

The Bulletin

Number 1, Friday 1 February 2019

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Dates for your Diary

Here is a list of our planned PD:

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](#) half day workshop

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!](#)

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](#).

Dialogue in the Dark, Docklands any time

Teachers can book complimentary tickets boxoffice@dialogueinthedark.com.au

Message from SVRC Transition Manager

Hello and welcome back to the 2019 school year,

It's an exciting time at SVRC. The transcription team has been doing an incredible job through January completing requests for the new year. We have confirmed our 2019 professional learning calendar and have done lots of preparation for this year's Supports Skills and Dot Power programs. After many months of work, we are now starting to take delivery of the first phase of our Equipment Boost for Schools technology, which will be delivered to schools in the coming weeks. I'd like to thank the tireless work and dedication of the SVRC staff, especially those who have been busy over the summer months.

Over the past few weeks a number of important staffing changes have occurred at SVRC. Following news of Garry Stinchcombe's retirement, Lea Nagel has agreed to take on the role of SVRC Student Programs Coordinator for 2019, covering both the Support Skills and Dot Power programs. Emma Hall has been appointed as our Student Programs Administration Coordinator, providing additional support to Lea and the Support Skills/Dot Power teachers. We are looking forward to welcoming our first Support Skills group for the year on Friday 8th February.

We are currently advertising two additional positions – One two-day-per-week teaching position and one two-day-per-week transcription officer position. If you or someone you know is interested in applying, please visit Recruitment Online or contact us for more information.

If your school currently has technology borrowed from SVRC's library, in December they will have received a stocktake form. Please ensure this is completed and returned as soon as possible. If your school requested equipment through the Equipment Boost for Schools initiative last year, in late December they will have received notification regarding what (if any) technology will be available for them. If your school is eligible to borrow technology from SVRC's library, please complete the loan agreement form and return it to SVRC. Once the technology is ready to be sent, Visiting Teachers will be contacted individually and delivery details confirmed. Although I understand your desire to get this technology as soon as possible, please be patient with us during this time.

Thank you for your ongoing support,

Matthew Trotter, SVRC Transition Manager

Message from SVRC Manager

As you can see from the above, life is never dull at SVRC!

I especially want to thank the folk at SVRC for working long and hard over the last year and school holidays to implement changes and 'create' a technology library. It is very rewarding to see technology moving out of our centre and into schools and it speaks volumes of the amazing workforce we have here in Victoria (Visiting Teachers, classroom teachers and the staff at SVRC) that we are all pulling together to maximise the inclusion of students with vision impairments.

We know there are more changes to come and will endeavour to keep you posted.

Happy 2019!

Marion Blazé, SVRC Manager

VCE Special Provision 2019

The last day for schools to submit applications for Special Examination Arrangements for the 2019 external assessments, is Friday March 1. The VCAA must approve all Special Examination Arrangements for students with vision impairments for any Unit 3 and 4 external (to the school) assessments. These arrangements must be confirmed on the student's Special Examination Arrangements Advice Slip, which is available on VASS.

The VCAA requires the following evidence to support an application for Special Examination Arrangements for a student with vision impairment:

- evidence of a moderate or severe vision impairment from either an ophthalmologist or the Educational Vision Assessment Clinic (EVAC)
- a supporting statement with comments and recommendations from a specialist teacher, along with confirmation of the student's enrolment with the Visiting Teacher Service.

If this evidence is not available, the VCAA may contact the student's school to request other educational and testing information.

If an alternative format examination paper is required (for example, enlarged print, Braille, electronic examination), a specific request with details of font type, font sizes, format and any other recommendations from specialists should be clearly outlined for each external assessment in the application.

Visiting Teachers and/or schools can consult with SVRC regarding the examination arrangements possible for a student with vision impairment, some of which are not listed in VCAA's 'Schools' Guide to Special Examination Arrangements'. Please contact Marion Blaze for information.

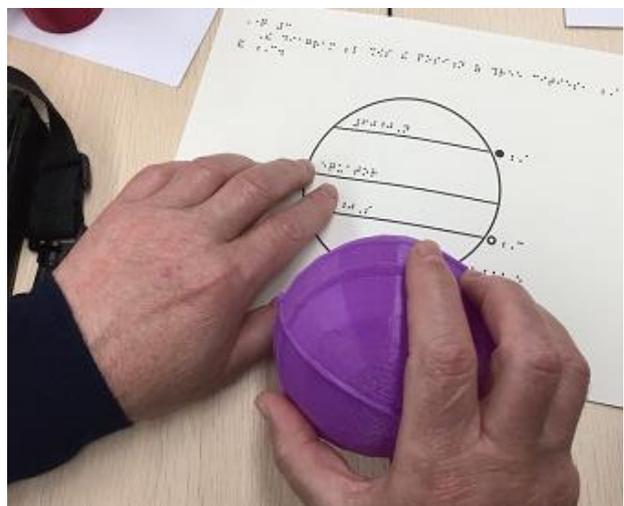
blaze.marion.g@edumail.vic.gov.au

Monash University: 3D Printing Research Project

Staff from Monash University have secured a grant from the Australian Research Council (ARC) to study the use of 3D printing to assist tactile literacy, facilitate O&M, and to teach STEM and geography. SVRC are partners in this research along with RIDBC, Guide Dogs Victoria, RSB and the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities.

Late last year, Kim Marriot, Matt Butler and Leona Holloway from Monash University brought some samples of 3D printed teaching items for us to look at including earth showing the continents, maps, geometric shapes, and so on. Garry is shown looking at a diagram and 3D model showing parallels of latitude.

We look forward to working closely with Monash University and the other partner organisations to develop some teaching resources – if you have ideas, please let us know 😊



Australia Day Honours – 2019



Congratulations to **Dorothy Hamilton** (left) who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. Dorothy receives this medal for her service to music as braille music teacher, transcriber and mentor. Dorothy's service has been extensive and ongoing, and very much-valued in Victoria and around Australia – a well-deserved honour.

Congratulations also to **Karen Hayes** (right), CEO of Guide Dogs Victoria, who has been appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM). She is highly-regarded in the field of vision impairment through her work with GDV; she was recognised for significant service to the community as an advocate for gender equity, and to women in sport.



"Born Accessible" Publications

Source: http://www.accessiblebooksconsortium.org/news/en/2018/news_0009.html

Have you heard the expression "born accessible"? It refers to books that are produced from the outset in an accessible format.

The Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) Charter contains eight aspirational principles that publishers should follow to make their digital publications available to persons with print disabilities. The aim is for the same product to be usable by everybody.

"Many (publishers) fear that a move to accessible publishing means they will have to produce two different versions of the same publication, one for the sighted market and one for people with print disabilities. But this is not the case. A publication that is born accessible can be used by everyone. It simply has a different layout and format."

In a video (see link above) produced by the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC), Hugo Setzer, President-elect of the International Publishers Association (IPA) talks about his interest in accessibility, the challenges to be overcome, and IPA's support of the work of ABC.

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)

January is Braille Literacy Month!

Adapted from: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/>

By [Charlotte Cushman](#)

Did you make a New Year's Resolution to learn braille this year? Perhaps you would like to support your child, relative, or someone you know who is a braille reader. Or perhaps you are a veteran teacher who knows braille, but you're looking for new ideas for activities and lessons. Whatever your reason to celebrate braille, we invite you to explore the resources and activities on Paths to Literacy!

Louis Braille's Birthday

January is Braille Literacy Month, in honour of the birthday of Louis Braille, who was born on January 4th, 1809. We now celebrate National World Braille Day on January 4th in honour of his legacy. We invite you to play the [Louis Braille Timeline Game](#) and sing the "[Louis, Louis](#)" song in celebration! Download the game and lyrics in print and braille to share with your students.

Is Braille Still Relevant in a High Tech World?

People ask this question a lot. We think that the most helpful response is to ask if they think that sighted children should still learn to read print, now that audio books are available. What would a parent or administrator think if it were suggested that we could get rid of pencils and pens, now that computers and digital devices are so readily available.

This [video from Perkins School for the Blind](#) presents interviews with braille users of different ages who talk about the value of braille in school, work, and the community. We think it is a valuable way to raise awareness of the importance of braille literacy.

Getting Started with Braille

We hope that you will explore this website and discover the many, many ideas here to introduce braille to young children. There are ideas for making [tactile books](#), [story boxes](#), [lessons for beginning braille readers](#), and more! Here are a few ideas to introduce braille to young children.

[Teaching Braille to Young Children](#): Dr Laurie Hudson shares ideas to make it fun, make it meaningful, and make it developmental.

[Tactile Books for Very Young Children](#): Dr Holly Cooper discusses when braille should be introduced, tips to create an experience book.

Braille for Sighted Children

There are a number of websites, as well as activities, to introduce children who are sighted to the basics of the braille code.

- [Braille Bug](#) (American Foundation for the Blind)
- [Arthur, You've Got Braille](#) (PBS Kids)
- [Braille Chart for Sighted Classmates Learning Braille Visually](#) (Jessica McDowell, TVI)
- [Games and Worksheets](#) (Royal Blind, Scotland)
- [Fun Sheets](#) (Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness)

Learning Braille: Resources for Parents

There are many different reasons people wish to learn braille. The resources and best way to learn will vary, depending on the situation of the individual. For example, sighted parents who would

like a basic exposure to braille to support their children who are blind or visually impaired will benefit from a different approach than someone who is an established print reader losing vision later in life. People who wish to be teachers of students with visual impairments will have still other needs. Here are a few resources that may be helpful.

[Braille Courses](#), Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired: a wide range of classes, from those designed for parents to those for adults with vision loss.

[BRL: Braille Through Remote Learning](#): no instructor for this course, but the materials are available for use.

[Dots for Families](#): free lessons for families to learn the basics of braille.

[UEB Online](#): an online Australian training program for sighted people to learn Unified English Braille (UEB). The program is suitable for classroom and specialist teachers, parents, teacher aides and other professionals supporting children and adults with vision impairment. An accessible course is also available through UEB Online.

Q&A: Foreign Languages in Braille

Question: My student will be starting Mandarin this year? Where can I find the braille code for Mandarin?

Answer: A great resource for foreign languages is the "World Braille Usage" (3rd edition) which has been produced by the International Council on English Braille (ICEB) and is available from the [Perkins School for the Blind](#) website. You'll find Mandarin braille code with examples of its use on pages 195-196.

Q&A: Braille UNO Cards

Question: Where can I get braille UNO cards?

Answer: The Vision Australia shop sells Uno cards for \$39 per packet. You can also braille directly on Uno cards, however the purchased version tends to hold the "dots" better!

Transferring Files from BrailleNote Apex to a New Braille Note Taker

A quick note from Lea Nagel for students about to receive new Braille Note Takers!!

Native BrailleNote Apex files are written using the BrailleNote Word Processor, KeyWord. This format is not compatible with computers, the BrailleSense Polaris or the BrailleNote Touch. Students are already in the habit of exporting their documents to Microsoft Word when sending to teachers. Students will need to do this for all of the documents they want to transfer to their new technology. They can use the multiple character wildcard to export a number of files at a time. Here's how:

From Main Menu: F to File Manager; T to Translation Menu; E to Export; (navigate to a folder containing Keyword files); Enter; Space + 35 to Multiple Character Wildcard; Enter; Enter to export to File; "Export as which file type?" Space + 34 to Microsoft Word File; Enter (navigate to destination); Enter.

Student News

Support Skills student **Luke** won First Place as a Disabled Skier in the Victorian Titles. What a great effort!!! And thanks to his mum, **Rachel**, for sharing!

Braille Repairs

Please add the following Perkins Braille repairer to the list that appeared in Issue 19, 2018.

Chris Papasavva Braille Repair and Servicing

15 Hardwicke St, Riverwood, Sydney, NSW 2210

Mob: +61459228626

Email: chris.papasavva1@gmail.com

School News

We have two recent graduates of the SVRC Braille by Correspondence Course – **Maria Douglas** of Newport Gardens Primary School graduated on the last day of term last year! And over the holidays, **Samantha Richardson** of Keilor Downs Secondary College, also successfully completed the course.

Congratulations to both Maria and Samantha.

Free Books for Every Prep Student

In 2018, the Premier announced that all Prep students starting school in 2019 would receive free books. The books for 2019 Foundation students are a lovely selection including *Frog on a Log in a Bog* by Terry Denton, *The Second Sky* by Patrick Guest & Jonathan Bentley (Shortlisted in the Children's Picture Book of the Year Awards, 2018) and *My Two Blankets* by Irena Kobald (Winner of the Children's Picture Book of the Year Awards, 2015) and *Where is Galah?* by Sally Morgan.

Thanks to the work of the Transcription staff, braille student will receive their four books in braille (see below), illustrated with tactile pictures, on the same day and at the same time as their sighted peers!



Thanks to Transcription Staff ... and ... **WHAT'S IN THE BOX?**



While teachers, students and families have been enjoying the summer break, transcription staff have been beavering away to create accessible materials for the beginning of the school year.

Staff of SVRC have created a box of resources for teachers of Foundation students.

Inside the box are the following:

- Materials for the English Online Interview including alphabet sheet, "Cup Cakes", "Clever Max"
- Materials for Mathematics Online Testing
- Word lists including: Magic 100 words, Oxford 100 words
- Days of the week and Months of the year
- Map of Australia with the states and with the capital cities marked
- An alphabet picture story book: "A a apple"
- Hundred's chart (1-100)
- Booklet with 2D and 3D shapes
- 2019 calendar

We hope you find these resources useful and if there other materials that you need that cannot be produced at the school, please be in touch!

Materials in alternative format have been mailed or emailed or can be collected from the SVRC.

Finally

How was your Summer? Did you do anything amazing that you'd like to share with the SVRC community? Please send us a paragraph and photo and your permission!!!

– Deb Lewis (Ed) lewis.debra.d@edumail.vic.gov.au



Photo above shows most of the SVRC Summer-staff (from the left) Nic, Beth, Jacky, Leanne, Eva, Taryn, Emma, Lauren, Sarah and Di.