

Annual Report 2025




Braille House



**You should not say you can not
do something**

Dell Purtill OAM

Braille House Life Member



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GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND

Message from the Governor of Queensland

As Patron of Braille House, I commend the organisation on another year of significant achievement and continued service. Fittingly, during the year the organisation formally changed its name from the Queensland Braille Writing Association, adopting *Braille House*, which reflects both its long history and its expanding national reach in the provision of braille literacy and accessible information.

As it marked 128 years of service, Braille House also continued to strengthen its role as a vital national resource, supporting readers of all ages across metropolitan, regional and remote communities. Its free lending library, encompassing braille, Moon and digital formats, continued to grow, with participation in the international Accessible Books Consortium further enhancing access to accessible titles from around the world.

The organisation demonstrated strong and sustained growth during the year, with increased library use, production output and availability of new titles, including digital braille formats. Demand for braille education and accessible resources continued to rise, with growing engagement from families, support workers, organisations, businesses and all levels of government. Braille House also maintained its advocacy role through participation in accessibility reference groups supporting major infrastructure initiatives.

Volunteers have remained central to the organisation's mission, contributing many thousands of hours across a wide range of essential activities, enabling a suite of major events throughout the year.

On behalf of Queenslanders, I congratulate the Board, staff and volunteers of Braille House for their continued dedication and commitment, and I thank them for their ongoing contribution to building a more inclusive and accessible community.

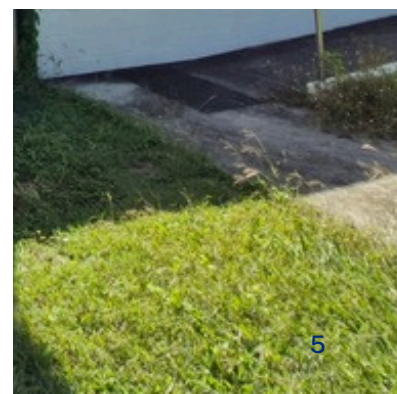
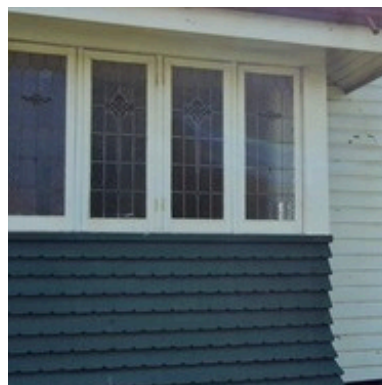
Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM
Governor of Queensland



Our Mission

To empower people of all ages who are blind or have low vision through alternative formats.

The world at your fingertips



Our Management Committee

The Braille House Management Committee brings together skilled and experienced volunteers with a diverse range of professional and lived experience across sectors including business, academia, technology, and disability advocacy. This year, each member has generously given their time and expertise to support Braille House in its mission to empower people of all ages who are blind or have low vision through alternative formats.



Barry Oliver

President

Barry is an Honorary Associate Professor at the University of Queensland Business School and CEO of Financial and Statistical Consultants and Unorthodox Hypnotherapy. With over 20 years' experience across academia, government and consultancy, his work spans finance and psychology and has been widely published and cited in the Australian Financial Review. He also has a personal connection to Braille House, as his mother was blind.



James Grant

Treasurer

James is a senior compliance professional, leading the compliance function at one of Australia's premier energy infrastructure organisations. With extensive executive-level experience, he has led large teams and business units across his career. James holds a Master of Financial Planning (MFP) and an Advanced Diploma in Financial Services.



Karen Prins

Secretary

Karen brings over 20 years of experience in the financial services industry, having held executive roles leading new business development and client relationship teams. She has contributed extensively to management committees and previously served as Brisbane Chair of the Mother's Day Classic Foundation and Treasurer for the Queensland Women in Super Committee. Karen holds an Executive MBA, is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD), and a certified member of the Governance Institute of Australia (GIA Cert).



Vicki Anderson

Vicki brings over 20 years of experience working with people who are blind or have low vision. Her passion, dedication, and commitment to learning have taken her across three countries to support and empower the BVI (blindness and vision impairment) community. Vickie holds a BS in Orientation & Mobility and an MS in Vision Rehabilitation Therapy.

Our Management Committee



Nigel Harris

Nigel is Managing Director of Nigel Harris & Associates, a consultancy specialising in philanthropy and fundraising leadership. With a career spanning 40 years, he has held executive and governance roles across the non-profit sector, including 24 years as CEO of Mater Foundation (Queensland). Nigel holds an MBA, is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD).



Meyrick Adams

Meyrick is Director of Orizan, a strategic marketing consultancy that helps brands uncover hidden revenue, streamline operations, and launch impactful campaigns across Australia. With extensive experience in marketing, sales strategy, and business development, Meyrick is committed to supporting Braille House's growth and reach. His passion for the organisation's mission is driven by a strong personal belief in the transformative power of reading for all.



Santiago Velasquez

Santiago Velasquez is a bilingual Australian who immigrated from Colombia at age 12 and is recognised as the first blind electrical engineer in the Southern Hemisphere. He is Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of Hailo, developing technology to improve public transport accessibility, informed by his lived experience of disability. A 2022 Churchill Fellow, he has researched accessible transport across 11 countries and has spoken at TED and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He first learned English through Braille House and is now a member of its Management Committee.



Management Report

Braille House continues to support people who are blind or have low vision to access reading, learning, and information in accessible formats. In 2025, the organisation experienced continued growth across library services, education programs, and membership, alongside strengthening internal systems and long-term funding stability.

Demand for accessible formats continues to increase, reflected in strong growth in library use, production, and engagement across Australia. Volunteers remain central to service delivery, contributing thousands of hours each year, while secure government funding through to at least 2029 provides a strong foundation for future growth.

Braille House was established in Brisbane over 128 years ago, when seven dedicated women, including Lady Lamington, the then Governor of Queensland's wife, each committed to transcribing twelve texts into braille. Since then, successive Governors of Queensland have served as Patron, and the organisation has grown through generations of volunteer support, alongside a small and dedicated staff team. In 2025, the Braille House Library marked 126 years of operation. From its beginnings in 1899 with 54 braille books, the collection has grown to 9,878 items, available to borrowers aged from 5 months to 99 years. This represents an increase of 1,423 items (17%) on 2024. Membership now spans individuals, schools, and organisations across all Australian states and territories, including urban, regional, rural, and remote communities.

Between 2021 and 2025, Braille House has experienced sustained growth across all key service areas, reflecting increasing demand for accessible reading formats. Library loans increased by 161% over this period, demonstrating significantly expanded access to braille and alternative format materials. Engagement with younger readers has also grown strongly, with picture book loans increasing by an average of 284% annually, highlighting the growth in early braille literacy.

Library membership increased by 133% between 2021 and 2025. Over the same period, organisational borrowers increased by 135%, while children's membership increased by 450%, reflecting substantial growth in engagement with younger readers and education providers.

Production capacity has also expanded significantly. By 2024, the organisation had more than tripled its production of titles compared to 2022. New additions to the library collection included 198 titles in 2022, 509 in 2023, and 603 in 2024, incorporating braille, BRF files, braille magazines, emagazines, and Moon titles.

Participation in braille and Moon education continues to grow, with increasing enrolments from people who are blind or have low vision, as well as family members, friends, and support workers. Interest remained strong throughout 2025, with further enrolments expected into 2026.

Volunteers remain central to Braille House operations, contributing approximately 14,454 hours annually across a wide range of essential activities. Using The Centre for Volunteering's Value of Volunteering Calculator, this contribution is valued at over \$638,000 per year, demonstrating their significant impact in supporting the organisation's mission.

A major milestone during the year was the continuation of State Government funding for a third consecutive financial year for the library, with a further four years of funding committed in the 2025–26 State Budget. This provides funding certainty through to at least 2029 and has enabled expansion of services, including increased production, staff resourcing, and investment in technology.

The year also included strong sector engagement. Staff presented at the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI) Conference in Brisbane, participated in Braille Awareness Day activities, attended the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities Annual Conference, and contributed to Vision 2020 Queensland Parliament Eye Screen Day and the Australian Parliamentary Friends Group for Eye Health and Vision Care events.

Organisational development was a key focus in 2025. Staff undertook professional training, a new CRM system was implemented, updated branding was introduced, and a new website was launched. The Braille House Team Handbook was also released, strengthening internal systems and service delivery capacity.

Extensive consultation with staff, volunteers, and the Management Committee informed the development of the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, which will be launched in early 2026. This process further embedded the organisation’s values across all areas of work.

Braille House continues to seek sustainable funding for operational needs and investment in fit-for-purpose facilities to support future growth.

The organisation remains committed to empowering people of all ages who are blind or have low vision through access to alternative formats, supporting independence, literacy, and inclusion.



Barry Oliver

President

Richard Barker

General Manager



Braille House Values

Braille House values continued to guide the work of staff and volunteers in 2025. This year, the organisation undertook values-based training and reflection, focusing on how these principles are demonstrated in practice.

Staff and volunteers identified and celebrated examples of the values in action across everyday activities, reinforcing their role in shaping organisational culture and service delivery.



Integrity

We do what's right and act with kindness, transparency, and honesty.



Respect

All interactions are constructive, collaborative, and considerate of others. Together we deliver our best.



Empowerment

We provide opportunity for all - clients, volunteers, and staff to be involved and do their best.



Sustainability

Building on our foundations, we look forward and adapt to change and ensure longevity.



High Expectations

We are committed to providing our clients, the community and one another with high-quality service and resources.

Our Mission:
 To empower people of all ages who are blind or have low vision through alternative formats.

Our Future:

More people using braille more often	The default provider of Braille training	Widely used national library service	An effective advocate for the benefits of touch literacy
Larger, well trained, and better equipped team organised in specialist roles, embracing a team-based culture, in new custom designed premises. Greater diversity and certainty of funding.			

Values:

Integrity We do what’s right and act with kindness, transparency, and honesty.	Respect All our interactions are constructive, collaborative, and considerate of others. Together we deliver our best	Empowerment We provide opportunity for all – clients, volunteers, and staff – to be involved and do their best.	Sustainability Building on our foundations, we look forward and adapt to change to ensure longevity.	High Expectations We are committed to providing our clients, the community, and one another with high-quality service and resources.
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Strategies:

Develop a sustainable braille training business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Bed in’ the current system • Achieve consistent growth – NDIS • Increase Braille for Print Users • Increase no. trainers as required. 	Encourage widespread use of braille library services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase online presence • Maximise membership and usage • Enhance production and distribution workflows 	Pursue viable ‘fee for service’ braille business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage Accessible Tourism and Industry group opportunities • Pricing to ensure a contribution to overheads. 	Advocate for the benefits of touch literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to convey the compelling case for support • Collaborate with like-minded partners
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Enabled by:

A passionate, engaged and capable team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed new recruitment, induction, onboarding processes • A systemised approach to training staff and volunteers 	Upgraded, fit for purpose systems and facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued upgrade of equipment • Low-cost building improvements • Plan and develop new premises including capital raising project 	Financial sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek government and philanthropic funding • Encourage NDIS funded training • Ensure longer-term security 	Sound effective governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular progress reporting • Appropriate level of risk management • Legal and regulatory compliance
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Progress Measures:

Training graduates and \$ return	Library membership # and usage	\$ return from fee for service	Redevelopment project on track
Staff and volunteer engagement	\$ Funding – government & Philanthropy	Financial surplus	Increase in public use of braille
		Compliance	

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

Braille House

ABN 93 456 085 512

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Revenue	2025 \$	2024 \$
Grants	367,637	591,600
Donations	259,950	375,395
Braille production	17,850	35,227
Interest income	77,936	100,136
Investment distributions	34,186	12,945
Increase in fair value of investments	14,491	33,114
Tutoring courses	21,024	18,704
Rental income	916	839
Other Income	3,918	5,701
	797,908	1,173,661
Other Income		
Insurance settlement for damaged books	385,451	-
	385,451	-
Expenses		
Employee benefits expense	1,052,961	902,080
Consultancy fees	22,060	78,617
Depreciation	39,659	45,556
Repairs, maintenance and cleaning	15,911	36,158
Computer expenses	22,212	31,160
Recruitment fees	345	28,560
Insurance	25,214	18,327
Fundraising expenses	891	11,937
Advertising and promotion	7,357	4,050
Braille production costs	10,950	13,357
Postage and stationery	11,758	8,643
Electricity, gas and rates	9,894	9,852
Other expenses	93,087	88,726
	1,312,299	1,277,023
Operating result	(128,940)	(103,362)
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(128,940)	(103,362)

Statement of Financial Position

Braille House

ABN 93 456 085 512

As at 31 December 2025

ASSETS	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$	1 JAN 2024 \$
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents		2,289,048	2,233,983	3,054,502
Trade and other receivables	4	14,507	12,332	3,863
Investments	5	591,554	542,302	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,895,109	2,788,617	3,058,365
NON-CURRENT ASSETS				
Property, plant and equipment	6	2,975,719	1,391,982	1,302,358
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		2,975,719	1,391,982	1,302,358
TOTAL ASSETS		5,870,828	4,180,599	4,360,723
LIABILITIES				
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Trade and other payables	7	419,459	356,654	306,381
Employee benefits	8	138,252	121,040	64,687
Deferred income	9	212,500	102,500	279,606
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		770,211	580,194	650,674
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Employee benefits	8	21,263	15,507	21,789
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		21,263	15,507	21,789
TOTAL LIABILITIES		791,474	595,701	672,463
NET ASSETS		5,079,354	3,584,898	3,688,260
EQUITY				
Retained earnings		2,383,986	2,512,926	2,616,288
Asset revaluation reserve	10	2,695,368	1,071,972	1,071,972
TOTAL EQUITY		5,079,354	3,584,898	3,688,260

Across Generations

Some of the people behind our books

At Braille House, volunteering spans home transcription, book production, and the work bringing braille books to life. What unites volunteers is a shared belief that access to reading changes lives.

We meet two volunteers at different stages: Angela, who has transcribed books for three decades from home, and Mathilde, a Year 12 student in regional Victoria beginning her journey. Together they show the breadth of volunteering at Braille House and why it matters.

Mathilde's Story

At 17, Mathilde is Braille House's youngest volunteer, but her connection to braille began much earlier.

When she was nine, her close friend began losing his sight, and she learned braille so they could continue sharing stories and letters.

"Braille has been part of my life since then, it's something I've always enjoyed" she says.

During Year 12, she looked for something meaningful beyond school and found Braille House. Now a Duxbury transcriber, she works remotely to prepare books for braille production, coding texts with care and precision.



Mathilde, Volunteer since 2024

"Transcribing is my way to unwind. I usually do it after school once I've finished homework," she says. "It's a really satisfying way to unwind."

She has found the work both grounding and surprisingly social, despite being remote:

"I still feel part of the Braille House community. Everyone is so welcoming."

Her motivation remains personal.

"To help someone else experience that same joy... that's what makes it meaningful for me."

Volunteering with Braille House

Braille House volunteers contribute across a range of roles, from home-based flexibility to hands-on production work

MS Word Transcribers

Convert books and documents into accessible formats using structured guidelines. Projects can take anywhere from a month to a year.

Duxbury Formatters

Use specialist software to prepare grade 2 braille files. Full training is provided and volunteers see each project through to completion.

Proofreaders

Check braille transcriptions for accuracy and clarity. This role is ideal for remote work, giving you a quiet space to focus.

Book Binders (in-person)

Assemble embossed pages into finished tactile books. No prior experience is needed - we'll show you how. A fun and hands-on way to create books that are loved by our community.



Angela, Volunteer since 1995

Shared purpose across generations

Angela and Mathide come from different generations, different states and are at different life stages, yet their experiences converge on a single idea: volunteering at Braille House is not just about producing braille materials, it is about enabling access, connections and independence.

All that Braille House achieved in 2025 was made possible by the generosity of our donors, around 15,000 volunteer hours, and our dedicated team. Every hour, every effort, and every gift helped bring braille pages and books to life - bringing the world to the fingertips of more people.

Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

Angela's Story

In 1995, Angela had recently retired and was looking for something meaningful to fill her time. Meals on Wheels wasn't quite enough. Then, by chance, she saw a small advertisement in the RACQ Road Ahead magazine: Braille House was seeking volunteers to learn braille transcription.

"I rushed over to the phone and put my name in," she recalls.

That call marked the beginning of a commitment that has now lasted 30 years.

Working from home, often late into the evening when the house is quiet, Angela has quietly become one of Braille House's most experienced transcribers. Her work spans an extraordinary range of literature - from The Da Vinci Code and Matilda, to Romeo and Juliet, Steve Jobs, and The Maid, multi-volume works requiring careful, sustained attention.

Every book she produces represents independence for a reader who is blind or has low vision - something they can access at no cost through Braille House's library services

"Volunteering keeps me occupied," Angela says simply, **"and I'm motivated because it's something worthwhile for someone else."**

Her work is detailed and exacting. Each book is proofread twice - once word by word, and again for formatting. Even after decades, she still finds small errors that slip through.

"I often find a little mistake I wasn't even looking for," she laughs. **"But when it's finished, I feel as if it's been an accomplishment."**

After 30 years, her perspective remains grounded in purpose rather than routine.

"Go ahead," she says to anyone considering volunteering. **"Don't hold back. You'll get a lot more out of it than what you put in."**

And at the heart of it all is a simple belief in access:

"If they've got braille and reading materials, they can find the stories that matter to them and the sky's the limit."

Five Years of Bringing the World to Their Fingertips



Ongoing Support for Braille Literacy

Braille House is deeply grateful to have received continued support in 2025 from the Freemasons of Queensland Theodore Unmack Lodge, together with a matched donation from Hand Heart Pocket. Since 2021, their generosity has contributed more than \$45,000, directly supporting children who are blind or have low vision through the gift of braille literacy. This ongoing support helps open doors to education, independence, employment and connection, empowering young people to access learning and thrive.

Five Years of Partnership Impact

In 2025, Braille House marked five years of partnership with UNITY Alliance, working as part of the Cross River Rail project. Since 2021, nearly 40,000 containers (approximately 0.84 tonnes in total) have been generously donated, supporting the production of accessible materials for people who are blind or vision impaired. This has assisted in creating children's braille and print picture books and providing materials to emboss full-length braille novels, helping expand access to stories, knowledge and independence.



Strengthening our Foundations

Fundraising, marketing and engagement

Braille House strengthened the systems that support our work and help maximise opportunities for impact throughout 2025. A new CRM was implemented in early 2025, improving how we connect with and support our community. Our refreshed brand was gradually introduced throughout the year, better reflecting our identity and impact. We also continued to strengthen donor engagement and improve the systems behind our fee-for-service model, including opportunities for organisations to purchase braille production as a way of directly supporting our mission. These improvements strengthen organisational sustainability and support delivery of our strategic plan, helping us continue bringing the world to their fingertips.

How you can support Braille House

One-off and regular giving • Gifts in Wills • Corporate partnerships and sponsorship • Community fundraising • Play for Purpose • Container recycling

To find out more about supporting Braille House, contact our team at marketing@qbwa.org.au or call 07 3848 5257.

The world at your fingertips

20
25

Library in Numbers



3054

Total Loans



736

New Items Added



80%

Increase in Ebraille loans

Growing the Collection


307 New Book Titles


189 Physical Magazines

240 Ebraille Titles

 **16.25%**
Increase from 2024

Format Accessed (all loans)

 **13.1%**
Ebraille Loans (399)
80% increase from 2024

 **86.9%**
Physical format Loans (2,655)

What Was Borrowed

Adults Library

408 Braille Books

18 Moon Books

121 Ebraille Books

Children and Young Adults Library

960 Twin Vision Picture Books

141 Junior Fiction and Young Adults Books

82 Ebraille Books

Magazine Library

687 Physical Magazines

441 In Touch and Touch Base Physical Magazines

196 Ebraille Magazines

Braille House Library

Expanding access. Strengthening independence. Connecting community.

The Braille House Library continued to evolve in 2025, supporting people who are blind or have low vision to access literature and information in ways that strengthened independence, choice, and community connection. The year was marked by strong growth in borrowing, rapid expansion of digital braille access, and increased engagement with readers across Australia and beyond.

A growing appetite for reading

Borrowing activity increased again in 2025, rising by 27% from 2,405 loans in 2024 to 3,054 loans. This growth reflected sustained demand for accessible reading and the continued relevance of the library's curated collection, supported by responsive selection processes and direct borrower feedback.

Readers consistently expressed enthusiasm for the range of available titles.

“What a wonderful list of titles to choose from... What a fantastic Library we have!”



3,054

tactile items were loaned across Australia in 2025

736 new titles

16.25% increase from 2024

19%

increase in library borrowers

The In Touch magazine remained the most widely used resource in the collection. The option for borrowers to retain their copy continued to enhance independence, supporting book selection, event discovery, and shared reading experiences over time.

The Touch Base children's magazine also continued to support early braille literacy, providing a valuable bridge for emerging readers building confidence and fluency.

Digital access surges

Ebraille (BRF files) borrowing increased by 80% compared to 2024, reflecting growing awareness of digital braille files, improved access to refreshable braille technology, and increased confidence among readers using digital formats independently.

This growth was further supported by Braille House's integration with the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC), an international platform connecting alternative format libraries worldwide. Through this partnership, Braille House expanded access to its collection beyond its own library, enabling readers to independently access a global catalogue of accessible reading materials.

In 2025, Braille House contributed 603 titles to the ABC platform, strengthening the availability of braille and alternative format resources internationally. The platform also recorded 43 international uses of Braille House files.

Locally, 36 borrowers registered for ABC access, downloading 140 titles, demonstrating early and meaningful uptake of self-directed digital reading within the Braille House community.

Engaging readers and community

The library continued to play an active role in strengthening community engagement throughout 2025, with strong participation in national literary and literacy initiatives.

Record participation was achieved in both the Braille Literacy Challenge and the Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition, supporting increased visibility of Braille House services and encouraging new library engagement.

Reader feedback continued to directly inform service improvements. In response, The In Touch magazine was enhanced with expanded listings of accessible events and audio-described programming, improving access to community information and participation opportunities.

With Thanks to Eva

Librarian Eva, concluded her time with Braille House in 2025, having made a significant contribution to the Library. During her tenure, she played a key role in modernising services and supporting a period of strong growth and achievement, helping to strengthen systems and improve access for readers.

We sincerely thank Eva for her dedication, care, and commitment, and wish her all the very best for the future.

BRAILLE HOUSE PRODUCTION

Our braille production team supports both our library services and external organisations through specialist transcription and design work. This fee-for-service activity extends access to information for people who are blind or have low vision, while also contributing to the sustainability of our broader work.

The team produces a wide range of materials for government, business, and community organisations. All transcribers are certified by the Australian Braille Authority and work in accordance with Unified English Braille standards, ensuring accuracy, consistency, and usability.

Highlights this year included braille signage for Federal Government offices at Parliament House, the development of accessible education resources, and the introduction of twin vision menus at Brisbane's iconic Regatta Hotel and other venues.

Alongside these highlights, the team continues to produce tactile signage, calendars, emergency resources, and custom braille and tactile solutions tailored to client needs.

Production in Numbers

In 2025, the Braille House production team reached new heights. With demand for braille growing rapidly, our dedicated team of staff and volunteers delivered more than ever before.

64,190

Pages
transcribed

134,792

Pages
embossed in
braille or moon

56

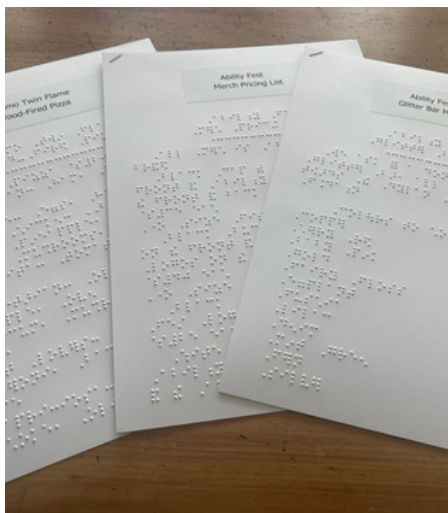
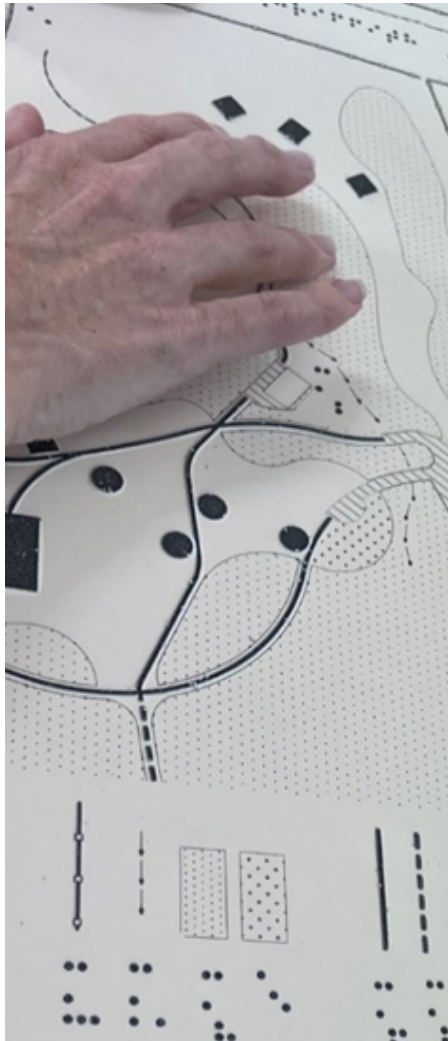
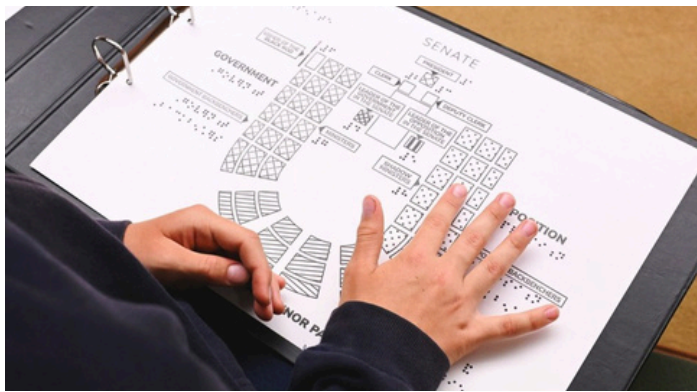
Magazines
produced

668

Twin Vision
picture
books

320

Novels and
books



Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition 2025

Empowering Writers in One of Our Biggest Years

2025 saw one of the strongest responses to the 'Dickinson' in recent years, which is quite the achievement for a competition in its 104th year.

Participation more than doubled, with entries increasing by over 110%. The number of entrants grew by more than 130% compared to 2024. Remarkably, around 70% of this year's entrants were completely new to both the competition and to Braille House, showing just how far our reach is expanding.

This year's theme, Discovery, inspired entries across six categories. The competition provides a unique platform for people who are blind or have low vision to share their stories, poems, and creative writing with the wider community. Increased exposure across communication channels helped more participants and voters get involved, while also allowing Braille House to advocate for braille and highlight the importance of creative expression in accessible formats.

"Luis was extremely happy this morning to hear his name called out twice on the reading radio and to hear the judges' feedback.

Jumping up and down with excitement!"

Luis Thompson's Dad

"A wonderful initiative that brings stories to life and celebrates the creativity of young writers through braille. Truly inspiring!"

People's Choice Voter (Anon)

Champions of Braille Literacy

We are grateful to the Brisbane City Council for sponsoring this year's event, and to our donors whose support makes competitions like this possible.

Thank you to all participants for sharing their voices and helping us celebrate the power of storytelling.

Proudly Sponsored by



Dedicated to a better Brisbane



Braille Education

More learners. More access. More impact.

Braille by Touch

Braille House continued to strengthen its Braille by Touch program in 2025, introducing a more structured pathway for learner intake, assessment and course delivery. Through individual consultations and tailored learning plans, our education team worked closely with students to ensure courses met their needs and supported successful funding applications. These conversations also provided valuable insights into service gaps and emerging needs across the blind and low vision community, helping inform future course development.

The expansion of Zoom-based delivery has opened new opportunities for learners in regional and remote areas, providing access to live, interactive braille tuition where no local services exist. Ongoing engagement with support coordinators, plan managers and allied health professionals has also strengthened referral pathways and broadened awareness of braille literacy as an essential skill for independence and inclusion.

2025 Highlights

9 new touch learners enrolled
2 completed multi year programs
29% growth year on year

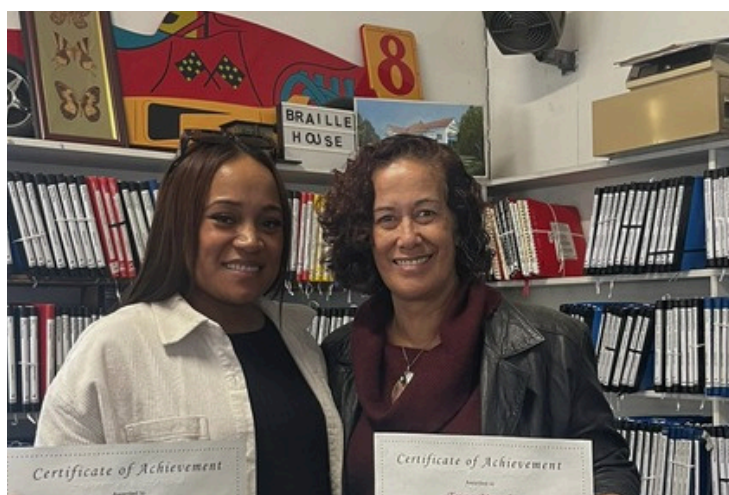
Outreach Centre

In 2025, Braille House established an outreach teaching location at the Ashgrove Library, creating a more accessible option for learners on Brisbane's northside. This partnership has improved flexibility for students and strengthened our connection with the local community.

Braille for Print Users

The Braille for Print Users course builds understanding and confidence in braille among families, educators, support workers and other professionals supporting people who are blind or have low vision. By demystifying braille and building practical knowledge, it strengthens communication, supports learning, and improves inclusion in everyday settings.

In 2025, the course was expanded for greater accessibility, with delivery offered both in-person at our Annerley centre and online via Zoom and Teams, enabling more participants across Queensland and beyond to engage in flexible learning.



Learning from Sector Innovation

In May 2025, two Braille House staff attended the Round Table Conference in Melbourne, connecting with industry peers and exploring new developments in accessibility, inclusive education, and braille technology.

From innovations in STEM accessibility to advancements in music braille and refreshable tactile displays, the conference provided valuable insights that will help strengthen our education services and support better learning outcomes for people who are blind or have low vision.

Braille Awareness Presentations

Changing Perspectives, One Conversation at a Time

Braille Awareness Presentations are where understanding begins. Delivered to schools, workplaces and community groups, these interactive sessions go beyond explaining braille — they invite people to experience it. Through hands-on activities and real-world insight, participants begin to understand braille not just as a code, but as a vital tool for literacy, independence and inclusion. And often, that understanding is immediate.

In 2025, presentations reached new and diverse audiences, each bringing their own perspectives — and leaving with new ones.

At the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), sessions formed part of professional learning for staff across education and assessment. With more students requesting braille for exams, the importance of accessible formats has never been clearer.

What stood out most wasn't just the information shared, but how quickly perspectives shifted.

“I learned perspectives of vision impaired students I hadn't thought about.”

“You should be proud of the whole session - it was so informative, digestible and interesting.”



Braille Literacy Challenge

The 2025 Braille Literacy Challenge was our biggest ever, bringing together more than 60 students and for the first time ever including a special guest from Tasmania.

A day of literacy, learning and achievement at Braille House.

Students competed in reading and writing categories, aligned for the first time with the education curriculum thanks to the close partnership with the Alternative Format Library team, showcasing their Braille skills in a spirited celebration of ability, persistence and growth. The House was filled with encouragement and excitement as families, teachers, volunteers and staff came together to support every participant.

A highlight of the day was the presentation of the Veronica Maguire Remembrance Award, recognising persistence and a “never give up” attitude. This year’s award was presented to Arckan Noon, whose determination and resilience stood out as a powerful example of what the Challenge represents.

Every student was recognised for their achievement with a gift bag and braille book, with remote participants also included and receiving their materials by mail.

More than a competition, the Braille Literacy Challenge is a celebration of what is possible when students are given the tools and opportunity to thrive. Thanks to the support of donors, volunteers and families, it continues to grow as one of Braille House’s most important annual events.

We look forward to welcoming even more students in 2026.

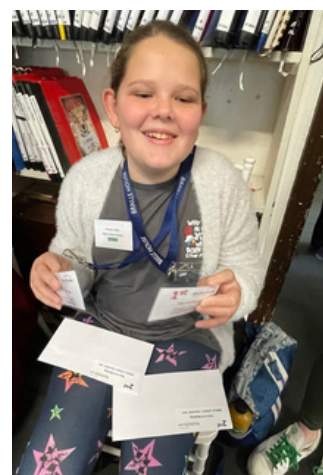
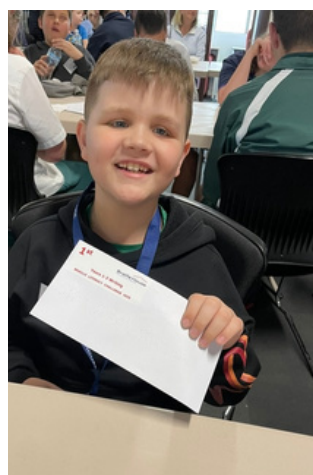


60%

increase in participants overall

8 ↑

more non-state schools competing





Tyrell Magele, 9, and Emily Roy, 8, at Braille House for the annual Braille Literacy Challenge. Picture: Tara Croser

Kids feel up to braille literacy challenge

Rose Innes

A record number of blind and vision-impaired students from across the state have taken part in the annual Braille Literacy Challenge.

Hosted by Braille House in its 128th anniversary, more

than 60 students joined the event to strengthen braille literacy skills through some friendly competition.

Braille House is among the many children's not-for-profit organisations to which The Courier-Mail Children's Fund has contributed.

It is one of the leading bodies who empower people of all ages who are blind through alternative formats.

Braille House general manager Richard Barker said the challenge represented everything it stood for at Braille House – empowering

people through touch literacy, building inclusive communities and creating pathways to independence.

"When we see over 60 students from across Queensland come together to celebrate their skills and form lasting friendships,

we're witnessing the foundations being laid for their future success," he said.

"Record numbers this year just further highlight the need for the government to invest in this education and provide us the funding to get a new building done."



“It was fun, but trickier than anything I’ve done before. It made me more confident with reading braille.”

Tyrell, Braille Literacy Challenge Participant and Winner, aged 10

Braille House Community

Volunteers 2025

Amanda Acutt	Lynne Grevell	Karen Prins
Meyrick Adams	Karyn Hagemann	Hazel Prosser
Wendy Alexander	Julie Hammond	Kerstin Reimers
Vicki Anderson	Lisa Harper	Margaret Rein
Layla Aoki	Nigel Harris	Cathy Roseman
Jennifer Baker	Matthew Hicks	Sue Schwartz
Beverley Best	Karen Ho	Jackie Searle
Elise Blair	Shirley Horton	Angela Shrestha
Denise Blumke	Christine James	Samuel Siu
George Brennan	Rachael Jones	Linda Slemint
Michaela Brett	Yumi Kaneko	Chris Smith
Linda Brookbank	Sean Kendrick	Gail Smith
Angelique Cahill	Mary Kentish	Andrea Smyth
Angela Callins	Ryan Langford	Violet Sologar
Margo Carwardine	Jan Lorimer	Jackie Sorensen
Frances Cooke	Teina Magele	Max Stephens
Vicki Couzens	Jodie Matire	Sharon-Anne Tan
Mathilde Cross	Mitchell Medcalf	Anne Tann
Angela Davoli	Jessie Middleton	Graeme Tann
Juliana Dwyer	Doreen Mission	Santiago Velasquez
Marget Elson	Conor Murphy	Sue Wagner
Jeannie Gamble	Barbara O'Connor	Nicholas Wong
James Grant	Barry Oliver	
Sue Greenall	Kathryn Pell	

Life Members

Mrs J. E. Jones	Mrs. T. Blackford	Gwen Hay OAM
Mrs P. Pinnock	Miss J. Hardie BEM	Dell Purtill OAM
Mrs Alex Ra	Mrs I. Fitzgerald	Jan Moody OAM
Miss N. Waugh	Miss M. Francis	Dorothy Akers
Miss B. M. Dalgish	Mr I. Stewart MBE	Shirly Sara
Mr R. F. Tunley MBE	Mrs G. Hannam	Marion Wood
Mrs H. Keith	Mrs L. Kitson OAM	Mhairi McDonald
Miss G. Ellis	Mrs H. Beedell	Penny Harland
Mrs K. Kent	Dr M. Dickinson AM	Judith Nothdurft
Mrs M. Taylor MBE	Mr N. Wilson AM	John Davenport
Mrs. B. Scott	Mr F. Blackford	Gail Smith
Miss W. Burton	Mrs M. Porteous OAM	Wendy Alexander
Mrs J. D. Cook	Olwen McAllister	Sue Wagner
Mrs M. M. Bird	Dorothy Perkins	Denise Blumke
Mrs W. Lloyd BEM	Yvonne Herbert CBE	Frances Cooke
Mrs. T. Blackford	Margaret Hinkler	

Braille House Community

Members 2025

Amanda Acutt
Meyrick Adams
Vickie Anderson
Annette Arndt
Richard Barker
Bonnie Boon
Leslie Buchanan
Margo Carwardine
Eileen Davis
Angela Davoli

Janet Douglas
Nigel Harris
Gina Kerr
Kay Kieu
Eva Lo
Heidi Monsour
Barbara O'Connor
Barry Oliver
Karen Prins
Wendy Sara

Jackie Sorensen
Malcolm Thomas
Santiago Velasquez
Sandra Vinson
Catherine Williams

Family Membership

James Grant and Family
Graeme and Anne Tann

Donors and Supporters 2025

Not-for-profits

Containers for Change
Fraser Lions Club
Hand Heart Pocket
Lions Club Burleigh Heads
Narellan Lions
Theodore Unmack Lodge
Vinnies Recycling NSW

Individuals, Foundations and Trusts

Margo Carwardine
Clairvaux Mackillop College
Paul Davis
Robert Fraser
Anne Hampton
Penny Harland
Nigel Harris
Kandy Jones
Jason Kehl

Martin Kriewaldt
The McCaul Family
Rabbani Mahrshahi
Brett Paul
Judith & Stephen Powell
St Joeseph's Collage,
Gregory Terrace
Camilla Von Pfyffer
Ian West

Corporate Partners 2025

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Beyond the Pages
Create My Book Challenge
Cross River Rail Delivery
Authority

Guide Dogs Queensland
Grill'd
MinterEllison
Mode Design
Museum of Brisbane
Mullins Lawyers
NV Access

QAGOMA
Queensland Hotel
Association
Supreme Court Library
Queensland
Unity Alliance

All donations are sincerely appreciated, though due to the number of donors and for privacy, not all donations are recognised in this publication.

Grants and Project Support



Specialist Disability Support in Schools (SDSS) Program Grant. The SDSS Program provided \$93,427 in funding to Braille House to transcribe and produce braille literature for schools across Queensland. The grant aims to improve curriculum access, boost participation, and enhance educational outcomes for eligible school-aged students who are blind or have low vision.



State Government of Queensland.

In the 2025–26 State Budget, the Queensland Government again allocated \$281,000 to support the Braille House Library, continuing its three-year commitment and introducing a four-year funding agreement. The funding contributes to core library operating costs, including production of titles, staffing, the integrated library collection and cataloguing platform, training, and technology.

The Gambling Community Benefit Fund granted Braille House \$100,000 for facilities improvement, including the balance of air conditioning in the upstairs section of the house, plus construction of a shade structure over front ramp, and production equipment.

Brisbane City Council Festivals and Cultural Events Sponsorship Program. Through its support for festival and cultural events, the Brisbane City Council supported the Annual Braille House Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition. \$2,200 was provided to assist with the provision of prize money for winning entrants and for the cost of producing an anthology of the winning entries.



Australian Government

Australian Government Stronger Communities Programme. A \$6,000 grant under the Australian Government's Stronger Communities Programme supported the partial installation of air conditioning in the upstairs section of the building, including the Grand Hall.

Anonymous Foundation.

The anonymous philanthropic foundation has continued to support Braille House in 2025 with a \$180,000 donation.



Looking Ahead

Braille House remains optimistic about a future rich with possibility and opportunity

As we look forward, our focus is on strengthening today's essential services while actively shaping the infrastructure, partnerships and funding models that will carry this work into the future. This is a period of steady preparation and purposeful progress — building what is needed not only for now, but for the generations ahead who will rely on accessible, alternative formats to participate fully in education, employment and community life.

Strategic direction 2026–2029

In 2025, Braille House progressed the development of its Strategic Plan 2026–2029. This plan will set a clear direction for the organisation's next chapter, aligning services, partnerships and investment with long-term community need.

It provides a framework not just for what Braille House will do — but for how it will continue to grow its impact in a changing world.

Facilities maintenance and readiness for growth

Our commitment to maintaining and improving existing facilities continues, with a focus on ensuring Braille House remains safe, accessible and fit for purpose.

Building on recent upgrades, this work is not only about upkeep — it is about readiness. Each improvement strengthens our ability to support current needs while preparing for future expansion and evolving service delivery.

Future facilities and partnerships

A long-term vision for purpose-built facilities continues to guide our work. Through an ongoing three-way partnership model with Commonwealth and State Government partners, Braille House is actively laying the groundwork for what comes next.

This collaborative approach reflects a shared responsibility — and a shared opportunity — to create spaces that better support clients, volunteers and staff, and reflect the growing demand for accessible services.

Sustainable funding and services

The sustainability of Braille House services sits at the heart of our future direction. We will continue to pursue diverse funding opportunities that strengthen both project-based initiatives and the core operational capacity that makes daily service delivery possible.

This focus ensures we can remain responsive, reliable and deeply connected to the people who depend on our work — now and into the future.



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Charity Registration Number: CH0028