Tailored education options bring success

Each child has individual needs, abilities and goals; and RIDBC provides a range of tailored options to ensure they live a life unlimited.

Read more, page 3
Welcome to RIDBC News – our biannual newsletter designed to keep you up to date on everything RIDBC!

RIDBC is constantly strengthening its programs and services to deliver the best outcomes for our clients and families. We strive to do more for those who need us, using cutting-edge, evidence based research and technology to underpin our services and to ensure we deliver best practice. In this issue, we share important preliminary findings from our research into the effectiveness of telepractice as an alternative to traditional, in-person approaches to family-centred early intervention.

With our plan to reach more people, RIDBC Teleschool uses telepractice to deliver education and therapy services to those living in regional and remote Australia. In this issue we highlight some key milestones achieved through RIDBC Teleschool as we celebrate its 10 year anniversary.

We also showcase some of the latest technology we are developing for our education resources, celebrate the incredible support the RIDBC Lantern Clubs have provided us for the past 54 years, and introduce our latest corporate partnership.

From all of us at RIDBC, thank you for your continued interest and support. I hope you find this issue of RIDBC News informative.

Chris Rehn
RIDBC Chief Executive

RIDBC UPDATE ON NDIS

RIDBC continues to support our clients and their families’ transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The scheme is now available to all areas in ACT and NSW and is being progressively rolled out in the other states and territories.

RIDBC can support families across all stages of their NDIS journey beginning with accessing the scheme, preparing for a planning meeting, implementing the plan and plan review.

For children under the age of seven, RIDBC is also working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to support families through the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Approach. This includes working with families to request access to the NDIS, and once confirmed, developing a plan and supporting connection with providers of choice.

Previous government funding of between $5M to $6M per annum received by RIDBC from Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) has been decreasing since July 2016 and will cease in June 2018. Government expects that all people who had been previously supported through this funding will have transitioned to NDIS. This means much of the work we do at RIDBC for our clients will be primarily claimed through the NDIS on a fee for service basis. As NDIS packages have varying values and do not cover all services, our funding stream has been significantly reduced. Our commitment to fundraising at RIDBC attempts to fill in some funding gaps to provide services to those who need it most.

RIDBC continues to liaise with senior staff within the NDIA to advocate for improvements so that the NDIS can provide appropriate support to people with vision or hearing loss.

For more information about using NDIS funding for RIDBC services, contact our NDIS team on (02) 9872 0869.
Our school years are critical. They open up a world of learning, friendships and life experiences that shape the rest of our lives. For children with vision or hearing loss, this experience should be no different.

Each child has individual needs, abilities and goals; and RIDBC provides a range of tailored education options to ensure they live a life unlimited. Here are just two examples.

**Pip benefits from RIDBC School Support Service in a mainstream school**

For many children with vision or hearing loss, mainstream education is an option to achieve their full potential. Students enrolled in mainstream independent schools across Sydney can access RIDBC School Support Services. RIDBC’s team of specialist teachers support the students and teachers by providing guidance in regards to assistive technologies such as braille books, braille readers, audiological devices, as well as in-class support, teacher liaison and one on one teaching from RIDBC’s team of specialist educators.

Pip, who is seven years old, is in year two at a mainstream school and accesses RIDBC School Support Service. Pip was diagnosed with profound (left) and severe (right) hearing loss at two weeks of age and received a cochlear implant at three.

Pip’s RIDBC school support teacher works with her in a one on one session each week to help her develop auditory, reading and language skills.

“With the support we’ve received from RIDBC, Pip is a confident communicator. We are so proud of the independent and creative person she has become,” said her mother, Dee.

**Specialist school support at RIDBC enables Simra to shine**

Another example of our tailored education options is RIDBC Alice Betteridge School. It provides highly individualised educational programs for children who are deafblind or have vision loss combined with an intellectual impairment. For a child like Simra, who has been blind since birth and also has an additional disability, RIDBC Alice Betteridge School is building a love of literacy and learning.

Simra’s teacher works closely with her and her family to build a tailored educational plan and provide resources such as braille books and reader devices that ensure Simra can learn, grow and ultimately achieve her full potential. Now in year five, Simra is bilingual and learning to walk short distances independently. “Simra has come such a long way since she started school. She has gone from a non-talker with very little fluency to being bilingual and now speaks Urdu and English!” said her mother, Fatima.

**RIDBC Student Alumni**

The long-term outcomes are evident in the success of our student alumni. Anna Kaszonyi, who was diagnosed with severe to profound hearing loss at age two, attended RIDBC Garfield Barwick School when it first opened its doors in 1989. The school caters for children who have a significant hearing loss and are developing spoken language. She then went to a mainstream high school whilst still receiving support from Garfield Barwick School. Now a primary school teacher, Anna studied her Master’s degree through RIDBC’s Renwick Centre. “I had fantastic teachers who worked really hard with me to achieve in all aspects of learning,” said Anna.

For more information about our education services, visit [ridbc.org.au/schools](http://ridbc.org.au/schools)
New study into family-centred early intervention service delivery

To reach more people and deliver best practice are key to RIDBC’s vision to do more for those who need us. The research conducted through RIDBC’s Renwick Centre informs us on delivering best practice for our clients. An example of such research is a study we have underway that will make a significant contribution to defining ‘best practice’ in telepractice early intervention in Australia and internationally.

One way RIDBC reaches more people is by delivering its services to those living in regional and remote Australia through telepractice as a mode of delivery (ie the use of videoconferencing and other technologies to deliver services when a teacher or therapist and a family are in two different physical locations).

Current research studies provide significant evidence to support the use of a family-centred approach (ie where professionals and families work as equal partners in supporting the learning and development of the child) as ‘best practice’ in the delivery of early intervention services. In addition to delivery of such services in-person, RIDBC has used telepractice for more than a decade. In particular, family-centred early intervention through telepractice has been used to alleviate inequity in service availability and access to specialist services for families in regional and remote areas.

Telepractice has proved to be an efficient way to deliver such services in remote environments; however, it raises the question of whether the telepractice model is as effective as in-person
service delivery (ie in a dedicated RIDBC site or through home visits). With limited research evidence available that this mode of service delivers ‘best practice’ in the delivery of early intervention services, it was important that we investigated this, given our commitment to deliver best practice for our clients.

**Research methodology**

RIDBC Teleschool provides the largest early intervention program in Australia for children with vision or hearing loss and their families delivered through telepractice, which makes it a perfect location to conduct this study.

Participants were drawn from RIDBC Teleschool and also from RIDBC Early Learning Program, which is a comparable service to RIDBC Teleschool in every way, except that it is provided in-person.

All eligible families and practitioners (179 in total) were asked to complete a survey related to the use of family-centred practices in their respective early intervention programs. A subset of participants who completed the questionnaire were also asked to consent to the recording of their regularly scheduled early intervention sessions for further analysis, to determine the extent to which elements of family-centred practice are present in either delivery mode.

**Results so far**

Preliminary results from this research indicate that there is no significant difference between the effectiveness of early intervention services delivered in-person and those delivered via telepractice.

“So far, the results are indicating that families feel engaged and involved in their intervention sessions, regardless of whether the sessions are delivered in-person or through telepractice,” explains Melissa McCarthy, the key researcher and PhD candidate conducting this research through RIDBC Renwick Centre, with support from supervisors Professors Greg Leigh and Michael Arthur-Kelly.

“Responses to questions about a wide range of issues indicate that families in telepractice services believe that they learn the skills they need to support their child’s needs just as effectively as those families who receive in-person services in metropolitan areas. Also, we have found no evidence of difference between the two modes of service delivery in regard to service provider’s perception of the quality of various aspects of their service delivery, which is very encouraging indeed.”

If you are interested in finding out more about this research, contact:
Professor Greg Leigh
greg.leigh@ridbc.org.au

“This research by Melissa McCarthy will add significantly to evidence regarding the effectiveness of telepractice as an alternative to traditional in-person approaches to family-centred early intervention. **It will make a very important contribution to professional practice in this field.**”

Professor Greg Leigh AO,
Director, RIDBC Renwick Centre
RIDBC is at the forefront of developing educational resources for those we support with vision or hearing loss. Our technical staff collaborate with our education and clinical staff to create some of the best educational resources available in the digital space.

Two of our latest technological developments include an app that captures a signer’s hand/ finger positions from a 180-degree perspective, and the design and development of 3D printed vision resources.

New feature in development for our most downloaded app - Auslan Tutor
RIDBC has developed many educational apps to provide support in a number of areas including listening and spoken language development, sign language, and an app that introduces children who are blind or have low vision, to Apple’s screen reader software called VoiceOver.

A new development for our Auslan Tutor app captures the signer using multiple cameras from a 180-degree angle rather than just from one perspective. This effect used in movies is referred to as ‘bullet time’. By providing the user with the capability to pan around the signing subject, this enables them to fully control the view around the signer. Another feature that will be added is a more comprehensive sign database that has been organised into intuitive categories and sub-categories to make searches easier. This new feature will be developed in 2018, with the improved Auslan Tutor App released in early 2019.

3D printed vision resources
RIDBC is developing vision resources using 3D printing technology to create or adapt tactile resources including tactile book resources, tactile board games and educational aids. For example, we have taken game concepts made for sighted children and printed tactile elements and combined them to enable everyone to play together. A good example of this is the game Snakes and Ladders. We printed 3D versions of the board and pieces so that our students who are blind or have low vision can feel the different parts of the game.

Another recent project involved a collaboration between our technical staff and a braille music specialist, whereby custom piano octaves were printed in 3D so that they could be joined together to better communicate musical concepts.

We are also developing 3D printed book resources to aid the learning of readers or people reading to children. For example, appropriate objects, shapes and textures included in the literature are being developed and prototyped by vision specialists to enhance the experience of reading.
RIDBC is committed to reaching more people across Australia who need our services. RIDBC Teleschool and our telepractice programs are one way we are striving to achieve this.

For over 10 years, RIDBC Teleschool has been a great example of RIDBC’s pioneering nature, providing education and therapy services to children with vision or hearing loss living in regional and remote Australia, using high quality videoconferencing technology.

Services include intensive regular individual sessions, listening and spoken language development, Auslan support, braille tuition and vision loss support, transition to school and school support, a lending library with child and parent resources, residential camps, and parent networking and information.

For the past three years, Hyundai Help for Kids, a valued corporate partner of RIDBC, has supported RIDBC Teleschool with its residential camps, providing resources such as braille and tactile playmats, chauffeur driven car rides and more.

To learn more about RIDBC Teleschool visit ridbc.org.au/teleschool. To learn more about our latest research in telepractice, see page 4 of this newsletter.
BECOME AN RIDBC LANTERN CLUB MEMBER

In 2018, RIDBC Lantern Clubs, who raise funds for us through fun and social events and activities, are celebrating a milestone: working together, they have collectively raised over $14 million since their inception in 1964. Here, Robert Anderson, President, Lantern Club Central Council tells us about working with the Lantern Clubs and his hopes for the future of the clubs.

How did you come to be involved with Lantern Clubs?

My wife has been a member of the Ryde Lantern Club for over fourteen years, and when I retired, I became involved with Ryde Lantern Club as their Vice President and also their Travel Director. Later I became a Vice President for Central Council Lantern Clubs, after which, I was elected later as President of Central Council Lantern Clubs.

What does being a member of a Lantern Club involve?

Lots of fun – and the reward of helping so many children! The clubs work together to organise fundraising events, be it a movie night at a local cinema, a dinner, a bus trip, a fashion parade – or even a trip away. Every member gets to be as involved as they want to be. With clubs all over Sydney, we try to attend each other’s events – it’s very social and lots of fun.

What is the best part of being a Lantern Club Member?

Without hesitation, I would say it is when we visit RIDBC and see the difference we are making through our fundraising to help the children. There is nothing more rewarding or motivating than that!

You’ve raised over $14M for RIDBC, what’s next for Lantern Clubs?

We have lots of exciting events planned, but a key goal is to attract more young people to the clubs! We want to see the clubs continue to change the lives of children – and having some younger members is key to continuing our work.

If you are interested in finding out more about Lantern Clubs in your area, visit ridbc.org.au/lantern-clubs

The 2018 | 2019 Entertainment Memberships

The 2018|2019 Entertainment Book and Digital Membership is on sale now!

Get in early and make the most of fantastic offers in your area of up to 50% off and 2 for 1 offers from popular restaurants, cafes, attractions, retailers, travel, hotel accommodation and more, while supporting our vital services. 20% of all books and digital memberships sold go to RIDBC. Great to share with family and friends, staff and clients. Order yours today and start saving!

Enquiries for bulk orders contact Kaye Bailey: (02) 9872 0329 or kaye.bailey@ridbc.org.au

ridbc.org.au/entertainment-books
CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP

VTECH

A PERFECT MATCH

At RIDBC we value collaborating with like-minded organisations from the corporate sector, working strategically and purposefully together towards shared objectives. For companies that we work with, a strategic partnership with RIDBC helps to enable their business goals, engage their staff and customers and build their social licence to operate.

Through building dynamic corporate partnerships, together we can make a difference to the lives of children and adults with vision or hearing loss, so they can live a life without limits. RIDBC’s services are ultimately focused on helping our children, adults and their families live life to its fullest, as independently and unlimited as possible. So when VTech approached us about a partnership across their CareLine™ range that provides phones and devices aimed at helping those with vision or hearing loss stay connected and live independent lives, it was a perfect match.

Every purchase from the VTech CareLine™ range will contribute funds to RIDBC for the development of cutting-edge technologies, apps and classroom resources for children and adults with vision or hearing loss. These specialist apps can change the way they interact with the world around them, expand access to learning and increase independence in daily life.

Corporate partnerships such as this, enable RIDBC to design and produce much-needed technologies and specialist resources for both the community and the classroom.

“The focus that VTech places on developing products that enrich our community’s quality of life, and its raising of funds for RIDBC from its CareLine™ range, will make a difference,” said RIDBC Chief Executive Chris Rehn.

VTech sees its role in supporting the development of assistive technologies as an important one that will benefit both organisations.

“We believe the work RIDBC does is invaluable within its community and it is a privilege to partner with them, because this is also our community. As such, this relationship goes beyond pure financial support and we look forward to the many opportunities to learn and support them further in the wonderful work they do.”

Mark Franklin, Managing Director VTech Telecommunications Australia

RIDBC Corporate and Community Partnerships Manager on (02) 9872 0237 or melissa.bergin@ridbc.org.au

vtech

17450 CareLine™ DECT6.0 Cordless Phone with VSMART™
**Fundraising Events**

**Hunter Literary Luncheon with Di Morrissey**  
6 April  
Join us for lunch at Noahs on the Beach in Newcastle East with journalist and presenter Natasha Beyersdorf in conversation with renowned author, Di Morrissey. Proceeds support local RIDBC families in the Hunter region. Tickets: [ridbc.org.au/LiteraryLunch](http://ridbc.org.au/LiteraryLunch)

**RIDBC Book, Toy & Music Fair**  
13 - 15 April  
Be sure to save the date for one of Sydney’s best book, toy and music fairs at RIDBC North Rocks. [ridbc.org.au/bookfair](http://ridbc.org.au/bookfair)

**Horizon Committee’s Annual Authors’ Lunch**  
17 May  
Australian Voices in Print will present two exciting Australian storytellers who will surprise and delight.  
Enquiries Colleen Keys 0400 522 629 or colleenkeys@hotmail.com

**Coleman Greig Corporate Challenge**  
21 September  
The Challenge held at Parramatta Park, is an opportunity for businesses to get fit and support a worthy cause by either walking, running or cycling around the Park. All funds raised support RIDBC, St Gabriel’s School and My Westmead.  
Enquiries Melissa Bergin: (02) 9872 0237 or melissa.bergin@ridbc.org.au

**Qantas Pathfinders Charity Flight**  
17 November  
Join us on our chartered Qantas Pathfinders Charity Flight for an unforgettable trip to South Australia with Maggie Beer as our special guest. We will be celebrating the best of South Australian food and wine and raising funds for RIDBC.  
Enquiries Kaye Bailey: (02) 9872 0329 or kaye.bailey@ridbc.org.au

**Get Active for RIDBC**  
Get your friends, family and colleagues together and join Team RIDBC as we get fit, have fun and best of all, fundraise for RIDBC. Find an event near you at [events.ridbc.org.au](http://events.ridbc.org.au) or contact Nadine Kanaan for more information (02) 9872 0324 or nadine.kanaan@ridbc.org.au

For a full list of upcoming fundraising events and how you can support RIDBC visit [ridbc.org.au/howtohelp](http://ridbc.org.au/howtohelp)

**Continuing Professional Education**

**RIDBC Renwick Centre provides conferences, seminars, workshops and webinars available face to face and online, for teachers, professionals, and parents of children with sensory impairments.**

**Simple steps to improved adult audiological rehabilitation**  
12 - 13 March  
This workshop involves learning about implementing tools and strategies with simulated patients, with the aim to reduce barriers and achieve successful outcomes in adult audiological rehabilitation. [bit.ly/stepaudi](http://bit.ly/stepaudi)

**The role of self-advocacy in the classroom for deaf or hard of hearing students**  
22 March  
The aim of this one-day course is to provide participants with the theoretical knowledge regarding the role of self-advocacy in the classroom and inclusion of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. [bit.ly/selfdhh](http://bit.ly/selfdhh)

**Positive behaviour support in the classroom: practical strategies for supporting individuals with autism**  
27 March  
This one-day course offers a student engagement framework to provide teachers with practical applications of evidence-based strategies for supporting the behaviour and engagement of individuals with ASD. [bit.ly/supportasd](http://bit.ly/supportasd)

**Improving the outcomes of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in your class**  
4 April  
This one-day course will include how to read an audiogram, classroom acoustics, theory of mind, social skills, classroom adjustments, hearing aid technology and differentiation. [bit.ly/studentsdhh](http://bit.ly/studentsdhh)

For a full list of upcoming professional courses visit [shortcourses.ridbc.org.au](http://shortcourses.ridbc.org.au)
Support RIDBC and win $500,000 in Gold Bullion!

RIDBC is part of a new online quarterly lottery – Play for Purpose – designed exclusively to support the not for profit sector. With a total prize pool of $1 million and only 200,000 tickets, you have a 1:19 chance to win one of over 11,000 prizes.

Tickets are $25 each and we receive $15 from each ticket bought by RIDBC supporters. Buy a ticket at playforpurpose.com.au/ridbc

The inaugural Play for Purpose Lottery closes on 20th March 2018 and will be drawn on 22nd March 2018.

RIDBC’s Rainbow Lottery will continue as a subscriber-only lottery with a prize pool of $30,000. You can sign up today by calling 1800 043 411.

2017 Donor Survey: The results are in

In 2017, we surveyed our donors and asked them what they thought on a range of topics related to RIDBC services and fundraising activities. We received a great response. Thank you to those who took part. Our preliminary findings indicate:

- The characteristics the majority of donors surveyed attributed to RIDBC are: respected; caring; supportive; and experienced
- Education services, conferences, informal referrals and clinical service provision are your primary interest areas outside fundraising
- Key motivators to continue donating to RIDBC in the future are: encouraged by the type of work RIDBC does; RIDBC’s work is personally relevant; and driven to donate because of our work with children

Yes! I want to help support families across Australia

1 MY GIFT AND PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ Yes (please tick), I want to join RIDBC’s Monthly Giving Program. Please debit a monthly gift of $ _____

☐ Yes (please tick), I’d like to make a single gift of $ _____

☐ Cheque/Money order (enclosed and made payable to Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children)

☐ Credit card ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Diners

Gift type ☐ Monthly gift ☐ Single gift

Card Number ___ ___ ___ / ___ ___ ___ / ___ ___ ___ / ___ ___ ___ Expiry ___ / ___

Name on card ________________________________ Signature ________________________________

OR call 1800 043 411 to set up a monthly gift by direct debit.

2 MY CONTACT DETAILS

Donations of $2 or more are tax deductible

Return form to: GPO Box 9828 in your capital city

Name ________________________________

Address ________________________________

State __________ Postcode __________

Phone ________________________________ Email ________________________________

Your privacy is important to us. For more details, please read our privacy policy at ridbc.org.au/privacy-policy

Donate now ridbc.org.au/appeal phone 1800 043 411 fax 02 9873 6795
Every year, thousands of people help change the lives of children and adults with vision or hearing loss. Here are just a few of the many ways you can help:

**WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

- **Make a Donation or Become a Regular Giver**
  Your gift helps support our vital services to lift the limits for children and adults with vision or hearing loss.

- **Become a Volunteer**
  Volunteers support our staff in areas as diverse as making tactile books, assisting in classrooms, gardening and professional roles.

- **Leave a Lasting Legacy**
  Funds donated through bequests, trusts, foundations or permanent funds continue to support future generations.

- **Join a Lantern Club**
  Lantern Clubs raise funds for RIDBC through fun and social events and activities.

- **Become a Community Fundraiser**
  Whether you want to raise funds for RIDBC through your own fundraising event, or participate in an existing event, we can help you maximise your success.

- **Create a Corporate Partnership**
  Talk to us about becoming an RIDBC corporate partner and how your organisation and staff can make a difference.

Find out more about how you can make a difference: ridbc.org.au/howtohelp
1800 043 411
fundraising@ridbc.org.au