



LET'S READ Newsletter

March 2009



Welcome to the first edition of the *Let's Read* Newsletter for 2009. This edition highlights sustainability ideas to support Let's Read into the future, inspiring reading session stories from Queensland, and community news updates from New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.

Let's Read Resource Order Delivery – Your Assistance Required!!!!

Over the last six months we have been experiencing a few order delivery complaints from a number of our communities. In order to reduce customer complaints and improve the quality of our service delivery, we require our communities to adhere to the following procedures when accepting shipments from the TNT courier.

- When receiving carton/s of goods, check the number of carton/s received against the number of carton/s recorded on the TNT delivery docket.
- If you haven't received the correct number of carton/s according to the TNT delivery docket, do not, under any circumstances, sign the TNT delivery docket. (If you sign the delivery docket, TNT will not take responsibility for any missing items). Instead, immediately ring TNT on 13 11 50 **and** inform Let's Read via e-mail metty.ioseph@thesmithfamily.com.au
- If you accept delivery, check the contents of the carton/s against your original order. If there is any discrepancy, please inform us within 14 days of the delivery date.

Your cooperation in this matter is much appreciated

We will not be able to process Let's Read resources orders from 14th March 09 to 7th April 09 as our Operations Administrator is on leave. If you wish to place an order for Let's Read Resources, please fax it to us before 14th March 09.

Sustainability of Let's Read

In these difficult economic times, we all need to accept that funding opportunities will be reduced. The challenge for us all then, is to change the ways we use those funds which *are* available to us. Many Let's Read communities are now coming up with creative ways to modify their model of delivery to families. Some are setting up a loans model where Let's Read packs are made available for families to borrow from eg playgroups and libraries. In ACT, the playgroup association has developed borrowing kits containing the Let's Read books, together with activities which relate to those stories (puppets, feltboard, songs etc) It is worth also considering reducing focus on the give-away book in Let's

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Read delivery, and placing more emphasis on the literacy–promoting conversation with parents, guided by the parent information sheets.

In November 2008, Victorian Let's Read coordinators were invited to meet at the Collingwood office for a round table 'Sustainability Summit.' Over lunch, participants shared funding stories, challenges and ideas – and we'd like to share some of those with others around the country.

We opened the discussion with an inspiring success story: that of Ruth Moxey, a volunteer in Cessnock NSW. In just 2 years, Ruth has attracted \$85,000 in funds to support early literacy initiatives for disadvantaged children in the Cessnock area. Her message to you all is : KEEP IN EVERYONE'S FACE! DON'T GIVE UP! Ruth has become so well known in her area as a fundraiser for early literacy, that funding bodies now contact her when it's time to re apply for funds!

To date, Let's Read programs around the country have been funded by a wide range of organisations including:

- Councils
- Service Clubs eg Rotary, VIEW Club, Soroptimists
- State programs eg Best Start, Neighbourhood Renewal
- Government Departments eg Housing, Education, Communities
- Federal funding eg Communities for Children
- Libraries
- Local businesses/shops
- Neighbourhood/Community Centres
- Other literacy programs eg A Smart Start
- Universities
- Corporates eg Shell Australia, Mallesons
- Non-Government Organisations eg Salvation Army, Burnside Uniting Care, Anglicare,
- Playgroup Associations
- Churches-Benevolent Societies
- Community Health Services

Extra Funding Tips

1. The Federal Government is providing drought relief funding through the CWA. Community Grants of up to \$3,000 are available. You can contact your local CWA branch, or ring (08) 8332 4166.
2. Philanthropy Australia publish the Australian Directory of Philanthropy. It is available in hard copy or as an online resource, at a cost of \$75. Details are available at <http://www.philanthropy.org.au/publications/directory.html>

Philanthropy Australia also provides ½ day Grantseeker Workshops with information on finding funders and writing submissions.



Let's Read News from Beachside Family Centre at Umina Public School

Debbie Notara, Project Coordinator

Let's Read operates from The Beachside Family Centre at Umina Public School, NSW, where it has been running since March 2008. During the planning stages, the steering committee decided to target Aboriginal families, young mothers, and parents with low levels of literacy.

Umina has a 'combination model' of delivery, where some books are given to families (baby book bags delivered by Early Childhood Nurses at 4 months), while multiple copies (10-15) of books for the older age groups are made available for families to borrow through 4 supported playgroups and through the Young Parent Worker and Aboriginal Early Intervention Workers. Family Day Care, and a playgroup for children with disabilities will shortly become part of this borrowing scheme also. This model was chosen with the aim of making the program more sustainable.

Feedback from parents and organisations has been very positive. Book borrowing has become a part of the regular routine in the participating playgroups. When asked about her reaction to the books, a young mother in the 'Babes with Babes' group said she loved *I Went Walking* - and then proceeded to recite the entire story. She has read it so many times with her baby, that she knows it off by heart.

Coffs Harbour Let's Read News

Helen Barrett, Project Coordinator

Let's Read in Coffs Harbour is delivered by UnitingCare Burnside's I'M A DAD program.

We give first-time fathers an I'M A DAD bag at Coffs Hospital which contains the Let's Read four month pack. We only reach about 60% of parents this way however due to privacy regulations. We are also only funded to give out the program to first-time parents which makes our task difficult.

I decided to ask Medical Practices in the Coffs region to help. I made appointments with each Practice Manager and got together a 15 minute presentation. I took along a laptop computer and played some of the Let's Read DVD to them. This was very powerful. 18 Medical Practices and 2 Paediatricians agreed to help me to deliver the program. I then asked six libraries to help, and all agreed. I then made up coupons that the parents were given by the nurses, receptionists or paediatricians. Bright green for the 4 month pack and bright yellow for the 12 month pack. We enlisted the help of a local printer who gave us half price brochures. I put the coupons and brochures into Perspex stands (See picture) Each practice is given sixty 4 month coupons and sixty 12 month coupons and as many brochures as I can jam into the stand. Parents





simply fill in the coupon and take it to their local library to receive their Let's Read pack. I printed out separate coupons for each Medical Practice with their names on them so we know where the coupons are coming from. Librarians are ready to make them feel welcome, show them around the library and sign them up for membership. I visit the Medical Practices about 4 times a year, topping up their stands or just making up an excuse to visit.

Last year, we delivered 155 Let's Read packs through the Medical Centres and Libraries and 190 four month packs through the Coffs Hospital in the dad bags.

Let's Read in Exmouth W.A.

Exmouth Photos and Story

Joe Bell, Exmouth

Joe Bell has recently joined the Exmouth Library team, and is enjoying promoting early literacy and delivering Let's Read along with her Storytime sessions in the library. She has sent some activity ideas around the theme of sea creatures:

I thought you might like to see some pictures of our first Let's Read story time! We had 4 children which is not a bad start. We had a great time reading about crabs, playing with crab puppets, making and decorating some cardboard crabs and walking like crabs do. We also sang some songs and had some finger play.



Let's Read in Bendigo

The Big Kids come to Playgroup

Many Primary Schools around the country are discovering the benefits to children, parents and school staff, of running weekly playgroups for children 0-5 within the school.

At California Gully Primary School in Bendigo, Victoria, the playgroup has become a wonderful avenue for promoting early literacy to local families. Good quality books are read to children during group time, and are available for families to borrow. An especially successful initiative which has evolved in this school, involves Grade 5 children coming into the playgroup in the last half hour of the session, to read and share books with the playgroupers. The school kids are so keen to be part of this, that teachers have had to make a reading roster so that the older children all get a turn at spending time with the littlies!



Queensland Reading with Children sites

In Queensland, Let's Read is delivered in 11 locations as part of the Reading to Children Initiative that is funded by the Queensland Government. As a part of the CALD component of Reading to Children, in 2008, QLD Let's Read Project Officers distributed around 1800 dual language books to CALD communities in Qld.

Dual-Language Books for Lakes Creek State School

Jane Ganter, Project Officer, Rockhampton, Qld

Terry Thirkettle, the ESL teacher at Lakes Creek State School (Rockhampton, Qld) was delighted to receive dual-language books with the text written in both English and Vietnamese. Jane Ganter, the Let's Read Project Officer for Mount Morgan/ Rockhampton, presented these books to Terry on Thursday 29 January as part of the CALD initiative of Let's Read.



Lakes Creek State School is a small, but culturally diverse school. It has a significant population of Vietnamese students, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and South Sea Islander students.

With the start of the new school year, eight new Vietnamese students joined the Prep class. All year levels at the school have Vietnamese students, with the highest number being 20 in Year 4. When new Vietnamese students arrive at the school, they rarely have any exposure to the English language. Most have only been in Australia for a short time, and experience culture shock as they come to grips with the Australian language, people, culture, and lifestyle. In the Lakes Creek area, many of the parents are employed in the meatworks.

Terry was thrilled that such well known children's stories as "Dear Zoo", "Brown Bear", and "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" are available in the English/Vietnamese format. Twenty-two books, across eight different texts were provided to the school. These will be placed in the library and used by both Terry and other staff members to help culturally and linguistically diverse students.



Terry encourages Vietnamese parents to come and read to their children, and any parent who is literate in English is a valuable asset in helping others to grasp the new language. Older Vietnamese students, who after two or three years at the school have developed a good grasp of the English language, are encouraged to read to the younger children in the school, and also function as interpreters between the staff and non-English speaking parents.

It is hoped that many students will enjoy these dual-language books, and achieve a better understanding of the English language through reading them.

Let's Read in Tasmania
Jane Hudson, Community Facilitator, Tas

Prior to 2008, Let's Read operated in 10 Local Government Areas in Tasmania, but in 2007, the State Government announced funding for Let's Read for every child under school age. Through 2008, the number of Let's Read communities rose to 27 out of 29 LGAs. Throughout the year, there was a range of activities for families, launching Let's Read in new communities and celebrating Let's Read in existing communities.

Literacy based Family Fun events to launch Let's Read were held on Flinders Island, in Dorset, Kentish, Georgetown, Break O' Day, Huon Valley and Kingsborough Municipalities. Northern Midlands launched Let's Read at a Teddy Bears Picnic in a park. Latrobe Steering group launched Let's Read on National Literacy and Numeracy Day with a book character Fancy Dress event in the Main Street. A group from a local Primary School entertained the crowd with a marvellous dramatised version of "Where is the Green Sheep?" Devonport advertised Let's Read with a float in the city's Christmas Parade. Burnie celebrated Let's Read by holding a concert in the Park. Burnie the Blue Tongued Lizard led the singing with "Let's Get the Reading Bug". Brighton celebrated Let's Read with "Stories under the Stars".



In Tasmania, through a partnership with the State Library, families are able to search for and make holds on Let's Read Book Suggestions from the State Library Catalogue.



Staff Updates

The Let's Read team recently farewelled Michelle Croker, Acting National Program Manager, Cheryl Henningsen, Let's Read Project Officer for Bundaberg & Raelene McNaughton, Database Management.

Let's Read Promotional Products to Purchase

Due to community demand we have introduced two new promotional products

Let's Read Worm Stickers

70 stickers on a sheet
Cost is \$4.00 per sheet
Size 25mm diameter



Post Card

Things to do When you are Reading

Cost is \$0.30c each
Size: H150mm x w 95mm



Front

Back

Both of these products will be uploaded on to the Let's Read resource order form by April 09. Until then, if you wish to place an order, please e-mail your order to community@letsread.com.au with delivery details and a contact phone number.

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 2009. Contact us at metty.joseph@thesmithfamily.com.au

For starters:

Share with us, the many creative ways your community has found to use the new Let's Read postcards to promote literacy in young children. We'll publish your ideas in the next newsletter.

