



2018 ANNUAL
REPORT





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FOREWORD FROM THE GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND

As Governor of Queensland and Patron of Braille House, I'm delighted to provide this foreword to the 2018 Annual Report for the Queensland Braille Writing Association, more commonly known as Braille House.

With a focus on "Growth and Expansion", Braille House is thriving in its quest to serve blind and vision impaired people, not just in Queensland, but nationally. These efforts are especially evident in the hard work being done to improve literacy and enhance understanding amongst the very youngest members of our community.

Braille House's unique twin-vision picture book initiative is responding to the immense need for blind and partially sighted children in the 0 to 4-year age group to be able to access a larger and wider selection of printed material. By modifying existing publications to include Braille, Braille House is reducing disadvantage, making it easier for no and low vision children to share the same books as others, and experience the joys and opportunities that learning to read brings.

Additionally, Braille House's highly successful, award-winning Braille Awareness Program uses puppetry, story-telling, and magic to demonstrate to all children, regardless of their visual capabilities, that they are equally able to learn, flourish and achieve their life dreams.

This report demonstrates a vibrant organisation, committed to developing innovative responses to an array of challenges. I commend Braille House and its tireless team of staff and volunteers, and wholeheartedly thank those Queenslanders whose financial generosity helps the continuation of such valuable initiatives.

His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC
Governor of Queensland



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2018 saw significant change at Braille House. A new look Council with a new President and a new strategic direction has meant we have had the ability to look at Braille House with fresh eyes.

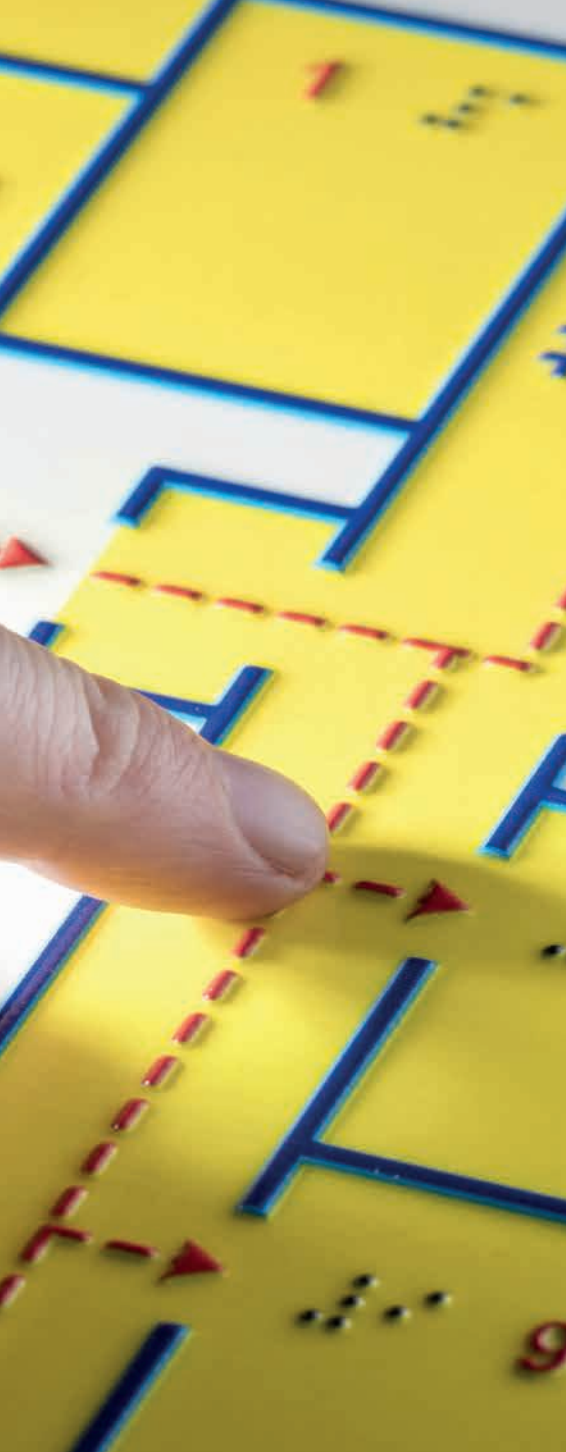
My first twelve months as President said goodbye to Scott Anderson, Wendy Alexander, Pam Raff and Sam Taylor from the Council. I thank them all for their many years of contribution and support which has shaped, and laid foundations for, the future of Braille House. I also take this opportunity to wish them well in their future endeavours.

I also had the pleasure of welcoming Professor Karen Benson and Tony Crilly to the Council. Your Council currently has a wonderful mix of skills covering legal, accounting/commerce, research, financial management, not-for-profit, marketing and public relations, not to mention the diverse life experiences also being brought to the table. This diversity is needed as the not-for-profit space has become more competitive than ever.

The 2018-2022 Strategic Plan is also twelve months down the track and I will let the General Manager update you on progress in her contribution contained later in this Annual Report. Suffice to say, many in-roads have been made with wonderful successes for Braille House. But we must remain vigilant to our environment and opportunities to ensure Braille House remains relevant, contemporary and viable.

We look forward to advising you in the next annual report as to the associations and partnerships we have made, which will ensure the success of Braille House into the future.

Jenni Erbel
President



FROM THE COUNCIL

In 2018, under its new President, the Council continued to focus on the strategic direction and issues for Braille House leaving the operations to the General Manager. This at times can be a tight-rope balance making sure the organisation is operating well and meeting its obligations without encroaching operationally.

The three Council sub-committees also continued: Governance (including Constitution), Investments and Finance, and Strategic Direction.

2018 saw a new Constitution adopted by Members and approved by the Minister for Justice. This new Constitution retains good governance as well as bringing the association into a more modern model which gives flexibility through by-laws to make changes without needing a change to the Constitution. For example, Council has adopted an investment policy which sets out what the association will and won't invest in. This will now form a by-law which can be amended by Council should circumstances and/or the environment change.

Our finances and investments continue to be priority areas for the Council. With the help of the General Manager, the Council is monitoring investment opportunities against operational requirements. To support this endeavour, 2018 saw an activity based costing budget developed to complement the traditional accounts based budget. Activity based costing is a method where an organisation identifies its key activities and assigns both revenue and costs to that activity. An organisation can budget under this method, and then compare the actuals as they occur. This method of budgeting and monitoring assists to capture, as best as possible, direct revenue and costs of activities undertaken to assess which are the most lucrative and viable. Similarly where costs are greater than revenue, for a particular activity, we can make more informed decisions about funding those activities.



FROM THE COUNCIL *CONTINUED*

It will take a couple of financial cycles to get this right but good information is already being returned.

Being only one year into our Strategic Plan, the Council sub-committee has focused on a regional presence through hubs, what that could look like, and the services/activities they could facilitate.

Our thanks are extended to everyone who has supported and continues to support Braille House in the many different ways. We welcome all the new members, volunteers, clients, donors, sponsors and other stakeholders in our community over the past twelve months, as well as acknowledge those who have been with us before. You are all valued and we are extremely grateful to you all. We look forward to our continued work for children and adults, who are blind or have low vision, and their community.

Braille House Council



Jenni Erbel

MFP, BCom, BBus, DipEd,
Cert IV TAE

PRESIDENT



David Balwin

FCPA BCom BEcon
Director, Balanix Solutions

TREASURER



Sam Taylor

B.Mus, Cert IV Tae
Musician
Products Specialist,
Pacific Vision



Sue Wagner

MBA



Cinta Graves

Owner, MyDesigner
Branding and
Communication,
working with
not-for-profit sector
for 13 years



SPOTTY DOTTY BRAILLE AWARENESS PROGRAM

Award Winner of the 2018 What's On 4 Kids - Best Not-For-Profit Activity

The Spotty Dotty Braille Awareness Program is specially designed to teach children about Braille and how their peers who are blind or have low vision read and learn.

Spotty Dotty visits preschools, kindergartens, schools, libraries, daycares and other community groups to educate children through the use of puppetry, magic performance and craft. Students are encouraged to participate in activities that increase their awareness of Braille and vision loss.

Braille House hosts themed local community Spotty Dotty events on the first Monday of each month for 0 to 5-year olds where children and parents of both blind and sighted children are invited to interact in a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment. They are treated to interactive play and even some special guests have attended, such as authors who have read their books live to the children.

The Spotty Dotty Braille Awareness Program not only benefits children who are blind or have low vision through accessibility, inclusion and non-discrimination, but also benefits others who are sighted. When a blind child is reading the same text in a similar format in the same environment as a sighted child, the benefits reach across both. The blind child doesn't feel isolated, and the sighted child feels a stronger connection. This has wide reaching and long lasting impacts for the whole community as these people take this valuable lesson of acceptance and inclusion through the rest of their lives and also share their experiences with others.



NDIS, YOU AND BRAILLE HOUSE

Braille House is a registered provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Over the past year, Braille House has supported, and continues to support, a number of NDIS clients through:

- tutoring in Braille;
- having material Brailled as part of work and/or leisure activities; and
- transcribing NDIS plans into Braille.

Keep in mind, you can nominate Braille House as your service provider for all your Braille needs.

The choice and control offered by the NDIS means you can work with your own carers or with registered external carers and supports. You and your family have more control over choosing the services that work best for you and get the support you choose and need.

Braille House can support you in your future. You can talk to us at any stage of your NDIS journey, however it is best to get us involved as early as possible. Our experienced people will work with you in establishing your short and long term goals and the supports you will need to achieve them in preparation for your NDIS planning meeting. This pre-planning will give you the confidence and understanding to work with the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency) in establishing your support to achieve your goals.



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

To quote Dinah Washington – “What a difference a day makes! 24 little hours.” In 2018, this phrase would repeatedly play through my head as 2018 has been a year of moving forward, growing and expanding, as well as ensuring our high, reliable and caring standard of customer care at all times.

Braille House has increased its reach as a national provider both within and outside the NDIS. The Braille House Library has grown its membership and activities as well as in the materials available to borrow. Braille House tutoring has grown with a number of students through the NDIS and our production/transcription of Braille has also increased.

Braille House's Braille Awareness Program was 2018's 'What's On 4 Kids' - Best Not-for-Profit Award Winner.

Considering our program was only some twelve months old and the competition was extraordinary, this was no little feat. Our thanks and acknowledgement goes to Kayt, Spotty Dotty, the Children's Library team and all the supporters who voted for us in this awesome achievement.

In line with the 2018–2022 Strategic Plan, Andrew Backhouse joined the Braille House team to manage Braille House's marketing and branding. We have been very fortunate to engage Andrew with his twelve plus years with News Corp and his extensive network with various industries. Andrew hit the ground running with outreaches to various publishers to obtain book and magazine files, whipping Braille House's social media presence into shape and linking Braille House with new supporters (to name but a few things he's been up to).

The end of 2018 saw Braille House's website revamped. It has a new contemporary look and complies with international standards for accessibility and inclusion.



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT *CONTINUED*

Thanks go to all people, blind or sighted, who test drove the website before going live to ensure its content and navigation was spot on. For the first time, the Braille House website has an online shop component where our gorgeous stitched cards, teddy bears, soaps and other lovely gifts and handcrafts can be bought from anywhere in Australia at your comfort and convenience.

On a personal note, my thanks go to the wonderful staff and volunteers of Braille House for your efforts, ambassadorships and contributions. I am very proud to be the General Manager of Braille House and I encourage you to find out more about us and how you can be involved in this wonderful organisation and community.

Sally Balwin
General Manager



VOLUNTEERING WITH BRAILLE HOUSE

Kharma Scott

Kharma Scott is a university student who recently joined Braille House as a volunteer along with other young people who are donating their time and skills to empower people who are blind or have low vision. As a long-standing not-for-profit organisation, we are very pleased to invite a new generation of volunteers to assist our organisation, as we teach them the inner workings of Braille House.



“Volunteering within a non-profit organisation like Braille House is a brilliantly rewarding and worthwhile venture. Donating your time to help give access and knowledge to those who otherwise don’t have the resources really helps you reflect on the things you take for granted in life.” – Kharma Scott

Kharma is studying a Bachelor of Creative Industries, majoring in Creative and Professional Writing and Media and Communications, at The Queensland University of Technology. She is working across many different areas of our organisation and contributes greatly to our dedicated team of volunteers. Our volunteers get to see first-hand the different services we provide for our clients; from the children’s library to the hand-sewn and Brailled cards.

“We all grow up with our favourite children’s books, teen novels and magazines, expanding our vocabularies and love for literature. Braille House’s library gives sight challenged children this beautiful childhood experience back; providing them with so many different books and stories to delve into. During my time at Braille House, I have learned a lot about the inner workings of how a non-profit organisation is operated.” – Kharma Scott



Braille House Awareness Program Tools

Image Credit: Andy Graves, Essence of Time Photography

2018 IN NUMBERS

402
LIBRARY BOOKS
TRANSCRIBED

	Braille Books	Ebraille Books
ADULT	51	47
YOUNG ADULT	4	8
JUNIOR FICTION	4	26
PICTURE BOOKS	262	0
TOTAL	321	81

18
TUTORING
STUDENTS

	Students
'I CAN READ BRAILLE' COURSE	15
'BRAILLE FOR PRINT USERS' COURSE	3
TOTAL	18

971
LIBRARY
LOANS

	Books
EMBOSSSED	300
EBRAILLE	30
SIMBRAILLE	7
MAGAZINES	561
PICTURE BOOKS	73
TOTAL	971

13
SPOTTY DOTTY
PERFORMANCES

368
PEOPLE

Spotty Dotty Performances
(Estimate - latest show results)

	People
PARENTS	13
CHILDREN	15
TOTAL	28
13 SHOWS X 28 PEOPLE	
TOTAL	368

Braille House
relies on support from
the community and can
only continue to operate
with the assistance of our
generous contributors.
THANK YOU!

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS Thank you to all contributors to Braille House in 2018

Grants

Brisbane City Council – Seniors
Celebration Donation 2018/19

Department of Education
and Training – Non Schools
Organisations Program

Department of Communities,
Child Safety and Disability
Services – Quarterly Funding
Disability Services

The Australian Communities
Foundation Grant - Clack Family
Memorial Fund

Trusts

Dr Ellice Dart Trust
Norma Benporath Charitable Trust

Associations

Northside Low Vision Support
Group Nundah

Queensland Blind Association

Donors

John Davenport

Case & Kirsty McCaul

Interdepartmental
Accounting Group inc
(IAG)

Sunsuper

Brisbane City Child Care

Ferny Grove Markets

Dorothy Akers

David Balwin

Sally Balwin

Catherine Beebe

Bonnie Boon

Emma Boon

Ailsa Boyd

Amanda Brown

Mary Byrne

Margaret Byrne

Leslie Byrnes

Vera Cahill

Abipradwiyana Caldwell

Peter Callaghan

Kathy Caplice

Lisa Colusssa

Beryl Cook

Angela Davoli

Judith Dingle

Catherine Donald

Robert Fraser

Susan Gaya

John & Karen Goldsworthy

Sarah Green

Sue Greenall

Anne Hampton

Stella Haralampou

Penny Harland

Gwen Hay

Dianne Hill

Darryl Irwin

Patricia Johnson

Vick Kandiah

Gina Kerr

John Langworthy

George Lawrence

Maya Lee-Nambiar

Linda Marsh

Mark McCarthy

Mhairi McDonald

Val Millican

Deirdre Otter

Barbara Oziganow

Dell Purtill

Lisa Ridler

Helen Simon

George Smith

Lorinda Spray

Jaimee Thompson

Kaye Walton

Karen Watson

Jean Weaver

Amy Wood



VOLUNTEERS

Wendy Alexander	Jeannie Gamble	Kathryn Pell
Annette Arndt	Renee Gibbons	Pamela Raff
David Balwin	Cinta Graves	Margaret Rein
Sally Balwin	Sue Greenall	Henry Santa
Denise Blumke	Lynne Grevell	Wendy Sara
Ailsa Boyd	Gwen Hay	Sue Schwartz
Vera Cahill	Margaret Hinkler	Kharmia Scott
Evangline (Evie) Carrodus	Karen Ho	Jackie Searle
Almy Chang	Xinyan (Carolyn) Huang	Gail Smith
Meghan Clark-McDaniel	Karen Jones	Phoebe Snow
Frances Cooke	Julie Joyce	Jackie Sorensen
Nerissa Cox	Natthika Kantee	D'Arne Squire
John Davenport	Jeanette Kasper	Denise Summerscales
Angela Davoli	Madeleine Lewis	Anne Tann
Lynden Douglas	Rebecca Lilley	Graeme Tann
Janet Douglas	Helene Merker	Sam Taylor
Kayt (Katherine) Duncan	Denise Munns	Bernadette Vialle
Marget Elson	Mala Nambiar	Sue Wagner
Jenni Erbel	Bev Nevin	May Wilson
Jan Franklin	Jennifer O'Sullivan	Louisa Young



LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING AT BRAILLE HOUSE

Pamela Raff

Braille House relies strongly on its dedicated and long-standing volunteers who donate both their time and skills to help our non-profit organisation. One of our enthusiastic volunteers, Pamela Raff, joined the Braille House team in 2013 and continues to transcribe and co-edit the quarterly magazine to this day.



Pamela came to Braille House as a financial supporter. When she moved to Brisbane, the base of the organisation, she decided to take on a more hands-on role. Stating...

"I had been donating to Braille House for many years so, when I moved, it made sense for me to become a volunteer. Though my employed life has always been secondary to that of my family, I have organised it to fit around them and I have been able to become more involved in the work of Braille House."

Pamela previously had a career as a radio announcer with the ABC and also as an English language teacher. Having studied a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Applied Linguistics she is well versed in the importance of written communication.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Braille House’s commitment to excellence in corporate governance, transparency and accountability is evident through the organisation’s culture and behaviour, underpinned by a quality system to ISO 9000. This quality system is continuously reviewed both internally and by external parties. Our policies and procedures ensure we meet the Australian Standards – AS 8000-2003 Good Governance Principles.

QBWA Council Package and Composition

The Braille House Council Package exists to ensure sound governance of the organisation starting from the top. The document sets out the Council's roles, responsibilities and Code of Conduct. The package also includes the Council's competency matrix to ensure a competent and diverse set of skills, experience and knowledge exists amongst the Council members.

The names of the Council members, including qualifications and experience, are contained on pages 6–7. More details can also be obtained from the Braille House website.

Role and Conduct of the Council

The Council held 10 monthly meetings in 2018, 1 special meeting in relation to the Constitution as well as the Annual General Meeting. The Council has organised itself to include the following sub-committees: Finance and Investment, Governance and Strategic Planning.

The Council continued to monitor and review its Investment Policy to ensure surplus monies are appropriately invested to maximise returns at an appropriate risk whilst ensuring funds are available to meet day to day expenditure. This policy includes, amongst other things, the risk profile of the Council in relation to investments and what investments it will and will not consider.

The Council conducts itself inline with the Braille House Council Package. The Council works closely with the General Manager to whom it has delegated day-to-day responsibilities and activities whilst still ensuring appropriate governance and quality checks. The Council receives a report from the General Manager at each of its meetings, which includes, among other things, key performance measures.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE *CONTINUED*

Conflict of Interest

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Conduct, Council members are required to: avoid real or apparent conflicts of Interest;

- not give preference to any person, organisation or other interest group as a result of any private association with that person, organisation or interest group;
- not solicit or receive any benefit in return for services performed as a Council member;
- immediately on becoming aware of any conflict between private interests and official duty, whether real or apparent, disclose details to the Council; and
- immediately disclose any connection whereby relatives, close friends or business partners are connected in any way with the functions of the organisation.

On receipt of a disclosure from a Council member the Council will determine the extent of any conflict of interest and direct any action required to resolve the conflict.

Ethical Standards and Performance

In addition to the Council's Code of Conduct and the quality system, there exists an organisational Code of Conduct which applies to all staff, contractors and volunteers. Braille House prides itself on the professionalism and ability of its employees and volunteers, including Council members, to meet community needs. We strive to be a leading service provider and to provide a safe, healthy and happy workplace for all.

This Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that all Braille House personnel and community members are treated in a manner that reflects the mission, culture and legal obligations of the organisation. To this end, the Code of Conduct addresses, among other things, workplace health and safety, human rights, privacy/confidentiality and behavioural matters that must be adhered to.

Auditors

The Council has retained external auditors to audit the organisation's finances annually. All auditor reports are presented to the Council for consideration and action if required. Further, Braille House's quality system's formal internal review is conducted at least every three years and outcomes provided to various external organisations for scrutiny in line with funding arrangements.

The figures contained in these statements are an extract from Braille House's audited Statutory Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2018.

The full Financial Statements and Auditor's Opinion are available on request.

ABRIDGED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	2017	2018
For the Financial Year ended 31 December 2018	\$'000	\$'000
Donations	319,501	202,545
Grants	95,382	68,944
Bequests	2,242	2,762
Braille House Market Income	3,695	1,971
Fee for Service Income	10,579	11,776
Investments Income	14,789	16,642
Membership Subscriptions	2,014	1,870
Other Income	1,989	1,564
Rental Income	17,333	-
Revenue from ordinary activities	467,524	308,074
TOTAL INCOME	467,524	308,074
Expenses		
Employee	80,193	111,175
Consultancy Fees	71,470	86,160
Computer Costs	9,531	14,945
Depreciation	35,318	33,436
Insurance	6,107	8,413
Other	73,772	68,934
Total Expenses	276,391	323,063
NET SURPLUS/LOSS FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	191,133	14,989

The Net Surplus/Loss for the 2018 showed a loss of \$14,989 compared to a surplus of \$191,133 in the previous year which was mainly due to a decrease in revenue from Donations (\$116,956) and Grants (\$26,438) and at the same time an increase in employee costs (\$30,9782). In relation to the revenue the organisation had been fortuitous over the past years in receiving significant individual donations which have now slowed in the 2018 year.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	2017	2018
For the Financial Year ended 31 December 2018	\$'000	\$'000
Current Assets		
Cash	178,103	762,021
Capital investment funds	550,000	-
Trade and other receivables	11,606	6,343
Total current Assets	739,709	768,364
Non-Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	2,717,199	2,684,053
Total non-current assets	2,717,199	2,684,053
Total Assets	3,456,908	3,452,417
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	9,642	11,123
Other	3,260	8,451
Total current liabilities	12,902	19,574
Total Liabilities	12,902	19,574
NET ASSETS	3,444,006	3,429,017
Equity		
Revaluation reserve	2,211,639	2,211,639
Accumulated funds	1,232,367	1,217,378
Total Equity	3,444,006	3,429,017

Further grant funding is changing in its' nature and is being more aligned to capital expenditure rather than operational meaning the frequency which we receive grant funding has generally decreased. Also the Management Committee in line with their Strategy Plan employed a marketing person on a full time basis in October 2018 which lead to increased employee costs.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Volunteer

Volunteer and benefit from developing new skills or updating existing skills whilst making new friends and feeling a sense of community and personal satisfaction.

Donate

Approximately 70% of our funding comes from donations and fundraising. We greatly appreciate any one-off or ongoing donations you can give to keep Braille House going. Please go to www.braillehouse.org.au and click on the “Donate” button to conveniently and simply give.

Fundraise for us

Our “Dotty Program” enables everyone to fundraise for us. Whether it be a morning tea, sponsored team in a walk/run, an a-thon of sorts or an event like a wine tasting, fundraising is fun and satisfying. Don’t want to organise a fundraiser – then volunteer at Braille House to help out with the fundraising event organised by us.

Become a member

Become a member of our community for the small annual cost of \$25 (individual) or \$40 per family. Membership provides our quarterly newsletter, a vote at the AGM, attendance at our Member’s Christmas morning tea, as well as VIP communication on all the other events and activities happening in our community.

Shop

Braille House has launched an online shop that sells a range of products like cards, soaps, pictures, knitted and crocheted items and other handmade clothing and homewares.

Corporate involvement

Braille House works with all types and sized organisations to create mutually beneficial partnerships based on common values and shared objectives. Many of the involvement opportunities may provide a tax deduction/ benefit. Please contact Braille House on 07 3848 5257 and ask to speak with our General Manager to discuss opportunities further.

Gift on your behalf

Have everything you need? You can request that wedding or party guests donate to Braille House in lieu of a gift.

In Memoriam gift

Commemorate your life and/or the life of a loved one by requesting donations be made to Braille House at the passing.

Make a bequest

Your bequest to Braille House, no matter how small, will be greatly appreciated to support us and our community to continue our vital work.

Get involved

Visit our website for more information on how you can get involved or call us on 07 3848 5257 to learn more.



507 Ipswich Road
Annerley QLD 4103

07 3848 5257

www.braillehouse.org.au

