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

## Dates for Your Diary – 2019

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

### Term 1

Tuesday February 12 – [Education Support for Students who are Blind](#)

Monday February 18 – Introduction to being a Visiting Teacher (Vision)

Tuesday February 26 – [Educational support of students who have low vision](#)

Tuesday March 5 – [Educational support of students who have low vision](#)

Wednesday March 13 – [Including students who are blind or have low vision in physical education](#)

Tuesday March 19 – [Educational support of students who are vision impaired with additional impairments](#)

Wednesday April 3 – Supporting Students with VI in Maths (9.30am to 1.00pm)

### Term 2

Tuesday April 30 – [Braille music](#) (program attached)

Wednesday May 15 – [Including students who are blind or have low vision in art](#)

Conference day for Visiting Teachers – yet to be scheduled

### Term 3

Tuesday August 13 – [Educational support of students who have low vision](#)

### Term 4

Tuesday October 15 – Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses braille

Tuesday November 26 – Assistive Technology Expo

**Note:** Programs, registration & online payment are available on the [SVRC website!](#)

### Dialogue in the Dark, Docklands any time

Teachers can book complimentary tickets [boxoffice@dialogueinthedark.com.au](mailto:boxoffice@dialogueinthedark.com.au)

Use the links above to find out more and register online.

For the full list of upcoming professional learning here at SVRC – take a look at our [professional learning page](#).

## SVRC: It's Been Quite a Year!!!

Each year brings new challenges and 2018 was no exception. After a very informative review of SVRC in 2017, we had a new "Transition Manager" (Matt Trotter) in place in February. Matt's role was to oversee the transition to the recommendations of the review, while the rest of us got on with it. And get on with it we did!

We have been more hectic and productive than ever before. For example, we produced 40,000+ pages of braille in 2017, and a whopping big 80,000+ in 2018. We've also run more PD days and Dot Power days, and seen more students at Support Skills. All this while also implementing the Equipment Boost funding.

We ran our first VT conference in June, which was one of the recommendations of our review, and are planning a two-day event in 2019 for all VTs, not just vision (date and venue tbc, but probably a Monday and Tuesday in June).

We also supported a team to go to Space Camp in the US: VTs Hilary Frost and Peter Davis were chosen as chaperones to accompany three young men to Space Camp. Come and see their framed photos at SVRC.

We've welcomed several new members of staff, Di Hewes in braille production and Sarah Hayman who is overseeing the Technology library; Beth Davies and Roy Sequiera are currently on contract to start procuring the approved equipment. Thank you to all these new people for really hitting the ground running and jumping!

We have also farewelled Nola Houghton, fantastically skilled braille transcriber (retiring to Porepunkah) and now Garry Stinchcombe, who will retire after LSL in Term 1 2019. Both these people will be so very sadly missed by staff and students.

Last week we had the opportunity to thank our helpers and supporters at the SVRC Christmas morning tea (photo below). We were able to catch up with folks from organisations who supply access technology such as HumanWare, Pacific Vision and Quantum RLV; organisations the provide support to students and families such as Guide Dogs Victoria and Vision Australia; Visiting Teachers past and present; staff from schools; students and family members past and present; and many others who are part of the wider VI community. We thanked our volunteer Jacquie Smith for her wonderful tactile illustrations that are in books in schools all over Victoria. We farewelled VT Lynne Murdoch who retires at the end of this year after years of support to student with vision impairments and deaf students – AND she was also one of the first VTs to take students to the USA for Space Camp! And we gave Garry Stinchcombe a little farewell. Garry will be on Long Service Leave in term 1, prior to his retirement later in 2019.

The staff of SVRC wish to thank everyone for their contributions, patience, hard work in support of the inclusion of students with vision impairments. Merry Christmas and let's do it again in 2019!!



Marion Blazé

SVRC's Acting Transition Manager while Matt's away

## Inclusive Practices for Young Children with VI: The First Five Years

RIDBC is offering this 2-day workshop either as face-to-face or via digital access.

**When:** Monday 4 March to Tuesday 5 March 2019 from 9.00am to 4.00pm

**Cost:** \$425 / \$395

**Presenter:** Dr Frances Gentle

**For course information and bookings:** visit the [RIDBC website](#).

## Top Tech Tidbits

Here's Garry's picks from the 6 December issue of Top Tech Tidbits

### Microsoft Accessibility Learning Webinars

Starting in January 2019, Microsoft will begin conducting monthly webinars, including video presentations and Q&A sessions, on accessibility topics. The first three will cover Narrator, magnifier and low vision features, and navigating the new office ribbon: <http://bit.ly/2RAARvI>

### Videos to Teach Coding

Hadley has created six videos helping visually impaired would-be coders learn the vision accessibility features in Apple's Swift Playgrounds app: <http://bit.ly/2QhirqU>

### See Audio Description in Action

This is the trailer for the Disney movie Frozen. Without audio description, a viewer with a visual impairment would be lost. Here is what it's like with audio description: <http://bit.ly/2StVnOh>

## How to Write Alt Text and Image Descriptions for Instagram

Check out the [Veroniiiica \(Veronica With Four Eyes\)](#) website for an excellent explanation of alt text, how to provide a succinct description and a whole lot of useful answers to questions you may have! Here is a sample of what you will find on the page:

### Explain what's in the photo

Here's an easy way to figure out what alt text to write for your next Instagram post. Imagine someone is sitting next to you as you scroll through Instagram, and they point at a photo and ask what it is. Chances are, you'll give them a one or two sentence description that is perfect for writing as alt text. Here's an example:

"Hey Veronica, who's that in the photo with you?"

"Oh, that's a fluffy gray dog sitting in my lap. We're sitting on the ground at a therapy dog event."

Ta-da! You now have written an alt text description. It's really that simple.

Thanks to Leona Holloway and the ANZAGG Facebook page for this link.

## Period and Incontinence Underwear

Source: [Modibodi](#)

Modibodi has been voted the #1 Period Underwear and Incontinence Underwear Brand. The Modibodi underwear can be used "from periods and discharge, light bladder leakage and weak pelvic floors to perspiration and pong".

The company is an NDIS provider and sells their products online.

## Q&A: VCE Music Examinations

**Question:** How do the students produce their answers requiring braille music code in VCE Music Examinations?

**Answer:**

### 1. For questions that do not require the braille music code:

A large portion of the student responses to questions will be text. They would submit that in the style they have been using all year. For example if they write on their computer or note-taker, they would submit a print-out in regular print or a Word Document on USB copy (or both) to VCAA.

### 2. For questions involving the student writing music notation:

It depends on what the student has been doing during the year. It would be great if the student has been using BME Braille Music Editor all year and are comfortable using it. If that were the case, they would submit their BME music file and export to Music XML and save that file to USB stick to be submitted to VCAA. The Music XML file could also be imported by school staff to a standard music notation software e.g. MuseScore. It could then be viewed and printed as .PDF, also to be submitted to VCAA. The advantage of the student exporting electronically is that the student is not relying on the accuracy of a person transcribing their braille music into print music.

If the student has only been using Perkins all year then they would submit their Perkins paper version of their responses to VCAA. VCAA would then seek to have it transcribed by a music transcriber and the transcription would be submitted with their exam paper.

**Note:** any special exam arrangements will need to be approved by VCAA.

## Gymnastics Clinic in January

Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria invite primary school aged kids who are blind or have low vision to develop their skills and confidence.

**When:** Monday 21 January 2019 from 1.30-3.30pm

**Where:** Essendon Keilor Gymnastics Academy 194-196 Roberts Road Airport West, VIC

**Staffing ratio:** 1:2

**Cost:** Free

Afternoon tea will be provided and there will be a Lego-making activity for siblings in the waiting area.

**To book a place:** RSVP to Miriam Bilander on (03) 9822 8876 or [miriam@blindsports.org.au](mailto:miriam@blindsports.org.au)

## Fun Activities for Sighted Children to Learn About Braille

There are some great text and video resources about Louis Braille, the braille code and downloading a braille font on the [Australian Braille Authority website](#).

Towards the bottom of the page is "[Braille activities and information for sighted children](#)" with links to Braille Bug for children from grades 3 to 6, Perkins Resource Pack with information and games for younger and older children, free printable braille charts, worksheets and flashcards and more.

Thanks to Leona Holloway and the ABA Facebook page for this link.

## Holiday Reading on Your Laptop or iPad

SVRC has approximately 4000 titles available for young readers (primary and secondary students). The online catalogues have recently been updated so you can see what books are on our electronic library shelves. There is a new easier-to-use Request Form which is also available on the SVRC website.

Set yourself a Personal Reading Challenge for the school holidays! Here is a suggestion:

**For my Personal Reading Challenge, I will read 5 books on my iPad or laptop during the school holidays and send one book review in to the SVRC for publication in The Bulletin.**

Excellent – I can't wait! (Ed)

If you are unsure what format to request, these should probably work:

- **BrailleNote Apex:** Word – doc
- **BrailleNote Touch:** Word – doc or docx
- **iPad:** ePub
- **Laptop with enlargement:** Word or PDF
- **Laptop with JAWS or NVDA:** Word – doc or docx
- **Polaris:** Word – doc or docx
- **Victor Reader:** Word – docx

Happy reading everyone!

## Free Alternative Format Production for Vision Australia Clients

Vision Australia clients can request up to 360 print pages per year to be transcribed into braille, audio, large print, tactual graphics or electronic text for free.

The [Accessible Information Personal Support service](#) is funded by the Print Disability Services Grant from the Federal Government.

For more information, contact VA on 1300 847 466 or email [printaccess@visionaustralia.org](mailto:printaccess@visionaustralia.org).

## Dot Power Dates for 2019

### Term 1

Tuesday 26th March For children in Foundation (Prep) only

**Note:** Pre-school and grades 1 - 3 first Dot Power Day will be in term 2.

### Term 2

Tuesday 4th June: Grades 1 - 3

Tuesday 18th June: Pre-school and Foundation (Prep)

### Term 3

Tuesday 27th August: Grades 1 - 3

Tuesday 10 September: Pre-school and Foundation (Prep)

### Term 4

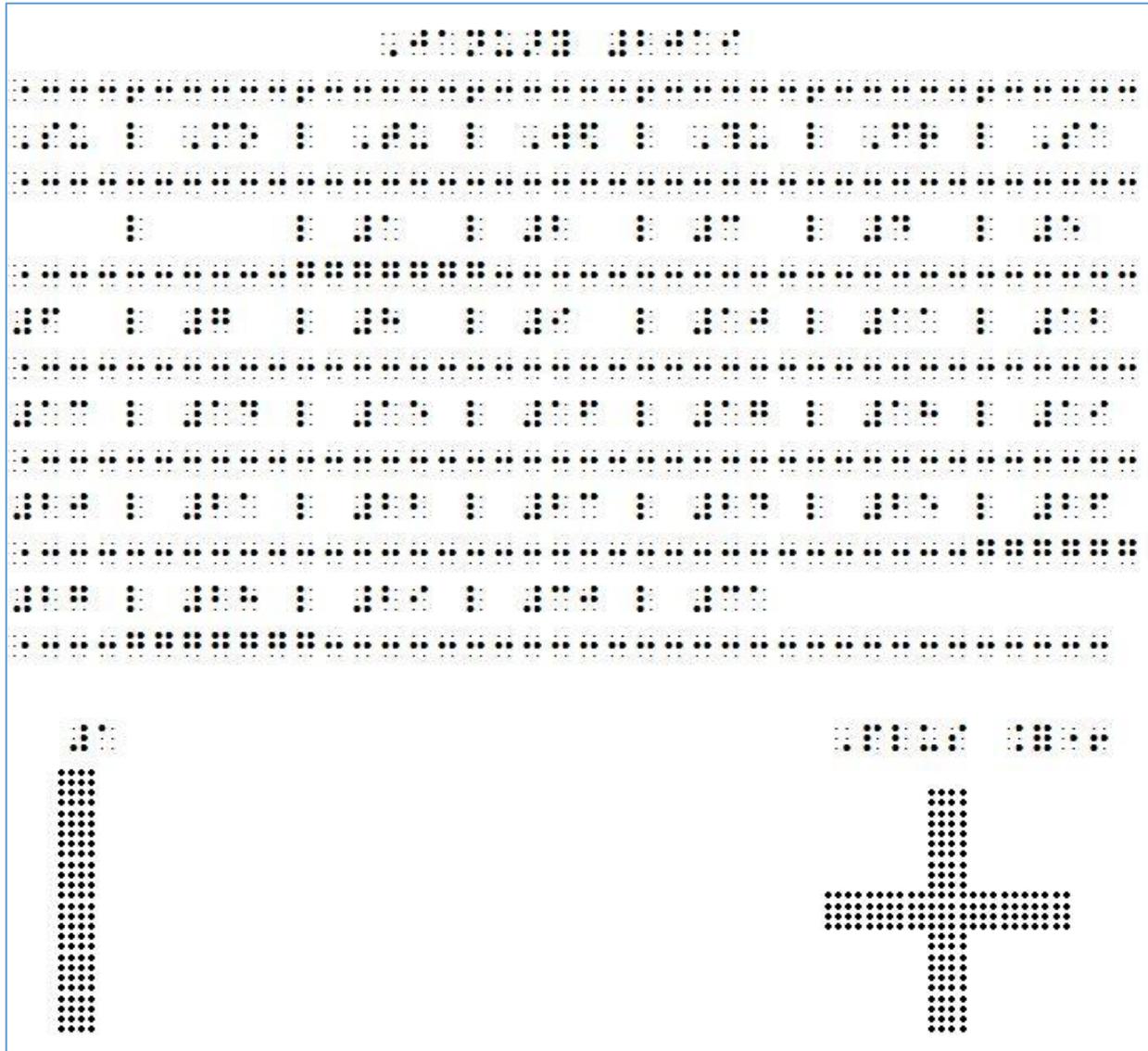
Tuesday 12th November: Grades 1-3

Tuesday 19th November: Pre-school and Foundation (Prep)

## 2019 Calendar in Braille

The 2019 Calendar is now available for request in braille with thanks to Garry and Sherryl. In addition to days and dates for each month, this calendar also features Maths symbols and numbers 1 to 12 in braille along with a tactual images of the print symbols. The page below is January with the number 1 and the plus sign at the bottom of the page.

Included also are two fun Wonderwords: days-of-the-week and months-of-the-year.



## Finally

We all hope you have enjoyed The Bulletin this year. We love contributions from students and others, so think about sharing something in the new year!

Meanwhile, the staff of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre wish you a very Merry Christmas season and a restful and peaceful January.

The SVRC will be open during the school holidays (except public holidays) but please call before you visit to ensure that someone will be here to greet you!

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