

## VIHSP 2005 Update

Thank you for the positive response to our first Newsletter of this year. We have received a number of requests from people wishing to join the circulation list.

Set-up of the expanded VIHSP is steaming along! Amongst other tasks, the team at CCCH has been busy drafting position descriptions, investigating potential Data and Information systems, updating the VIHSP logo (the original is 12 years old and seriously out of date), and liaising with our various working groups.

VIHSP has been consulting other programs interstate and in the UK regarding various aspects of implementing universal newborn hearing screening.

## Working Group Update

**The Screening Working Group** is developing screening protocols, and is currently considering equipment options, consent and parent information documents. In doing this it is considering other programs such as the Victorian genetic newborn screening program (heelprick) and the Victorian Perinatal Data Collection Unit.

**The Diagnostic Working Group** has begun to discuss diagnostic audiology protocols and the follow-up pathway that children will take after their newborn hearing screen. A survey will be sent out to audiology centres across the state to review facilities and resources that are relevant to diagnostic assessments of newborns who are referred through a hearing screening program.

**The Hospital Liaison Group** includes representatives from each screening site. This group has been informing on aspects of each site relevant to newborn hearing screening.

**The Data and Information Systems Working Group** is providing expertise in considering the data needs to run and monitor the program, and appropriate systems to accommodate these. A number of discussions with local as well as international providers have been held. A business case is being developed which outlines the feasibility and requirements of such a system.

**The Early Intervention Working Group** is being convened by DHS. This group is commissioning an extensive literature review of evidence regarding early intervention, as well as performing an analysis of current service provision in Victoria.

**The Quality and Evaluation Working Group** will convene soon.

The Steering Committee discusses issues and decision from each group at its monthly meetings.

## Equipment

In line with most Australian programs, VIHSP will use **Automated Auditory Brainstem Evoked Response (AABR)** technology as a screening tool. Each of the working groups and the Steering Committee have endorsed this major decision.

The AABR involves sound being presented through a probe or headphone, and measurement of the infant's electro-physiological response to this sound via scalp electrodes. AABR screening is done while an infant is in a quiet state, or asleep, and is painless.

## Media

Short articles have been submitted to ASA 'Audiology Now' (Spring edition), Parents of Hearing Impaired Children 'Link-up' (Term 4 Edition), and the Victorian Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Newsletter. Keep an eye out for these and future publications regarding VIHSP.

The VIHSP website ([www.vihsp.org.au](http://www.vihsp.org.au)) will go live this week. At this stage we have published a brief introduction to VIHSP. The remainder of the site (including final logo and web design) is under construction.

This newsletter is produced by the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program Implementation Team for the various professional groups involved in infant hearing screening in Victoria. These include Maternal & Child Health nurses, audiologists, paediatricians, midwifery and neonatal care staff, early intervention staff and key government staff