

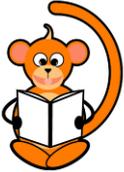


LET'S READ Newsletter

May 2008



Welcome to another edition of Let's Read. In this edition we would like to introduce our new team, highlight our involvement in the Queensland Government "Reading to Children" initiative and the Tasmanian Government "Read for Life" initiative. Also included are training highlights from across the country.



Few housekeeping items

- You will notice over the next few months the tag line for Let's Read has been changed on the website and other documents, to read:

"Let's Read, an initiative of the Centre for Community Child Health, is being developed and implemented across Australia in partnership with The Smith Family".

If your community has this tag line in any materials produced we would appreciate the text being updated, where possible.

- Remember that each time you place an order, the order form for Let's Read resources needs to be downloaded from the secure section of the Let's Read website. This is to ensure that we are all working from the same up to date form. If you have forgotten the password/username please contact head office for a reminder email.
- Please note that order forms for Tasmania and Queensland (Reading to Children funded sites) are different from the generic one and will need to be downloaded from appropriate area in the secure section of the Let's Read website or requested from either Elizabeth (QLD) or Jane (TAS).
- We are slowly working on updating the Let's Read website and there is now a new section under the Parent Information tab featuring book reviews from Shell staff, our inaugural sponsor. The information regarding our 5 year Randomised Cluster Controlled Trial has also been updated. Visit www.letsread.com.au to read the updated information.
- Proformas in the secure section of the Let's Read website now sit in 3 sections: "National", "Read for Life" and "Reading to Children" initiatives. If you are unable to locate materials, please contact Metty Joseph on (03) 9473 4366 or metty.joseph@thesmithfamily.com.au



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Documenting Let's Read models of delivery

If you have access to the secure section of the Let's Read website, you may have noticed that there is a list of communities that are delivering Let's Read, as well as some of the details of how Let's Read has been integrated into local programs. We would like to invite all communities to provide this information to us so that we can facilitate better communication between Let's Read communities. We are also conscious that over time staff and projects change so would like to invite you to check that any details listed against your community are still correct. A simply community model template is available from Let's Read; please contact Metty Joseph for a copy if your model is not listed. We do ask that one contact person is provided against each site and that this person is willing to be contacted by other Let's Read communities for further information.



Let's Read in Queensland

On Wednesday March 19, 'Let's Read' was launched at the Maroochydore Neighbourhood Centre, Cotton Tree on the Sunshine Coast. With funding provided by the Queensland Government through Department of Communities for the Reading to Children initiative, Let's Read is being delivered in eleven communities for a four year period.

Carrolyn Male, the local MP for the Glasshouse Mountains addressed the attendees on behalf of the Minister for Communities, Lindy Nelson-Carr. Sonja Pase the National Program Manager for Let's Read and David Ballhausen Head of Community Programs for The Smith Family spoke regarding the Let's Read principles and the importance of engaging children in literacy before they commence school. More than forty community members from the Sunshine Coast, in conjunction with professionals from a range of services including the local libraries, Queensland Playgroup Centre, Queensland Health and Queensland Education and VIEW Club members attended the event along with Channel Ten and Channel Seven news television. At least twenty children from the local Cotton Tree C&K Community Centre and Foster Care also attended the launch and were entertained by a storyteller, face painter and balloon artist. The children then joined the other guests to hear Agro the puppet, assisted by Rosanna Natoli, the MC for the day, read the story 'Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy'. At the conclusion of the launch, the Let's Read cake was cut and everyone was invited to have morning tea.

To support Let's Read in Queensland, Elizabeth Sayers joined the Let's Read team in January this year as the Community Facilitator for Queensland. Six project officers have also been employed to manage the 11 Let's Read sites, which will be located in North Brisbane area, South Brisbane area, Bundaberg/ Isis, Mackay, Townsville and Mount Morgan/ Rockhampton.

There will be two elements to the delivery of Let's Read in Queensland; the first involving the general one to one delivery of Let's Read messages by trained community based professionals and the second involving community activities with mature aged volunteers to promote early literacy.



Cake cutting - Sonja Pase, Carolyn Male, David Ballhausen



Rosanna Natoli (MC) and Agro (aka Jamie Dunn) reading to the children



Let's Read Project Officer Cheryl taking a turn at reading to children at our Bundaberg site.



New Staff

National Office

Metty Joseph, Operations Administrator joined the Melbourne team in January 2008 and is responsible for the financial, inventory and logistic management of Let's Read.

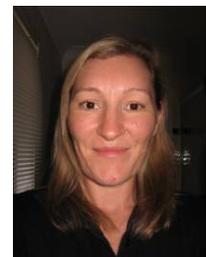


Prior to joining TSF, Metty was Retail Project Team Leader with The Cancer Council Victoria, where she gained significant experience in retail financial, sales, marketing and operations management. She has an MBA (Masters in Business Administration) from La Trobe University and lucky for us, is very excited to work with the Let's Read Team.

Metty is the friendly voice on the end of the phone when you call the national office in Melbourne and can be contacted on (03) 9473 4366 or metty.joseph@thesmithfamily.com.au Metty would like to encourage you to phone to chat about any resources, ordering, accounts etc.

Queensland Team

Elizabeth Sayers, Community Facilitator for Queensland has had a varied background having studied and worked in the child care, environmental area as well as community development with the Scout Association in NSW. Having moved to Queensland two years ago, Elizabeth once again worked in an environmental role before joining Let's Read. Elizabeth will be supporting six Project Officers in the delivery of Let's Read across 11 locations in Queensland over the next four years. Elizabeth is based in the TSF office in Brisbane and for Queensland enquiries only, can be contacted on 0418 744 430 or elizabeth.sayers@thesmithfamily.com.au The new project officers will be introduced in the next edition of the Let's Read newsletter.



New Tasmanian Team

Jane Hudson started work as Tasmanian Community Facilitator, Let's Read, in the middle of January. Jane has been an early childhood teacher most of her working life and for the last 7 years has been involved in coordinating and delivering birth to 4 programs, and encouraging interagency coordination. She is married with 2 grown up daughters, and reading has been an integral part of all of their lives.



Jane's job is to support Tasmanian communities to set up Let's Read in their local government area. She does lots of travelling and has met wonderful people so committed to supporting families with young children. Tasmanian Let's Read communities can place their orders with Jane and she is available to answer any questions. Jane is based in Launceston and can be contacted on 0417 696 819 or jane.hudson@thesmithfamily.com.au

Sally Mollison also joined the Let's Read team in January as Tasmanian Trainer. Sally has worked in environment centres, art galleries, museums and schools, and brings experience in training, teaching and educational leadership on state and national management boards. An interest in *the ways people learn* has also led Sally on fellowships to the UK, Japan and NZ to learn from leaders in museums, universities, schools and botanical gardens and then a research Masters into museum learning environments. Her most rewarding assignments have included national science learning projects and the development of education centres for The Hydro and Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.





Sally will be training the professionals across the community agencies who will model Let's Read with parents. Her aim is to have delivered training across the 29 Local Government Areas in Tasmania within twelve months. For training enquiries in Tasmania only Sally is based in Hobart and can be contacted on 0418 402 302 or email sally.mollison@thesmithfamily.com.au

Notes from the road

From Jeanette Miller, National Trainer, on her many recent trips across Australia

It was such a privilege to have Davina and her beautiful 4 month old baby at the Broome Let's Read training in January. Davina's baby showed everyone that 4 month old babies love books, and especially love hearing parents make funny animal sounds. Babies are most welcome at our training sessions – in fact I'm thinking of making a 4-6 month old baby a training session requirement!



The Broome library team, led by Jean Indermaur, is doing a fabulous job of promoting early literacy in their area. Each morning they call the Midwifery unit at the local hospital to see if any new babies have been born. One of the team then makes a bedside visit to the new Mum, to give the baby his or her first book and to welcome the family to the library. When babies are one year old, the Library hosts a birthday party - the First Birthday Club, where children are given their next book. Jean has produced some beautiful board books, published by local Indigenous publishing house, Magabala Books, featuring photos of local babies and toddlers. Look out for their latest – 'Aussie Twos' which is given to children at the Broome Second Birthday Club. Their 'Aussie Toddlers Can...' is on the Let's Read book suggestion list for 4 month old babies.

Finally, I'd like to make a very special mention of Wendy Hubert, who attending Let's Read training in Karratha in February this year. She has single-handedly delivered around 100 Let's Read packs to Aboriginal families while doing home visits.

Please keep in touch with us after your training session. We love to hear your stories!

Announcement of Young Readers Program for Victoria

The Victorian Government recently announced the launch of the Young Readers Program partnered with the State Library of Victoria, the Municipal Association of Victoria, Maternal and Child Health services and local library services working together. The Young Readers Program will give parents practical information about how to help children develop literacy skills from a young age and has two delivery points:

- 4 months: distribution of a free 'rhyme time' booklet and DVD, book bag, and information on local libraries, as well as online materials.
- 2 years: all babies will receive a book at their 2 year old visit.

Let's Read is committed to working with all Victorian communities to ensure that Young Readers is integrated into Let's Read delivery. If you would like to discuss how you can ensure an integrated approach please contact the Let's Read team to discuss.

Feedback

Have you had a wonderful idea? Developed a great new resource? Overcome a challenge? We'd love to hear about. Help other Let's Read communities to thrive by sending us stories and photos to share in our next newsletter due out in July-August. Contact us on metty.joseph@thesmithfamily.com.au

