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Shell supports Corio literacy program

Prize money awarded to Shell Companies in Australia through the 2007 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence will be donated back to the Geelong community on August 7 via the *Let's Read* program in Corio.

Shell won the *Special Award for Impact on a Community* in recognition of the company's leadership and initiative in joining together with community organisations to deliver positive outcomes to their communities.

The Corio Let's Read program is the recipient of prize money received by Shell which will be used to purchase and donate new books to eight Corio playgroups as well as hold training about the importance of early literacy with leaders of those playgroups.

An initiative of the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute's Centre for Community Child Health, Let's Read is being developed and implemented across Australia in partnership with The Smith Family and aims to encourage reading by parents to children aged from birth to five years.

According to Shell's National Social Investment Manager, Jenny Odgers, Shell has supported the literacy development of Australia's young children since the first *Let's Read* community was established in Corio in 2005.

"Shell is committed to investing in our local community and one of the best ways we can do this is by supporting the development of local children," said Ms Odgers. "We are pleased to be able to put the prize money to good use by providing extra support to Corio *Let's Read*."

Let's Read National Program Manager, Sonja Pase said Shell's partnership has enabled the *Let's Read* program to grow nationally, now reaching more than 60,000 children across Australia.

"We're thrilled that Shell has decided to use the prize money to build upon the existing early literacy-boosting activities in Corio," Ms Pase said.

Each playgroup will receive books, literacy posters and two Shell Playgroup Boxes in which to store the books.

"For early literacy development, young children need adults who understand the importance of reading aloud to children and Shell has recognised the need for access to books and training to help achieve this," Ms Pase added.

Let's Read also supports the professional development of playgroup leaders in the area to enable playgroups in Corio to provide ongoing literacy activities for young children.

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The Smith Family is a national, independent non-profit organisation supporting disadvantaged children to reach their potential through education and learning opportunities. Visit www.thesmithfamily.com.au

The Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) has been at the forefront of Australian research into early childhood development and behaviour for over two decades. A particular focus of CCCH's work is supporting and strengthening community-based professionals and organisations in their work with families to bring about the best outcomes for children. Visit: www.rch.org.au/CCCH

