



## Let's Read National Early Literacy Campaign

### Key messages for media

#### What is the Let's Read Campaign?

**Let's Read National Early Literacy Campaign** engages families, professionals and communities to promote reading with children from birth. Sharing books from birth helps children develop the skills they will need when it's time to start school. Let's Read *anywhere anytime* is the national campaign call to action for families, carers and early childhood education professionals to share rhymes, songs and stories every day with children from birth. The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Smith Family to deliver Let's Read. For information please visit

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

#### Why Let's Read?

Almost half (46%) of Australians over the age of 15 lack the literacy skills they need to meet the demands of everyday life and work. Furthermore, more than one in five children arrive at school developmentally vulnerable. Research shows that children who fall behind in the first few years of schooling find it very difficult to catch up to their peers, even with appropriate intervention. Establishing the building blocks for literacy starts very early in life and a child's early literacy skills are a predictor of later literacy and academic achievement. An individual's literacy levels affect their opportunities in life for education, employment, income and wellbeing. Reading with children from birth is probably the single-most important activity in developing a child's future ability to read and write.

#### How does Let's Read work?

Let's Read was developed by The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health. It is designed to be delivered at four points during a child's development – from 4 months, 12 months, 18 months and 3 ½ years. The 2013 Let's Read reading tips and tools provide practical information to support families to read anywhere and anytime with children every day from birth, these resources include:

- reading tips and information sheets in nine languages
- age-appropriate book suggestions to support families to select and share books with their children
- a DVD featuring Leah Vandenberg and Alex Papps with simple and practical tips on how families can enjoy books with their children.

#### How is the Australian Government involved?

Following the success of Let's Read community program, the Australian Government has funded the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute \$1 million dollars over 12 months to implement a Let's Read National Early Literacy Campaign. Building on existing evidence-based programs and leveraging off the designation of 2012 as the National Year of Reading, this campaign aims to develop and generate national, integrated early years literacy promotion and support.

#### Let's Read Campaign Celebrity Ambassadors

The Let's Read campaign celebrity ambassadors are Jay Laga'aia and Liz Ellis.

#### The Let's Read launch

The Let's Read campaign launch took place on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. Jay Laga'aia and Liz Ellis were in attendance.

#### Let's Read Celebrity Champions

More than 30 high profile Australian parents have endorsed the Let's Read campaign by answering two questions about reading with their children. Some of the celebrities/Australian identities who have submitted headshots and reading profiles include: Alicia Gardiner, Cameron Daddo, Camille Keenan, Colette Mann, David Collins, David Tredinnick, George Donikian, Gorgi Coghlan, Jeremy Lindsay Taylor, Jules Lund, Kat Stewart, Kate Ceberano, Kate Langbroek, Leah Purcell, Leigh Sales, Livinia Nixon, Nathan Lovett-Murray, Rebecca Judd, Rhys Muldoon, Shelley Craft and Tony Jones. Their profiles will be available on [www.letsread.com.au](http://www.letsread.com.au) following the Let's Read launch to empower families to make a difference by reading with their children from birth.

### **The Let's Read community program**

The Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Smith Family partnered to implement Let's Read with communities across Australia. In the Let's Read community program, community-based professionals (ie: community health nurses, early learning centre staff and general practitioners) participate in Let's Read training that enables them to promote reading with children from birth with families and in their local services. The Let's Read community program utilises existing community networks and can be integrated with services and early literacy initiatives. Integral to the success of the Let's Read community program is the role of the trusted community-based professional in encouraging and supporting families to help children to develop the building blocks of literacy before they enter school.

### **Australia Post research**

An evaluation of pre and post shifts in attitudes, knowledge and behaviours of families reading with their children is of great importance to this campaign. As a result, Let's Read has established a partnership with Australia Post to leverage off existing research data collection sources. Australia Post's recent data collection has provided Let's Read with quantitative analyses of the number of families who read to their children from birth every day, as well as the attitudes and behaviours families have towards reading to their children from birth to five years.

To speak with Prof. Frank Oberklaid or members of the community using the Let's Read resources or any media enquiries, please contact:

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