

Number 1, Friday 5th February, 2021

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Welcome back

SVRC staff wish all families, students, friends and the community a Happy New Year and a very warm welcome back and hopefully, a very seamless beginning for 2021.

SVRC is back to fully functioning onsite to meet all the incoming requests across all teams. It has been very enjoyable this week to sit and chat over a morning cup of coffee with other staff members. May the 'double doughnuts' results in Victoria continue for the rest of the year!

I would like to provide you with an update on staffing changes that have occurred in preparation for 2021.

Assistant Principal/Manager – Kim Foley

Acting Leading Teacher – Marion Blazé

EVAC Senior Education Officer – Annette Godfrey-Magee (Tuesdays and Wednesdays)

EVAC Senior Education Officer – Sam Oxley (only on Wednesdays)

SVRC Psychologist – Geoff Bowen increase to four days (Tuesday-Fridays)

Assistive Tech Trainer on Support Skills – Elise Lonsdale (only on Fridays)

Assistive Tech Trainer on Support Skills – Olivia Muscat (only on Fridays)

Assistive Tech Trainer on Support Skills – Kira Young (only on Fridays)

Please email Sarah Hayman if you have had student and/or staff changes to your caseload for 2021, to ensure our tracking system is up to date.

Week one 2021 update:

SVRC staff have hit the ground running with Transcribers producing alternative format materials with 120 new requests from schools and VTs in the past week alone! This week six new VTs attended our Introductory Professional Learning opportunity from across metro and rural areas. Families attended the first onsite EVAC clinic at



the Royal Eye and Ear Hospital. Students will be attending the first onsite Support Skills Program this Friday.

Over the schools holidays, Michael Kelly coordinated the creation of a very Green Screen Room. Presenters will now have the opportunity to use the new facilities to pre-record professional learning sessions. When you have the opportunity to visit SVRC I am sure Michael will be happy to give you a demonstration of the finished visual product. In the photo on the following page, Elise Lonsdale is pre-recording her presentation for one of the PL days this month.

PD events

Professional Learning from SVRC in 2021

Happy New Year! SVRC is beginning to get back to 'normal' after 2020, with a few very advantageous changes. One is about our professional learning activities. We will provide all of these **online in 2021**. Our August 2020 PL was so successful (200+ participants and great reviews!!) being entirely online, that we will run with this model for 2021. We will aim to record all the sessions so that participants can access sessions after the day if they wish to review or catch up on something they missed. Please tell schools about the PL calendar of events.

Below is the PL calendar. Please go to our [website for details and registrations](#).

Tuesday February 9 - **Educational support for students who are blind**

Providing practical strategies for classroom teachers and ES staff to promote inclusion and achievement for their students who are blind.

Tuesday February 16 - **Educational support for students with low vision**

Providing practical strategies for classroom teachers and ES staff to promote inclusion and achievement for their students who have low vision.

Tuesday February 23 - **Educational support for students with VI and additional impairments**

Providing practical strategies that teachers and ES staff can use to support students with vision impairments and additional disabilities.

Wednesday May 12 - **Including students who are blind or have low vision in art**

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

Tuesday August 10 - **Educational support for students for students who have low vision**

Providing practical strategies for classroom teachers and ES staff to promote inclusion and achievement for their students who have low vision.

Tuesday October 19 - **Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who is blind**

Providing practical support for school staff preparing to welcome and include a new student who will be learning to read using braille.

Tuesday November 23 - **EXPO: Assistive Technology for students who are blind or partially sighted**

Showcasing and demonstrating a range of assistive technologies that can promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind or have low vision.

SPEVI Online Conference 2021

Extract from: SPEVI Presidents Sharon Duncan, Frances Gentle and Phia Damsma

The SPEVI 2021 Conference, our first ever online event, has come and gone! Management have received wonderful, positive feedback from so many of you who attended, from Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific and from further away – we had 235 delegates and presenters from eight different countries!

If you missed the opportunity to attend the conference, then you can register to access recordings of the keynote speakers and presentations.

You can register for this package by visiting <https://shortcourses.ridbc.org.au/events/11501/>. The recordings will remain available to view until June 30, 2021.

Finally, if you are not yet a member of SPEVI, we invite you to join via <https://www.spevi.net/join/>

JSPEVI– Volume 13, No. 1, 2020

Source: Dr Bronwen Scott, JSPEVI Convening Editor and SPEVI website

The latest edition of the Journal of South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (JSPEVI) is now available on the SPEVI website. The journal provides essays, quantitative and qualitative research articles and analyses, conceptual papers, literature and book reviews, case studies, policy analyses and innovative practice descriptions and evaluations as well as perspectives and opinions on a wide variety of issues and topics related to the education of children, youth and adults in Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Island Countries who are blind or have low vision.

Issue 13 Number 1 features interesting research papers looking at O&M, and braille oral reading fluency in Australia and New Zealand, as well as a number of reports from around the region.

The Journal is now available in an open-access online format at <https://www.spevi.net/jspevi/>

LEGO Braille Bricks

From: Vision Australia

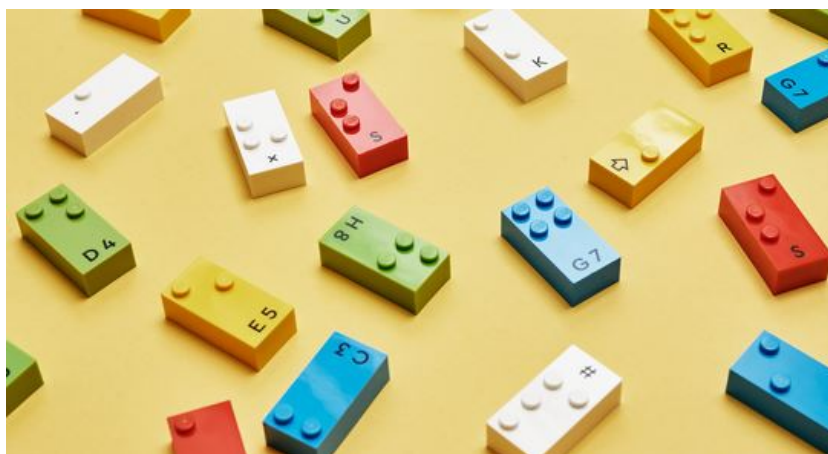
LEGO® Braille Bricks will be launched in Australia in early 2021 by Vision Australia, in partnership with the LEGO® Foundation.

LEGO® Braille Bricks is an educational tool designed by the LEGO® Foundation to support children and young people who are blind or have low vision.

The raised bumps on each LEGO® Braille Brick have been modified to correspond to a letter or character of the braille alphabet.

Each brick also has a printed letter or character to allow children who are blind or have low vision to learn and play alongside sighted classmates, family members and educators.

For more information please go visit the [Vision Australia website](#).



Books for Preppies

Source: Dan Andrews' Facebook page, 28 January 2021

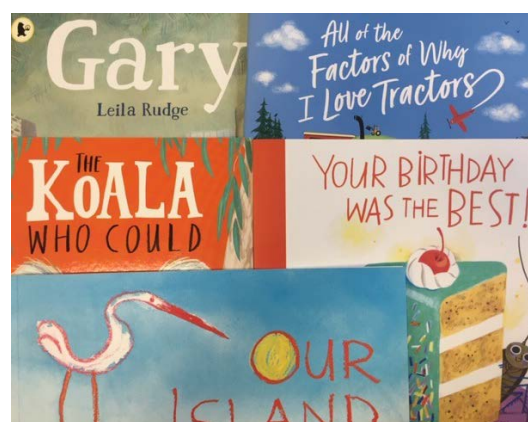
60,000 prep students start at state schools this week. And every single one of them gets one of these book bags. All the titles inside are selected by experts to help kids with their literacy and numeracy skills. They're completely free and available in braille too – giving everyone something to smile about.

Photo (left) shows Premier Daniel Andrews handing a red book bag to a student.

Staff of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre have undertaken production of the braille copies of the books for Preppies. Students who read braille in Prep (Foundation) receive their brailled books at the same time as their sighted peers.

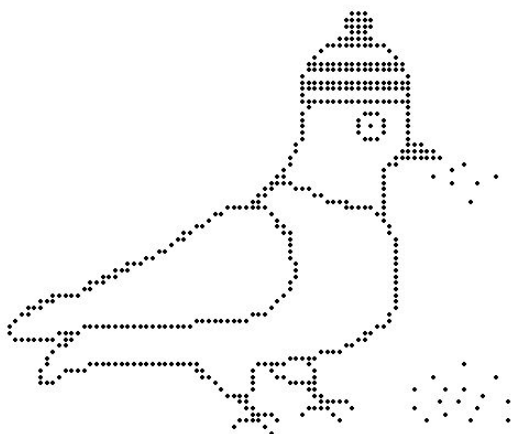
This year, the books in the book bag included the following books:

- *All of the factors of why I love tractors* by Davina Bell
- *Gary* by Leila Rudge
- *Our island* by the children of Gunana, with Alison Lester and Elizabeth Honey
- *The koala who could* by Rachel Bright
- *Your birthday was the best!* by Maggie Hutchings

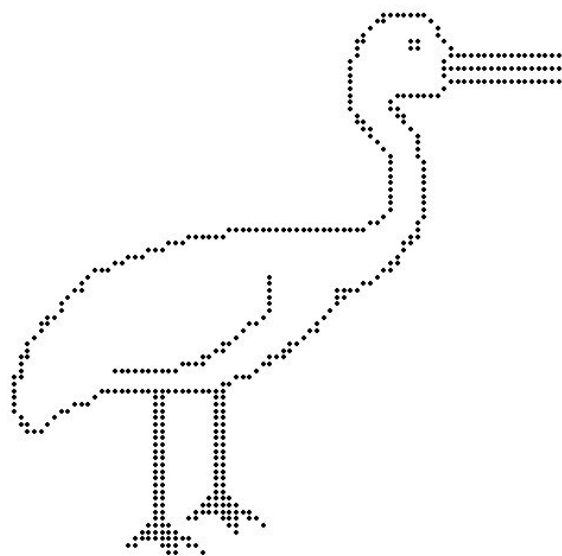


Braille books are illustrated with tactile pictures like the two example below.

Most of the time, Gary was just like the other racing pigeons. He ate the same seeds. Slept in the same loft. And dreamt of adventure.



An old crane watches for fish in the shallows.



Nas Campanella: Disability reporter who has a disability

The Guardian recently published an article which featured the ABC's national disability affairs reporter, Nas Campanella. According to the article, 'Campanella is coming up to 10 years at the national broadcaster and has embraced her "second dream job" after seven and a half years as Triple J's newsreader.

She was born sighted but at six months of age blood vessels burst in the back of her eyes, which detached her retinas and left her blind.' Campanella comments, 'reporting of people with a disability has been sensationalist: it's either a "pity party" or "inspiration porn", and she wants to change that.' For more, visit [The Guardian website](#)

Virtual Exhibition Tour: Reconfigured/Discovered

Extract from information provided by Description Victoria

Event Details:

Art lovers who are blind or have low vision are invited to a free, online described tour of 'Reconfigured/Rediscovered', an exhibition of artworks exploring the permeability of photography at Town Hall Gallery in Hawthorn.

Featuring artists: Christian Capurro, Ben Cauchi, Danica Chappell, Peta Clancy, Daniel Crooks, Izabela Pluta and Robyn Stacey.

When: Saturday 27 February, 2:00pm-3:00pm

Where: Online via Zoom.

Cost: Free.

How to book: [Register via Zoom here](#), email townhallgallery@boroondara.vic.gov.au or call 03 9278 4770.

More info: [Visit the Town Hall Gallery website.](#)

From the ABA Facebook Page

The [Australian Braille Authority \(ABA\) Facebook page](#) is located at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Australian-Braille-Authority/149349021763394>

Transcription of Early Learning Materials – Guidelines

New guidelines on the [braille transcription of early learning materials](#) now out from the Braille Authority of North America (BANA).

Visit: http://www.brailleauthority.org/early_learning/index.html

And finally

Please feel welcome to drop in and see us at the SVRC, COVID-restrictions permitting! And check out our freebies shelves – we have several Romeo 25 embossers that need new homes, lots of tactile diagrams to repurpose and a pile of braille readers for little kids 😊