



The Victorian  
Deaf Education Institute  
**2014 Highlights**



Education  
and Training



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# Introduction

## Department of Education and Training Early Childhood and School Education Group

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) is a Branch of the Leadership, Professional Practice and Accountability (LPP&A) Division within the Department of Education and Training Early Childhood and School Education Group (ECSEG).

The role of ECSEG is to design an early learning and education system which delivers improved outcomes for all children and young people from birth to 18, and their families, without exception.

As a policy lead and performance assurer ECSEG ensures a seamless and streamlined service system which is accountable, coherent and responsive. The Group plays a key commissioning role to effectively mobilise resources and monitor outcomes and standards of service based on the best evidence.

ECSEG's responsibilities include:

- ensuring high standards for curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting
- fostering capable and confident leadership that drives an improvement focus across the system
- establishing accountability frameworks to continuously improve the quality of school education workforces including professional knowledge and practice
- implementing the National Quality Framework in Victoria to ensure high-quality early learning and development services
- funding and monitoring a universal maternal and child health and kindergarten service to support all children's learning and development
- funding and commissioning targeted services to intervene early and prevent escalation of risk factors for children, young people and families across 0-18.

## Leadership, Professional Practice and Accountability Division

The Leadership, Professional Practice and Accountability Division provides policy leadership to the early childhood and school education sectors. Its primary roles are to:

- support the improvement of practice quality for all educators and providers
- shape the quality and standards of the school and early childhood workforces through the design of policies and strategies, and the design of approaches to professional learning and development that ensure the availability of highly capable leaders, teachers and supports workforces to all schools and early childhood service providers
- collaborate with Strategy and Review Group and Regional Services Group to establish accountability and intervention frameworks for school education
- commission and monitor the effective and efficient delivery of services for the whole of Victoria.

## Victorian Deaf Education Institute

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute provides policy leadership in the early childhood and school deaf education sectors. Its primary roles are to:

- work to improve educational and wellbeing outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing
- lead innovation in deaf education program development and policy review
- provide evidence-based deafness related professional learning opportunities
- implement innovative technology programs to ensure communication and curriculum access for students who are deaf or hard of hearing
- commission and undertake research to identify evidence that contributes to improvement in educational and wellbeing outcomes for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute is co-located with the Victorian College for the Deaf, 597 St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

The VDEI has a suite of three influential programs.

### **The VDEI Professional Learning Program**

Offering mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech pathologists, psychologists, and speech and language support staff a unique opportunity for ongoing professional learning to support the +3800 Victorian children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and their families. The program takes a portfolio approach to professional learning, including mentoring, coaching, peer observation of teaching, and in-person and online learning opportunities.

### **The VDEI Research Program**

Supports the identification and understanding of evidence-based practice in deaf education.

### **The VDEI Resources and Technology Program**

Identifies, pilots and evaluates equipment to support curriculum access and inclusion for children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Victoria.







# Professional Learning Program

The VDEI operates a Learning Centre that has a strong focus on innovation and technology. The Learning Centre has been designed to support the professional learning of teachers of the deaf and allied health practitioners and strengthen access and inclusion for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Learning Centre plays a pivotal role in building the required knowledge and skills of professionals and paraprofessionals working with children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing in various educational settings.

The Learning Centre is conveniently located in the St Kilda Road and High Street business precincts, close to public transport and parking, and only minutes from Melbourne's CBD. Its amenities include:

- architecturally designed, flexible, open plan spaces with a variety of seating options
- venue capacity up to 100 people
- state-of-the-art, high definition videoconferencing equipment
- next generation multimedia, including six interactive whiteboards
- wifi that syncs with iPads, PCs and other mobile devices
- alfresco morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea options
- Tradeblock Café - on site catering provided by Victorian College for the Deaf hospitality students.

The Learning Centre enables hundreds of professionals each year (including mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech pathologists, psychologists, and speech and language support staff) to build their expertise in providing learning support to the 3800+ Victorian children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Corporate and government stakeholders hire the Learning Centre, taking advantage of its state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment. The Centre has become a well-used venue for professional learning and the acquisition of new knowledge.

The VDEI embraces the 70:20:10 learning model, which holds that professionals learn best when learning is apportioned as follows:

- 10% is formal learning that is structured, and results in some kind of accreditation or recognition of skill or knowledge
- 20% is based on feedback or working with others - including observing role models, and learnings from mentoring
- 70% is on-the-job experiential learning acquired through doing tasks and problem-solving.

This model aligns with evidence-based research that suggests learners' retention of knowledge is improved through the use of strategies such as learning by doing and observing; repetition; reflection; connecting with colleagues; spaced learning (over longer periods of time); and applying theory to practice.

The nature of education has changed significantly over the past decade. The current learning environment is more connected, with the use of mobile technologies resulting in an increase in online and 'on demand' learning. The educational workforce is increasingly dispersed. These developments have fundamentally changed how organisations approach and deliver learning programs. It is envisaged that the VDEI's professional development programs will continue to be guided by the 70:20:10 learning model and will continue to evolve.

In 2014, approximately 3700 registrations were made for VDEI's services, including individual registrations for the VDEI's professional learning programs; registrations by partners, government, and external agencies; and registrations for video conferencing meetings, and other uses of the Learning Centre. The VDEI also welcomed cross-sector partners and on-site stakeholders who hosted a number of forums.

A comprehensive learning needs analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement conducted by the VDEI determines professional learning themes.

The 2014 Professional Learning Program catered for practitioners supporting children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing across a range of educational settings and practitioners supporting students who are deaf or hard of hearing who have additional needs.

The VDEI consistently employs exemplary practice in the provision of accessible professional learning, with the provision of live captioning of sessions, Auslan interpreting, and video conferencing.



## 2014 Professional Learning Program Highlights

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### Learn What's New in Hearing Aid Technology

Presenter: Karin Gillies  
Date: 13 February 2014

Paediatric audiologist, Karin Gillies, has extensive experience of fitting and habilitation for children with mild to profound hearing loss. In this presentation Karin provided information on the new hearing aid range for paediatric clients and discussed how the new devices could best meet individual needs, both within and outside the classroom.

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### Family Information Morning, VDEI Transition into Primary School (TIPS) Program

Presenters: Jean Moores-Chadwick and Jenny Galloway  
Date: 22 March 2014

The VDEI invited families and carers to join Jean Moores-Chadwick and Jenny Galloway to obtain more information on the range of education options available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Victoria.

Clem Newton-Brown, former MLA Member for Prahran, officially launched the Transition into Primary School (TIPS) program, which was designed to assist families and carers of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing and who is transitioning into primary school.

There was also a special appearance from children's favourite Blue Bear, with an interpreted reading of 'Blue Bear gets ready for school' in Auslan.

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### The Listening Brain: From Research to Practice

Presenter: Dr Carol Flexer  
Date: 24 and 25 March 2014

This two-day workshop by Dr Carol Fletcher was presented to teachers, therapists and school support staff.

The first day focused on 'Auditory Brain Development'. Dr Flexer emphasised the need for early and continual auditory intervention to generate new neural pathways and improve outcomes in speech and literacy for children with any type or degree of deafness.

Day two expanded on this theme exploring how children learn to hear. It also focused on the acoustic environment. Different teaching strategies were covered, including how to improve acoustic accessibility in the classroom.

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### Training on how to use the Resource Kit - VDEI Transition into Primary School (TIPS) Program

Presenters: Jenny Galloway and Jean Moores-Chadwick

These sessions presented on request were hosted by Jenny Galloway and Jean Moores-Chadwick, and were designed to instruct deaf education professionals on use of the VDEI Transition into Primary School (TIPS) Resource Kit.

The Kit was developed to help children who are deaf or hard of hearing transition well into primary schools.

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### Social Capital

Presenter: Jill Duncan  
Date: 29 April 2014

Dr Jill Duncan, Director of the VDEI, discussed social capital in terms of the benefits for adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing that can be gained from online and face-to-face relationships.

Dr Duncan covered topics such as the relationship between family social capital and adolescent social capital; the influences of online social capital; and the role of the teacher of the deaf in facilitating the increase of social capital.



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## Parent Workshop: Sign Language Development in Children

Presenters: Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark  
Date: 4 May 2014

Parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing joined experienced teachers, Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark, to learn more about how parents can support their child's sign language development.

By sharing their extensive knowledge on the subject, Michelle and Michelle were able to expand parents' knowledge of how children develop sign language and how they can help improve their child's skills.

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## The Contact Sign Continuum and its Application to the Classroom

Presenters: Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark  
Date: 5 and 6 May 2014

Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark presented this popular workshop to participants including staff from the Victorian College for the Deaf on the Monday, and to the Furlong Park School for Deaf Children on the Tuesday. This foundation workshop was designed specifically for staff in bilingual settings.

The workshop drew upon the most recent research and developed understandings of the contact sign continuum the different ways deaf people sign using natural sign languages and systems.

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## Speech Production: From Phonetic to Phonological Achievement

Presenter: Marie Fram  
Date: 15 May 2014

More than seventy teachers, professionals, and parents of students who are deaf or hard of hearing attended a professional learning session with Marie Fram; in person or via video conferencing.

Marie's session provided an opportunity to revisit the teaching of speech production; to consider assessment materials, and how to use assessments to determine goals and develop a program to improve everyday communication.





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## Latest FM technology for Paediatric Clients

Presenter: Karin Gillies

Date: 29 May 2014

This presentation, led by paediatric audiologist Karin Gillies, informed teachers and professionals about the new FM range for paediatric clients.

Participants learnt about the FM features available and explored how these could be employed to meet individuals' needs both inside and out of the classroom.

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## Literacy in Deaf Education Research

Presenter: Professor Greg Leigh

Date: 16 June 2014

Professor Leigh demonstrated how research can be turned into practice, focusing on current research into how children learn to read. He also discussed how teachers might apply the research in their own work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Models for developing students' reading skills were examined, with Professor Leigh arguing for the adoption of an interactive model to explain different outcomes.

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## Communication Skills for Professionals, Recognition and Management of Emotions

Presenter: Dr Robynne Moore

Date: 1 and 15 August 2014

Dr Moore has over 40 years of experience in the field of psychology. He spoke to teachers and professionals working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing, about the types of skills needed in working with students' families and colleagues.

The first day focused on strategies for making listening a powerful tool. This theme was continued on the second day with a focus on the art of questioning, and recognising when challenging is appropriate.

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## Assistive Technologies for Supporting Students with Vision and Hearing Loss

Presenter: Ian Bean

Date: 7 and 8 August 2014

The VDEI hosted a two-day professional learning event with Ian Bean, an independent special needs ICT consultant and trainer from the United Kingdom.

Day one was all about blended technologies for blended learning, with a focus on practical advice, teaching examples, and resource-sharing.

Day two explored use of the iPad as a tool for teaching and learning, and how the iPad experience can be personalised to meet specific needs.

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## The Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language: Administration and Scoring for Novices

Presenter: Angela Kinsella-Ritter

Date: 28 August 2014

Angela Kinsella-Ritter's practical workshop was designed for teachers who had no experience in administering and scoring the Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language (CASL).

Teachers were able to experience administering and scoring a battery of tests that measure language skills in various categories: Lexical/Semantic, Syntactic, Supralinguistic and Pragmatic.

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## It's All in Their Hands - Supporting Signing Deaf Children to Read

Presenters: Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark

Date: 28 and 29 August 2014

In this workshop Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark drew on contemporary research into strategies used by signing children when reading. Teachers and professionals discussed how children in bilingual contexts can use sign language to make connections between Auslan and English.

‘The nature of education has changed significantly over the past decade. The current learning environment is more connected, with the use of mobile technologies resulting in an increase in online and ‘on demand’ learning.’

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### **Supporting Adolescents with Hearing Loss**

Presenter: VDEI and RIDBC Renwick Centre  
Date: 10 October 2014

The VDEI, in collaboration with RIDBC Renwick Centre, presented this event for educators, therapists, and support staff, focusing on adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing. The event was in the form of a live interactive stream from the Sydney RIDBC Renwick Centre, delivered at the VDEI.

Topics covered included: social and emotional issues, identity issues, communication difficulties, and the psycho-linguistic, cognitive and neural consequences of bimodal bilingualism.

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### **Psycho-linguistic, Cognitive and Neural Consequences of Bimodal Bilingualism**

Presenter: Dr Karen Emmorey  
Date: 27 October 2014

Dr Emmorey studies the processes involved in the production and comprehension of sign language by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

In this presentation Dr Emmorey highlighted recent research showing what bimodal bilinguals can tell us about language processing and the functional neural organisation of language. Bimodal bilinguals are unique as they access distinct sensory-motor systems for comprehension and production.

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### **Social Skills for Students with Hearing Loss**

Presenter: Dr Hester McMillan  
Date: 10 November 2014

Dr Hester MacMillan, a psychologist specialising in child development and disability, ran a workshop for professionals and parents of children and adolescents growing up deaf or hard of hearing, focusing on their emotional and social development.

Dr McMillan explored various strategies to promote resilience and the integration of children and teenagers through emotional coaching.

## **Inclusion Online**

In 2014 the VDEI continued to work collaboratively with central and regional staff to present and promote the Inclusion Online - Understanding Hearing Loss course, offered by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to teachers state-wide.

The course was revamped to update content as well as the operating platform and participants' access to course materials has been improved. Many teachers of the deaf are now trained as tutors for this program and are able to run courses either via video conference, in metropolitan or rural locations.

Course participants undertake 20 hours of professional learning, consisting of self-paced online learning and three short face-to-face sessions. The course, which is aimed at mainstream teachers, increases participants' understanding of:

- how the ear works and what we mean by hearing loss
- the possible effects of a hearing loss on a student's academic, social and communication skills
- the range of assessment strategies to assess hearing skills, listening skills, language skills, the classroom environment, and appropriate technology
- the importance of a whole-school approach to supporting students with hearing loss
- a range of teaching strategies to support learning across the curriculum and to maintain a positive learning environment.







# Research Program

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## **Outcomes of Victorian 5-6 year old children with congenital hearing loss: The Longitudinal Outcomes of Children with Hearing Impairment (LOCHI) Study**

This commissioned study completed by the National Acoustic Laboratories draws on the data collected as part of the Longitudinal Outcomes of Children with Hearing Impairment (LOCHI) study to describe demographic characteristics, educational intervention choices and outcomes of Victorian children at five years of age, compared with their peers in New South Wales and Queensland; and to determine factors influencing developmental outcomes.

The major findings were as follows. On average, LOCHI children in Victoria received hearing aids significantly later than did children from other states. On average, LOCHI children in Victoria enrolled in early education later than did children from other states. A smaller proportion of Victorian children used spoken language (oral communication mode) as the primary mode of communication at home and during educational intervention than did children from other states. A greater proportion of Victorian children changed their communication mode during educational intervention over the first three years of life than did children from other states. Children with lesser hearing loss, no additional disability, and come from families with higher socio-economic status were more likely to use an oral-only mode of communication in early education.

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## **Online Social Participation, Social Capital and Literacy of Adolescents with Hearing Loss: A Pilot Study**

This commissioned study completed by the National Acoustic Laboratories aimed to assess the feasibility of using an online survey questionnaire to measure the amount and type of online social participation in adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing, and its relationship with online and offline social capital and literacy. An online survey including questions on demographics, internet use, social network site (SNS) use (Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat), social capital in online and offline situations, and literacy scores (from the National Assessment Program – Numeracy and Literacy results) was completed by a group of 29 adolescents who are deaf or hard of

hearing (aged 11-18) from Victoria, Australia.

Results indicated that an online survey method is feasible to collect data on online social participation and social capital in adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing. However, the self-report method was not reliable for collecting data on literacy outcomes. Adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing used the internet at high rates, with 40% (n=11) using the internet 2-3 hours per day and another 40% using it 5 or more hours per day. Over 70% (n=21) of adolescents used SNS, with the most popular and frequently used being Facebook. Overall, social capital was higher offline than online. Online bridging social capital was associated with intensity of general internet use (i.e. number of hours online). In contrast, social capital was not associated with intensity of SNS use or attitudes regarding Facebook. Only 13 of the 29 participants provided valid data on NAPLAN literacy (reading, writing, spelling and grammar) scores. On this very limited dataset, a positive relationship was found between literacy and offline bonding social capital. However, online social capital was not related to literacy skills.


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## **VDEI Assessment Protocol**

This project was developed in response to the Individual Learning Plans (ILP) project completed by the University of Melbourne. The ILP research project investigated the development and use of individual learning plans for students in Victorian primary and secondary settings who are deaf or hard of hearing. Data were collected using surveys completed by facility coordinators and teachers, the analysis of student portfolios, and individual interviews with coordinators. The main findings of the project were that:

1. Ninety percent of students had an Individual Learning Plan.
2. Formal (CASL, PPVT, and CELF) and informal (observations, interviews, running records, self-assessment reflections, and performance based) assessments occurred most frequently in the primary years of schooling, but less so in the secondary years.
3. Ten percent of students had no record of any formal assessment having been conducted; and overall, and formal assessment data made limited contribution to the Individual Learning Plan.
4. This pattern was repeated for informal assessment.



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5. Individual Learning Plan goals were relevant, realistic and action-based; but lacked specificity and measurability.
  6. Coordinators had a range of different views about assessment; but in general were unclear about translating data into goals.
  7. A range of practices was evident in relation to Student Support Groups and to work collaboratively with all stakeholders.
  8. While teachers reported feeling confident in their ability to assess and plan for students in their care, they would like to have an assessment protocol established.

From these findings several recommendations emerged, as follows.

- Every student who is deaf or hard of hearing who is receiving support should have an Individual Learning Plan that should be regularly reviewed.
- The Individual Learning Plan should address core needs such as language development, literacy, numeracy, and speech (where appropriate); and other curriculum areas, dependent on the age and needs of individual students.
- Every student who is deaf or hard of hearing should have regular formal assessment at key stages, so that data can be collected by DEECD to evaluate deaf education in Victoria. This will require the establishment of an assessment protocol.
- Teachers should be provided with further training in assessment, data analysis, goal development and evaluation.
- Practices around Student Support Groups should be improved in terms of collaborative partnerships with parents, classroom teachers and the students themselves (where appropriate).

As a result of the above findings and recommendations the VDEI commissioned the writing of an assessment protocol.

The aim of the protocol is to provide teachers with a framework for assessment, goal setting, teaching and review of the progress of children and students with significant levels of hearing loss. The groups of students addressed in this protocol are primary- and secondary-aged students, particularly those using spoken language. Aspects of the protocol are, however, also appropriate

for students communicating through Auslan.

The protocol covers major developmental domains such as cognitive and behavioural assessment; speech, language and communication; literacy and numeracy; and social competence. It also addresses device use and maintenance, for students for whom this is appropriate.

The protocol aims to enhance teachers' understanding of why, how, and when to use particular assessment tools, how to interpret the results in conjunction with other information, how to generate targets for intervention and how to measure the efficacy of the intervention. In summary, it provides guidelines for teachers to generate data from which to design and implement appropriate interventions and to evaluate these interventions. The Assessment Protocol draft document has been distributed for sector consultation. Consultation will continue in 2015.

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## Telepractice Trial

The Telepractice Trial was implemented in 2014 in a Victorian regional area, supported by staff from the VDEI. The trial investigated the feasibility of delivering visiting teacher services to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

The student involved attended school in a rural area where there are substantial visiting teacher caseloads and a vast distance between schools. As the required frequency of face-to-face consultation and intervention could not be realised, the educational needs of the student could not be adequately met. The aim of the project was to build the capacity of teachers to support a student to access the full school curriculum so they could provide appropriate educational support for the student. The specialist services involved maintained direct contact with the student, the student's family, and the school via video conference.

Telepractice is used widely in other parts of Australia, but is not routinely in Victoria. It is envisaged as a result of this trial, that telepractice will be used more widely in Victoria, particularly in rural and remote areas where it is difficult to provide appropriate support for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

# ‘Supporting the identification and understanding of evidence-based practice in deaf education.’

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## Learning Needs Analysis

Developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in 2012-13, the Learning Needs Analysis is a survey conducted on an annual basis by the Victorian Deaf Educational Institute, to gather information from practitioners working in deaf education about the skills and knowledge teachers need to optimise student learning.

Between 65-70% of teachers of the deaf employed in deaf education in Victoria in 2014 completed the survey. The results of the survey have informed the development of the professional learning program for 2015, and will help to ensure that the VDEI professional learning program continues to meet the learning needs of professionals working within the sector.



# Resource and Technology Program

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## Assessing Auslan Development Tool

The Assessing Auslan Development tool was published early in 2014. It was developed by the VDEI, in partnership with La Trobe University, supported by the authors of the Assessing British Sign Language Development: Receptive Skills Test and the Assessing British Sign Language Development Production Test (Narrative Skills). Associate Professor Adam Schembri, Gabrielle Hodges and Ida Rogers of La Trobe University, in collaboration with the VDEI, adapted the British tests for the Australian context to provide the first standardised Assessing Auslan Development tool.

Use of the tool enables assessment and monitoring of Auslan development in children who are deaf or hard of hearing who sign, and will inform the development of individual learning plans for these children. The VDEI will continue to work with the British authors to create an online version of the tool.

Associate Professor Adam Schembri completed the first training on use of the Assessing Auslan Development tool in August 2014 at the VDEI. Further training in use of the tool will be offered in 2015.

The Assessing Auslan (Australian Sign Language) Development tool is available in kit form, and will be provided to professionals who have completed the required training and are accredited to implement the tool.

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## Real-Time Captioning

An extension of the More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership initiative for 2104 led to an extension of the VDEI's real-time captioning (RTC) pilot program, which began in 2013. As a result, four schools received real-time captioning services to support senior secondary students in 2014.

Real-time captioning provides an almost instantaneous visual display of teacher and student speech as it occurs in the classroom. Using a microphone attached to a transmitter, speech is transmitted over the internet to a remote captioner. Speech is then translated into text and sent back to the students via the internet, usually within seven seconds. Captions can be displayed on an interactive whiteboard or on a student's laptop or iPad.

The real-time captioning trial aimed to improve students' access to curriculum; boost student literacy levels, inclusion,

engagement and participation with peers and educators in classrooms; and support home-based learning through the provision of transcripts.

The results from an evaluation of the pilot project will inform Victorian policy relating to inclusive practices for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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## C-Print Trial and Evaluation

In term 4 a trial of C-Print was implemented in four schools in Victoria. C-Print is a tool developed to support access and communication for students who are deaf or hard of hearing that can be used by school-based personnel.

C-Print facilitates access to information during classes by providing a text display of spoken information in real time. The captionist uses text-condensing strategies rather than providing a verbatim transcription of what has been said. Notes from a C-Print session can be used by students at a later date for revision or review, or as a teaching tool.

The C-Print program commenced in term 4, 2014, and will be extended in 2015. An evaluation of the program has commenced using the framework devised for the Real-Time Captioning (RTC) evaluation.

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## VDEI Caption Centre at Bendigo South East College

The VDEI Caption Centre continues to produce high quality captioned materials for senior secondary students who attend school in Victoria. Originally set up as one of the resource development projects funded by the VDEI in 2011, the Centre captions educational media used by schools to enable full access to the curriculum and support materials by students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The VDEI Caption Centre is located at the Bendigo Deaf Facility at the Bendigo South East 7-10 College campus. It is staffed by two part-time captioners who implement the complex captioning process. A transcript is made of the material to be captioned, which is then carefully aligned with the visual image to ensure the written text matches the spoken text.

Further information about accessing the captioning service is available on the VDEI website.



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## **Deafness Forum Australia, Captioning Award 2014, Captioning for Kids Category**

The VDEI was awarded the Deafness Forum Australia 2014 Captioning Award, in the Captions for Kids category, for its commitment to providing captions for kids.

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## **Transition to Primary School Project**

The Transition to Primary School program is a More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership initiative that supports families and those working with families who are involved in transitioning a child who is deaf or hard of hearing into primary school. It aims to inform those involved about the transition process and the part each need to play to help ensure a positive transition experience for the child and family. The kit aims to highlight important dates within the transition timeline, whilst encouraging strong communication links between the family, school and local community. Partnerships are fostered between these groups, setting the scene for ongoing positive relationships throughout the primary school years.

The Transition to Primary School Program/Kit includes handouts for families, early intervention workers, visiting teachers, and schools to use (available on the VDEI website). The kit includes a Professional Development PowerPoint presentation on CD for teachers of the deaf to present to school staff. In addition, there is a story book about a character called Blue Bear who wears hearing aids and is getting ready for his first day at school.

## **Resource Development Projects**

The resource development projects administered through the VDEI enable deaf education practitioners and experts in schools to collaborate with the VDEI to develop or expand knowledge and expertise within the sector; and facilitate the sharing of resources, materials and sustainable knowledge in an appropriate shared space. Many of the resource development projects have now been completed. Information about these projects can be found on the VDEI website.

The following projects were completed or were nearing completion in 2014.

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### **Forest Hill College Deaf Facility - Fairview Learning Reading Program**

In 2011 the deaf facility staff at Forest Hill College undertook a project to develop a modified literacy resource, based on the Fairview Learning Reading Program. The project enabled two teachers to be trained directly through the company who developed the program; with other teachers of the deaf receiving school-based training from the two trained teachers.

The Fairview program is designed specifically for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is not a curriculum; rather it is a set of high-yield strategies to be used with an existing curriculum. It is not a scripted process and is completely student-driven. The Fairview program is an established, clearly documented, methodological program with resources, which supports teachers of the deaf to assist deaf students develop their ability to read and write competently in English.

Further information about this project is available on the VDEI website.

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### **St Mary's College for Hearing Impaired Students - Language Development Project**

The Language Development Project for students who are deaf or hard of hearing was undertaken by the staff and students of St Mary's College.



# ‘Identifies, pilots and evaluates equipment to support curriculum access and inclusion for children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Victoria.’

A school’s most valuable resource is its teachers. This is especially true in the field of deaf education where teachers undertake additional specialist training to develop their knowledge and skills.

This project aimed to increase the skills of teachers and support staff in:

- understanding the developmental nature of speech, listening and language
- administering tests and assessments
- using assessments to set goals
- developing reading competencies, particularly student’s ability to answer inferential comprehension questions
- integrating goals for students who are deaf or hard of hearing into mainstream classroom activities.

Following the project staff:

- have further developed their skills in administering assessment tools and interpreting results
- regularly assess the language, literacy and listening and speech skills of students who are deaf or hard of hearing
- use assessments to formulate individual goals
- keep longitudinal records of formal and informal assessments for each child.

Further information about this project is available on the VDEI website.

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## **Mount View School - Video Resource Getting the Message 4: 7 Rules for Good Communication**

The video resource, 7 Rules for Good Communication, was produced by the staff and students of Mount View Deaf Facility at Mount View Primary School. This resource aims to raise school community awareness about effective communication strategies for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Based on the students’ own experience, the resource offers seven examples of communication breakdown and ways of avoiding these. It provides the viewer with valuable insights, highlighting the need for sensitivity when dealing with students who have specific communication needs, and is highly

recommended for use at key educational transition points.

Also available produced by Mount View Deaf Facility are:

- Getting the Message 2, Classroom Strategies
- Getting the Message 3, Dealing with Noisy Situations.

Links to these resources are available on the VDEI website.

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## **Grovedale College -The Use of Digital Technologies in Learning**

This project was designed for teachers in the Grovedale College deaf facility and aimed to:

- help teachers to develop a digital literacy program using iPads and other emerging technologies to extend students’ global knowledge
- give students exposure to, and experience with, new technologies and the social and ethical implications of using these technologies
- further develop teachers’ skills in using new technologies.

Teachers in the Grovedale P-12 deaf facility use iPads as teaching tools on a day-to- day basis. This project allowed teachers to learn more about how to use iPad technology and apply their knowledge in the classroom e.g. to record formal and informal assessments using applications such as Evernote, and to take photographs of students learning.

Teachers from the deaf facility visited other iPad programs and used the knowledge gained to develop a more comprehensive digital literacy program. Teachers began by increasing the use of iPads and the range of different applications used in facility sessions. These were used for language and literacy development in areas such as auditory memory, numeracy and social skills program work.

Student learning plans incorporate the use of iPads to develop literacy and numeracy skills and to improve student outcomes. Teachers also used the iPads to track and record student improvement and outcomes and to share documents, using the application Evernote. This is an approach the whole school has now adopted to manage student documentation and individual learning files.

Further information about this project is available on the VDEI website.

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## North East Victoria - Visiting Teacher Program

Hearing Loss Strategies for the Classroom Teacher (DVD/ information package)

This teaching resource was produced for mainstream teachers in a primary or secondary school setting who have a student in their classroom who is deaf or hard of hearing.

The DVD/information package provides a valuable resource for use in a whole- school context. This teaching resource demonstrates strategies and inclusive practices to obtain the most effective learning outcomes for deaf or hard of hearing students. It provides teachers with a sound understanding of the implications of hearing loss and how this may affect students' learning and language skills.

The menu has the following selections:

- primary strategies
- secondary strategies
- information concerning hearing loss, audiograms and hearing equipment
- a simulation of a hearing loss.

A link to this resource is available on the VDEI website.

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## Brighton Hearing Unit - Visiting Teacher Program

As part of this project two teachers of the deaf spent a day visiting two facilities where the students receive support from qualified teachers of the deaf, and are also included in mainstream education. This program was designed to further develop understandings about how deaf facilities within a school are coordinated.

The school visits strengthened teachers' knowledge about assessment and planning, and about the use of various hearing augmentation devices. The visits enabled participants to investigate a range of resources to promote auditory skills, language development and social skills. Discussions with facility coordinators enhanced teachers' understanding of the enrolment process, including the preparation of required documentation.

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## Eastwood Deaf Facility – Developing Children's Connectedness

This project was set up to design a program focusing on developing the skills of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in the following areas:

- joining in – how to approach others in the classroom and playground
- understanding and interpreting non-verbal cues
- learning strategies to assist becoming a 'good listener'
- learning strategies to assist becoming a 'good speaker'
- dealing with conflict – managing my feelings and emotion
- conflict resolution – how can I achieve an outcome that helps both people?
- anxiety – developing strategies to manage this in the classroom and playground
- bullying – understanding it's various forms and developing strategies to deal with it
- resilience – how to 'cope' and deal with issues that don't turn out how I want.

It is hoped that a web-based program will be available for practitioners to use in the near future.

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## Bendigo Deaf Facility- Auslan Translation of Reading Resources

This project aimed to facilitate access by teachers and parents to the Auslan translation of 20 PM books from levels 1-5. The original project developed products for students who are deaf or hard of hearing who would benefit from having their nightly reading material being presented in Auslan.

Translations of reading material into Auslan were originally to be made available on a CD-ROM. Advances in technology make it possible to make this material available online. The materials that have been produced will soon be available via a link on the VDEI website.

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## St Mary's College for Hearing Impaired Students- Identity and Interpersonal Development

St Mary's students have the opportunity to identify with peers both from hearing communities and communities of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is through this broad schooling context, and the student's family context, that students develop a sense of identity and their place in the world. Hence the vital role played by the student's emotional development and their personal and interpersonal relationships.

The project aimed to:

- ensure staff have an understanding of deafness and mental health issues and the links between interpersonal development and personal learning
- improve staff confidence to implement learning strategies that help strengthen students' sense of identity and wellbeing
- identify resources, purchased and implemented
- commence development of a program that will be implemented with some continuity from Prep to Year 12.

The project motivated staff to examine the available data more thoroughly and from a fresh perspective. This resulted in students' Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) containing more relevant and achievable goals in the spheres of personal and interpersonal learning. An underlying consideration in developing the ILPs was the significant impact that deafness and mental health issues can have on the lives of many students and their families.

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## Eastern Metropolitan Region - Visiting Teacher iPad trial

The aim of this project was to purchase and trial iPads as a communication and learning tool, and to provide an opportunity for visiting teachers to develop skills in use of this technology.

All visiting teachers currently use iPads to support student engagement and learning. Many iPad apps have been shared during team meetings. Particular emphasis has been placed on speech apps (which are more engaging than worksheets, and are able to provide feedback via voice recordings) listening apps,

and language and writing apps.

The project has been successful in demonstrating that the use of iPads can:

- reduce the equipment to be carried for individual sessions
- replace the use of video camera for language sample recordings
- be used to make presentations to teachers, parents and other students
- record student work and take photographs.

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## Shepparton Deaf Facility - Reading in Meaningful Units

Using the KANO program, this project aimed to take a well-resourced approach to:

- assist students to comprehend written text through exploring the multiple meanings of words
- assist a group of teachers to trial the program
- evaluate the program - including literacy outcomes, ease of implementation and student engagement.

The KANO program centres on a high frequency word list sourcing various common word lists used in Victorian schools. The program focuses on multiple meanings for the same word (homonyms) and appropriate ways to sign these. It introduces students to the different meanings a word can have, strategies that can be used to determine the meaning from the context of a word, and appropriate ways to express meanings in Auslan.

The words are grouped into themes within learning phases, which are designed to become progressively more challenging as students develop their understanding of English, Auslan and reading. The kit contains a word-meaning assessment and a DVD which explains how to sign the different meanings in the appropriate context, using specific examples. The program is designed for students who are hearing, as well as students who are deaf or hard of hearing who have access to Auslan.







# Working Together in 2014

## Strategic Partners

The VDEI is co-located with the Victorian College for the Deaf (VCD). Angelique den Brinker, its Principal, and her entire staff have been a strong support to the VDEI, its vision and mission. It is a joy to work alongside VCD's students, staff and parents.

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) has been a partner of the VDEI since its inception. Professor Greg Leigh, RIDBC Renwick Centre Director and Ms Trudy Smith generously collaborate with VDEI to ensure world-class professional learning opportunities are available to Victorian deaf education practitioners.

## Associates

Many colleagues and associates work with VDEI to deliver its Professional Learning Program, Research Program and Resource and Technology Program. These associates include, but are not limited to:

Victorian government, independent and Catholic schools  
Arts Access Victoria  
ASLIA Victoria  
Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf (Vic)  
Australian Communication Exchange  
Australian Hearing  
Catholic Education Office  
Cochlear Implant Clinic  
Deaf Australia  
Deaf Children Australia  
DeafConnectED at Melbourne Polytechnic  
Deaf Victoria  
Deafness Forum  
Deafness Foundation  
Deakin Institute  
Early Education Program for Hearing Impaired Children  
Hear For You  
Independent schools

La Trobe University  
Murdoch Children's Research Institute  
National Acoustics Laboratory  
RIDBC Renwick Centre  
Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children  
RMIT University  
Taralye  
The Royal Children's Hospital  
The University of Melbourne  
Victorian Deaf Education Network  
Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program

## VDEI's 2014 Team

The VDEI's team is dedicated, hard-working, and committed to the cause of improving outcomes for children and young people in Victoria who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Karyn Barrasso  
Jill Duncan (from April 2014)  
Jenny Galloway  
Aris Goletsos  
Shaun Goodwin  
Helen Harrington-Johnson  
Sally Martin  
Jean Moores-Chadwick  
Jamie Owen (from October 2014)  
Julie Postance  
Kaye Scott





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and Training

