

# *speakout*

APRIL 2015

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# Speech Pathology Australia

## National Office

Level 2/11–19 Bank Place Melbourne VIC 3000

T 1300 368 835 F 03 9642 4922

E [office@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

## Chief Executive Officer

Gail Mulcair

T 03 9642 4899 E [execassist@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:execassist@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

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ACT – via [pubs@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:pubs@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

New South Wales – Jessica Rennie and Eryka Arteaga

Northern Territory – Bea Staley

Queensland – Leanne Sorbello, Catherine Hicks, Erika Campbell and Rebecca Sexton

South Australia – Emma Leeson and Josie Kemp

Tasmania – Kate Day

Victoria – Shane Erickson

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# Speakout

APRIL 2015

## Highlights in this issue...



**PAGE 12:** Just Sentences literacy program at Risdon Prison, Tasmania;

**PAGE 14:** Speech Pathology Australia hosts @WeSpeechies #RoCur.

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## From the President



*Our second Speak Out for this year highlights the significant activity undertaken by the Association and its members in the social media, advocacy and lobbying, and professional practice arenas.*

**THIS ISSUE ALSO HIGHLIGHTS** the impressive impact of the speech pathology profession in the community, and the need for speech pathology services in underdeveloped countries.

In this issue we welcome our new Online Communications Officer, Luke Buesnel, who has joined the team at National Office. Luke brings a wealth of experience in social media and journalism, and I am sure he will take the Association's social media presence to new heights.

SPA's social media presence has continued to increase and was given an additional boost through an invitation to be the first Association to curate the @WeSpeechies #RoCur one-hour "chat" session. The @WeSpeechies handle was founded by SPA members Caroline Bowen and Bronwyn Hemsley in March 2014 and provides an internationally curated meeting point in Twitter for speech pathologists to comment and discuss specific topics. Our topic for discussion in this event was *Strategic planning: objectives, deliverables, and future directions*. It is hoped that such events and other Twitter activity will continue as part of the Association's commitment to a greater social media presence.

I am sure that you will be interested to read in this issue about the extraordinary advocacy and lobbying activity that has occurred on behalf of members across the country by National Office staff, the CEO, and the Board Executive as a follow-up to the Senate Inquiry. To date, more than 30 meetings have occurred with federal, state and territory politicians and their staff, with more on the agenda. These meetings are designed to garner support for the Senate recommendations but have had the additional benefit of gaining advice and contacts for further lobbying activity. We await the Federal Government response with eager anticipation.

This issue provides an update on the Association's activities related to the NDIS. Our Disability Project Consultant, Cathy Olsson, continues to do an amazing job in supporting our members through this transition phase as well as providing input into numerous NDIS policy discussions and papers.

Professional practice issues relating to advertising, transparency of client information, and mentoring

and supervision are highlighted in this issue of *Speak Out*. Important points are raised in relation to clients' understanding of all aspects of our services, and a checklist of points to consider when advertising speech pathology services is provided. In this issue the similarities and differences between mentoring and supervision are described. Our warmest congratulations go to Miriam Staker who was recognised by the NSW Branch for her excellence and sustained mentoring of speech pathologists for more than 25 years. Her advice to anyone considering mentoring – "you just have to be a listening ear" – says it all.

I am sure you will also enjoy reading about the impact of our profession in various sectors of the community and the ways in which we can enrich the professional lives of speech pathologists, and our clients. You can read about how speech pathology will impact on important community initiatives such as the Best Start early intervention family literacy program in Queensland, and the enlightening experiences gained by speech pathology students who undertook a clinical placement in remote areas of the Northern Territory. It is hard not to be impressed by Rosie Martin's efforts to teach literacy skills to inmates in a Tasmanian prison and the significant impact that speech pathology had on an inmate in achieving life-changing literacy skills. In the international arena, we are reminded of the great need for speech pathology services in underdeveloped countries. SPA is committed to assisting agencies in such countries through grants and other activities.

This *Speak Out* introduction will be my last as National President of SPA. At the AGM in May I will stand down as National President after 20 months in this position. It has been a great honour and a privilege to have led the Association during this period and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I encourage all of you to consider leadership positions within SPA, be it at a Branch or Board level. You will gain more than you give from this experience. Of course the role of National President is ably supported by our CEO, Gail Mulcair, and her equally dedicated and competent team at National Office. I cannot thank you enough for your support.

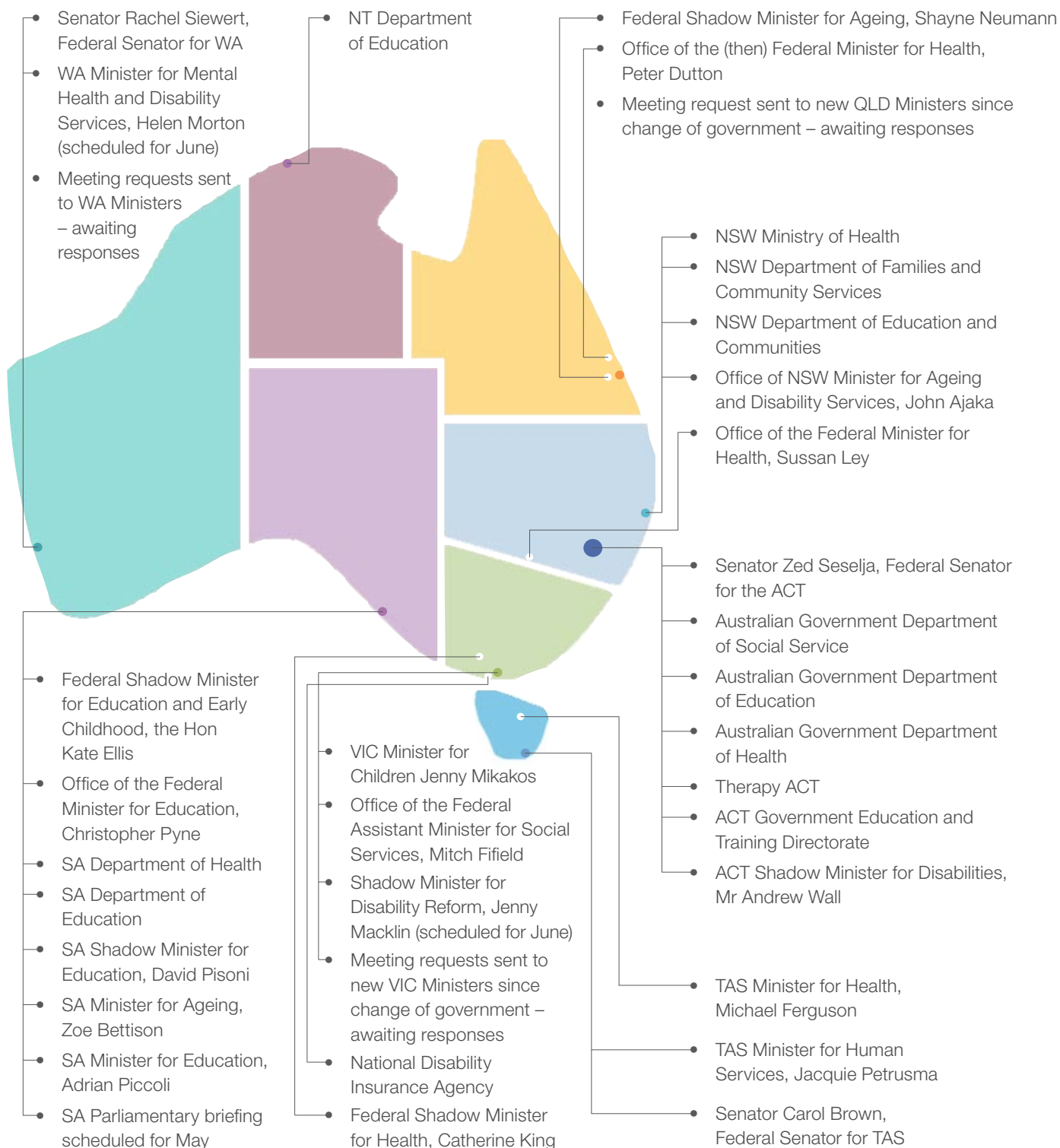
**DEBORAH THEODOROS**  
National President



# Speech Pathology Australia continues lobbying for Senate Inquiry recommendations

**SPEECH PATHOLOGY AUSTRALIA** continues to advocate for government support for the Senate Inquiry recommendations. To date, we have held formal meetings with a variety of elected officials and government departments around the country (listed below), with more scheduled in the coming months. A federal government response to the Senate Committee's report is expected mid-2015.

**RONELLE HUTCHINSON** *Manager, Policy and Advocacy*





# Board of Directors – February meeting report

THE FIRST BOARD MEETING for 2015 was held on 27–28 February.

## Some highlights from the meeting include:

- The Board discussed the need to host a **Board Election** to elect two of the three candidates, from the State of Victoria, to Speech Pathology Australia's Board of Directors. (Information regarding the voting process was circulated, via email, to all Voting Members of the Association.)
- **Student engagement and membership** is being considered, as the number of university programs and students increase across Australia.
- The Association remains committed to the **International Communication Project**, with work currently underway to produce a project brief with a strategic advocacy focus on world health policies.
- **Community Representatives** continue to be sought to join Speech Pathology Australia's Ethics Board.
- The Association's appointed auditors, E Passaris and J Szafraniec, of Grant Thornton, joined the meeting to discuss the **2014 Financial and Audit Reports**. The Financial Report for the end of 2014 was approved by the Board.
- The Association continues to seek support from Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Advisors, at a Federal and State/Territory level, as we await the Government's response to the **Senate Inquiry Recommendations**.
- A **Lobbying and Policy Strategy Development** Breakfast, aimed at developing advocacy capacity within the membership, is planned for the 2015 National Conference.
- A **Stakeholder Engagement Reception** (involving politicians and key invited guests), hosted by the ACT Chief Minister and scheduled to occur prior to the National Conference dinner, was confirmed.
- With a growing staff, the **National Office premises** has been of inadequate size for some time. Following significant consideration over the past twelve months, the Board approved the lease of new premises, while renting out the Speech Pathology Australia-owned offices in Bank Place.
- The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework** was discussed, with the Board indicating that they envisage implementation of a broad Reconciliation Action Plan, with wide-ranging impacts, not limited to accreditation. Given the size of the project, this will need to be considered for the next Strategic Plan.
- The **CBOS 2011 Transferability Report** is currently in the process of being finalised, with a well-received presentation given by project officer, C Brebner, at the University Accreditor's Training Day.
- The timeline for **Speech Pathology Australia's Research Grant Program** is being reconsidered, with the current timeline not well suited to undergraduate research.

The Board will next meet on Friday 15 and Saturday 16 May 2015, ahead of the National Conference, *Challenge, Broaden, Revolutionise, Canberra 2015*.

**GAIL MULCAIR**  
Chief Executive Officer

## 'Recognise Health' initiative launched in March



**ON 5 MARCH**, Gail Mulcair, as Chief Executive Officer of Speech Pathology Australia, attended the launch of 'Recognise Health' in Canberra. *Recognise Health* is an initiative of the Lowitja Institute that aims to promote understanding of the important link between health, wellbeing, and constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The initiative brings together more than 117 non-government organisations across the Australian health system. More information and photos of the *Recognise Health* launch can be viewed at [www.lowitja.org.au/recognisehealth/launch](http://www.lowitja.org.au/recognisehealth/launch).

## 2015 Research Grant Program

**IN LINE WITH** the Association's commitment to promoting and funding high-quality research, we are pleased to offer research grants in the following categories for 2015.

**Clinician Research Grants:** Two grants will be awarded, one up to a maximum value of \$5,000, and one to a maximum value of \$10,000. These grants are available for clinically based research and are not available for research related to postgraduate studies or research undertaken by an academic.

**Postgraduate Research Grant:** Two grants will be awarded, one up to a maximum value of \$5,000, and one to a maximum value of \$10,000. These grants are available to speech pathologists enrolled in postgraduate studies.

**Undergraduate Research Grant:** Four grants will be awarded up to a maximum value of \$600. These grants are available to entry-level students enrolled in a research program.

**The Nadia Verrall Memorial Research Grant:** One grant will be awarded up to a maximum of \$5,000. This grant is awarded to grant applications for research focusing on children with communication disorders and their families.

The Association is dedicated to supporting the development of evidence-based data relevant to communication and swallowing disorders and was very pleased with the high number of grant applications in 2014.

Priority will be given to research applications that align with the Association's strategic plan. **The closing date for applications is 29 May 2015. Please refer to the SPA website for application details.**

We look forward to receiving your research grant applications soon.

**CORI WILLIAMS, PHD**  
National Advisor, EBP & Research

## Queensland Registration Board Legacy Fund Research Grant Scheme

**THE QUEENSLAND REGISTRATION BOARD** Legacy Fund Research Grant Scheme is one of four schemes, funded from the legacy funds remaining at the closure of The Registration Board of Queensland, in 2013.

**This scheme is open to all speech pathologists residing and/or practising in Queensland.**

**The Queensland Registration Board Legacy Fund Research Grant** is to support research into communication and swallowing disorders across the lifespan. Research may focus on aspects of assessment, intervention or broader issues concerned with clinical practice as a speech pathologist. The outcomes of the research will enhance the clinical practice of speech pathologists working in Queensland, and with the capacity of generalisation more broadly to the worldwide speech pathology community. In 2015, funds are available to support two research grants within the Queensland Registration Board Legacy Fund, each grant up to a maximum of \$10,000.

**Further information, including the application form and closing dates, are available from the SPA website.**

**CORI WILLIAMS, PHD**  
National Advisor, EBP & Research

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## SPA's 2015 Online Resource Guide



The 2015 Online Resource Guide is a handy reference manual of

products and services. The Guide is an interactive resource, complete with links to websites and email addresses, and enabled to be conveniently viewed on portable devices such as mobile phones and tablets. To view the Guide, visit the [Publications](#) webpage.

## Welcome Luke Buesnel, Speech Pathology Australia's new Online Communications Officer



THE ASSOCIATION IS PLEASED to welcome Luke Buesnel as our new Online Communications Officer. Luke brings a wealth of experience with regard to social media (managing, monitoring, and analysis). Luke's online skills are supplemented by his experience and skills as a writer/journalist. Before joining SPA, Luke worked as a journalist, a media

advisor to a federal politician, and for the Australian Medical Association (Victorian Branch). Luke has also previously worked as a radio broadcaster. Luke is your main point of contact with regard to social media, e-News, and Branch and Member Communities. We are excited to welcome Luke to the National Office team.

## Australian Government Hearing Services Program resources available

*Is hearing loss holding you back?*

*Is someone you know affected by hearing loss?*

The Australian Government Hearing Services Program may be able to help.

- Learn more about hearing and hearing loss
- Find out what the Hearing Services Program can do for you
- Apply for the Hearing Services Program online
- Find a hearing services provider in your local area
- Find out about other services and programs that can assist.

Visit the website [www.hearingservices.gov.au](http://www.hearingservices.gov.au) or call **1800 500 726** for more information.

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## Disability project update



**THE DISABILITY PROJECT CONSULTANT** role has been extended to December 2015. Speech Pathology Australia is taking a very active role with the NDIS, and in supporting members in the trial sites. This historic change in the way that services and supports for people with disabilities are provided has continued unabated, with the upscale to full roll-out across all areas and all States and Territories (with the possible exclusion of WA) still scheduled to commence in July 2016.

The impacts of the scheme are steadily being felt by more members, including those working in health and education, with the scheme roll-out leading to negotiations and decisions about the boundaries and interactions between the different sectors. The Federal Government is also looking to the different sectors for models of service delivery that may be appropriately applied more broadly as a means to achieve efficiencies and cost savings. For example, there has been some discussion about aspects of the equipment provision systems being shared and consistent.

### Recent submissions

- **SPA recently submitted a response to the NDIS 'Towards solutions for technology' discussion paper, which can be viewed on the [SPA website](#).** This process provided an opportunity to advocate for the system requirements, and important role for skilled, knowledgeable and experienced speech pathologists in providing Assistive Technology, to achieve the best possible outcomes for people with communication and swallowing disabilities. Many thanks to those members who provided contributions and feedback.
- **In February, the NDIS released a 120-page consultation paper 'Proposal for a National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework', which can be viewed at <https://engage.dss.gov.au/ndis-qsf/>.** Members have consistently raised their concerns about impacts of the NDIS on clinical governance of speech pathology services for people with disabilities. SPA will be preparing feedback ready to submit by the closing date of 30 April.
- **The NDIS also released an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Policy Framework document for consultation in February, which can be viewed at <http://www.ndis.gov.au/document/1421>.** ILC is the new terminology for the previous 'Tier 2 supports', and this document has provided some welcome clarity, though no detail, about these supports and how they may interact with the individually funded packages. SPA contributed to the Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) feedback document, which advocated strongly for recognition of the role of allied health in identifying and contributing to the provision of these supports, the importance of mapping already existent programs and services, and ensuring that they are maintained and made available more readily, including through the provision of additional funding. The importance and value of ILC as part of promoting communication access and participation is clear, and SPA will continue to advocate around this area.

- **SPA has contributed to a successful submission to the NDIS by AHPA to provide and evaluate a series of workshops in the current NDIS trial sites.** The workshops will be provided free to allied health professionals and will offer advice and guidance about the NDIS, working with the NDIS and delivering NDIS-appropriate therapy supports. Programs will run towards the middle of the year, and dates will be announced closer to the time. An online version of the workshops will be made available as part of the project.

### NDIS resources and support

- As part of its roll-out, the NDIS is grappling with a number of questions about what is 'reasonable and necessary' and about eligibility for individual funding packages, including for people with communication and swallowing difficulties. Members continue to raise questions and provide examples of areas where there is a need for greater exploration and clarification with the NDIS. One issue that has emerged is around the requirement to provide 'evidence of disability' as part of the eligibility process, including providing a functional age equivalency. I will be facilitating a working party to develop resources that may be useful to members in this situation, including describing the alignment between scores on standardised assessments and functional communication levels, and identifying whether or what tools are available that may be used to describe children's functional communication level.
- The NDIS has led to significant changes in the choices of providers available to participants in the NDIS. As well as the entry of many new providers, some existent providers are opening their doors to a much broader range of participants. SPA is aware that some members have concerns about how participants can be supported to make informed choices about and access to their supports from the most appropriate speech pathology provider to meet their specific needs. SPA will be exploring how it may be able to contribute to this occurring.

Finally, one of the priorities for 2015 is to meet with members in trial sites with the aim of hearing what members feel are the most important resources that SPA can provide to help them work in the new NDIS environment, and to share information about our actions and what we have learned to date about the NDIS. It is a big, complex and very dynamic organisation. SPA will also be offering an online event for members which will cover the same information.

## Have your say

Members are urged to continue to post to the [Disability Member Community](#) or to email me ([disability@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:disability@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)) with information, issues and concerns about the NDIS and speech pathology service

provision for people with disabilities. What you provide is invaluable to inform what we take to the NDIS as well as setting the actions and priorities for the project and National Office more broadly.

**CATHY OLSSON**  
*Project Consultant, Disability*

## Reflections on the NSW Branch and Disability Research Network event at The University of Newcastle, 16 March 2015

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE** Disability Research Network and Speech Pathology discipline were delighted to co-host, with the NSW Branch of Speech Pathology Australia, a visit from Cathy Olsson (Speech Pathology Australia) for a two-hour presentation on the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The University of Newcastle is located in the Hunter region, a test site of the NDIS, and has a keen interest in engaging with the community in all areas of disability and across all disciplines and stakeholder groups. We were delighted that the event attracted around 110 speech pathologists, including 10 students.

Reflecting both Cathy's credentials in the field of disability in speech pathology, and the importance of the NDIS in the Hunter region, the audience were highly engaged with considering the impact so far and the potential for Speech Pathology Australia to be involved in supporting speech pathologists as they become NDIS providers. Cathy's informative presentation summarised key components of the NDIS and potential impacts on speech pathology, and this was followed by a Q&A session and a discussion of some issues in greater depth.

The audience discussion reflected that both newly qualified and experienced speech pathologists are learning to navigate a new system and negotiating at various levels with planners and other parties in the NDIA and NDIS. Not all audience members were clear on the role of planners in relation to the role of speech pathologists. Of major concern was the potential for NDIS to promote or require transdisciplinary practice but to foster individual rather than collaborative practice. New graduates in the audience were finding things particularly difficult in relation to navigating the new system while developing competence and confidence in working with people with a diverse range of disabilities, referring to billable hours as an impediment to having sufficient time or support for acquiring these new skills.

Discussion focused on the many professional practice issues confronting speech pathologists in an NDIS test site.

We understand that, through Speech Pathology Australia and the NSW Branch in particular, further information about strategies for working within the NDIS framework will be provided and upcoming education sessions are planned to address some of the issues raised by the audience.

It is apparent that some strategies for problem-solving are needed around both professional development and workforce planning or preparation, including student supervision (e.g., how student supervision can take place in a private practice or fee-for-service model), coaching or mentoring, and clinicians developing confidence and competence in working with people with complex communication needs, dysphagia, and diverse disabilities including autism and a range of other health conditions.

The University of Newcastle Disability Research Network look forward to furthering discussions and finding ways for speech pathologists to access and implement evidence in the field of disability in a variety of clinical settings. Collaborating with the NSW Branch of SPA and National Office in this event was successful and rewarding for all involved. We would like to thank Cathy Olsson and Harmony Turnbull for arranging the visit, and their generosity in sharing time. We would also like to thank the University of Newcastle Speech Pathology Australia student representatives Rebecca Gillogly and Erin Cranney for their volunteer assistance at the event. Any speech pathologists interested in joining the Disability Research Network, which has a focus on research translation into policy and practice across the disciplines, please contact [bronwyn.hemsley@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:bronwyn.hemsley@newcastle.edu.au) to be added to the mailing list for information and invitations to future events at the University of Newcastle.

**A/PROF BRONWYN HEMSLEY**  
*Discipline of Speech Pathology, The University of Newcastle*

**MS JOANNE WALTERS**  
*Lecturer in Speech Pathology and Speech Pathology Clinical Education Coordinator, The University of Newcastle*

**MS GWENDALYN WEBB**  
*Lecturer in Speech Pathology, The University of Newcastle*

*See overleaf for attendee reports on the event*

## University of Newcastle NDS event: Attendee perspectives

**ON MONDAY 16 MARCH**, Cathy Olsson presented a seminar about the NDIS to students and staff from the University of Newcastle as well as practising speech pathologists. We both enjoyed helping to organise this event, and meeting Cathy and more than 100 speech pathologists. An overview of the NDIS was presented, then audience members were given the opportunity to discuss experiences of working under the scheme. Currently, there are approximately 30,000 clients eligible for NDIS funding, yet this number is expected to increase to approximately 400,000 when the full roll-out occurs in July 2016. This means that a large number of current students will be working with clients in NDIS funding arrangements upon entering the workforce in the years to come. The open format of the presentation allowed for an interesting insight into the varying perspectives of practising speech pathologists and students. Major topics of the night included the hierarchy of decision-making processes involving NDIS, how we as speech pathologists can be involved in transitioning families into the scheme, and issues with contacting and negotiating with the NDIS planning officers.

As students, we thought the topics highly relevant to us, including the apparent limitation in practical disability experiences offered to speech pathologists at a university level, and the difficulty of new graduates to obtain training and support in working with people who have a disability. This issue was brought forward as the majority of clinical placements for speech pathology students occur within the public sector, so there is limited opportunity to gain the appropriate skills required to work in private practice models of service delivery. The issue surrounding the lack of student placements within the private and non-for-profit sectors needs to be addressed in order to provide students with opportunities to develop



*From left: Cathy Olsson, Rebecca Gillogly, Erin Cranney, Bronwyn Hemsley, and Harmony Turnbull at the University of Newcastle NDIS seminar.*

practical skills essential to working with individuals with complex needs in the NDIS funding system. We consider that greater emphasis in professional courses needs to be placed upon theoretical knowledge required to work as a speech pathologist in private practice models of service delivery, including transdisciplinary models of practice, how to refer patients to the NDIS, and skills required to become a key worker with the NDIS model. Similar seminars and events are needed in order for students to gain valuable information from speech pathologists working in private practice. Overall, it was an informative night that provided a great insight into how the NDIS is operating at the current stage and potential changes that may occur when current students join the workforce in the future. We would like to thank Cathy for her time, as well as Harmony and Bronwyn for their efforts in organisation, and look forward to being able to assist at any future events.

**ERIN CRANNEY** and **REBECCA GILLOGLY**  
SPA student representatives,  
The University of Newcastle

**FOR THOSE OF US** who have been travelling within disability services for a long time, we were expecting the same dozen or so faces to turn up to the SPA NDIS update held at The University of Newcastle on 16 March. Imagine our surprise to find more

than 100 speech pathologists eager to hear what the incomparable Cathy Olsson had to share with us.

Most of those attending are already engaging with the NDIA at some level. What became clear is that similar issues are affecting most practitioners, including the definition and delivery of transdisciplinary practice, the inconsistency of plans for people who have similar disabilities, and the concern about new graduates heading straight to private practice within this sector with no supervision or mentoring available to them. A culture of reluctance to release staff from face-to-face time in order to engage in training and development is also emerging. Issues previously experienced primarily by the private sector are now common across all providers including not-for-profit organisations as everyone is now essentially a fee-for-service provider. These are experiences common with practitioners across all trial sites.

NDIS is clearly changing the face of how we are practising and has exponentially increased the clinical interest in the disability sector. Thanks to Cathy, who calmly noted the issues raised by clinicians and will continue to work with NDIA to shape change within the context of the NDIS trial, with full roll-out to commence in just 14 months time.

**CHANTELLE ROBARDS**  
Speech Pathologist, Hunter trial site



# What is the difference between mentoring and supervision?

**SPEECH PATHOLOGY AUSTRALIA** recognises the value and importance of both supervision and mentoring for speech pathologists at all levels of practice. The recently revised position statement, *The role and value of professional support*, together with the *Supervision Standards* position statement, are available on the website via [Information for Members > Clinical Guidelines and Position Statements](#). This position statement specifically outlines the differences between supervision and mentoring and highlights the value of both.

**While there are many similarities between mentoring and supervision, some key differences include:**

- Supervision focuses on clinical competencies and accountability, while mentoring has a broader emphasis on professional growth and development
- Supervision is paid while mentoring is voluntary
- For a new graduate, it is expected that supervision would occur more frequently – ideally weekly – than mentoring, which would typically be monthly.

It is pleasing to see that increasingly, through the process of mentoring, mentees are recognising the need for supervision as well as mentoring, and have been negotiating with their employer to receive external supervision if discipline-specific supervision is not available within the workplace.

Remember you can accrue PSR points (M category) for every hour spent in both supervisory and mentoring relationships as a supervisee, supervisor, mentee or mentor.

For information about the Mentoring Program, please visit the website: [Information for Members > Mentoring Program](#).

For any questions regarding mentoring, supervision or professional support in general, please contact Meredith Prain (Tuesday only) at [psa@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:psa@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

**MEREDITH PRAIN**  
Professional Support Advisor

See the NSW (p 24) and TAS (p 29) Branch pages in this issue of *Speak Out* for personal reflections from members who have participated in the mentoring program.



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**VOCAL UNLOADING**  
Foundations of Vocal Unloading for Speech Pathologists

Do your clients have muscle tension? Would you like to be able to assess their posture, laryngeal position and the state of the perilaryngeal muscles and tissues? Foundations of Vocal Unloading for Speech Pathologists explains the clinical implications of how laryngeal anatomy, biomechanics & musculoskeletal issues may adversely impact your clients' ability to produce effective voice. Most importantly, this module provides you with practical skills.

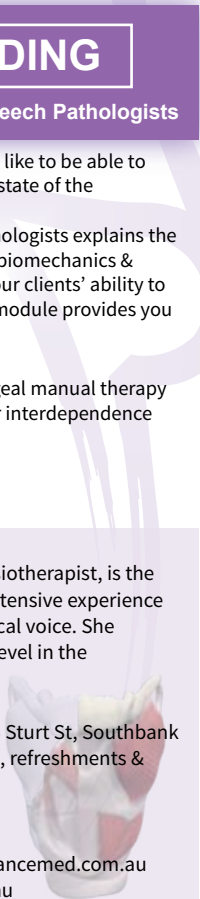
**This two day program includes:**

- The theory behind Vocal Unloading and laryngeal manual therapy
- Laryngeal, TMJ & cervical spine anatomy: their interdependence in voice
- Hands on assessment tools
- Practical sessions: assessment & treatment
- Case studies

**PRESENTER: ANNIE STRAUCH**  
Annie Strauch, Musculoskeletal & Sports Physiotherapist, is the Australian pioneer of Vocal Unloading with extensive experience treating both the performance and pathological voice. She presents at both an international & national level in the physiotherapy and voice industries.

**Date:** 30 & 31 May 2015  
**Location:** Performance Medicine, Suite 2, 135 Sturt St, Southbank  
**Cost:** \$900 + GST. Pre-reading, course manual, refreshments & lunch provided.

**For information and registration contact**  
**Performance Medicine**  
Enquiries: 03 9820 1324 Email: [info@performancemed.com.au](mailto:info@performancemed.com.au)  
Website: [www.performancemedphysio.com.au](http://www.performancemedphysio.com.au)



# Just Sentences: prison literacy pilot project



*Risdon Prison Complex, Tasmania.*

**JUST SENTENCES** is a literacy pilot which began at Tasmania's Risdon Prison in October 2013 with one inmate – later adding a second. Positive liaison between the in-prison literacy service and the external speech pathologist was the springboard into this successful project. Each service desired to learn from the other and to share knowledge and perspectives with mutual valuing.

The title was the brainchild of Melissa Iocco, the LINC Literacy Coordinator at the prison. We love the human dignity which is encapsulated within each permutation of the meanings of 'Just' and 'Sentences'. Merely language – that language, spoken or written, need not be baffling – thus speaking of hope for

mastery! Merely a decree – which speaks of acceptance, reflection and attitudinal choice. Right language – that communication is a human right; and honest, authentic, honourable communication has important place. Right decree – which speaks of rehabilitation and using liberty-deprived time justly to build skill in readiness for pro-social return to society.

One participant, in his 50s, had a presentation suggestive of a past childhood apraxia of speech and all that it brings in botheration of literacy acquisition. He had never read a book, nor written. He had always asked others to fill in forms for him when necessary. Blessed with a sunny personality, he didn't show shame in the way we know some people in his

situation might; but he would – in his words – “get wild”, if he felt that people responded to him as if he were stupid or needy. Across his adulthood he had attended many literacy programs but felt put-down when he was told “you can do this”. In his words again – and through gritted teeth – “I bloody can't do this”.

We know this scenario. A well-meaning and undoubtedly caring tutor was trying to offer him support and encouragement and assure him that the task was not too hard for him. But actually, it was too hard for him – and the tutor did not have the background knowledge to understand why. This participant often stated how frustrated and belittled he felt when this

kind of 'encouragement' was given – it had the exact opposite effect to that which the tutor had almost certainly intended.

Bringing a speech pathology skill set to this inmate opened everything. Just three months into the program he wrote the first letter of his life – to his father – and eagerly read texts of approximately grade 3–5 level complexity. He generously says: “You are the one who worked it out. The others [volunteer tutors] didn't know what to do. Like, they were nice and everything. They tried different things, but they didn't know what to do. It was confusing. But this way, I get it. It's not confusing anymore.”

As we all know – this success is not about the





*"It doesn't matter how much attention is given, words will just be squiggles on the page unless we are addressing those deeper issues [with prisoners who have literacy difficulties]. The speech pathologist's engagement with them is always at that deeper level..."*

**MELISSA IOCCO**  
 Literacy Coordinator,  
 Risdon Prison

Above, from left: Melissa Iocco, Risdon Prison's Literacy Coordinator, and Rosalie Martin; below, an example of a Just Sentences participant's reflective writing.

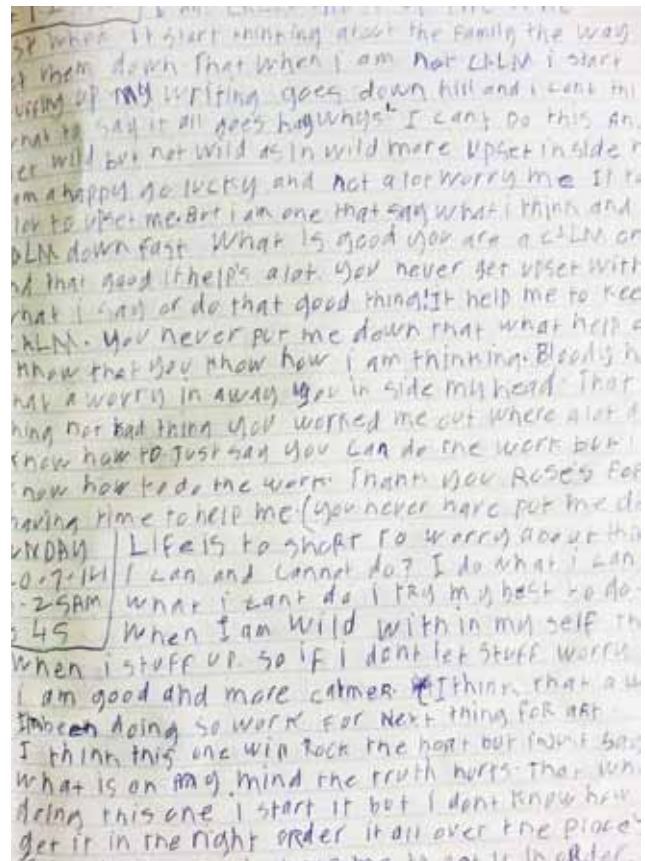
'who', but about the 'what'. That is, 'what happened': a systematic, phonemic-linguistic-metacognitive approach to teaching reading and writing.

Melissa said this: "Because of the range of severity of literacy impairments which we see in the prison, the approaches which the speech pathologist and I use are complementary. The methods that we currently use achieve great results for many clients, but for some, it doesn't matter how much attention is given, words will just be squiggles on the page unless we are addressing those deeper issues. The speech pathologist's engagement with them is always at that deeper level..."

It's been worthy work and a great privilege. The full report can be found at [www.chattermatters.com.au](http://www.chattermatters.com.au). And now, our *Just Sentences* attentions are turned toward sustainability of the program.

**ROSALIE MARTIN**  
 Speech Pathologist

News of Rosalie Martin's work recently appeared on 936 ABC Hobart radio and Hobart's ABC News Online: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-20/speech-pathologist-helps-tasmanian-prisoners-learn-to-read/6336462>







# Speech Pathology Australia takes the @weSpeechies reins

@WeSpeechies RoCur



**DO YOU USE TWITTER?** That's what everyone asked as Speech Pathology Australia (@SpeechPathAus) prepared to curate the @WeSpeechies #RoCur ('rotation curation').

If you are a stranger to social media and neither 'tweet' nor read Webwords in JCPSLP, then you may be unfamiliar with the @WeSpeechies Twitter handle (or Twitter account).

The @WeSpeechies handle was founded in March 2014 by Speech Pathology Australia members Caroline Bowen (@speech\_woman) and Bronwyn Hemsley (@BronwynHemsley). It provides an international curated meeting point in Twitter for Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs), Speech & Language Therapists (SLTs), and SLP/SLT students. Its purpose is to facilitate mutual support, the sharing of peer reviewed articles and relevant links to websites and blog posts, and opportunities for engagement with colleagues and other interested tweeters. The highlight of the week is often its one-hour Tuesday 'chat', related to the week's theme, and planned and led by the curator of that week. A description of the curator's topic is posted online, in advance, along with the four questions that are posed to chat followers.

Each week an invited person or organisation assumes responsibility for curating @WeSpeechies. In this way, the handle can facilitate discussion of diverse research topics, ideas, views and experiences, and other subject

matter. In February 2015, Speech Pathology Australia was the first professional organisation invited to curate the handle. From 22–28 February 2015, SPA (or more accurately, its Chief Executive Officer @GailMspa and Communications and Marketing Manager @anactbloke) took the @WeSpeechies handle for a 'spin'. Under SPA's auspices, the @WeSpeechies chat topic was **'Strategic planning: objectives, deliverables and future directions'**.

SPA experienced their @WeSpeechies chat as being a bit like attending a town hall meeting where everyone wants to ask their question or have their say, all at the same time. Unlike a town hall meeting where the organisers sit at a desk at the front of the hall, the organisers of the chat sit in front of their computers (or mobile phones or tablets) attempting to respond to the various questions and comments as they come up. As newcomers to chat moderation, we found that responding to everyone is not possible. But, that said, often someone else in the chat would respond to a comment or question. And so it goes on for an hour. Everyone is exposed to everyone else's thoughts and inputs – for all to see on the hashtag, #WeSpeechies. It is possible to respond to people later, and topics often extend from the chat further into the week.

A @WeSpeechies chat is carefully focused. SPA's four questions were designed to stimulate debate, comments

and questions. And with Twitter, you don't have to tweet in order to participate in the chat. You can simply 'Favourite' someone's Tweet, or 'Retweet' it (forward it) to your followers. In this way, the conversation grows exponentially beyond those actively tweeting.

Although there are a growing number of Australian speech pathologists joining and using Twitter, the potential for Twitter to be an empowering tool for intra and inter-professional discourse and change is largely untapped by most students, new graduates, or experienced academics, clinicians, educators, managers, researchers or retirees.

It is easy to open a Twitter account, which allows you to generate and disseminate news by tweeting links to abstracts, articles, and information relevant to the profession. You can use your Twitter account to draw attention to professional events or other matters that may interest your work or professional colleagues. And it doesn't have to be all about work. You can show the world a photograph of a new niece or nephew if that's what you want to do!

**MICHAEL KERRISK**

*Communications and Marketing Manager*

*Many thanks to Dr Caroline Bowen and A/Prof Bronwyn Hemsley for their support and assistance during SPA's week at the helm of the @WeSpeechies handle!*

# 17–20 May 2015 National Convention Centre, Canberra, Australia



Major Sponsor

## Register for the 2015 National Conference now

We can now count the weeks until the National Conference, with the Conference program and online registration available from the [Conference webpage](#). The Conference Planning Committee (CPC) is encouraged by the number of registrations received prior to the close of the Earlybird date (8 April 2015).

Places are still available so we ask that you read through the Conference program, select the sessions that you

wish to attend, and then proceed to the online registration. This will ensure a faster registration process and less chance of being logged out. Some workshops have limited attendance so avoid disappointment and register today! There will be **NO** wait list for any sessions.

## Program Update



**Professor Nickola W Nelson's** keynote will open the Conference, addressing the heterogeneous group of unexplained

language and literacy disorders of childhood. Professor Nelson will explore the evidence that supports the fact that young children with oral language problems become school aged, adolescents, and some adults with literacy problems, and will further consider if are there individuals with literacy problems for whom oral language difficulties cannot be detected. A detailed follow-up seminar provides delegates a model of oral and written language development and disorders which guides assessment and intervention for language and literacy disorders in school-aged children. Professor Nelson will be presenting a Masterclass while in Canberra, providing delegates with practical methods to gather and analyse written story probes to describe a student's strengths and weaknesses at multiple language levels. She will further teach delegates how to use a collaborative classroom-based writing lab approach to blend language instruction for all students, including those with a range of special needs – a must for paediatric speech pathologists.

### Professor Emeritus John (Jay)

**Rosenbek's** keynote address on day three will describe the simplifications of Evidence-Based Practice and propose that a return to complexity may restore



its original promise. Professor Rosenbek will overthrow the tyranny of the randomised clinical trial and describe how

practice can be based on the best available evidence, not the best possible evidence. This will be followed by a seminar emphasising procedures for evaluating and treating persons with one or a combination of the commonly recognised motor speech disorders. Additionally, Professor Rosenbek will conduct a pre-Conference clinical Masterclass; the emphasis will be on a variety of specific aphasia interventions including attention and intention therapies, VNeST and ARCS. Professor Rosenbek will include a description of the active ingredients needed for successful therapy. This Masterclass is a must for clinicians working in the area of aphasia.



**Associate Professor Pamela Snow,** invited presenter of the 2015 Elizabeth Usher Memorial Lecture, will discuss that

learning to read is an inherently linguistic task. This presentation will adopt a critical stance with respect to the way in which the notion of "evidence" has been constructed (and contested) in education, and will argue for a more assertive and visible presence for speech language pathology in education policy and practice debate. It will be argued that access to evidence-based early reading instruction is as much a social justice and public health equity issue as is access to population-based neonatal screening, safe housing, and clean water. This presentation is highly anticipated and will encourage speech language pathology as a profession to bridge the health and education paradigms.

The first Masterclass by Professor Nickola Nelson, **“Methods for using written expression as a context for curriculum-based language instruction and intervention”**, will encourage clinicians who work in paediatric medical or private practice contexts to think of how they might adapt the writing lab approach for their work settings.

The second Masterclass by Professor Emeritus John (Jay) Rosenbek, **“Aphasia management: It’s the method and much more”**, will appeal to attendees who are or will be seeing men and women with aphasia for therapy once the Conference is over or soon thereafter. Formal testing will be respected but will not be emphasised. Rather the emphasis will be on a variety of specific procedures including attention and intention therapies, VNeST and ARCS.

The CPC would like to thank all presenters participating within the Conference program and looks forward to their many varied and interesting presentations via the oral, workshop and poster sessions.

Any changes to the program will be made immediately to the online Registration Brochure, so it is suggested you visit the [Conference webpage](#) from time to time. You will be contacted directly if any major change affects your registration. However if you wish to make a change to your registration, please contact Tayla Hope at [conf2015@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:conf2015@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au).

The Canberra 2015 Conference Planning Committee is reminding presenters of the student oral presentation prize and the four poster presentation prizes.

### **Student oral presentation prize**

Canberra 2015 sees the continuation of a \$100 prize for best student oral presentation. All SPA student member presentations are eligible for participation and rated independently by two anonymous judges. If you wish to be considered for this prize please email your interest to Pamela Richards at [conference@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:conference@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au) no later than **Wednesday 29 April 2015**

and include your SPA student member number. Presentations will be rated on the Powerpoint presentation, verbal and non-verbal presentation skill, and overall clarity of the presentation content.

### **Poster prizes**

Canberra 2015 is providing prizes for the best poster presentation. Four poster prizes, each worth \$50, are available. All poster presentations will be considered eligible for the prizes with each poster rated independently by two anonymous judges. Posters will be rated on overall design and clarity of the poster content.

All presenters need to register to attend the Conference. Please also ensure that you complete the Speaker’s AV Checklist (sent with your confirmation letter), and once you click the submit tab, the information will be sent to Event Technology who is managing the audio visual requirements for the Conference. If you have misplaced this Checklist, please contact the National Conference Manager.

## **Pre-registration and Welcome Reception**

Delegates are invited to collect their Conference pack from the registration desk at the National Convention Centre between 5.00pm–6.30pm. Visit the exhibition while enjoying a ‘welcome’ drink.

Coaches will depart the National Convention Centre at 6.15pm and 6.30pm for the 20-minute drive to the **National Arboretum Canberra**. When Walter Burley Griffin designed Canberra, he envisaged, as part of the design, a continental arboretum; a place that would showcase iconic trees from all over the world. Today the National Arboretum Canberra features 100 forests of rare and symbolic trees from Australia and around the world and spreads over 250 hectares. Finger food and drinks will be served, plus the opportunity to network informally with fellow delegates, sponsors and exhibitors. Coaches will return delegates to the Conference hotels at 8.30pm and 9.00pm.

## **National Gallery of Australia \$200 voucher prize**

The May *Event e-News* will include the last of the competition questions. If you would like the chance to win the \$200 gift voucher please ensure you enter the competition. The lucky winner will be drawn during Pre-Registration on Sunday 17 May 2015.

## **Restaurant Night**

The Restaurant Night, a long-standing Conference tradition, will be held on Tuesday evening. To help facilitate the process and have a clearer estimate of participant numbers, we are asking members to select their restaurant preference at the time of registration. Four restaurants of various cuisines have been selected. At the Conference, delegates will be asked to re-confirm their attendance by morning tea Tuesday 19 May so restaurant reservations can be finalised. Payment for the dinner and drinks is to be made directly to the restaurant on the evening.

## **Guild Insurance Conference Dinner**



The Guild Insurance Conference Dinner, to be held in Gandel Hall of the National Gallery of Australia, will provide a fitting conclusion to ‘**C**hallenge, **B**roaden, **R**evolutionalise’. Following three days of intellectual stimulation and challenge, the dinner is a great opportunity to relax and socialise with friends and colleagues. A three-course, all-inclusive meal will be served and “Annie and the Armadillos” will ensure a great night of entertainment is had by all. We are again including the ‘Photo Booth’, and we would also like to thank Guild Insurance for their support. The Guild Insurance Conference Dinner is included with all Full Practising Member and Non Member Conference registrations. If you did not indicate on your registration form and now would like to attend, or if you wish to purchase



additional tickets, please contact the National Conference Manager.

**Botanical** – What's a more appropriate theme for the Conference dinner in the Bush Capital of Australia; known for its leafy suburbs with green public spaces, tree-lined streets, Floriade (the annual festival of flowers), National Botanical Gardens, National Arboretum, National Gallery of Australia sculpture garden, and the beauty of the four seasons.

We will welcome you at the National Arboretum and then farewell you at the National Gallery of Australia, where the native gardens complement the building, and links are created between the seasonal Sculpture Gardens with the National Arboretum patchwork quilt of '100 Trees 100 forests' and the Australian flora found at the Botanical Gardens – inspiring, informing and connecting people. Many seeds of ideas for dress flourish and may include... national or state floral emblems, your favourite bloom, floral dress or shoes, hat, fascinator, corsage, or even the use of floriography – the language of flowers which communicates without words, such as Sweet Pea for *Goodbye, departure and thank you for a lovely time* – the options are endless!

## Sponsors & Exhibitors

The CPC would like thank all the Conference sponsors and exhibitors for their support of SPA and encourages delegates to visit each display during the Conference.

There are a few stands and smaller sponsorship opportunities available, so if you know of any company that might be interested please contact Pamela Richards, National Conference Manager.

## Call for Student Volunteers/Assistants

The Call for Student Volunteers/ Assistants is now closed and unfortunately it was not possible for all applicants to be accepted. Thank you to all the students who submitted an application.

## Call for Session Chairs

Katina Swan, Scientific Program Sub-Committee Chair would like to thank the members who have volunteered to chair a session at the 2015 National Conference. Full details regarding the session and presenters' biographies will be sent out to all session chairs.

## Accommodation

PR Conference Consultants is ready to take your booking. To view the hotels and apartments available please visit the [Conference website](#) and the [Accommodation link](#). Bookings can be made online.

## Public Transport

### Airport Shuttle

Canberra Airport Shuttle (Royale coaches) operates a shuttle service from the Canberra airport to the city centre and various hotels. To make a booking, visit the [Conference website](#) > [Airport Transfers](#). At the time of printing a ticket costs \$12.00 one-way or \$20.00 return. Of course taxis are also available from the front of the Canberra airport.

### Car Parking

The National Convention Centre has undercover parking with internal lift access. The cost is \$18.00 per vehicle per day or \$10.00 per four hours or part thereof, Monday to Friday, and \$3.00 flat rate if entering after 5pm or on weekends. Voucher public parking is available across the road from the National Convention Centre on Constitution Avenue. Prices are correct as at 20 October 2014 and are subject to change. If you wish to pre-book car parking please contact the National Conference Manager at [conference@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:conference@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au) and request a booking form.

**FELICITY MARTIN**

*2015 Conference Convenor*

**PAMELA RICHARDS**

*National Conference Manager*

National Office has a 1300 368 835 number to support members within Australia to have equity in telephoning National Office for the cost of a local call. When phoning about SPA Events, please have your SPA member number ready to help us assist you as efficiently as possible.

### 2015 National Tour

*Kids, communication and context: Providing holistic and evidence-based care to children with speech and language difficulties* by **Associate Professor Jane McCormack**.



This two-day workshop aims to provide speech pathologists with knowledge and skills for providing holistic support to children with communication difficulties, and their families and educators.

Associate Professor Jane McCormack is the Speech Pathology Discipline Leader at Charles Sturt University. Jane coordinates the Bachelor of Speech and Language Pathology and the Master of Speech Pathology programs, and teaches subjects relating to child speech and language impairment and professional practice. Prior to commencing at CSU, Jane worked as a speech-language pathologist in community health and early intervention settings.

Jane conducts research into the experiences of individuals with communication difficulties and their families, the application of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF; WHO, 2001) in speech pathology, collaborative practice and alternative models of speech pathology education and service delivery.

For further details, including the planned itinerary, please visit the [SPA website](#) > [SPA News and Events](#) > [CPD Events](#) > [Association National Tour](#).

Registrations are open for workshops in Brisbane, Launceston, Perth and Adelaide.

**Evidence-Based Practice for Speech Pathologists: an Independent Study Resource** by **Associate Professor Cori Williams, PhD**, is now available at no charge for SPA members to access.



This EBP resource has been developed for self-directed learning. It is divided into six video sections with accompanying handouts and activities that you can work through at your own pace. Perfect for those wanting to refresh and/or review their skills in this area. Check it out now – it's well worth it! Go to the SPA website > click on the *Member Resources* button on the right > then click on [Evidence Based Practice](#) > [Evidence Based Practice Learning Module](#) and log in.

SPA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities are supported by a strong and wonderful team of SPA members in each Branch.

### CPD – who's who in 2015

The committees in each Branch are headed by the following valued volunteers:

- **ACT** – Katina Swan
- **NSW** – Christine Sheard
- **NT** – Erin Coonan
- **QLD** – Maureen Liddy and Stella Martin
- **SA** – Barbara Lyndon
- **TAS** – Alison Gardner
- **VIC** – Kate Bridgman and Linda Crisci
- **WA** – Kelly Robinson
- And many thanks to all the members who volunteer their time, knowledge and support through their active involvement in their Branch CPD committees.

The CPD Leaders and committees are supported by paid staff, who are SPA members. These include CPD Coordinators in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia:

- **Shirani Gomes**, New South Wales CPD Coordinator
- **Tricia Chardon**, Queensland CPD Coordinator
- **Catherine Quin**, South Australian CPD Coordinator
- **Erin Masson**, Western Australian CPD Coordinator

Branch CPD committees are supported in the running of their events by staff based at National Office – Sharon Crane, Senior Advisor, Professional Education & Certification (also a SPA member), and Anita Rodricks, Professional Education Administration.

### Let's hand over to Anita who will tell you about her role in supporting SPA CPD ...



**I HAVE BEEN** working in the role of Professional Education Administration Officer for over a year now. I work with Sharon Crane, Senior Advisor Professional Education and Certification, who continues to be a source of inspiration to me with her work ethic.

It has been a very exciting time and a great learning experience for me with many varied tasks to keep me busy.

My role, amongst other things, involves managing the CPD Events Library, which incorporates a range of recordings of CPD events and Independent Study Resources. The Library is proving to be very popular as it gives members a chance to catch up on events they may have missed out on attending.

I am also involved in setting up CPD events in our system from inception through to finality, from managing speaker agreements through to closing off events and entering event evaluations for each event.

I enjoy working with the state CPD Coordinators and assist them by booking flights and accommodation for speakers, monitoring attendance for CPD events, etc.

On a personal note, I was thrilled to turn 60 in February and am still celebrating! I am off to India in March on a holiday for a month with a wonderful group of friends. Life is good!

**ANITA RODRICKS**  
Professional Education Administration

**CPD program ...** To view events open for online registration, watch out for the monthly *Events* and *Branch e-News*, and/or check out the SPA website under *Upcoming Events*, and/or go to the webpage > *SPA News and Events* > *CPD Events* > [CPD Branch Events and CPDLive](#). Earlybird rates available for registrations up to one month before the event date, after which an additional fee of \$66 applies post-Earlybird close.

**Registrations are now open for the CPD Events listed below.**

## CPD Events

**Register before the Earlybird rate for 2015 SPA CPD Events and save \$66...**

Book before the Earlybird closing date to save money, to assist CPD committees in planning, and to avoid the disappointment of finding the workshop has sold out.

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**Friday 21 August 2015**

**Sydney** *Receptive Language Impairment in Young Children* by **Mellanie Sherwood**

### NORTHERN TERRITORY

**Monday 17 August 2015**

**Darwin** *Receptive Language Impairment in Young Children* by **Mellanie Sherwood**

### QUEENSLAND

**Friday 1 May 2015**

**Gold Coast** *An update on research of word retrieval impairments and their treatments* by **Professor Lyndsey Nickels**

**Saturday 2 May 2015**

**Gold Coast** *A Journey through NARNIA: Integrating verbs, sentences and discourse in aphasia therapy* by **Associate Professor Anne Whitworth**

**Friday 10 July 2015**

**Townsville** *Early Language Treatments: an Evidence Update* by **Kate Short**

**Monday 31 August and Tuesday 1 September 2015**

**Brisbane, 2015 National Tour** *Kids, communication and context: Providing holistic and evidence-based care to children with speech and language difficulties* by **Associate Professor Jane McCormack**



## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Thursday 23 April and Friday 24 April 2015**

**Adelaide** *An update on autism: research and practice across the spectrum* by **Prof Jacqueline Roberts**

**Monday 15 June 2015**

**Adelaide** *Working with adults with cognitive-communication disorders* by **Dr Anna Copley**

**Friday 31 July 2015**

**Adelaide** *An update on research on word retrieval impairments and their treatment* by **Professor Lindsey Nickels**

**Friday 18 September 2015**

**Adelaide** *Advanced Language Skills in Children and Adolescents: Assessment and Intervention* by **Dr Marleen Westerveld**

**Thursday 8 and Friday 9 October 2015**

**Adelaide, 2015 National Tour** *Kids, communication and context: Providing holistic and evidence-based care to children with speech and language difficulties* by **Associate Professor Jane McCormack**

## VICTORIA

**Thursday 23 and Friday 24 April 2015**

**Melbourne** *Utilising FEES as part of an Evidence-Based Approach to Dysphagia Assessment and Management* by **Michelle Cimoli** and **Rhonda Holmes**

**Thursday 27 and Friday 28 August 2015**

**Melbourne** *An update of evidence-based approaches for managing phonological impairment in toddlers, preschool and school-age children* by **Dr Elise Baker**

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Tuesday 21 April 2015**

**Perth** *Measures for exploring quality of life with clients with aphasia: Know more, use more* by **Dr Madeline Cruice**

**Wednesday 22 April 2015**

**Perth** *A Practical Guide to Managing Fussy Eaters Sundowner* by **Dr Julie Cichero**

**Thursday 23 April 2015**

**Perth** *Topical Issues in Adult Dysphagia Management* by **Dr Julie Cichero**

**Friday 1 May 2015**

**Perth** *Using the SETT framework to find the right fit: AAC success* by **Ms Dolly Bhargava**

**Friday 12 June 2015**

**Perth** *Working with Adults with Cognitive-Communications Disorders* by **Dr Petrea Cornwell**

**Monday 5 and Tuesday 6 October 2015**

**Perth, 2015 National Tour** *Kids, communication and context: Providing holistic and evidence-based care to children with speech and language difficulties* by **Associate Professor Jane McCormack**

## NATIONAL

*Online 90-minute events run in conjunction with CPDLive*

**Recordings available via CPDLive**

*Managing Dysphagia via Telepractice: What's the Evidence?*

by **Professor Liz Ward**

Live event ran on 2 July 2014

**Viewing available until 2 July 2015**

*The role of speech pathology with clients with mental health disorders*

by **Mary Woodward** and **Natalie Albores**

Live event ran on 28 August 2014

**Viewing available until 28 August 2015**

*A clinical advantage: the art of accent modification within a speech pathology context*

by **Tristan Nickless**

Live event ran on 19 November 2014

**Viewing available until 19 November 2015**

*A professionally collaborative approach to supporting upper primary and secondary students with language and literacy difficulties*

by **Dr Julia Starling**

Live event ran on Friday 12 December 2014

**Viewing available until 12 December 2015**

*Enhancing practice with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds*

by **Professor Sharynne McLeod** and **Sarah Verdon**

Live event ran on Tuesday 24 February 2015

**Viewing available until 24 February 2016**

*Stuttering across the lifespan: Could I use telehealth?*

by **Dr Kate Bridgman**

Live event ran on Wednesday 25 March 2015

**Viewing available until 25 March 2016**

*Diagnosing and treating apraxia of speech for optimal outcomes*

by **Associate Professor Kirrie Ballard**

Live event ran on Wednesday 15 April 2015

**Viewing available until 15 April 2016**

**Upcoming live events via CPDLive**

Live event to run on **Wednesday 15 April 2015 (11am–12.30pm AEST)** *Diagnosing and treating apraxia of speech for optimal outcomes* by **Associate Professor Kirrie Ballard**

Live event to run on **Monday 4 May 2015 (12–1.30pm AEST)** *Step back and take a fresh look at adults with an intellectual disability who present with dysphagia* by **Monika Kaatzke-McDonald**

**SHARON CRANE**

*Senior Advisor, Professional Education & Certification (CPD & PSR)*

# Speech pathology practice – no place for fine print

**DO YOU EVER** read the fine print when you agree to the terms and conditions related to a transaction or service? How many times have you inadvertently signed up for a newsletter or ongoing communications? Do you ever think to yourself I wish I had known that that was going to happen because I wouldn't have agreed to that? When

clients access a speech pathology service there is no place for fine print. Every aspect of the service should be discussed either before it occurs or as it occurs, and information should preferably be also made available to the client in writing. It is risky to assume that just because the client is attending a speech

pathology session, they fully understand and have consented to what is going to happen, the costs, and the potential outcomes. This assumption often leads to misunderstandings and reduced client satisfaction, and in the worst case scenario, complaints and claims being made against the speech pathologist.

Over the coming months we will present a series of articles discussing how to avoid “fine print” and ensure your clients are making fully informed decisions. The articles will cover five main topics:

1. Intake
2. Assessment
3. Communications
4. Interventions
5. Client feedback.

## Intake

**I know and understand:**

- what a speech pathologist does
- where I can find out more information about speech pathology
- what other speech pathology services are available.

## Assessment

**I know and understand:**

- why an assessment is needed
- what I need to bring to the assessment
- what the assessment session will involve and how long it will take
- what the assessment report will look like.

## Communications

**I know and understand:**

- if someone will be contacted about me (or my child)
- who will be contacted
- why they will be contacted
- what will be discussed
- that I can specify what I don't want discussed.

## Fees

**I know and understand:**

- what the fee will be
- how and when to pay the fee
- if I am eligible for a rebate and how to claim the rebate
- report writing fees
- cancellation fee policy.

## Interventions

**I know and understand:**

- why treatment is recommended
- how long the course of treatment will be for
- what are the goals
- how outcomes are measured
- what is best practice
- how the decision for treatment to be discontinued will be made.

## Client Feedback

**I know and understand:**

- how to provide feedback
- who to complain to
- how my complaint will be handled.



Please see overleaf for *Intake – Point of referral or initial contact with a potential client*

# Intake – Point of referral or initial contact with a potential client

**IN MOST CASES**, the first time you speak to a potential client will be the first time they have spoken to a speech pathologist. Often the client will not fully understand what a speech pathologist is and what we do. Providing them with this information and details about your business will increase their understanding of our profession and will potentially minimise the risk of misunderstandings or disagreements in the future.

How much time you spend on intake and the level of detail you go into is a personal business decision and may vary from client to client depending on their needs and the complexity of these needs. It is highly recommended that intake discussions occur either over the phone or face-to-face, that you have a standard procedure or checklist that you follow, and for the client to be provided with information in writing.

Speech Pathology Australia’s fact sheets can be used to provide information about what a speech pathologist is and what we do, and a brochure can be developed for your business. The brochure or information sheet can include

details about the type of clients you work with (e.g., children, adults, both), the type of service you provide (e.g., mobile, clinic-based), your fee schedule and when and how to pay, and any policies or procedures that the client needs to be aware of, etc. A template for this information sheet is included in SPA’s Policy and Procedure Manual. Providing information about what an assessment session involves will prepare the client for the next step.

Just as with the “fine print” we never read, don’t assume that your client has read the information provided. You will need to discuss the information in your first session and encourage the client to ask questions. Ultimately, you want the client to understand what a speech pathologist does and how your business works before they agree to the next step... an assessment. The assessment process will be the topic of our next article in the June edition of *Speak Out*.

**CHRISTINE LYONS**

*Senior Advisor, Professional Practice*



**The Hanen Centre®**  
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Nurture early language and literacy...  
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Attend a Learning Language and Loving It™ Certification Workshop and gain an evidence-based training framework that has been shown to:

- Change teacher interactive behaviour in the long term
- Increase children’s overall language use, as well as the complexity of their utterances
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This intensive 3-day Hanen workshop provides you with a set of invaluable materials for engaging and supporting educators to create language-rich, responsive environments for young children (birth-5).







**Space is limited! Register today for this upcoming *Learning Language and Loving It* workshop:**  
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## Does your advertising comply with SPA's Code of Ethics – Advertising policy?

Use this quick audit tool prior to 1 July 2015 to check that your advertising is compliant (and there is an extended electronic version available in the FAQ document, in the [Resources](#) section of the website).

-  My advertising is accurate and does not misrepresent the profession. I do not guarantee results.
-  When I advertise the benefits or outcomes of a program it is based on evidence.
-  My advertising contains the accurate wording and/or post-nominal for my SPA membership and CPSP status, and for each of my staff.
-  I have used the approved SPA logo (which I obtained, with permission, from SPA), or does not contain the approved SPA logo because not all of my staff are SPA members.
-  I do not use testimonials in any of my advertising.
-  My advertising does not include the terms 'expert' or 'specialist' unless I have achieved recognised accreditation (currently only available internationally, there are no recognised formal credentialing programs in Australia).

## Advertising – Using post-nominals and SPA logos

**DID YOU KNOW** only current financial members are permitted to use Association sub-brand logos in advertising?

These are appropriate logos you are able to use as a **Speech Pathology Australia member**:



If you have **current CPSP status** (i.e., have received a Certificate of PSR Recognition that states you are eligible to use the Certified Practising Speech Pathologist title and CPSP post-nominal for the year), you may also use these logos:



The **post-nominal** that is appropriate for current ordinary members to use is 'MSPA', and if appropriate you can also use the 'CPSP' post-nominal.

**An example of the accepted lay-out is:**

Jane Smith  
Speech Pathologist,  
(your degree) MSPA, CPSP

**TRISH JOHNSON**  
*Senior Advisor, Ethics and Professional Issues*

# Mentoring: Paying it forward

**MIRIAM STAKER** is Head of Department at Southern NSW Local Health District Eurobodalla and has mentored speech pathologists for more than 25 years. She was awarded an achievement for her longstanding contribution to mentoring during the NSW Branch *Nation for Communication* celebrations in October 2014. We took the opportunity to interview Miriam on what it is that keeps her mentoring.

## What made you decide to become a mentor?

For me, encouraging people is something that I do in my life, whether it be my professional or personal life. I believe that if you want to grow people, then you need to encourage them. Mentoring provides that opportunity.

## What exactly is mentoring?

Mentoring is about mutual learning, support and encouragement. It doesn't have one 'look' – it's what you and the mentee choose it to be. It could be anything from directing your mentee to local resources or lending an ear after a stressful week to providing clinical support with a difficult case.

## Who have you mentored?

I've mentored speech pathologists from Cooma to Lennox Head to Yass and Balgownie. Some have been sole therapists; others have worked for large organisations in rural and metropolitan areas. Some clinicians have been new graduates, others have been practising for a while. I believe that mentoring is a valued part of your continual growth, not just your early years.

## Have you noticed any changes in mentoring over the last 25 years?

With advancements in technology, being able to make a video call has made mentoring members in rural and remote areas much easier. It's so meaningful to



*Previous NSW Branch President Candice Brady presenting Miriam Staker with her award, in recognition of Miriam's outstanding commitment to mentoring speech pathologists over many years.*

connect face-to-face, even via computer screen!

## What has been the most rewarding part of mentoring?

Seeing people through their whole careers – twenty years down the track and you see that they're still in the profession, that they're continuing to strive to provide fabulous service to clients. Seeing people empowered to achieve their goals and provide best practice, and seeing them become mentors themselves. It's encouraging to see them grow and give back to the future of the profession in return.

## What advice would you give to someone considering becoming a mentor?

Just do it! You don't have to be perfect

or an expert to mentor – you just have to be a listening ear! Look at it as an opportunity to use your clinical and professional skills to encourage and support a peer, and prepare to learn and grow just as much in return. Enter on equal ground, be open, supportive and encouraging. It's such a rewarding experience for mentor and mentee alike. We have a responsibility to grow our profession and this is a wonderful way to do it.

For further information on Speech Pathology Australia's mentoring program, please see the [Mentoring webpage](#).

**JESICA RENNIE** and **ERYKA ARTEAGA**

*NSW Branch eNews  
and Speak Out co-editors*

## Student placement in remote Australia: a life-enhancing experience

**AS PART OF MY FINAL YEAR** in the Bachelor of Speech Pathology, myself and Megan Horner, a friend and peer, were chosen to represent James Cook University on an eight-week student placement at the Clyde Fenton Primary School in Katherine, NT. According to the ARIA+ index (ABS), Katherine is classified as a remote location, servicing an area the size of the state of Victoria. Megan and I worked under a peer-to-peer supervisory model of practice, with remote clinical supervision provided twice weekly through Skype from Darwin and Townsville. We had face-to-face supervision from Flinders University and lots of support from the school, especially the special education teacher, Gabriele Stephens.

Living and working in remote Australia was a wonderful experience and one I would repeat. Megan and I had unique opportunities, such as advocating for the speech pathology profession over a breakfast with the chief minister of the Northern Territory, Adam Giles; undertaking a 1,500 kilometres outreach road trip to Borrooloola to engage with the high school students and the local health clinic; facilitating workshops at the Remote Health Experience weekend; and participating in the local Aboriginal culture, creating art and learning some of the local languages.

At the school we held 'jolly phonics' intensives with small group numbers. Over the course of a four-week period we saw wonderful outcomes with the children. Their teacher reported their skill level was similar to the rest of their peers. We conducted one-on-one intervention for both speech and (English) language and whole group intervention with the Indigenous Learning Unit. Some of the children at the school were multilingual with English as their 3rd, 4th or even 5th language. Our work with the children was symbiotic, whereby we gained knowledge about their culture and environment, which then allowed us to



*Above, front row only: Megan Horner (red shirt), Jessica Taylor (blue shirt) and Dr Pascale Dettwiler (end); right: Megan (sitting) and Jessica (standing) take a helicopter flight.*

individualise treatment and maximise outcomes. We worked closely with the class teacher who was fluent in Kriol to build rapport with the children and start to understand their culture. At times, it would have been advantageous to have a clinical educator close by to ask questions, but on the flip side, this independence was a gift and I gained valuable insight into myself as a clinician.

The speech pathology clinic was situated within the school and was a small room where we could bring children for intervention if another location such as the playground, library or classroom was not appropriate. Megan and I started a small library of resources, with categories such as ear health, audiology, dental, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD), phonological awareness, speech and language screener, voice care, referral forms, word classes, literature and Speech Pathology Australia clinical guidelines, including the Code of Ethics. We also created and delivered a professional development workshop to the teachers at the school titled "voice care for teachers". We had over 90 per cent attendance from the school staff, including the principal!



Megan and I saw a lot of the surrounding countryside with a helicopter flight over the Katherine gorge, swimming in the Mataranka thermal pools, cycling along the Katherine river, and even hiking 7km into Nitmiluk National Park to see the Northern Rockhole, a path closed for the majority of the year. I think I could speak for both of us in saying that our student placement in remote Australia changed our lives for the better and we have made lifelong friends in the process. We wish to thank Louise Brown, James Cook University; Pascale Dettwiler, Flinders University; and the Clyde Fenton Primary School.

**JESSICA TAYLOR**  
James Cook University student



## Best Start for language and literacy development

**BEST START** is a universal early intervention family literacy program led by the State Library of Queensland, aimed at supporting stronger language and literacy environments for young children across Queensland from 0–5 years. It commenced its roll-out in January 2015, and will be delivered in partnership with public libraries to directly support parents and primary caregivers as the child's first and most important teacher.

*Best Start* identifies the urgent need to create a positive cultural shift and more confidence in learning and literacy in our communities. This is in order to enable parents and caregivers to better understand their role, and what they can do to support their children by encouraging everyday play, learning, and language-rich interaction and environments at home.

Dan Georgeson, Executive Manager, Literacy and Young People's Services at the State Library of Queensland, states "public libraries through their targeted programs and services, are well placed to respond to the local needs of children and their families. Libraries are available to children, and their families, from babyhood, providing year-round, free access



From left: Kylie Webb, Consultant Speech Pathologist, State Library of Queensland; and Dan Georgeson, Executive Manager, Literacy and Young People's Services, State Library of Queensland.

to resources and services that support language, reading and literacy activities".

Kylie Webb (Speech Pathologist) has been seconded to the State Library of Queensland from her role

in Queensland Health to consult on the Best Start initiative. Kylie has a wealth of experience working directly with children and their families in the 0–5 year-old age group, as well as clinical research and training experience in language and emergent literacy.

Kylie will work with the *Best Start* team at the State Library of Queensland to maximise the opportunities that the existing 320 library networks have throughout Queensland, and expand these through a range of initiatives to reach children and their families who don't currently access library programs.

Parent toolkits, training, a state-wide awareness campaign, and partnership opportunities with existing services are all a part of the *Best Start* initiative. For more information please contact the State Library on 07 3780 7902.

**KYLIE WEBB**  
Consultant Speech Pathologist,  
State Library of Queensland

### CONSULTING ROOM AVAILABLE IN KELVIN GROVE, BRISBANE

The *Better Life Centre, Kelvin Grove* is seeking a committed and enthusiastic, self-employed Speech Pathologist to join our multi-disciplinary team. A rare opportunity to work with a variety of professionals is available.

Our current clinicians and specialists include:

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- Developmental Paediatrician;
- Occupational Therapists;
- Counsellors; and
- Social Workers.



Our centre offers fully furnished, air-conditioned rooms, all serviced with telephones. Adjoined is also a bookstore which complements our multi-disciplinary philosophy.

Reception staff are available during opening hours Monday to Saturday, and evenings by arrangement. Full reception services are provided, including Medicare, FaHCSIA, HICAPS and EFTPOS. The Front Desk Practice Management System is used.

Full-time and part-time rooms are available.

Inspections are welcome. Please direct enquiries to Practice Manager Judi Pomfret by phone on (07) 3353 5430, or email [judi@betterlife.com.au](mailto:judi@betterlife.com.au)

# Make a difference with a career in education

Working as a speech-language pathologist in Queensland state schools is a rewarding career that can make a real difference to the lives of students.

- Be part of a statewide team of speech-language pathologists who are leaders in their field.
- Work with educational teams to help students to succeed at school.
- Enjoy flexible, family-friendly work schedules.
- Special incentives available for working in rural locations.

For more information visit [www.education.qld.gov.au/hr/recruitment/therapy](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/hr/recruitment/therapy) or email [SLPJobs@dete.qld.gov.au](mailto:SLPJobs@dete.qld.gov.au)



*'I was attracted to my job because of the support network – the idea of having other speech-language pathologists across the state to collaborate with and learn from. I also like the education focus in our therapy services. It gives us a clear purpose for our work'*  
Amelia Kennedy

140140

Great state. Great opportunity.  
And a plan for the future.



Authorised by the Queensland Government, Mary Street, Brisbane.



## Advertise with us

SPA's bi-monthly members' magazine *Speak Out* is distributed to 6,000+ Australian and international speech pathologists. For more information about advertising opportunities in 2015 please contact Publications Officer at [pubs@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:pubs@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)



## Looking for work? Advertising a speech pathologist job?

Remember to check our [Education and Careers](#) section of the website, available from the homepage menu.

For more information about our Job Board please call National Office on 1300 368 835.



## New and Aspiring Speechies (NAAS) official launch



**IN MID 2014**, the South Australian Branch sent out an email to all final-year Bachelor and Masters of Speech Pathology students at Flinders University to establish interest in forming a Student and Recent Graduate Networking Group.

SA Branch members Josephine Kemp (Member Engagement), Emma Leeson (Member Engagement), and Cathy Clark (Branch Chair), met with us to explore the scope of functions of the group and brainstorm for events to be held in 2015. From these discussions the 'New and Aspiring Speechies' (NAAS) group was created by representatives Selena Petrou, Emma Foreman, Emily Morris and Tara Shem, who continued to meet on a monthly basis. Creating the NAAS brand involved design of the logo (donated by graphic designer Josh Tharaldsen) and set-up of an email address and Facebook page as points of contact with future members.



The NAAS group was officially launched by its reps at the SPA SA Branch Annual General Meeting on 1 December 2014. After presenting the vision and aims of the group we invited students, recent graduates and experienced clinicians to register their details and specify their participation interests (e.g., attending events, becoming a representative, presenting at an event).

The first NAAS event was a relaxed cocktail evening held on the 10 February 2015, at Grace The Establishment. This provided members the opportunity to network, catch up with peers, and listen to two recent graduates share their experiences in transitioning from student to clinician. We were lucky enough to have presentations from Lauren Hammond, who won the new graduate position for 2015 at The Repatriation General Hospital, and Kate Dempsey, a 2013 graduate who has had unique experiences working in community health and a NGO.



Students at the NAAS cocktail event in February.

The night also comprised of fun and games in the form of our very own "famous faces of speech pathology" game, where attendees were asked to name the pictured speech pathologists and Flinders University speech pathology lecturers. Della O'Brien was the winner and received a buffet dinner for two, which was kindly donated by the Watermark Hotel, Glenelg.

The event was advertised on the NAAS Facebook page, via email, through Flinders University, the SPA Events webpage, and in the January edition of the SA Branch e-News. Registration for the event was available via the Speech Pathology Australia website at a cost of \$5 for SPA members or \$10 for non-members. Overall the night was a great success, with 35 people in attendance, and a total of 59 people currently registered as NAAS members.

We recently farewelled two original NAAS reps, Emily and Tara, who are relocating to Melbourne to take up speech pathology positions; we would like to welcome new reps Jasmine Crisanti, Ella Conboy, Anja Elder, and Lisa Divett!

NAAS are currently in the midst of planning the next event and are excited for what the future holds for the group. If you are interested in becoming a NAAS member, or are willing to share your professional experiences at one of our events, please contact:

**Emma Foreman**  
[emmaforeman7@gmail.com](mailto:emmaforeman7@gmail.com)

or

**Selena Petrou**  
[selenapetrou@hotmail.com](mailto:selenapetrou@hotmail.com)

We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

**EMMA, SELENA**  
and the **NAAS GROUP**



## Rare Opportunity

A rare opportunity exists for an experienced speech pathologist wanting to move into private practice, or expand an established practice. Adelaide Voice and Speech Services (operated by Voicecraft) is an established Speech Pathology practice in Melbourne St., North Adelaide. We currently have a stylish consulting room, group therapy room and business administration support available for a private speech pathologist to establish, relocate or grow his or her business.

### We will provide and manage -

- Banner under which to operate (AVASS)
- Sessional use of the consulting and/or group room
- Website
- Email address
- Business cards bearing the trading logo and your details
- Online Practice Management System – access from any internet connected computer
- Bookings and appointment confirmations service (incl. issuing forms)
- Recording equipment
- Message forwarding service (incoming)
- Invoicing & banking service (we will generate invoices, receipt payments & forward the balance of your receivables, once our percentage is deducted)
- Clinic stationery, forms and documentation
- Letterhead template for your reports/clinical correspondence
- Clinic printing, scanning and fax facilities
- Clinic mail & scanning service (incoming reports scanned to file, mail sent on your behalf)
- Credit card payment facilities/HICAPS
- Staff tea & coffee facilities
- Clinic laptop, if you do not wish to use your own

### You simply -

- Build and manage your caseload
- Provide appropriate service to your patients (incl. assessment/notes/reports etc)
- Manage compliance matters relating to your services (insurances, memberships, consents)
- Advise us of billable services to third parties (WorkCover/medico-legal reports, travel, ph. calls)
- Provide copy for your web-page

**If you are interested in taking up this opportunity, contact -**

melanie.manson@avass.net.au  
**Adelaide Voice & Speech Services**

**THE TASMANIAN BRANCH** of Speech Pathology Australia meets once per month. All members are welcome at our meetings. Would you like to have a more active role in Speech Pathology Australia in 2015? Come along to one of our meetings with video link-ups across the state.

## Meet some of the Tasmanian Branch Exec for 2015



**Nicole Hatch,  
Deputy Chair**

Nicole completed her Graduate Entry Masters in Speech Pathology at the University of Queensland in 2011.

She currently works for the Department of Health and Human Services in Hobart at the Community Rehabilitation Unit. Recently, she completed a six-month rotation to the Royal Hobart Hospital where she worked in the Acute Stroke Unit and General Medical Wards.

Nicole was a primary school teacher from 2003–2009 and taught ages five to eight during this time. Her inspiration for becoming a speech pathologist began with a class she taught where a high level of the students presented with speech and language impairment. After completing a research project and clinics based in the adult population, she developed an interest in geriatrics, stroke, and progressive neurological diseases. Nicole is excited to contribute to the Tasmanian Branch this year as part of the executive council.



**Catherine Wood,  
Secretary &  
Treasurer**

Catherine trained in Brisbane before finding her slice of paradise working on the North West

Coast. She works mostly in early intervention and primary school-aged children. Catherine enjoyed attending the SPA meetings, and is looking forward to being part of the committee in 2015.

## Reflections on the SPA Mentoring program

**ISOBEL LEWIS** talks about some of her experiences with the Speech Pathology Australia mentoring program. Isobel was a mentee in 2007 and mentor from 2010 to 2014.

### **Why did you choose to become a mentee?**

I chose to access the mentoring program as mentee when I was a new graduate. When I was first starting out in my career I thought it would be good to have some support available outside of the work place.

### **Why did you choose to become a mentor?**

I signed up as a mentor as I felt the program had benefited me as a new graduate, and I wanted to be able to give others the same benefits that I had experienced. Supporting new graduate speech pathologists and student speech pathologists is an area that I am passionate about.

### **Can you tell us about your experiences as a mentee/mentor?**

Both experiences have been rewarding. In both roles I believe that having someone to talk over any issues with, or to help you further develop your skills in new areas, is very beneficial.

### **Do you have any advice for speechies in Tasmania who are considering taking part in the Speech Pathology Australia mentoring program?**

I encourage everyone to take part in the program. I think we are very lucky in Tasmania, in that most workplaces provide great supervision for new graduates; however, it is always nice to have someone outside of the workplace to talk things over with. As a mentor, I find it very rewarding and also a nice way to keep in touch with speech pathologists working in different parts of the state.

*Thanks Isobel! More information about the Speech Pathology Australia mentoring program is available on the [SPA website](#).*

**KATE DAY**

*Speech Language Pathologist  
Tasmanian Speak Out Editor*



Australian volunteer Peng-Sim Eng with students at the Kianh Centre in Vietnam.

## We can speak, even without a voice

**TAM\* WAS NINE YEARS OLD** when Australian volunteer Peng-Sim Eng first met him in April 2012. Highly anxious, Tam had frequent tantrums and hit his friends. He was labeled, together with many other students at the Kianh Centre special education facility in Hoi An, Vietnam, as 'not able to remember' his alphabets and numbers.

Peng had just arrived from her home state of Victoria as an Australian volunteer, funded by the Australian Government as part of the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program, to work for two years at the Kianh Centre as a special education specialist.

Although in its infancy, the systematic facilitation of special education in Vietnam is improving. It was apparent to Peng that her role would be to introduce fundamental skills that would be useful for the teaching staff at the Kianh Centre to address the diversity of impairments presented by the twenty-odd students.

"I wanted to deliver an effective training program, so that teachers were better able to understand the students as individuals with specific needs and abilities. To teach in ways that enabled students to acquire functional skills towards greater independence, and to plan for classrooms with diverse abilities and needs."

Within a year of the training program, Tam's teacher made changes to her teaching strategies which resulted in more effective engagement and learning.

Tam began using level one mainstream textbooks. He was able to blend alphabets to read simple Vietnamese words, including diacritics. His mathematical skills had improved significantly and he could now execute simple mathematical calculations.

"I found addressing the behavioural and communication needs of students especially challenging because these were not viewed as educational

needs. The importance of expressive communication had been overlooked in favour of development of academic and other skills. At that point, expressive communication of verbally impaired students was limited mainly to body gestures and confirming or negating questions and statements," said Peng.

"In the absence of support from professional speech pathologists, in June 2012 I worked with local staff to initiate the systematic use of symbols to augment the expressive communication needs of students."

To develop a system, selected staff members at the centre identified culturally important themes and vocabulary. Culturally appropriate symbols were designated to each word.

Staff and students trialed and identified some of the most commonly used core Vietnamese words to facilitate navigation to other fringe vocabulary within the system.





## Social Thinking® Masterclass Sydney & Melbourne

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**Day 1 Practical Strategies for Teaching Concrete Learners across the Classroom, Playground & Home**

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[www.spectrumspeech.com.au](http://www.spectrumspeech.com.au)

Vocabulary was then organised in a multi-level communication book. Layout was undertaken with consideration for enabling learning and teaching. The staff were taught to use and navigate through the book until they could teach the students how to use it.

By the end of 2012, some students were able to make statements to express themselves with three or more key words of their choice. With the turn of a page, they could clearly express themselves for the first time in their lives.

Through her volunteering experience, Peng contributed to pioneering the development of augmented communication at Kianh Centre.

The culturally appropriate Vietnamese multi-level communication book is now instrumental for the development of greater awareness of the communication

potential and need of verbally impaired people in Vietnam.

Teachers and medical professionals from beyond the Kianh Centre have recognised the potential the communication book holds for some of their verbally impaired clients. Peng has enabled staff at the Kianh Centre to respond to requests from these professionals by undertaking augmentative and alternative communication training in early 2015.

Peng is one of thousands of Australian volunteers who have shared their professional skills in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program is an Australian Government initiative.

Australian Volunteers International is one of three core partners for the AVID program.

Positions for a wide range of assignments, including speech pathology and related positions, are advertised. Airfares, accommodation, modest living allowances and extensive briefing and support are provided. Learn more at [www.australianaidvolunteers.gov.au](http://www.australianaidvolunteers.gov.au).

*\* Name changed for privacy*

**SOPHIA WALTER with PENG-SIM ENG**



## April holidays are here: enjoy your member benefits.

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