Braille House

Making Tourism Accessible for Visitors
who are Blind or have Low Vision

Braille House – *What We Do and What We Deliver*

May 2024

About Braille House

Braille House is a free lending library and Braille transcribing organisation that transforms text materials into alternate tactile formats, including Braille and eBraille, as well as maps and other accessible formats such as large print, twin-vision and audio. Beyond books, Braille House is experienced in the provision of other tactile resources such as menus, health information, tactile QR code indicators, maps and a tactile model for the Cross River Rail project, emergency evacuation information packs and local neighbourhood watch newsletters. We also produce specialist tactile programs with Brisbane and Ipswich City Councils, as well as produce books under the Specialist Disability Support in School Program for the Alternate Format Library.

Since 1897, Braille House has been producing and providing high quality transcription and Braille production. In 2022 Braille House celebrated its 125th Anniversary and an organisation, with the library commemorating 125 years of operation in 2024. This is an incredible achievement for any organisation, setting Braille House apart from other agencies who offer more diverse services to those who at blind or have low vision. At Braille House we specialise in braille and tactile production.

At Braille House we provide services to government, councils, private companies, and the general public to communicate information to people who are blind or have low vision. We do this using strict quality control procedures, and ensure accuracy and confidentiality. We do this in a fast and efficient manner, to allow us to quote specific jobs prior to production, with transparent pricing systems. This allows clients to plan and budget for these accessible items in advance.

The need for the services provided by Braille House is increasing as governments, councils, organisations and businesses seek to be more accessible and inclusive for those who are blind or have low vision.

The mission of Braille House is to empower people of all ages who are blind or have low vision through alternat formats.

The *Braille House Strategy 2022-2024* identifies the following growth strategies:

- Develop a sustainable Braille training business
- Encourage widespread use of Braille literacy services
- Pursue viable ‘fee for service’ Braille business
- Advocate for the benefits of touch literacy

Braille House has values that showcase what it stands for. These values are integrity, respect, empowerment, sustainability. and high expectations.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Braille House means access and inclusion. We assist people, businesses, organisations and governments to convert their printed material into alternate formats such as Braille, Moon, large print, twin-vision, eBraille and tactile maps and graphics. At Braille House we work in partnership with those seeking accessible formats that best suit the audience, to deliver accessibility and inclusion.

Key Personnel:

Leadership, strategic direction and corporate governance of Braille House is provided by the General Manager and the Management Committee.

- Richard Barker is General Manager at Braille House and brings 38 years of media and commercial radio experience to the role, as well as time as the CEO of Queensland Rugby Union. Richard joined the Braille House team in 2022. As the General Manager, he works closely with the Management Committee which provides strong governance and strategic direction to Braille House.

The Management Committee consists of the following members:

- Jacqueline Parker – Chair, Managing Director and past owner of Big Sky Financial Planning and currently a financial consultant

- Barry Oliver – Treasurer, Associate Professor at the University of Queensland Business School, Managing Director and CEO of Financial and Statistical Consultants and CEO of Unorthodox Hypnotherapy

- James Grant – Secretary, Director at KPMG

- Nigel Harris – Member, Managing Director at Nigel Harris and Associates, former CEO of the Mater Foundation

- Heidi Monsour – Member, Senior Project Advisor QTAC, former Director of Marketing and Admissions at Griffith College and past director of Marketing and Fundraising at Anglican Care

- Amanda Acutt – Member, Acting Senior Policy Officer at the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

- Vickie Anderson – Member, Owner and Managing Director of Vicki Anderson and Associates, Vision Rehabilitation Specialist.

Experienced staff members and volunteers at Braille House have many years of Braille production experience. Trans-Tasman qualified transcribers are a part of our staff team. Collective staff knowledge, understanding and skills add much value to the organisation and the communities we work with.

The Braille House Management Committee and staff each include people with lived experience of blindness or low vision.

Our Services

Braille House is experienced in providing a variety of Braille and tactile resources. A person who is blind should have access to the same information available to a sighted person. Examples of services provided include:

- Commonwealth Department of Health: Bowel Screening Information
- Commonwealth Department of the Attorney General: Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with a Disability (braille and eBraille)
- Queensland Department of Transport: Cross River Rail
- Queensland Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport: Making Tourism Accessible for Blind and Low Vision Visitors
- Queensland Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability: Certificates
- Queensland Department of Education: Specialist Disability Support in School Program for the Alternate Format Library.
- Queensland Department of Emergency Services: Braille Emergency Evacuation Pack
- Queensland Government Parliamentary Speeches for Ministers in twin vision format
- New South Wales Department of Community and Justice: Adoption Papers
- Brisbane City Council: A City for Everyone – Draft and Final Inclusive Plan
- Brisbane City Council: Severe Weather Plan
- City of Gold Coast: Document transcription
- Tactile maps for the Queensland Department of Transport, Brisbane City Council and schools
- Tactile QR Code Indicators for local councils and state and commonwealth governments, as well as businesses
- Programs for the Brisbane Writer's Festival
- Menus and wine lists in braille / large print / twin vision for the Governor of Queensland, Bribie Island RSL, Osteria Epoca restaurant, Maguire Hotels, and Billykart kitchen, to name a few
- Several projects for the Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, including the European Masterpieces from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Exhibition Guide for Braille Users)

The Braille Transcription Process

Once an individual, organisation, group or government agency has accepted a quote from Braille House, the transcription process commences. This involves:

- ✓ Braille House receives, in Word or PDF format, documents to be transcribed
- ✓ Our transcribers import information into Duxbury and transcribe into Braille
- ✓ Documents are proofed for quality assurance
- ✓ Documents are produced on our Braille embossers
- ✓ Documents are bound, as required
- ✓ Finished Braille documents are packaged and posted, as required

Costs

Braille House creates Braille using Unified English Braille which is the official Braille code for usage in Australia. Our Braille transcription process meets or exceeds the standards set by the Australian Braille Authority. Every fee-for-service job produced by Braille House needs to be individually quoted for to take into consider the many variables that impact pricing. These include, but are not limited to:

- The format we receive the document in (e.g. Word, PDF, is the document encrypted…)
- The length of the document
- The complexity of the document
- If editing is required
- The type of braille required, i.e. Grade 1 braille or Grade 2 Braille*
- Whether the document is to be embossed interpoint or single sided
- The medium the embossing is to be created on (for example braille paper, parchment or specialist paper, plastic sheets, or braille label). Some mediums require each sheet to be hand fed.
- If the document requires stapling or binding, and the type of cover required
- Postage and packaging, if required.

We seek to keep the cost of our Braille services as inexpensive as possible as we appreciate how valued braille is to its readers.

*** Types of Braille**

There are two common types of Braille.

Grade 1 Braille is the most basic form of braille and is essentially an instructional level. It is often used for signage. Every letter is transcribed, making the document longer than a Grade 2 version.

Grade 2 Braille uses contractions, where combinations of letters present as a single character. Grade 2 braille is the most widely accepted form of braille and for experienced braille readers it is easier to use than Grade 1 Braille. Grade 2 braille takes up less space, making the document shorter than a Grade 1 version of the same material.

Accessible Document Services

At Braille House we also provide a service for converting documents to a “screen reader friendly” format. This process gives those with blindness or low vision an accessible document they can listen to independently using their technology. Documents can also be produced as eBraille files, enabling braille readers to access the material using their refreshable braille device.

Business and Contact Details:

Business Name: Queensland Braille Writing Association (known as Braille House)

General Manager: Richard Barker *Email*: richardbarker@qbwa.org.au

Management Coordinator: Ms Renee Cohen *Email*: coordinator@qbwa.org.au

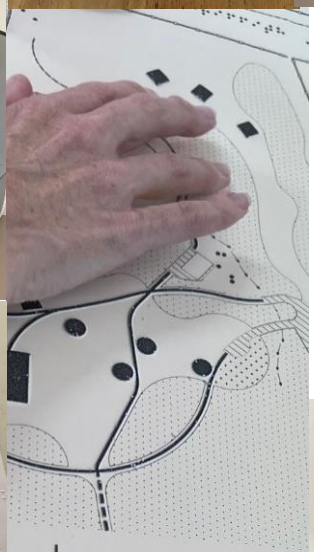
Telephone: (07) 3848 5257

Location: 507 Ipswich Road, Annerley, Queensland 4103

Postal Address: PO Box 610 Annerley, Queensland 4103

Website: www.braillehouse.org.au *ABN*: 93 456 085 512

Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young PSM, Governor of Queensland



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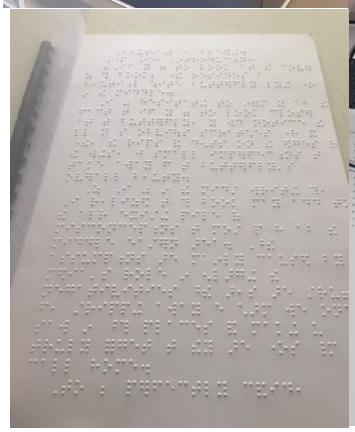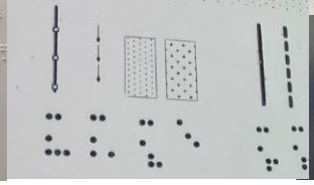
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