



Blind Citizens Australia

Additional information to BCA's evidence given to the Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training - Inquiry into Teacher Education - Friday, 10 February, 2006.

1. STATISTICS

When considering the number of students receiving disability support services, it is estimated that there are some *3,000* students of school age who are blind or vision impaired in Australia.

Source: Dr. Gale. G and Dr. Steer. M. from Renwick College, University of New Castle. Conference Paper delivered at a 2005 conference of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI) (article contained in this pack) citing:

Verick, Margaret (2000). *Braille: The forgotten "language"*. Paper presented at the National ACROD Convention. Canberra, 23 October.

2. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ACCESSIBILITY ACT 2001 (IMAA) (United States)

In their analysis of the IMAA, the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) explained that the purpose of the Act is "intended to improve access for blind persons, or other persons with print disabilities, to print instructional materials used in elementary and secondary schools by creating a coordinated and efficient system for acquiring and distributing such materials in the form of electronic files suitable for conversion into a variety of specialized formats that are accessible to such persons. The transition for implementing this new system will occur over three (3) years".

Source:

<http://www.afb.org/section.asp?SectionID=49&TopicID=258&DocumentID=1704>

The AFB noted on their website that the:

"Key elements of H.R. 490, the Instructional Materials Accessibility Act, introduced in the 108th Congress, were incorporated into the final version of H. R. 1350, a bill to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

On December 3, 2004, President Bush signed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act into law. (P.L. 108-446".

Source:

<http://www.afb.org/section.asp?SectionID=49&TopicID=258&DocumentID=1709>

3. BRAILLE LAWS

The AFB website states that Braille laws exist in a number of US States. These laws specify requirements that publishers of textbooks supply their books to the state in electronic file formats so that they can be reproduced in braille or other accessible media. As of 9th January 2005, 33 states of the US have braille laws.

Source:

<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=44&TopicID=192&DocumentID=2986>