

## The Bulletin

Number 13, Friday 12 September 2019

### Inside this Somewhat Belated Issue

Here's what you'll find:

- **From SVRC:** Welcome from Transition Manager, Dates for Your Diary, Braille Brain Gym, Written Descriptions Q&A
- **PD:** Inclusive Education Scholarships Initiative, Tech Accessibility Notes from Glen Morrow, Maths Made Easy YouTube Channel, Program for Preparing for a student who reads braille
- **Alternative Format:** Perkins Repairs
- **Access Technology:** Vision Australia 2020 Bursary, Free Accessible Touch-Typing Software
- **Activities and Recreation:** Lego Audio & Braille Building Instructions, Vision Impaired Table Tennis, SongLab, Sonic Labyrinth, Blind Eye Spy, Audio Described Circus by Circus Oz, Vision Australia School Holiday Program
- **From the Field:** GDV Support for Early Years, Blind Tennis in the News, Can Blind People Make Great Architects?, An Architect Who Listens to Buildings, Interview with Furniture Designer and Maker, Unseen, an Audio Comic, The Story of NVDA, Braille Music Camp – How it all began, Applying Makeup 101

### Dates for Your Diary

2019

**Tuesday October 15:** Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses braille – program is included in the PDF copy of The Bulletin

**Tuesday November 26:** Assistive Technology Expo

**Tuesday 10 December:** SVRC Christmas Morning Tea – **all welcome! Please RSVP**

2020

**12-15 January 2020:** SPEVI Conference in Adelaide

(Dates for 2020 SVRC professional development activities coming soon!)

**Note:** For upcoming professional learning at SVRC along with programs, registration & online payment, visit the SVRC [professional learning page](#).

### Braille Q&A (Braille Brain-Gym)

**Question (via ozbrl):** How should the word **rabblers** be written in braille:

ra bb l er ou s er s

or

ra bb l e r ou s er s

For the answer: see the end of this issue!

## Welcome from SVRC's Transition Manager

As Term 3 draws to a close, I want to thank the wonderful team at SVRC and the committed staff we work with in regions and schools for all that we have achieved so far this year.

We are excited to announce the launch of our new website - [www.svrc.vic.edu.au](http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au). We hope that you'll find our new website useful, informative and easy to navigate. As with all of our work, we are always looking for ways to continue improving. If you have any feedback about our new site and how it works, please let us know. If there is any additional information you'd like to see on our website, or ways we can make it more accessible, please suggest it.

In Term four this year we are excited to welcome back Garry Stinchcombe, who will be joining us on Fridays at the Support Skills Program. We are also excited to announce the Elise Lonsdale was the successful applicant for our Assistive Technology Trainer position, and will be continuing with us on Fridays until the end of 2020.

In the last edition of the Bulletin, I announced that we were running a [short survey to seek your feedback on your experiences of reading The Bulletin](#) (more details below). This survey has been extended and will be **open until Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September**. Please participate and let us know what you think.

Happy reading!

Matt Trotter

## Feedback Survey – The Bulletin

We are seeking your feedback regarding The Bulletin, SVRC's regular e-newsletter. [Please complete this short online survey](#) to let us know what you like most about The Bulletin and what you would like to see more of. The survey is anonymous, will take less than five minutes to complete, and will be used to improve our newsletter in the future. This survey has been extended and will be **open until Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September**. Everyone is welcome to participate.

If you have any questions or additional feedback, please email Matt Trotter – [trotter.matthew.a@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:trotter.matthew.a@edumail.vic.gov.au).

## Dot Power: Foundation Students

Our Dot Power theme with the Foundation students this term was braille music. Families and school staff were invited to hear Jordie Howell speak about her career using braille music. The students had the opportunity to hear and touch brass instruments including trumpet, French horn and tuba. Students learned to read a braille music rhythm and play it on an angel chime bar. Students then wrote a story about being a musician on the Perkins Braille and read their stories to the group. After lunch students played a quick game of Swish Mini which they all enjoyed. Children finished up by playing a game of Go Fish using tactile cards featuring pictures of musical instruments and the braille words to match.

Everyone had a great day and we look forward to seeing all the students again in term 4.

Right: Jordie and a student read a page of braille together. Jordie's hands are the one with the painted fingernails.



## Inclusive Education Scholarships Initiative

The [Inclusive Education Scholarships Initiative](#) is providing scholarships for teachers in Victorian government schools, and other departmental staff, to undertake a VIT endorsed postgraduate course focused on inclusive and special education. The initiative is part of the Victorian Government's commitment to increase the number of highly qualified and specialised inclusive education teachers working in Victorian schools.

There are two intakes per year. The next round of scholarships will be opening in September 2019.

RIDBC offers a postgraduate course focused on vision impairment that is offered through this initiative. See [Master of Disability Studies \(RIDBC/Renwick Centre through Macquarie University\)](#).

For more information contact Claire Farrington, Manager, Graduate Education, RIDBC Renwick Centre: [Claire.Farrington@ridbc.org.au](mailto:Claire.Farrington@ridbc.org.au).

## Vision Australia 2020 Bursary

Source: [Vision Australia](#)

Applications for the 2020 Vision Australia Further Education Bursaries are now open.

Each year, Vision Australia provides bursaries to equip a select number of tertiary students who are blind or have low vision with assistive technology to support them in their chosen studies.

Applications close: October 31, 2019

For more information, visit: [eligibility criteria and the application process](#), phone (03) 8378 1220 or email [joy.king@visionaustralia.org](mailto:joy.king@visionaustralia.org).

## Tech Accessibility Notes from Glen Morrow

### G Suite Guide To Accessibility

Google have realised a G Suite Guide To Accessibility document. It goes through keyboard shortcuts, screenreader and browser recommendations and contact information for people with vision impairments who access Google services. The guide covers areas such as which screen reader to use with which browser for various Google Suite apps - and credit where it's due, they don't always recommend their own browser.

The guide is available here: <https://support.google.com/a/answer/1631886?hl=en>

### iOS Keyboard Shortcuts

The MacObserver have compiled a pretty neat list of iOS keyboard shortcuts you can use with iOS devices and an external keyboard: <https://www.macobserver.com/tips/quick-tip/ipad-keyboard-shortcuts-apple-apps/>

### Getting Started with Apple

The AppleVis online user community have developed some great resources - this Getting Started series is well worth a read: <https://www.applevis.com/new-to-ios>

### Magnifier in iOS

And finally here's a video Glen made on using the Magnifier in iOS, demonstrating what it is and how it works: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXsGw3hPYo>

## Free Accessible Touch-Typing Software

Thanks to Odette Budge for this information!

TypingClub is a fast and effective web-based way to learn how to type. It is free for individuals and schools. TypingClub has in-built low vision & blindness accessibility. Below are the steps to apply these changes to this free typing extension. Go to <https://www.typingclub.com/>



Create a log-in.

Click on your name in the upper right hand corner when you have logged on.

Click on "Profile"

Scroll to the bottom of your profile

Click on the "Accessibility" button

Accessibility options: blind, dyslexic, right hand only, low vision, hard of hearing, left hand only

Select your desired accessibility

Two accessibility features such as "left hand only" and "blind" can be on at the same time

Click on "Save Changes" button

Click on the "home" link in the upper left hand corner of the screen

Now you are ready to begin your typing lessons!

## Written Descriptions: Q&A

**Question:** I'd like to provide a written description of an image in an upcoming Year 10 exam. How should I go about it?

**Answer:** The trick with all written descriptions is to make them short and succinct without giving away information that is not available to the sighted reader.

The person in the best position to provide the description is the person who set the exam paper or selected the image, as they know what information they are hoping to convey from the image.

For a more comprehensive answer, there are guidelines available that have been developed by the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities website, the [Guidelines on Conveying Visual Information \(2005\)](#).

## GDV: Support for Early Years

Guide Dogs Victoria offers a range of support and services to:

- early years – for children 0-6 years
- carers and families
- tweens and teens
- adults
- seniors

For more information: [visit Guide Dogs Victoria](#).

## Perkins Repairs (updated)

There are currently **three** repairers available to repair or service your Perkins Braille.

### Braille Repairs and Maintenance

Kevin Partridge  
 PO Box 78, Taralga NSW 2580  
 Tel: (02) 4840 2389  
 Mob: 0418 29 8179  
 Email: [kevinpartridge@gmail.com](mailto:kevinpartridge@gmail.com)

### Precision Braille Repair

Ian Newham  
 PO Box 1120 Ingleburn NSW 1890  
 Mob: 0425 280 620  
 Email: [precisionbrailrepair@gmail.com](mailto:precisionbrailrepair@gmail.com)

### Perkins Braille Repairs

Ken McDonald  
 1 Amicus Street, Ocean Grove  
 \$180 full service (parts extra)  
 Mob: 0418 341 388  
 Tel: (03) 5259 9631

## Lego Audio & Braille Building Instructions

Lego has developed a set of instructions for people with vision impairments. The Lego Audio & Braille Building Instructions were inspired by Matthew Shifrin, who was born blind.

Lego and Shifrin worked with the Austrian Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence to develop AI software which translates Lego Exchange Format Mel Script (LXFML) data from visual instructions to text-based descriptions for braille and voice commanded instructions.

Shifrin says: "I would like every blind person to be able to download the instructions, buy a set, have a sighted person sort out the pieces and feel on par with a sighted builder."

"Lego bricks allow me to see things that are impossible to explore by touch, such as the arches of a Middle Eastern palace or the towers of London's Tower Bridge," he adds.

The instructions are so far only available in English and can be accessed online for free. Four sets have been released and the company intends to launch more in the first half of 2020.

Lego says that the long-term ambition is to add more languages and provide these instructions for all future product launches.

Earlier this year, the toy company launched its Braille Bricks series, which aims to "support young children with vision impairment to learn braille in a playful and inclusive way".

Source: <https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/26-august-1-september-2019/lego-launches-braille-instructions-for-the-visually-impaired/>

For more information, visit [Lego Audio Instructions](#)

## Vision Impaired Table Tennis

The Victorian Vision Impaired Table Tennis Association invites any new or returning players to attend one of our clubs. Currently, there are four clubs in Melbourne and surrounds. The details of each club are listed below. Players can either play socially or competitively in tournaments locally and interstate.

### Dandenong

Address: Dandenong Table Tennis Club, Cnr Heatherton Road & Cleeland Street, Dandenong

Time: every Monday from 1-4pm

Phone: Peter on 0407 848 181

Email: [peter.fletcher@vvitta.org.au](mailto:peter.fletcher@vvitta.org.au)

### Kooyong

Address: Vision Australia, 454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong

Time: every Thursday from 6-9pm; every Saturday from 1-4pm

Phone: Marco on 0412 128 429

Email: [marco.curralejo@vvitta.org.au](mailto:marco.curralejo@vvitta.org.au)

### Mooroolbark

Address: 1/40 Felix Road, Mooroolbark

Time: every Tuesday from 7-10pm

Phone: Wayne on 0497 905 638

Email: [wayne.hyland@vvitta.org.au](mailto:wayne.hyland@vvitta.org.au)

### Moreland

Address: Scout Hall, 14A Jolley Street, West Brunswick

Time: the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 11-2pm

Phone: Adua on 0408 336 304

Email: [morelandvitt@gmail.com](mailto:morelandvitt@gmail.com)

## Blind Tennis in the News

Source: Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria Newsletter, September 2019

“Come On” yells Lleyton Hewitt as he takes to the courts with Carrie Bickmore and Tommy Little for Blind Tennis.

An exciting day at the National Tennis Centre with Carrie Bickmore and Tommy Little having a go at blind tennis together with former world number 1 champion and winner of 2 Grand Slams, Lleyton Hewitt! They played against 2 blind tennis players, Chris and Genamarie, who have participated in 3 International Blind Tennis Tournaments and are a force to be reckoned with!

“It was such a fun event, watching Carrie, Tommy and Lleyton play whilst blindfolded and trying very hard to hit the ball –overall, I think Lleyton was the only one who managed to get it over the net” was one of the comments overheard on the day.

The interviews were broadcast on the Carrie and Tommy Radio Show on The Hit Network and [The Project on Network 10](#).

## SongLab

The Arts Centre Melbourne's Creative Learning team are running a four day intensive song writing workshop, [SongLab](#), that students with vision impairments are invited to attend. So if you are a budding wordsmith, poet or singer, this workshop is for you!!

When: 23-26 September 2019

Cost \$290 for the 4 days

## Sonic Labyrinth

Information provided by Will McRostie, Description Victoria

[Sonic Labyrinth](#) invites kids and their families into an immersive and interactive journey of discovery through sound.

Each turn uncovers the possibility for new experiences through special listening devices and objects that enable hearing sounds on the edge of perception. In an other worldly environment inhabited by the labyrinth keepers, the participants choose their own journey with opportunities for solitary, intimate and collective sound-making. This work reflects on the age-old uses of the labyrinth for problem solving, accessing creativity, transformation and communication that is both ancient and futuristic.

It's an immersive, interactive installation where all the apparatus are designed to make sound in response to interaction by kids. It should be a really fun opportunity for some physical and creative play in a sound- and touch-first environment.

It's taking place at [ArtPlay in Birrarung Marr](#), and myself and peer facilitator Penny Stevenson will be on site for the **11am session on Sunday September 29** to support the participation of kids and parents who may be Blind or have low vision. If you or any of your colleagues, family, and friends would like to come, they can email Patrick Hayes – Producer at Melbourne Fringe – to register on [patrick@melbournefringe.com.au](mailto:patrick@melbournefringe.com.au).

## Blind Eye Spy

**Performer:** Tom Skelton

**Where:** Coopers Inn Small Room

**When:** Fri 20<sup>th</sup> – Fri 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 6.30pm

**Price:** \$20

Tom Skelton developed Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy (a genetic eye condition that runs in his family) nine years ago, leaving him with 5% vision, and first noticed some loss of sight at the Edinburgh Fringe, when fellow performers on stage became blurry, and he started to struggle to read the information on tickets. His sight quickly deteriorated and he was diagnosed weeks later. He had been planning to move to Berlin the following year, but never did. Now he finally gets there, in his imagination...

2023. Post-Brexit, Britain's secret service MI6's budget has been slashed, but they need a new agent in Berlin. Out of work comedian Tom Skelton has 'seasoned abilities as an improviser' (Chortle), speaks 'ein Bisschen Deutsch', and is registered blind – and who would suspect a blind spy? A Le-Carre-On character comedy thriller unfolds as Tom wanders blindly into Berlin's dark underbelly of espionage, betrayal and currywurst.



## Audio Described Circus: Aurora by Circus Oz

The outrageously talented acrobats of Circus Oz have never been afraid of heights, but they'll be pushed beyond their earthly limits during this excursion into the upper stratospheres of the possible. An exhilarating 70-minute voyage of astonishment, the flying, swinging and trapezing of Aurora will take you out of this world.

**When:** Saturday September 27, tactile tour from 4.30pm, performance from 5.30pm.

**Where:** Under the Big Top on the Southern Cross Lawns, Royal Botanic Gardens

**How much?** Tickets cost between \$35 and \$50 plus booking fees. Companion Card accepted.

**How to book:** Call the Ticketek Accessible Seating Hotline on 1300 665 915 and ask for audio description seats. If you prefer seating close to the stage, please let the agent know when booking. Alternatively, you can email [boxoffice@circusoz.com.au](mailto:boxoffice@circusoz.com.au).

## Can Blind People Make Great Architects?

Thanks to Emily White for this article – read more from [The Guardian](#)

Visualise yourself entering a new building. What do you notice first?

The answer for most people will probably be the internal structure, the colour of the walls, the light entering through the windows. But stay a little longer and you might start to experience the space differently: you'll hear sound reverberating, you'll feel air currents, textures and materials, you'll smell wafts from the kitchen.

For blind people, this multi-sensory experience is their first impression of a space. And now a new programme is trying to harness that unique ability by training more visually impaired people to become architects.

## An Architect Who Listens to Buildings

Thanks to Emily White for this article, too – read more from [KQED News](#)

Downey has been an architect for 30 years. Like most people in the business, Downey spent most of his career concerned about what the spaces he designed looked like. Then 10 years ago, as the result of brain surgery, he abruptly went blind. Now he pays more attention to how buildings sound and how it feels to be in them.

To do his work, Downey prints embossed building plans. All the details of the structure are raised off the page, so he can feel the building — things like the walls, stairways, and rooms. Instead of taking in the whole building all at once through his eyes, he experiences each detail individually through his fingers.

"What's different, I'm thinking with my fingertip," Downey says. "I imagine being there. And I'm thinking about what it sounds like as I move through the space."

## Interview: Furniture Designer and Maker

A recent edition of New Horizons featured an extended interview with Duncan Meerding, who, since developing his vision impairment at 18 years old, has forged a strong and fascinating career in designing and making furniture and other items. Duncan was recently invited to teach blind and vision impaired people overseas. Hear about Duncan's career and his passion for design and thinking outside the box. Visit [New Horizons](#)



## Unseen, an Audio Comic Especially Designed for the Blind

Source: [Hyperallergic](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — During his six months at the Colorado Center for the Blind, Chad Allen learned braille. He went skiing and white-water rafting. Most importantly, he learned to get around by himself. At the end of his stay, Allen, like all the residents, had to do two things: go to five cities on public transportation in one day, and find his way back to the center after being dropped off somewhere. He was only allowed to ask one question. Allen said both these things would have seemed impossible to him when he started the program, but by the end, he breezed right through.

To get back to the center, Allen had listened carefully to the direction that the van that had dropped him off took, which also helped him to determine where a major road was.

“I found the bus stop, waited, and when the bus stopped, I asked the driver, ‘Does this bus go to light rail?’ and that was my one question,” Allen said. “He said yes, so I got on, and went to the light rail and took it back to the center. That was it.”

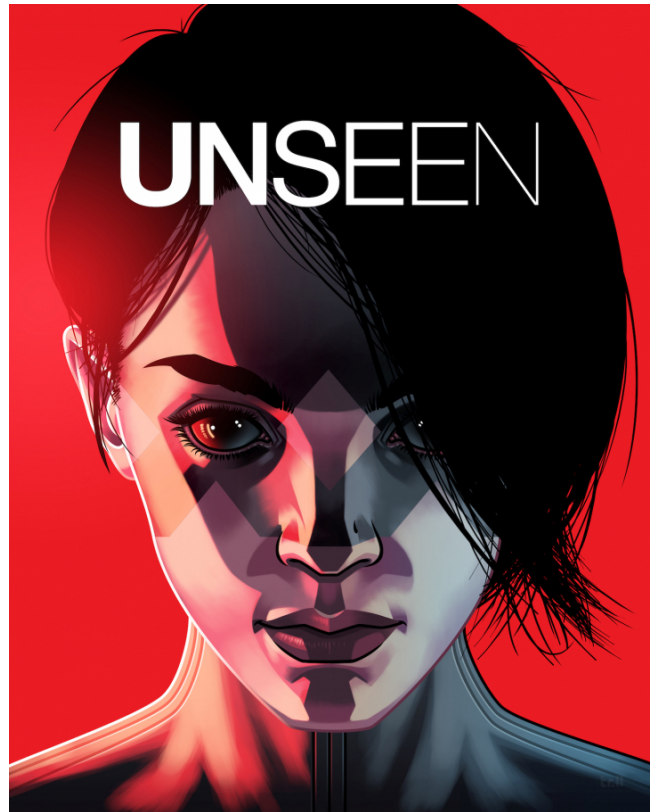
Allen has given that self-confidence and the skills to get around to the main character in [Unseen](#), Afsana, a blind assassin from Afghanistan. The audio comic — a comic experienced only with sound — starts off on the militarized southern border in a chaotic and totalitarian United States. The people Afsana fights often underestimate her because of her disability — and that’s a big mistake. In this first installment, she has two missions: to kill a soldier who is a serial rapist in the camps of immigrants, and then to disable a lab where the administration carries out experiments on disabled people without their consent. Taken prisoner by the soldiers, Afsana escapes by picking the locks on her handcuffs. She reads the braille in the elevator to get where she needs to go, and then uses her cane to find generators in the lab to make them overheat and explode. Allen did not want Afsana to have superpowers. He felt that would be cheating.

[Episode 1 of Unseen](#) is available for free for a limited time.

### The Story of NVDA

For the past 12 years, NV Access has been ensuring that people who are blind or have low vision, no matter their location, language or economic status, have full independent access to computers, by developing and providing the free and open-source NVDA screen reading software. In this extended YouTube video you can hear from both users and key members in the blind community about just what impact this software is having for blind people world-wide, and how NV Access has managed this life-changing work.

Visit [Changing Lives: The story behind the free NVCA Screen Reading software](#)



## Braille Music Camp – How it all began ...

Braille Music Camp was established by Roma Dix who had attended the music camps run by the Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) for over 20 years. Roma was concerned that with blind students being enrolled in regular schools, it would be difficult for them to learn the braille music code.

The camp is set up to expose blind students to a widespread selection of braille music, experienced teachers and networks of similar individuals; which essentially assists them in becoming more independent people. Participants are aged 9–18, and come from all over the country. They are accompanied by 10 or more staff running the camp, with both visually impaired teachers and non-blind helpers on site.

Having blind tutors, Roma says, is inspiring to kids participating in the camp, knowing they are in the same position.

“The very first camp, we sat the kids down, gave them all a piece of braille music, and Ian started teaching them to sing. Then we did a ‘let’s get to know you’, so they went around the room and Ian told them he was from the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB). All the kids sat up and their jaws dropped, they couldn’t believe he was blind.”

And the rest, as they say, is history.

To read the article, visit: [Alumni Stories: Roma Dix – National Braille Music Camp – Australian Youth Orchestra](#)

## Mathematics Made Easy: YouTube Channel

From: Frances Gentle, President, ICEVI and Co-President, SPEVI

ICEVI has recently launched a YouTube channel entitled “[Mathematics Made Easy](#)”, which showcases 30 instructional mathematics videos.

The target audience for the instructional videos includes teacher training institutes, educators and families who support students with vision impairment to successfully participate and achieve in mathematics at primary and secondary school. It is anticipated that an additional 20 videos will be uploaded in September 2019, with further uploads to follow.

You are encouraged to share the news with your networks, and to consider subscribing to the YouTube channel to receive immediate access to the additional videos as they are released.

The YouTube channel was jointly launched last week by Larry Campbell, President Emeritus ICEVI, and Todd Reeves, CEO, Overbrook School for the Blind (OSB), Philadelphia.

## Applying Makeup 101

Geoff Bowen found this lovely video from Priceline's makeup artist Sarah Laidlaw who demonstrates, with audio description, some makeup tips and tricks for women who have vision impairments. Visit: [Priceline's Makeup Tutorial](#)

## Vision Australia School Holiday Program

Vision Australia invites children aged 7-12 years with vision impairments to participate in their school holiday program.

**When:** Monday to Thursday, September 30, October 1, 2, and 3

**Time:** 9.00 to 3.00pm

**Where:** Vision Australia, 454 Glenferrie Road Kooyong

**Activities will include:** gardening, café, National Gallery of Victoria, arts and craft, mapping, accessible sport, live music

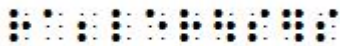
**Bookings are essential:** 0437 919 141 or [leo.gnavi@visionaustralia.org](mailto:leo.gnavi@visionaustralia.org)

## Braille Q&A – the Answer

**Question:** How should the word rabblers be written in braille:

ra bb l er ou s er s      or      ra bb l e r ou s er s

**Response from Kathy Reissen, Coordinator Accessible Format Production South Australian School for Vision Impaired:** I would consider this to be a compound word made up of "rabble" and "rousters" so wouldn't use the contraction "ER" in the middle. Refer to section 10.11.1 of the Rule Book.



I note that the DBT translator currently puts the contraction in. To force it not to contract you can put the code [/] between the E and R.

## Finally

Happy holidays for all who have them. Meanwhile, here at the SVRC, staff will be banging out braille, editing etext, drawing diagrams and keeping the home-fires burning!

– Deb Lewis (Ed) [lewis.debra.d@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lewis.debra.d@edumail.vic.gov.au)



Education  
and Training



Statewide Vision Resource Centre

presents

# Preparing for a student who reads braille

Tuesday 15th October 2019

**Where:** Statewide Vision Resource Centre, 370 Springvale Rd Donvale

**Parking:** Lower car park – next door at the Donvale Sports Complex

**For:** School Leadership Teams and Families

## PROGRAM

- What does inclusion look like?
- Reading and writing via braille
- Where and how to get resources
- Resources available from SVRC
- Equipment/Technology
- Expanded Core Curriculum
- Access to Core Curriculum
- Expectations
- Funding

This half-day professional learning opportunity is to support your inclusion of students who will be braille users entering schools in 2020.

No cost

Time: 9:30-1:00

Please [register online at the SVRC website](#)

For further details: phone 9841 0242

For parking and public transport information, please see the [SVRC website](#)