

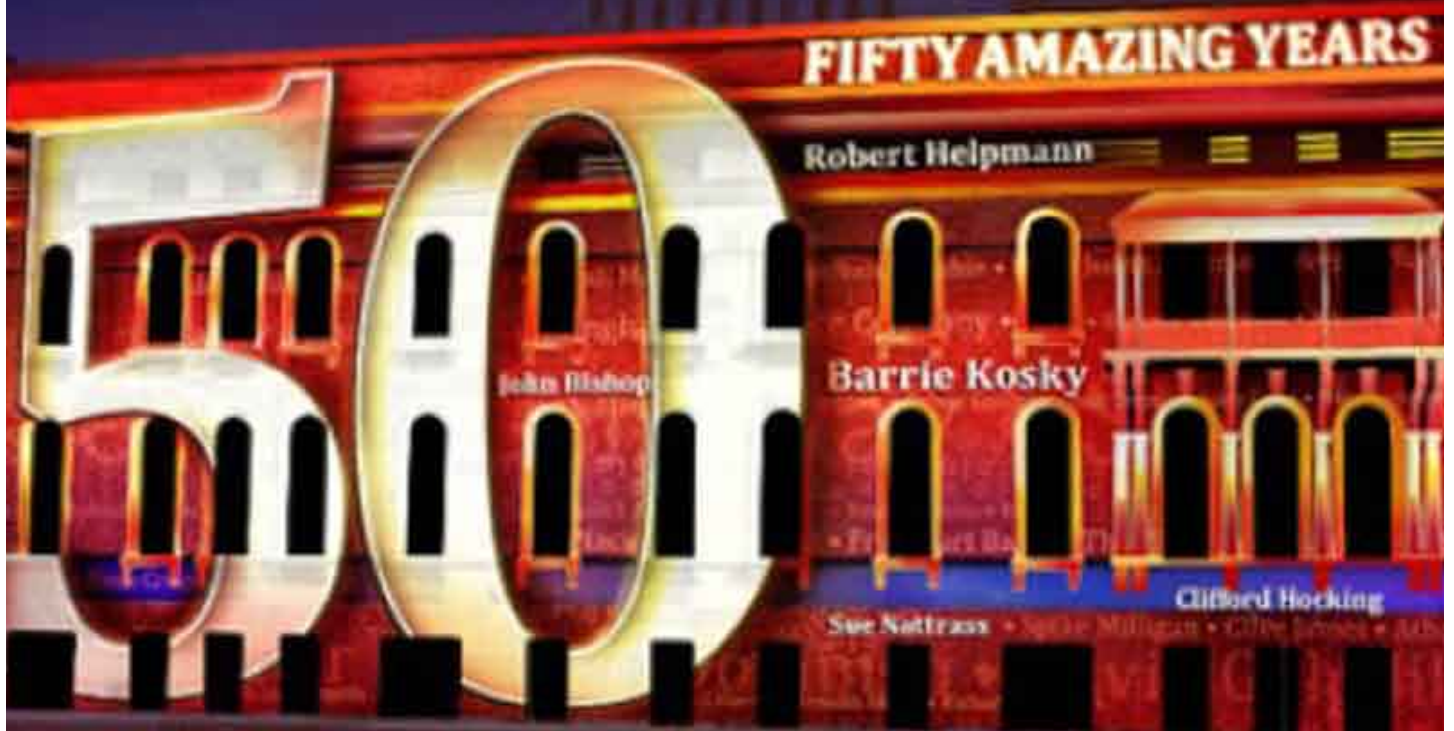
# Talkback

Talkback Newsletter

[www.aphasia.asn.au](http://www.aphasia.asn.au)

March 2010

## ADELAIDE FESTIVAL OF ARTS - NOTHERN LIGHTS



Communication Aides  
for people with Aphasia

KNOW YOUR  
COMMITTEE

Meri Karschimkus  
- A Carers Story

OT Students Project  
- Volunteers Needed

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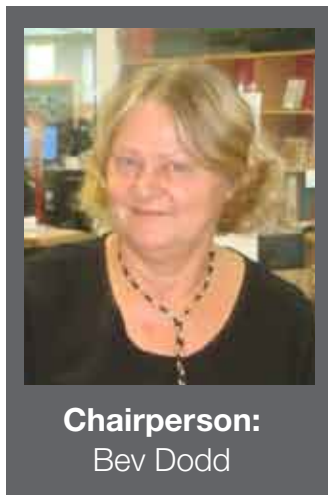
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Association  
for Aphasia Inc

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# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



**Chairperson:**  
Bev Dodd

I hope you all had a great Christmas break.

Committee had a break for about six weeks. We are now working hard again.

I talked about several projects that we will work on this year in the last newsletter.

These are progressing well.

## Website Project

We think the website needs updating. We have accepted a quote from Joel Bull (Jeff's son) to update the website.

We have spent the last couple of months working out the new content.

We want to have more information about what Talkback is doing. We also want more stories of people with aphasia, carers and volunteers.

If you would like your story on the website, get in touch with the office, Jeff or me. A committee member can help you write your story if you have trouble writing.

## Carers Project

Kate and Coralie have started looking at what Talkback can do for carers.

This project is in the early stages. They hope to have some ideas by May.

We will let you know what they find out. If you would like to be involved contact Kate or Coralie.



**Left: Bev Dodd** (Chairperson Talkback) & **Suzanne Weatherald**

## Young People with Aphasia Project

Tom, Anne, Jackie and I have met to talk about how we can help young people with aphasia. We will write to young people via speech pathologists to see if they are interested in forming a group to do things together - like bowling or going to a film.

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

## Retuning Recreation Project

The OT students, Aedan and Callum, will be working with members on this project over the next 6-8 weeks.

We think this project will really help people with aphasia be more involved in leisure activities.

They have written about this in the newsletter. If you would like to be involved, please contact them or the office.

## Raising Community awareness

We have contacted Monsignor David Cappo, Commissioner for Social Inclusion about aphasia and some of the difficulties people with aphasia have accessing services.

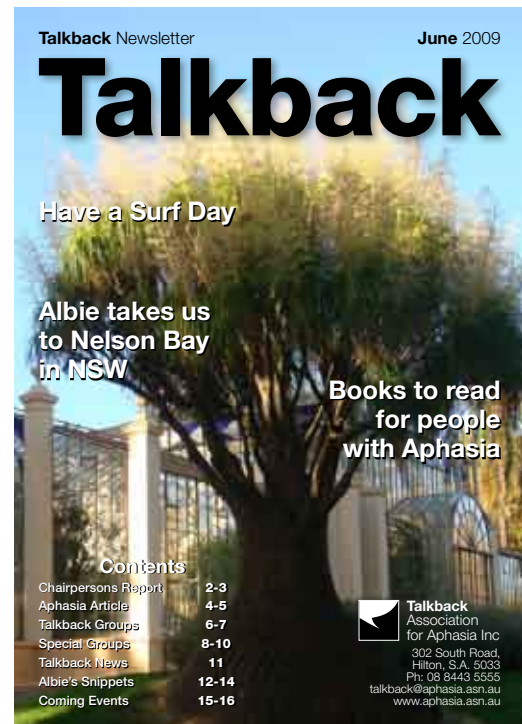
We will be meeting with staff from the Social Inclusion Unit to talk more about this.

## Electronic Newsletters

We are really proud of our recent newsletters and think that Danny is doing a great job as Editor.

When we print them we only print a few pages in colour.

If you would like to receive the newsletter by email instead of post, you can print the whole newsletter in colour.



If you would like to receive this electronically, please contact us on [talkback@aphasia.asn.au](mailto:talkback@aphasia.asn.au) and say 'newsletter by e mail please'.

If you would like to be more involved in any of our projects, please let us know. We are always looking for people who want to help out.

Please phone me on 83320577 or e-mail the office on [talkback@aphasia.asn.au](mailto:talkback@aphasia.asn.au)

**Bev Dodd**  
**Chair**

# KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

## Meri Karschimkus...carers story

On the night of April 6 2006, I went to bed alone, while my hard working fully committed husband, and dedicated father of our 5 children, played his **last game** of 5aside soccer with Jake (our 16 year old son). Little did we know that this would be his last game of soccer, nor that we would wake up with lives **dramatically** changed for ever...**in the beat of a heart!**

Wolf **suffered** an **Ischemic stroke (a clot obstructing the flow of blood to the brain)**, followed by an **aneurysm** (another type of stroke caused by a ballooning of these 'now weakened blood vessels' which bled into the brain following the ischemic stroke). No **'one'** professional can medically explain why. It was just a freaky thing that happened. Wolf was only 52 years old, mentally and physically fit, strong, healthy, didn't smoke and only drank moderately 3 or 4 times a year.

**But**, spiritually we know why! Although initially our future looked poorly as we grieved our losses and struggled to accept the devastating changes, we have now learned that Wolf's strokes have also brought many **blessings** and **positive** wonders into our lives. Our family has grown, learned how to manage crisis, acquired an absolute appreciation for one another and have been blessed with the gift of

compassion for others.



The fact that it is 4:30 a.m. in the morning as I write this, is testimony to the time constraints I now have, as I try to squeeze so much into my day as a **carer**. How my time has been stretched between raising our 5 children, caring for my husband, bringing in a 'little income' and also taking on 'the man's duties' (those that Wolf was once responsible for). In saying this, I need to be clear about how I feel regarding my increased load. I don't resent what I do for a second. I love my new role in life and am absolutely **passionate** about my husband.

# KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

Wolf is now **permanently** in a **wheel chair** and suffers from the debilitating condition ... **Aphasia**. Wolf's Aphasia has been as equally enervating as his physical disability. His ability to **communicate** was completely **stolen** as if by a thief in the night. He was unable to even produce a sound and left with **no ability** to express. Aphasia was the most distressing component of our whole experience.

I was completely naïve and initially believed that my husband was not there ... that intellectually he was an empty shell. As he became more awake, I could see **recognition, fear, questions** and **knowingness** in

his sad blue eyes. He was trapped in his own body. As the days and weeks progressed and he became more **alert**, I watched him use the remote control for the TV and I saw him read the clock on the hospital wall. I was overcome with tears when he struggled with his **left**

**hand** to remove his wedding ring from his left finger (his right hand was not working any more), and pass it to me with questioning eyes as if to say ... 'will you still be my wife?'

Although he was on a special diet with swallowing difficulties, he managed to use newly developing **gesturing skills** to communicate that he **'WANTED that**

**chocolate Easter egg'**

on the hospital window sill. He was all there! He made hills with his hands to let us know that he was desperate to come home.

**His language centre was severely damaged but intellectually**

he was alive. We



Left: Wolf & Meri Karschimus at the dinner from Brisbane Conference 2007

are now three years on from that heart beat that changed our lives. I have learned that people with **Aphasia** are **smart**, but sadly the condition can be misunderstood for an **intellectual disability**.

# KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

I have had T-shirts made for Wolf to try to educate those in his community – to impress that Wolf is **not stupid!** T-shirts that read **'Aphasia ... loss of words not intelligence'** and **'Words ... Aphasia stole mine'** etc. We are fortunate that Wolf's receptive language

over the past year than any other period of time since his stroke. I can not impress enough that you never **give up** despite what the professionals might say about 'most progress occurs within the first 6 months after the injury'. **It's NOT true!**



**2010 Talkback Committee:** Left back - Anne Bunning, Tom Bunning, Coralie Hayley, Jeff Bull (Vice-Chairperson), Margaret Manning (Secretary) & Vic Benefield; Left front - Meri Karschimkus, Kate Handscombe (Treasurer), Bev Dodd (Chairperson), Jackie Gouldhurst & Danny Dichiera (Editor)

has improved, and he is able to make sense of most of what is said to him. His expressive language remains a **struggle** as he searches his muddled filing cabinet to 'find the words' that match his thoughts, but has made **massive progress**. He has great **difficulty writing** and **reading** also has its challenges. Wolf has made the biggest leap in his **speech**

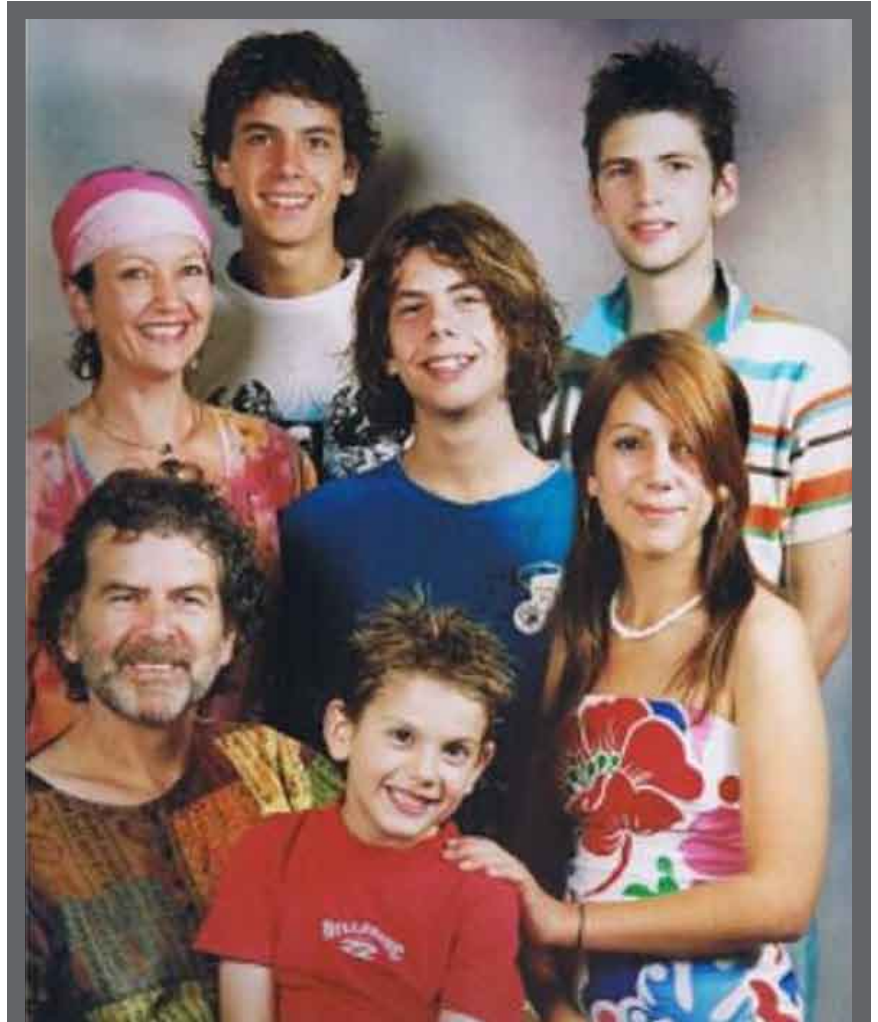
large family has had to simplify our life style. We are not unhappy about living on pensions and have found that we find happiness in non materialistic things and prioritise differently. There are struggles at times to make ends meet but this ... believe it or not, has been a healthy change and we are far happier (but if offered a million dollars we would consider!)

As a **full time carer** I have had to **resign** from my work as **Manager of KEYS (a speech and language centre for children with Autism)** but have recently managed to return for just **6 hours** vonce a week). Since Wolf has acquired his **physical disability** and **Aphasia**, he is also **unemployed**, so consequently our

# KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

One of the hardest things has been the losses for our children, their grief, saying goodbye to the dad who was so physically and emotionally involved with them. Their ages at the time of their dad's stroke were 16, 15, 13, 12 and 5 years of age and Wolf's daughter from another marriage who was older but still effected greatly. Our children have grown and **learned** so much from their experience, love their dad for who he is now and become **strong compassionate**, caring young people.

Almost 4 years down the track Wolf's communication skills continue to **improve** and we work hard as a team in our family. Wolf attends some form of **rehabilitation** 4 days a week and he has developed new skills in leisure such as **table tennis** and **painting**. He gives back to the Universe (as we have been so blessed along our journey) by visiting our new found friends who live in the parks in the city and fulfilling their many needs. Our relationship as husband and wife has '**changed**' but remains **stronger** than ever. Our children are coping extremely well with their lives and we are very proud of



Family photo 1 year after Wolf's stroke

the way they have come through a crisis as strong caring individuals...and Wolfie rocks! His **strength, patience** and **persistence** have been such an inspiration to us all.

**Meri Karschimkus**  
**Committee**

# TALKBACK NEWS

## Northern Lights Festival - Adelaide Festival of Arts 2010

The Festival of Arts has begun and there is a fantastic light exhibition through the streets of **Adelaide**.

I went to **Elder Park** and it looks really good. There are pictures and lights that show the **history** of the Adelaide Festival.

The lights are on Adelaide landmarks including the Rotunda at Elder Park, the State Library and many more.

I recommend you go for a drive and see it for yourself.



Rotunda Elder Park - Festival of Northern Lights

The Artistic Director Mr Grabowsky said "It is wonderful for the people of Adelaide - and our visitors - to again be able to share in the spectacle of the **largest light installation** of its type **ever** displayed in Australia - and

is one of the ways we will celebrate the **Festival's 50th anniversary year** in 2010," Mr Grabowsky said.



Art Gallery - Festival of Northern Lights

Internationally acclaimed, Sydney-based projection specialists The Electric Canvas will return to Adelaide to light up our city. **Northern Lights** was created using digital software and giant Frenchmade PIGI system projectors, each weighing more than 200kg.

Northern Lights is **FREE** and will run from dusk until **1am** for over a month from **Friday, 26 February** until **Monday, 5 April 2010**.

**Danny  
Editor**

# TALKBACK GROUPS

## **DISABILITY SERVICES SA FULLARTON GROUP**

The Talkback Groups meets on **Wednesdays** from **1.30pm - 3.00pm** at Disability Services SA 103 Fisher St, Fullarton.

Contact **Anne Walter** on **ph: 8272 1988** or email [anne.walter@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:anne.walter@dfc.sa.gov.au).

## **HENDON GROUP**

The Talkback Groups meet at Acacia Court on **Tuesdays 9.45-11.30am** at 81 Tapleys Hill Road, Hendon. From **19th of March** the group will meet on **Fridays** from **9.45 - 11.30am**.

For more information call **Bev Dodd** or **Chris Dejoia**, Speech Pathologist on **8243 1844**.

## **HOVE GROUP**

The Talkback Groups meets at Alwyndor Rehabilitation and Support Services at Hove on **Tuesday 10.00 - 11.30am**. The sessions are from **2nd February** until **June 29th** (excluding school holidays).

For information please contact **Coralie Hayley**, Speech Pathologist on **ph: 8298 8849**.



**The Hove Talkback Group**

## **MORPHETT VALE GROUP**

The group meets at Southern Therapy Service on Pimpala Road at Morphett Vale. The **new** time for Groups meets on **Monday** from **1.30pm - 3pm** from **1st February** until **June 29th 2010** (excluding school holidays & public holidays).

For information please contact **Coralie Hayley**, Speech Pathologist on **ph: 8322 5700**.



**The Morphett Vale Talkback Group**

## **MURRAY BRIDGE GROUP**

The Talkback Groups meets on **Wednesdays** from **10am - 11.30am** from **10th March 2010** at Murray/ Mallee Community Health Centre 102 Swanport Rd, Murray Bridge.

Contact **Sarah Puust**, Speech Pathologist on **8535 6800**.

## **RESTHAVEN PARADISE GROUP**

Here at Paradise and Eastern Community Services we have had a successful block with good attendance. The dates for the next block are **3rd February** to **7th April** from **Wednesday** at **1.30pm** to **3.30pm** for **10 weeks** at Resthaven Therapy Centre, 61 Silkes Rd, Paradise.

The Speech Pathologist is **Tammy Morrison** on **ph. 8337 4371**.

# SPECIAL GROUPS

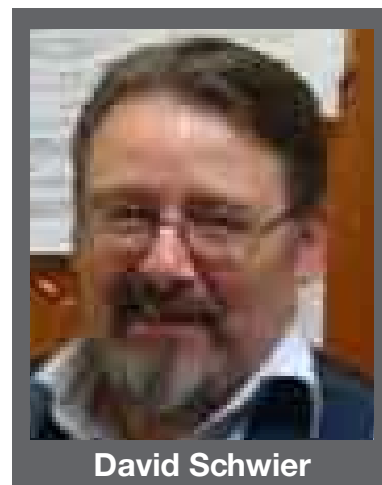
## Marden Coffee Club

Hi Coffee Lovers

This is a snap of our people in the Marden Fish Café with one of the owners. If you are in the area, call in and have a decent cup of coffee. Any **Tuesday** from **11-12pm**.

Ring me, David on **8363 3914** about the **Marden Coffee Club**.

**David Schwier**  
Talkback Member



**Left back: Vic Benefield** (Aphasia Committee), **Kirstie Fatah** (Owner Marden Fish Café), **Albie Carter** (Aphasia Member) & **Gordon Andrews** (Carer Member);  
**Left front: Gerald Norton** (Aphasia Member), **David Schwier** (Aphasia Member) & **Pegg Andrews** (Aphasia Member)

## Hendon Group Coffee Club

The **Hendon Group Coffee Club** meets every **Thursday** morning at **10.00am** for approximately one hour at Cinos Cafe, West Lakes.

Anybody wanting more information or to go along and have a chat, please ring **Jeff Bull** on **0416 307 210**.

# SPECIAL GROUPS

## Computer Club

I felt a bit **nervous** on my first day at the Computer Club. It didn't last long. The members are a **great** bunch of people who made me feel right at home.



**Left: Marianne Downes** (4th year student Speech Pathology Flinders University) & **Bev Dodd** (Chairperson Talkback)

Working with the Computer Club is really **important** for me. I have been studying for many years and feel like I'm drowning in theory. Here, I get to meet some people with **aphasia** and **understand** more about the different personal challenges it brings.



**Left: Members Jamie Castro, Greg, Suzanne Weatherald & Stanley Copley** in the Computer Club at Burnside Library

I'm **planning** some practical and enjoyable activities for the next few months. Together, we will investigate useful websites and find out what's happening in Adelaide and all over the world. There will be **quizzes, jokes** and **fun** for all. I love **food** so that's also on the menu. Did I **mention** learning some computer skills too? We have some speech pathology student volunteers to support anybody who needs help.



**Left: Bob Collins** (Member) & **Marianne Downes** (student Speech Pathology Flinders University)

I might be older than the average student, but I am still wearing my **L-Plates**, so thanks to the members for their patience and generosity to me.

**Marianne Downes**  
**Student Speech Pathologist Flinders Uni**

The Computer Club meets on **Monday 1.30 - 3.30pm** at Burnside Community Library, 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore. Must be a Talkback Association Member to attend.

**Bev Dodd Ph: 8332 0577**

# SPECIAL GROUPS

## Students Project

### 'Retuning Recreation'

**Do you have some free time?**

**Do you want to take part in a new group?**

**Do you want to make a difference?**



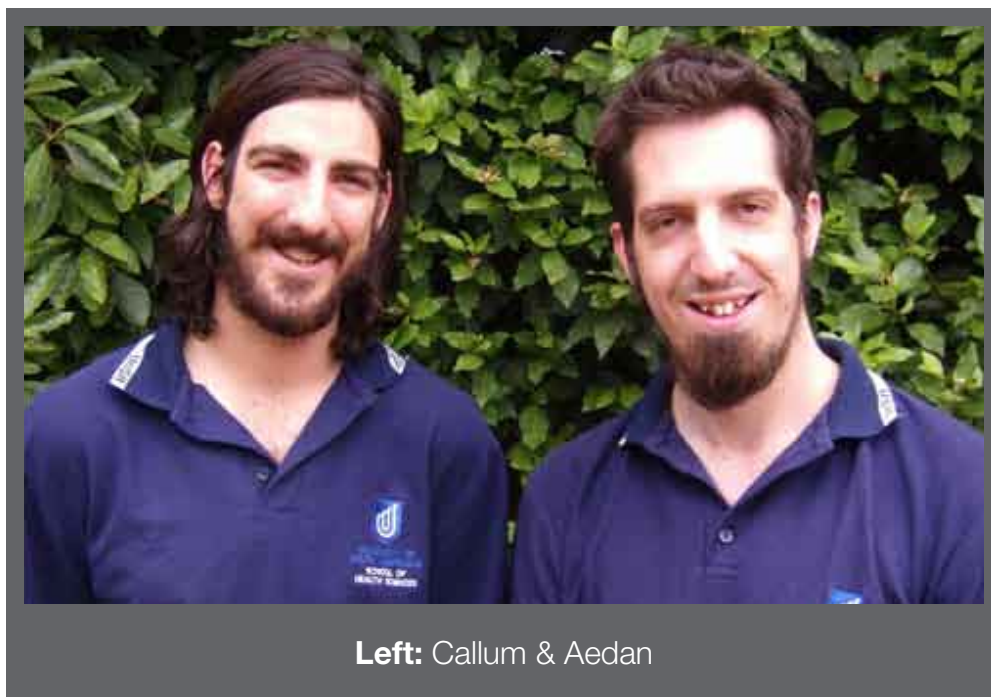
As part of the '**Retuning Recreation**' project, we need **volunteers** to join a new group. The volunteers will work with us to come up with ideas to help people with aphasia participate in more **recreational** activities.

As a volunteer you will be **encouraged** to:

- actively contribute ideas to the group
- attend group meetings
- take part in group activities which have been organised
- remain respectful to the thoughts and opinions of others

If you require more **details** or would like to register your **interest**, please email

**Aedan** and **Callum** (4th Year Occupational Therapy Students) at: [retuning.rec@gmail.com](mailto:retuning.rec@gmail.com) or contact the Talkback Association on 08 8443 5555



**Left:** Callum & Aedan



# LIBRARY

## Aphasia DVD Collection (2009)

**La Trobe University**

**Kimberley Bagot, Kaarina Fekete, Annie MacCulloch, Thilini Madduma Acharige & Milla Sambell**

**4yr Speech Pathology Students under the supervision of Dr Miranda Rose & in association with Australian Aphasia Association (AAA) Vic Branch.**

**A presentation for the friends of people with Aphasia - *'With a little help from my friends'***

The **'Aphasia DVD Collection'** can be accessed from:- **La Trobe Communication Clinic**  
Fourth Floor Health Sciences Building 2, School of Human Communication Sciences

La Trobe University BUNDOORA VIC 3086  
Ph: (03) 9479 5815 Fax: (03) 9479 1874



## Talkback Office Information

The Office is usually manned by volunteers on **Thursday** (during the middle of the day) and **Friday afternoon**.

This is how to get to the office by bus. Public bus no. **720** - catch in **King William Street** east side - stops A1, B1, D2, goes along **Wakefield St**, stops in **Victoria Square** near tram, then in front of the market Stop W2.

Safest to get off at stop 1A on **Sir Donald Bradman Drive**, cross at trafficlights ahead,

turn left & follow **South Road to No. 302**.

Public bus no. **J1, J2, J3** - via Airport - catch in **Grenfell** or **Currie Streets**. Get off at Stop 5A, first stop when bus turns from **South Rd**, into **Sir Donald Bradman Drive**. Walk back towards the city & turn right at **South Road** intersection, walk along **South Road to No. 302**.

Please ring before coming to make sure someone is there.

# WORD SEARCH

## South Australia



HAHNDORF  
 CEDUNA  
 GLENELG  
 KANGAROO ISLAND  
 ART GALLERY  
 NORTH TERRACE  
 HINDMARSH STADIUM  
 PORTPIRIE  
 RIVER TORRENS

ADELAIDE  
 FLEURIEU PENINSULA  
 NETBALL  
 MOUNT GAMBIER  
 MATTHEW FLINDERS  
 MURRAY RIVER  
 ADELAIDE OVAL  
 PORT POWER  
 VICTOR HARBOR

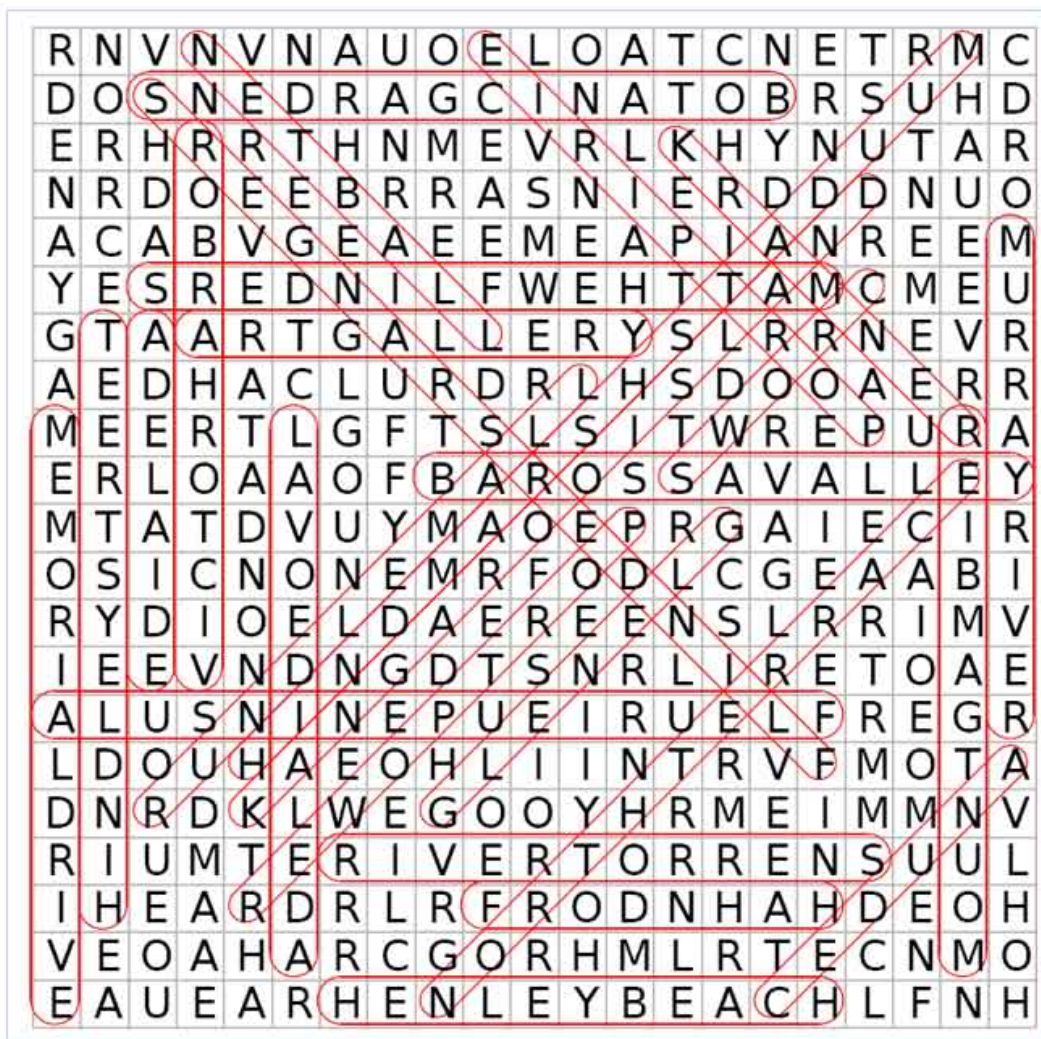
BAROSSA VALLEY  
 CROWS  
 FLINDERS RANGERS  
 BOTANIC GARDENS  
 HINDLEY STREET  
 HENLEY BEACH  
 MEMORIAL DRIVE  
 RENMARK  
 RUNDLE MALL

# COMING EVENTS

Sydney Aphasia Conference 26-29 September 2010

For more information go to - [www.aphasiaconference.com.au](http://www.aphasiaconference.com.au)

## Word Search Answers



The next **Talkback Newsletter** will be published in  
**EARLY JUNE 2010**

This is **YOUR** newsletter and we want to hear from you !!

**Please send articles to us by 27th of May 2010** (at the very latest)

Opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and are not sanctioned by the Talkback Association. Please consult your medical practitioner for any health advice required.