSTRALIA (PAISA)

PAISA, which is also part of Library and Information Services, is a fast reference service for people with print disabilities throughout Australia.

Requests may be made in person, by telephone, fax or email to reference staff who provide answers in the format preferred by the requesting client.

SKI CLUB

The RVIB Ski Club was formed in 1967 by a group of blind skiers who learned to ski through programs organised by RVIB. In 1977, RVIB purchased an existing ski lodge on Mount Baw Baw and appointed the Ski Club as occupier/manager.

Mount Baw Baw is the closest ski resort to Melbourne. It offers down hill and cross country skiing, snowboarding and tobogganing.

The RVIB Ski Club encourages people who are blind or vision impaired, their family and friends to visit our attractive three storey A-frame lodge to enjoy snow play in winter or mountain walks in summer.

For more information and booking rates contact Irene Sumbera, bookings officer at RVIB on 9522 5222.

RNIB EXPORT CATALOGUE

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has just signed an agreement that RVIB will be a wholesale distributor of their products. This means that RVIB clients can order products from the RNIB Export Catalogue at a lower price than ordering directly from RNIB. Refer to the

RVIB News section on the RVIB Voice Print menu for further updates. The number is 9525 1211.

LABELLING WITHOUT PRINT

A daub of nail polish, rubber bands, string, adhesive tape, a safety pin, small hole, a change in surface texture, a different shape or a missing corner are simple and inexpensive ways to identify any household item. All that is needed is a little imagination.

It is not necessary to read print or braille to label an item. Tactile labels are equally as effective.

A small piece of adhesive tape on a smooth surface or smooth tape on a rough surface makes any item easy to identify. Alternatively, a scratch with a sharp knife may assist you to differentiate the shampoo from the conditioner bottle. One or more rubber bands around an item makes it immediately distinguishable from another. For example, the baked beans tin has one rubber band, spaghetti has two and the tomato soup has three rubber bands.

Try the following suggestions:

Adhesive tape under the top right hand corner of placemats and coasters will show you they are facing the right way.

PROGRAMS BOOKLET

Client Services produce a programs booklet each year. The booklet contains information about camps and courses for children and adults who are blind or vision impaired. It is available in large print, braille, computer disk and audio cassette.

Regular programs advertised in the booklet include Career Explorers for year 10 and 11 students, Living and Learning with a Vision Impairment for people of all ages, Internet classes and a "Getting There" camp for people over 55.

Contact Karen McKenzie to ensure that you are on the permanent mailing list.

AROUND THE INSTITUTE

***Around the Institute* is a thirty minute radio program produced by RVIB. The program promotes services of RVIB and upcoming events around the Institute.**

You can hear the program on 3RPH at 10 am on Tuesdays and it is repeated at 9 pm every Wednesday. 3RPH can be found at 1179 on the AM dial.

RVIB PUBLICATIONS FOR CLIENTS

RVIB produces several publications outlining our services and programs. To obtain a copy of any of the following publications, contact Client Services on 9522 5222 or toll

free 1800 33 655 88.

RVIB Services booklet

RVIB Programs booklet

Student handbook for adults who are blind or vision impaired

Employment and Training handbook for people who are blind or vision impaired

Sound magazine

Around the institute magazine

Parents newsletter

Visiting teachers newsletter