

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 14

Monday 3rd September 2012

This issue was edited by Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Professional Development Activities for Term 3 & 4, 2012

Dot Power Day of literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	11 September
Space Camp – Huntsville, Alabama	Sep/Oct
SPEVI Day – Vision Australia – Program attached	8 September
Masterclass: Transition from School to Work – Karen Wolffe	29-30 Oct
Support Skills Try Day for 2013 – download an expression of interest form: http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Arefssp.pdf	Friday 16 November
Dot Power Day of literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 20 November
Educational Expo – Access Technology Options This day is suitable for teachers, aides, therapists, parents/carers, visiting teachers, STUDENTS and members of the wider community – all welcome!	Monday 26 November
SVRC Christmas Morning Tea All welcome! – please RSVP	Wednesday 5 December

The program for 2012 is available from this link: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml>

Paralympics 2012

By the time you receive this issue of The Bulletin, the London Paralympics 2012 will be underway! Australia has quite a number of athletes with vision impairments competing in these Olympics and we look forward to hearing about their great results!

Victorian competitors with vision impairments include:

- **Jessica Gallagher:** javelin, long jump
- **Prue Watt:** 50m freestyle

To assist with your research into our Paralympians, attached to this issue is a brief biography of those competing. We hope you enjoy the Paralympic program as we all will!

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Report on Masterclass by Marion Blazé

“Assessment and Instruction: Two sides of the same coin for successful literacy outcomes” with Frances Mary D’Andrea at SVRC

Wow! What an inspirational few days we had with Frances Mary. We started with a Yum Cha on Sunday afternoon (having to explain in previous emails what a ‘yum cha’ was - it is called ‘Dim Sum’ in the US). We had a wander around the Melbourne Museum, marvelling at Phar Lap and a bit of Melbourne history, before letting Frances Mary rest in her hotel.

Monday and Tuesday at SVRC were attended by 60 participants. Mainly VTs but also Early Childhood Educators from Vision Australia, a couple of Guide Dogs O & M instructors and two teachers from the (anticipated) Insight School. Frances Mary had us all enthralled, informed and entertained for two days. I will quote one especially articulate participant from the feedback sheet s/he submitted:

‘The presentation was relevant to my teaching by being practically-based, including achievable suggestions, based on solid research, vision-specific and the notes were clear and concise. It felt like an invitation to continue to learn how to observe, assess and design literacy learning, progressively more efficiently. I felt a sense of “community” with my “vision colleagues” and am inspired to read more and research more about literacy learning.’

Thank you Frances Mary and thank you to the SVRC staff for organising the event, especially to Annette who had us all for a three-course dinner at her home on the Tuesday evening. Yum!! Frances Mary even photographed the beer!

On the feedback form where we asked for suggestions for ‘future programs’, a few people mentioned wanting sessions on braille maths and numeracy for our students. The sessions we have already run this year around this topic include ‘Braille maths for beginners’ (May 16) and ‘Maths solutions’ (August 1) as part of our SkillPower sessions. We are always eager to cater to people’s needs, so if the people who made these suggestions would like to clarify with us what is required, we’d be happy to include something in future programs. Thanks everyone!

National Youth Disability Conference

The Youth Disability Advocacy Service is hosting their first ever National Youth Disability Conference. The Conference will bring together young people with disabilities, peak bodies, representative organisations, and passionate workers and researchers in the field, from across Australia to:

- Identify and develop clear actions in relation to priority National issues.
- Strengthen the voice of young Australians with disabilities.
- Provide opportunities for service providers, workers, researchers and peak bodies to respond more effectively to the needs of young Australians with disabilities.

Keynote speakers include: The Hon. Kelly Vincent MLC, Stella Young, Editor of ABC’s Ramp Up, Graeme Innes, Australian Disability Discrimination Commissioner and The Hon. Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Minister for Disability Reform.

For more information: <http://www.ydas.org.au/NYDC>

Technology Whiz Kid

Provided by Helen Caldwell, Visiting Teacher, Eastern Metropolitan Region

The photo of Damian below was taken by his very proud VT. Damian goes to a special school for students with a physical disability or health impairment. Damian has limited use of his right hand and he is totally blind.

The photo shows Damian with his digital voice recorder plugged into his BrailleNote. He was going through the process of problem solving in order to try to work out why his digital voice recorder would not play some music files he had saved. When Damian's efforts did not solve the mystery, he tried to play the files on his laptop using JAWS after copying them to a USB! At one stage he stopped and went back as he thought he had made a mistake.

During this process, Damian was able to clearly articulate what he was doing and why. He showed terrific maturity by not becoming anxious and frustrated when the problem could not be solved. Damian did not work out the problem but I think you will agree he gave it a red hot go!

Congratulations Damian!



Quantum Low Vision Assessment Services

From LiveWire Low Vision Newsletter – Winter 2012



Quantum has a new Low Vision Assessment Service available and operating from its Melbourne office. This service is being offered to clients, who wish to have their vision assessed and to be shown a range of low vision aids that may be suitable for them.

The Low Vision Assessment Service is being provided by Erik Draganovic, a Low Vision Consultant and trained Orthoptist. Erik has worked in the low vision field for the past 8 years and has found many people with low vision have limited options for transport and have been asking for a local service that they can travel to easily.

The Low Vision Assessment is limited to a client's need for low vision aids and does not

cover daily living aids or mobility. It is designed to assist people who are looking for magnification and reading solutions, from simple optical magnifiers through to the latest electronic devices.

For further information, contact Quantum: <http://www.quantumrlv.com.au>
Phone for an appointment on (03) 9545 4100

Disability Standards for Education

Source: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Pages/disabilitystandardsforeducation.aspx>

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 were formulated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and tabled in Parliament on 17 March 2005. They came into effect in August 2005. The Standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education and training on the same basis as those without disability. The Disability Standards for Education 2005 and accompanying guidance notes are available in both Portable Document Format (PDF) and Word Document Format (DOCX) from the link above.

Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005

The Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005 was undertaken to determine whether the Standards remain an efficient mechanism for Government to achieve the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 in the education sector. As part of the review, written submissions were received from organisations and individuals across the country, and national roundtable discussions were held with key stakeholders and representative bodies in each capital city. A report was prepared on the findings and recommendations of the review. On 1 August 2012, Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins, Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Workplace Relations, released the Report on the Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005, and the Australian Government Response to the Review. This report is also available from the link above.

BrailleNote Upgrade

From Ramona Mandy, Humanware

HumanWare has just put out a minor upgrade to KeySoft (software) on the BrailleNote. This is a maintenance release for current BrailleNote Apex users running KeySoft 9.2, which contains stability enhancements to ensure that the daily information stored in your BrailleNote Apex remains secure. Improved disk checking makes sure that those valuable files on the BrailleNote's flash disk are safe from any possible file corruption.

You need an SD card and a card reader if you want to download it using your computer (best option) or you can download straight onto the BrailleNote. The software and instructions are on the Humanware website at:

http://support.humanware.com/en-australia/support/brailnote_apex/software/keysoft_92

Note that if you are running KeySoft 9.2, you do not need a product key/license file.

To keep up to date with BrailleNote updates, sign up for Newswire at:

http://www.humanware.com/brailnote_support.

World Sight Day: 11th October 2012

Heidi Littleford is assisting in the promotion of World Sight Day this year and has sent us the following:

World Sight Day is a global day of awareness of the causes of blindness and vision impairment. Over half a million Australians aged over 40 are living with some form of vision loss yet approximately 75 per cent of blindness and vision loss is preventable or treatable. Saving your sight could be as simple as getting an eye test.

There is a good website and some great information and resources which you may want to put up around your schools and workplaces.

<http://worldsightday.org.au/>

<http://worldsightday.org.au/spread-the-word/media/>

Students Celebrate National Year of Reading

Emily White, (Visiting Teacher, Western Region) and two of her students Thien and Thanh feature in a YouTube clip celebrating the National Year of Reading by reading a braille book.

The new clip was produced by Vision Australia Library staff and put up on YouTube as "Reading braille – Vision Australia celebrates National Year of Reading". The video is audio described and is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCIK82Benpo>

Schools Blind Cricket Programme

When: Friday 21st September 2012

Time: 9:30am to 2:30pm

Who: All students with vision impairments in years 4 to 12

Where: Please meet at Cricket Pavilion, Victorian Blind Cricket Association's grounds
454 Glenferrie Road Kooyong (at the rear of Vision Australia)

RSVP essential by: Friday 7th September 2012

Further information in Issue 11 of The Bulletin: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/bulletin/2012-11.pdf>

Better Start Funding “Unpacked”

by Marion Blaze (with thanks to two lovely ladies from SCOPE who came and briefed us!)

Better Start is an initiative of the Federal Government aimed at providing therapy services for eligible, young disabled children. It is provided by ‘FAHCSIA’ - the department of Family and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and is overseen by ‘Carers Victoria’.

There are two separate components to Better Start: an Early Intervention component for 0 - 7 years and a Medicare component for 7 - 15 years.

Any child eligible for our services, would most likely be eligible for Better Start.

For the Early Intervention component, a family must apply prior to the child turning 6. Then \$12,000 can be made available between the years 0 and 7, but only \$6,000 can be used per year. Of this \$6,000, only 35% can be used for equipment and the equipment cannot be solely for school use, and needs to be recommended by the child’s Better Start provider. Children can receive the services of: a physiotherapist, speech therapist, audiologist, occupational therapist, orthoptist and/or psychologist. Better Start funding is for actual intervention, not assessments.

The Medicare component is a newer initiative and providers are still ‘finding their feet’ with it. It allows family to access 20 additional Medicare items prior to the child turning 15. Children must be ‘registered’ before they turn 13.

Families develop a treatment plan with their GP for up to 20 sessions of physio, speech, audiology, OT, orthoptics, psychology and/or optometry. The Medicare component is for actual intervention, not assessments and not equipment. Families pay for therapies and claim on Medicare items so there will be an out-of-pocket cost.

What VTs can do:

For children under the age of 6 and in need of therapy, ask families if they have Better Start. If not, contact Carers Victoria - Freecall 1800 242 636 or <http://www.carersvic.org.au>.

For children under the age of 13 and in need of therapy, ask families if they are registered for Better Start through Medicare. If not, they should go to their GP to initiate registration. Some of our students have already utilised Better Start funding for such things as iPads, Brailers or even trampolines, if their therapists have recommended such things.

Turkish Audio Books

From Leanne Philp, Visiting Teacher Northern

A good source of Turkish audio books for children can be found online at <http://www.tulumba.com/storeitems.asp?tag=180.340>

For Sale

Please email Jordie Howell (Jordie.Howell@visionaustralia.org) if you are interested in purchasing:

- Focus 40 Braille Display – good condition complete with all accessories – \$1500 ONO
- PacMate BX440 – 40-cell Braille display can detach from the PacMate for use with a PC via a USB connection – \$1500 ONO

Staff News

Dianne Simpson from Western Metropolitan Region has a month Long Service Leave for the end of the term – hope she has fun!

Student News

- There is a pretty cute news clip on YouTube featuring upcoming Space Camper, **Brendan**, at a football match with his integration aide, Guy. The clip comes from “Sunrise” and can be found: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pou4neODh6E&feature=channel&list=UL>
- A new record has been set for the memory game, Blind Memory, by Group D student **Kiel**, last week. He scored **17**, which anyone who has played the game will know is not easy! Sorry Jacob your yearlong high score has finally gone! Congratulations Kiel.

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Marion Blazé, Maria Elford, Lea Nagel and Mike Steer.

If you have something you would like included in “The Bulletin” please email Lyn Robinson lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au

To read The Bulletin online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>



**SPEVI Victoria Combined Agencies
Professional Development Day
8th October 2012**

Venue: Vision Australia
454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong (Melway Ref 59 3D)

**Theme: Collaboration and Communication in supporting
children who are blind or have low vision**

PROGRAM

8.30	Registration, networking and coffee
9.20	Housekeeping and welcome
9.30	SOD: A discussion of this condition and the implications for educators – Geoff Bowen, Statewide Vision Resource Centre
10.10	Questions
10.20	Teleschool: A programme for working with families in remote and regional areas – Melissa McCarthy, RIDBC via video link
11.00	Questions
11.10	Soap Box topic
11.15	MORNING TEA
11.30	Presenting viewpoints from parents regarding beginning school and the placement of children who are blind or have low vision Introduction – Beth Glover, Vision Australia
12.10	Questions
12.20	Soap Box
12.30	A journey to independence: Orientation and mobility in early childhood for children with vision impairment. Bronwen Scott, discussing her research
1.10	Questions
1.15	LUNCH
2.05	Adaptive technology in this new APP age – JimPipsak, Vision Australia
2.45	Questions
2.55	Young Adult Panel: Post-school life and experiences. Introduction – Rachel Morgan, Guide Dogs Victoria
3.40	Questions
3.50	SPEVI Counsellor Voting
4.05	Evaluation and collection of Participation Certificate
4.20	PROGRAM CONCLUDES

Employ-Able

Aimed at clients aged between 15 – 21 years who are interested in seeking more information about part time work and career development.

Spend a day shadowing a Vision Australia staff member at work.

- Date:** Monday 24 September 2012
Time: 9am to 3pm
Location: Vision Australia Kooyong Office
454 Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong
Bring: Equipment to take notes, lunch, and a positive attitude



RSVP: Deb Deshayes (03) 9864 9274 by the 8 September for a full timetable of the day's events

Blind and Vision Impaired Athletes attending the 2012 London Paralympics

Source: <http://www.paralympics.org.au>

Bryce Lindores - QLD

Blind: Car accident

Cycling: Road race, Road time trial, 4km individual pursuit, 1km time trial.

Bryce Lindores started to cycle in 2006, only two years after a freak accident took his sight. Six days before his 18th birthday, Bryce was at a friend's place towing a car with his ute when the rope snapped, hitting him in the head and permanently damaging his eyesight. Just six months into his cycling career, he won a bronze medal at the 2006 Cycling World Championships and the same year was awarded the 2006 Queensland Tandem Cyclist of the Year. At the 2008 Paralympic Games, Bryce won a bronze medal in the individual pursuit. Buoyed by his standout performances in Beijing 2008 and most recently at the 2012 Track World Championships where he won gold in the tandem 4km pursuit, Bryce enters London 2012 well primed to succeed.

Jessica Gallagher - VIC

Vision impaired: macular dystrophy

Athletics: Javelin, Long jump, Alpine Skiing (winter)

In 2010, Jessica Gallagher created history at the Winter Paralympics in Vancouver, becoming the first Australian woman to ever win a Winter Paralympic Games medal. Her rapid rise as a Paralympic skier came after her track and field career was placed on hold following the 2008 Beijing Games. Having earned selection to the Australian team in the 100m, long jump, discus and shot put, Jessica was ruled out the day before the Opening Ceremony after Paralympic classifiers declared her right eye was 0.1 of a degree too sighted to legally compete. With a rare disease known as cone dystrophy which continues to deteriorate her sight, Jessica became eligible for both the summer and Winter Paralympics and has now returned to athletics in the long jump and javelin. In 2010 she was named Female Australian Paralympian of the Year for her bronze medal performance in Vancouver and is now working towards her quest to be the first Australian athlete to medal at both a summer and winter Paralympic Games.

Sean Russo - NSW

Vision impaired: retinitis pigmentosa

Swimming: 50m freestyle, 100m freestyle, 400m freestyle, 100m butterfly, 100m backstroke, 200m individual medley.

Sean represented Australia for the first time at the 2010 IPC Swimming World Championships in Eindhoven and made the most of his opportunity. He won a bronze medal in the 100m backstroke, breaking the Australian record in the event and representing the highlight of his burgeoning career. At the same meet, Sean broke Australian records in the 400m freestyle and 100m butterfly to underlie his enormous potential. Competing in the 100m backstroke, 100m butterfly, 50m, 100m and 400m freestyle and the 200m individual medley, Sean is mainly aiming to win a medal in the 100m backstroke. His training is progressing nicely and he recorded encouraging results in the prelude to London 2012, winning gold in the 50m backstroke at the 2010/11 NSW Metro Championships and winning three gold medals at the 2010 NSW MC Championships.

Tyan Taylor - NSW

Vision impaired: Ocular albinism

Goalball

Tyan Taylor is a relative new comer to the sport of goalball, having been introduced to playing the sport by her vision support teacher at high school. However, it was actually years earlier than Tyan

first saw goalball. Watching it as a 10-year-old, her grandmother suggested that one day Tyan could play goalball and if she put her mind to it, might even be able to compete at the Paralympic Games. Fast forward nine years and in 2009 Tyan made her competitive debut off the back of a stellar first year at the national championships, where she was the second highest goal scorer. She was then called up to the Australian Women's goalball team for the 2010 World Championships and has since been a regular fixture at all international events. She describes gaining a more permanent position on the team as a major personal achievement.

Jennifer Blow - NSW

Vision impaired: Oculocutaneous albinism

Goalball

In less than a year since first playing goalball in 2009, Jenny represented Australia at the 2010 IBSA World Championships, where Australia finished eighth. Jenny dreams of competing in London and is looking further still towards Rio de Janeiro in 2016, where she hopes the team will be in a position to medal. Her discovery of a rock shaped like the lucky egg from the film Cool Runnings while the team was competing at the 2011 IBSA World Cup in Turkey, lifted the team's spirits and it has since become a pre-game ritual that Jenny must hold the rock and quote the movie before every big game.

Meica Christensen - QLD

Vision impaired: Oculocutaneous albinism

Goalball

As a little girl, Meica Horsburgh dreamed she would one day represent Australia and growing up, excelled in many sports. But it wasn't until 2004 when she picked up a goalball for the first time that she found her perfect fit. Now, as captain of the Australian women's goalball team, Meica is determined her team will make it to the 2012 London Paralympic Games. After its top eight finish at the 2010 Goalball World Championships in Sheffield, and its top six finish at the 2011 World Cup, the team looks set to become Australia's first Paralympic goalball team since the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games. As team captain, Meica loves to indulge in the team song, 'the final countdown' before each game and enjoys the international travel that goes with being an athlete. She is also an integral member of the dominant Queensland state team which has a string of national titles to its name.

Russell Short -

Vision impaired: macular degeneration

Athletics: Discus, Shot put

One of the most successful Australian Paralympian athletes of all time, Russell Short stands ready to enter a remarkable seventh Games at London 2012. The super talented discus, shot put and javelin thrower has won no less than six gold, two silver and two bronze medals from participating in the last six Games. This is in addition to four gold and three silver medals from the last five World Championships. He isn't slowing down either. Russell won silver in shot put at the 2011 World Championships, indicating he will yet again pose a threat at London 2012. At his sixth Games in Beijing, Russell was given the honour of carrying the Australian flag during the Opening Ceremony. The Games saw him finish sixth in both the discus and shot put. The vision impaired athlete displays his iron will both on and off the track. Not only has Russell walked the Kokoda Track (and starred in a documentary along the way), but he also spent eight days paddling 400 kilometres from Australia to New Guinea across the treacherous Torres Strait

Felicity Johnson - SA

Vision impaired: macular degeneration

Cycling: 1km time trial, Tandem sprint, Individual pursuit

Having enjoyed stellar results in the prelude to London 2012, Felicity Johnson stands well poised to carry her impressive form into the Paralympic Games. Since uniting with new pilot Stephanie Morton, she has recorded an imposing array of results. At the pair's first international competition at the 2011 World Championships, they won gold in the 1km time trial. They have since won two more world championship gold medals in the 1km time trial and tandem sprint as well as set new world records in the 200m flying sprint and 1km time trial, marking the pair as one to watch out for. Born with a visual impairment, Felicity expressed an interest in sport from an early age. Prior to her cycling career, Felicity was prominent in the athletics field in the late 1980s, winning two silver medals in the 800m at the FESPIC Games. After getting sick of "running" around in circles, she decided to commence "riding" around in circles instead. She first represented Australia in 2007 in the one kilometre time trial event at the World Championships in France, and has now continued to race at a faster and faster speed. At her first Paralympic Games in Beijing, Felicity with her pilot Katie Parker won a silver medal in the 1km time trial, her best international result up to that point. Felicity was amazed by her first Paralympics, both in her performance and through taking part in a world uniting event. Felicity's cycling prowess has been widely recognised. In 2007 she was the recipient of the National Achievement Award for Best Newcomer - a title Felicity was very delighted to receive. She has since won the Blind Sportsperson of the Year award consecutively in 2010 and 2011.

Kieran Modra - SA

Vision impaired: Juvenile Optic Atrophy

Cycling: Individual Road race, Individual pursuit, 1km time trial, Individual time trial

Four-time Paralympic gold medallist Kieran Modra is one of the most decorated and respected members of the Australian track cycling team. A pioneer in tandem cycling, Kieran has competed many times as a Paralympian and at various sporting championships over his career spanning two decades. It was Kieran's time to shine at the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games. He won a gold medal in the 200m sprint and the 4km time trial and won bronze in the 110km road race. He also competed in the 1km individual pursuit and the 40km time trial, making him the first ever cyclist to compete in all five cycling events at a Paralympic Games. Kieran was named the 2004 Australian Male Paralympian of the Year, a just reward for his stellar year. The Beijing Games proved just as fruitful, winning gold in the individual pursuit in world record time and a bronze medal in the 1km time trial. Kieran has maintained the rage since the 2008 Games, breaking the world record in the 4km individual pursuit at the 2011 World Championships. He won gold in the same event at the 2011 Oceania Championships.

ABC iView story: http://www.abc.net.au/iview/?WT.srch=1&WT.svl=TV_iview_au#/view/25453

Nicole Esdaile - QLD

Vision impaired: Oculocutaneous albinism

Goalball

Nicole first experienced goalball during a primary school demonstration and played ever since. She believes the highlight of her career so far was saving a penalty and scoring off the next ball against Greece at the 2010 Goalball World Championships, however winning a tough game against Germany at the Paralympic qualifiers in Turkey also stands out as a highlight. She loves the equality all players experience once on the goalball court. With each player wearing standard black-out goggles, the sport focuses on an athlete's sporting ability rather than vision impairment. Nicole sees herself as the team's all rounder, in that she can defend effectively in all positions on the court.

Sam Harding - WA

Vision impaired: Choroideremia

Athletics: 800m

After taking up running at the end of 2009, Western Australia's Sam Harding is in good company, training with the likes of Beijing Paralympians Evan O'Hanlon, Michael Roeger and Brad Scott

under the strict guidance of Paralympic track coach Iryna Dvoskina at the AIS in Canberra. Sam has a rare hereditary eye disease called Choroideremia, which has deteriorated most of his peripheral vision. Originally a tandem cyclist who competed for Western Australia, he dreamt of cycling in the velodrome at the London Paralympic Games. Instead his focus turned to running after competing at the 2009 Paralympic Youth Games in Melbourne in the 400m, 800m and 1500m, where he won three gold medals. Identified by the APC's Paralympic Talent Search Program, Sam was fast-tracked to a talent development camp in Canberra before moving to the AIS. After winning bronze in the 800m at the 2010 National Championships, his progress at the AIS was underlined when he was named as part of the Australian athletics team for the first time at the 2011 IPC Athletics World Championships. He performed well, making the final of the 800m and placing fifth. Sam recorded the same fifth place finish in the 800m at the 2011 German Nationals to suggest he is tracking nicely for London 2012.

Rachel Henderson - SA

Vision impaired: Retinitis pigmentosa

Goalball

Rachel Henderson's rise to the top of Australian goalball has been rapid. From South Australia's Barossa Valley, Rachel had never before played the exclusively vision-impaired sport until 2010 when she was invited to attend an APC Talent Camp. After showing much potential, Rachel was fast-tracked through Australia's goalball program and developed her skills so quickly, she was selected for the Australian Women's Team for the 2011 IBSA Goalball World Games, where she scored four goals. So excited to make the team, she describes getting the call from Australian Women's Goalball Head Coach Georgina Kenaghan as one of the greatest moments in her sporting career. Rachel was born with retinitis pigmentosa and was diagnosed at four years old. Always involved with sport, she once dreamed of pursuing athletics, specialising in the javelin until she discovered goalball. Describing herself as active, she admits she still has a lot to learn about goalball but enjoys learning the game from her team mates

Michelle Rzepecki - NSW

Vision impaired: Rod monochromatism - NSW

Goalball

Michelle Rzepecki has been training with the Australian squad since 2011 and having played goalball for much of the past decade. Having played for New South Wales at a number of national championships, winning the 2004 championships against a strong Queensland side has been the highlight of Michelle's goalball career so far. She has also watched goalball change significantly in the past 10 years and is a strong supporter of growing the sport in Australia.

Timothy Antalfy - NSW

Vision impaired: retinitis pigmentosa

Swimming: 50m freestyle, 100m freestyle, 100m butterfly

Timothy Antalfy is among the up-and-coming brigade of stars in the Australian Paralympic Swim Team. Following in the footsteps of his heroes - Olympians Michael Klim and Geoff Huegill - the New South Welshman is now targeting a wide array of events in his bid for success at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Timothy outlined the extent of his progress at the 2011 Arafura Games, winning gold in the 50m backstroke and silver in the 100m butterfly as well as bronze in the 50m and 100m freestyle and 50m breaststroke. He also dominated at the 2011 Tasmanian State Championships, taking home three gold medals and one silver. He is targeting the 100m butterfly and 50m freestyle at London 2012 and plans to compete at many more Paralympic Games in the future. Timothy warmed up for the main event by competing for the Australian Paralympic Squad in a variety of World Cup meets late in 2011, giving him a valuable insight into what it takes to succeed at the top level.

Prue Watt - VIC**Vision impaired: retinopathy of prematurity****Swimming: 50m freestyle**

Prue Watt established herself as one of Australia's most successful Paralympians at the Athens 2004 Games, bringing home five silver medals and one bronze medal. Her widespread success saw her awarded the 2004 Female Junior Paralympian of the Year for her achievements. Four years later at Beijing 2008, while she did not win any medals, Prue put in a consistent performance and made the final for each of her events. In the highlight of her Games experience, Prue finished fourth in the 100m butterfly, fifth in the 50m freestyle and 200m individual medley, sixth in the 100m and 400m freestyle and eighth in the 100m backstroke. In a great effort, Prue registered personal bests in each of her races. One of the most experienced members of the Australian team, Prue has continued to excel in the lead up to London 2012. She snared a silver medal in the 100m butterfly at the 2011 National Titles before taking home two gold and two bronze from the 2011 Para Pan Pacific Championships, including a national record breaking performance in the 100m butterfly.

Jeremy McClure - WA**Vision impaired: Lebers hereditary optic neuropathy****Swimming: 50m backstroke, 100m backstroke, 50m breaststroke, 100m breaststroke, 50m freestyle, 400m freestyle.**

Jeremy McClure may have lost 98 per cent of his sight at the age of 15, but he did not lose his vision for inspiring young people. The West Australian turned his disability into a passion for swimming and his immediate success in the pool received acclaim from those around him. In just his second year of competing for Australia, Jeremy was first selected in the swimming team for the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. He then reached his second consecutive Paralympic final in the 100m backstroke at Beijing 2008. But 2012 has undoubtedly been a standout year for Jeremy. After winning four medals at the WA State Open Championships, a series of solid performances on the international stage has helped him climb inside the top 10 of the world rankings. He is currently ranked third in the 50m backstroke, fourth in the 50m breaststroke and fifth in the 100m backstroke. Jeremy will be hoping his Paralympic experiences can help lift him on the podium in London.

The following athletes were listed at <http://www.paralympics.org.au> but are not attending the games – perhaps we'll see them next time...

Brandie OConnor - Vision impaired - ACT - Cycling: Road race, road time trial, 1km time trial, 3km individual pursuit

Courtney Harbeck - Vision impaired - QLD - Athletics: 100m, 200m

Gerrard Gosens - Vision impaired - QLD - Athletics: 1500m, 5000m

Robbie Vogt - Vision impaired - QLD - Goalball

Ian Speed - Vision impaired: Retinitis pigmentosa - VIC - Athletics: 800m

Roy Daniell - Vision impaired - ACT - Athletics: Marathon

Ben Macfie - Vision impaired - QLD - Goalball

Sam Byrne - Vision impaired - VIC - Goalball

Jon Horsburgh - Vision impaired - QLD - Goalball

Michael Sheppard - Vision impaired - QLD - Goalball

Elise Kerle - Vision impaired - NSW - Goalball

Ben Demery - Vision impaired - NSW - Cycling: 1km Time Trial, Sprint

Lindy Hou - Vision impaired - NSW - Cycling: Pursuit, 1km time trial, road race, road time trial.

Angelique Booth - Vision impaired - NSW - Athletics: 200m, 400m, 800m