**Teacher notes: how can visual impairment affect people in their daily lives?**

These notes are for you as a teacher to consider so that you can prepare to lead students towards these concepts in their brainstorms if they are stuck for ideas. They include facts as well as possible lead in dialogues to get students thinking around these facts.

**Print Material** – In Australia, only 3-5% of print material is available in an accessible format to vision impaired individuals (Vision Australia, 2012).

* Do you think there are books available for the blind? Where can you get those books from? How are they different from other books?

**Getting around** – Safely navigating from their home to other locations can be a challenge. With the assistance of seeing-eye dogs (or seeing-eye ponies for people with dog allergies) and/or others people can be assisted.

* Imagine you need to walk from your house to the nearest shopping centre to buy some new clothes. What are three hazards that you might encounter along the way. How might those hazards be more difficult to deal with if you were vision impaired?

**Understanding of vision loss by affected individuals** – Understanding their vision loss can assist affected individuals to make the most of the vision that they have remaining, and/or assist them to use their other senses to achieve their goals. Knowing the part of the eye that has been affected and why people can see some things at some times and not at others can help to identify the tasks they may find difficult and prompt them to think of alternative ways of doing things (Vision Australia, 2012).

* If you had just recently become blind, what might be a question you would ask your doctor?

**Getting non-verbal cues in communication** – Social interactions with people consist of much more than just talking. We use a significant amount of extra information to make sense of these interactions on top of what is said. For example, facial expressions, being able to see who is speaking to you, knowing if you are being spoken to at all, or the ability to recognise somebody waving from across the street are things that a vision impaired person may have trouble with (Vision Australia, 2012).

* How can you tell if someone is talking to you? What do you look for? How might conversations become harder if you had a vision impairment?

**Letting others know about vision impairment** – Others may not assume that a person is vision impaired, and communicating that a person is vision impaired will explain some challenges that they may face. But telling people about vision loss can be difficult to do if it is new for you or you don't quite understand it yet yourself (Vision Australia, 2012).

* How do you know if someone is vision impaired when you first meet them? Has anyone ever told you that they had a problem with their vision? Do you think you would want regularly explain to people that you had trouble seeing if you had a vision impairment? How many times a day might you need to do that?