

The Bulletin

Number 5, 17 April 2018

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Check updated [The Bulletin archive](#) for back issues!

Dates for Your Diary – 2018

Here is a list of our planned PD and other activities:

- **Braille Music:** 24 April (half day)
- **Art4Kids with VI:** 2 May
- **[Round Table:** 5-8 May in Sydney]
- **Dot Power Term 2:** 8 May (for pre-school and Foundation/Prep)
- **VT Master Class:** 12 June
- **Dot Power:** 19 June (new date for Year 1 to 3s)
- **[Braille Music Camp:** 30 June to 7 July in NSW]
- **Dot Power Term 3:** 7 August (for pre-school and Foundation/Prep)
- **Educational Support for Students who have Low Vision:** Tuesday 14 August
- **Dot Power:** 11 September (new date for Year 1 to 3s)
- **[Space Camp:** September-October in USA]
- **Dot Power Term 4:** 30 October (for pre-school and Foundation/Prep)
- **Dot Power:** 13 November (new date for Year 1 to 3s)
- **Technology Expo:** Tuesday 27 November
- **Christmas Morning Tea:** Wednesday 5 December [no need to register – just come at 11am!]

Programs and registration are available on the SVRC website! Online payment is also available!

If you can't find the PD you need, please contact Lea Nagel or Marion Blazé to request a session.

SVRC – Job Opportunity: Administration Officer

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre is responsible for administering a collection of specialist blind and low-vision educational technologies. Since 2012, we have provided specialised equipment for over four hundred eligible students attending Government schools. Technology is purchased by SVRC and loaned to schools, so that it can be returned and redistributed when a student leaves their school or when their requirements change.

A vacancy exists for a capable and enthusiastic staff member to join SVRC. The successful applicant will provide a range of administrative functions at the centre, including the purchasing, tracking and issuing of specialist equipment for students across Victoria. They will work effectively and collaboratively with other staff, be highly responsive to SVRC's changing needs and willing to lend a helping hand wherever required.

The fixed term position is online now and applications close soon. Please have a read through the position description online and submit an application if you are interested

- You can read the job details online by [clicking this link](#)
- This full time fixed term position lasts from 07/05/2018 until 21/12/2018.
- Applications are due on **Monday 30th April, 2018**.
- If you have any questions about this position, please contact our Transition Manager, Matt Trotter at trotter.matthew.a@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Concept Development – Interactive e-Learning Opportunity

Source: <https://www.visio.org/en-gb/expertise/expertiseprogramma-s/kennen-en-kunnen/conceptontwikkeling/mooc-over-conceptontwikkeling>

"Visio", an organisation in the Netherlands, is offering a MOOC (Mass Open Online Course) on concept development for children and young people with vision impairments. This MOOC will be offered in four blocks of one week (2-4 hours per week), beginning 16 April 2018 and is free.

Week 1: concept development in general: what's the definition, what is the importance of good concept development for children with a severe vision impairment, a structure that you can use to offer different concepts to children etc.

Week 2: children 0-6 years old (beginning 23 April)

Week 3: children 6-12 years old (beginning 30 April)

Week 4: children 12-18 years old (beginning 7 May)

Based on social learning: sharing knowledge and experiences, anyone with an interest is invited to register – see the link above.



Sensory Scientific Exhibition and Discovery Day

Source:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScV69B4eGgVV5LdWZ6QPqevSHQEcla18njTa6STD33DTQQJPQ/viewform?c=0&w=1>

Monash University is hosting Sensory Scientific Exhibition and Discovery Day. "The exhibition is specifically aimed to be accessible for the blind and low vision community with tactile, sound, olfactory and low vision accessible displays and exhibits. The event will cover a range of topics including learning about bacterial and viral infection, antibiotic resistance, vaccination, immune cells and the defence mechanisms they employ, and immunology of the eye.

There will be a special presentation by Prof. Jamie Rossjohn, ARC Australian Laureate Fellow who heads the Infection and Immunity Program at the BDI, followed by morning tea and breakout sessions, that will include:

- Hands on 2D and 3D exhibits created with 3D printers with models of immune cells and the human body
- An immersive experience at the MONASH CAVE2, an impressive super scale space where visitors can experience research and scientific discoveries on a grand scale.

When: Thursday 31 May from 8.45am to 1.00pm

Where: Monash University

This Exhibition and Discovery Day is offered to all primary, secondary, tertiary students, adults and science enthusiasts of all ages who are blind or have low vision, to come and explore the world leading research undertaken at the Infection and Immunity Program at the Biomedicine Discovery Institute.

For more information, visit the link above (expression of interest is required).

Space Camp (SCIVIS) 2018

We have a number of excited Space Campers interested in travelling with Visiting Teacher Chaperones, Peter Davis Hilary Frost and Gayle Skinner.

In some exciting holiday news **Boedi** has been selected to attend Space Camp as part of the Northrop-Grumman scholarship program! Boedi's scholarship includes program materials, airfare to and from home to Huntsville, lodging and meals while in Huntsville. There will be staff at the Huntsville International Airport to greet you and bring you to Space Camp upon arrival. Boedi will be staying in the Space Camp Habitat with approximately 180-210 blind and students with vision impairments.



Meeting for Space Campers and their families: 4.30pm on 18 April at SVRC – please RSVP

More Space Camp news as it comes to hand!

SCIVIS dates: 29 September to 4 October 2018

Announcing Additional Dates for Dot Power 2018

Dot Power is a program for young children whose primary reading medium is braille.

Based around the [Expanded Core Curriculum](#), Dot Power is designed to encourage students to get as much braille under their fingers as is possible in one day!

Eligible Victorian students from 4 years old (pre-school) to Year 3 are invited to participate in the SVRC Dot Power Program.

Prior to 2018, Dot Power has been a termly day at the SVRC, where students participate in group activities designed to offer opportunities to read and write braille. 1:1 assistance is provided as required. Each day features a theme: a postman delivering letters, a mother bird feeding its babies, pizza-making, braille music, the Paralympics etc.

Dot Power is also an extremely valuable learning opportunity for family members, ES staff and teachers to find out how best to include students who are blind in educational activities.

One recommendation of the review of SVRC undertaken in 2017, was to increase the number of Dot Power days. We also have an increased number of students eligible to attend, so for Terms 2, 3 and 4 this year we will invite the younger children to the already scheduled days and the older children to a second day a bit later in each term.

So for 2018 Dot Power Days will be:

Term 2

May 8 – for children pre-school to Foundation (prep)

June 19 – for children in Year 1 to 3 (new date)

Term 3

August 7 – for children pre-school to Foundation (prep)

September 11 – for children in Year 1 to 3 (new date)

Term 4

October 30 – for children pre-school to Foundation (prep)

November 13 - for children in Year 1 to 3 (new date)

Please note: Dot Power days and all the materials for them are very carefully prepared for the children that we know are coming. We definitely need RSVPs from families, and staff who are intending to come to any of these days.



Desmos Accessible Graphing Calculator

Source: <https://www.desmos.com/accessibility#accessibility-intro>

For students needing an accessible calculator at secondary level, check out the Desmos online graphing calculator which is compatible with JAWS and NVDA and works on iPad, Mac etc!

Desmos describes their mission as "to help every student learn math and love learning math". Desmos has "recently introduced improvements to the calculator to ensure students who are blind or have low vision have the same opportunities as their peers to discover the joy of learning math".

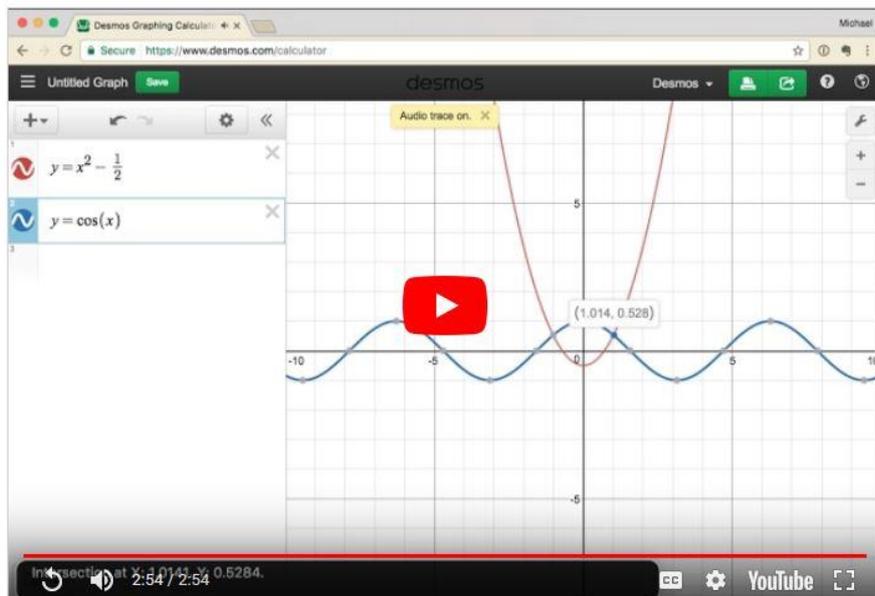
The software is now compliant with [the WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards](#). Improvements to the calculator include:

- respecting font-size settings of low vision users
- ensuring that colours have sufficient contrast
- making graphs accessible to blind students

Desmos Accessible Graphing Calculator now communicates with screen readers, allowing them to speak equations in a verbally intuitive manner. For example, the text "cos(x)" is spoken as "cosine open-parenthesis x close-parenthesis," and "stddevx" is read aloud as "standard deviation of x." The screen reader voices additional cues to indicate a student's location within an expression. (Numerator or denominator, superscript or subscript, baseline, etc.) There is added audio synthesis to the graphing component, allowing users to hear audible representations of graphs, explore their points of interest, and more.

See the introductory video: <https://youtu.be/EggigTkThi8>

Please note: At this stage, Desmos has not been approved for use during VCE exams.



Why Accessibility is Important

Our mission at Desmos is to help every student learn math and love learning math. Our graphing calculator is used by millions of students all around the world, and we'd like to see that use expand

Round Table Conference 2018

Theme: Advances in Information Access – Opportunities, Applications and Technologies

Presenters: from Japan, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, USA and Australia.

When: Saturday 5 May to Tuesday 8 May 2018

Where: Rydges Sydney Central, 28 Albion Street Surry Hills

Registration and further information: <http://printdisability.org/conference/2018-round-table-conference/2018-round-table-conference-registration-details-and-form/2018-round-table-conference-registration-form/>

ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference 2018

When: 16-19 October 2018

Where: Manila, Philippines

Theme: Rights-Based Education & Sustainable Development Goals for Persons with VI

"Keeping in view the global agenda of "Education For All" children, ICEVI East Asia region is attempting to deliberate on the issue of treating education of children with visual impairment as their fundamental human right and ensuring that the global campaign 2030 addresses the Sustainable Development Goals in the vast Asia region, which is reported to have the largest number of visually impaired persons of the world."

Further information and registration: <http://icevi.org/conferences/>

Q&A: Scanning – Editing – Producing in Braille

Question: Is it possible for OpenBook to scan multiple pages and then send to Duxbury for braille?

Answer: OpenBook can send multiple pages to a program of your choice on the computer.

You need to set up Launchables once (this may take some time). Next time you scan more than one page, go to launchables and select Word, then you'll be launching the multi-page document into Word and all of the pages will be scanned. From there, you can edit and open using Duxbury. Emboss in the usual way.

For more detail, please see: http://svrc.vic.edu.au/wp-content/resources/CSscan_to_brl.pdf

Q&A: Opening ePub File on iPad

Question: What's the best app to use for ePub on the iPad?

Answer: You'll probably get the clearest text and images by opening the file in iBooks.

Q&A: Extra Dots between Words in Word Files

Question: When I open etext files from SVRC on my student's laptop there is a dot between each word and so when JAWS reads the document it says the word but then also says "place marker" every time it comes across a dot – which is EVERY word. Do you know why and how to get rid of these dots?

Answer: Have you tried turning off the paragraph markers?

Under the Home menu in Word, there is a symbol that looks like a backwards "P". If you click this button it should take away all the dots between each word and JAWS should read it properly.

Shortcut key: CTRL + SHIFT + *

Blind Photographer Captures the Games

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2018/apr/14/sound-and-vision-how-a-blind-photographer-shot-the-games>

Australian Andrew Follows has retinitis pigmentosa and is totally blind in one eye and has tunnel vision in the other. Follows photographed the recent Commonwealth Games in Brisbane.

Follows says, "Over the years I've developed techniques [for making photographs] and it works well for the swimming, especially. I'm using my hearing to follow the sound of the water splashing and the crowd.



"You know that the end of the race is coming when the crowd gets louder and louder and louder. I just focus the camera on the end blocks and start pressing that shutter button. I'm not seeing the results until I see them on the computer but I get really excited when I see them."

Check out some more of Andrew's amazing photos at the link above.

6 Sports in 6 Weeks for Teens!!!

Students with VI from 13 to 17 years are invited to take part in a sporting extravaganza in term 2. One new sporting activity to try each week for 6 weeks including goalball, soccer, tandem cycling, tennis and more! Expression of interest is required by phone 9822 8876 or email janelle@blindsports.org.au

With Seeing Hands – With Audio Description

With Seeing Hands is an accessible and inclusive exhibition that presents a range of multi-sensory works made by artists with and without disabilities. Staff from Description Victoria will be leading a described tour of the exhibition, and invite you to stay for performances and interventions by the artists which will follow.

Participating artists include Fayen d'Evie and Bryan Phillips, Carolyn Eskdale, Heather Lawson, Carmen Papalia and Nathan Liow, and Sam Petersen.

When: Saturday 21 April at 11am

Where: Incinerator Gallery, 180 Holmes Rd, Moonee Ponds. A pickup service will be available from Moonee Ponds station on the Craigieburn line at 10.30am.

Cost: Free but bookings are required

Bookings: Email AMathieu@mvcc.vic.gov.au or tel (03) 8325 1750

Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition 2018

Queensland's Braille House is again conducting their annual writing competition. To be eligible to enter, writers "must be a resident of Australia who is either legally blind or has low or no vision".

Theme: Imagine

Age at closing date: Junior (12 years or under); Senior (13 to 17 years); Adult (over 18 years)

Submission format: hard-copy braille, a Word document, SimBraille or a Duxbury-readable file.

Entry fees: Junior - \$5; Senior students and adults - \$10

Closing date: 31 August 2018

For further information and/or an entry form email: admin@qbwa.org.au

Autumn Edition of Soundabout

Source: Samantha Marsh, Information and Administration officer, Blind Citizens Australia

The Autumn issue of BCA's audio newsletter, Soundabout, is now available and includes the following interviews:

- Steve Richardson speaks with CEO, Emma Bennison for an update on BCA
- Peter Greco speaks with Angela Jaeshcke, new BCA Policy Officer
- Marian Jones speaks with Vicki Alipasinopoulos for a Women's Branch update
- Steve Richardson speaks with Graeme Innes about the Banking Association Accessibility Review
- Glen Morrow speaks with new Board Director, Helen Freris
- Dr Fred Schroeder speaking from the National Convention
- Jonathan Mosen, speaks about accessible technology

Listen link: <http://bca.org.au/attachments/soundabout/2018-03/SoundAbout%20Autumn%202018.m3u>

Download link: <http://bca.org.au/attachments/soundabout/2018-03/SoundAbout%20Autumn%202018.zip>

What's it Like to be a Blind Software Engineer at Amazon?

Source: SPEVI List with thanks to Phia Damsma

Quite an interesting interview (by Lydia Dishman) with Michael Forzano, who for the past six years has been working as a software engineer for Amazon in the USA.

In view of my Sonokids background (developing accessible audio games and an app to learn how to code) I can't help but quote: "...Forzano has always been comfortable around computers, playing audio-based games as a kid and later teaching himself to code in high school."

I think it's a useful resource for senior students looking for inspiration on how to 'score a job'. This article has also been published on the SPEVI website (Transition and Employment links).

Web: https://www.fastcompany.com/40555815/what-its-like-to-be-a-blind-software-engineer-at-amazon?partner=rss&utm_campaign=rss+fastcompany&utm_content=rss&utm_medium=feed&utm_source=rss

Call for Expressions of Interest: Opportunity for Young People to Attend US Summer Camp

Blind Citizens Australia, (BCA), the national representative organisation of people who are blind or vision-impaired, is calling for expressions of interest from young people aged eighteen to twenty to attend the Enchanted Hills Summer Camp in California, USA.

Enchanted Hills Camp and Retreat (EHC) serves blind children, teens, adults, people who are deaf-blind, seniors, as well as families. Since 1950, Enchanted Hills has provided valuable opportunities for recreation in a fun, challenging and accessible way. Located on 311 acres on scenic Mt. Veeder, Enchanted Hills is just 10 miles west of Napa, California.

The experience of summer camp holds countless opportunities for enjoyment and learning in many a young person's life. Whether it's exploring a trail in the woods or creating a skit as a team to perform in front of an audience, camp provides a wealth of structured and unrestricted moments that contribute to socialization, growth and development.

For further information about Enchanted Hills Camp visit: <http://lighthouse-sf.org/enchanted-hills/about-enchanted-hills/>

As part of its commitment to providing opportunities for young people who are blind or vision impaired, Blind Citizens Australia is looking to send six Aussie teens, aged 18 to 20 years, to participate in the Teen session at Enchanted Hills this July 2018.

Your expression of interest should include:

- Why you would like to attend EHC
- How you think attending this camp may support you in your independence, education or employment
- How you feel you may be able to support BCA in its endeavours to improve the lives of teens and young adults who are blind or vision impaired
- If you would like to participate in this unique opportunity, please send an expression of interest to BCA Project Officer Sally Aurisch at sally.aurisch@bca.org.au by 5:00pm on the 30 April 2018.

If you have any questions, please call 1800 033660 or email bca@bca.org.au

Importance of Braille Music

Source: ABA Facebook page

Emma Bennison, BCA's CEO, discussed the impact that braille music has had on her life. Visit: <http://www.abc.net.au/radio/hobart/programs/your-afternoon/emma-bennison-ceo-blind-citizens/9519492>

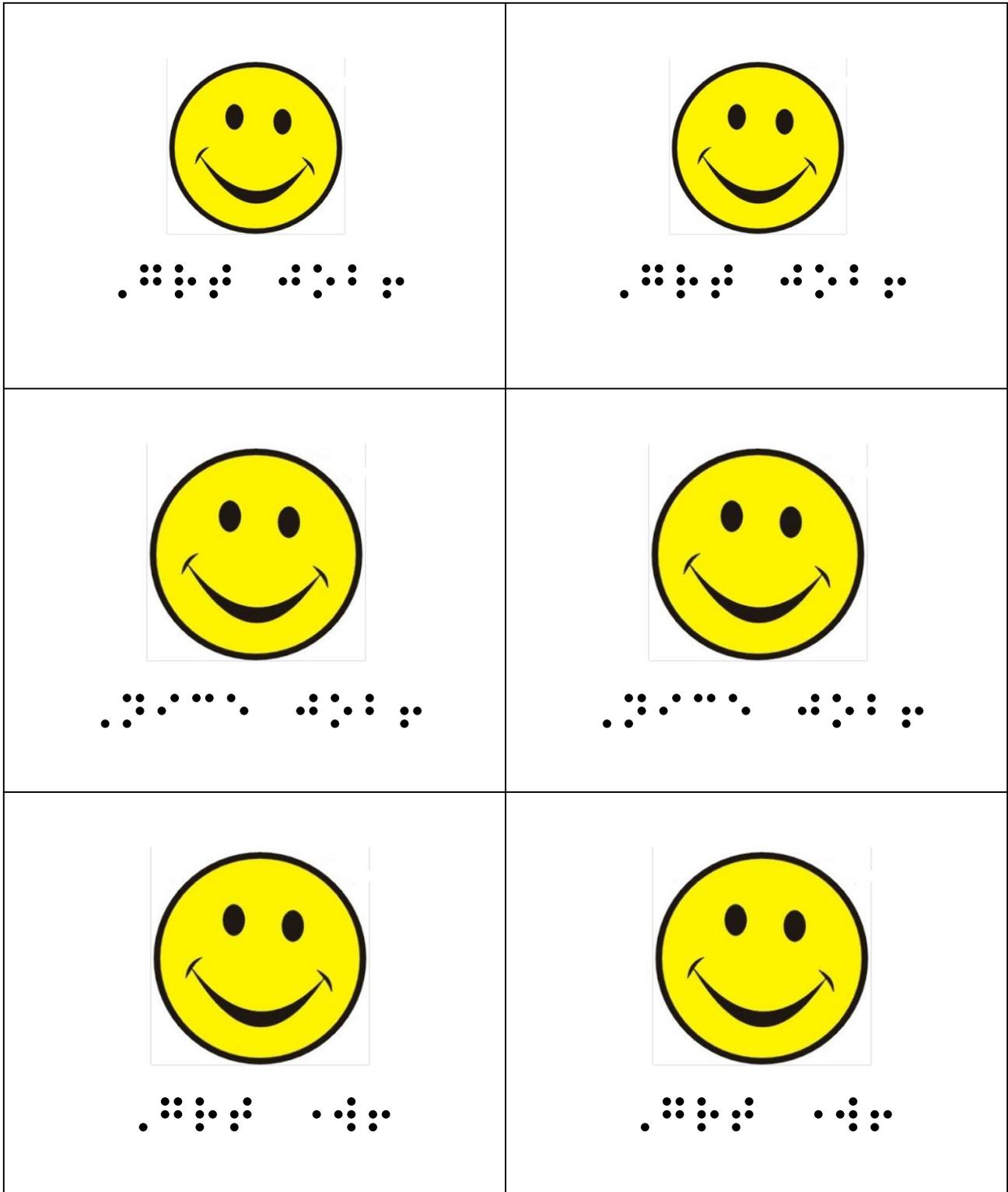
CNIB's 100 Years in Canada Commemorated

Source: ABA Facebook page

Beautiful braille on the commemorative coin and medallion celebrating CNIB's 100 years in Canada. Visit: <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/the-royal-canadian-mint-launches-an-innovative-coin-and-medallion-set-honouring-the-100th-anniversary-of-the-canadian-national-institute-for-the-blind-677497223.html>

Colourful Tactile Stickers

Dianne Bennett reminded us that you can print in colour on stereo paper. This is a cute idea to bring colour to student's tactile stickers! Below are some examples which say "Great job!", "Nice job!" and "Great work!". A lovely idea for braille readers, particularly those with some vision ... and their classmates! Thanks for sharing, Di!



NDIS Workshops

Source: Ramona Mandy, AFDO Disability Loop

AFDO is rolling out two new workshops on the NDIS throughout Victoria.

1. **Understanding the NDIS:** workshop specifically designed for people with disability and their families. This three-hour workshop will cover lots of different parts of the NDIS; including knowing who is eligible for the NDIS, working out what support you can get in your NDIS plan, to actually using the funds in your NDIS plan to live a better life in the community.
2. **Understanding the ILC:** workshop for user-led and small community organisations. This workshop is specifically for small user-led community organisations. These NDIS workshops are about the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) part of the NDIS.

Workshops for people with disability

Our next set of workshops will be held in **Warrnambool** and **Bendigo** in **May**. You can learn more about our NDIS workshops and register, by visiting our Disability Loop website "events" page:

<https://www.disabilityloop.org.au/events.html>

Warrnambool NDIS workshop: for people with disabilities and families/carers:

[Thursday 10th May \(day session\)](#)

[Thursday 10th May \(evening session\)](#)

Bendigo ILC workshop: for user-led and small community organisations:

[Bendigo - Wednesday 2nd May \(day session\)](#)

Warrnambool ILC workshop: for user-led and small community organisations

[Warrnambool - Wednesday 9th May \(day session\)](#)

If you have any questions, or want help registering, please email disabilityloop@afdo.org.au or phone (03) 9662 3324.

Improving Visual Contrast in the Snow

From Facebook:

"Love the creativity of my students and their families. A parent just shared this fun idea for her child with low vision. Spraying the snowman with food colouring added to water in a spray bottle. What a great method of improving contrast so he can see the snowman from inside the house!!!!"



Coding for Students who are Blind

A Visiting Teacher has sent the following request:

One of my schools uses code.org P-6 which is not suitable for my student who is blind. The Hour of Code Perkins School for the Blind e learning mentions Sodbean. I have installed this but cannot run it – though suspect from the blog it is aimed at Intro to Programming for College-aged students in any case.

Are there any schools or teachers using coding for upper primary students who are blind to recommend and open up discussion . We have had discussions about visual basic and html using notepad but are wondering if there are any other options.

Please contact Deb Lewis at SVRC.

SVRC Staff News

What does an SVRC Manager do on long service leave?

Many of you will be unaware that Marion has another string to her bow (or in this case, plectrum!). When she's not managing SVRC, she's spending time with her family or playing the mandolin. Marion leads one of the two Melbourne-based mandolin and guitar ensembles, and has been invited on a European tour with the other one. The group of forty musicians from around Australia meet in Amsterdam on April 25 and will perform seven concerts over three weeks across Europe. Marion is then tripping around Spain and Morocco with her husband.



The picture shows Marion and husband ready to head off to separate gigs.

Late News: Changes to Upcoming SPEVI Conference

Information provided by Carly Turnbull, President, SPEVI

Due to unforeseen circumstances I would like to advise our community that unfortunately our next SPEVI Conference will not be held in Perth this coming January 2019.

However, I am happy to advise that our next confirmed conference will be held in Adelaide in South Australia. The conference will be held from Sunday 12th January to Wednesday 15th of January in 2020. It will include social events, international keynote speakers, optional school tours as well as other exciting program features yet to be announced.

We look forward to building a wonderful conference program and welcoming our community to SPEVI Adelaide 2020.

Finally

I hope everyone survived the cold snap that shut down our beautiful holiday weather! And wish everyone a productive and fun term 2.

Deb Lewis (Ed and Acting SVRC Manager in Term 2, 2018)