

## Inside this issue

Here's what you'll find:

- **From SVRC:** From the Manager, PL and Dot Power Calendar – 2022, The soup is in the freezer – Support Skills in Term 3 2021, Dot Power Program goes virtual, SVRC's Support Skills Program Come and Try Day
- **From the field:** Safety Online, Blind Cricket Open Day Change of Date, Postgraduate Expo, How much sunscreen is enough?, Training for AI Apps from Google and Microsoft, BCA – Advocacy Projects Officer

## PD events

The 2021 [Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available on the SVRC website. Most professional learning will continue to be online. Events are now on Eventbrite.

### Tuesday Oct 19 [Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses Braille](#)

Online professional learning day on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 9.30am to 1pm

This workshop aims to provide practical support for school staff preparing to include a new student who will be learning via braille. It is aimed at schools welcoming a Foundation level or Year 7 student. We will discuss the implications of being a reader and writer of braille, how braille works (including braille maths, music and languages), what inclusion looks like, and how to obtain resources and support from SVRC and your Visiting Teacher (Vision).

Please encourage school staff to [register for this PD on our website](#)

### Tuesday Nov 23 [EXPO: Assistive Technology for students who are blind or partially sighted](#)

Showcasing & demonstrating assistive technologies that can promote inclusion & achievement for students who are blind or have low vision

## From the Manager

Source: Kim Foley, SVRC

SVRC staff teams are currently reviewing our Strategic Plan for 2021 and we are pleased to reflect that most goals have either been finalised or will be by the end of the year, despite the extended lockdowns and restrictions. We are currently formulating new goals which will embed personal and professional growth into the plan. Once the SVRC Strategic Plan is endorsed by Heatherwood School Council it will be available on our website in 2022. We have taken the time to reflect and celebrate the amazing achievements of the SVRC staff in supporting our community.

To assist parents and teachers in supporting children during the extended lockdowns I have listed some websites, webinars and programs that may be helpful.

[Chat Starters: Head to health](#) – Helping parents and young people support each other (website)

[Headspace Tips for Parents and Carers during lockdown](#) – Vikki Ryall, Executive Director of Clinical Practice (YouTube Video)

**Royal Children's Hospital** discussion with psychiatrists and psychologist in supporting children through the continuous lockdowns, encouraging school engagement, guidance for remote learning for parents and some practical guidance and supports in watching for mental health issues.

- [RCH TV : Why is everyone wearing a mask?](#)
- [Youtube: Supporting children's mental health during the pandemic and beyond](#)

### Self-care for teachers

- All Play have a [self-care page for educators and teachers](#)

### One Step at a Time Program: Parent Support for Childhood Anxiety

Clinicians at Swinburne University have developed a program to help parents of young people ages 6-11 years old manage childhood anxiety.

- [Referral Form](#)
- Email: [psychprojects@swin.edu.au](mailto:psychprojects@swin.edu.au)
- Cost: No fee until November 2021. \$10 per session

### Department of Education & Training Health and Wellbeing Resources

- [Health and wellbeing staff in schools](#)
- [Supporting students' mental health and wellbeing](#)
- [Information for parents and carers](#)
- [Looking after your child's mental health](#)
- [Mental health supports for students over school holidays](#)

## **PL and Dot Power Calendar – 2022**

All PL activities online unless specified otherwise

### **Term 1 (27 Jan to 1 April)**

New VT day - February 1 (on-site)

Inclusion of students who are blind - February 8

Inclusion of students with low vision - February 15

Inclusion of students with VI and additional disabilities - February 22

### **Term 2 (19 April to 25 June)**

Braille music - Wednesday May 4 (on-site)

Inclusion of students with VI in Art - Wednesday May 11 (on-site)

Dot Power - Tuesday May 17

Dot Power - Tuesday May 31

Inclusion of students with VI in PE - June 7 (on-site)

### **Term 3 (12 July to 17 September)**

Inclusion of students with low vision - August 9

Dot Power - August 16

Dot Power - August 30

### **Term 4 (4 October to 17 December)**

Preparing for a braille-reading student - October 18

Dot Power - October 25

Expo - November 22

## **The soup is in the freezer – Support Skills in Term 3, 2021**

Source: Marion Blaze

The SVRC Support Skills program started Term 3 very excited to actually be onsite for our first Friday back. We planned a staff lunch of soup and bread, but alas, another lockdown happened that Friday and we have not made it back to SVRC for any Fridays this term. However, online Support Skills has been a triumph of creativity. How do you involve students in art online? By instructing them in origami (with the Paralympics happening in Tokyo) and AL foil sculpture! Daniel Pritchard could not run blind cricket workshops, but he was online every week to talk to students about sporting opportunities and showed some of the Paralympic competitions online. Leo, our wonderful Occupational Therapist from Vision Australia, even ran yoga sessions online! Our thanks to the ever-positive SSP team and all the family members who supported their home-learning students on Zoom for yet another term.

## **Dot Power Program goes virtual**

Source: Marion Blaze

After one joy-filled day with the younger Dot Power students in May 2021, we have been prevented from seeing any Dot Power students at SVRC since. In fact, we have not seen the Year 3 Dot Power group since 2019. So, on October 5, we are having an online Dot Power morning. We're posting out the braille, and will sing, listen, read and create online with the help of their parents at home.

Dot Power for the younger children (pre-school to Year 2) is scheduled next for October 26. We'll have to wait and see if this will be possible.

## SVRC's Support Skills Program Come and Try Day

**Date:** Friday, November 19, 2021

**Time:** 9.30am to 2pm

**Location:** SVRC 370 Springvale Road, Donvale.

The Support Skills Program is a specialised educational program for groups of [eligible](#) students from Year 4 until they enroll in any VCE subjects. Students attend once or twice per term for a full day of timetabled individualised or small-group instruction focused around the [Expanded Core Curriculum](#) for students with vision impairments. Areas covered at Support Skills include: technology, PE, Orientation & Mobility (O&M), Daily Living Skills (DLS), social skills, braille, music, math, research, careers, and relationships and sexuality.

The Support Skills Program provides a positive learning environment, which promotes inclusion while acknowledging the unique needs and learning styles of students who are blind or have low vision. It provides an opportunity for students to come together in positive association to learn, share and grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

The Support Skills Program does not seek to replace the role of the visiting teacher or local school, but rather to enhance and build on specific needs not easily addressed in the local school setting.

The program runs on Fridays during school terms from 8:45-3:30pm. Teachers and other specialist staff are drawn from the Statewide Vision Resource Centre and external agencies including Guide Dogs Victoria and Vision Australia. Feedback from staff is provided to families, visiting teachers and schools after each session.

The Come and Try Day will comprise a program for students and also for parents/carers. It will provide a taste of most subject areas offered at Support Skills and an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Parents/Carers will stay with their children at SVRC.

Please complete a [SSP Try Day Registration Form](#) to book a place at the Come and Try Day, 2021.

### Safety Online

Source: [eSafety website](#)

With holidays coming and students still learning at home, it's a good time to think about online safety.

Staying connected online has never been more important, now that many of us are physically isolated from family members, friends, colleagues and support networks.

The internet is a great way to socialise, learn, work, play and be entertained. But there are also risks.

There are tips sheets and even webinars on the Australian Government's eSafety website

It includes tips on:

- Staying connected with friends
- Managing your mental health in and out of COVID lockdowns
- Knowing how to deal with cyber bullying
- Not falling for fake news
- Balancing your time online
- Being cautious about online relationships

## **Blind Cricket Open Day Change of Date**

Daniel Pritchard has been speaking with our Support Skills students in their online Friday sessions. The focus of his talk was on an upcoming Open Day that the Victorian Blind Cricket Association are hosting in early November. Students were encouraged to attend the day for a variety of reasons. By attending the day, students could;

- Interact with peers who are also experiencing Blindness or Low Vision
- Establish intergenerational relationships with other Blind and Vision Impaired individuals in higher education or the work force
- Learn information from others on various strategies on how to perform various school and life tasks
- Participate in a sport as an equal
- Be out of the house, active and in the sun with peers whilst also being able to remain COVID-Safe
- Receive a FREE lunch

Daniel advised the students that the Open Day would take place on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, 2021 and would run from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Students were invited to attend with their families for any part of the day for as long or as little as the wished. The location of the day is at 454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong at the rear of the Vision Australia Building.

If students are interested, Daniel advised that after the Open Day, there was the opportunity to participate in various Blind Cricket activities throughout summer. There are also pathways available for students to progress into the State Blind Cricket Team and even the National Blind Cricket Team. Daniel then revealed his very own Baggy Green (Australian Cricket Hat) for the students to observe.

To find out more information about the Blind Cricket Open Day, families can head to the Facebook event at [www.facebook.com/events/850606659221962](https://www.facebook.com/events/850606659221962) or go direct to the webpage at [www.vbca.org.au/2021-blind-cricket-open-day](http://www.vbca.org.au/2021-blind-cricket-open-day).

For any questions, Daniel can be contacted directly by email at [dan.pritchard@vbca.org.au](mailto:dan.pritchard@vbca.org.au).

## **Postgraduate Expo**

Source: SPEVI email list

Macquarie University is hosting a virtual Postgraduate Expo from Tuesday, 21 September to Thursday, 23 September, which will showcase the Master of Disability Studies for specialist qualifications in Low Vision and Blindness.

This course is exceptional for anyone working/wanting to work as an Advisory Teacher (Vision Impairment) throughout Australia.

See the [Macquarie University Website](http://www.mq.edu.au) for more information.

## How much sunscreen is enough?

Source: [Cancer Council website](#)

As we move into summer, it's good to remind ourselves about how to protect our skin from sun damage. The [Cancer Council](#) has plenty of useful information at their website. From what SPF means and how much you should use to protect yourself, we address some of the most frequently asked questions about sunscreen.

### Sunscreen FAQs

- Sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before exposure to UV in order to create the intended protective barrier. It should be applied liberally and evenly to clean and dry skin.
- Use the 'teaspoon rule'. For an adult (or anyone bigger than an infant), the recommended application is 5mL (approximately one teaspoon) for each arm, leg, body front, body back and face (including neck and ears). That equates to a total of 35mL (approximately seven teaspoons) for a full body application.
- Sunscreen should always be reapplied at least every two hours, irrespective of the water resistance of the sunscreen. Swimming, sport, sweating and towel drying can reduce the effectiveness of the product, so sunscreen should always be reapplied after these activities.

Stay safe in the sunshine!!

## Training for AI Apps from Google and Microsoft

Source: Special Education Teachers email list

Discover and master the free, easy-to-use "breakthrough" Microsoft and Google Artificial Intelligence (AI) apps and resources to boost outcomes for students with hearing, visual, and reading problems or disabilities.

A professional development course delivered via a 30 minute introductory webinar and two 90 minute hands-on webinar workshops. Total cost \$59 per teacher reducing to \$39 per person for group enrolments.

Learn how to use AI apps to quickly and easily:

- Enhance reading intervention & reading support programs
- Transform text, video and audio materials into hearing and visually disabled resources
- Provide automated speech-to-text facilities for typing-challenged students
- Accurately transcribe Internet-based or file-based video or audio to text
- Improve students' reading fluency
- Improve student understanding, structure, presentation and punctuation in written work
- Boost student engagement
- Boost student motivation
- Boost reading and comprehension skills
- Enhance student speech-making skills and confidence
- Automate voice translation from English to other languages

[Obtain more information, then register today](#) for this professional learning.

## **BCA – Advocacy Projects Officer**

Source: Blind Citizens Australia email list

Blind Citizens Australia is recruiting for an Advocacy Projects Officer. This role is part-time, and is a remote position – you can work from home from anywhere in Australia.

Blind Citizens Australia is the national representative organisation of Australians who are blind or vision impaired. Our mission is to achieve equity and equality by our empowerment, by promoting positive community attitudes, and by striving for high quality and accessible services which meet our needs.

If you are an all-rounder - a strong and empathetic advocate, excellent networker, confident at representing BCA's position on forums and in meetings, and with a head for policy, this role is for you.

People who are blind or vision impaired, or people with disability are encouraged to apply.

For more details and how to apply, please refer to attachment or on our website:

<https://www.bca.org.au/employment/>

### **And finally ...**

Here are the answers to the questions at the end of the last Bulletin. How did you go?

1. The book of Jurassic Park came before the film
2. 🐟: The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister
3. "You can't help respecting anybody who can spell TUESDAY, even if he doesn't spell it right." is from The House at Pooh Corner by A.A. Milne.