

SPELD Victoria - Annual Report 2015 - 2016

Dear Members,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the 2016 SPELD Victoria AGM.

As this is the only occasion in the year where The Committee (Board), staff and members of SPELD Victoria get together, we do hope that you will take the opportunity after the formalities to stay with us and have informal introductions and discussions.

Introduction

The year ended 30 June 2016 was a busy year of service delivery amidst organisational changes. We would like to highlight the major events that took place during the financial year:

Property

As discussed in the previous AGM, SPELD Victoria sold its Brunswick Street property in September 2015. As previously advised to members, this decision was necessitated by the financial position of SPELD Victoria at the time.

Governance

The year in review also witnessed considerable organisational change. First, following the AGM in January 2016, four new appointees were added to the SPELD Victoria Committee, with each appointee having specific expertise of value to the Committee. The appointees were Guy Inbar (Innovation and Technology), Jenny Ward (Education), Stephanie de Campo (Marketing and Communications) and Prof Zivit Inbar (Strategy, People, Culture and Change Management).

In April 2016, the SPELD Committee was further strengthened by the addition of Claire Britchford and Matt Foran who bring added finance and communications experience to the Committee.

The following Committee members left the organisation: In January 2016 Marree Metcalfe notified the Committee of her intentions to complete her three years' tenure and cease her role by end of March. Jason Henham, President, resigned in May 2016. Andy Minogue, Treasurer, resigned July 2016. We thank each of them for dedicating their time and energy to SPELD over the last 3 years.

There has also been significant change in office holders in 2016. In March 2016, Prof Zivit Inbar took on the role of Secretary and, more recently following the resignation of Jason Henham in May 2016, the role of Acting President. At that time, Claire Britchford was appointed as the Acting Treasurer.

Chief Executive and Staffing

As discussed in the previous AGM, Claire Carmody resigned as the CEO in October 2015. The former President, Jason Henham, instigated a process, which included the use of a professional executive recruitment firm specialised in the non-for-profit sector, to find SPELD Victoria's next CEO. John Willis was appointed as CEO of SPELD in April 2016 and formally commenced work in that role at the end of June 2016.

There is no doubt that the changes in CEO, and lack of continuity of one person in that role, has affected SPELD Victoria and its ability to provide its services across the year. The Committee has addressed this issue and is confident that these issues are now behind us.

SPELD Victoria thanks all staff and, in particular, Clare Carmody, the former CEO, Karen Comans, Operations Manager and Karen Starkiss, Director of Learning for their contributions to SPELD during the year.

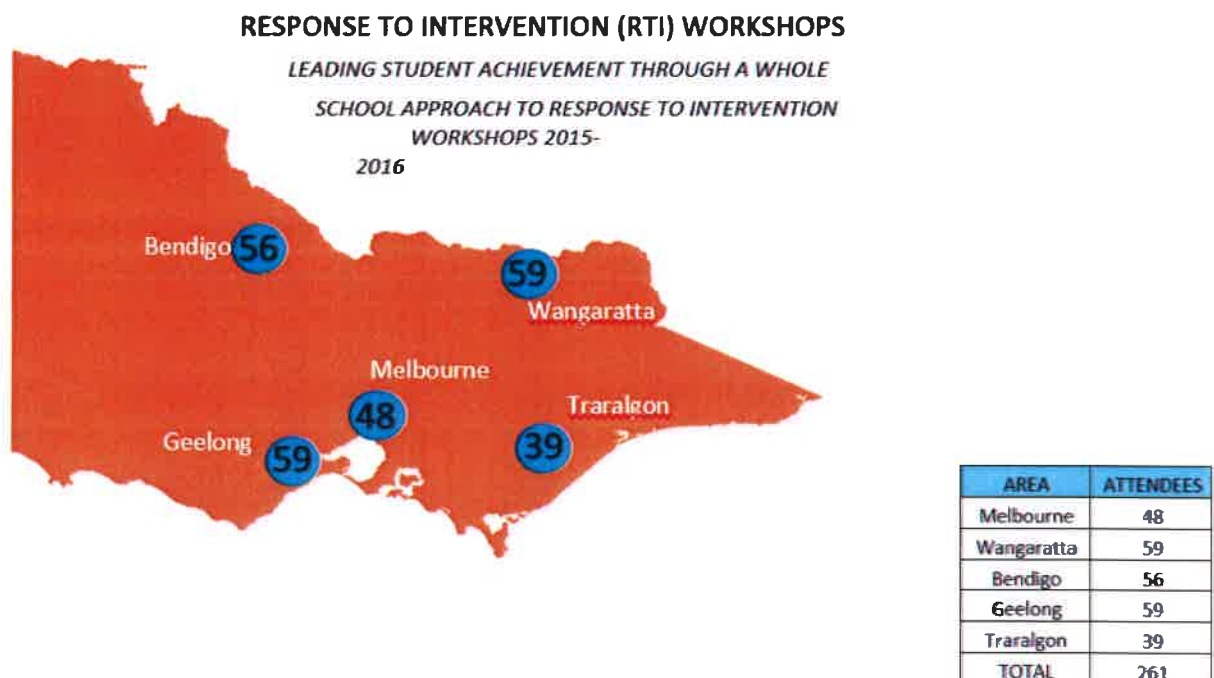
Operations

Throughout the year, SPELD Victoria continued to offer its cognitive assessment services to families; professional development workshops both in Melbourne and in regional Victoria; research, advocacy and membership support services.

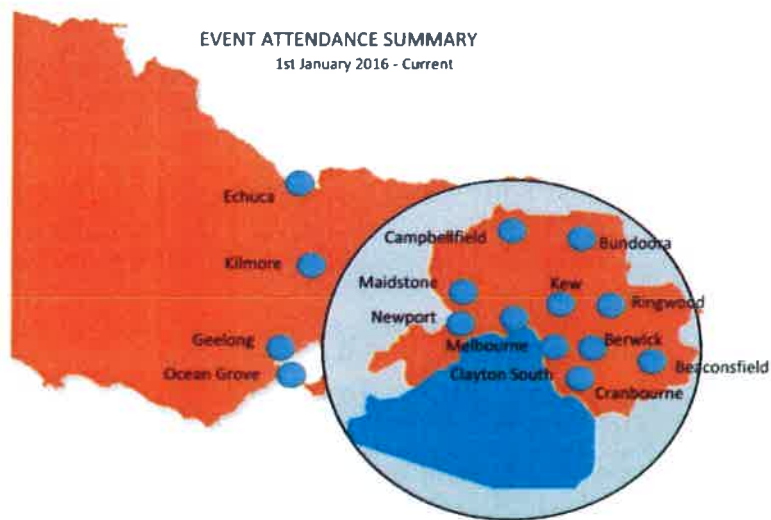
Our long-standing and valued relationship with the Department of Education and Training (DET) continued and included the delivery of two special projects over the year.

- 1) *20 Tips for 20 Weeks Project.* This online project designed to provide parents in particular with tips for navigating the challenging domain of specific learning difficulties was researched and coordinated by Puja Bhattacharya. A number of SPELD Victoria’s psychologists and specialist teachers contributed to this project, which was delivered to DET for their future use. Our thanks to all who contributed to this project.

- 2) *RTI workshops* (Response To Intervention – leading student achievement through a whole school approach) workshops were held in Melbourne and four regional centres: Bendigo, Geelong, Traralgon and Wangaratta for 261 teachers. Conducted by teaching specialist, Karen Starkiss, these workshops were warmly received, with feedback indicating a demand for further workshops in regional Victoria.



In addition to the RTI workshops, another 14 capacity development and information workshops were held for teachers; school principals; psychologists and parents. Over the total year, **25 days** of workshops were held for **635** participants coming from **341** postcodes across Victoria. This represented a **31%** increase in attendance on the 2014-2015 year. Our thanks to all presenters.

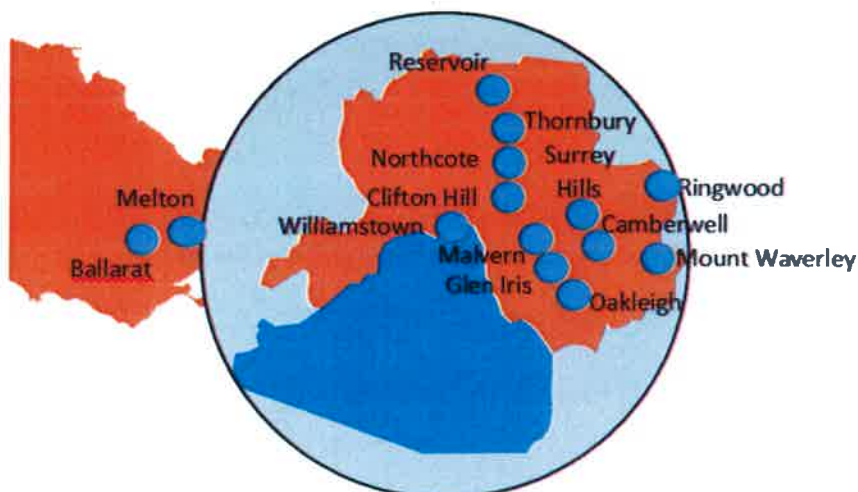


SPELD Victoria’s cognitive assessment and consultation services grew over the year by more than **9%**, proving there continues to be a need and demand for this service.

Indeed, SPELD Victoria has long regarded cognitive assessments as being the essential foundation stone for families, children and youth seeking to navigate the most positive pathway through school and into tertiary education settings.

In the 2015- 2016 year families coming to SPELD for assessments came from **180** postcode areas across Victoria. We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the educational psychologists who continued to provide this essential service to Victorian families and their children over this period.

LARGEST CLIENT LOCATIONS WITHIN VICTORIA 2015-2016



SPELD Victoria's Info-line service provided by Mim Davidson, one of SPELD Victoria founders, continued to respond to a growing number of queries from parents seeking advice on how best to support their children deal with learning differences. We know that many parents make calls to the Info-Line when they are at a loss to know what to do or where to go for help. The Info-line service and advice reduces the anxiety felt in families and provides them with a positive direction in which to move forward. The Committee remains grateful for Mim Davidson's commitment and support.

During 2015-2016 SPELD Victoria ceased to provide its tutoring service to students. In its place, it commenced the provision of *Action Plans*. While SPELD Victoria acknowledges the disappointment that families felt in losing the tutoring services during the year, the reality of SPELD Victoria's position is that the cost of providing those services exceeded the organisation's financial resources available to pay for them. SPELD Victoria intends to undertake work in the coming financial year to determine whether the tutoring services, or other similar services, can be provided in a more cost-effective way that is within SPELD Victoria's financial capacity.

Advocacy

SPELD Victoria continued to represent members' interests at various government reference groups and to liaise with Auspeld – our affiliated national body.

Members

SPELD Victoria has also continued to reach out and engage with its members and volunteers throughout the year via its e-news, information sessions and events such as the Dyslexia Empowerment Week activities in October 2015-16. We thank our Patron, Mr Keith Houghton who continued to advocate for and support SPELD Victoria.

Internal systems

SPELD Victoria invested in a Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) system during the year. Work to integrate this system with the membership and other office databases was still in progress at the end of the 2015-2016 year.

Financial Position

SPELD incurred an operating loss of \$144,514 for the year. The loss was primarily due to reduced revenue from donations and operating activities and due to commencement of rent paid at 60 High St, Preston.

The Committee was very aware during the year that SPELD Victoria's financial position needed to be addressed as a priority and, by year's end, had taken numerous steps to place SPELD Victoria's ongoing operations on a firm financial basis and to implement its strategic plans to restore SPELD Victoria to a sustainable position (on a long term basis) as soon as practicable.

Events subsequent to the end FY2016

In July, the Committee appointed BPR Audit Pty Ltd as its new auditor. The previous auditor Bryan McKimmie from Langley McKimmie has provided great support and service to SPELD Victoria through many years; however, in line with good corporate governance practice, a decision has been made to appoint a new auditor. The Committee thanks Langley McKimmie for its many years of service as SPELD Victoria's auditor.

In August / September 2016, three appointments were made to the Committee to fill casual vacancies. Fiona Hinrichsen, Graham Holdaway and Ian McCubbing have brought fundraising, financial, analytics and business expertise to the Committee. Fiona Hinrichsen has since been appointed as Acting Secretary in September. These appointments were made in line with a merit-based skills matrix completed earlier in the year by the Committee, which identified potential areas in which the skills available to the Committee needed strengthening. The call for nominations was advertised externally and attracted a pool of qualified candidates.

The employment of John Wills as the CEO of SPELD Victoria was terminated on 19 September 2016. In the period prior to that termination, it had become apparent to SPELD Victoria that what was represented to SPELD during the recruitment process was not in fact the case and, as such, the SPELD Victoria Committee had no choice but to end Mr Wills' appointment.

In September, the Committee appointed Claire Stonier-Kipen as interim CEO. Claire is an experienced executive and senior manager in the arts and cultural sectors, State and Local Government. The SPELD Victoria Committee is confident in Claire's ability to drive SPELD forward and put the organisational issues of the last year behind.

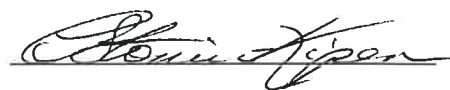
In the period since the start of this financial year, the Committee has also reviewed SPELD Victoria's mission and commenced work on a new strategy. This includes the proposed establishment of a new research advisory board with international expertise and connections into world renowned research institutions. It is intended that this initiative will give SPELD Victoria's members and the wider community access to emerging research and practice in the field of dyslexia and specific learning differences.

As a consequence of all these changes the Committee is now confident that the issues it has faced in FY 2016 will be resolved over the coming period.

We are very grateful for your support this year and are looking forward to making a difference in the lives of Victorian individuals and families by ensuring those with learning differences hold the power to achieve their potential and aspirations.



Prof Zivit Inbar, Acting President



Claire Stonier-Kipen, Interim CEO