

Number 04, Friday 17 March, 2023

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## PD events

The [2023 Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available for download on our website. See below for links to the events in Term 2 2023.

**Tuesday May 9** [Inclusion of students who have vision impairments in art](#)

Providing practical strategies that teachers can use in their art classes to promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind or partially sighted.

**Tuesday May 23** [Teaching and learning with braille music](#)

Providing practical strategies for music teachers to promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind.

**Tuesday May 30** [Inclusion of students who have vision impairments in PE](#)

Providing fresh ideas and practical strategies to enable teachers to support the inclusion of students who are blind or partially sighted in physical education.

## On Demand PL

All of our professional learning workshops are now available on demand where participants can access all the videos and resources at a time that suits them. You can find links through the [On Demand page](#), under Professional Learning, on our website.

## **Message from the Manager**

Source: Kim Foley, Manager, SVRC

### **Multicultural Week**

Multiculturalism is a core part of the Victorian identity, our character and way of life. Our state is home to people who speak 290 languages. It's a place where anyone can contribute and belong. Cultural, linguistic, and faith-based diversity is one of our greatest assets.

This year, Cultural Diversity Week starts on 11 March and finishes on 21 March, the United Nation's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD). This year's theme, 'Our Past, Our Future', presents an opportunity to reflect on Victoria's multicultural history and celebrate its bright future.

SVRC recognizes and embraces the cultural backgrounds of all our staff and families and we will offer the opportunity in our SSP to reflect and research the cultural diversity of our state.

### **Visiting Teacher Community of Practice**

On Thursday, Visiting Teacher – Vision Community of Practice welcomed Joanne Muscat from VCAA Special Provision. A very timely reminder to begin considering Special Provision options for our students who are blind or have low vision in their senior years. School staff and parents should engage with their visiting teachers as a source of knowledge when submitting special provision conditions for exams and assessments. This week Victorian students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat the NAPLAN assessments and our students should have received extra time and the assessments available in a preferred alternative format.

### **SVRC Professional Learning Day**

SVRC hosted an Inclusion of students with vision impairment and additional disabilities professional learning day last Tuesday. It was a great opportunity for school staff and parents to understand the educational implications of a vision impairment in the context of co-morbidities and how to support inclusive practices. The recordings will be available On Demand in the next few weeks after post-production editing. Please visit our website for our catalogue of professional learning opportunities available now and during the year.

### **Alternative Formats**

Our wonderful transcription team are working extremely hard to ensure your requests for alternative formats are ready on or before the designated date. Some interesting data on the current level of request: on the 16 Feb 2022 we had 808 requests; on the 16 Feb 2023 we have had 959 requests! With staff absences and extended leave the team are working hard to meet the ever increasing demands. To support our transcription team please ensure you allow enough time for the production process to occur.

## Report on the online PL day – ‘Inclusion of students with vision and additional impairments’ - March 7, 2023

Source: SVRC

SVRC and GDV staff were joined by 26 educators for a day about inclusion of students with vision impairments and other significant impairments. We had 17 educators from special and specialist schools (with a team of 12 from one specialist school), 4 from primary settings, 1 from a secondary school and 1 from the Virtual School. We were also joined by 3 Visiting Teachers (Vision).

Sam Oxley shared her wisdom about CVI and its implications, Kirstie Price (Guide Dogs Victoria) demonstrated how orientation and mobility can be achieved in special settings and Geoff Bowen talked about challenging behaviours. There were lots of questions and several teachers following up to find out specifics about their students.

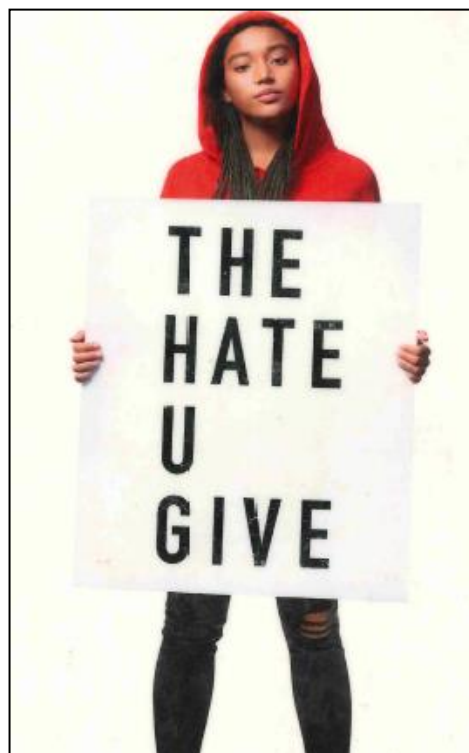
Thank you to our speakers, Sam, Kirstie and Geoff and to Naomi Thompson for managing Eventbrite and communications and Michael Kelly for all things technology and audio visual.

### New Books in the SVRC Library

Source: SVRC Transcription department

**For the mid- to upper-secondary student**, we have a number of new books in etext that deal with issues of first Australians, family, racism, refugees and dystopian future including:

- Born a Crime – Stories from a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah
- Flames by Robbie Arnott
- Guardians (Wylah the Koorie Warrior) by Jordan Gould
- Severance by Ling Ma
- The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas (see cover illustration right)
- We Are Displaced – My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World by Malala Yousafzai



**For the Year 5-8 reader**, we have:

- Code Name Bananas by David Walliams
- Gorilla Suit (Aussie Nibbles) by Victor Kelleher
- Monster Hole (Aussie Nibbles) by Mary Small
- Princess of the Sands (Trick Stars) by Karen Wood
- Robot Riot (Schooling Around) by Andy Griffiths
- Up and Away (Ava Anne Appleton) by Wendy Harmer
- Welcome to Paradise (book 8 in the Wolf Girl series) by Anh Do

Check out the catalogue which can be found on our [catalogue page](#) and if you can't find a book that suits you, please send us a print copy and we'll transcribe it into alternative format for you (eligible students only, of course!)

## 3D Materials Catalogue Update

Source: SVRC

There has been a substantial update to the 3D printing catalogue, including a change of name to 3D Materials Catalogue! Here are some other changes:

- It's now in a spreadsheet format.
- Clicking on the name of an item will take you to a new sheet which includes a photo and a brief description of the item.
- You can filter the catalogue list by clicking on the arrows next to the heading. Headings include Year Level and Subject.
- There are links to the Australian Curriculum for most prints, and to Source files in case you'd like to print them off yourself.

We've included some commercial models in the list. These aren't reproducible, but if they're available can be used to support student access to the curriculum.

### Aztec/Mayan sculptures

These are reproductions of sculptures from museums and models of buildings. The picture is of a pyramid, small enough to be held in your hand. It's from a set of three Pre-Columbian pyramids, Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon from Teotihuacan and the Maya Pyramid of Chichen Itza.



### Braille letter twister

A manipulative braille twister that comes in two different versions.

CVC: Make and break words with the CVC word twister.

Magic E/Silent E/Bossy E: Explore how adding an E on to the end of a CVC word changes the sound of the earlier vowel.

You can find the catalogue on the [Alternative Format Catalogues page](#) (it's now stored in Google Drive as the file is too big to fit on our website!). Items can be requested using the [Alternative Format Request Form](#).



## Accessible Maths Series

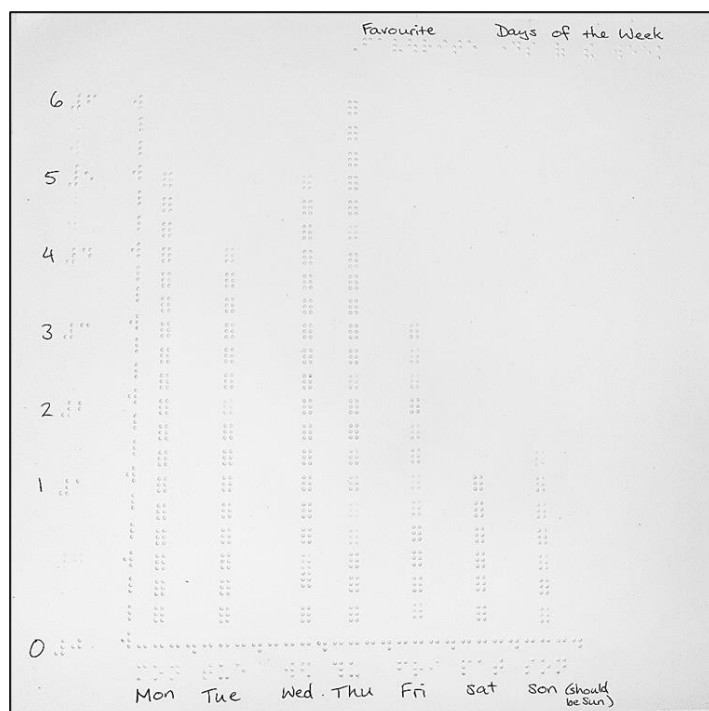
Sharing ideas from our Maths/Science teachers, Lauren Devenish and Sarah Hayman, on our Support Skills program.

We are always open to more ideas and suggestions – please contact Marion if you want to comment or share your Maths ideas. [marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au)

### Accessible Maths Series Number 2 – Bar Graphs

From the VT: the student's year 5 class are moving onto data next week and students will need to make a bar and line graph. I have done some work with my student on this using the Perkins and grid paper, or just constructing the x and y axis on braille paper. She needs lots of practice with this, particularly marking increments. She made a line graph with me yesterday using pins and elastic bands on grid paper, plotting points where the x and y axis intersect. She managed this well and could describe the graph line.

At Support Skills: The student brought in a vertical bar graph which she had made with her Visiting Teacher the previous day. She described how she made the graph, using dots 4,5,6 and 'w' to make the y-axis, middle 'c' and full stops to make the x-axis and full braille cells to make the columns. She talked about the 'w' and full stops creating increments along their respective axes. The student was not very confident, so we made another vertical bar graph to continue consolidating her skills. Her finished graph is shown below.



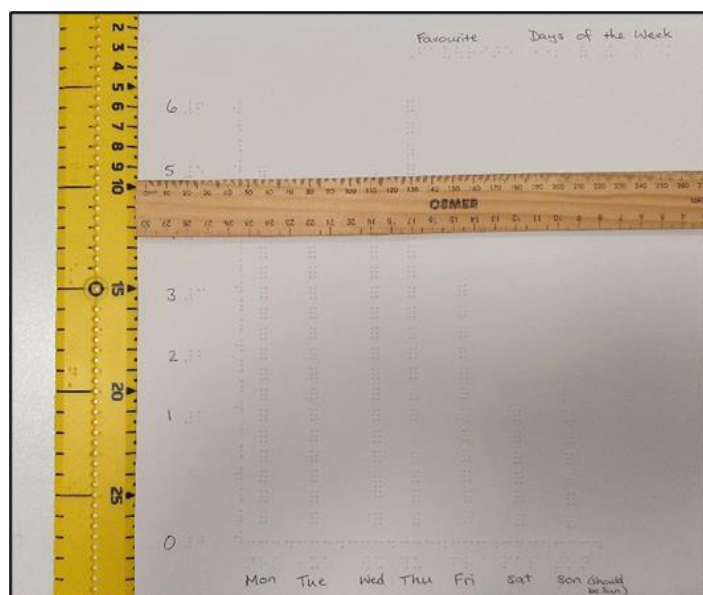
The student is still developing her spatial awareness and sense of scale. She initially started her vertical axis on the far left of the page. But she quickly realised she would have no space for the axis labels, and so moved the axis to the right (we discussed how many cells across it should go). Similarly, we talked about when to finish the y-axis so that there would be space for the x-axis and

labels underneath. Ideally, the x-axis will align with the lowest increment marker ('w') on the y-axis (in the image above, you can see that the Braille had shifted, so the middle 'c's look like lower 'c's). This lowest increment marker was labelled '0'. For the x-axis, the student knew that we needed to know more about our data before she knew how wide to make each increment. We decided to pretend that she had surveyed a group of people on their favourite day of the week, and she worked out that she could use the shorthand of each day to keep the increments fairly narrow (three cells wide). This started to assist in her understanding of scale and how to fit the information on the page. When we came to labelling the y-axis, we discussed how the number of people that we surveyed determined the numbers used, e.g. counting by ones, twos, fives, tens, hundreds, etc, and that the highest number on the axis would likely be lower than the total number of people surveyed. We chose her class (25 people) as the survey group and the student invented survey results, mentally checking that they added up to 25:

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
5	4	5	6	3	1	1

From this, the student worked out that the y-axis labels needed to go up to only 6, and so she could count by ones up the increments (unfortunately there was a mostly rubbed-out zero above the correct zero, and the student mistakenly counted from the incorrect one – so, as you can see in the photo, there is a bigger gap between zero and one than there should be).

Finally, it was time to add in the columns, which the student did confidently and successfully. She also added a title. When she removed the page from the Braille and was checking over it, she found it tricky at times to follow the cells straight across the page. She ended up using two rulers and the edge of the table as pictured. We could also have used a T-square. If the paper is blu tacked to the table, the T-square can slide up and down the side.



This is a technique she can trial at school, particularly using blu-tac to hold the page and vertical ruler in place, allowing her to slide the horizontal ruler up and down while keeping it straight.

## Dual media decision tree

Source: SVRC and Paths to Literacy

Visiting Teachers across Victoria heard from Dr Cay Holbrook in February about media use by our students. Students can often struggle working out which media to use for which task. The 'Decision Tree' idea could help them to make decisions between print or braille. It could also be adapted for other decisions, such as braille or audio, laptop or iPad, Perkins or Polaris.

Do you struggle with a student who is a dual media reader and prefers to use print over braille in what seems to be every circumstance possible?

Do you find yourself saying to them, "You need to use braille more!" but you don't get any improvement in the amount of braille they use?

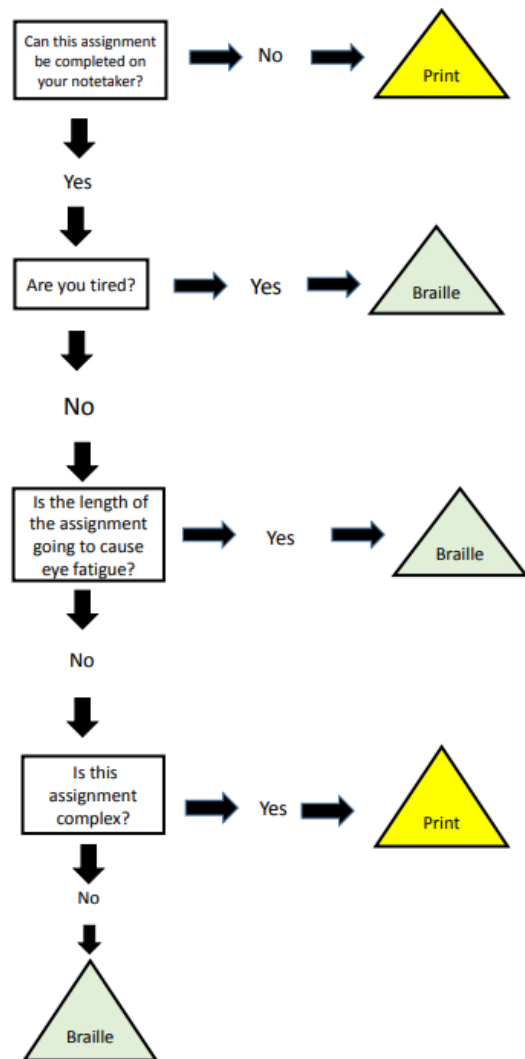
Consider sharing with your student the Dual Media Decision Tree to help guide them in their decision making process of when to use print or braille.

### Steps

1. Share and explain the sample decision tree with the student
2. Seek input from the student regarding accessibility and any other changes needed to make them feel successful in using the document
3. Ask the student about a previous assignment completed in print. Model and discuss the decision tree in context of the assignment. Based on the decision tree would Braille have been a better medium to complete the assignment?
4. Discuss upcoming assignments with the student. Determine which ones would be appropriate to complete in Braille
5. Check in with the student daily/weekly to discuss, evaluate and reflect on choices of the medium used
6. Provide feedback and encouragement on choices

Read the whole article from [Paths to Literacy](#).

Braille or Print Decision Making Tree



## National Simultaneous Storytime 2023

Source: SVRC

National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) is held annually by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Every year a picture book, written and illustrated by an Australian author and illustrator, is read simultaneously in libraries, schools, pre-schools, childcare centres, family homes, bookshops and many other places around the country. Now in its 23rd successful year, it is a colourful, vibrant, fun event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy, using an Australian children's book that explores age-appropriate themes, and addresses key learning areas of the National Curriculum for Foundation to Year 6. 2022 was the biggest and most successful NSS to date with over 2.18 million participants at over 59,000 locations!

This year NSS takes place on Wednesday 24 May 2023 at 11:00am and any home, school, public library or even a university library can participate!

This year's book is 'The Speedy Sloth' by Rebecca Young and Heath McKenzie and SVRC have produced it in braille with tactile illustrations. So, make sure you request your braille copy from SVRC before May 24, 2023.

Thank you to our talented transcription team (in this case, Taryn). Not only can they produce high level maths and languages in braille, they can put personality into illustrations in a children's book!

Register below to participate - it's free! To purchase a copy of this year's NSS book to read on the day, head over to [Scholastic's Website](#) and order your copy now.





## Master of Inclusive Education Program 2023

Source: Inclusive Education Scholarships Unit, Department of Education

Are you interested in gaining a department-funded master's level qualification specialising in vision impairment or inclusive education? Applications for Round 9 (R9) are now open and will close on Tuesday 28 March at 11:59 pm. The long-term vision is for all Victorian government schools to have a master-level qualified inclusive education teacher on staff, creating and leading a more inclusive school environment for all students regardless of their abilities and backgrounds.

There are 75 places available, and the program will consider providing schools with an additional masters if teachers are interested in specialising in vision impairment, through the following course:

- **NextSense - Macquarie University:** [Master of Disability Studies](#) - Blindness/Low Vision

For all other Inclusive Education courses, please see course details below:

- **Australian Catholic University:** [Master of Education \(Inclusive Practice\)](#)
- **Deakin University:** [Master of Specialist Inclusive Education](#)
- **La Trobe University:** [Master of Education \(Inclusion and Diversity\)](#)
- **Monash University:** [Master of Applied Behaviour Analysis](#)
- **Monash University:** [Master of Inclusive Education](#)
- **University of Melbourne:** [Master of Learning Intervention Stream A](#)
- **University of Newcastle:** [Master of Special and Inclusive Education](#)

Through additional postgraduate study, teachers can make a significant contribution to how their schools plan and support students with disability and additional learning needs, using contemporary evidence-based, best practice approaches. These bespoke courses have been designed for the Victorian context and will be delivered by our seven partnered universities listed above. Please see the Master of Inclusive Education website for further information, including testimonials from graduates of the program.

To find out more or to check whether your school is eligible, please contact the IESU at: [inclusive.ed.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:inclusive.ed.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au) or call 9084 8496.

## Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties)

Source: Inclusive Education Scholarships Unit, Department of Education

Strengthen your knowledge of learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia, with postgraduate study in 2023.

The Department is offering 75 fully funded places for learning specialists, leading teachers, and classroom teachers working in mainstream Victorian government primary or secondary schools to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) program, commencing study in Semester 2, 2023.

Delivered by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne, this bespoke course is designed for the Victorian educational context.

Applications for Round 2 opens are **now open** and will **close on Tuesday 28 March at 11:59 pm**. Visit the [Graduate Certificate webpage](#) for more information about eligibility and how to apply.

## **Journal of SPEVI – Issue 15 Available for Download**

Source: Bronwen Scott, JSPEVI Editor via SPEVI list

I am pleased to let you know the latest Journal of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (JSPEVI) has now been published and will be available for free download from the [SPEVI website](#).

The journal is available in both a pdf and an accessible word document format.

Includes articles by the following leading educators and researchers:

- Anna van der Meule, Mijke Hartendorp, Wendy Voorn and Felienne Hermans – An Exploration of Unplugged Programming Education for Elementary School Children Who Have Low Vision or are Blind
- Jacqui Kirkman – Making decisions about braille technology
- Bill Sakoulas – Reflections on an interview with a parent of a child with a sensory disability

## **Surf with Blind Pro-Surfer and Paralympian Matt Formston**

Source: Vision Australia

Matt is a world champion surfer who surfs some of the largest waves in the world. Plus, he is a Paralympian. Coinciding with the launch of the book *Surfing in the Dark*, we have a few limited spots available for Vision Australia clients to join a lesson at the wave pool, URBNSURF in Melbourne.

If your child is interested in this opportunity, please express your interest by the 20 March. Your child is also allowed to bring along a friend to have a surf lesson with them.

When: Thursday 6 April

Time: 9:45am – 12:00pm

Location: URBNSURF, 309 Melrose Dr, Melbourne Airport VICTORIA

Cost: free

The Big Visions children's series depicts everyday low vision and blind Australians living well and chasing their dreams. These important new role models are the first step towards changing expectations of just how much a child with low vision or blindness can achieve.

For further information email: [info@visionaustralia.org](mailto:info@visionaustralia.org) or phone 1300 84 74 66

## NASA puts the sounds of the universe into a new album

Source: NPR via Sonification World Chat

What if, instead of seeing the universe as an explosion of light, we heard it? What would that sound like? Kimberly Arcand is a visualization scientist and emerging tech lead for NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory. She's part of NASA's sonification project. It's an effort to turn data collected from the outer reaches of the universe into sounds. The idea is to allow visually impaired people to experience the galaxy. But the result, a collection of 16 of these interpretations, is an album with a beauty all its own.

Listen to or read the whole interview on the [NPR Website](#). Find the album Universal Harmonies on [Spotify](#), or listen to the many other sonifications that have been created at the Chandra X-ray Observatory on their [Sonification playlist on Youtube](#)

## Blind/Low Vision Tennis Talent Pathway

Source: Tennis Australia

As well as mainstream tournaments Tennis Australia also provides a range of elite competitive pathway opportunities:

- State and National Camps and Tournaments
- International Blind Tennis Tournament

Tennis Australia has state based squads, camps and tournaments that can lead to you playing for Australia at the International Blind Tennis Tournament.

For more information on how to get involved, visit the [Tennis Australia website](#).

Or contact: [blindtennis@tennis.com.au](mailto:blindtennis@tennis.com.au)

You never know, you could represent your country in tennis overseas!

## Junior Blind Tennis Opportunity

Source: Blind Sport & Recreation Victoria

Join Blind Sport & Recreation junior tennis program today!

**Where:** The Junior Blind Tennis programs are held at the National Tennis Centre (Indoor Courts), which are located within the Melbourne Park precinct.

**When:** Fridays, 5:30pm - 6:30pm

**Cost:** \$20 per term

**Contact:** Susan at [Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria](#) – [info@blindsports.org.au](mailto:info@blindsports.org.au) 03 9822 8876

People with varying levels of vision impairment participate in the program, rotating through different tennis exercises with the support of volunteers. Various types of balls are used, including audible tennis balls and different sized and coloured balls. Participants can choose to play on a social basis or develop and improve their skills to play at a more elite level. We welcome people of all ages and abilities!

**Other locations:** Affiliated Melbourne tennis clubs with coaches trained in vision loss:

- Le Page Tennis Club Cheltenham Contact: Brad Cosher, brad@bgctennis.com 0438 223 323
- Lalor Tennis Club Contact: Liz Laspatzis, elaspatzis@yahoo.com.au 0402 554 769
- Williamstown Tennis Club 0433 107 586
- Keilor Tennis Club Contact: Stefan Visser, viss.tennis@gmail.com 0432 431 057

## **IBSA World Games 2023**

Source: Blind Sports Australia

The world's biggest gathering of athletes with visual impairments heads to Birmingham, Great Britain, in August 2023.

Powerlifting, judo, goalball, football, chess, tenpin bowling, shooting and showdown, as well as cricket, archery and tennis, form the programme. The men's and women's IBSA Blind Football World Championships and the partially sighted World Championships will take place as part of the event.

The World Games, due to take place from 18-27 August 2023, will be held at the University of Birmingham, across the Edgbaston area and wider region.

Normally staged every four years the World Games are the pinnacle of IBSA's international calendar outside of the Paralympic Games. With three Paralympic and eight non-Paralympic sports, for some athletes it is the highest level at which they can compete. The last IBSA World Games were held in Seoul, South Korea, in 2015.

If you want more information, go to their [website](#) or contact [Chair@blindsportsaustralia.com.au](mailto:Chair@blindsportsaustralia.com.au)

## Sensee Braille Colouring Books

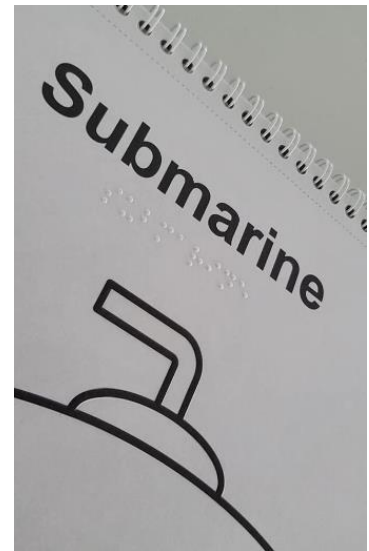
Source: WonderBaby.org

Sensee is a South Korean-based print-braille publisher that sells via Amazon.

The lines and print of these colouring books appear to be tactile and high contrast black-on-white. The word is also provided in uncontracted braille (see example right).

Currently, there are three colouring books available:

- [Vehicle Coloring Book](#)
- [Animal Coloring Book](#)
- [Fruit Coloring Book](#)



### And finally...

We have two eyeballs to give us depth perception – comparing two images allows us to determine how far away an object is from us.