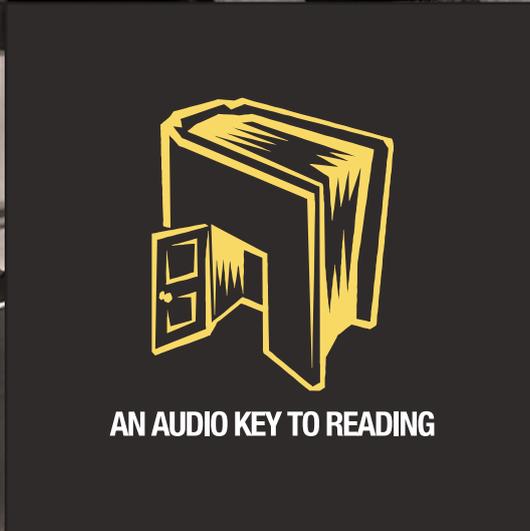


Queensland Narrating Service

PRINTED MATERIALS IN AUDIO FORMAT
1967–2021

A tribute to a pioneering service for people with print disabilities and the dedicated people who believed in the value of independence



AN AUDIO KEY TO READING

This book is dedicated to all the volunteers who passionately devoted their time and energy to the pursuits of the Queensland Narrating Service (QNS).

QNS was a not-for-profit organisation whose success was due to the services and dedication of volunteers and staff.

The Queensland Narrating Service acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our organisation was located and where we conducted our business. We paid our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. The Queensland Narrating Service was committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Acknowledgements

Written and edited by Jo Booth, Janet Poole and Kaye Stevenson.

Contributions about the early years by Wilfred Prince, Val Millican, Craig and Margaret Magill.

Warning: This book contains images of people who have passed.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to obtain permission for the photos used throughout this book.

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Introduction

It is with great sadness that we are forced to close the Queensland Narrating Service after 54 years of providing entertainment, information and educational possibilities to a sector of our society that, in mid 20th century Australia, was so often ignored and marginalised.

However, the closing of QNS has meant that we can focus on our beginnings, our achievements and our contributions. The result of that focus is this tribute to the individuals who have worked for decades to ensure people with a print disability have access to audio material that has enhanced their participation in their community, provided them with the opportunity to become less dependent on others and delivered entertainment through the magic of books.

Timeline

- 1967 Queensland Tape Recordists Association (QTRA) founded as a social club
-
- 1968 QTRA established the Auxiliary for the Blind, later Auxiliary for the Handicapped
-
- 1969 Launch of Brisbane Jacyees 'Books Bring Brightness' Project
-
- 1972 Split from QTRA and registration of Queensland Taped Service for the Handicapped (QTSH)
-
- Lady Phyllis Cilento became Patron
-
- First edition of CONTACT Magazine was produced
-
- 1973 Constitution adopted
-
- 1975 QTSH's association with State Library of Queensland commenced
-
- 1978 National Library Australia introduces copyright clearance requirements
-
- 1979 Petition to the House of Representatives to include QTSH in the Copyright Amendment Bill
-
- 1981 QTSH was a founding member of The Round Table on Reading Materials for People with Print Disabilities Inc
-
- 1985 Constitution amended to incorporate fee for service, fundraising and paid employment
-
- 1986 First audio book catalogue distributed to public libraries
-
- 1988 National Audio Book-of-the-Year Awards Certificate of Achievement in Production Quality of *Special Dynamic*
-
- 1990 National Audio Book-of-the-Year Awards Certificate of Achievement in Production Quality of *Polar Star*
-
- 1991 Commencement of Community Information Program funding
-
- 1993 Definition of a print disability adopted by the Round Table and QTSH
-
- 1996 Purchase of first office computer with sound editing capabilities
-
- 1997 Name change from QTSH to Queensland Narrating Service (QNS)
-
- 1999 First regular segment of 'From the Book Jacket' broadcast on Radio 4RPH
-
- Launch of QNS's first website, hosted by State Library of Queensland
-
- A.L.I.V.E project – the first VIP book club, conducted via phone, for socially isolated elderly people living in remote areas of Queensland
-
- 2002 Last edition of CONTACT Magazine produced
-
- Commenced the shift from analogue to digital audio format production
-
- 2003 Five part time staff and a contract bookkeeper were employed
-

2004	Attorney-General declares QNS an institution assisting people with print disabilities
	First VIP Book Club event held in conjunction with BCC One-Book-One Brisbane project
2005	First VIP Writers Group – Writing With A Vision
2006	First DAISY format audio books produced
	Format shifting of catalogue audio books from analogue to digital
2007	End of collocation with Public Library Services, State Library of Queensland
	Commenced collocation with Vision Australia at Kent Street, Woolloongabba
2008	Funds from a Gambling Community Benefit Grant enabled the purchase of 30 Mac Book Laptops and USB Microphones
2009	Commenced closer relationships with publishers enabling the supply of ‘Open Access’ titles to public libraries
2010	Relocated with Vision Australia to Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo
	Launch of QNS independent website
	QNS loses Federal Government funding
2014	QNS commenced supplying online content via the OverDrive Marketplace
	All volunteer narrators working in digital format
2015	Established QNS Face Book page
2017	Due to the reduction in government funding and Award Modernisation the staff accepted a pay decrease and reduced hours to assist the organisation
	Funds from a Gambling Community Benefit Grant enabled the purchase of a further 10 Mac Book Laptops, USB Microphones and Studio equipment
2018	Long time supporter and financial donor, Clan MacKenzie Association, closes
	Collaboration with the State Library Indigenous Languages Project team with the recording of the Yuwibara language for preservation and revival
2019	Full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) resulting in the loss of State Government funding
	Collaboration with Logan City Libraries and Logan Elders on ‘Our words our stories’ project for United Nations Year of Indigenous Languages
	VIP Book Club closes after 16 years
2020	Adaption of QNS business model to facilitate staff working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic
2021	Funding ceased 30 June, forcing closure

History



The Early Years

The Queensland Tape Recordists Association (QTRA) formed in November 1967 as a social club for those interested in tape recording as a hobby. In the following year, an Auxiliary for the Blind, later Auxiliary for the Handicapped, was formed with Mr Max Vines as the Chairman. According to historical records handed to the organisation at its 50th AGM celebration in 2017, the QTRA Auxiliary's desire was to "assist those among us who live in a world of sound only, the visually handicapped, and, the physically handicapped who cannot hold a print book to read". The QTRA presented a donation of \$20 to the Auxiliary and the 18 people present at the inaugural meeting were asked to donate \$4 on a loan basis. The money was used for the purchase of the initial tape stock; \$30 was collected from immediate donations. The first projects produced

AID METHOD DECIDED

C.D. Councillor Bill Smith has decided that this year under our national project "Books Bring Brightness" we will aid the Queensland Tape Recordists Association by (a) enlisting readers to record books, (b) providing tapes, and (c) publicising the services of the Association among handicapped people.

Bill urges those members who have not yet completed their part of the blind survey to fulfil their obligation and send him the results as soon as possible.



From left: Fred Turner, Bill Smith, Don Cottrell, Rick Firster and Errol Perry have the finer details of a "talking book" explained to them.

"Aid Method Decided" - announcement that QTRA will be the recipient of funds raised from the Jaycees national project 'Books Bring Brightness'

Braille Has Limitations

Braille was going out of use now, the President of the Queensland Blind Citizens Association, Mr. Fred Turner, told those at our recent chapter dinner meeting in the Embassy Hotel.

He said braille was bulky and expensive. The labour involved in preparing a book in braille was very costly. Many newly-blinded people were to be catered for now and it was difficult to teach them braille, especially if they were elderly. Mr. Turner said the Queensland Government continued to use braille at its Narbethong School for visually handicapped children at Buranda.

Tape recordings, he said, were coming into their own as a convenient way to help the blind. In 1960 the Royal Institute for the Blind in England produced a "playback machine" but because of a patents limit, supply throughout the world was rationed. "We just can't buy them," he said.

The Royal Blind Society in Sydney was preparing tape recordings for the blind which were used in Queensland. But Queensland blind people had to accept what the Queensland Institute for the Blind wanted to buy and what the Sydney Society wanted to record.

"Blind people have not yet realised the value of the tape recorder. Tapes enable you to read what you want, when you want it. The future lies in the talking book.

"In Queensland and New South Wales we are changing to a new system with half the cost of the present one and a lighter machine. They will be made by a private company and will be readily available to everyone. Each machine will cost \$75 and the cassettes \$19," Mr. Turner added.

Mr. Don Cottrell of the Queensland Tape Recorders Association auxiliary for the blind said his association had established its auxiliary in March this year to record books for any blind individual who wanted them. Quality of the readers of these tapes was very important. He had received many offers of help, including some from individual Jaycees, but the trouble lay in the marked shortage of tapes.

He urged Jaycees to consider donating 100 tapes costing about \$400 for the formation of a master tape library from which his auxiliary could copy books for the blind. They could be copied at whatever speed the blind person wanted, to suit his tape playing machine.

"Braille Has Limitations", Jaycees News & Views June 1969

by the QTRA Auxiliary in June 1968 were textbooks covering history, English, logic, physics and drama for students at the Narbethong School for Visually Handicapped Children. By March 1969 the QTRA Auxiliary had 29 approved transcribers, three of whom were inmates of Boggo Road Gaol.

Mr Don Cottrell, President, chaired a meeting in May 1969, which adopted the constitution of the QTRA Auxiliary. Other QTRA Auxiliary founders included Mrs P Hicks-Hall (Registrar), Miss R Langworth, Mr Ian Stewart, Mr Fred Turner and Archdeacon H Richards. Mr Ian Stewart was awarded an MBE in 1981 for his services to the QTSH and conferred a Life Member in 1987. Early meetings of the QTRA were held at Narbethong School for Visually Handicapped Children. Eric Searle, Principal of Narbethong, took a great interest in the work of the QTRA Auxiliary, which resulted in many books being transcribed for Narbethong students. Blind and vision-impaired individuals also used the QTRA Auxiliary for the sole purpose of transcribing pamphlets, periodicals on all manner of subjects, including gardening and marriage guidance and

PLANS FOR LIBRARY

We hope to establish a free lending library of tape recorded books for the sole use of handicapped people.

Handicapped people are defined as those who are unable to read normally, and include the visually handicapped quadriplegics, paraplegics, the war wounded, those suffering from multiple sclerosis and many other hospital patients.

To establish this library we have to buy 400 5 inch recording tapes for a total cost of about \$1,200.

This \$1,200 will be raised on a zone basis with a target of \$50 for each chapter proposed.

BILL SMITH, Zone Co-Ordinator.

"Plans for Library", *Jaycees New & Views* July 1969



Ian Stewart
MBE (QTRA),
Don Cottrell
(first QTRA
President)
and Bill Smith
(Brisbane
Jaycees)

instruction manuals for household items such as washing machines. During this time service delivery was expanded to include the physically disabled. The QTRA Auxiliary also produced audio material for students at tertiary institutions, as well as for people with other disabilities including elderly people with degenerative eye conditions or poor sight. In the early days, because most blind people owned a tape recorder, clients would post their tape recorder along with the book they wanted transcribed to the QTRA Auxiliary who produced the recording

free of charge. Recordings were made on open-reel recorders and stock was purchased with money raised through very small grants, donations and loans.

In early 1969 the Brisbane Jaycees conducted a survey and needs analysis of blind people throughout Queensland. The survey and needs

analysis revealed there were approximately 1200 blind persons across Queensland, 140 of which owned their own talking book playback machine while approximately 250 owned tape recorders. The analysis notes that there was a 2-year wait in Queensland for the new style playback machines due to the Royal Institute for the Blind patent limitations in the United Kingdom. Mr Cottrell noted, "that occasionally a book that had already been transcribed was requested by another individual", which led to the idea of establishing a lending library; a library that contained books selected by blind and vision-impaired readers. Mr Cottrell stated that "one of the basic reasons for establishing the library was that blind people should be able to read what they want to" (*Braille Has Limitations*, News & Views, Jaycee Newsletter, June 1969, p19). Up until this time choice in audio books was decided by what the Queensland Institute for the Blind wanted to buy and what the Royal Blind Society in Sydney wanted to record. Detailed in a letter from the QTRA Auxiliary chairman, Archdeacon Richards, the Auxiliary's needs were two fold; "more LGS 35 4inch, 450 feet, 10/135 tape in plastic boxes and more transcribers" were required to facilitate the expansion of service delivery. At this time tapes cost \$1.76 each and transcribers used their own equipment. Historical records make known that members of the Brisbane Jaycees met with the QTRA Auxiliary to ascertain the support needed to pursue its endeavours. By March 1969 the Jaycees had launched a national project, 'Books Bring Brightness', to raise funds to assist the Auxiliary to expand its services to blind and handicapped



"Letter by Bill Smith promoting QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped", *Enterprise*, July 1969

They Have The Right

Being handicapped is an inconvenience. When people suffer a disability such as blindness, or physical handicap it doesn't mean they stop taking an interest in what goes on about them. Their world doesn't stop, nor do they want to get off. Interest in community and world affairs remains with them. They still want to know what the latest fashions are, what new buildings are going up and what colours they are. Many blind people lost their sight later in life and still retain an image of their earlier life and want to know what changes have taken place since they were afflicted.

They still have a desire to communicate with other people and they want other people to communicate with them, just as they did before they were handicapped. Becoming handicapped did not make them "different" from other people; in fact, it made them more tolerant. They came to understand human failings more than those who are not handicapped. These handicapped people are able to tolerate lack of understanding in the more "normal" members of the community.

Those among us who were born with a disability or who have met with an accident or from some sickness may have been left with a handicap are still as mentally alert as before that accident or sickness. In many cases they are more mentally alert. The blind are not suddenly distracted by something going on about them and can concentrate to a remarkable degree. They live in a world of sound and touch senses developed because of their disability.

Physically handicapped persons, depending on their degree of disability, also develop their other senses. Handicapped persons have the ability and the desire to absorb knowledge and enjoy the pleasures of life that their retained senses can bring them.

By having the desire and the ability **THEY HAVE THE RIGHT**; the same right that you and I have. We have the desire, we have the ability and we exercise our right. Any one of us can walk into a bookstore or library and purchase or borrow any book or magazine in which we may have an interest. By that simple gesture of borrowing or purchasing we exercise our right. We can help them by using their sense of hearing.

The Auxiliary for the Handicapped of the Queensland Tape Recordists' Association helps the visually and physically handicapped of the community by recording onto tape, books, magazines, articles and text books as well as producing a magazine on tape every three weeks, one each for the adults and children.

You can assist the handicapped by assisting us with a donation towards tape or helping your organisation in their project support for us.

DON COTTRELL,
President Qld Tape Recordists' Association
Auxiliary for the Handicapped.

"They Have the Right", Jaycees News & Views August 1969

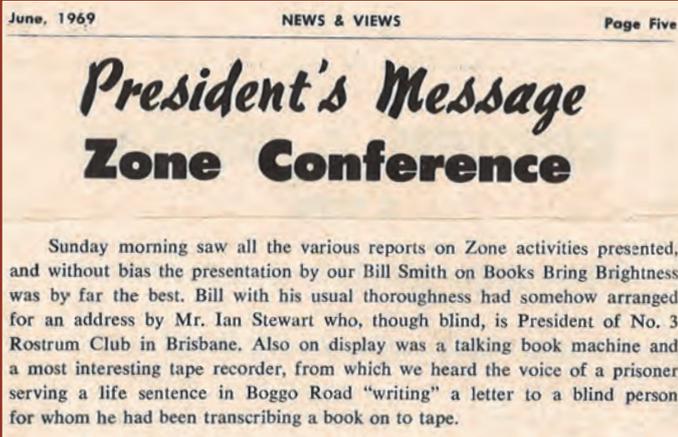
people throughout Queensland and beyond. The April 1969 'Books Bring Brightness' report states, "that 100 tapes are necessary to enable a taped-book library to be established for adult blind persons in Queensland". The report suggests that each Jaycee Chapter purchase a book, desired by a blind person owning a tape recorder, plus twice the required number of tapes, and arrange for the QTRA Auxiliary to transcribe the book in duplicate.



Ian Stewart (QTRA) addresses delegates at the May 1969 Jaycees Zone Conference in Rockhampton

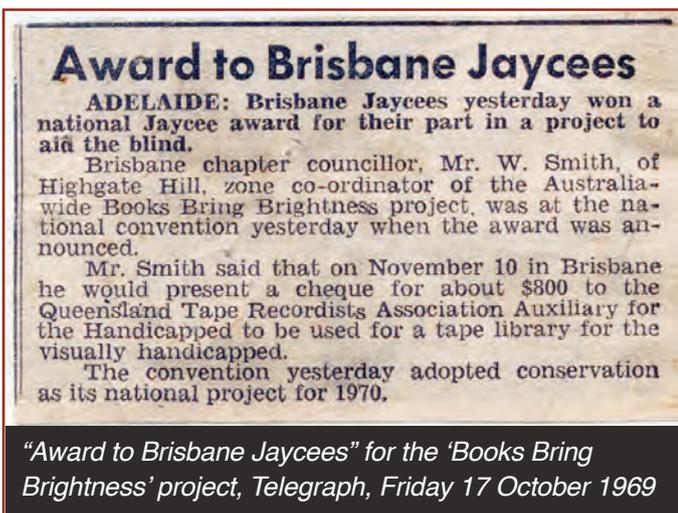
The completed book would be presented to the blind person and a copy provided to the Auxiliary's lending library. By May 1969, 25 audio books had been produced.

The 'Books Bring Brightness' project not only increased awareness of the needs of blind and vision-impaired people but also the work of the QTRA Auxiliary, raising much-needed funds for tape, enlisting readers to transcribe books for the purpose of establishing a free lending library of audio books for the blind and physically handicapped, and, publicity of the Auxiliary's services. Mr Cottrell anticipated that the library would increase to 250 audio books by the middle of 1970 due to the Jaycees contributing to the cost of tapes and equipment. Mr Bill Smith, Jaycees, invited Mr Ian Stewart of the QTRA to address delegates attending the Jaycees 'Our Community, Our Responsibility' conference in Rockhampton in May 1969. Delegates were afforded the opportunity to hear a QTRA transcriber, a prisoner of Boggo Road Gaol serving a life sentence for murder, speak of the role prisoners were playing in helping blind people. Delegates listened to a letter a prisoner had recorded for a



"Presidents Message – Zone Conference", Jaycees News & Views June 1969

QTRA client for whom they had been transcribing a book on to tape. This may have spurred various members of Jaycee Chapters in Queensland to volunteer as transcribers. By September 1969 in excess of one hundred projects had been transcribed and the first transcriber education evening had been held, possibly facilitated by Mr Graham Webster. The 'Books Bring Brightness' project ran from February to November 1969 and won the national award at the Jaycees convention in Adelaide. The project raised \$916.00 for the QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped, which was presented to the Auxiliary at a dinner function held in the Gold Room of the Majestic Hotel at a cost of \$1.80 per head. The QTRA Auxiliary relied on the success of this project to purchase tape, which as Mr Don Cottrell stated in his newsletter of November 1969 "is our lifeblood, without it we perish or stagnate. When one realises the need of

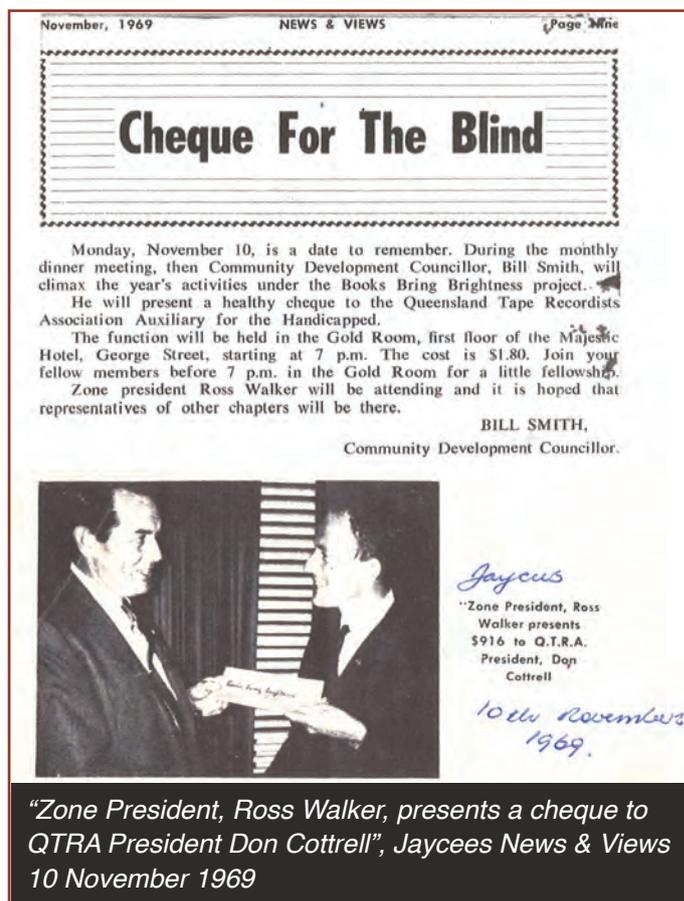


"Award to Brisbane Jaycees" for the 'Books Bring Brightness' project, Telegraph, Friday 17 October 1969



"Murderer Tells of His Work for Blind", The Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Monday 5 May 1969

the handicapped for literature we cannot stagnate, nor shall we perish, for while there remains a real need by the handicapped there will be organisations like Jaycees, Rotary and Service Clubs to whom we can turn." As a result of the Jaycees promoting the project through radio interviews, magazine and newspaper articles word of the QTRA Auxiliary's work spread far and wide, resulting in increased demand on services, however lack of funding remained a problem.



"Zone President, Ross Walker, presents a cheque to QTRA President Don Cottrell", Jaycees News & Views 10 November 1969

Among these projects was the Bundaberg Amateur Players group who volunteered to record a play, *The Nightingale*, specifically for the QTRA Auxiliary. The play was produced in the studios of 4BU. Requests were also received to transcribe material in languages other than English. There were now 35 registered transcribers. Many early transcribers and members of the Association were associated with radio broadcasting and harnessed their skills to record from their homes, storing tape masters under their beds!! By the end of the decade discussion had turned to moving from open-reel recorders to cassette recorders, informed by client surveys. By November 1969 requests for assistance were being received from as far afield as Boroko in New Guinea with a request from a medical social worker asking if the Auxiliary could assist a Papuan who had recently lost their sight following surgery. Mr Don Cottrell's response was, "Naturally we can. Being blind doesn't mean you have to live in Brisbane or that Brisbane or Queensland is the only place where people go blind. Blindness is world wide and that's the area we will cover if necessary." At this time the QTRA Auxiliary was providing tapes to people in other states of Australia and according to a statement by Mr Cottrell in the Telegraph, 12 November 1969, "to 200 people in ten countries"

Prior to obtaining Federal Government funding in the 1980s, financial assistance to purchase tape stock came from the Jaycees, Lions and Rotary Cubs, the Lady Mayoress' Social and Welfare Committee and Lady Bjelke-Petersen Welfare Committee. Brisbane City Council and State Government Welfare Committees also donated funds. Mining companies, UTAH and Mount Isa Mines, also gave large donations, which were used for the purchase of specific recording and copying equipment. Donations also came from individuals and fundraising events, such as afternoon teas, gift stalls at church fetes, the sale of QTRA Auxiliary Badges and car bumper stickers during 'Handicapped Persons Week 1972'. In 1969, a team of 3 volunteers (President Don Cottrell,

Registrar Trish Hicks-Hall and Fred Franklin) from the QTRA Auxiliary won \$30.00 on Play Your Hunch, a television game show aired on Channel 9. Since the early 1970s the Clan Mackenzie Association donated the proceeds from their Annual Highland Ball to the organisation, and did so until the Association disbanded in 2018. In later years, Clan Mackenzie donations were used to support volunteer narrator workshops, staff training and small projects such as the provision of audio books for the establishment of libraries at the Queensland Stroke Association, Kidney Support Network and two aged care facilities.

The 1970s saw a name change, the expansion of CONTACT Magazine and marked the first change in production technology from open-reel to cassette. This period also heralded the beginning of the organisations lengthy relationship with the State Library of Queensland. In 1971 the decision was made to produce cassettes for users requiring this format, which was more costly than open-reel. Mr T R Wielaert, who was President from 1970 to 1982, navigated these changes. Mr Wielaert also volunteered not only as a transcriber but also delivered tapes and books to volunteer transcribers, collected the recorded works, made copies and delivered them to Narbethong School for Visually Handicapped Children. In 1977, Mr Wielaert was awarded an MBE for his service, at which time he stated, "Although the award was his, it in fact was given both to him and the Tape Service and the many people who had been involved". Mr Wielaert was also the first member to be awarded Life Membership of the QTSH. As word spread the QTRA Auxiliary expanded its services to other schools and educational institutions supporting students with learning difficulties, which continued until 2021. In the November of 1972, the QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped received a letter from QTRA stating that the Club no longer had any interest in the Auxiliary and a new name had to be proposed. The split between QTRA and the Auxiliary for the Handicapped occurred due to competing

Volunteers tape books for blind

Volunteer readers, including radio announcers, tape books for blind people whose needs are being catered for by the Queensland Tape Recordists Association Auxiliary for the Handicapped.

The president, Mr. Don Cottrell, of Lutwyche, said the average novel took eight to 10 hours to read on to tape and could occupy as many as four tapes.

Every second Sunday at the Narbethong School for the Visually Handicapped at Buranda a drama group read one-act plays on to tapes.

The Brisbane group catered for 200 blind people in 10 countries, said Mr. Cottrell.

The auxiliary was building a tape-recorded library covering a cross section of literature — drama, magazines, fiction, textbooks, and women's fashion.

Since May 13 a library of 120 tapes (25 books) had been established.

Mr. Cottrell said a Jaycee cheque of \$916 re-

ceived on Monday night would help boost the library by another 300 tapes.

Until May 13 this year Mr. Cottrell's group read a book for one blind person.

Then it was found occasionally the same books were requested twice. This led to the idea of a tape library.

Most blind people had tape recorders and they merely had to send their tape to the auxiliary with the book they wanted dictated, said Mr. Cottrell.

The auxiliary made the recording free of charge and returned the tape.

"One of the basic reasons for the library is that blind people should be able to read what they

want to," said Mr. Cottrell.

"I hope to have 250 books in the library by the middle of next year.

"Brisbane Rotary has promised to dictate 50 books".

The Jaycees cheque of

\$916 was a result of their nationally co-ordinated project Books Brings Brightness.

The cheque was presented to Mr. Cottrell by Jaycee zone president Mr. Ross Walker, of Dalby.

"Volunteers Tape Books for the Blind", Telegraph Wednesday 12 November 1969

interests and development in different directions. A new name, The Queensland Tape Service for

the Handicapped (QTSH), was officially adopted in February 1973 and the Constitution was sanctioned by the Justice Department later that year.

As the QTSH had no office premises the service relied on the Queensland State Library for distribution of its audio books. At the October 1975 meeting of the QTSH members were advised that the State Library of Queensland planned to establish an Audio Book Collection. The State Library provided the QTSH with blank cassettes for the purpose of copying audio masters for the collection, which operated through the Country Extension Service (now known as Public Library Services) under the guidance of the Acquisitions Librarian, Miss Joyce Nicholls. The QTSH secured funds to purchase a second cassette fast copier, which was to be housed at the State Library on indefinite loan. Books for transcribing to audio were now being chosen by librarians. 120 audio book masters, comprising 580 cassettes, produced by the organisation and its volunteer narrators, were provided to the library; these books formed the nucleus of the original collection.

Long time volunteer narrator, Peter Bauers, offered his services as a copier to provide audio book stock

for the library's collection. The inaugural audio book collection of the State Library of Queensland grew from the collocation and subsequent relationship between QTSH and State Library at Grey Street, South Brisbane. This relationship ensured that people with print disabilities across Queensland gained access to audio books, produced by QTSH volunteer narrators, at their local library, providing many hours of reading entertainment. The storage of tape books became an issue at the State Library and so an agreement was made that the QTSH would direct its focus on transcribing print books for the library rather than copying books, which resulted in the QTSH developing guidelines for transcribers. Subsequently the State Library began receiving requests for other information to be made available in audio format and referred these requests to the QTSH. This formed the beginnings of what was to become the Community Information Program the roots of which were laid down in the early years.

Copyright restrictions were tightened, preventing distribution of transcribed audio works to Boroko, New Guinea and other countries. Val Millican recalls that obtaining copyright from publishers and authors was problematic, with many letters being exchanged in order to seek permission to make books accessible in audio format. Val argued that this was extremely important as not all blind and vision-impaired school students were taught Braille and therefore they relied on audio format for access to the printed word. To advocate for a better process for obtaining copyright to transcribe books to audio format Val Millican travelled to Canberra in the early

QUEENSLAND TAPE SERVICE FOR THE HANDICAPPED

RE: COPYRIGHT ACT AMENDMENT BILL, 1979.

The Attorney-General's Department has been good enough to send us a digest of the provisions of the above Bill, which we have read with interest - and some concern.

It appears that the Bill provides for a 'statutory licence' for the taping of printed material for educational purposes. This is excellent as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough.

The Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped is an entirely voluntary body working to read on to tape any printed or written material requested by persons handicapped in any way which prevents them from reading normally. No charge is made to the user of the service.

The service operates in two ways. firstly, ad hoc readings specifically requested by registered users. This covers educational material from primary to tertiary levels and other works where the user has a particular interest. Secondly, there is the work done to provide master readings for the Queensland State Library who provide a lending service of taped material to around 1000 bona fide handicapped persons throughout the State. Virtually all this material comprises books for leisure reading.

The Copyright Act, as it stands at the moment, discriminates against handicapped people. The normal person can buy or borrow a book and read it without further trouble. The handicapped person who buys or borrows a book cannot read it without the intervention of another person who translates it into a form that can be used but, before this can be done, copyright clearance has to be obtained and this, in the case of overseas publishers, can take months. In the meanwhile the handicapped person is denied a facility which is readily available to the normal person.

The proposed provisions of the Amendment Bill will remove this restriction from those who need educational material but for every person in this class there are one hundred or more who simply want to read books for pleasure and personal enrichment. The needs of these people are not provided for in the Bill and their need is every bit as great as that of the students.

We feel very strongly that the provisions of the Bill should be extended to provide for 'statutory licences' for all readings done by approved organisations for bona fide handicapped persons. In our case, and that of the State Library, the bona fides are ensured by the request of a certificate from the user whereon he is vouched for by a responsible person who knows his case, such as a doctor, social worker, ophthalmologist, Justice of the Peace, etc.

The incorporation of provisions into the Bill to extend the 'statutory licence' to all tape recordings made for handicapped persons is most important to the welfare of a large number of people in this State, and we pray that you will use your good offices to ensure that this is done.

We understand that the Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped is not included in the Schedule to the Bill which lists organisations approved under the Bill. Perhaps the omission could be remedied by an amendment to the Schedule.

QTSH Statement to the Attorney-General on the Copyright Amendment Bill 1979

1970s to meet with the National Library of Australia. The National Library of Australia devised a standard copyright application form to facilitate requests for copyright permission from publishers and authors to transcribe printed books to audio. It also became a requirement to create bibliographic records on the National Libraries Union Catalogue, now Kinetica database, which was a means of avoiding duplication and tracking transcribed materials held by libraries.

By 1978, it became necessary to seek copyright clearance on all audio works produced. QTSH

president, Mr Wieleart, wrote countless letters to every Senator and State and Federal Member of Parliament seeking an exemption for the Tape Service under the Copyright Act. The QTSH also lodged a petition calling on the Speaker and the House of Representatives to include the QTSH in the Copyright Amendment Bill. The petition was forwarded to Ben Humphreys, Member for Griffith who subsequently presented it to the House of Representatives on 18 September 1979 which is confirmed by the Hansard record of that day. In 1979, Mr Wielaert and Val Millican's efforts, along with the work of many others, resulted in the Federal Government fulfilling their obligation. The Attorney-General granted an exemption under the Copyright Act 1968 to institutions producing alternate format material for blind and vision-impaired citizens paving the way for easier access to printed works, however QTSH was excluded. A

further request to be declared an institution assisting handicapped readers was made by Erica McCall, QTSH Coordinator, in May 1993. Yet it wasn't until after a submission to the Attorney-General in 2003 by staff member, Jo Booth, that the organisation, then known as the Queensland Narrating Service, was successful in being declared an institution assisting people with print disabilities. The declaration appeared in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. GN, 17 March 2004 almost two decades after Val Millican's meeting with the National Library and 25 years after the presentation of the petition to the House of Representatives.

PETITION

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

The Humble Petition of undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth -

THAT THE COPYRIGHT AMENDMENT BILL IS INADEQUATE IN MEETING THE COMPLETE NEEDS OF THE HANDICAPPED PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA AND IN ORDER TO-MAXIMISE THE BENEFITS OF THIS LEGISLATION, YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY:

THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CORRECT THE OMISSION OF THE QUEENSLAND TAPE SERVICE FOR THE HANDICAPPED FROM THE SCHEDULE TO THE BILL.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL EXTEND THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL TO PROVIDE FOR STATUTORY LICENCES FOR ALL READINGS AND TAPE RECORDINGS DONE BY APPROVED ORGANISATIONS FOR BONA FIDE HANDICAPPED PERSONS.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will every pray.

SIGNATURES

ADDRESSES

QTSH Copyright petition to the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives, Canberra

Petitions

18 September 1979 REPRESENTATIVES 1175

That the National Women's Advisory Council is a discriminatory and sexist imposition of Australian women as Australian men do not have a National Men's Advisory Council imposed on them.

Your petitioners therefore pray:

That the National Women's Advisory Council be abolished to ensure that Australian women have equal opportunity with Australian men of having issues of concern to them considered, debated and voted on by their Parliamentary representatives without intervention and interference by an unrepresentative Advisory Council.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Malcolm Fraser.

Petition received.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of undersigned electors of the Division of Wannon respectfully sheweth:

support for the Chairman of the Gas and Fuel Corporation in the appeal to the Prices Justification Tribunal against rises in the price of L.P. Gas, and

support for the approach by the Deputy Premier of Victoria, Mr L. Thompson, to the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, for a reduction in the price of L.P. Gas.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the price of L.P. Gas will be duly reduced.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Malcolm Fraser.

Petition received.

Copyright

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

That the copyright amendment bill is inadequate in meeting the complete needs of the handicapped people of Australia and in order to maximise the benefits of this legislation, your petitioners humbly pray:

That the Government will correct the omission of the Queensland tape service for the handicapped from the schedule to the bill.

The Government will extend the provisions of the bill to provide for statutory licences for all reading and tape recordings done by approved organisations for bona fide handicapped persons.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Humphreys.

Petition received.

Fishing

To the Speaker and the Members of the House of Representatives. The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia hereby sheweth:

Whereas the undersigned citizens of Australia being professional fishermen engaged in full time employment in the fishing industry in the Portland area:

1. Deplore the apathy shown by this Government towards the fishing industry, a large and vital one, as regards to foreign exploitation of our natural resources in Australian waters.

Tabling of Petition to the House of Representatives in 1979



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA, ACT 2600
TEL. 72 1211

18 September 1979

Dear Mr Humphreys,

The petition which you lodged from certain citizens concerning alterations to the Copyright Amendment Bill was presented to the House today.

The full terms of the petition will appear in the Hansard record for today.

A copy of the petition has been forwarded to the Attorney-General.

Yours sincerely,

J.A. Pettifer
(J.A. PETTIFER) MLC
Clerk of the House

Letter to Ben Humphreys advising of the tabling of the Petition 1979

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette
No. GN 11, 17 March 2004

Government Departments 583

Government Departments
Attorney General

COPYRIGHT ACT 1968

DECLARATION UNDER SECTION 10A(1)(c)

I, Philip Ruddock, Attorney-General, pursuant to paragraph 10A(1)(c) of the Copyright Act 1968, declare the following body to be an institution assisting persons with a print disability for the purposes of the Act:

Queensland Narrating Service
PO Box 3376
South Brisbane BC QLD 4101

Attorney-General

Dated this 8th day of March 2004

2004 Gazette Notice announcing the declaration by the Attorney-General that QNS is an institution assisting persons with a print disability

CONTACT Magazine

Although the roots of CONTACT Magazine began in 1969 with Mr Don Cottrell it wasn't until the 1970s that production and distribution of the Magazine took hold under the guidance of Mr Ian Stewart and Mr Neil Magill of the QTSH. At the time the QTSH was established, the Fraser twins, blind sisters in Melbourne, produced the only available audio magazine for blind people. According to the Presidents newsletter of August 1969, the Fraser twins approached QTRA Auxiliary for permission to circulate CONTACT on their 'circuit' throughout Australia, New Zealand and other overseas destinations. CONTACT Magazine and CONTACT Junior were being circulated every three weeks in August 1969. In 1972, with a thirst for information and wanting something different, Neil Magill took the reigns of CONTACT Magazine. Neil roped in his long-time school friend, Val Millican, who in turn roped in her husband Des. Margaret Dalglish and Ian Stewart were also involved in establishing the magazine, making a significant contribution in the early years. This marked a shift in service delivery. Margaret Dalglish and Margaret Magill took responsibility for the local distribution of CONTACT Magazine while Val Millican distributed the magazine nationally through her networks. Margaret Magill, along with other volunteer



Mr Ian Stewart (l), Mr Des Millican and Mrs Val Millican discuss final plans for recording issue No.140 of Contact)

Page 8

NO. 67 —DECEMBER 1991

CONTACT Magazine article, Breakthrough December 1991. Standing L-R Ian Stewart and Des Millican, Seated Val Millican

The cassette magazine **Contact** offers readings from print books and magazines, together with information of particular interest to blind listeners. The cassette also provides an editorial section which carries references to correspondence from readers. Cassettes are issued without cost to people who are print handicapped. For more information write to Contact, 43 Bunya Street, Greenslopes, Queensland 4120.

transcribers, including Mavis and Bill Scott, recorded content for the magazine. In February 1972, Lady Phyllis Cilento became Patron, and, along with Sir Raphael commenced transcribing segments for CONTACT Magazine. The first edition of CONTACT Magazine, recorded in June 1972, was distributed to 47 members; 27 copies were produced on C90 cassettes and 20 on open-reel.

The popularity of CONTACT Magazine grew, providing unique content for people with a print disability. The content of each edition included news items, interviews, editorial, news for the blind,

Val Millican's reminiscences on CONTACT Magazine

"My late husband Des and I, along with our friend the late Neil Magill, produced and distributed the 'CONTACT' tape magazine for over 30 years. Des, who was not vision-impaired did all of the paperwork, research and provided his own segment for each edition. Neil, who was totally blind used the mixer to produce the master copy each month. I then made the copies to send out. I liaised with members, narrators, organisations and whomever we thought may assist us. I also attended to phone calls, letters, visits and generally tried to entertain our listeners. Each edition we had what we called our 'editorial' generally encouraging members to feel part of the CONTACT family. We produced 10 editions each year for around 450 recipients. This of course was long before computers, and Internet. VI people were desperate for information. The 'Tape Service' was so very important to many of us."

discussions, personal stories, specific information and entertaining articles on miscellaneous topics and Australian focused stories; all read by a variety of voices. Volunteers carried out production, distribution, memberships and circulation of the magazine. This was not a small job as ten editions a year were produced and distributed to around 450 subscribers nationally. Each recording was redirected on its return, in a five-week cycle, to another CONTACT Magazine subscriber. It was completely free to all subscribers. At the General Meeting of the National Federation of the Blind Citizens of Australia in 1993, Mrs Mercy Dickinson told the meeting that, "I always say that the best exchange of information about blind people and blind affairs comes through CONTACT".

Des and Val Millican, Neil and Margaret Magill and Ian Stewart, involved since the first edition, continued to ensure that CONTACT Magazine served the vision-impaired community for the next 30 years, producing the last edition in 2002.

The Development Years

The 1980s saw an application for funding to the Federal Department of Social Security to subsidise a third of the cost of production materials for book titles. 'The Material for the Blind Post Free' scheme was also introduced, which allowed producers of audio material for people with print disabilities access to free postage. This paved the way for supplying affordable audio format materials nationally not only through libraries but to individuals and other clients. In 1981, The Round Table on Materials for Print Handicapped Readers (now the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities) was formed to establish a link between all organisations involved in the production of Braille and audio material, and to establish Australian Standards for audio production. QTSH was a founding member and was represented by Miss Gamble of the State Library at the inaugural meeting. At subsequent

Craig Magill and Margaret Magill's reminiscences on CONTACT Magazine

"Neil was a recognised life member of QNS. Neil was a member of the CONTACT Magazine team and for the entire 25 plus years was the producer/editor. The team met on a regular basis at Neil's house to record articles, which Neil put together to produce the final master. Team members that we recall include Val Millican, Des Millican and Ian Stewart. Neil was a regular consumer of the QNS service in getting information and articles read and had regular contact with the narrators."

Round Table meetings Ron Toombes, Pat Brennan, Kathy Knowles, Erica McCall, June Curyer, Leonie Swainston, Alison Banks and Jo Booth represented the organisation. The organisation's involvement ranged from assisting with the hosting of annual conferences, holding positions on the executive and contributing to various working parties on narrating protocol and digital audio production.

In 1982, Des Stephens, State Librarian, was elected to the position of Vice President of the QTSH. The organisation's relationship with the State Library of Queensland continued to strengthen, forging a strong link with the Public Libraries Division. In 1984, the Community Employment Program enabled the QTSH to employ Mrs Flora Smith as Registrar, who was provided with space at the State Library in Grey Street, South Brisbane. Until that time the position of Registrar had been held in an honorary capacity



QTSH President, Mr T R Wielaert and Joan Gamble (SLQ) copying audio books at the State Library in 1975

Audio book standards found lacking

THE inaugural National Audio Book of the Year Award has been won by the Christian Blind Mission Tape Library for its production of Madelaine L'Engle's *A Circle of Quiet*.

The award was announced in Melbourne last Thursday.

But while the judges had high praise for the nine-hour seven-cassette production of *A Circle of Quiet*, they were less than impressed with the overall standard of work.

Speaking on behalf of the panel, judge Trish Trinck said a number of entrants were guilty of a lack of thought.

She said books had been submitted held together by rubber bands and some audio cassettes had not even been housed in cassette cases.

"There appears to be a certain amount of hit-and-miss attitude to the audio book," she said.

Commercial

"It would be interesting to know how many commercial producers have researched their market.

"Have they only considered the sighted?"

"What about the blind, the dyslex-

ic, the brain-damaged, the people who listen because they are afraid to admit they cannot read?"

The National Audio Book of the Year Award is administered by the Australian National Library.

Other books short-listed for this year's award were *The Sugar Mother*, by Elizabeth Jolley, produced by the Association for the Blind of Western Australia, *Perestroika*, by Mikhail Gorbachev, produced by the Hear A Book Service, and *Special Dynamic*, by Alexander Fullerton, produced by the Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped.

"Audio Book Standards Found Lacking", Newspaper Article 1988

initially by Mrs P Hicks-Hall, Founder, followed by Mrs June Lynch from 1971. When the Public Libraries Division of the State Library vacated Grey Street and moved to the Australian Estates Building, Macquarie Street, Teneriffe in 1985 QTSH moved with them. Storage of masters moved from under beds to being housed at the State Library. The State Library proposed to pay a 'fee for service' based on the production of audio work by the organisation, and this, coupled with library grants and an agreement with the Disability Services Support Unit of the Department of Education to pay \$26.00 per cassette for audio books, ensured that adequate funds were available. This allowed for ongoing employment of paid staff.

In 1986, Kathy Knowles was appointed to perform administrative tasks for 10 hours a week and Ron Baggs accepted the voluntary position of Equipment

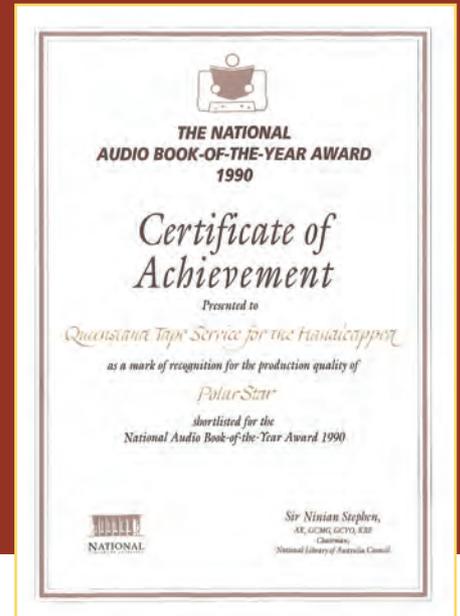
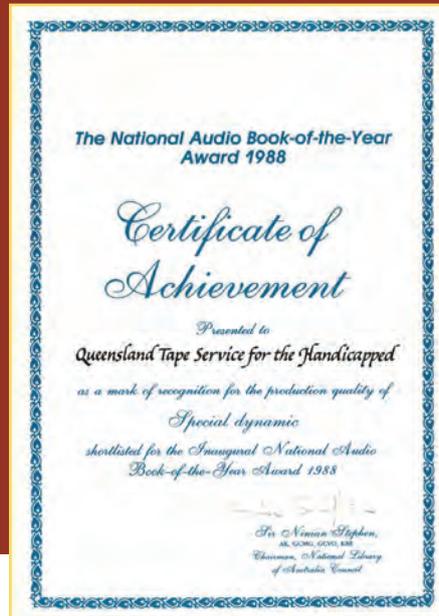
Officer, which involved delivering recording equipment to narrators and troubleshooting issues. Kathy was responsible for the drawing up and distribution of the first audio book catalogue to libraries, which resulted in audio books narrated and produced by the QTSH being found in public library collections throughout Australia. Until this time QTSH audio books were included in the Queensland State Library Services to the Print Handicapped audio book catalogue. Libraries around Queensland ordered taped books from catalogues by sending C90 cassettes for the purposes of duplicating the new taped books list. Volunteers were enlisted to copy and distribute the catalogue to libraries and to fill audio book orders. The first QTSH logo was designed for cassette labels and audio book covers. A request was received to produce and copy cassettes, which would guide vision-impaired

Wilfred (Willie) Prince's reminiscences

"I was instrumental in ensuring the audio book collection was well maintained, spending many hours checking tapes and listening to the audio books that QTSH volunteer narrators recorded. The quality of the cassette books, packaged in distinguishable blue folders, was very good. Barbara Crowther, librarian, was responsible for selecting titles from the library's print book collection for transcribing to audio format. As knowledge of the audio book collection grew the State Library began receiving requests from individuals for print materials to be transcribed to audio format, these were referred to the 'Tape Service'."



Graham Webster narrating a book for the QTSH catalogue in the 1980s



people through the Expo 88 site. Due to Kathy's commitment to raising narration standards and improvements to production quality, QTSH production of Graham Webster's reading of *Special Dynamic* received a Certificate of Achievement in recognition of production quality at the inaugural National Audio Book-of-the-Year Awards in 1988. QTSH production quality was again recognised in 1990 with the production of John Rowell's reading of *Polar Star*. In February 1989 Erica McCall was employed and when Kathy Knowles left in 1992 June Curyer commenced, taking over the responsibility of producing the bi-annual audio book catalogue along with the role of bookkeeper. This same year Pat McCallum was elected as President of the QTSH Management Committee. Pat McCallum was instrumental in securing recurrent State Government funding.

QUEENSLAND TAPE SERVICE TO THE HANDICAPPED

For the last ten years the Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped has been offering a small service to the handicapped community by recording books on to tape as requested. This service was first begun by a small group of volunteer readers who wished to assist blind students. Requests were later accepted from elderly blind people, and a recording was made of a book when it was asked for, the user listened to it, and the tape was then cleaned.

Since those days the existence of the service became more generally known, and now we are receiving requests from sufferers from cerebral palsy, dyslexia and multiple sclerosis, and older people in nursing homes whose diminishing sight does not allow them to use large print books. Each user of the service is countersigned by a doctor, ophthalmologist, social worker, matron, or other responsible person who knows the details of his case.

It is only recently that we have become aware of the very large number of people in the community who need the service. We have had calls from elderly people with diminished sight who have bought, for instance, an electrical appliance but who are unable to read an accompanying instruction booklet. This may be the only time they require the Tape Service, but it is, we feel, most important that we meet all requests, of every kind. We believe that the handicapped of the community need information, have leisure time to fill, and need the guidance, stimulation and satisfaction that reading can bring.

We would also like to extend the service to include handicapped people outside the capital city.

The users of our service are asked to adhere strictly to all conditions of copyright.

The Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped makes no charge at any time for any of its services, and all officers and readers give their services on an entirely voluntary basis.

As the Tape Service has no office premises, distribution of our readings are made by the Queensland State Library.

QTSH service description roughly around 1985



30 Year Celebration 1997. L-R Brian Rowell, June Curyer, Derek Christy, Pat McCallum, Des and Val Millican (CONTACT Magazine), Unknown, Joan Alexander



Volunteer narrators, Derek Cheeseman, Betty Bingham and Brian Rowell participate in an editing session at the 2003 Annual Narrator Workshop

Towards the New Millennium and Beyond to Closure

The 1990s brought another relocation and name change, increased funding and altering audio technology.

When the Public Libraries Division moved from Teneriffe to Montague Road, West End so too did QTSH. The Disabilities Consultant of the State Library continued the tradition of assisting with advice and the selection and loan of recreational titles for transcribing. QTSH audio books now found their way into the restricted access collections of libraries across Australia.

In 1997 the organisation underwent its final name change to the Queensland Narrating Service (QNS), which more adequately reflected and described the services provided and the consumers catered to.

In 1994, due to the tireless work of Pat McCallum, President, and other committee members, State Government funding from the Department of Family Services, Aboriginal and Islander Affairs was secured. While Federal funding enabled the coordination and production of audio books to public libraries, State funding was dedicated to the Community Information Program. This provided the opportunity to expand service delivery into the community with the employment of Community Information Services Development Officers. State funding facilitated the expansion of QTSH service

delivery to not only blindness organisations and individuals but to Federal, State and Local Government departments, the corporate sector, educational institutions and other community organisations allowing them the means to make their printed information accessible to those with print disabilities. This resulted in a wide range of print materials being transcribed, which resulted in increased revenue. Staff numbers increased with the employment of Carol Willis, later replaced by Linda Thompson as Coordinator; June Curyer filled the position of Assistant Coordinator while Leonie Swainston and Kerrie McManus were appointed as Community Information Program Officers. Increasing revenue due to audio book sales to



Alison Banks facilitates a technical session at the 2001 Annual Narrator Workshop

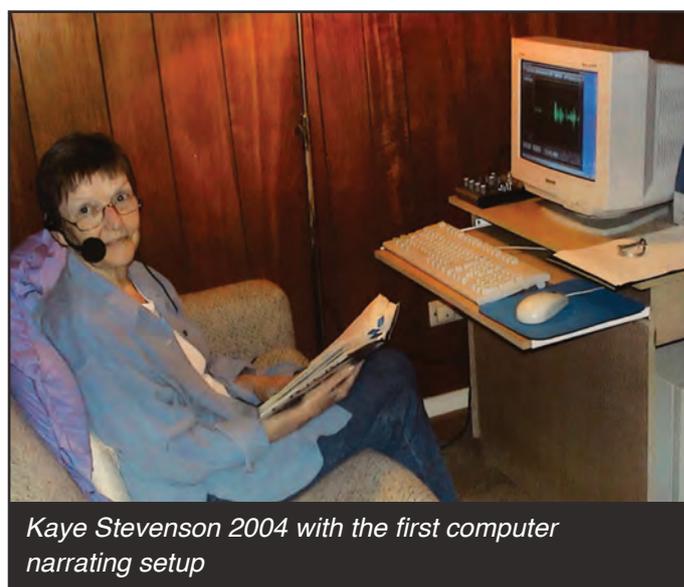
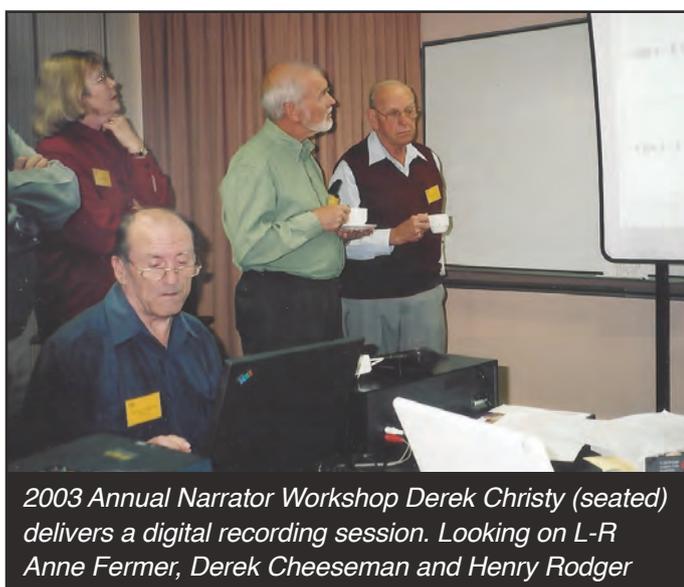
public libraries nationally and the new revenue stream generated by the Community Information Program enabled the employment of further staff to meet the increasing demands of service delivery. Alison Banks was employed to undertake Audio Production, Sandy Williams assisted June Curyer with the filling of library orders and Jo Booth replaced Kerrie McManus. While Federal Government funding ceased in 2010 QNS continued to receive recurrent State Government funding until closure in June 2021.

Many links, networks and friends within the Vision Impairment Agency Network (now Vision Empowerment Agencies Network) were forged during these years. Further changes around copyright also occurred during this period, resulting in the organisation having to reapply to the Federal Attorney-General to be sanctioned under the Copyright Act 1968 as an institution assisting persons with a print disability. This period of time also marked changes in audio technology globally with the advent of CDs, however, narrators still continued recording to cassette, the end users' preferred format.

QNS's biggest changes and challenges occurred in the new millennium. Ken Mapstone replaced Linda Thompson as Coordinator and David Fermer joined as Audio Production Assistant.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Derek Christy, office technology improved from one shared PC computer to five Apple Mac desktop computers and as a result systems also improved and became more streamlined; a necessity due to the increase in service delivery. From 2004 until 2011 QNS successfully operated with a flat management structure, which was uncommon in community organisations and the corporate sector. Leonie Swainston, Alison Banks, Jo Booth and David Fermer worked as a cohesive team alongside the QNS Management Committee navigating many internal and external changes and challenges. Jane Prior replaced Leonie Swainston and in 2010 Nick Warren replaced David and Alejo Valencia joined in 2011 after Alison resigned. Jo Booth managed the organisation from 2011 until closure in June 2021.

In the early 2000s the organisation began making the switch from analogue to digital, requiring the purchase of equipment to facilitate the conversion of cassettes to CD format. Research and development along with client surveys informed the shift to digital audio production. One-off grants through Jupiters Casino Benefit Fund and Gambling Community Benefit Fund enabled the organisation to further grow and develop, diversifying from analogue to digital recording, ensuring that QNS product would meet the needs of QNS consumers into the future. The first digital





Volunteer narrator Graham Webster presenting at the 2003 Annual Narrator Workshop



DAISY player launch at Logan City Council Libraries in 2007. L-R Janet Poole, David Fermer, Alison Banks

audio work station comprised six Denon Cassette machines, two computers, one for sound editing and one for format shifting from cassette to CD. In 2002, Hilda Reid narrated QNS's first-ever digital audio production, an education guide to 'horse-grooming', for students at the Open Learning Institute of TAFE. Hilda, skilled in narrating student texts and who loved a challenge, was QNS's pioneer digital audio narrator. QNS staff began experimenting with digital recording in a Window's PC environment and then training narrators, who used their own computers.

By 2006 the State Library of Queensland had moved from Montague Road, West End to its new building and current location at South Bank. After 30 years collocated with the State Library, QNS was left looking for a new home and found a friend in the Royal Blind Foundation of Queensland, which was undergoing a merger with Vision Australia at the time. QNS moved into the old Boarding House for the Blind and Deaf building on the Vision Australia site at Kent Street, Woolloongabba. This provided a closer link to the print disabled community, yet strong links with the State Library were still maintained. By 2010, Vision Australia was also required to find new premises and generously offered to accommodate QNS, complete with a studio, at its new purpose-built site on Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo, where the organisation

remained until its closure.

In 2007, due to QNS's collocation with Vision Australia and the organisation's links with libraries, QNS partnered with Vision Australia and Logan City Libraries to deliver 90 DAISY players to residents with a print disability in the Logan area and to train library staff and users in their operation. DAISY, which stands for Digital Accessible Information System, is a digital talking book format that offers many advantages over traditional audio books. DAISY audio book players were designed to support DAISY format, which gave people who are blind or have low vision a lot of functionality in accessing and enjoying audio books. The fast paced changes in audio technology and the launch



Volunteer narrators attending a Being in Voice Workshop conducted by Filloyd Kennedy in 2005



Volunteer narrators participate in a vocal warm up session at the 2008 Annual Narrator Workshop



Geoff Bartholomew and Anne Fermer at the 2008 Annual Narrator Workshop, Kent St, Woolloongabba

of the DAISY format occurring at this time resulted in the engagement of John Stevenson. Through John's dedication and commitment the Mediafit software program was created that enabled QNS to move easily into the realm of the production of DAISY format books. In addition, more volunteer narrators were successfully recording in home studios using Audacity software, while a handful of narrators recorded directly to DAISY format using Sigtuna software. John continued refining the Mediafit software program to eliminate glitches with and changes to the DAISY software.

By 2008 QNS had 10 narrators skilled in digital audio production. As funding allowed, modifications were made to the audio recording kits supplied

to volunteer narrators. The switch from analogue to digital audio recording was slow to begin, as volunteer narrator recruitment adjusted towards volunteers with computer skills, and training procedures and instruction manuals were altered to reflect the shift to digital audio production. Initially, narrators still recorded to cassette with Alison Banks and David Fermer responsible for editing, sound production and format shifting to CD format. In 2010, a successful grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund enabled the purchase of 30 Mac Book laptops and Rode Podcaster USB Microphones. This facilitated the change in equipment from the era of Denon cassette recorders to computers, further improving the quality of narrations and sound production. The Mac Book laptops allowed narrators to record digitally using Audacity software and return their audio files on CDs, which eliminated format shifting; USBs then replaced CDs and Drop Box was used to transfer smaller audio files with Google Drive used for larger audio files during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. Over the years, successful grants from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund enabled the purchase of a further 10 Mac Book Laptops and Rode Podcaster USB microphones along with equipment to kit out the purpose-built QNS Studio.

2008 also marked a change in the State disability



First digital recording workshop in 2008 at Kent St, Woolloongabba. Clem Fechner, John Stevenson, Kaye Stevenson, Jo Booth, Jane Prior

funding landscape, grounded in bureaucracy and red tape. QNS, along with other government-funded organisations in the disability sector, were required to obtain external Quality Assurance Certification in order to retain ongoing recurrent funding. In 2010, after 29 years, the Federal Government shifted the funding goalposts to only fund print disability organisations that provided audio, Braille and electronic formats, excluding QNS, which only provided audio format. QNS ceased to receive the Federal funding that supported the production of recreational audio books for libraries and their print disabled borrowers. More commercial audio book producers also began emerging around this time.

By 2009 it had become increasingly difficult to borrow books for transcribing from the State Library, and, combined with the cessation of the National Libraries copyright permission forms and the increase of commercial audio book producers, meant new approaches for obtaining copyright were required. Public libraries across Australia purchased QNS audio books for their 'restricted access' collections directly from QNS. Changing library policy resulted in the closure of 'restricted access' collections and changes in purchasing direct from specialist library suppliers. This created a problem for QNS as copyright permission was granted upon the condition that audio books would be housed in 'restricted access' collections and library suppliers charged for listing books. This threatened the organisations diminishing revenue stream, which supported the Community Information Program's work. To address these challenges, Jo Booth negotiated directly with publishers, resulting in the creation of a standard QNS copyright clearance request. This included a request to transcribe chosen books to audio; a complimentary copy of the book; clearance for libraries to house QNS audio books in 'open access' collections and supply of QNS audio books through specialist library suppliers, and eventually online via the OverDrive Marketplace. The removal of the 'restricted access' label from the covers of QNS audio books had the added benefit of

removing the stigma associated with individuals having to declare their print disability. The flexibility of the organisation to navigate and adapt to changing technology and library policies meant that QNS audio books continued to be available to print disabled library borrowers until closure.

By 2011, all narrators produced digital audio recordings. With fewer requests made for material on audio cassette the decision was made to phase out cassette production completely and focus on producing digital audio content in DAISY, MP3 and CD formats, which continued until 2021. Until that time QNS supplied audio books to libraries in cassette, CD, MP3 and DAISY formats in order to cater for library borrowers' needs; while Community Information Program materials were also offered in multiple audio formats including compressed MP3 format for clients' websites. With the rapidly changing technology landscape QNS audio, produced in MP3 format, became the preferred client choice due to its suitability for use on multiple digital platforms. Changes in technology and the dedication and commitment of QNS staff and volunteer narrators to provide a quality and timely service greatly improved the access to print information for people with print disabilities. Due to advances in digital technology, adaptive software programs and changes in the education publishing arena requests for the transcription of student texts began to decline. Little did QNS realise at this time was that continuing advances in technology, combined with the revamping of the Federal Government disability funding model, State Government 'red tape' funding reduction and Award Modernisation would contribute to QNS's eventual demise. The Federal Governments Disability Care Australia plan, now the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), was also on the horizon.

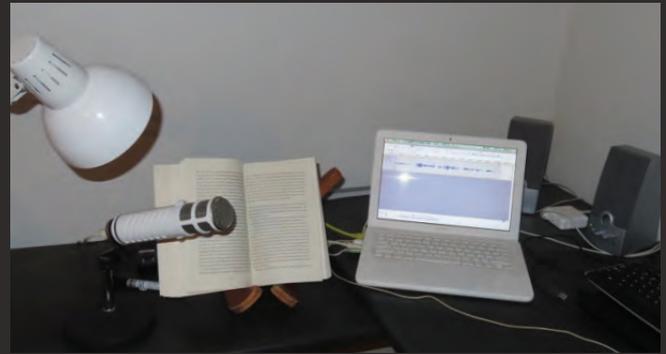
The organisation's successful registration as a charity enabled the receipt of tax-deductible donations; sadly the organisation's pursuits in seeking donations were unsuccessful. However, staff benefited from the salary sacrifice packaging that came with being a charity, which aided in

staff retention. Award Modernisation resulted in a reduction of staff numbers and hours. Other challenges included the reduction to QNS funding by the State Government to reduce red tape and the necessity to maintain certification of the QNS Quality Management System, requiring the development of policies and procedures, business plans and governance audits to retain reduced State Government funding. A paradox. This, combined with the many hours staff spent complying with red tape, along with preparation for the looming National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) involving attendance at conferences, briefing sessions and workshops to alter the QNS business model in preparation for the implementation of the NDIS eventually took its toll on QNS service delivery.

The NDIS rolled out in Queensland on 1 July 2016, signaling the end of State Government disability funding and the requirement that QNS was to fully operate in the open market, without government funding, by June 2019. Disability Services Queensland mapped QNS services to the Interpreting and Translation Support Cluster. QNS began the arduous process of registering as a provider in the NDIS space, under Translation and Interpreting, with the hope that individuals requiring print materials in audio format would have QNS support in their plans. After navigating the ever-shifting goalposts and lobbying both State and Federal politicians and bureaucrats the organisation received news that would seal its fate. A letter in December 2017 from Jane Prentice, Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services, confirmed that QNS' application to register as a provider had been rejected by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), stating the following:

“QNS applied for NDIS registration under the Interpret/Translation registration group in March 2017. This was not approved by the NDIA on 17 March 2017, when it was confirmed language interpretation services were not being provided as part of QNS' services.

“The services being provided by QNS are considered to be mainstream services, which are



MacBook laptop and Rode Podcaster digital recording setup used from 2010 to 2021

not funded by the NDIS. An example of a similar mainstream service is Vision Australia's library, where people who are blind or have low vision can have 360 pages converted to Braille, large print or audio for free.”

QNS pursued a review of the decision under the NDIS Act 2013, which was rejected. Due to the structure and rigidity of the NDIS Interpreting and Translation support cluster, QNS ceased to pursue registration as a service provider. In addition, with the continually shifting goal posts, QNS no longer aligned with the Information Linkages and Capacity Building framework.

To market the organisation's services in the NDIS and therefore disability arena required service provider registration. Despite hard work marketing and promoting QNS services to the wider sector and Local Area Coordinators efforts were in vain. QNS was shut out of the NDIS and disability space, significantly impacting people across the country living with a print disability, which covers more than just blindness and low vision and includes people aged over 65 years; thus creating a gap and limited choice.

The NDIS marked a neo-liberal shift in Federal and State funding, resulting in a move from a business model grounded in relatively secure government funding to one operating in the free market. Many disability organisations that had provided invaluable support to people with disabilities over many, many years began to fall on the sword of the NDIS.

In light of this, the organisation directed its energies into finding alternative sources of funding and



William Smith and Janet Poole cut the cake to celebrate the 50th year of the organisation in 2017



William Smith addresses the 50th AGM of QNS in 2017

revenue to replace government block funding. Realising efforts to secure other forms of funding or become a provider under the NDIS were being met with little enthusiasm; staff and the Management Committee began thinking of ways to survive without government funding. QNS commenced working on a new aspect of service delivery directed at self-published authors who may be interested in narrating, recording and publishing their own audio book. The self-published audio book initiative, AudioWords By You, was promoted through Literary Festivals, self-publishing websites, and writers' groups as well as the QNS website and social media pages. A Sponsorship Prospectus was also created with the hope that sponsors would be found to fund the production of audio books and catalogues so that service delivery of recreational audio books through public libraries would continue. These efforts too proved fruitless and with the final three year funding service agreement ending in June 2019 closure was increasingly becoming a reality. Acutely aware that failing to secure funding beyond 2019 or, alternatively, finding a partner to align QNS services with, would mean closure of QNS.

By 2018, the number of government departments and community organisations accessing the service through the Community Information Program continued to decline with improvements in adaptive technology; however, individual client numbers

remained steady with an increase in requests for transcribed work. While sales of audio books to public libraries had decreased significantly due to the increase in commercial audio book producers, requests for audio books for schools increased considerably. QNS continued to improve on service delivery, to explore new revenue opportunities, and to modify production and delivery techniques as appropriate. The Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors advised the organisation that ongoing State Government funding beyond June 2019 would cease when the NDIS was fully rolled out across the State on 1 July 2019. However, in October 2018, despite this advice, QNS was given a lifeline by Coralee O'Rourke, Queensland Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors. Funding to the organisation would continue under the Communities funding stream until June 2021. Although funding was reduced yet again, this allowed QNS staff and the Management Committee time to explore other funding options and to plan for closure should efforts fail.

The resignation of Alejo Valencia in March 2020 reduced staff hours to within range of the new funding agreement. 2020 was not without extra challenges, particularly in light of the Covid-19 global health pandemic. The March 2020 Covid-19 lockdown required a shift in business model to accommodate staff working from home. The

funding body was advised that QNS would continue delivering services during the pandemic under a work-from-home business model, which ensured service delivery continued in line with the organisation's Service Agreement, further testament to the organisations flexibility and adaptability. Although funding continued, enabling basic service delivery to continue, a lack of monetary donations and a general shift in the funding landscape further impeded the organisation's activities. With all avenues exhausted our ability to deliver services and remain viable beyond 30 June 2021 was not possible, therefore the QNS Management Committee made the difficult decision to wind up the operations of the organisation at the end of June 2021. The department was advised of the decision. The last few months of QNS's existence was dedicated to producing the final audio book catalogue for distribution to libraries, ensuring QNS assets were distributed to organisations that work to improve the lives of others and ensuring that, on closure, QNS met all financial and legal obligations.

From the outset the organisation focused on individuals having free choice in the audio materials made available to them for recreational reading, to pursue studies, interests and hobbies; a focus that continued until the end. The longevity and success of the organisation was due to a passionate team of past and present volunteers, Management Committee members, staff and support of external

stakeholders. Without the belief, support and dedication of those connected with the organisation over the years the QNS family would have ceased long ago. So, thank you to you all!

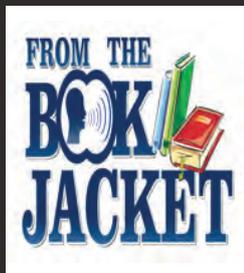
QNS owes the State Library of Queensland and Vision Australia a huge debt of gratitude for being so generous in accommodating the organisation over many, many years. The Management Committee, staff and volunteers have truly valued these collocations and the opportunities they have afforded the organisation and QNS clients. Gratitude too is extended to the many Australian publishers, authors and library suppliers who believed in and supported the work of QNS in making books accessible in audio.

Staff, Management Committee, Volunteers and clients, past and present, continued to advocate to both Federal and State politicians to the very end in the hope the organisation would be saved. One thing is certain QNS didn't go quietly!!

The legacy of QNS will live on through the gifting of the collection of recreational audio books to Reading Radio; the collection of audio books for school students to the Alternate Format Library at Narbethong State Special School; the donation of portable digital recording kits to the Indigenous Languages Project Team at the State Library of Queensland and studio equipment to Link Vision.



Past and present staff and volunteers at the QNS Closing Event 5 June 2021



From the Book Jacket logo

Significant QNS Projects

From the Book Jacket

Since 1999, QNS produced a monthly radio program that was aired on Radio 4RPH, now Reading Radio, and various other radio stations throughout South-East Queensland. This equates to approximately 252 radio programs produced. The program was also made available from the QNS website and Face Book page. Each program was aired twice, at different times of the week. In recognition of their shared aims, 4RPH did not charge QNS to broadcast their programs. Occasionally, 4RPH provided studio time for QNS volunteers, who usually recorded their work at home. QNS and 4RPH pooled resources on several occasions to produce high quality audio books that featured in the QNS catalogue and were broadcast by the station. For a time 4RPH technical producers, who have a print disability themselves, produced the program. Alison Banks was the producer and presenter of the monthly program from 1999 until her departure in 2011. Staff brainstormed to find a suitable name for the show and came up with 'From the Book Jacket', which reflected much of the programs content. The program, which featured reviews on the organisation's latest audio book releases, reached listeners across South-East Queensland. Program content also raised awareness about QNS services, the availability of government and other organisational information in audio format, and events such as the biannual VIP Book Club. Nick Warren took over the role of producer and presenter in 2011. The last program produced and presented by Nick Warren aired in June 2021.



Participants of the 'A.L.I.V.E' Remote Book Club for Vision Impaired People project
L-R Willie Prince, Faith Stephson, Beryl Underwood

A.L.I.V.E Network

In 1999, a small grant was secured by Leonie Swainston from the Year of the Older Person funding for a new project – the A.L.I.V.E Network – targeted at socially isolated elderly people with print disabilities living in remote areas of Queensland. A.L.I.V.E was the acronym for Audio Literature and Information, Vision and Energy. A.L.I.V.E provided the opportunity for six participants to meet once a month in an audio book club operated via teleconference. Using exclusively QNS audio books participants discussed the books in the same way as participants at a typical book club, with authors also joining in. Participants' also had the opportunity to discuss information produced by the Community Information Program.

New Club For Older Booklovers

A new pilot project funded by the International Year Of Older Persons will be commencing soon for older people in rural and remote areas. An audio book club for people over 60 years of age who have difficulty or find it impossible to read printed materials independently is being established. Members of the book club will discuss books which have been recorded onto audio cassette tapes.

They will teleconference each month to share their views and talk with other print disabled people who enjoy books and literature.

Interested people should contact Queensland Narrating Service who is co-ordinating the pilot project.

The program is specifically designed for older people who live in remote areas of the state where opportunities to participate in a book club would be limited.

It is targeted specifically at bookreaders who are print disabled, ie those people who love reading and wish to continue their enjoyment of literature but can no longer read printed materials independently.

Print disability includes those people with blindness or severe vision impairment, but not everyone realises that other members of the community may also be classified as print disabled.

For example, a person who has had a stroke or brain injury which affects their ability to read is print disabled, as is someone with chronic arthritis in the hands who can no longer hold a book or other printed materials.

Right: Faith Stephson loves using her audio books.

The program will be free of charge, but is available to a limited number of participants. If you or a friend, relative or neighbour is interested in joining the book club, please phone the Queensland Narrating Service on 07 3846 1755 for further information. Or log onto <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/owpp/qns> or email qns@gil.com.au Queensland Narrating Service (QNS) is a non-profit community organisation which has been providing audio format information for people with a print disability for over thirty years. QNS records books onto cassette tape for libraries around Australia, and also produces a range of community information such as government brochures and documents, newspaper clippings, newsletter, minutes of meetings etc for people who are unable to read them personally. In most cases this information can be provided free to the consumer.



"New Club for Older Book Lovers", Quest Newspapers, 11-17 August 2000



*2010 VIP Book Club event
L-R June Curyer Nick Warren Marion
Houldsworth (author) and Aleho Valencia*



*Jo Booth and
Hugh Lunn at the
2014 VIP Book Club*



*2017 VIP Book Club attendees enjoy a chat
over a cuppa after hearing Tony Pritchard
author of Drifting Down the Darling*

VIP Book Club

Following the A.L.I.V.E. project QNS collaborated, for a number of years, with the Brisbane City Council on the One-Book-One Brisbane reading campaign. QNS produced the chosen books in audio format, which enabled blind and vision impaired residents in Brisbane an equal opportunity to participate in the One-Book-One Brisbane initiative. The first book the VIP Book Club participants enjoyed as part of this initiative was *The Mayne Inheritance* by Rosamond Siemon. Sadly, in 2019, a chapter of the organisation closed with the final VIP Book Club event held in March. For the past 16 years, members of Brisbane's vision-impaired support groups had enjoyed a biannual audio book club morning run in the same way as traditional book clubs. After operating since 2003, hosting a wide variety of authors, the VIP Book Club had run its course.

Over the years the group was fortunate to have heard from a diverse range of authors who gave up their mornings to entertain, enlighten and above all else share a love of both the written and spoken word. Participants heard from a wide range of authors such as Matthew Condon and cousins Janice Teunis and Deb Drummond who have worked to uncover crime and corruption in Brisbane,

Queensland. Participants also heard from Ian Callinan QC, high court judge and author of crime fiction, and the wonderful local legend, Hugh Lunn, who entertained us all with his wit and humour. So many authors generously allowed QNS to make their works accessible in audio for participants and willingly gave their time to share a behind the scenes insight into their writings, staying on beyond their talk to enjoy time chatting with participants over a sandwich and cup of tea. These events enlightened authors to an audience who cannot access books in print. It was an absolute pleasure for staff to share these mornings with book club participants.

Leonie Swainston facilitated the VIP Book Club, which had its roots in the A.L.I.V.E and One-Book-



Leonie Swainston addresses the 2006 VIP Book Club

One Brisbane projects, from 2003 until 2007, followed by Alison Banks until 2011 and then Jo Booth until 2019. The prospect of the loss of funding and dwindling numbers due to ageing and illness of participants meant that it was no longer viable to keep the book club going.



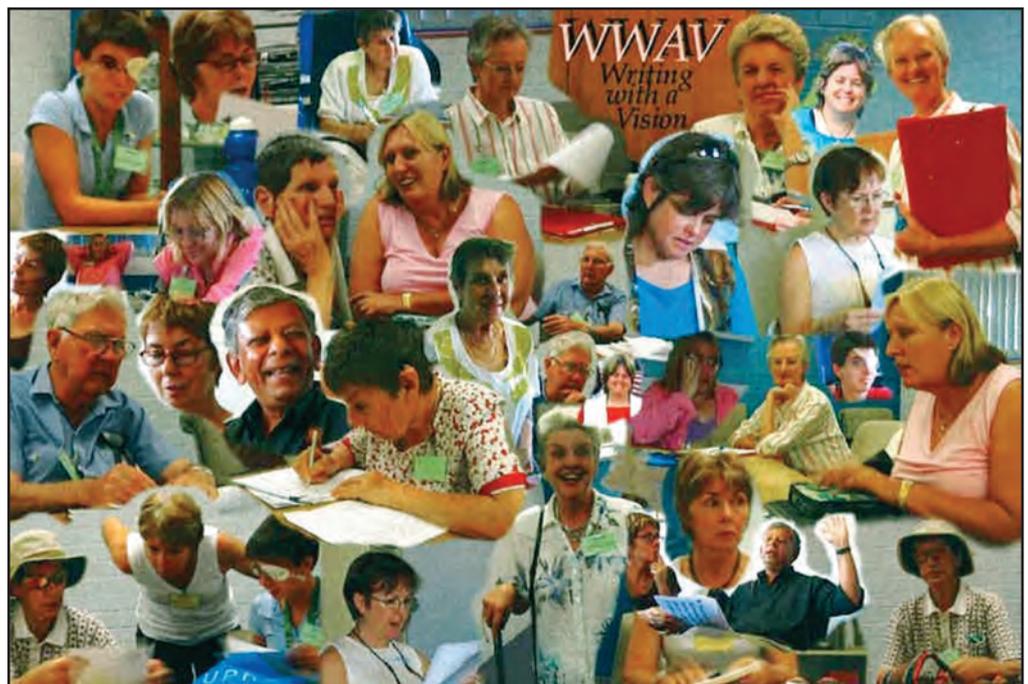
Janice Teunis and Deb Drummond address members of the 2015 VIP Book Club

Writing With A Vision – VIP Writer’s Group

Writing With A Vision (WWAV) emerged from the VIP Book Club and was a writer’s group for people with blindness or vision impairment who had a serious interest in writing for their own pleasure or for publishing. In 2005, acclaimed Brisbane author, Mary-Rose MacColl, gave an inspiring talk to the VIP Book Club, which sparked participant’s creativity and writing talents, and, in turn, resulted in the first VIP Writer’s Workshop! Mary-Rose commented, “what a wonderful group of people. If you ever want any help with a writer’s session for these people, I would like to be involved”.

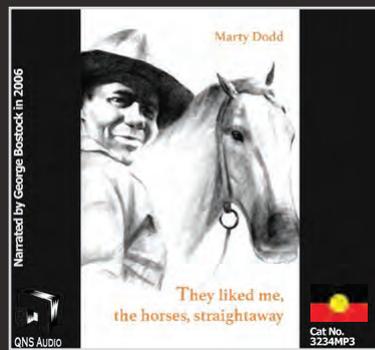
This was the seed that grew into the VIP Writer’s Group, Writing with A Vision, established by Leonie Swainston and facilitated by Wendy Dartnall, with the assistance of a number of wonderful volunteer scribes. Funding from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in 2008 covered the cost of the facilitator for the creative writing group that year. Wendy was an amazing facilitator who generously took members under her wing to ensure the success of the group. Along the way, a few people really threw themselves into the concept and planning, which

made the first workshop possible. Robyn Bree, Empress of the Written and Spoken Word, chaired and steered the working group. Robyn’s passion for language and to see this seed of an idea germinate into a memorable experience provided irreplaceable energy. Along with Robyn, Don Dias, Vanessa Barber and Helen Boardman, and other volunteer scribes, all gave their time and commitment to supporting this project. In the early stages the group also benefited from the input of Linda Triasmono from Braille House. WWAV ran for 16 years under the guidance of Wendy Dartnall who said she would only be running the group for six months! WWAV produced many budding authors.



Writing With A Vision participants and scribes

Collaborative Projects



'Indigenous Literature Project' They liked me, the horses, straightaway



'Indigenous Literature Project' Of Muse, Meandering and Midnight

Indigenous Literature Project

In 2001 the Indigenous Audio Book Narration project, funded through the Brisbane City Council's Cultural and Festival Grants Program, commenced. In conjunction with University of Queensland Press, a selected number of published Indigenous novels were recorded by local Indigenous actors/narrators for access by readers with print disabilities

through public library collections. The books produced under this project were, *They liked me, the horses, straightaway* by Marty Dodd narrated by George Bostock; *Is That You Ruthie?* by Ruth Hegarty narrated by Roxanne McDonald and *Of Muse, Meandering and Midnight* by Samuel Wagan Watson narrated by Samuel Watson.

Adult Learners' Week

In 2004, QNS, the State Library of Queensland and TAFE Queensland held a narrating/storytelling workshop. QNS provided expertise on narrating preparation and technique and provided simple narrating guides. As a result of this workshop

QNS was asked to narrate migrant stories for the Brisbane Writers Festival in conjunction with the Multicultural Education and Cultural Development Association (MECDA), resulting in audio books for multicultural collections in libraries.

Listen Up

In 2004, QNS began a joint project with Indigenous Library Services (ILS) to enhance the collections of Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) in remote Queensland. The project's aim was to work with remote Indigenous communities using resources available to Indigenous Library Services and the skills of Queensland Narrating Service. 'Listen Up' provided training to community participants, to select content, narrate, record, and make accessible through Indigenous Knowledge Centres cultural stories, local history and other material of interest to Indigenous listeners. The communities

of Mabuiag Island in the Torres Strait and Wujal Wujal were chosen. Alison Banks travelled to these communities to conduct workshops and to train and skill Indigenous Knowledge Centre staff and volunteers. The workshops covered the techniques of narrating and recording relevant materials and provided training in the use of recording equipment with the aim of increasing the inclusiveness and self-determination of Indigenous people in remote Queensland. It was anticipated that elders would have a high level of interest and family/group/community stories would be favoured subjects.

The project strengthened the capacity of the two communities by building up the IKCs' collection through consultation with community members about story and subject choice. The project also empowered people to actively participate in the selection and production of materials to be recorded in cassette format then transferred into digital audio format for uploading to websites; thus making the audio accessible through IKC collections and in local and shared libraries. This promoted an interest in acquiring knowledge via the dual formats of print and audio materials.



'Listen Up' Project Alison Banks delivering the Mabuia workshop

Wongabel Walk Project

In 2006, Tamara Vallance from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service received a request from a vision-impaired man to make a walk through the Wongabel State Forest, south of Atherton, accessible. Project Manager, Tamara Vallance consulted and worked closely with the local Indigenous Ranger, Atherton Shire Council, John Nolan of Guide Dogs Queensland Cairns, Leona Kitson from Braille House and Jo Booth from QNS to bring this accessibility

project to fruition. QNS's role was to produce the audio cassette guide of the text, which was narrated by Kaye Stevenson and incorporated music, which marked the end of the text for each stop along the walk, indicating to the listener to stop the cassette before proceeding along the track. The project won the Minister's Award for Innovation in Service Delivery at the 2007 Disability Action Week Awards.



VIPs trying out the Wongabel walk



'Wongabel Walk' Project received the Disability Action Week Awards Innovation for Service Delivery L-R Jo Booth and Tamara Vallance

Sharing Australia's Stories

Following on from the successful 'Listen Up' project, QNS collaborated on the 'Sharing Australian Stories' project. Assistance was provided to the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, the State Library of Queensland and the Wujal Wujal Community with the CD audio production of *Norman Baird – a spark within* written by Kathleen Denigan and narrated by Caden Pearson. An audio CD accompanied the print copy of the book, which overcame the literacy barriers for many individuals. It is through the telling of stories such as Norman's, that the similarities between non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities, as much as the differences, can be highlighted, promoting the formation of an inclusive national identity.



'Sharing Australia's Stories' Project Norman Baird – a spark within

Mackay/Yuwibara Language Recording Project

In 2018, QNS worked in partnership with the State Library's Indigenous Languages Project Team to provide portable digital audio recording equipment, training and support to the Mackay/Yuwibara language group to record Yuwibara language. QNS established two mini recording studios in the 'silent' rooms of the Dudley Denny Library for the purpose of recording language words. Jo Booth and Alejo Valencia provided a general group training session covering basic recording skills, microphone technique and structure for recording language words, participants divided into two groups. Jo and Alejo guided and provided support and encouragement to each group through the recording process. Recording was slow to begin with but as the participant's confidence grew so did the pace of the sessions. Over the course of the three days, the participants recorded over 800 words from a

wide range of categories including kinship, human artefacts and weapons, dreaming and spirituality, mammals, birds etc. On the final day, four students from North Mackay State High School joined the workshop, and, being guided by the elders in pronunciation, each recorded a few words. An audio kit was left for the group to record the remaining few word categories. QNS was responsible for the postproduction sound processing of digital audio masters, which included preparation of the audio files to upload to the Miromaa language App. The App comprises the print word and audio word in language and English and an image, which will assist in the preservation and teaching of language within the community. This was an incredibly successful partnership and a very rewarding and exciting learning experience for all involved.

Our words our stories

In 2019, QNS collaborated with Logan City Council Libraries, who secured funding from State Library of Queensland and Telstra, to develop and deliver a Deadly Digital Communities Program in the City of Logan in recognition of the United Nations Year of Indigenous Languages. The ‘Our words our stories’ project focussed on a different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language each month between February and November 2019. QNS provided digital audio training and assistance to the project officer, Robert Ah Wing, a Kalkadoon community elder, which enabled him to oversee the recording of stories by community members. QNS also provided recording equipment, post-recording sound production, quality assurance and the master audio files for uploading to

Logan Libraries website. The project culminated in the creation and recording of 10 short stories – *Our words our stories*, which was launched in February 2020 at Logan Central Library. The stories, comprising audio with visual overlays, are live on the Logan Libraries website. The program provided the opportunity for Logan residents to engage in an intergenerational learning experience to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages and learn a new skill – digital recording and narrating. In 2021, QNS donated a digital recording kit to Logan Libraries to ensure that community members can continue to share and narrate their stories, while also inspiring others, creating further stories.



Nick Warren with Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts Student training QNS Studio



QNS Staff Jo Booth and Aleho Valencia guiding the Mackay/Yuwibara Language recording session with Yuwibara descendents

Indigenous Languages Project

While lack of funding opportunities prohibited an ongoing partnership between the SLQ Indigenous Languages team and QNS, the organisation continued to support the Indigenous Languages team by providing pro-bono support through the loan of digital recording equipment and post recording sound production work. Support was provided for the recording of further Yuwibara language words and the recording of Eric Carle's, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in Yuwibara language to mark the books 50th anniversary. Jo Booth was invited to speak at the Language Research Discovery Workshop, run by the State Library of

Queensland Indigenous Languages Project Unit in early 2020. Jo presented on the success of the Yuwibara/Mackay project and on how QNS's digital audio equipment, training program and guides provided the skills in recording language words for the Miromaa App and elders' stories for communities before they are lost. As a result of gleanings at the workshop, QNS, upon closure, donated 29 digital recording kits to the Indigenous Languages Project Team to further their work in assisting communities with the preservation and revitalisation of languages and recording of oral histories.



Staff members Jo Booth, Nick Warren and Aleho Valencia volunteering at the 2015 Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival for cultural awareness training

Volunteers – the backbone of QNS



At the 2001 Annual Narrator Workshop, volunteers wear cardboard glasses to simulate retinitis pigmentosa

In the early years transcribers were recruited mainly by word of mouth, through radio programs, articles in newspapers, and letters to organisations; while the Jaycees 'Books Bring Brightness' project also brought additional transcribers. Val Millican remembers that there was no formal process for recruiting volunteer narrators, which meant the quality of some early works was poor. However, many early transcribers with backgrounds in radio broadcasting brought their knowledge and skill to the craft of transcribing, which improved audio quality. Audio quality continued to be improved upon throughout the 1990s with tighter volunteer narrator recruitment and training methods and also access to a small studio, which was essentially a 'cold room' at the School of Distance Education. The studio was only used for government work

with volunteer narrators recording in a home studio environment. Annual Narrator Workshops not only provided volunteers, who narrated in isolation, the opportunity to gather, network and share the trials and tribulations of transcribing but also provided them with valuable information and the opportunity to develop and learn new skills. Workshops were delivered by diverse guest presenters on a host of topics ranging from presentation and vocal technique to editing and digital recording. Narrators went to great lengths to improve their home studio recording environments to achieve the best possible quality audio recording for QNS clients. As an indication of volunteer narrator stamina, one completed audio hour takes four hours to produce!! QNS narrators were kept informed about changes and events through a regular newsletter entitled 'Mic-ing About',



Narrator Tony Saunders in his 'Tardis001' and 'Tardis004'. Tony named his studio 'Tardis' because whenever he entered and started recording a book he was transported to another place and into another adventure.

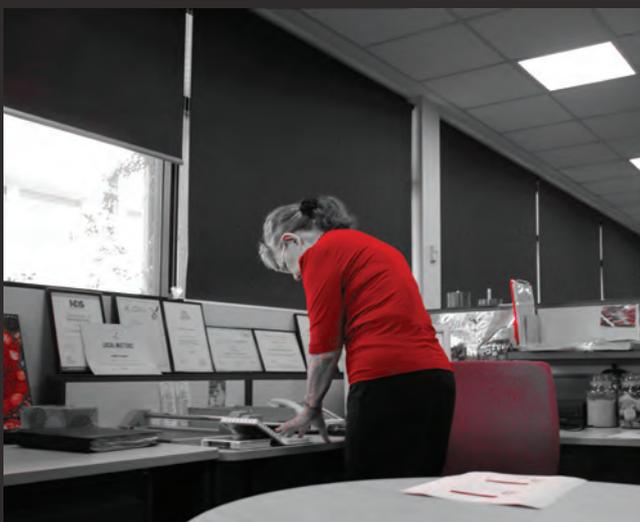
so named by long time volunteer Peter Bauers. In 2001, Derek Christy, Brian Rowell, Hilda Reid, Irene Irving, Graham Webster and Peter Bauers were recognised for their volunteering contribution at an event marking the United Nations International Year of the Volunteer. Kaye Stevenson and Peter Bauers received recognition for their continuous services to people with print disabilities at the Disability Action Week Awards in 2001 and 2004 respectively. When the Hear-A-Book service in Tasmania closed in 2006, due to the advent of digital audio technology, QNS gained several skilled narrators, bringing with them many years of narrating experience and a willingness to be trained in digital audio recording. As audio technology advanced, so too did the organisation. Changing times, facilitated by technology, meant many QNS volunteer narrators operated from home studios across the country, and, although interstate they were still very much connected and part of the QNS family. While the number of transcribers/narrators fluctuated over the years so did demand for the organisations services. QNS volunteers were engaged not only in transcribing print to audio but also assisted with monitoring of narrated works, compiling of audio book orders for libraries, IT administration and roles on the Management Committee.



Kaye Stevenson, volunteer narrator, receives the 2001 Disability Action Week Award. L-R Kaye Stevenson, Peter Vance, Judy Spencer Minister for Families and Disability Services



Peter 'Speedy' Bauers recipient of a Disability Action Week Award 2004



Volunteer Judy Christy at QNS compiling audio books for a State Library of Queensland order

Volunteer Reminiscences

Derek Christy – Equipment Officer and System Administrator

“Judy and I began our association with QNS in 1990 when it was QTSH, and stationed at the State Library’s facility at Teneriffe. The sole person in charge was Kathy Knowles and June Curyer later joined her. Judy had joined as a Narrator and I was to ‘fix’ faulty cassette recorders. The National Library in Canberra had the task of assigning copyright clearance and QTSH did this by mail. With the advent of computer systems, the National Library turned to using electronic means to accomplish this. This meant we had to buy and set up our first computer plus a modem to go with it. This was the beginning of my long association with the QNS computer systems, coming as I did from a computer/electronics background dating from the 1960s. We started with one Windows machine to connect to Kinetica in Canberra, but after our move to Public Library Services (PLS) at Montague Road, we began using the Internet and shortly afterwards I set up a computer network to cope with an increase in staff.

Our workload increased, so I also set up two Apple Macs to enable us to record multiple copies of a single narration at once. This sped up the delivery of recordings to users. When PLS moved to Cannon Hill, they declined to offer us space, so we set up again through the generous offer of



Derek Christy

the Royal Blind Foundation Queensland to house us in the premises that once was the Queensland Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb in Dutton Park. It was there that I had the opportunity to set up a complete Apple network with a then top-of-the-range Server through a grant from the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund. This included a sophisticated Audio recording and post-production facility and several office computers. Our final move to the Vision Australia site involved the transfer of all this equipment, which had to be stand-alone from the Vision Australia network (which used Windows).

We extended our presence in the community by setting up a website using Australia Online facilities in Melbourne. A member of staff was assigned the task of maintaining the site. By 2017 or 18 I felt my age, plus a stroke, meant I was no longer able to keep up with current computer developments, so after almost 30 years of volunteering my administrative services, I had to hand over to an outside expert. It has certainly been an interesting, challenging and frustrating (at times) journey! However, I’m proud of my achievement in providing and maintaining the best possible computer system we could afford for the staff’s benefit. I’m also proud too, of the benefit of all our efforts on behalf of the vision-impaired community over the years.”



Clem Fechner

Clem Fechner – “CEO, Northern Command”

“Pre-retirement, in early 2003, I contacted an Organisation (who shall remain nameless) purporting to offer all manner of support to Blind residents Australia-wide, and emailed a three – page summary of my lifetime achievements (failures not included) in fields, which would allow me to volunteer narrating with them. It’s now April 2021 and I am still waiting for a response. After I got over my disappointment, sometime about September 2003, I went searching online and came up with this lot called QNS. Having learned my lesson earlier, I only emailed QNS a query, this time amounting to about three lines.

1. Are you looking for narrators?
2. What qualifications?
3. How do I register?

No messing about!!!! QNS replied in about 20 minutes flat, and the result is that my first narrated book was sent off to Brisbane in November 2003. Now 17½ years later I hope I’ve improved with age as I’ve clocked up 90 books for general usage and heaps of different jobs for personal use, organisations, etc.... Tasks you’d never have imagined would be required. I mean, the *Official Queensland Road Rules? The Lawn Bowls Rules of Play Australia wide? Safety PA announcements for, I believe, the Sydney Rail network? I know there’ll be heaps of my co-narrators out there who have been able to tell similar stories and I am sure you received as much pleasure from this as I.*

What was my motivation? Simply to use my gifts to help others in need. We’ve all entered these commitments without any expectations of reward... knowing you’ve made someone else’s day a little brighter is all you seek. But what I didn’t realise was I’d get so much from being a QNS volunteer. I’ve read so many really fantastic books that I’d never have seen otherwise... (But of course, there were some experiences one would prefer to forget). During a period of office staff changeovers and with no trained staffer available, I was fortunate to be able, for many months, in conjunction with John, the husband of our most prolific narrator, to be asked to produce the cassette, CD, MP3 and DAISY formatted audio books from the files supplied by our Brother and Sister Narrators. That was a gratifying experience. So you see, when you volunteer for something, who knows where it will lead?

What a great family we have become... all aiming to achieve the one goal. What a sad finale for such a worthwhile organisation. Congratulations to the wonderful office staff throughout the years who have held everything together and organised us so brilliantly. Well done! You’ve been great friends! Also I would like to offer bouquets and thanks to my sibling narrators who have given so much of your time and talents to helping our visually handicapped customers. Here’s to the future!

Best wishes and God Bless. Clem Fechner”



Kaye Stevenson

Kaye Stevenson

“I’ve had a long association with QNS. I started narrating for the Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped, as it was then known, in 1973.

In those days we recorded on reel-to-reel tape and editing was

a tricky procedure attempting to insert a corrected section of narration and trying to ensure that the sound of the record button was as unobtrusive as possible. When you had finished your recording and it was returned to the office the staff would then do the technical work to check for mistakes and clean up any extraneous noises. Right from the beginning the organisation wanted the end result to be as professional as possible, both technically and, with the standard of the work of the volunteer narrators.

As I was a professional actor I often found myself between jobs; it’s called ‘resting’ in the business, a euphemism for not having been offered any work. When asked what I was doing during those ‘resting’ periods I could always say, with pride, that I was narrating books for the vision-impaired. I loved this activity and was more than happy to volunteer my time. I read lots of books I would not have otherwise. Some really good, some not so much. I also had my fair share of bus time tables, government announcements, instruction books, recipes etc, etc... I was happy to do whatever was sent to me and enjoyed the variety.

One of the reasons QNS managed to continue for as long as it did was the ability of the staff and management to understand that technology was changing rapidly and that to remain in the game we had to move with the times. I’m not sure of the time frame but I think it was around the early 2000s that it was decided that we would start moving to record on computers. I loathed computers, had no understanding of them and was despairing that QNS was going to be moving in this direction.

My husband, John, who was an electronics engineer and computer buff, on retirement had set himself up as a designer of programs for small business. He loved a challenge and decided to have a go at designing a program for QNS, which would enable the recording, editing and compilation of the finished job into cassette, CD, DAISY and MP3. He worked closely with David Fermer who was on the staff at the time, to ensure that the program was fit for purpose. He called it Mediafit. Only a few narrators used the recording element but the rest of the program proved invaluable. It was this program that forced me to deal with computers, and I became a devotee of the recording method called Sigtuna. The ease with which I could edit and correct mistakes was light years away from my clumsy attempts with the reel to reel.

On reflecting on my years with QNS I would like to pay tribute to all of the staff I had the pleasure of being involved with. They were all, without exception, wonderful people, so dedicated to the aims of the Queensland Narrating Service and their clients. Also, as a long term committee member my grateful thanks to our many volunteers over the years. Our community would be much the poorer without your dedication and support.

Times change and sadly we must move on too, but know that we did our bit to make life easier and more enjoyable for a section of our population. I am proud of what QNS has achieved.”

Dornell Wylie

“Towards the end of the 1990s I started a folder of activities for retirement, including a newspaper clipping about QNS. That was the beginning of twenty joyous, rewarding years with an organisation without parallel for commitment and dedication. I began as a nervous novice narrator and had a number of memorable experiences: called a name in the phone book to ask about its pronunciation and it was a relative of the person in the book; called an author for clarification and was invited to call back any Sunday for a chat; found my own ancestor in a book; called the tax department to ask how to verbalise a



Barbara Duncan last recording session 2021

Barbara Duncan

"I first heard of QNS over twenty years ago when a close friend, Althea Wolfe, mentioned that she'd volunteered as a narrator and suggested I might be interested too.

I got in touch and was sent an audition sheet to read. Alison Banks introduced me to 'The Denon', a monster cassette recorder that I set up at home and started on what turned out to be the first of 70 books.

Every project posted out to us was accompanied by a printed list of instructions such as the order in which we had to read the text of the material or book provided and also how to achieve the best results technically. The hardest quality to achieve was the absolutely 'clean' read, i.e. no background noise of any kind, which was a more realistic goal when cassettes were superseded for the blessed Audacity and computers. My greatest challenges for a clean read was birds, mostly gregarious magpies that occasionally brought their domestic issues into the kitchen, crows, yellow eyes, kookaburras and the biggest of all birds, planes. We live under a flight-

path for planes on the approach to Brisbane and there's a popular local airport for small, low altitude planes. Trumping these by far for sheer volume is our summer cicada season which seems to last forever and runs at full volume from light to dark. We live in close proximity to a large stand of native trees so very high wind can be a nuisance as is anything heavier than a light shower on our corrugated iron roof and our little Jack Russell X is on a hair trigger if he suspects there's an enemy approaching.

My enduring memory is being given an emergency narration for a student who needed a copy of *All the Light We Cannot See*, before the commencement of the school year. Luckily I'd read it previously, which was time saved and I managed to finish in time, despite the crushing January heat. I needed help when I narrated a book by Ramona Koval as it contained quite a few Polish words. I contacted her through her publisher and she was wonderfully helpful and very generous with her time. I have appealed to a couple of other authors over the years, and it did make a personal connection to how I felt while narrating the book.

The introduction of Audacity and computers was like the sun parting dark clouds. It's hard to describe how frustrating it was to work with cassettes and the recorders that were so fiddly and temperamental. All of us who worked with them will surely have a scarifying memory of ejecting a day's work in the form of a mangled cassette.

complex equation. By far the most emotional narration was describing a picture book so a blind mother could 'read' it to her sighted child. When my cough and local noise stopped my narrating, Jo suggested monitoring and that's what I have done now for years. What a privilege it has been to be involved with QNS! Their dedicated, empathetic service has enriched so many lives. It has certainly enriched mine!"



Dornell Wylie

I enjoyed my time with QNS more than I can say and I'm so grateful to Jo and Nick and the staff over the years, which have been so supportive, encouraging and kind. I found the process of refining and honing technique and reading skill, to bring my best work to the book the most satisfying and subjective of challenges. It's not a competition, it's just you and the microphone and the words."

Testimonials

Testimonials from clients, library borrowers and authors

“I stand in awe of your narrators ability to represent such a diverse range of characters, and tackle

the technical jargon of wireless telegraphy. All of which made your task much more difficult. A fellow Amateur Radio Operator, who has a visual impairment and had grown up with Morse, read the book using a magnifying device, and was adamant that many others would enjoy the story if it were narrated. Thanks to your efforts that may come to fruition.”



“I’ve just finished reading *The Second Father*, read by Hugh Taylor. I just wanted to say what a fabulous job Mr Taylor did narrating this book. I enjoyed it from the moment I started reading and simply could not stop listening. I especially enjoyed Mr Taylor’s interpretation and the way he brought the emotions of the author to life, especially the ironic moments within the book. I have only recently moved to Brisbane and learned a lot from the book, but it was really brought to life by Mr Taylor’s narration. I would like to thank him personally for reading this book so wonderfully; I haven’t enjoyed a book this much in a long time.”



“Thank you so much for providing this service, it really does mean a lot and I hope to hear more fantastic books in the very near future. In fact, I’m going back on to iAccess right now to search for more QNS titles.”

“I have been bed bound due to spinal degeneration for a very long time. I just wanted to convey my appreciation for the service you offer and want to let you know how much I enjoyed reading *My Life, autobiography of Ray Martin* narrated by Chris Nielsen.”



“I recently borrowed a book called *The Bark Cutters* by Nicole Alexander from my local Vision Australia library. I noticed on the end of the recording that QNS were asking for any feedback regarding their borrowed books. I would just like to say that I was very impressed with the quality of Maureen Mann’s narration in this audio book. I have borrowed several QNS audio books in the past and have been very impressed with them also. It is obvious to me that your narrators must have had experience in radio/TV etc... I believe that the QNS narrators are of a high standard.”



“I am visually impaired and got the book from the Newcastle Regional Library section catering for Special needs borrowers. John’s reading captured the many moods of the book; the simplicity and surreal story of Bleriot, the revelation about Houdini and the nail-biting drama of the failed postal run to New Zealand – and the many other highlights too many to list. Kind wishes to those that strive to improve the quality of life for others and that includes you!”



“I received a complimentary copy of *Inkonkoni* courtesy of QNS and several approving emails pertaining to your narrative by Tony Saunders. I feel an obligation to offer an apology for requiring you to negotiate the vagaries of the Afrikaner and Zulu language, which you tackled admirably. Thank you for this difficult narration, and like any author I trust many will enjoy the yarn.”

“Hello there, I have just finished listening to *Whispering Death* by Garry Disher, narrated by John Sharpe, in 2011. We borrowed the disc from Gosnells library in WA. Both my husband and I enjoyed it very much. John’s reading was great! Please thank all concerned!”



“I tell you, you are the stars here. 11 years of finding great authors like Huey and putting on a fantastic day for us. Good on you.”



“I would like to thank you for the really interesting and enjoyable mornings with authors etc at the VIP Book Club events.”



“I did enjoy the narration of *Coloured Sands*. I am very grateful for the efforts of the Anne Cochrane (volunteer narrator) in doing such a wonderful job. I became very interested in the person who read my entire book aloud, so beautifully. You are a wonderful organisation.”



“I am the author of *Grace’s Table*, a work of adult fiction published by University of Queensland Press last year. I was browsing through the Brisbane City Council library catalogue recently and noticed that there is an audio version of my book available for loan. I was both intrigued and excited about this so borrowed my book and listened to what was my first audio book. I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the experience of listening to Grace’s voice come alive in this way and to hear the emphasis and tone the reader placed on Grace’s (and other characters’) words and thoughts.”

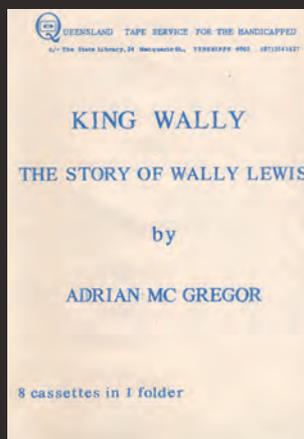
“I would like to thank Kaye Stevenson (volunteer narrator) for lending my character her beautiful and articulate voice and for bringing her alive for me, despite being the author, in this new and captivating way. I would also like to express my thanks and gratitude to the Queensland Narrating Service for bringing books such as mine to the attention of print disabled readers. As you say on your website, it gives readers the opportunity to listen to stories that aren’t necessarily on best seller lists, which to my mind only expands the breadth and depth of literature available to our community of readers beyond the expected.”



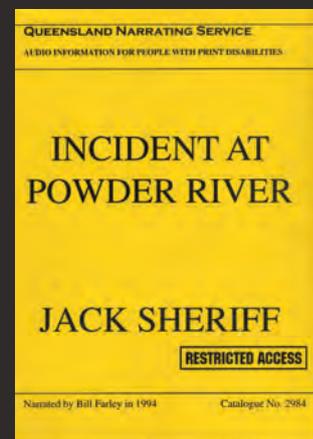
“I borrowed *The Conversation* by David Brooks, narrated by Pierce Bragg and enjoyed the reading immensely. Thank you.”



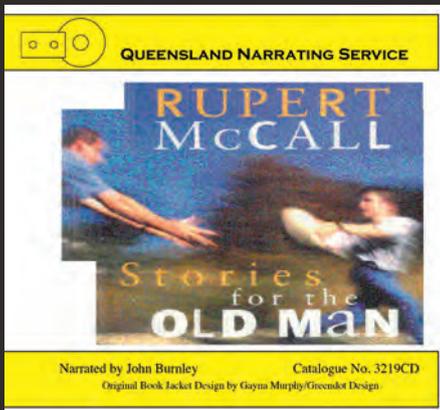
“I have just finished an audio book *The Three Crooked Kings* by Matthew Condon and read by Tony Millett. My wife and I enjoyed it very much. It was borrowed from the Gold Coast City Council Library. I am hopeful that the sequel *All Fall Down* will be available in audio book MP3 format soon.”



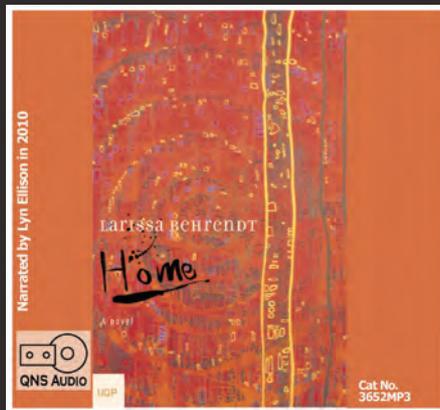
First cassette audio book cover showing the first QTSH logo



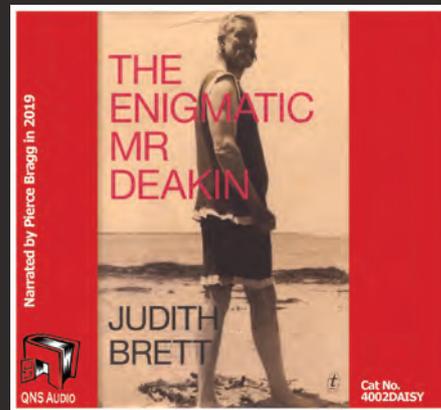
Second cassette audio book cover



First CD audio book cover and QNS logo



MP3 audio book cover and second QNS logo



Final audio book cover and QNS logo

“I’ve been using the audio system for years to listen to stories, as I have a problem with reading. The system is very good the only problem I have is that the library tends to go more for eBooks and when I find an author that I like, I check the catalogue for more stories from that author, only to find that they are in eBook format. It would be great if you could put more titles out in audio book?”



“I appreciate the way the narrator communicated a tongue-in-cheek but intense ethos to the writing. I liked the MP3 format because I didn’t have to change disks to listen to the whole book. I didn’t like it having so much on each track, but it just meant I didn’t go back most times I felt I’d missed some of the story. I borrow these disks from the public library. Well, public libraries. I borrowed it from Port Augusta library and returned it to Quorn. This is not the first book I have heard, prepared by QNS.”

“I have just read *10 Hail Marys* narrated by Kaye Stevenson, my second audio book by QNS. This first was *As Darkness Falls*. I only get what Perth send me. I live in Collie a small country town. I enjoyed the narration very much. I have a Plectalk DAISY player. Perth put different stories on USB so I get what I’m given. Do you have anything on reflexology, engines, machinery and sleep disorders? Thanks again for a great service.”



“I just finished listening to one of your audio books.... I’m a member of Yarra Plenty Library, Ivanhoe. I use OverDrive to borrow my books. Yarra Plenty shares their collection with Brisbane City.”



“I just wanted to pass on my gratitude to QNS and John Sharp in particular for his very beautiful and moving narration of Venero Armano’s *Black Mountain*. I borrowed it through the BCC library using the OverDrive catalogue and app. Thank you again very much.”

Final testimonial received April 2021

“Dear QNS, I’ve just finished ‘reading’ my first on-line audio book *The Rosie Project* from Brisbane City Council library after discovering their availability yesterday. Initially I didn’t like the style of narration but after an hour or so found it delightful. Thank you very much. I eagerly look forward to trawling the other riches available.”

Condolences

Messages received from members, clients and stakeholders upon the news of the closing of the Queensland Narrating Service.

“I am very sorry to hear the news. NDIS and the withdrawal of funding has affected many organisations. On behalf of the Round Table Executive, I wish to acknowledge and thank the Queensland Narrating Service for its service to the print disabled community and the Round Table. Thank you to your tireless efforts in making audio books of Australian content. Thank you to your narrators and volunteers who have given a voice to the printed word. And thank you for supporting the Round Table by being on the executive and your contributions to the guidelines. It is a sad loss indeed. I wish you all success in your personal endeavours.” Sonali Marathe, Round Table President



“What sad news, I’m so sorry. Thank you for your tireless work. We are so grateful for the work of QNS in making our Text Publishing titles available to everyone. I wish you the best of luck in your next endeavour. It has been a pleasure working with you.” Lara Shprem, Rights Coordinator, Text Publishing

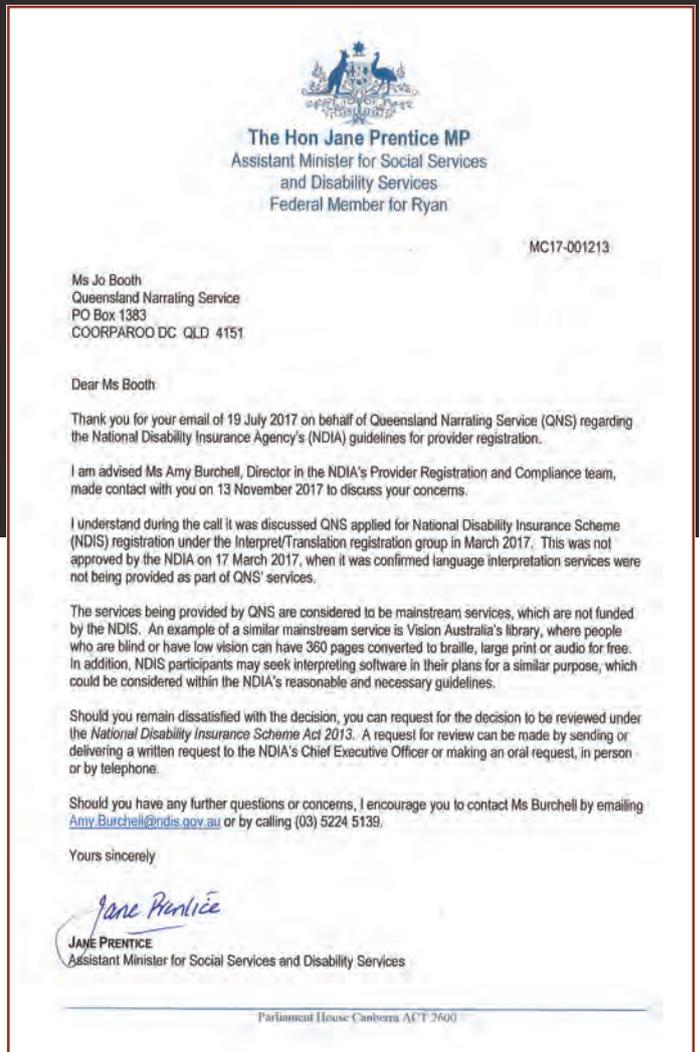


“I’m so sorry to hear this news. Jo, you’ve been a tireless champion of QNS and its services, and it’s been a pleasure to work with you. I do hope we get to work together in the future in some capacity.” Anne Beilby, Rights and Contracts Director, Text Publishing



“How terribly sad! I am so sorry to hear of QNS’s struggles. This makes me feel very disheartened with our government (yet again). It has been a pleasure working with you, and I wish you all the best in the future.” Erin Sandiford, Black Inc Books

“I have just learnt about your service closing and am very sorry to hear this news. The NDIS has a lot to answer for with organisations such as yourselves



Letter from Jane Prentice confirming QNS is rejected as an NDIS service provider

having to close due to lack of funding to continue. Our BCA National Women's Branch would like to thank you for making our Aspirations Magazine, cook book and other material available to those who do not have computer access. All of our members will be sad to learn of your closure. Times like this are very difficult for dedicated staff and volunteers, and we wish everybody all the best for whatever comes next in the future." Janene Sadhu, President, Blind Citizens Australia National Womens Branch



"Thank you for filling me in on the situation. I will make every effort to accept an offer to meet up with you all. Especially Jo, I want to thank you personally for long years of effort on behalf of those who required the service. Your appreciation of our needs, and your friendly approach has always impressed me. I hope you have the chance to continue working, if that is your wish. Best of luck with whatever you do." Val Millican, Life Member and QNS Client



"I have really appreciated the opportunity to do this work. It was something I dreamed of for a long time but couldn't do while working. It has enriched my retirement life so much. I also could not have done it without the support of yourself and others - especially with technical problems. I have picked up lots of skills eg. How to pronounce the premier's name when she wrote a letter as disability minister for each issue of Community Connect magazine which I narrated regularly for a time. I actually rang her office for the correct pronunciation! I felt so clever to know it when she became Premier – ha, ha. All the best for your future whatever it may become. I have really enjoyed our chats." Margaret Williams, Volunteer Narrator



"So sorry to hear of the loss of this valuable service. I wish to acknowledge the great service you provided. Many other states and systems were envious of this service. Take pride in an amazing contribution to the lives of so many." Therese Campbell, Special Education – Sensory Vision, Catholic Education

"I just read your email - devastating news! I just can't believe that QNS could be seen solely as a mainstream service! I personally am very upset as I was just gathering more books to send to you. However, I am just devastated for you and all the volunteers who have worked tirelessly to produce quality audio for so many years! If there is still any hope, let me know. However, if not, please extend my personal thanks to all who work with you for all that you have achieved over your long history. I personally wouldn't be where I am today without your service – as all the material for my tertiary studies as well as all my professional texts have been read and produced by you. My heart goes out to you Jo, as I can envisage the many sleepless nights you have had over this gut-wrenching decision. If there's anything that can still be done, please let me know. If not, I mourn the end of this era. Deepest regards." Leanne Smith, Client



"This is incredibly sad news, why do the government not accept and continue valued services. Like Carers Queensland handed over to a government-funded service Wellways/Carers Gateway. When you consider all the experience the employees of these organisations have gained over the years, and the relationships formed, just thrown to one side. So very, very sad. All the best." Yvonne Campbell, CEO/ Founder, Special Care Central Inc.



"A sad email, indeed. Thank you for the work you have done for us over the years. I know our students appreciate it. Coincidentally, I had an email this morning from Andrew Wilkie, our federal member for Clark, with a letter he is writing to the Queensland Government, as he received no joy from the federal minister. Both Andrew Wilkie and Nick McKim are trying to push some federal funding for this as schools from all states use your services. I have no idea whether they'll be successful, but it's worth a try. Go well." Katie Stanley, The Friends School

“Good day, it is sad to see such a great service go. It will be a great loss. There are probably many more like you also that have been lost in this new funding.” Willemina Hendriks, Client



“Hi team, it saddens me to hear about the closing of a wonderful service such as yours. I wish there could be a miracle to change it around for you. Would like to thank you for all the support you have given the vision-impaired over many, many years. I wish you all the best in whatever path you take in your next chapter in your life. Take care stay safe.” Jenny Scown, Client



“Thank you for letting people know that QNS is dissolving. It is another tragedy of a service falling through the cracks. Rest assured you’re not alone; there are many individuals that are falling through the cracks. Thanks for putting print to audio it has changed my life along with many others.” Janet Gay, Client



“Thank you for the support you have provided to blind people like myself. Is there anything I can do to support you? This could be either through donation or writing to organisations to enlist support for your organisation. Have a nice day.” Mikhail Mikhail, Client



“To Jo, Nick and the team of wonderful Volunteers, I have been a part of this wonderful band of hard workers and compassionate people for 14 years now and have loved the culture and invaluable work of QNS. We have all been privileged enough to have this worthy service at our fingertips and now that we are about to lose it, we may be panicked and more than a little saddened. I hope you will all stay in touch.” Helen Boardman, QNS Life Member and Volunteer



“What a very sad time it is for the Narrating Service and especially staff members, volunteer readers and the committee members that you will no longer be able to operate. I really cannot understand how you have been in operation for so long, you have a service that

is needed by different walks of life in the community and we know funding is available on individuals packages with NDIS that certain heads of government departments have deemed your service not worthy and to stop ongoing funding. It certainly has been lovely to work with you and we will Miss your smiley faces at meetings and expos. From everyone here at QBA we wish you all the very best always. Take care.” Stella Haralampou, Queensland Blind Association Inc.



“Some time ago I got the shattering news that QNS will close down soon. This is a great blow for me and for all the print-disabled people in Queensland. The services that QNS has provided for so many years has been EXTREMELY important for me and for the hundreds if not thousands of print-disabled people who are unable to read standard print books. I feel sure that if the appropriate authorities are informed about your excellent services that QNS has been provided for so many years that the local government or the Queensland Government will re-consider its decision to stop funding for this very important service provided to Queenslanders. I have listened to QNS books for at least 10-12 years and have greatly enjoyed listening to them.” Hans, Client



“Very sad news. I have told so many in Transport Main Roads how wonderful the QNS service is. All the best for the future.” Nickél Turner, Manager, Accessible Transport Network – ATN, Office of Director General, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads



“This is such sad news, for so many reasons, but especially for students with print disabilities and for the staff and volunteers of QNS! In my role with Education Queensland, I was very much aware of the importance of resources in audio format for students with vision impairment, and QNS can be so proud of the invaluable support it provided to so many students for such a long time. On a personal level, I am very grateful for the support I always received from QNS staff, particularly in matters relating to the Round Table.” Maureen Ward

Life Members

T R Wielaert MBE, Ian Stewart MBE, Des Millican, Neil Magill, Peter Bauers, Douglas Collier-Bishop, Mavis Scott, Colin McDonald, Max Baker, David Lane, Adrienne Ross, Kerry Gallimore, Graham Webster, Keith Evans, Betty Applegate, Hilda Reid OAM, Kaye Stevenson, Brian Rowell, Derek Christy, Trevor Vayro, Val Millican, Judith Morgan, Joan Alexander, Margaret Nielsen, Mary Pickering, Blair Meldrum, David Kennedy, Geoff Bartholomew, Geoff Cass, Judy Christy, Lyn Ellison,

A snapshot of some of the contributions made by the organisations life members follows.

Ian Stewart MBE, commenced 1969

Ian was one of the founding members of the QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped and one of the first narrators recording on open-reel recorders. Ian was also instrumental in producing CONTACT Magazine until his retirement in 1993.

Graham Webster, commenced 1969

Graham was a tremendous asset to QNS during his years with the organisation witnessing and embracing many changes. Graham's excellent and impeccable narration of novels, student work, government documents and works for individuals were highly commended. Graham also dedicated his time and expertise over the years generously passing on his skills to narrators teaching them some of the finer points of narrating facilitating small group sessions at QNS workshops. Graham also gave one-on-one

direct feedback and training sessions to individual narrators, which was very well received and immensely appreciated by both narrators and QNS. Graham's contribution in the instruction of narration style and technique made a significant improvement to the quality of QNS audio books and information.

Neil Magill and Val and Des Millican, commenced 1969

In 1972 Neil and Margaret Magill, along with Val and Des Millican and Ian Stewart, took the reins of CONTACT Magazine, a magazine produced specifically for blind and vision-impaired people. They were instrumental in driving the content and local and national distribution of the magazine.

T R Wielaert MBE, commenced 1970

Mr Wielaert, President from 1970 to 1982

contributed by being a transcriber, by copying tapes and also delivering those tapes. In 1977, he was awarded an MBE. He was the first member to be awarded Life Membership.

Kaye Stevenson, commenced 1973

Kaye became our longest serving volunteer, recording hundreds of titles over 48 years. Kaye was awarded recognition of her contribution to people with disabilities at the Disability Action Week Awards in 2001. Kaye was



*Life Membership recipients:
Back Row L-R David Lane, Keith Evans, Brian Rowell
Front Row L-R Hilda Reid OAM, Kaye Stevenson, Derek Christy and Joy Tomlinson (President 1999-2002)*

Anne Fermer, Henry Rodger, Ray Edmunds, Barbara Duncan, Pierce Bragg, Dornell Wylie, Michael Hill, Mary Hill, Kathy Kunde, Clem Fechner, Gilbert Case, Peter Price, Helen Boardman, Janet Poole, Tony Millett, Elizabeth Oats, Margaret Williams, John Sharpe, Kay Murry, Lynne Schofield, June Curyer, Jan Huggett, Yvonne Matta.

one of the finest narrators QNS ever had and was a dedicated committee member for many years right up to the organisations closure in June 2021. QNS treasured Kaye's involvement counting ourselves extremely lucky to have her contribution and involvement over many, many years.

Hilda Reid OAM, commenced 1976

Hilda was one of our longest serving narrators and no doubt not only saw a lot of changes over her time with us but rose to the challenges those changes brought. Hilda narrated a variety of subjects and was an absolute whizz at minutes and reports and other Community Information Program work, that very rarely required editing. Hilda was the pioneer of our first ever-digital narration – a *Horse-grooming Manual* for students at the Open Learning Institute of TAFE.

Peter Bauers, commenced 1977

In 2004, already a narrator for 27 years, Peter was awarded an Individual Disability Action Week Award for his continued dedication to providing services to people with a print disability. Peter, whose nickname was 'Speedy', specialised in transcribing academic readings for students. Peter took great care to ensure students received the audio format as quickly as possible.

Douglas Collier Bishop, commenced 1981

Douglas was a dedicated narrator for 21 years, hanging up his microphone in 2002 after having narrated 78 books in the genres of mysteries, thrillers, adventure and action. Douglas was noted for arriving at the office at Christmas time with a bottle of bubbly in hand to celebrate the year that was with the staff.



Max Baker, commenced 1982

Max completed a variety of narrating jobs, including many western books for the catalogue, which were popular at that time. During the 1990s Max began concentrating mainly on student work. One of Max's biggest fans was our own Trevor Vayro, who really appreciated Max's reading style for cricketing publications.

Kerry Gallimore, commenced 1984

Another long time narrator, Kerry enjoyed novels, particularly mysteries. Kerry was always willing to tackle whatever task was requested with a commitment to do the job properly bringing an air of grace to her narrating style.

Betty Applegate, commenced 1989

Betty's first job was to narrate photographs of sheep dog trials. Betty preferred not to read novels but enjoyed transcribing student work instead, becoming a specialist expert narrator in recording to 4-track cassette. Betty was always available at short notice, sometimes working long hours into the night to complete work she knew was required urgently.



Mr Don Cottrell, First QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped President 1969



Mr T R Wielart MBE, QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped and QTSH President 1970–1982



Pat McCallam, QTSH President 1992–1999 cutting the cake at the 30th anniversary celebration

David Lane, commenced 1989

Despite being an avid golfer David found time to narrate 69 books. David enjoys reading novels, and had a well modulated, relaxing voice. Having spent time in the navy David really enjoyed naval literature and had the ideal narrating style for books in this genre. The last novel David narrated had NO mistakes in it, no mean feat.

Judy Christy, commenced 1990

Joined QTSH as a narrator in 1990 and over the years narrated many novels, student texts and CIP work. Using her experience as an ex-ABC audio operator, from the early 2000s she also volunteered many happy hours in the office, copying thousands of cassettes, CDs and MP3s and helping to assemble them into the finished product for sale or distribution. QNS produced EVERY item in-house!

Keith Evans, commenced 1991

Keith was a skilled narrator and a valued member of the Management Committee as a Narrators' Representative. A retired engineer, Keith enjoyed narrating student work never saying no to any transcription task. Keith could always be relied upon to use a lot of common sense and practicality when transcribing and was skilled in describing technical information contained in equipment instruction manuals requested by individuals.

Colin McDonald, commenced 1991

Colin narrated several novels but mainly dedicated his time transcribing student texts, even being

specifically requested to transcribe text by one of our print disabled students. Colin was another of our expert 4-track cassette narrators, providing instruction to other volunteer narrators in the use of 4-track equipment and recording at the narrator workshops in 1999 and 2000. Colin was also a very practical narrator, and took on large jobs without batting an eyelid.

Brian Rowell, commenced 1991

Brian, being an experienced radio announcer, enjoyed narrating novels bringing his highly professional presentation style to the task, which was a big asset to the quality of audio books in the QNS library catalogue. Brian also held the position of Narrators Representative on the QNS Management Committee.

Adrienne Ross, commenced 1991

Adrienne was known to be an excellent narrator with lovely expression who consistently made herself available to narrate student work. Adrienne's reliability to undertake the narration of urgent student material meant she was a great asset to students with print disabilities.

Derek Christy, commenced 1991

Derek served as Vice President from 1992 until 2001 and President from 2002 until 2010. Apart from this position on the Management Committee, Derek was the QNS System Administrator providing invaluable assistance with everything IT or audio equipment related. Derek commenced in the era of



*Joy Tomlinson,
QNS 1999–2002*



*Derek Christy,
QNS President 2002–2010*



*Kaye Stevenson,
QNS President 2010–2013*

the Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped, which possessed two office typewriters, the extent of the office equipment. It is doubtful that QNS could have afforded to navigate to a computerised environment without Derek's expertise, commitment and involvement. Derek's tireless dedication to the pursuit of QNS and support of staff was invaluable.

June Curyer, commenced 1993

June commenced QNS as Assistant Coordinator when she 'retired' from Queensland Newspapers back in 1993. June managed the bookkeeping and 'everything' to do with the production of QNS audio books for the library catalogue before retiring in 2003. After John, her life partner and soul mate passed away in 2012 June rejoined the ranks and QNS family taking on the role of very valued volunteer monitor, our Wednesday girl!

Margaret Nielsen, commenced 1996

Margaret was one of our finest narrators who were committed to the craft of narrating bringing much grace in her narrating style, which suited her preferred genre. Margaret narrated 60 books for the QNS library catalogue during her first ten years.

Geoff Bartholomew, commenced 2000

In honour of Geoff Bartholomew, volunteer narrator, who bequeathed a generous donation, QNS created a Life Member Honour Board in recognition of his volunteer service with QNS, and, in dedication to his pursuit to make schoolbooks accessible and Geoff's connection with Milperra State High School,

a selection of class books for students from non-English speaking backgrounds were produced in MP3 and CD formats.

Kathy Kunde, commenced 2001

Kathy commenced as a narrator but soon found her calling joining the Management Committee as Honorary Secretary, a position she held from 2004 until 2021. Kathy's good humour and knowledge of QNS, carried in the 'gold bag', ensured management meetings were lively and entertaining.

Barbara Duncan, commenced 2002

Barbara, a skilled radio announcer with experience in amateur theatre, was one of our finest narrators. She enjoyed transcribing a wide range of materials for individuals, organisations or government departments but her passion was novels. Barbara was committed to the craft of narrating novels bringing delight to readers. Never letting the microphone go cold, she would always be looking for the next project while completing the current one.

Dornell Wylie, commenced 2002

Dornell brought her skills as a secondary, ESL and TAFE teacher along with her experience in teaching radio and TV journalism to her craft of narrating. As well as having narrated many student texts and newsletters Dornell's greatest contribution by far was the narration of many Australiana books, which are enjoyed by hundreds of readers through public libraries around Australia.



Kathy Kunde QNS Secretary 2004–2021

Pierce Bragg, commenced 2002

Pierce, being an avid golfer still found time to narrate 41 books for the QNS library catalogue. Pierce was among a very small number of narrators who could narrate straight to DAISY format. Pierce served as the QNS Vice President and other positions on the Management Committee from 2003 until 2018.

Mary Hill, commenced 2003

Mary brought her skills and knowledge in chemistry and nursing to her craft of narrating student texts and in particular, anatomy. Mary contributed many hours to ensure students had access to their materials in a timely manner and in later years focused her narrating on works for individuals.

Michael Hill, commenced 2003

Michael contributed vast amounts of time transcribing textbooks, manuals, novels, recipes and annual reports for many clients including government departments, organisations and individuals. No job was too difficult and Michael willingly tackled some extremely difficult texts with great attention to detail.

Clem Fechner, commenced 2003

Clem used the skills and knowledge acquired over his 20-year career in radio, as well as his experience acting in stage plays and musical comedy to enhance

his narrating craft. Having narrated many student texts, government documents, community material and work for individuals, not to mention the countless books narrated for the QNS library catalogue, Clem also contributed many hours of production work to QNS. Clem, ‘CEO of the Northern Branch’ as he so humorously referred to himself, willingly assisted in anyway he could not to mention keeping the staff entertained with his humorous emails and phone calls.

Janet Poole, commenced 2006

Janet joined the QNS Management Committee as Library Representative in 2006 before taking the role of President from 2014 to 2021. Management Committee members and staff really appreciated Janet’s active involvement and support in negotiating QNS’s path through the disappointments of the NDIS implementation. Ultimately, our efforts to survive the new disability environment were not successful, however this was not due to lack of effort.

Peter Price, commenced 2007

Peter took the position of Consumer Representative on the Management Committee seriously providing valuable feedback and advice on audio quality, which was invaluable in assisting QNS with our continuous improvement.

Helen Boardman, commenced 2007

Helen worked closely with Leonie Swainston in providing description for a collection of children’s audio books for a small project, followed by aiding in establishing the Brisbane Writers Group for vision-impaired writers. For many years Helen was a regular in the QNS office, initially assisting with the compiling of audio books for library orders before moving to the role of volunteer monitor, listening to countless narrated books for quality and accuracy noting any issues. This was an invaluable aspect of quality control of QNS audio books.

Management Committee Members

Founders

Mr M Vines, Mr D Cottrell, Mrs P Hicks-Hall, Miss R Langworth, Mr I Stewart MBE, Mr F Turner, Archdeacon H Richards

Patron

Lady Phyllis Cilento

Presidents

Mr T R Wielaert MBE, Mr W R Toombes (also Equipment Control Officer), Mr W F Brenan, Mr D Cottrell (also Quality and Equipment Control Officer), Mr J Cartwright, Mr P McCallum, Ms J Tomlinson, Mr D Christy (also Equipment Control Officer and System Administrator), Mrs K Stevenson, Ms J Poole

Vice Presidents

Archdeacon H Richards, Rev. J Blakely, Mr R Baggs (Equipment Control Officer), Mr D Stephens (State Library of Queensland), Ms J Keppell, Ms M Vicsai, Mr D Christy, Mr A Calder, Mr H Taylor, Mrs K Stevenson, Mr P Bragg

Registrar

Mrs P Hicks-Hall, Ms J Lynch

Secretaries

Mrs M Scott, Mrs R Longworth, Ms C Wielaert, Ms M Bell, Ms C Lewis, Ms E McCall, Mr C Alexander, Mrs L Thomson, Ms K Kunde

Treasurers

Mr W R Toombes, Mr D Elliott, Mr D Eckersley, Mr D Millican (CONTACT Magazine), C Lowe, Ms B Nicholls, Ms S Remington, S Moore, Mr M Booty, Ms J Birtwistle, Mr P Bragg, Mr A Tavaryan, Mr R Malcolm, Mr D Kennedy

Committee Members

Miss D Butters, Ms L Clague, Ms K Chappell, Mr D Daly, Ms M Oberg, Mr M Baker, Ms C Lincoln, Mr J Cartwright, Mr W F Brenan, Ms D Hall, Mr P Pagliano, Ms S Crawley, Ms G Huish, Ms J Gamble, Ms C Wielaert, Mrs L Watson, Mrs Y Barlow, Mrs R Toombes, Mr E Searle, Ms J Poole, Ms K Howard, Mr A Scocchera

Narrator Representatives

Mr B Rowell, Mrs J Alexander, Mr K Evans, Ms J Lynch, Mrs J Christy, Mrs H Reid, AO, Mr M Potters, Mrs M Sadler-Watson, Mr R Glanville, Mr M Baker, Ms J McGlinchey, Ms J Cockburn, Ms B Dwyer, Mrs K Stevenson, Mr D Kennedy, Mr P Bragg

Reader/Consumer Representatives

Mr I Stewart, Mr N Magill, Mr T Vayro, Mr R Campbell, Ms B Allom, Mrs V Millican (also White Cane Society Representative), Mr F Turner, Mr D Dias, Mrs R Bree, Mr D Lohrey-Geard, Mr P Price, Mrs H Boardman

Other Representatives

Education Department

Mrs J Booty, Mr P Pagliano, Ms M Ward, Ms L Ottosson, Ms K Gole

State Library of Queensland

Mr R Bowerman, Ms T Paull, Ms J Keppell, Ms E Costello, Ms J Worden, Ms D Cullen

Queensland Department of

Welfare Representative

Mr P Roberts

CONTACT Magazine Representatives

Mr N Magill, Mrs M Magill, Mr D Millican



Janet Poole QNS President 2014–2021 with a photo of Ian Stewart MBE, Don Cottrell, QTRA President and Bill Smith, Brisbane Jaycees

Tribute to Management Committee Members

To the members of the Management Committee, past and present, thank you for the valuable support and guidance you have provided to staff over the last 54 years. The continually altering disability and technology landscape has provided many challenges, changes and opportunities over the years. Thank you all so much for supporting and trusting in the staff to lead, diversify and explore new avenues of service delivery to navigate these challenges and opportunities. The appreciation of your efforts for an organisation that has punched above its weight is beyond words; a heartfelt thanks to you all.



*Office Staff Christmas Party 1998 – annual 'shorts' day
L-R Linda Thompson (Coordinator 1996–2001), Kerrie McManus, June Curyer, Kaye King, Leonie Swainston*

Staff

Ms F Smith

Ms J Lynch

Ms K Knowles

Ms C Willis

Ms E McCall

Ms P Alexander

Mrs L Thomson

Mrs J Curyer

Ms K King

Ms K McManus

Mrs L Swainston

Ms S Williams



*QNS Staff 2001 International Year of Volunteers
Back Row L-R June Curyer, Linda Thompson (Coordinator) and Leonie Swainston, Front Row L-R Jo Booth and Alison Banks*



*QNS Staff 2003 and President.
Back Row L-R David Fermer, Ken Maptson (Coordinator 2001–2003), Derek Christy (President 2002–2007);
Front Row L-R Leonie Swainston, June Curyer, Alison Banks, Jo Booth*

Ms A Banks

Ms J Booth

Mr D Fermer

Mr K Mapstone

Mrs J Prior

Mr N Warren

Mr A Valencia

Ms C Tracey

Mrs J Trevena

Mrs L Buchanan



QNS Staff 2011–2021 L-R Jo Booth, Aleho Valencia, Nick Warren



Jo Booth

Tribute to Jo Booth, QNS Staff 1999–2021

The committee members are always ultimately responsible for the running of a not-for-profit organisation. However at QNS, we are very aware that our organisation owes the last six or seven years of its life to the untiring work done by Jo. We had to jump through fiery hoops, change direction in an instant, beg politicians and bureaucrats for an audience and generally bash our heads against a very hard brick wall. Through all this, Jo guided us and kept us on track. She also initiated schemes in an attempt to keep us afloat. We owe her so much and I know the wider community is also aware of her great qualities. We are all disappointed that QNS has come to an end, however we went down fighting and will close with dignity due to her integrity, competence and good humour. A volunteer committee relies heavily on a paid manager and we always knew Jo was honest and a true advocate for our unique service. Thank you Jo for your uncompromising labour.

Janet Poole and the committee

Notes

Information used in the compilation of this book has been taken from the historical records of the Queensland Tape Recordists Association Auxiliary for the Handicapped (QTRA) and Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped (QTSH), the historical records of the Jaycees 'Books Bring Brightness' project and Queensland Narrating Service (QNS) documents. These documents are housed in the John Oxley Library at the State Library of Queensland, accession number 33010.

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Front cover images:

Top row: Reel-to-Reel Recorder; Mr T R Wielart MBE, QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped and QTSH President 1970–1982; Mr T R Wieleart MBE and Joan Gamble (SLQ) copying audio books in 1975

Second row: Graham Webster narrating a book for the QTSH catalogue in the 1980s; Trevor Vayro, QTSH Readers Representative; Volunteer narrators, Derek Cheeseman, Betty Bingham and Brian Rowell participate in an editing session at the 2003 Annual Narrator Workshop

Third row: Kaye Stevenson, volunteer narrator, with the first computer narrating setup in 2004; Clem Fechner, volunteer narrator, narrating a book for the QNS catalogue in 2021

Back cover images:

Top row: Participants of the A.L.I.V.E Remote Book Club for Vision Impaired People project, L-R Willie Prince, Faith Stephson, Beryl Underwood; Kaye Stevenson, volunteer narrator, receives the 2001 Disability Action Week Award, L-R Kaye Stevenson, Peter Vance, Judy Spencer Minister for Families and Disability Services; International Volunteer Day Awards 2001, Back row L-R Brian Rowell, Hilda Reid OAM, Graham Webster and Ken Maptson (Coordinator 2001–2003) Front row L-R Derek Christy, Irene Irving and Peter 'Speedy' Bauers

Second row: QNS Staff 2001 International Year of Volunteers, Back Row L-R June Curyer, Linda Thompson (Coordinator) and Leonie Swainston, Front Row L-R Jo Booth and Alison Banks; DAISY player launch at Logan City Council Libraries in 2007, L-R Janet Poole, David Fermer, Alison Banks; 'Wongabel Walk' Project received the Disability Action Week Awards Innovation for Service Delivery L-R Jo Booth and Tamara Vallance

Third row: Geoff Bartholomew and Anne Fermer at the 2008 Annual Narrator Workshop, Kent St, Woolloongabba; VIP Book Club event L-R June Curyer, Nick Warren and Marion Houldsworth (author); VIP Book Club attendees enjoy a chat over a cuppa after hearing Tony Pritchard author of *Drifting Down the Darling*

Fourth row: QNS Staff L-R Jo Booth, Aleho Valencia, Nick Warren; Bill Smith and Janet Poole cut the cake to celebrate the 50th year of the organisation in 2017

