



LET'S READ Newsletter

Issue 2, June 2010



Welcome to the second edition of the *Let's Read* Newsletter for 2010. This edition profiles the Let's Read launch in Portarlington Victoria. It gives community news updates from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia. Also included is the Let's Read Community Annual Reports Summary 2009.



Let's Read Community Annual Reports

The Let's Read Community Annual Report 2009 template was e-mailed to all Let's Read communities (except those sites in Tasmania and Queensland that are government funded) at the end of January 2010. Forty Let's Read communities submitted their 2009 Annual Reports.



Let's Read would like to thank all the community-based professionals and organisations for their commitment and enthusiasm in delivering Let's Read to families. Thanks too for finding creative ways to engage families in emergent literacy activities and collecting data to compile annual reports.



The data you report to us is very useful in further developing the Let's Read program. It also provides information and ideas that can be shared with other Let's Read communities around the country. The 'Let's Read Community Annual Reports Summary 2009' is available on the Let's Read website at:

<http://www.letsread.com.au/pages/communityprogram.php>

Hold down **Ctrl** key and **click** on the above link

Let's Read Launch in Portarlington - VIC

Peter Kelly, Project Officer Family Services, City of Greater Geelong

Initiative of:



Peter Kelly & Jan Castle discuss the importance of reading with parents & children

At the end of the 2008 / 2009 financial year, the City of Greater Geelong received \$25,000 funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to implement the Let's Read program in the communities of Corio, Bell Park, Bell Post Hill, Grovedale, East Geelong and Portarlington. These communities were identified through the use of the literacy related indicators that make up the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) for the Geelong region.

The Let's Read launch was held at the Portarlington Pre School on Tuesday 20th April 2010 with Cr John Doull present. Other program partners were present including Bellarine Community Health and Portarlington Primary School. Approximately 40 kids and 40 parents attended the launch. It included



Councillor John Doull introducing the Let's Read pack to children.



components of storytelling, time with parents to go through the importance of reading as well as the contents of the Let's Read pack.

The City of Greater Geelong Councillor, John Doull said Let's Read was important in preparing children to learn to read at school and supporting local parents to develop children's critical early literacy skills.

Karla Morison, of Bellarine Community Health, described the new program "as a unique opportunity for Portarlington to make a real investment in the future of our children".

Nowra Family Support Service – NSW

Tracy Smith, Learning for Life Worker | The Smith Family

Nowra Family Support Service, in conjunction with **Anne's Bookshop**, held a successful "Let's Read" Fun Day at Nowra Mall on Thursday 13th May 2010.

Parents of pre-school aged children were encouraged to attend to claim their free "Let's Read" kit and to listen to stories read by representatives from the "Let's Read" program and the Shoalhaven.



Beth & Ben Reading receive a Let's Read Pack from Lynne Jackson Waite from the Nowra Family Support Service

Library. Story book characters also made an appearance to supervise craft activities whilst free balloons and book vouchers were given out by **Anne's Bookshop**.

It was a wonderful opportunity for pre-school children to join in the "Let's Read" program which is being rolled out in a number of targeted towns and villages throughout the City of Shoalhaven.

Bribie Island Let's Read - QLD

Kathy Donovan, Bribie Island State School

Once again the Bribie Island State School community has been fortunate to be allocated funding by the Parents and Citizens Association to continue the implementation of the Let's Read Program with the incoming Prep Class cohort for 2011.

Plans are being made to launch the 2011 program in Term 4 2010 at a reading breakfast, where future and present students will be able to engage in reading activities together in our recently refurbished library.

The prep students will be presented with their Let's Read book packs on their very first day in Prep 2010 to take home.



We have also been fortunate to secure the services of volunteer story tellers who read with our students every morning before school. These sessions have proved to be very popular. The reading was extended recently into our Under Eights Day celebrations with the Reading Tent, manned by our volunteers and our Literacy Coach, proving to be a very popular venue on the day.

2010 has also seen the formation of our Pre Prep Playgroup with a growing band of very excited early readers who love nothing better than story time! These students will also participate in the Lets Read 2010 launch breakfast.

The other school and kindies in the Bribie area also have huge plans for the 2011 launch of their programs including reading afternoons, parent workshops and enrolment presentations.

Onkaparinga Let's Read - SA

Leeann Koesters, Learning for Life Worker | The Smith Family

Recently the Christie Downs Community House held a giant playgroup day with almost 250 people attending. Learning for Life staff were on hand to read stories and talk about Lets Read with families. Just a few days later Leeann attended the Dad's Night at Morphett Vale Preschool Kindergarten. 27 Dads attended with



Storytelling at the Giant Playgroup Day in Christies Beach

their children, it was a wonderful sight to see the men sitting on the mat with children in their laps. We sang songs about meeting people and footy. We also learned to greet each other in the local aboriginal language. Each child went home with a Lets Read bag and reading mats donated by VIEW clubs and Port Elliot Patchers. There have been many reports that the children won't go to sleep until their Dad reads them the book they received and insist on having the reading mats on their bed, some even took them to kindy the next day to use for story time!

Let's Read in WA

*Sue Fielding, Communities for Children Project Manager | The Smith Family
Nikki de Domahidy, Project Officer, Mirrabooka Literacy Links Project Ngala*

In WA, Let's Read was positively promoted in the Gosnells, Kwinana and Mirrabooka areas:

Bonding with Books (Gosnells) held a Let's Read Training session on 10 May 2010. The training was well attended with a total of 16 participants including seven Polytechnic West TAFE students (Children's Services) and their lecturer. Polytechnic West has agreed to engage Diploma students in helping to deliver the Bonding with Books Story Time sessions at Centro Maddington as part of their education/training curriculum. Let's Read is actively promoted through the story



time sessions. This is a great example of tapping into community resources to promote the importance of early literacy.

In Kwinana, KEYS to Literacy (Kwinana Early Years Service (KEYS)), has recently delivered Let's Read packs through the Transition to School Program. This program includes four local primary schools in the Communities for Children Kwinana area and provides activities for three to four year old children and their families to promote school readiness. KEYS to Literacy has also promoted Let's Read with the Kwinana Active Parents Group, Let's Read packs were delivered to over 20 mother's with babies up to six months of age. In addition, KEYS were a finalist for the 2010 Community Services Excellence Awards. We would like to extend our congratulations to KEYS on this wonderful achievement.

The Mirrabooka C4C Ngala Literacy Links Project has been going for almost a year now and we have been making some fantastic connections within the very multi-cultural community in the area. One connection that has been working really well is delivering the Lets Read book packs to families at the Anglicare Parks Project. The Parks Project move from park to park in the local area setting up activities to encourage families to be active in their local park. Literacy Links have been setting up literacy activities at the park and doing reading sessions. In this way we have been able to deliver the Lets Read book packs and talk to parents while their child is engaged in the books available. It is a place where the families feel comfortable and are happy to talk about their literacy practices in a supportive environment. Talking has allowed parents to share any concerns they have regarding their children. We have been able to offer many referrals to other services through these conversations. One mother said " I was impressed with the information received and loved the fun, informal and friendly manner in which it was applied and am also grateful for the extra info on speech therapy".

Let's Read packs were delivered through a diverse range of activities/events including the HIPPIE program, Parenting and Play Time, Funtopia, playgroups, family day care, child care, Community Parks Project, Harmony Week and the Teen Family Centre. Literacy Links also held Let's Read training on 28 April 2010. The training was attended by staff from Ngala, Child and Adolescent Community Health, City of Stirling Library, Roseworth Primary School and Miya Kaadadjiny Learning Centre

Plans are underway in WA for Book Week celebrations from 21-27 August 2010. This will be a great opportunity to promote Let's Read in the community



Reading to Children site updates- Queensland Mount Morgan/Rockhampton

Jane Ganter, Project Officer, Let's Read | The Smith Family

Volunteer Morning Tea,
Wednesday 12 May, 2010

To celebrate National Volunteer Week, *Let's Read* volunteers from Mount Morgan and Rockhampton met together for a morning tea at the Coffee Club in Rockhampton. Jane Ganter (*Let's Read* Project Officer) was pleased that both long term and newly trained volunteers were able to attend.



Photo: From Left to Right: Pam Walker (volunteer), Jane Ganter, (Joan Wilson (volunteer), Councillor Sandra O'Brien (Rockhampton Regional Council)

As well as having an enjoyable morning tea and a chat, the volunteers were officially thanked for their participation in *Let's Read* and given a volunteer badge that acknowledged their contribution. We expressed our appreciation for other volunteers who were unable to attend.

This function was enhanced by the presence of Councillor Sandra O'Brien, who represents the Mount Morgan area on Rockhampton Regional Council. Sandra has been a valuable asset as a foundation member of the *Let's Read* Steering Committee.

'Let's Read' Training conducted at Dingo State School Tuesday 27 April, 2010.

Small communities often experience isolation and the difficulty of accessing resources which are considered normal in larger towns and cities.

Three small schools in Central Queensland, Daringa, Dingo, and Bluff, form the **'Connected Communities'**. They are working together to provide *Let's Read* in their areas. These small communities are dots on the map along the Capricorn Highway travelling west from Rockhampton. Each school has about forty pupils, and services a very large rural area.



Activity showing Brain Development and Connections



Sorting resources into bags ready for delivery

Under the guidance of Terry Chamberlain of Education Queensland, the Parent Groups at these schools obtained funding from the Queensland Government's 'Blueprint for the Bush', which enabled them to purchase Let's Read resources.

Jane Ganter (Project Officer, Mount Morgan/Rockhampton) travelled to Dingo on 27 April to provide training for thirteen enthusiastic participants. This included parents, teachers, administrative staff, a grandmother and a retired librarian. The training was well received, and there was a strong sense of purpose as the participants discussed how best to deliver Let's Read resources to their communities.

North Brisbane-Zillmere, Caboolture, The Sunshine Coast *Maree Stratton, Project Officer, Let's Read | The Smith Family*

During Volunteer Week in May the Let's Read volunteers all got together for picnics in their local parks to celebrate the valuable work they are doing in modelling and encouraging reading to young children in their communities. It was a good opportunity to swap reading tips and gain valuable information from each others experiences.

Let's Read in North Brisbane continues to be delivered from a wide range of community professionals such as social workers, speech pathologists, playgroup facilitators, child and family health nurses, early childhood teachers, family support workers and the list goes on. The volunteers are also reading at a diverse range of community venues from organised sessions at playgroups, child and family health waiting rooms and community centres to quite informal reading sessions at local parks. It is common for parents to say how surprised they are that their child is so interested in the story times and that they intend to read more at home as they learn that reading can be so much fun.



Volunteers reading at Cotton Tree Park at Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast

The delivery of Let's Read in North Brisbane keeps going from strength to strength and it is lovely to receive feedback such as this letter from a parent.

I have four children aged seven and under and since receiving the Let's Read packs, it's encouraged me to read with the family at home, as well as at the playgroup.



We've started reading together as a family every night. Making that time has benefited all of us. It's a lot of fun and really opened up my eyes to the point where I'm now reading to my seven-month-old, which I wouldn't have done before.

It's helped my two-year-old especially because he's a little bit slower with talking and just reading every night and getting him to point things out in the books, like the DVD suggests, has really helped his vocabulary. I've noticed that change in him.

Getting a two year old to sit down and listen is hard, but he knows when it's reading time and he now wants to listen along with the other kids and he likes to interact with the book as well.

The DVD gave me some more ideas for making reading interesting. It gave me the great idea of taking books in the car instead of taking the toys and now I've always got books in my car.

Redlands

Col Sutcliffe, Project Officer, Let's Read | The Smith Family



Members of local Cadet Unit and drama students from Capalaba State College provide read aloud and literacy stimulus activities to under 5's in Redlands

In association with the Rotary Club of Capalaba, a Let's Read marquee and display was set up. This provided an opportunity for Project Officer Col Sutcliffe to talk to parents about the value of reading in the early years and, when appropriate, to deliver Let's Read Packs. The Book Suggestion sheets were made into A3 Posters and displayed as suggestions for parents and grandparents for Birthday and Christmas gifts to under 5 year olds. Read aloud sessions were also provided by several volunteers assisted by the local Cadet Unit members and drama students from Capalaba State College.



Let's Read in Tasmania

Wendy Armstrong, Regional Programs Manager | The Smith Family

Despite losing our wonderful state wide Let's Read coordinator, Jane Hudson, the program continues to be delivered successfully across all 29 Local Government Areas in Tasmania through a number of community-based professionals.

Launching into Learning, the successful early years program supported by the State Government in 120 schools in Tasmania, continues to work well as a key distribution point for resources for 18 month and 3 ½ year olds and our Child Health and Parenting Services (CHAPS) nurses deliver the program in many of our communities to parents of 4 and 12 month-old children.

We were delighted to have once again engaged Jane's expertise to deliver Let's Read training to new community practitioners across the state. In May, Jane held three successful sessions in the North, South and Northwest, bringing a total of 37 additional professionals up to speed with delivering Let's Read in their communities.

Following his successful visit last year, The Smith Family is pleased to have received support through the Tasmanian Government's Community Capacity Building Grants program to bring Dr Jim Thomas back to Tasmania to deliver a series of workshops to parents and Early Years professionals in July. Having Fun with Language workshops have been promoted through the Let's Read communities and will provide additional skills and encouragement to engage children with books from the very beginning.

Feedback

Have you had a wonderful idea? Developed a great new resource? Overcome a challenge? We'd love to hear about it. Help other *Let's Read* communities to thrive by sending us stories and photos to share in our next newsletter due out in September 2010. Contact us at community@letsread.com.au

