

## Christopher Davidson Awarded OAM

Chris Davidson was recently awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his services to Special Education.

In 1968 Chris took the reins of the Special Education Department at Glamorgan (Toorak Campus of Geelong Grammar Prep. School) and was soon moulding it along his own strictly professional lines. Special education was his passion and nothing would stand in the way of his quest to achieve justice for the forgotten child. A graduate of the Diagnostic Testing and Remedial Teaching course at the famous Schonell Research Institute in Queensland, he kept his mind open to new perspectives of teaching, and the expertise of a variety of agencies and specialists was sought and willingly given. His department at Glamorgan became a beacon for special education, and those intending to establish their own special education centres came to him for advice, including the Army and the Victoria Police.

Special education associations such as SPELD (Specific Learning Difficulties, Victoria) and LDA (Learning Difficulties Australia, then known as AREA) ran conferences at the school and acknowledged experts such as Dr John Munro and Professor Gordon Stanley conducted research there.

He founded the Australian Journal of Remedial Education (now known as the Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties) in 1969, which soon gained an enviable reputation both nationally and internationally. He served as its editor for 36 years, producing 163 editions.

LDA honoured him with its *Mona Tobias Award* in 1995. *Who's Who* acknowledged him in 2000.

Chris saw the benefits of organisations with similar purposes working together and encouraged alliances between LDA and SPELD. He was a founding member of SPELD Victoria in 1968. This association encourages parents and professionals to work together. For many years he served on the SPELD committee as Vice-President and he was President for two years.

For 41 years he has co-edited the SPELD Bulletin, and in 2006 (with Dr Daryl Greaves) launched its Journal. Like all SPELD publications, it is aimed at both parents and teachers.

He continues to spend at least one day a week at SPELD as a phone consultant and remains a member of the Management Committee.

In his varying capacities at SPELD he has helped numerous children and adults who find learning difficult, and he has advised parents and teachers.

The community has benefited from his several publications promoting literacy, including the three Spellout games and Wordswork (He co-authored both.)

Chris has given generously of his time to advance the cause of special education for over forty years. His enormous voluntary contribution has made a significant difference to the way in which we now perceive the intelligent under-achiever. While hundreds of students have benefited directly from his personal intervention, many more throughout Australia and in dozens of other countries throughout the world (where his LDA Journal has circulated) owe him a debt of gratitude as well.

- *Dick Weigall*