

The Bulletin

Number 10, Friday 23 July, 2021

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PD events

The 2021 Professional Learning Calendar is now available on the SVRC website. Most professional learning will continue to be online. Events are now on Eventbrite.

Wednesday Aug 10 [Educational Support of students who have low vision](#)

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

Tuesday Oct 19 [Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses Braille](#)

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

Tuesday Nov 23 [EXPO: Assistive Technology for students who are blind or partially sighted](#)

Showcasing & demonstrating assistive technologies that can promote inclusion & achievement for students who are blind or have low vision

From the Manager

From: Kim Foley, SVRC

Welcome back from school holidays for term 3. Once again, Victorians find themselves in a lockdown situation. During this challenging time it is very important to look after your health and wellbeing and check in on colleagues, students and families. SVRC will continue to deliver programs, resources in alternative formats and equipment, regardless of the restrictions. I would like to personally thank all SVRC staff who are working away behind the scenes to ensure our students who are blind or have low vision receive what they need to access the curriculum.

It has been a privilege to be involved with the VT Project as a member of the Working Party Group and being interviewed on the success and challenges VTs currently face. As a trained VT-Vision and former regional NEVR VT Manager, I am extremely passionate about the workforce and acknowledge the support and specialised expertise VTs offer to students, schools and families. I feel very hopeful that by shining a light on the VTS, positive changes will be made to support the workforce and schools.

Last week, I met with representatives from Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria, DET Swimming Program Statewide Coordinator and Life Savers Victoria Group Leader to explore how students who are blind or have low vision are supported in government school swimming programs. We hope to try and action a number of increased opportunities for our students through collaboration with internal and external stakeholder services. SVRC has offered the DET and Life Savers Victoria representatives the opportunity to join the VT Community of Practice on September 14th to discuss how the government currently support our students and gain feedback from the workforce on successes and challenges students often face in participating in school led swimming programs.

SVRC is about to launch our new website, built on a different platform called Squarespace. It has been designed so that it will be easier for the vision community to navigate the website. At the moment the Bulletin can often end up in DET spam mail, so we are ever hopeful this issue will be resolved with the introduction of the new website. Please let us know what you think as constructive feedback is always welcome.

Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge – Accessible Resources

Source: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/prc/Pages/default.aspx>

The Premiers' Reading Challenge encourages children and students to read a set number of books over the year and record their efforts online. Since the Challenge first began in 2005, more than 3 million students have read nearly 51 million books.

The Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge is now open and the staff of the SVRC are excited to be able to support students with vision impairments with their reading challenge.

The Challenge is open to all Victorian children from birth to Year 10 in recognition of the importance of reading for literacy development. It is not a competition; but a personal challenge for children to read a set number of books by 17 September 2021.

Children from Prep to Year 2 are encouraged to read or "experience" 30 books with their parents and teachers. Children from Year 3 to Year 10 are challenged to read 15 books.

Students can participate through their school OR as a "Home Reader" – check the Premier's Reading Challenge for details and to register:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/prc/Pages/default.aspx>

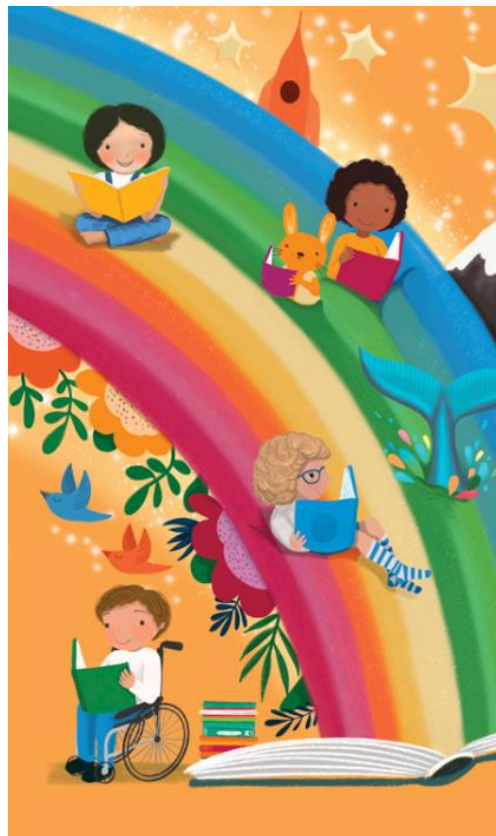
Students can read print books or ebooks or they can listen to audio books to complete the challenge. Many of the books on the list of "challenge" books are available to eligible students in alternative formats from the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Check out our catalogue of books in alternative formats on the SVRC website:

<https://svrc.vic.edu.au/transcription-services/alternative-format-catalogues/> and email us with a request form (also available on the SVRC website).

All children who meet the Challenge will receive a certificate of achievement signed by the Victorian Premier and former Premiers.

To read the Premier's letter to parents, view the booklist and for more information about the Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge, visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/prc.



Polaris Tip

From: Di Bennett, SVRC

When preparing documents using Microsoft word for a student to read on the Polaris best practice tells us to include heading styles and formatting notations such as bold or underline, but what happens when the student then reads the correctly formatted document on the Polaris using the word processor? None of the formatting is translated into the Braille code so the student is unaware of the formatting which might be very important to them as the Braille indicators are not present.

Q. How do we counteract this if indicators such as bold, italic and underline are important?

A. The document needs to be converted into a BRF file using local formatting (Australian) and opened on the Notepad application on the Polaris. Secondly, the formatting of the BRF file should be set to 32 cells in the Global and Document settings of the embosser with no binding characters. All unnecessary line spacing should also be removed as this creates additional scrolling which is not needed on the Polaris when reading the document.

Support Skills Term 3, 2021

From: Marion Blazé, SVRC

We started the term excited at the prospect of our first face-to-face Support Skills since May, but it was not to be. After organising a jam-packed timetable for July 16, sending it to teachers and families, setting up SVRC with printing, Braille, Swish table, hand sanitiser and QR codes, and even making soup as a welcome back to staff, we had to cancel after it became apparent on Thursday afternoon that another lockdown was imminent. Thankfully, our second Friday (July 23) was for our Online group. With the extension of the lockdown, we will also run July 30 (Group E) online.

Thank you to Di Bennett, and all the SSP staff for their untiring flexibility and creativity in these very weird times.

Oh well, the soup is in the freezer and we're all ready to roll with whatever happens.

Welcome back for Term 3, everyone!

SVRC Writing Competition 2021

From: Marion Blazé, SVRC

The annual SVRC writing competition usually happens in Term 4, but with most of our students in isolation at present, we are sharing the topics with you earlier, so that you can be inspired to start writing now.

This competition is open to any eligible student with a vision impairment who is supported by a Visiting Teacher and/or the Statewide Vision Resource Centre. You can 'write' in the format of your choice. Your writing can be creative or factual. A judging panel will award prizes at every age level and an overall winner's prize.

The topic this year is the theme of the Children's Book Council, Book Week (August 21-27, 2021): 'Old worlds, new worlds, other worlds'. Take inspiration from the wonderful poster designed for Book Week.



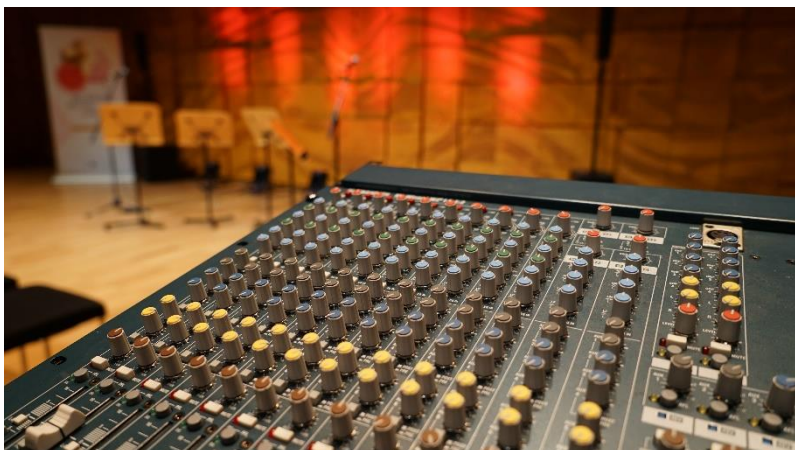
This is a broad theme that you can take in any direction. You could write about life before, during and after COVID. You could write about space, food, housing, transport, technology, almost anything.

Please include your name, age, school and contact details (for prizes and certificates). Please email your entry to: marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au or post to Marion Blazé, Statewide Vision Resource Centre, PO Box 201, Nunawading 3131.

Entries will be accepted until November 8, 2021.

Melbourne Recital Centre in partnership with Vision Australia presents

Music Production Mentoring



This program provides an opportunity to learn more about Music Production with individual mentors from Melbourne Recital Centre.

With 4 in-person sessions throughout the year, students will have the opportunity to work with Melbourne Recital Centre Sound Engineers to get feedback on music they are already producing, or learn the basics of how to create something from scratch.

These mentoring sessions are designed for high school students who are blind or have low vision, with times tailored to suit the student and Music Production mentor.

For more information or to register your interest in this program, please email learning@melbournerecital.com.au

Melbourne Recital Centre acknowledges the people of the Kulin nation on whose land these workshops are being presented.

**MELBOURNE
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Dickson Memorial Literary Competition



Braille House is proud to announce that the **Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition for 2021** is now open for entries from all Australian residents and the theme for our 100th year is **GROWING**.

Spread the word about this opportunity to pen a short story or poem and be in the running to win cash prizes in the Centenary Anniversary year of the Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition which is a National literary competition and is for children and adults who are blind or have low vision. To enter, please go to <https://www.braillehouse.org.au/dickinson-2021/>

People who are blind or have low vision have told their stories for 100 years through this unique competition, this year is your turn!

The Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition is a National competition and is for children and adults who are blind or have low vision. There is also special "People's Choice" award that will be open to anyone (even if you are sighted) and all entries in this category will be published on the Braille House website and the audience will get to choose the winner.

There are 6 categories for all ages to enter and prize money is awarded in every category: **\$350** first prize per category and **\$150** second prize per category (judge's decision is final).

Prizes awarded in 6 Categories:

- Adult Poem/Song Lyrics/Limerick
- Adult Article/Opinion e.g.: self-reflection, blog
- Senior Student Creative Category, e.g: story, poem, song lyrics, limerick, blog,
- Junior Student Creative Category, e.g: story, poem, song lyrics, limerick, blog
- People's Choice Category – Short Story. (All People's Choice entries will be published online for the public to vote).

Manuscripts must be an unpublished work, not on offer for publication before the announcement of awards and not have been recognised in any other competition.

Entries close Monday August 30, 2021. Entries should be submitted in hard copy Braille, Simbraille or Duxbury-readable file or in a Word document

Timing of competition: Entries close Monday August 30, 2021. Winners announced approx. 4 weeks after this and then we publish the winners and runners up in a special commemorative anthology.

This unique competition has a proud history of showcasing the work of blind and low vision writers to a broader audience and has provided a platform for these people to tell their amazing stories. Entry fee is \$10 per entry.



www.braillehouse.org.au

Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition History:

History: The competition was started in 1921 by the "Queensland Musical, Literary and Self Aid Society for the Blind as an Essay Competition; the subject was "Self Reliance" and first prize in each category was One Guinea.

Both Harold Dickinson and his brother Edwin were members of the QMLSAS and were very involved in the literary and musical world at that time although Harold averred that it was Edwin who was the literary brother. Edwin died in January 1956 but his name continued to be synonymous with the competition.

The Society changed its name in 1966 to Queensland Society of Blind Citizens and in 1986 it acquired royal assent to use the prefix Royal. Then it all became complicated! In 1988, the name of the organisation was shortened to Royal Blind Society of Queensland. In the decade that followed, a number of amalgamations occurred of organisations serving the VI community. The QBIC (Queensland Blind Industrial Centre) had become part of the QFBP (Queensland Foundation for Blind People) (previously Queensland Training and Placement Centre for the Blind in which the Dickinsons – Harold and Mercy – were founders together with Malcolm Bryce and Eric Searle). The QBIC component separated and became Vision Queensland. The QFBP became the Royal Blind Foundation of Queensland and continued so until 2006 when it and Vision Queensland became part of Vision Australia. The competition found its way home to Braille house and we are proud to be continuing this important competition for the 100th year in 2021.

We welcome participants in the Centenary Anniversary of The Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition and wish you all good luck and a happy writing experience.

For any questions, please contact me on the details below

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Digital Accessibility Education Program – Scholarship opportunities

From: SPEVI email list and [G3ict website](#)

If you are interested in getting certified as an accessibility professional, you are welcome to benefit from our recently launched DARE Academy Scholarship Fund. A program that is dedicated to opening new potentials for persons with disabilities who are interested in and passionate about advocating for digital accessibility and to get certified as professionals in this field. This scholarship fund will enable potential candidates to have free access to G3ict's International Association of Accessibility Professionals' education material and examination process in partnership with Princeton University.

Background

The Scholarship Fund will enable potential candidates to have free access to G3ict's International Association of Accessibility Professionals' education material, developed in partnership with Princeton University's Office of Information Technology, and examination process. Under the scholarship fund, G3ict offers 40 scholarships covering 100% of the costs of the IAAP-Princeton Course and CPACC Exam applicable in applicants' countries of residence, to individuals representing or actively engaged with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. The scholarships aim to support individuals from developed and emerging economies in gaining knowledge and professional credentials in digital accessibility relevant to their advocacy work.

Eligibility

To be considered for the DARE Academy Scholarship, applicants must:

- Be a person with disability.
- Have the minimum of secondary education degree and be a minimum of 18 years to apply.
- Be working or actively engaged in the field of digital accessibility.
- Demonstrate a passion for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in ensuring digital accessibility.

Important Dates and Scholarship Award Process

The available 40 scholarships are offered in two cycles, and twenty scholarships are available in each cycle.

- **Cycle 1:** Between July 2021 through September 2021
- **Cycle 2:** Between October 2021 through December 2021

How to Apply

Applications are processed by the G3ict's Institutional Advocacy Division. If you are interested in submitting your application, please complete the [Digital Accessibility Rights Education Academy Scholarship Fund Program Application](#).

- Applicants must ensure all information provided is accurate and in aptly detailed. All questions and fields indicated with an asterisk (*) are required.
- The deadline to submit your application to be considered in Cycle 1 of the scholarship is **August 15, 2021 (11:59 p.m. New York time)**.

Census in Braille

From: Australian Bureau of Statistics and shared via ozbrl

The 2021 census will be conducted on Tuesday 10 August.

Information and forms will be made available in Braille and other accessible formats. According to the census website (<https://www.census.abs.gov.au/help/accessibility/blind-low-vision>):

Braille forms and information

We have the following resources available in braille print (grade 1 and grade 2):

- braille household form
- braille help guide
- a blank answer booklet to provide your responses using a braille.

If you want to order a braille form you can:

- Contact us online (open new tab) and request a braille household form or help guide
- call our 24-hour automated paper form request service on 1800 130 250. You will need your 16-digit Census number from your Census letter. This service will be available from 24 July 2021
- call us and request a braille household form or help guide.

Paper forms will be sent out in late July.

Monash Sensory Science – "My Goodness" Book Launch

Exhibition 1: Friday, August 20 2021, 9:15 am - 10 am, followed by morning tea

Exhibition 2: Friday, August 20 2021, 10:15 am - 11 am, followed by morning tea

We invite members of the blind, low vision and deaf community to touch, see and listen at our newest exhibition for National Science Week.

This exhibition will showcase the Multisensory Interactive Science Book developed to explore the world of infection, immunity, food and nutrition, titled "Oh My Goodness".

This exhibition is a collaboration between Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute's Rossjohn Laboratory, and Swinburne University's Interaction Design Lab.

The books displayed are built of foam core, laminated pages, utilising large print text, braille, tactile artworks, haptic and audio display to create a truly interactive experience. They will explore a range of audio approaches including 3D sound and interactive sound elements. The palette of sounds will be drawn from analogue modular synthesis.

Resister at the [Monash Sensory Science website](#)

UsherKids Events

UsherKids Australia Research Online Webinar - 14th August, 2021

Join UsherKids Australia as we update our community on the various Australian research projects currently working on treatments for retinitis pigmentosa and Usher syndrome.

UsherKids Australia Transitions Conference Online - 17th September, 2021

Save the Date, 9AM-4PM, online, live and on demand

More information for both events on the [UsherKids website](#)

Quantum RLV Webinar

Getting the most out of JAWS, Focus 40 braille display and ElBraille

Friday 30th July at 11 am AEST

For any computer user, whether you are a "Power User" or a novice, there's always so much more to learn. When you add the JAWS screen reader and a Focus 40 electronic braille display, the possibilities and the complexities may seem daunting. But, with a little modification, you can simplify your interaction with Windows and JAWS using intuitive shortcuts that are easy to remember. If you are perhaps hesitant to try seemingly complex devices like the "Elbraille" (which combines a Windows computer with a Focus braille display and JAWS), then this webinar is for you.

In this Talk to The Experts webinar, hear from two experts who will share their tips and tricks and hopefully inspire you with the productivity and power this technology is capable of.

[Webinar registration](#)

Job opportunities

Visiting Teacher Vacancy

NEVR Visiting Teacher (Vision preferred) 0.8 position.
Job opening 1232458 is now live on Recruitment Online.
Applications will close effective 03/08/2021 (midnight).

Blind Citizens Australia Project Manager

Find more information on the [BCA website](#)

And finally...

A former student from SVRC has been involved in a project in the UK called Tactile Universe. The project has created 3D designs of galaxies that are far, far away that can be printed and used by anyone. In the not too distant future (i.e. when lockdowns start to ease in Victoria) we will print some out and they can be used in classrooms to support any budding astronomers!