



# LET'S READ Newsletter

Issue 1, March 2010



**Welcome** to the first edition of the *Let's Read* Newsletter for 2010. This edition highlights inspiring reading session stories and community news updates from New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.



## Thank You to Shell

Since 2005, with the support of Shell – its inaugural supporter, more than 100,000 children have been involved in the Let's Read Community Program. Thanks to Shell's support of Let's Read, there is a heightened general awareness about the importance of emergent literacy, and many thousands of families have been supported to read and share appropriate books with their children.



Now that the program is well established and continuing to expand, Shell is able to step back from its support from the end of March 2010. Because the *Let's Read* program is well established, this will not impact on the way that *Let's Read* is delivered in communities.



CCCH and The Smith Family acknowledge the unique role that Shell has played to establish *Let's Read* and promote early years literacy in Australia. The contribution that Shell has made to the development of the evidence base to support the program, the resources and training that have been made available and the opportunities for specific communities of need has been of considerable benefit to the *Let's Read* program and its sustainability. We have also greatly valued Shell's commitment to promoting *Let's Read* in communities, enabling more families to become aware of *Let's Read* and learn about the benefits of the initiative. As well as supporting the national implementation of Let's Read, Shell supported specific communities including the community of Corio in Geelong, Victoria, which is located close to Shell's Geelong refinery.

### Initiative of:



### Inaugural corporate sponsor:



We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Shell for its support over the last five years.



Speech therapist Stephanie Szalpa pictured reading with some Corio children.



### Let's Read Community Annual Reports

After a successful and challenging 2009 it is that time again, tell us all about it! Part of delivering *Let's Read* is the requirement that communities prepare an Annual Report outlining their achievements and challenges in delivering the program. The Annual report template was e-mailed to communities in the middle of January 2010. The reports were due to be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2010. Thanks to those communities who have submitted their Annual Report. We are still waiting for annual reports from a few more communities. Please feel free to contact the *Let's Read* Operations Manager for assistance in completing your annual report

**I'm sure this will bring a smile to your face!**



*Hunter Reads On Your Potty*

This is Hunter Bohme, aged 3.5 years, who takes his reading very seriously! His Mum, Chantel, snapped this gorgeous picture a few days after they joined the Let's Read program through the Noah's Ark Centre at Shoalhaven, an Early Intervention Centre for children with special needs on the South Coast NSW.

### Let's Read in the Shoalhaven - NSW

*Lynne Jackson-Waite, Team Leader, Nowra Family Support Services*

*Let's Read* in Shoalhaven continues to be rolled out by enthusiastic trained volunteers, professional, community and welfare workers. Nowra Family Support Service Inc., the lead agency in the Shoalhaven, has implemented monthly reading group sessions at the centre. New participants who attend receive a *Let's Read* Pack and continue to attend subsequent reading groups.



Nowra Family Support Service Inc. has also woven a *Let's Read* component into the Music for Fun Sessions and this has proven to be a successful partnership.

*Let's Read* T-shirts and badges are great advertising for our fabulous program and, when dialogue occurs, parents are encouraged to attend a reading group or make an appointment for a personal presentation of the *Let's Read* pack.

The *Let's Read* program has also been delivered to families who attend a playgroup at Ulladulla Family Support Outreach Service. A presentation to the Groovy Grandparents Group is planned for February 2010. The project is growing, and the community is welcoming the opportunity to encourage their children to love books from an early age.

### Read Aloud Sessions, Brimbank Let's Read - VIC

*Jeanine Carter, The Smith Family Community Development Learning For Life worker*



*Reading Session at Brimbank Library*

The Smith Family has joined forces with Brimbank Library to promote reading with young children in the community. This year four reading sessions will take place to coincide with events such as Cultural Diversity Week, Literacy Week and Book Week. The first of these took place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Children enjoyed a book reading and a simple craft activity whilst parents were given information about the local Library and *Let's Read* in Brimbank.

### Let's Read In Communities of the Pilbara - WA

*Renee Cooper, Childcare Links Coordinator*

Childcare Links have been using the *Lets Read* program for the past 7 months. It has been great to take it out to communities for many reasons; a lot of indigenous communities do not have many resources and the children just love to be read to and enjoy reading themselves especially with the DVD. I have also found that, through reading together, a lot of parents and carers seem more involved with their children.



*Renee at Marble Bar reading to the children*

We explain that even if you cannot actually read the English words then it is fine to make up the story as children love the attention and closeness reading gives



them. We have also found that the parents or carers have the DVD to watch so this helps them as well.



*A father and his daughter reading*

*Let's Read* has become a great tool for many people in the Pilbara. In the last 7 months we have even been getting pulled up in the street to find out where to get the delightful books and information from. It's been really great to see the men and women in the communities asking about the program and help we can give. Child care Links has really been enjoying the chance to use the *Let's Read* resources as it helps with our work. Link's aim is to

link the community and to ensure that we can give relevant information to families in Hedland and some surrounding areas, information about what is available for families and children aged 0 to 12 years old.

### **Reading to Children site updates- Queensland**

*Col Sutcliffe & Susan Scarr, Let's Read Project Officers*

#### **Bundaberg Let's Read**



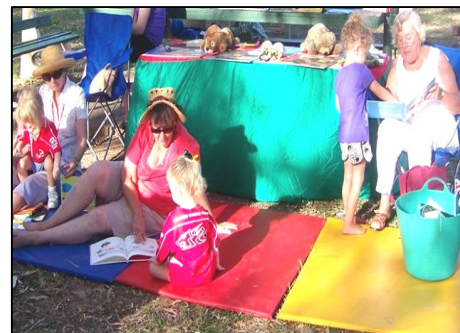
*Volunteers reading at the Australian Family Fun Day*

*Let's Read* is maintaining a high profile in the Bundaberg region with a new read aloud session beginning in February at Sugarland Shoppingtown. The two major shopping centres in Bundaberg have shown great support to our read aloud sessions. Regular volunteers Flora, Robyn, Chris and Cathryn continue their fantastic commitment to *Let's Read* and we have had plenty of interest from members of the public to come on board and train to be *Let's Read* volunteers.

The Bundaberg Regional Council included

#### *Let's Read* at their Australia Day

Family Fun Day celebration and we had a great afternoon and evening promoting *Let's Read* and reading to the vast number of young children who attended the day. Members of the local library received training and packs and a volunteer training session will be held in the near future. The steering committee is up and running and full of enthusiasm and great ideas. Students from the local campus of CQUniversity have assisted with putting packs together and helping out whenever needed. We are very



*Volunteers reading at the Australian Family Fun Day*



grateful for their support.

### Toowoomba

*Let's Read* has successfully been delivered into a number of schools as part of the interview process in the year prior to starting Prep. One of the strategies this has enabled is when the children start Prep and come from a number of different child care centres books such as *Za Za's Baby Brother* or *Where's my Teddy?* provide a common experience that the teachers are able to use as part of the socialisation of the group.

*Let's Read* is the focus of 2 Indigenous programs known as *Deadly Readers* and *Muni Murris* that are being developed by different agencies. As part of these programs packs are delivered to parents and caregivers and the general principles of having fun and trying different strategies when reading are explored and reinforced.

### Ipswich

The delivery of *Let's Read* in the area of Ipswich has been enhanced through the development of an Early Years Network. It was found that there were a large number of agencies working across the early years and that in many cases there was overlap in the services or a lack of understanding and knowledge about the services. Through the co-ordination of the Community Development Officer from the Ipswich City Council the agencies meet every second month to share information and to address the needs of the community in a more aligned and effective way. Some professional development also takes place during the network meeting.

### Redlands

Several playgroups have incorporated *Toddlerobics* into their programs for *Eat Well, Be Active* and encourage parents to follow up using the book and the actions at home and in playgroups. Through using the book in these small group situations parents have been able to share extension tasks and ideas for literacy stimulus activities.

### Coomera

*Let's Read* has a partnership with the Gold Coast Division of GPs to ensure doctors share with parents and caregivers the benefits of reading aloud at a young age as well as the development of literacy and language skills through the provision of books. Some practices have trained nurses and other key professionals who incorporate the delivery of books into their appointments. Local Speech Pathologists have also incorporated the delivery of *Let's Read* into a program titled *Read and Grow* that they have developed as part of the Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children (C4C). The underlying principles of these two programs align very closely and parents are getting the basic message about the importance of reading aloud to young children from a range of professionals and people who they respect.



## Staff Updates

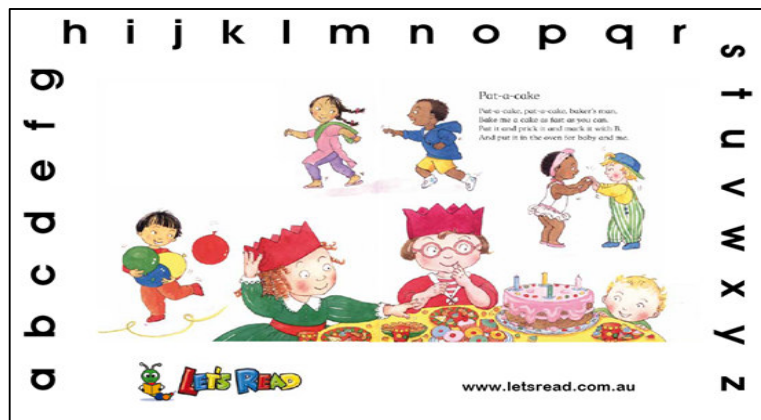
The *Let's Read* team recently farewelled Jane Hudson, Coordinator of *Let's Read* in Tasmania. We thank Jane for her significant contribution, great commitment and enthusiasm to *Let's Read* in Tasmania.

## Let's Read Promotional Product to Purchase

We have introduced a new promotional product. It will soon be added to the order form on the website.

### Let's Read Placemat

This lovely placemat is fully encapsulated. It is a completely reusable product (please note: it should not be fully submerged in water).



**Size:** 297mm x 210mm

**RRP:** \$2.50 each (price includes GST)

## 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 June 2010. Contact us at [metty.joseph@thesmithfamily.com.au](mailto:metty.joseph@thesmithfamily.com.au)



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