**Vision Australia Summer Holiday Reading Webinar 2 December 2015**

Cass Strakosch: OK, well, welcome, everyone, to the Summer Holiday Reading webinar. We’re gonna get started in just one minute’s time to do this event tonight. I’m joined at a long table by four amazing panelists from Vision Australia, and I’ll introduce them all to you in just a minute. We’re actually sitting in the library at our Kooyong Centre, and so behind us is a number of very interesting looking books, but hopefully you can keep your attention on us tonight. And interestingly, for a summer holiday reading webinar, it isn’t that summery here in Melbourne, but we’ll try and warm you all up with our great tips and ideas tonight.

So today we have four great panellists from our Vision Australia library team. So, starting from my right, we have Stephen Jolley, Library Ambassador.

Stephen Jolley: Hello, everyone. Great to be with you at an event which is going way beyond the venue, thanks to the technology.

Cass Strakosch: Thanks, Stephen. We also have Jamie Kelly.

Jamie Kelly: Hello, Cass. Lovely to be here and to share this evening with you.

Cass Strakosch: Great. And we have Anne Ford.

Anne Ford: Hi, Cass. And hello everyone who’s tuned in,

Cass Strakosch: And at the end of the table we have Anthea Taylor.

Anthea Taylor: Hi, Cass. And thanks for letting me be part of this.

Cass Strakosch: Very welcome, Anthea. So, tonight we’re going to be talking all things summer holiday reading. So we’re gonna be talking through our recommended books for the summer, which I’m very much looking forward to hearing and getting a few tips myself. We’re gonna be talking a little bit about the library, and of course how you can actually read these amazing books when you’re on holidays, on the move or perhaps by the beach.

So, I’ll remind you that there’s two ways that you can ask questions tonight. The first one is you can email. So you can email webinar - that’s w-e-b-i-n-a-r - @[visionaustralia.org](http://visionaustralia.org) with your name and question. So that’s the email address that we sent the information about how to log in to from tonight, so if in doubt, you can always just reply to that email and we’ll get it. The second way is you can send a text message, so SMS this number - 0438 792 407 with your name and question. So those two ways again are emailing webinar@visionaustralia.org or texting 0438 792 407, remembering to pop your name or question in either way. And we’re gonna get through as many questions as possible from you tonight, so please send them through. We’d love to hear from you.

So, we might just jump straight in and think about what are those amazing books that we should know about or that might be coming up or that are in the library that we should be reading this summer. So we’ll start with thinking about what were the five most requested books in 2015 through the Vision Australia library. Anthea, are you able to share some information on that?

Anthea Taylor: I certainly can, thanks, Cass. Well, the first book is ‘The Narrow Road to the Deep North’ by Richard Flanagan. He won the Booker Prize last year for this particular book, and it’s one I can talk about because I am currently reading it at the moment. So it’s set in the Second World War, and it’s about Dorrigo Evans, a prisoner of way in the Japanese camp, for the Thai-Burma Railway. And it is very confronting because it talks about the circumstances and the situations of the prisoners of war, but it also talks about his story and how he copes after the war. And for me it was quite a good learning sort of experience, thinking about, “Oh, yeah, I know a little bit about the Second World War, the prisoners of war, but this goes into greater detail.

Cass Strakosch: Great. So that has been a very popular book in the library this year?

Anthea Taylor: Yes, yes, it has. And it was last year as well.

Cass Strakosch: Mm, interesting. So, what has been the second most popular book?

Anthea Taylor: The second one - and this is one of my favourite books - is ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’. And I think people think, “Oh, this was published in the 1960s, why is this so popular?” But Harper Lee published a book this year called ‘Go Set a Watchman’ which is set 20 years after ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’, so there’s been a resurgence because people want to know “What’s this book about?” And ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’, it’s about racism in a small town in Alabama, and it’s about the small town prejudices as well. And it’s seen from the eyes of an 8-year-old, Scout. And her father, Atticus, is a lawyer and defends a black man against a rape. And also, too, intriguing in that is this mysterious Boo Radley who the children think is a boogeyman.

Cass Strakosch: Mm. I think that is one of the books that everyone is supposed to read but I haven’t read yet.

Anthea Taylor: Cass!

Cass Strakosch: I think I will have to quickly add that to my list this summer, especially after that great description. Thanks, Anthea. So, what has been the third most requested book through 2015 in the library, Anne?

Anne Ford: Well, surprise, surprise, Judy Nunn - one of her books has come up third on the list. And Judy Nunn is one of our very favourite authors here at the library. And the book’s called ‘Elianne’. And ‘Elianne’ is set is southern Queensland. And it’s about… The main character is Big Jim Durham who builds a big sugar mill for his French wife, Elianne, in a rather ruthless manner. And it’s all about the southern Queensland town and the sugar industry way back in 1881. So, if you have read Judy Nunn before, you will really enjoy this next book and it’s been certainly very popular.

Cass Strakosch: Great. And what has been another requested book in 2015?

Anne Ford: Another requested book, the fourth one - and this is another book that’s a bit like ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’, it’s been around for quite a while - and it’s ‘The Thorn Birds’ by Colleen McCulloch**.** It’s been made into a TV movie, a lot of people have read it, but it’s still being asked for regularly at the library. And for those who haven’t read it, it’s about the extraordinary…over three generations of the Cleary family, set in Australian, in central Australia and various states within Australia. And it’s one of those very much loved books that just keeps being read over and over.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. Thanks, Anne. We said it was the top five, so what was the fifth most requested book in 2015 through the library.

Anthea Taylor: The fifth book is **’**52 Waratah Avenue’ by Lynne Wilding**.** And like ‘The Thorn Birds’, which Anne just mentioned, it’s a family saga. Family sagas are so very popular and, really, who doesn’t love a bit of a family saga? And this features Laura Beaumont, and she has established a department store, Ashworths, but she’s not well. She wants to know is how the department store going to survive. Do they need to sell it? Do her children come in and take it? She has two daughters. One lives overseas and is a pianist. Another daughter is interested but sh’e also suspicious of her sister. So it’s about, sort of, that dynamics within families.

 Cass Strakosch: So they all sound like really fantastic books. No wonder they’ve been so popular this year through our library. But I’m really interested – since we have two library experts on our panel - I want to know what you recommend that we should read this summer. So, Anthea, what do you think we should be reading?

Anthea Taylor: I think, Cass, the books that we’re going to recommend are sort of fairly new to the library, and we know they’ve been popular. The first two I’m going to recommend are in the true crime category, which public libraries around the world - it’s one of the most popular genres. The first one is ‘Milat: Inside Australia’s Biggest Manhunt, A Detective’s Story’ by Clive Small. And as most of our participants in the webinar will know, or remember, about Ivan Milat, the serial killer, this is what this book is about. He sort of took his victims to the Belanglo Forest in New South Wales. It was one of the largest manhunts in Australia, and an investigation that absolutely gripped the nation. This is the story about how he was caught, about the detectives that were involved. So it’s chilling, it’s forensic, it has some compassion. But, again, it’s the interest that derives from it for a lot of readers.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. And now we’ve had a question come through from the audience about how we spell the names of the authors. So what I might do, rather than us spelling them tonight, we’ll make a list of all of these books available afterwards for everyone at home so they don’t have to be furiously taking notes right now, and we can keep hearing those wonderful recommendations.

So what is the second recommendation?

Anthea Taylor: The second recommendation is ‘This House of Grief: The Story of a Murder Trial’by Helen Garner, and she’s one of Australia’s most acclaimed authors, generally of fiction. But she’s written this book, for non-fiction, about the supposed murder of the Farquharson boys back in 2005, on Father’s Day, when Robert Farquharson was driving his children back to Winchelsea in country Victoria. They drove into a lake and only he, as the father, survived. So the court case was about…he was alleged to have murdered the children, he was convicted. So, again, it looks at the court case, you know, as a man…so his marriage had already broken up but he and his wife were quite good friends, but because of all of these circumstances how they’ve distanced themselves from each other, how unpredictable the justice system is.

Cass Strakosch: It sounds like a very interesting book. And who’s that book by again?

Anthea Taylor: It’s by Helen Garner.

Cass Strakosch: Garner. Great. And so I’m getting a nice five top recommended reads. So, what is number three on the list?

Anne Ford: And number three is ‘The Dressmaker’ by Rosalie Ham. Now, Rosalie Ham has written a number of books, and ‘The Dressmaker’ has just been made into a movie which is doing very well at the box office at the moment. And for those of you who are wondering about what’s the book about, it’s about a dressmaker who has learnt her craft in France, and she returns to her original home town, in a small country town, to re-engage with the people in her small town. And she meets everyone, and they’re all very suspicious of her t the beginning, but gradually she has them all wearing the most beautiful French gowns. But things go a bit sour and she decides to wreak revenge. So, the movie is doing very well and the book is very well-written. So, if you like a bit of French, a bit of French class , a bit of country town and a bit of revenge, you’ll enjoy this one.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic,. Thanks Anne. I’ve definitely seen the ads for the movie so reading the book’s a really good idea. So, what is number four on the recommended list?

Anthea Taylor: Number four is ‘Make Me’ by Lee Child, again, one of our very popular authors. And this is the latest Jack Reacher book, and for Jack Reacher fans, this is the book for you. So at this point, jack Reacher, he’s really got no placed to go, he’s got nothing to do, so he thought, “Oh, I’m going to go on a bit of a one-day holiday, it will be fine.” But that doesn’t go according to plan. He lands in a very small ghost town, but there’s a woman waiting for him, this missing colleague, there’s a cryptic note about 200 deaths, then there’s also the very watchful community. So it’s mystery and intrigue, and it really is a quest into the heart of darkness of a town.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. And number five.

Anne Ford: For those people who are science fiction-fantasy reader, we’ve got the final book in the Discworld series by Terry Pratchett, which is called ‘Shepherd’s Crown’. It’s another Tiffany Aching adventure, and it is the final in the series. And it once more draws us back into the Discworld where strange and mysterious things happen. So for all those Terry Pratchett fans, the book is awaiting you to read.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. So, all five of those are available in our library at the moment, is that right?

Anthea Taylor: Yes, they are.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. But I heard that we’ve got a few coming up that you might be able to look forward to this summer. And in fact there was three really exciting ones to look forward to. Can you just tell us about those?

Anne Ford: Well, the first one I’ve got on my list is ‘Reckoning: A Memoir’ by Magda Szubanski, and I’ve just finished reading this book myself. And it’s a true memoir. It’s a true memoir of her family and herself and coming to terms with her family’s history and her rise to stardom. It’s a book with laughter in it. It’s a book with some sadness in it. And it’s one of those memoirs that once you start reading, you really can’t put it down. So it’s well worth keeping your eye out for it because it’s in production at the moment.

Cass Strakosch: Great. So, what’s another one coming up, in production, that we can look forward to?

Anne Ford: The next one that’s in production is called ‘The Great Plains’ by Nicole Alexander. And Nicole Alexander has written a number of books generally set in the heart of Australia. This one takes us on a captivating journey from the American wild west to the wilds of outback Australia. And then it takes us through the Great Depression and onward through Australia. So this one is full of characters which are full of life and laughter. And I think people will enjoy this book too.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. So, that was the two books so far, three books?

Anne Ford: I think Anthea has got another one.

Anthea Ford: One more – ‘Ash Island’ by Barry Maitland. And this features Detective Sergeant Harry Belltree who previously had had a near fatal confrontation with one of his colleagues, became a bit of a departmental embarrassment, so he got shifted from Sydney to a supposedly quiet life in Newcastle but it ends up not being so quiet, of course. There’s a bit of crime, a bit of mystery. And a body’s been found buried just off Ash Island. But there’s more – Harry’s also got unfinished business. There was a car crash previously that killed his parents and blinded his wife so he’s also looking into that.

Cass Strakosch: Right. So they sound like three very interesting things to look forward to this summer. So they’re all coming out over the next summer period?

Anthea Taylor: Yes, within the summer 2015-2016. They’re all in production as we speak.

Cass Strakosch: Well, I’m very glad that we’ve got those ones, you’ve mentioned them tonight. I’ve had Cathy write in and say she’s already read a couple of those books that we’ve mentioned already. So I’m glad we’ve had those three for you, Cathy, I hope you enjoy them.

So they’re a really great list of books. And, as I said, we will have in a list with the author and their title available for everyone at home afterwards, so don’t worry if you missed anything.

What I will do is quickly just refresh everyone’s memory about who’s on the panel tonight , for anyone who joined us late. So, my name’s Cassandra. I work in client engagement at Vision Australia. And joining me tonight we have Stephen Jolley.

Stephen Jolley: Hi, all.

Cass Strakosch: Jamie Kelly.

Jamie Kelly: Hello, everyone. I’ve just been enjoying all these new books.

Cass Strakosch: They sound great, don’t they?

Jamie Kelly: Wonderful.

Cass Strakosch: We have Anne Ford.

Anne Ford: Hi, everyone.

Cass Strakosch: And Anthea at the end.

Anthea Taylor: Good evening.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. So, we’ve got some questions coming through, which is fantastic. But what I might do first is just make sure everyone knows how they actually become a member of the library so they can get all these fantastic book in alternate formats. So, Anne, how do you actually become a member of the library?

Anne Ford: Well, all you need to do… You can become a member in a number of different ways. You could either call us on 1300 654 656 and ask us to send you a membership pack, or we can even join you up over the phone – we can do that when necessary. You can also email us on library@visionaustralia.org, and we will send you a membership, straight to you via the email. Or you can also hop online to our website, and download the membership pack yourself and fill it in, and just email it or fax it or pop it in the mail and it will come back to us. We generally have memberships added to our systems within 48 hours, and before you know it, you’ll be receiving books or being able to download books and happily reading away.

Cass Strakosch: And what format books do we have?

Anne Ford: Look, you can access books in a variety of ways. You can access them via CD. You can also access them via our 3G Player which is like a radio, and it will just play the books to you in your own home. You can also download them yourself, or you can listen to them via our app on your iPad or your iPhone. So, the books are available in a variety of ways. You can also borrow books from our Braille library if you’re a Braille user. And we have quite a large collection that you can access also.

Cass Strakosch: So, the Vision Australia Library is for people who are blind, have low vision or have a print disability, so it sounds like we have books in Braille and audio for people at home.

Anne Ford: That’s correct.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. So, how do you work out what books you’re gonna get? Sum that up.

Anne Ford: When you are filling out the membership form, there’s a section that asks for what type of material yo like to read, and we’ve got about 105 categories that you can choose from. And for some people that works very well because the books come out to you automatically in those categories. But for other people who like to have a bit more hands-on, you can also access our catalogue. When you become a member, we give you an ID and a password, and you can access the catalogue, choose the books yourself, ask them to be posted out, or download them or add them to your download queue, and they will go into your 3G Player or onto the app on your iPhone. So, you can access two ways- you can have us help select, you can select yourself. Or you can call us up or email us with any suggestions you’d like for us to add to your bookshelf so you’ve got extra reading, or books that you’ve heard people talking about.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. Now, I’ve got a question that’s come through from Michael. So, Michael’s recently read a book from the Vision Australia collection – so, already a member, which is fantastic – called ‘Dune is a Four-letter Word’ by Griselda Sprigg, which he described as a really terrific book. His question is this – “How do I find other books in the collection that would be along similar lines,” to that one they enjoyed.

Jamie Kelly: Well, it’s Jamie. I’m happy to answer that, Cass. So, if Michael wants to either ring us and ask us of we’ve got other similar books to that type of subject. Or he can go onto our online catalogue at i-accessonline.visionaustralia.org, he can log in and he can do a search for that subject or author, and look for similar books like he’s already got. And that’s a very popular way of actually, you know, trying to find your own books. So the catalogue is very user friendly. You can you know, just use a basic search and just type in a subject and look at it that way, or you can do a more detailed search by using the advanced search page.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic.

Anne Ford: And if they’re not too sure how to do that, they can call us up on the 1300 654 656 number, and someone will go through that process with them on the phone.

Cass Strakosch: Great. So, there’s a bit of help there if it’s someone’s first time going online to order some books?

Anne Ford: Yes.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic.

Anne Ford: We’re definitely there to help.

Cass Strakosch: Great. And so, you’ve got your books, you’ve finished reading them – how do you get more books?

Jamie Kelly: Well, you can go online and search for them. You can add them to your wish list so you can go back and read them later. Or you can loan them by adding them to your loans so they’ll either come to you on CD if that’s what you prefer or we like people to download them or use our new Vision Australia Connect app which is now available through the Google Store and also through the iOS store. And it’s a very simple, easy-to-use app. At this stage it just offers you our audio books and magazines. But in February we’ll get newspapers and podcasts, and in June or thereabouts we hope to add more functionality, including being able to search through the app for books directly. So there’s a lot of exciting things to look forward to with the app.

Cass Strakosch: Yeah, fantastic. So, Stephen, from your perspective – you’re a volunteer at the library and a member yourself – how do you find using the library to get what books you would like to read?

Stephen Jolley: it’s pretty good. I can have my requirements met. If I’m not sure what way to go, I can talk to one of the staff, and they really are friendly staff. We don’t just say that. They’re a very dedicated mob. Very passionate about their books, as you can hear from Anthea and Anne earlier. And the Reader Services team really do convey that when they’re talking about the books. Now that we have the online facility, that’s terrific to use the online catalogue to go and just sort of scratch around and find the books that you want. And if people have other queries, they can easily contact the library. It’s a very thorough and attentive service.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. Thanks, Stephen. Now, you’ve mentioned the app, Jamie. We’ve actually had a question come through, very similar, so I’ll ask that one. This is from Anna. “Is it possible to access the catalogue from within the app itself?”

Jamie Kelly: That’ll be happening hopefully mid next year, mid-2016, Anna. And we’re very excited about that because at the moment you still either would either need to go on to the catalogue and add books yourself to your loans, or ring the library – we can do it for you. I might also say, too, for those people that don’t have a smart phone or tablet, there are other handheld devices that are very popular. And for a number of years, the library have had Victor Stream and also the Plextalk Pockets. They’re popular just because they’re very accessible. You used to have to download the book from the computer to an SD card to play the book, but now with these devices, the new models, you can download or stream directly to these devices from your online bookshelf. So it just gives people another option apart from their smartphone or their tablet to access books from the library, and also other content.

Cass Strakosch: So, you must need an internet connection, then, for those ones to work?

Jamie Kelly: Well, you do, yes. But there are some people who don’t have internet, and they actually go to their local library, and the local library will download content for them and put it onto their device. So, there are other ways of getting access to the content. And if you want something portable… So, some people might have a 3G Player or a CD player but they want something portable as well, so they’ll buy one of these little handheld devices like the Victor Stream, and they’ll go to their local library, so when they’re going away, they’ll have some books with them. So that’s proved to be very popular because these handheld devices are very accessible. And for people that are low vision, they like the tactile buttons and also the talking menus. The other good thing about them is that they have very good recording capabilities, so if you want little note-takers to record phone numbers and things, they’re very handy. But the app is certainly proving to be very popular. We’re very excited about the app and it’ll be very exciting to see it grow in development.

Cass Strakosch: I know we have a few of the Vision Australia Connect app users at the panel. I think we’ve all got it, actually.

Anne Ford: yes, we’ve all got it.

Cass Strakosch: We’ve all got it, which is fantastic, especially for the webinar tonight. Anne, how do you find the Vision Australia Connect appto use?

Anne Ford: Look, I’ve got it on my iPhone and I find it quite good. It’s got very large buttons – they’re a purple colour –but quite large buttons so it’s quite easy to see, to tap the play button and to rewind. And when it’s in portrait, the buttons to touch take up the whole screen. If you turn the iPhone to landscape, then actually the buttons become smaller on side, but then you can access the chapters, so you can access it chapter by chapter. I’ve found it quite easy to use, and I didn’t have to ask for much help, or any help, with getting going with it. It was just a matter of having a bit of a play and off I went. And once the books appear on your bookshelf, you just tap it once and it starts to play the book within a couple of seconds.

Cass Strakosch: Now, Anne, you actually gave me a really handy hint when you were showing me the app when I first got it, around how you can bookmark the catalogue in your phone and also have the app. So you can order your books, and then go to the app. Can you just tell me a little bit about that?

Anne Ford: Yes. What I suggest to people, what they can do, is put the front page to log into the catalogue onto your home screen of your iPad or your iPhone, and then you also have the app sitting on your home screen. And then when you’re logging in, you just tell it to remember, you know, who you are, so you just tap ‘log in’ – so you immediately can get to the catalogue without having to fiddle, going through Google or trying to type in the address - it’s just sitting there on your home screen straight away. And then once you’ve found the book that you want and you’ve told it to add it to your download queue, it jumps straight into the app, and you’ve got the app right next to it, and you just tap the app and you’re going.

Jamie Kelly: And can I add to that, too, if you don’t want to search for books, but you would like to, say, have similar books that you had when you were getting CDs put online, the library can give you an online profile so you can get those same books in your bookshelf on your app. So, when you open the app, your bookshelf can always have three or four books, and if you don’t want them, you just return them and get more the next day. So that’s a good way for people to get books that don’t necessarily want to go to the trouble of searching for their own books.

Anne Ford: It sort of cuts out that searching part, doesn’t it?

Cass Strakosch: So, you’ll just get books coming to you?

Anne Ford: Yes.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. And so I know there are… we’ve already heard about some of the great recommended books we can read from Anne and Anthea. So, how would I go about getting those books on my bookshelf?

**J**amie Kelly: So, you would either ring the library and the library can add them to your request lists or loan them to you. Or if your’e used to using the online catalogue, you can log into i-access. Now, a good, handy shortcut if you’re using your tablet or smartphone is if you open your browser and key in ia.va.org.au – and I’m sure Cassie will give that out later again – that’s ia.va.org.au. That’ll take you to i-access if you haven’t shortcutted, or if you haven’t added it to your screen as Anne suggested as a shortcut. Log in and then simply search for the book. And then you would use the download to my bookshelf queue option buttonbelow the book, and then that would put it onto your online bookshelf.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. Thanks, Jamie. And just a reminder to everyone at home that there’s two ways that they can send in a question tonight – and we’d love to hear from you. So the email address is webinar – that’s w-e-b-i-n-a-r – at visionaustralia.org. And just pop your name and question in the email. And if your’e a bit confused about what that email address is, just reply to that email we sent you telling you how to log on tonight, and that will get to us. So it’s webinar@visionaustralia.org. Or you can send a text message, so SMS, to 0438 792 407. So I’ll read that out again for you. It’s 0438 792 407. So you can send a text to us. Make sure of course, again, you pop your name and your question in the text message. And we’re going to get to as many questions as we can tonight in this webinar.

So, we’re talking all about summer holiday reading, and we’ve talked about what some great books are and how you can become a member of the library, and started to talk a little bit about the new app that Vision Australia’s released. But, Stephen, I’m really interested in your perspective on the app. You use it using VoiceOver.

Stephen Jolley: Yes, I do, and I’m quite enjoying it. I like exploring new apps, Cass. And this is one of those ones where I was able to get familiar wit h it very quickly, and get to do most of the things that I was expecting it was able to do. A note of caution – this app is no different to every other good app around the place, and that is that it has a bit of a settling-in period that’s required. This is only the first version of it. Sometimes its performance is not as mature as we would expect, but it’s improving all the time, and with future releases it will be really good. But it’s no different to anything else. We all have to be a bit patient with new apps. But already what this is doing, and the potential of it, is going to make it an outstanding facility to use. I like it.

Jamie Kelly: Well, Stephen, can I share some good news with you and everybody else listening? I was hoping by today we would have seen new updates in the Google Play Store and the iOS Store. There is a new update which will improve on some of those performance things that you were talking about. So probably tomorrow morning, hopefully, or Friday morning, when you turn on the device, you will see an update for the app that will improve some of those performance things. And the main thing with it is don’t tap on things too quickly for ti sometimes needs a little time to work through its processes. When you first tap it to go into the app, you’ll hear a beeping sound, and that’s because the app is actually logging into and linking into the online catalogue.

Cass Strakosch: So wait for the beeps.

Jamie Kelly: Wait for the beeps.

Stephen Jolley: That’s a really good feature, Jamie, those beeps while it’s moving in because other times there’s just silence with other apps.

Jamie Kelly: And we have had feedback around, “Oh, can we turn the beeps off?” which we may at some stage have an option in the settings to do that. But it is actually very handy to have that indication when you can’t see. Because visually you can see that there’s something happening, but unless there’s something audible to tell you that things are happening in the background, you don’t know. Because for the whole time, the app has to sync with the online catalogue - even if the book’s downloaded, you still need to be logged in to the catalogue.

Anthea Taylor: If I can just, Cass, in regards to the app, it’s only been available for three to four weeks. We have had over 300 members use the app.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic.

Stephen Jolley: Really? That’s great, really.

Anthea Taylor: So we’re very pleased with that.

Cass Strakosch: I encourage everyone else to have a go as well.

Stephen Jolley: Yeah, get onto it, it’s good.

Cass Strakosch: And does it cost any money to buy the app?

Anthea Taylor: It’s free.

Cass Strakosch: Free. Fantastic.

Jamie Kelly: Cass, can I also remind people, the people that like to use our newspapers particularly – even though you can’t get them through our app yet until early next year, you still can listen to them through the other apps that you used to, like Voice Dream and things like that. So the newspapers are still available but we’ll be very pleased when you can get them through the VA Connect app.

Cass Strakosch: And now I’ve just got a question that has come through from Jennifer. “How can I provide feedback about the app?

Jamie Kelly: The best way at the moment is through the library email address, that’s library@visionaustralia.org. Or you can use the feedback page through i-access Online**.** There’s a line there for feedback. In a future app release, there will be a feedback option where you will be able send feedback about the app.

Cass Strakosch: OK. And if someone’s having problems using, need a little bit of a hand, can they get in touch with someone at the library?

Jamie Kelly: Please ring me tomorrow.

Cass Strakosch: Oh, ring Jamie!

Jamie Kelly: Or anyone. We’re happy to talk to you.

Anne Ford: We’ve got a team of people waiting to take your phone call. So if you’ve got any questions about using the app, please feel free to ask.

Stephen Jolley: Give them a break, though – don’t call too early in the morning, just in case they’re sleeping in.

Anthea Taylor: Phones open at nine o’clock in the morning.

Anne Ford: Yeah, they’re open at nine.

Cass Strakosch: Alright, so we’ve talked a little about the app now, and you’ve mentioned those other devices there, Jamie. Now, they’re something someone would have to purchase, is that right?

 Jamie Kelly: We have old models of the Victor Stream and the Pocketsometimes in the library. If we’ve got them in stock, people can borrow them or, depending on how new they’ve joined, they can rent them. But they can also purchase the newer models - which is probably better because they get all the newer functions, including wi-fi - through the Vision Australia Equipment Solutions **shop.** And they’re both available. I think the Linio Pocket whenwe’ve got them, if your’e a library member, I think are still around the $350 mark. And the Victor Stream is $435 at the moment, but I think there’s a summer sale on, I think they’re $50 off at the moment, I think they’re $385. So that’s just something maybe worth checking out.

Cass Strakosch: Great. Now, also on the table in front of you we have another type of player. What’s that one there?

Jamie Kelly: That’s our 3G Player, which is our new online desktop player. And we have two versions – we’ve got the wi-fi version and the 3G version. And that’s a bit like a desktop version of the app. So for those people that don’t have a computer, we now offer them, through the library service, a 3G Player or the wi-fi player where they turn the player on, it connects directly through the bookshelf, through the Optus network or through their wi-fi to our online system and they can access their online bookshelf. So no CDs, they can have five books a day and also someone can request books for them if they want to, and they can listen 24/7. Send the book back, they get a new one the next day when they turn on their player. So it’s a great service and it’s proven to be very popular, I have to say. So it just means it’s a way of getting direct access to books, no CDs.

Anne ford: Jamie, I just wanted to remind…if people are traveling around school holiday times, they can still take their 3G as long as they’ve got the power cord with them and plug it in if they’re going down to somewhere else over Christmas, maybe from Melbourne up to Sydney or Sydney down to Melbourne. As long as there’s a mobile phone network close by, people can still take their 3G Player with them.

Cass Strakosch: Great. That’s good to hear. Thanks, Anne.

Jamie Kelly: They can also take their wi-fi player too. And if they want to, there is a way they can use a player to download books to the player before they go away, and then they don’t have to be connected to wi-fi to access their books.

Cass Strakosch: So you can organise ahead and think, “I’m gonna get Anthea and Anne’s wonderful list of books that we just heard, put them on my wi-fi player before I go and then take it away with me.”

Jamie Kelly: And you would also do that with our app. You would download the books when you’re on wi-fi, so that when you’re outside your wi-fi network, you’re not using up you own data, and then you’ve got your books there sitting in your app for you to listen to when you’re away.

Cass Strakosch: So, I understand you can stream them or download them, is that right?

Jamie Kelly: Yes.

Cass Strakosch: So, what’s the difference, Jamie?

Jamie Kelly: Well, streaming means you listen to it as you go, like listening to the radio. Downloading the means that you're downloading the books, so the actual physical file sits on your phone, and your’e not using up any mobile data away from your wi-fi. You can choose to turn that on in settings if you want to do that, but most people are more likely to want to download the books first.

Cass Strakosch: Great. Thanks, Jamie. Now, I’ve had a question come through about the app from Judy. “Can you use the app on an Apple Mac computer?”

Jamie Kelly: No, it’s for an iOS device, so it’s for a smartphone or an iPad. You can certainly access our catalogue through the Mac, and you can download books as you would on a Windows computer, but there is no app as such for the Apple computer.

Stephen Jolley: And then you could play them through an mp3 player on your Mac, couldn’t you, if you wanted to?

Jamie Kelly: Yes, yes.

Cass Strakosch: So the app’s just for smart phones and tablets, is that right?

Jamie Kelly: That’s right. You can get DAISY software for the Mac and the PC which gives you the same functions as the app, but this app itself won’t work on an Apple computer.

Cass Strakosch: OK. Now, we keep hearing this term ‘DAISY’, which I hear a lot when talking about the Vision Australia Library. Stephen, can you tell me what DAISY is all about?

Stephen Jolley: Just briefly, for those who are not familiar with the concept of DAISY, it’s a way of organising the content in a vey convenient and accessible way. We used to read books in audio from the start to the back. Think of it like the old-stye tube of lollies, like the fruit pastilles, and you take out the first one, it’s one flavour, the next one’s the next flavour, and you can’t actually get to the flavour you really want that’s about five down until you go down those five. Well, DAISY is more like a supermarket where the content is arranged in groups of products in aisles. And you can go in the door of the supermarket and you can go to any group of products, you can walk straight to it. Or you can go to a particular aisle, you can walk along that aisle a bit, then you can go, “Oh, no, I want to go back to… There was something there I wanted to look at back on that shelf,” so you can go back to that. So it gives you the freedom to moves around in the content more. And it has other advantages - that’s there’s file compression used, the files are compressed as mp3 files, so we can get a lot more in an equivalent amount of space to what used to be required in the past if they were wav or CD audio files. So, when they’re put onto CDs, for instance, we can put about maybe 20 hours of content all organised in a nice DAISY way.

Cass Strakosch: Great. So it sounds like a really useful content system, the DAISY one.

Stephen Jolley: It’s used around the world and there are very good reasons for doing it. It’s fantastic.

Jamie Kelly: It’s also good to know too that our books are also compatible with mp3 players, so if you’ve got a portable DVD player or something that plays mp3 files but doesn’t necessarily give you all the wonderful DAISY features, you can still listen to our books.

Cass Strakosch: Great. Thank you. So, Stephen what if someone doesn’t feel very confident at using technology, what would you say they could do to read their books when on holidays?

Stephen Jolley: Well, there’s a number of ways. Some people take their G3 player with them. Sometimes people, just because it’s more convenient and it’s not just because they’re not familiar with the technology, they might us a small pocket device like the Book Port Plus or the Plextalk Pocket Player. And for screen reader users, I have a Book Port Plus **i**n my hand at the moment, just so you know. And it really does sit in your hand, it’s very small. And you can have a lot of content in that through an SD card. I put it into it. There are two ways. There are some people who use CDs and they take their CD player.

There are a number of different ways, and you don’t have to be a whiz-bang technology person to use them. The Victor Reader Stream is also very popular. And one of the things about, say, the Victor Reader Stream and other devices is that it’s a wi-fit device. It has the capability of streaming the content into it, so the book doesn’t have to be downloaded. But also you can use it for other things out in audio land, whether it be internet radio stations and all sorts of things. So it’s a real terrific gateway.

Cass Strakosch: Now, we’re just coming up to just only 15 minutes to go tonight for the webinar, so I’ll do another reminder for all those people watching us from home. Thanks for tuning in. If you would like to ask a question to one of our expert panel, you can email webinar@visionaustralia.org with your name and question. Or you can send an SMS, a text message, to 0438 792 407. That’s 0438 792 407.

And i’ve actually got a question that’s come through on the 3G Player fromNimoy. And he’s asked, “What’s really good about the 3G Player?”

Jamie Kelly: I’m happy to answer that, Cass.

Cass Strakosch: Great.

Jamie Kelly: What’s wonderful about it is that you have instant access to books, that your books are chosen for you, they’re online, no CDs. And you don’t have to rely on anybody to help you.

It gives you total independence. We speak to people in the library every day who, when DAISY came in, they thought DAISY was wonderful and they wondered how they survived beforehand. Now with the 3G Player, people just really enjoy it because, as I say, having access directly to the content - “I don’t like that book” - they can get a new one the next day, or ring us up and we can give them another book straightaway, they don’t have to wait a week for a book to arrive in the mail.

Stephen Jolley: Cass, can I add that Jamie pointed out a very good advantage that you don’t have to have the books chosen for you but… I”m sorry, you don’t have to choose the books yourself, they can be chosen for you from the criteria that you’ve already given. But if you do wanna choose your books, you still can listen to them through the 3G Player if you can access the online catalogue. You just select the book and it goes to your bookshelf and it’s available when you use the player, so you’ve got both options. And it is a very convenient machine.

Jamie Kelly: And I’d also add to that too, Cass, the access to our newspaper and magazine collection. Because before someone just borrowed CDs, they didn’t have access to our newspapers. Now with the 3G Player, they can subscribe to their favourite paper, we have over 400 newspapers available that people can subscribe to, local and regional and major metro newspapers. So they’re also available, as they become available to us and they’re converted into DAISY, like ‘The Australian’ or the ‘Sydney Morning Herald’, they’ll turn up on your bookshelf, on your 3G Player.

Anne Ford: And can I just say, for those people who haven’t seen a 3G Player, it looks almost the same as your DAISY that you have home already. It’s got large buttons which are easy to see and use, and it talks to you and it remembers where you’re up to, and it still has a sleep timer on it that can turn the player off if you tend to doze off in books at times. So it’s very much like the old DAISY player, with all the same features, but it just gives you more flexibility that you can return a book and have a new book the next day.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. Thank you. Now, we’ve had a question come through from Cathy. “Where do you get the Book Port Plus within Australia?”

Stephen Jolley: You contact your friends in America and order it from there.

Cass Strakosch: So, it’s not available in Australia?

Stephen Jolley: It’s not available directly in Australia. But doing stuff online these days, I got mine within less than two weeks from when I ordered it.

Jamie Kelly: Maybe the dollar was a bit better, then, Steve, when you got yours.

Stephen Jolley: It was too. The Plextalk Pocket and the later versions is virtually the same device, isn’t it, Jamie? The same functionality.

Jamie Kelly: Yeah, that’s right, very similar. The other thing we should mention is Braille. If you have a braille note-taking device or a Braille display, you can take advantage of our huge Braille collection. Braille books and also Braille music. And you can download them and read the BRF file on your device. And some DAISY players will also read the BRF file like a Word document or text file. So, we actually encourage people and love people to use our Braille collection.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic. Now, I have a question for both Jamie and Stephen. How do you both access your books when you’re on holidays or when you’re travelling about? Stephen, maybe you first.

Stephen Jolley: Yes, and just a postscript to that other question. It was from the APH, the American Printing House that I got the Book Port, Cathy, if you were wondering. I couldn’t quite remember when I was answering.

Yes, I use my Book Port Plus most of the time when I’m reading, and my wife uses a Victor Reader Stream, which is a very similar device. I find that very convenient because you can take it anywhere. I just make sure that I’ve got it loaded up with content before I go.

Jamie Kelly: I use my phone firstly, particularly now with the new app. But I also keep a backup of books on my Victor Stream and also the Linio Pocket. I’m a big reader, you see.

Cass Strakosch: Big reader.

Jamie Kelly: Yeah. The other thing is I like… Well, the Linio Pocket is great for recording and also great for accessing some other content. And the Victor Stream, it’s terrific for the podcasts and web radio that Stephen was talking about earlier. So, yeah, I carry a few devices with me and highly recommend them all.

Cass Strakosch: Great. Now, we’ve had a question come through from Anne, and I might ask Anne or Anthea to answer Anne’s question, which is not confusing at all. “Is there a simple way to find the order of a series of books if you wish to read them in the correct order? For example the Barry Maitland series mentioned earlier.”

Anthea Taylor: Yes. Have a look on the catalogue record in i-access, and to look in the description, it will give you where it is in the series. Or sometimes, depending on the publishers, they might just say, “This is part of a series.” But if it’s actually in order, the catalogue record will note which number that book is.

Anne Ford: Can I make another suggestion? If you happen to be an internet user and fairly good with Google, if you go to a site called “Fantastic Fiction”, it lists all the books in order and all the series in order by a given author, and also whether a new book is being released soon. So, you can look at our catalogue, and the information will be there, or if you want to have a written list to pre-plan what you’re going to get, and you’re good with Google and the internet, you can look at Fantastic Fiction.

Jamie Kelly: Anne and Anthea, you can also search by series in our catalogue, but even better - if you know that the book is in a series, if you open the title link of the book, there is a link that takes you to the series in the detail record page on i-access**.** So that’s anther handy hint to know. So, you open the book title, and where it says ‘series’, there’s a link and that link then takes you to a page, and it lists all the books, hopefully in the right order.

Cass Strakosch: Great. Thank you. Now, we’ve actually had a tip come in from a webinar participant. Thanks for that. And that’s letting us know that 3G Player doesn’t require the user to have their own internet. We provide the internet. Can you just explain that a little bit for me?

Jamie Kelly: Yes, I’m happy to. The 3G Player uses the Optus network to access the library. So, you turn on the player, it has a little modem inside it which then connects through the network and connects to our network. Whereas if you have the wi-fi player, that wi-fi player is preconfigured by us before we send it to you, if we have your SSID (Password to your computer modem) and password, and then that uses your wi-fi to access our catalogue.

Anthea Taylor: So, I think the best way to describe the 3G Player, it’s like a mini-computer in itself.

Cass Strakosch: OK. Alright. So, we’ve heard a lot about how you can access books through our library, but I know there’s other ways people can get audio books out there. And what are some other ways that you can get accessible reading material?

Anne Ford: I’m a bit like Jamie - I get my books from wherever I can lay my hands on them. I get books from my local library. There’s a number of apps, one called BorrowBox which is a free access to audio titles, and another one called OverDrive that you can add on to your iPhone or iPad, and be able to access audio books that way. I also have a Kindle, and a Kindle is quite good if you have some vision because you can enlarge the print to a fairly big size. And so I have books on my Kindle. And you can also access Audible.com, which is an American company which has over 150,000 titles that you can download. Now, there’s a cost involved. They usually can give…you get a month trial for free, and after a month it’s about $15 a month to subscribe to them. But they give you a discount on the books that you buy off them if you subscribe. So, the books often come out at maybe only $5 or $6 for an audio book, where if you were buying a paperback book in a shop, you could be paying $30-odd for a paperback book. So, there is a variety of ways that you can get it. The ones in the library are for free. The Kindle, once you’ve bought the Kindle, you can download books once more through Amazon at reasonable prices. It’s just choosing what suits you and to give a variety of books and different access points.

Anthea Taylor: And I think it’s also worth mentioning that members of Vision Australia Library can also become members of the American Bookshare group**.** There is a cost to it, an initial joining fee of $75 and then a renewal fee per annum of $50. But it gives an extra, sort of, about 20,000 titles that otherwise we wouldn’t be able to provide.

Cass Strakosch: So, there’s a couple of different options available for people out there.

Anne Ford: Yes, yes.

Cass Strakosch: Great. And, we’re actually coming towards the end of the webinar now. But before we go, I’m really interested in what one book each of our panellists is looking forward to this summer. I know you’ve already got to say a good 13 books you could read, down the end there. But if you could only pick one, what would you one book be? And, Anthea, I’ll go to you first.

Anthea Taylor: My book is ‘Go Set a Watchman’ by Harper Lee, and it’s already set, ready for me to start reading.

Cass Strakosch: Fantastic.

Anne Ford: And I also have one ready to go which is ‘Pushing the Limits: Life, Marathons and Kokoda’ by Kurt Fearnley**.** So that’s sitting there waiting for me to read.

Cass Strakosch: Great. Well, I”m glad to hear you all have things sitting and waiting for you as well despite being such avid readers. It makes us all feel not so bad. And, Jamie, what is your one thing?

Jamie Kelly: One? That’s tough. The ‘Milat’ book, I think that’ll be… I know it’ll be pretty dark. I am looking forward to reading that. By Clive Small, which was one of the top books coming out over summer. Oh, no, it’s already out that one, isn’t it?

Anthea Taylor: Yes, it is.

Jamie Kelly: Yeah, sorry, it’s already out. But ‘Milat’, I’m looking forward to reading that.

Cass Strakosch: Great. Thanks, Jamie. And Stephen?

Stephen Jolley: I haven’t read enough Peter FitzSimons material yet so I’m going to read his story of Charles Kingsford Smith. Looking forward to that.

Cass Strakosch: Oh, great. And I’ll name mine as well. So, I actually would like to read the book that was mentioned earlier, which is Magda Szubanski’s memoir. I think that would be a really interesting read.

Anne Ford: It’s really good.

Anthea Taylor: ‘Reckoning’.

Anne Ford: Yes, ’Reckoning’.

Stephen Jolley: That’’s on my list also, but I didn’t have time to..

Cass Strakosch: We could only pick one, yeah.

Anthea Taylor: It’s on my list.

Cass Strakosch: On the list. OK, we’e all got long lists.

Anne Ford: I’ve already read it, but it’s good.

Cass Strakosch: So, just starting to wrap up. We’ll just repeat how people can get support from the library. So, if anyone wants any help with anything we’ve covered tonight, how can they get in touch with someone in the library?

Anne Ford: You can give us a call on 1300 654 656. Or you can email us at library@visionaustralian.org, or you can leave a message if for some reason we’re busy on the phones tomorrow morning.

Jamie Kelly: Or use the feedback page through i-access as well.

Cass Strakosch: And now we do have the holidays coming up, so when are we shut over Christmas?

Anthea Taylor: So, the library will close at 2pm on the 24th of December, which is a Thursday, and reopen on Monday the 4th of January. Nad during that time period we’re closed. But from now up until about the 18th of December, if members want to have extra books, we will do that. We’re doing an allowance of up to 20 books per member to cover them over the holiday period so that they’re not without any books to read.

Cass Strakosch: That sounds really good. What a great little bonus for the summer there, a few extra books. Alright, well, I’d like to say a big thank-you to everyone who tuned in tonight and sent their questions through. We really enjoyed popping this webinar on for you and thinking about our great summer reading tips. And I hope that you found something really useful out of tonight. We’re happy to hear from you if you’ve got any feedback at all about the webinar. Just send us an email, it’s webinar@visionaustralia.org. Love to hear from you. Any questions we didn’t get to tonight, we’ll follow up with you individually and provide our support as best we can.

So, I’d also like to say a big thank-you to all the panellists. Thank you very much.

Stephen Jolley: It’s my pleasure. Happy reading, everyone. Happy reading and happy listening to all your other audio.

Anne Ford: And Merry Christmas.

Anthea Taylor: And enjoy reading.

Cass Strakosch: Alright, and on that very positive reading note, I might leave it there for now and wish everyone a very safe and happy summer holiday.