

## Press Release

Thursday 24 July 2014

# World's first braille mobile phone launches in Australia

A suitable mobile phone for people who are blind is now available, with OwnFone launching the world's first braille mobile phone in Australia today.

"OwnFone is proud to bring the world's first commercially available braille phone to Australia," said Brad Scoble, Director of OwnFone Australia.

"There are currently 35,000 people in Australia who are blind. Touchscreen technology is problematic for those Australians. OwnFone UK, in consultation with the blind and low vision community, developed a simple mobile phone without a touchscreen and one that users can personalise with braille buttons.

"The braille buttons are produced using 3D printing and customised for every customer, which makes OwnFone's braille phone a world-first."

Tom Sunderland, the UK-based inventor of OwnFone, said, "Incredibly, OwnFone is the first in the world to sell a braille phone which is personalised for every user. In the past, the cost of developing a braille phone versus the market size has been a barrier to entry. 3D printing provides a fast and affordable way to overcome this barrier."

Users in Australia can design their personalised braille phone on the OwnFone Australia website – [www.ownfone.com.au](http://www.ownfone.com.au). They will need to provide up to three contact names, which will automatically be converted into braille. These names are then printed on the front of the phone in braille.

Brad said, "OwnFone meets the need for a basic mobile phone to keep in touch. Smartphones are often too complicated, and in the case of people who are blind, not user-friendly.

"OwnFone's braille phone is very easy to design and easy to use. There is simple one button dialling, and the braille buttons are pre-programmed to call people of the user's choice, such as family, friends or carers.

"Users can only make and receive phone calls, and Triple Zero (000) is always included as an option, in case of an emergency."

The braille version of OwnFone adds to OwnFone Australia's existing range of easy-to-use mobile phones for children and seniors.

Brad said, "The braille phone complements our existing and popular OwnFone for kids and seniors. The only difference is in the design of the phone. Kids and seniors have the option of words or images as buttons, whereas people who are blind have braille."

To purchase an OwnFone in braille, visit the OwnFone Australia website ([www.ownfone.com.au](http://www.ownfone.com.au)) and select to make a phone for 'kids' or 'seniors'. Prices start at \$89 and call plans start at \$2.35 a week.

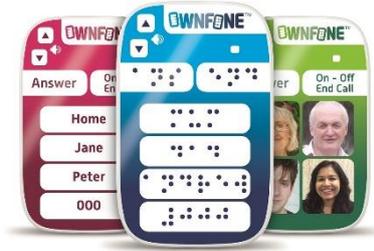
**Images:** <https://kids.ownfone.com.au/about-ownfone/media>

### Media contacts:

Bernadette Smon: 02 8011 3597; [media@ownfone.com.au](mailto:media@ownfone.com.au)

Brad Scoble: 0421 629 245; [support@ownfone.com.au](mailto:support@ownfone.com.au)

-more-

**About OwnFone:**

OwnFone first successfully launched in the UK in 2012 with the aim of creating simple mobile solutions for consumers at every stage of life. Ownfone Limited owns the patented technology behind the OwnFone, which is manufactured using the 'Seed', a blank mobile device that can be customised for a range of sectors and purposes. OwnFone's braille phone launched in the UK in May 2014, patent pending.

Tom Sunderland is the UK-based inventor of the OwnFone. He studied Product Design at Central Saint Martins and Design Products at the Royal College of Art (RCA). For his final project at the RCA, Tom set out to design the world's simplest mobile phone. His solution was to develop a customisable mobile platform and let people design their own mobile phone with a personalised keypad that calls the people they need.

Brad Scoble is the Director of OwnFone Australia & New Zealand. He comes from a strong telecommunications background following a longstanding career with Optus. Brad launched OwnFone in Australia in April 2014.

[www.ownfone.com.au](http://www.ownfone.com.au)

-ENDS-