

18th August 2015

Dear SPEVI members,

I am pleased to advise the release of the SPEVI Standards Elaborations for Specialist Teachers (Vision Impairment). The Standards Elaborations address the professional qualities of educators with tertiary qualifications in education of students with vision impairment. The Standards Elaborations “elaborate” upon the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers that were published in 2014 by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The Standards Elaborations also “elaborate” on our recently released SPEVI Professional Standards for Specialist Teachers (Vision Impairment).

I wish to thank everyone who contributed to the drafting of the Standards Elaborations (their names are listed on page 6). I also wish to thank Trudy Smith, Chair of the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf, for her support in hosting the SPEVI elaborations workshop and for guiding us through the development process. The Standards Elaborations are available for download from the SPEVI website - <http://www.spevi.net/standards-elaborations>.

Summarised below are several initiatives that have been undertaken by the Committee of Management since their June 2015 Strategic Planning Day at RIDBC Renwick Centre:

1. Development and launch by Phia Damsma of the new SPEVI website, <http://www.spevi.net/>
2. Development of the SPEVI Face Book Page by co-Editors, Ben Clare and Karen Gilligan - <https://www.facebook.com/SouthPacificEducatorsinVisionImpairmentInc>.
3. Development of a new membership category for new and renewing members. The category is for specialist teachers (VI) with tertiary qualifications in education of students with vision impairment, and includes a mandatory requirement of 15 hours of professional learning in vision impairment every two years. The revised Membership Application/Renewal Form is available on the SPEVI website –see <http://www.spevi.net/join/>.
4. SPEVI submission to the Review of the National Disability Advocacy Framework - thanks to Phia Damsma, Sheila Klinger and Sue Silveira.
5. SPEVI submission to the Senate Inquiry into the School System for Students with Disability - thanks to Nicole Donaldson and colleagues.
6. SPEVI 2014/15 AGM by teleconference, 15th July 2015.
7. SPEVI Committee of Management teleconference meeting, 15th August 2015.
8. Agreement to consolidate SPEVI accounts into one national account, with separate ledgers for SPEVI Branch funds. This includes closure of the SPEVI Queensland and Victorian bank accounts.
9. Allocation of one-third of the surplus for the 2015 SPEVI conference to SPEVI Victoria activities, with the remaining surplus directed towards the SPEVI website update and member priorities identified in the January 2015 SPEVI member survey.
10. Revision of SPEVI Constitution/Rules, with the revised draft Constitution to be released for member feedback in coming weeks.
11. Establishment of a SPEVI Complaint Handling Policy and Code of Conduct – see <http://www.spevi.net/constitution-and-policies/>.
12. Establishment of the 2017 Brisbane SPEVI conference organising committee, with tentative conference dates of Monday 9th and Friday 13th January 2017.
13. Application to the Department of Social Services (DSS) for addition of appropriately qualified specialist teachers (vision impairment) to the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel.

If we are successful in our DSS application for the Better Start Panel, it will enable SPEVI members who sign up for the new SPEVI membership category (item 3 above) to register themselves with Dept Social Services (DSS) as Better Start early intervention service providers. Parents and carers of eligible children will then be able to seek early intervention services from these SPEVI members. An additional benefit will be that SPEVI members who are registered as Better Start providers will be able to apply to the DSS to become service providers under the NDIS. I will keep you informed on our progress with the application.

I wish to sincerely thank Dianne Skillern of Statewide Vision Resource Centre (SVRC) for her many years as SPEVI Victoria Treasurer. Dianne’s book-keeping skills are a marvel and she has skilfully managed the “engine room” of SPEVI Victoria, including managing the finances for SPEVI conferences held in Victoria.

As you can see from the above list, it has been a busy few months. Please be in touch if you wish to discuss any of the above initiatives.

Sincerely Yours,

Frances Gentle

President

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