



## SPELD Victoria Autumn 2022 E-News



*Reimagining School by Not Dead Design*

### **Dear Parents and Supporters,**

In a season where state, national and international resilience is being tested in very dramatic ways – we are focusing this E-News on the power of imagination to envisage new and better outcomes.

Whether climate change is in action, a pandemic or a despotic war-hungry ego – we remain convinced that it's the children we are collectively educating who will come up with solutions we need and didn't dream of.

Their imaginations and ideas can produce new and different solutions for the wicked problems we are all facing. But only if their early and primary education includes the evidenced-based keys to learning that will enable them to read and count, and we listen to what they have to say.

At SPELD Victoria, we are Re-imagining School where everyone has equitable access, is included and supported no matter what their gender orientation and cultural heritage may be; where undergrad teachers start their profession already educated in Specific Learning Disorders (SLD); where all Year 1 children do a Phonics screener; have their learning difficulties identified and SLD diagnosed; where Primary Schools embrace collaborative Individual Learning Plans; no longer face budget trade-offs so they can regularly provide timely evidenced based interventions; and no longer pander to past debunked teaching philosophies - or pass the problem along to secondary schools to sort out.

SPELD Victoria participates in and advocates for change wherever possible, particularly when the outcomes are not helpful to our community. In this edition, you can read about several advocacy items SPELD Victoria has been engaged with:

1. VCAA announces a new GAT Literacy & Numeracy test for Yr12 students in Sept 2022
2. Quality Initial Teacher Education Review – Final Report
3. Gonski reforms 10 years on.
4. Two E-Petitions: Phonics check for Year 1; and universal early learning system

**Also in this edition of E-News you will find:**

5. SPELD Vic Parent and Teacher Workshop and Events
6. Diagnostic Assessment Service update
7. *See It & Be It* videos – Meet Amy (May) Nunn
8. DSF online research conference – 19 – 21 April 2022
9. Victorian SLD Resource Hub taking shape but we could use some help
10. Changes to our office COVID-19 protocols

With best wishes from the whole SPELD Victoria Team,

**Claire Stonier-Kipen, CEO**

## **1. VCAA announces a new GAT Literacy & Numeracy test for Year 12 students in September 2022**

Following Adam Carey's article in The Age on 9/2/22, ***All year 12 students to be tested on literacy and numeracy*** - SPELD Victoria met with VCAA to better understand its intent in rolling out a new General Achievement Test (**GAT**) with a Literacy & Numeracy (**L&N**) test in September 2022. We then posted a media release that addressed some of the many parent questions we were receiving. You can read this [\*\*HERE\*\*](#).

**We are now informed that:**

- 1) The L&N test will be a new tool developed with ACER and benchmarked with the Australian Core Skills Framework Level 3 (minimum) & 4; (so no norming with international standards).
- 2) VCAL students will also be expected to undertake the new GAT even though they have not done so previously, and some practice opportunities are intended to be provided in advance of the September 2022 test. Timeline still to be confirmed.
- 3) Importantly - yet to be clarified is the process, criteria, and timing for: a) exemptions; b) special provisions (current deadline 8/4/2022); and c) re-sit provisions for students who do not meet basic standards. VCAA intends to introduce support for students who need to re-sit the GAT L&N. Unfortunately as anyone in the SLD community knows, this will amount to too little too late. That support should have been provided in Primary School if Basic L&N standards were to be met in Year 12.
- 4) VCAA will continue to meet with SPELD Victoria on this matter and has offered to hold a parent webinar to explain all of the above in Term 2. More to follow.

## 2. Quality Initial Teacher Education Review – Final Report

SPELD Victoria contributed to an AUSPELD submission into the Commonwealth Quality Initial Teacher Education Review in July 2021. You can read AUSPELD's submission [HERE](#)

The final Review report has now been released. You can access this [HERE](#)

SPELD Victoria welcomes the references to the need for teachers to be educated in evidenced based teaching practices including phonics, phonics screeners and phonemic awareness. However we remain disappointed that so few of the other recommendations including those from other disability organisations were taken up, and in particular with regards to numeracy and mathematics learning difficulties (MLD).

As a consequence the opening statement in AUSPELD's submission remains a concern. We are not convinced that the final report will sufficiently impact change to close the equity gap.

## 3. Gonski Review – 10 years on

Ten years ago the Gonski review promised a fairer funding model for schools across the nation. 10 years on – it seems inequity has grown - not shrunk. You can read it [HERE](#)  
Variability remains the key characteristic across the nation.

I look forward to the day when I no longer hear from parents whose children have diagnosed SLD which recommend 1:1 tutoring to close the learning gap – only to be told by the school that they don't have the resources to provide said tutoring either because their budget is insufficient, or because the school has allocated their budget to other areas like acceleration programs for able students.

Victoria and Australia need to get out of the mindset that such tutoring is a cost rather than the investment in our collective future that it is.

## 4. Two E-Petitions: Phonics check for Year 1 & universal early learning system

If you feel like being an agent for change – here are two immediate opportunities to help:

1. A reminder that your opportunity to support an e-petition to the Victorian Legislative Council seeking a **mandatory phonics screening for Year 1 students** is still possible. Closing date is 18/5/2022. You can find the e-petition [HERE](#)

2. The Women for Progress E-Petition seeks to drive equal participation in society and the economy for women – and amongst its priorities for change is a **national commitment to develop an evidence-based early learning system** that is universal, accessible and high quality, delivered by securely employed and properly paid educators and coordinated from infancy through to primary school. You can read more [HERE](#)

## 5. SPELD Vic Parent Events and Teacher Workshops

Our updated program is below, and SPELD Victoria is excited to announce a range of new information evenings for Parents with two focused on secondary school. There is also a Teacher workshop on a Model for Explicit and Inclusive Classroom Education (Secondary) and further Talk for Writing and Sounds-Write workshops.

We welcome Elise Cassidy, Jenny Vanderzweep, Melanie Henry, Erin Rollason, to our Presenter Team.

You can see the full program [HERE:](#)

**Website:** <https://speld.secure.force.com/events>

**Email:** [events@speldvic.org.au](mailto:events@speldvic.org.au)

As we move towards asynchronous learning all of these workshops are being recorded for future release.

### Information Evenings / Parent Events:

#### **1. What is Dyslexia? - Presented by Elise Cassidy**

Tue 29th March 2022 - 6.30-8.30pm

#### **2. Developing Language Skills For Secondary Students**

- Presented by Melinda Schambre

Wed 6th April 2022- 6.30-8.30pm

#### **3. Foundations of Early Literacy: Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Decodable books - Presented by Jenny Vanderzweep**

Wed 27th April 2022 - 6.30-8.30pm

#### **4. Science and SLDs - Secondary School - Presented by Erin Rollason**

Thu 2nd June 2022 - 6.30 - 8.30pm

#### **5. Understanding Assessment Reports - Presented by Bethany Townsend**

Wed 22nd June 2022 - 6.30 - 8.30pm

### Professional Workshops:

**1. A Model for Inclusive and Explicit Classroom Instruction: using oral language and vocabulary instruction effectively in secondary classroom - 24th May 2022**

**2. Talk For Writing - Live Online Workshop March/April 2022**

**3. Sounds Write - Phonics Program 6 Week ONLINE - May 2022**

**4. Talk For Writing - Live Online Workshop June 2022**

**5. Sounds Write - Phonics Program - 6 Weeks ONLINE - July 2022**

**6. Talk For Writing - Live Online Workshop July School Holidays 2022**

**7. Sounds Write - Phonics Program - 6 Weeks ONLINE - October 2022**

## **6. Diagnostic Assessment Service (DAS) update**



We are delighted to welcome Brooke McIntyre to the DAS Team. Brooke has come to us direct from SPELD NSW where she was undertaking similar work to our diagnostic assessment work. Prior to this she worked as a Psychologist and Counsellor in the NSW Education system for 5 years; did a 2 year stint as an administrative research assistant and 11 years as a primary teacher. It's great to have Brooke on board!

SPELD Victoria has returned to delivering diagnostic assessment services face to face at Donkey Wheel House. See Item 10 below for our updated Covid-19 protocols to ensure clients and staff safety when they visit us. Where necessary we are still able to deliver part of our diagnostic assessment services remotely (via telehealth). Payment plans are being arranged for families facing financial hardship at this time. To make an appointment – please start [HERE](#); and Reception will contact you directly.

## **7. See It & Be It - videos that inspire – Meet Amy (May) Nunn**



We are delighted to announce that Amy (May) Nunn, established actor, theatre and video/film scriptwriter (who happens to be dyslexic), is currently writing the script for our first video in our "See It and Be It" series -demonstrating the diverse and successful career pathways many Victorians have taken on their journey with dyslexia or another Specific Learning Disorder.

Amy was recently performing in Pramkicker – a Theatre Works and Dirty Pennies Theatre Project co-production.

Appropriately, the first *See It and Be It* story to be told is on the journey of our new Committee member Rory Smeaton, Aboriginal Recruitment and Cultural Competency Manager; and previous winner of the VCAL Student of the Year Award in 2010. We hope we will be able to go into production soon so his remarkable story can be shared with you all later this year.

## **8. DSF online Language, Literacy and Learning Conference – Tues 19 to Fri 22 April 2022**

The 2022 DSF Language, Literacy and Learning Virtual Conference is an unmissable event for anyone with an interest in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for students.

This four-day online event will feature:

- Eight inspirational keynote speakers with follow-up Q & A sessions; and,
- More than 50 evidence-informed concurrent sessions

The entire conference will be available to view on demand for three weeks following conclusion of the event.

Registrations are now open! **Go to: <https://dsf.net.au/conference-registration>**

A discounted rate is available for SPELD Victoria Members via a code which we will send to all Members separately.

Not yet a Member of SPELD Victoria? Join us **[HERE](#)**, you will then be sent the discount code – and then you can register for the conference!

## **9. Victorian SLD Resource Hub taking shape but we could use some help**

Our new Victorian SLD Resource Hub is gradually taking shape despite delays imposed by COVID-19. By the end of 2021 all the furniture had been moved to create the space in at Donkey Wheel House and we had spent our seeding grant from the Department of Education on some of the books and resources we want to share with Parents and Teachers that will assist all students with SLD.

We are now fundraising to complete the project which includes more resources; furniture and technology (and a bit of painting!), so we can welcome you all back to the Melbourne CBD and show you what is available to help all students with SLD.

If you would like to help please consider a donation [HERE](#)

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

## **10. Changes to our office COVID-19 protocols as at 7/3/22**

SPELD Victoria continues to adapt and update our in office protocols to align with State Government guidelines, and to maintain the health and wellbeing of our staff and all our clients.

Confirmation of vaccination status or documentation of medical exemption on arrival plus the wearing of masks in the office remains mandatory. This is because of the length of time our clients spend in the office when attending the Diagnostic Assessment Service.

However – there is no longer a requirement to sign in via a QR code.

With thanks for your understanding.



SPELD Victoria

Level 3, Donkey Wheel House  
673 Bourke Street Melbourne 3000

W: [www.speldvic.org.au](http://www.speldvic.org.au)

T: 03 9480 4422

E [hello@speldvic.org.au](mailto:hello@speldvic.org.au)

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