

Number 17, Friday 12 November, 2021

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## PD events

The 2022 [Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available on the SVRC website. Most PL will continue to be held online, but some are planned to be onsite. Please encourage school staff to [register for PD through our website](#).

### 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.

### Tuesday Feb 8 [Inclusion of 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 Feb 15 [Inclusion of students who have low vision](#)

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

### Tuesday Feb 22 [Inclusion of students with vision impairments and additional disabilities](#)

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

## From the Manager

Source: Kim Foley, Manager, SVRC

Following consultation over the past months, I am pleased to be invited to a presentation facilitated by Dandolopartners, regarding the Visiting Teacher Service (VTS) Project findings. The IEPP Branch in partnership with the North Western Victorian Region (NWVR), have engaged Dandolopartners to support the VTS Project, aiming to determine the current VTS practices, identify the workforce's unmet needs and to support the VTS to implement evidence-based inclusive practices. The findings will inform recommendations to be developed in the next Phase of the Project. SVRC looks forward to reviewing the Executive Summary of Recommendations and being invited to participate in Phase 2 of the VTS Project.

Please keep November 24 free from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm so you can attend the annual SVRC Expo: Assistive Technology for students who are blind or have low vision via ZOOM. To register, visit our website and following the link to Eventbrite. There will be showcasing and demonstrations of assistive technologies that can promote inclusive practices. The SVRC Writing Competition awards will be announced towards the end of the day with prizes mailed to the winners.

SVRC has sought advice from DET's International Education Division as to whether Victorian students will be able to participate in an international experience such as Space Camp in 2022. Unfortunately, there is currently no clear directive to allow students and teachers to travel overseas in the foreseeable future. We will keep you informed if there is any change to the policy.

On Tuesday afternoon another Visiting Teacher Community of Practice session was held. It featured two of our Support Skills Program (SSP) staff Jordi Howell and Olivia Muscat. The session's topic was on how to competently access and utilise the many features of screen reader programs such as NDVA and JAWS. It was entertaining and extremely informative in understanding the importance of developing these assistive technology and typing skills for students who are blind or have low vision. The SSP staff are currently developing accessible checklists for both programs and they will eventually be available on our website.

## SVRC Alternative Format Library – New books in our collection!

### For 8-year-olds: Polly and Buster

I imagine you have read books by author Sally Rippin. Sally wrote the *Billy B Brown* and *Hey Jack* series, which are much loved by early chapter-book readers. If you loved the adventures of Billy and her neighbour Jack, what could you read next?

Well! Sally has created a new series for slightly older readers with all-new characters in her latest series, ***Polly and Buster!***

Here is a review from Goodreads.com

Who ever heard of a witch and a monster being friends? Everyone knows that witches don't mix with monsters. Witches are educated, clever, sophisticated. But monsters? Monsters are just uncouth. Some are even dangerous. But Polly the witch and Buster the feelings monster have been best friends forever.

It's the sort of friendship that makes your heart squeeze with happiness.

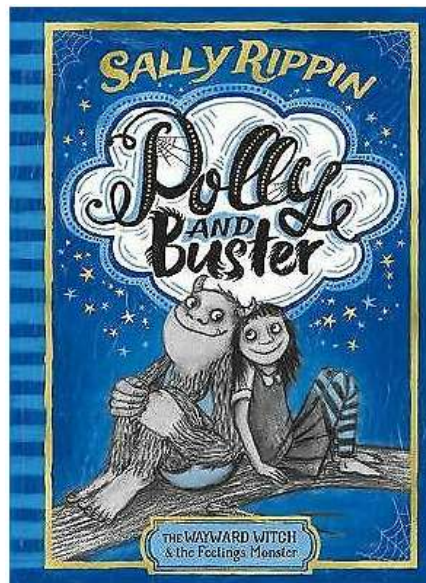
Somehow, they've managed to keep their friendship a secret. Until one day, when everything changes ...

The three books in the series include:

- The Wayward Witch & the Feelings Monster (Book one) – available
- The Mystery of the Magic Stones (Book two) – available
- The Search for the Silver Witch (Book three) – available soon

Books one and two are currently available as docx and ePub files for eligible readers from the Statewide Vision Resource Centre. Docx files can be read in print or large print on a PC/Mac or in braille using a Polaris, BrailleNote Touch or similar device with refreshable braille display. Docx files can also be listened to, using Victor Reader, Polaris, BrailleNote Touch etc. The ePub version can also be accessed via iPad.

Send us a request and we'll send you the books in alternative format!



## Software Update

Source: Quantum RLV

Recently version 2022 of ZoomText, Fusion and JAWS has been released.

To download the new version visit the relevant link for your product:

[Download JAWS 2022](#)

[Download Fusion 2022](#)

[Download ZoomText 2022](#)

There are some exciting new features in version 2022 such as, automatically installing your settings from previous versions, braille profiles and sound splitting for Fusion and JAWS as well as improvements to the Voice Assistant and performance with Microsoft Office 365 apps.

It is important to note that support for Windows 7 and 8.1 operating systems has been discontinued with the release of version 2022. If you are using one of these operating systems you can continue to use version 2021 or below.

For more information about the new features of version 2022 visit the links below.

[Read all about what is new in ZoomText and Fusion 2022](#)

[Read about what is new in JAWS 2022](#)

## English tutoring by University of Melbourne graduate

My name is Alexandra Douros, and I am a 2019 graduate of the University of Melbourne, with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in creative writing. I am keen to share the knowledge I have gained with students from year seven to twelve, as an English tutor. In sessions, we can work on:

- Creative writing
- Essay writing
- Discussion and analysis of assigned texts (this includes books, plays and films)
- Aural presentations

English has always been one of my favourite subjects. It's a subject that encourages critical thinking, self expression, and the development of your voice. I believe that my further tertiary studies in creative writing have deepened my knowledge and understanding of this, and now, I would like to help you achieve your personal best. These are skills that help you in many facets of life, not just in the classroom.

I am double vaccinated, and hold a current working with children's check. I am also an assistive technology user, of both a screen reader and braille. If you have any questions, or would like to arrange a free, no obligation meet and greet session to discuss your goals, please get in touch by email, at: [adourostutors@gmail.com](mailto:adourostutors@gmail.com)

## **AFL Blind Auskick is back!**

Source: Ned Brewer-Maiga, Hawthorn Football Club

In exciting news AFL Blind Auskick is back!

We had to postpone the sessions due to lockdowns and covid restrictions throughout the year but we are excited that we are now able to run the program again in alignment with the relaunch of the AFL Blind Season.

### **Dates**

We are aiming to run 3 sessions beginning on 20th November, the next two sessions would be on the following two weekends of November 27th and December 3rd. All sessions will be held at Action Indoor Sports Tullamarine.

### **Session 1**

Date: Saturday 20th November 2021

Time: 1:30pm

Where: Action Indoor Sports Tullamarine

This session will start directly after AFL Blind games have finished and we encourage you to come a bit early to see how the games are played in the flesh!

### **Session 2**

Date: Saturday 27th November 2021

Time: 12:30pm

Where: Action Indoor Sports Tullamarine

This session will start directly after AFL Blind games have finished and we encourage you to come a bit early to see how the games are played in the flesh!

### **Session 3**

Date: Saturday 3rd December 2021

Time: 11am

Where: Action Indoor Sports Tullamarine

This final session will align with the AFL Blind Grand Final. We aim to have the session as a curtain raiser for the grand final and hope to get great numbers down to this session and of course you are all welcome to stick around and hopefully watch the Hawks win another flag! Excitingly, all participants of the program will receive their very own Hawks AFL Blind Auskick Shirt! I can't wait to see you all wearing them at the sessions!

We totally understand and apologise for the late notice, there has been a lot of uncertainty around this year and a lot of things we had to tick off before being able to run the program again but we hope to see you all down at these session if you can make it!

We can be flexible with the times so if these proposed times clash with plans or other activities please let me know and we can try work around it so we can get as many of you down as possible! Below is a registration link can you please fill this out and list the days you will be attending. We would also love it if you could pass it on to anyone else that may also be interested in the program. [Registration Link](#)

As always if you have any questions at all please reach out.

## **Hawks for all schools program**

Source: Jaymie Moynihan, Hawthorn Football Club

The Hawks for All program is designed to give students a better understanding of disability and to build empathy, all while learning to play Blind and Wheelchair Footy! Sessions are run by a facilitator with lived experience of playing blind or wheelchair AFL and are free of charge. All equipment will be provided, and dates are flexible to a school's availability.

Our staff will attend the school and run sessions across the course of one day. Each session runs for 45 mins-1 hour and can be presented to up to 50 kids (or 2 classes) at a time. Our goal is to be flexible to the size and timetable of the school. This is a two-part session, which includes an education element, and an outdoor activity.

To book for Term 4 2021 or Term 1 2022, or to find out more, please contact me on [jaymiem@hawthornfc.com.au](mailto:jaymiem@hawthornfc.com.au) or 0477 713 181.

## **Cinema session: Vision Portraits**

Source: [City of Boroondara website](#)

This event will be delivered online.

"Vision Portraits" is the personal story of filmmaker Rodney Evans as he embarks on a scientific and artistic journey, questioning how his loss of vision might impact his creative future. Through illuminating portraits of three artists: a photographer, a dancer and a writer, the film looks at the ways each artist was affected by the loss of their vision and the ways in which their creative process has changed or adapted.

Screening to be introduced by guest speaker Carly Findlay OAM. Carly's talk will be Auslan interpreted.

To access the guest speaker introduction and the film, links will be emailed to registered guests on the afternoon of the event. The film link will be valid for 24 hours after the event has concluded.

There are two versions of the film available. Please select your preference for Closed Captioning (CC) or Audio Description (AD) when making your booking.

This event has limited capacity and bookings are essential. Bookings will close on Monday 29 November 2021 to allow for timely provision of event links.

For callers who are deaf or require speech assistance, contact us via the National Relay Service (Speak and Listen users) call [1300 555 727](tel:1300555727) and ask for [9278 4770](tel:92784770).

## LEAP 2022 Program Information

Vision Australia's LEAP (Learn, Engage, Act, Perform) program is an innovative employability and leadership program designed specifically for young people who want to learn new skills and gain confidence to achieve their personal and professional goals. LEAP is an inclusive program that is tailored to each person's needs and goals.

Traditional education and disability employment services often do not have the expertise in vision loss that young people require to learn new skills in a meaningful way. Vision Australia are experts in vision loss services and support and understand the unique challenges that young people can face.

### The 2022 program

The LEAP program will build a young person's employability by supporting them to achieve goals across the following domains:

- Choice and control
- Work
- Social and community participation
- Relationships
- Daily living
- Lifelong learning
- Health and wellbeing

Participants graduate with important skills in emotional intelligence, relationships, conversational skills, personal presentation, and technology. They also graduate with a personalised resume and cover letter which is coupled with their new skills in job searching, networking, and job interviewing.

LEAP is a ten-month program running from February to November 2022. It is designed for teenagers aged 14-18 years who are blind or have low vision or any Vision Australia client (including members of the Vision Australia Library). Participants can live anywhere in Australia.

Check out our [website](#) for additional information and testimonials from our LEAP graduates. You can also watch an audio described video of impressions from previous participants [here](#).

### Key dates

**Registrations close:** December 14 2021

**Program starts:** February 2022

**Individual meetings:** Monthly session booked between you and your Vision Australia Service Provider

**Group meetings:** One evening per month for the duration of the program.

**Magic Moments Camp:** Held in Collaroy, Sydney for 5 days in July 2022.

For more information or to register your interest, please complete the [expression of interest form here](#) or email [LEAP@visionaustralia.org](mailto:LEAP@visionaustralia.org).



## **And finally ...**

The Australian Braille Authority has a webpage with a list of [braille in public spaces](#) around Australia. The places include parks and playgrounds, restaurants with braille menus and public art. With the weather getting warmer and no lockdowns in place in Australia, it might be a good time to go exploring!