



LET'S READ Newsletter

August 2008



Welcome to the second edition of the *Let's Read* Newsletter 2008. This edition introduces QLD *Let's Read* team members, highlights special events and gives community news updates.

Let's Read Community Annual Reports

After a successful 2007 it is time to tell us all about it! Part of delivering *Let's Read* requires communities to prepare an Annual Report outlining how they are progressing with the delivery of *Let's Read*. We have prepared an Annual Report template to simplify this process. The template was e-mailed to communities at the end of April. The reports were due to be submitted by 30th of June 2008. Thanks to the 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 Administrator for assistance in completing your annual report.



BUDDING BOOKWORMS in Corio gets a helping hand thanks to a \$5,000 book donation

Shell donated prize money it received through the 2007 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence, to the Corio *Let's Read* program. More than 530 new books were distributed among eight Corio playgroups care of energy company Shell.

"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 Jenny Odgers, Shell's National Social Investment Manager.

Children's books, literacy posters and book storage boxes were presented to playgroup leaders and children at a ceremony at Bethany's Rosewell co-ordinated playgroup in Sharland Road. The playgroup leaders then received training in Early Literacy from the *Let's Read* national trainer.

"It's a fantastic encouragement for early literacy," playgroup leader Karen Butterworth said.

"The children will love the books." The *Let's Read* Program, in partnership with the City of Greater Geelong, encourages parents to read to children from birth. "We're thrilled Shell has decided to use the prizemoney to build upon the existing early literacy-boosting activities in Corio," *Let's Read* National Program Manager Sonja Pase said.

"For early literacy development, young children need adults who understand the importance of reading aloud."



Bethany's Rosewell playgroup co-ordinator Karen Butterworth, Let's Read's Sonja Pase and Jenny Odgers from Shell with young Buckley

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Let's Read Launch in Salisbury Communities for Children

From Cathie Bishop – Project Facilitator

Salisbury Communities for Children launched *Let's Read* with a huge community event attended by some 200 parents and children at Ingle Farm Recreation Centre. Many local organisations including kindergartens, church groups, libraries and schools with FamilyZones on site were involved. Children made puppets, bookmarks and their own personalised book to take home. They were entertained by Bozette the Clown and had books read to them by the library service. Parents had an opportunity to speak with a speech therapist and to gather information on community activities.



The day was officially opened by Karl Brettig Manager of Salisbury Communities for Children. Project Facilitator Cathie Bishop gave away lots of books and pencils to eager children, and led a rousing version of "The children on the bus sing Read Read, Read Read!!!" From all reports everyone had a fun-filled day and went away with lots of new enthusiasm for reading.

West Pilbara Early Literacy Project Launch

From Anne Pomery, Project Officer

The West Pilbara Early Literacy Project is now being rolled out in the towns of Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Onslow, Karratha, Dampier, Roebourne and Wickham and the communities of Cheeditha, Mingullatharndo, Wakathuni, Youngaleena, Ngurawaana and Chiratta. Further visits will be made to Pannawonica, Bindi Bindi, Peedamulla and Bellary within the next two months. Under the Service Delivery Plan, the project was required to deliver four training sessions for the *Let's Read* Program in the towns of Karratha, Roebourne, Tom Price and Onslow. In fact, five training sessions have now been held with excellent response from child workers in the four regions. *Let's Read* National Trainer, Jeanette Miller has reported that she was happy with the response to the training sessions and has provided the project with some useful feedback.

Anne Pomery, Project Officer, together with Pete Britto (Karratha-based) and Wendy Hubert (Juluwarlu, Roebourne) have visited child care centres, playgroups, libraries, home day care, outlying communities and agencies currently working with children in the 0-5 age group.

To date, approximately 750 *Lets Read* packs have been distributed to families with wonderful free books, information for parents and extra little giveaways for the children.

The message "Reading with your children creates readers for life" is being spread across the Pilbara and the communities are now recognising the team as the "book ladies" or "book man". Pete has also gained a reputation around the communities for his guitar playing and great smile!



Playgroup in the Park, Roebourne

A very successful "Playgroup in the Park" was recently held in the town park at Roebourne. The activities for the children included story time with Jocelyn from the Roebourne and Wickham libraries, face painting with Sasha and Dorinda Britto, helium balloons blown up by Josh Britto and Steve from the Cancer Council, playdough and craft from RUCSN and bubble blowing, a fabulous sausage sizzle cooked by Pete, together with fresh fruit and water supplied by Woolworths Karratha. The Project Officer would like to thank all who helped to make it a really fun day!



Gosnells Early Years Action Group launches

On August 19th the Gosnells Early Years Action Group (GEYAG) launched *Let's Read* as part of their broader "Bonding with Books" Initiative. The aim is to reach 500 families in the Gosnells area within the first year of implementation.

The Mayor of City of Gosnells, Cr Olwen Searle, the Chief Operating Officer of Shell Development Australia Mr. Chris Gunner, and Aboriginal Elder Beryl Harp attended along with approximately 60 children and invited guests. Adults and children were entertained by Levi from Didgeridoo Breathe when they arrived. The children then had an opportunity to express their creativity by decorating their own book bag, making a "Bonding with Books" book and manipulating play dough into unique shapes and designs. The activities were supported by the Roberta Jull Family Day Care Scheme, Coolabarro Neighbourhood Centre, and Derbarl Yerigan who will all take part in the delivery of *Let's Read*.

Beryl Harp opened the ceremony with welcome to county an invited the audience to participate in the Hokey Pokey which she sang in Noongar.

Following the launch a presentation about *Let's Read* was given to Shell employees at the North Fremantle terminal. Shell staff were invited to take a children's book home to read with their child and write a review for the *Let's Read* website. They were also given the opportunity to further support the program by purchasing a book from our booklist to donate to a "share box" for the WA sites.





Do you have a *Let's Read* launch or event planned?

If you are holding a *Let's Read* event and are planning to write a media release or develop other promotional material, please let us know early so that we can provide you with approved *Let's Read* content and logos. Contact us on metty.joseph@thesmithfamily.com.au

Casey Medical Centre – *Let's Read* Program

From Monika Birthisel - Let's Read Co-Ordinator

Casey Medical Centre, Cranbourne is extremely thrilled to be involved in the *Let's Read* Program. The information session for staff highlighted the importance of sharing with parents/carers and siblings the invaluable benefits to not only the children but also to the family as a whole.

Family life can become so hectic. The promotion of spending a short time reading together not only encourages children to “seek” new adventures through books but also provides an opportunity for families to spend time together which is low cost, educational and fun. Many of our parents are stunned when given the library bags during their Clinic visit. They listen intently to the benefits of reading and it also provides an opportunity to create a positive environment for the children after their immunisations. The positive comments from the parents also promote a pleasant atmosphere in the Clinic amongst staff and the public. In particular the Pre school employees have commented favourably on the program being offered through nursing staff. The new “book corner” in our waiting room has also brought many positive comments from all who attend the clinic. The minimal effort required to promote this program is far outweighed by the excitement of the children drawing their families closer. We have been thrilled by the children’s priceless smiles and encourage other to become involved in such a valuable program.

Introducing the “Reading with Children”, Queensland *Let's Read* Team

The Queensland Department of Communities has funded a 4 year early literacy strategy known as “Reading to Children Initiative”. is funded under this initiative.

Jane Ganter joined *Let's Read* in March as the Project Officer for the **Mount Morgan/Rockhampton** area. She is involved in various groups in the area, including a support group for mothers of young children. Jane is married with two adult children. She comes from a background of teaching, ranging from child care and preschool, through primary years, to adult literacy, both here in Australia and in Papua New Guinea. Since returning from Papua New Guinea she has taught in primary schools in Queensland. When she moved to Rockhampton recently, she was looking for a change, and was thrilled to be employed as a project officer for *Let's Read*. Jane loves reading, and is fascinated by children’s books, and sees this project as having great potential in encouraging parents to have fun reading to their children. Jane can be contacted on 0403 314 055 or by e-mail jane.ganter@thesmithfamily.com.au



Wendy Hone, is the Project Officer for *Let's Read* in **Mackay** and has been in the role since March 2008. Wendy has worked in a variety of roles including as a tutor and Manager. Originally from South Africa, Wendy has lived in Australia for the last 11 years and is a passionate reader. Wendy can be contacted via phone (07) 4959 1818/0432 054926 or by e-mail Wendy.Hone@thesmithfamily.com.au

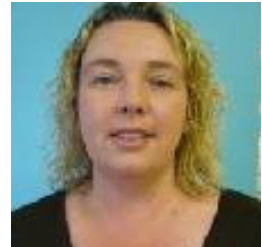




Maree Stratton, is the Project Officer for **North Brisbane** and has three sites, Zillmere/Taigum, Caboolture and Maroochydore/Nambour on The Sunshine Coast. Maree has previously worked in rural NSW as a Dental Therapist enjoying her time working with children and their families. After spending 7 years in a small Kimberley town working in a family business and becoming immersed in local community affairs she moved to Brisbane with her family and returned to study Adult and Community Learning at QUT. Thrilled to be working with the Queensland team of *Let's Read* Maree has already found her communities excited about being involved in the project, especially the many senior volunteers eager to assist young children to grow up with a love for books. Maree can be contacted on 0438 732 457 or by e-mail maree.stratton@thesmithfamily.com.au



Cheryl Henningsen, is the new Project Officer for *Let's Read* in the **Bundaberg/Isis** area. Cheryl has worked in Early Childhood and Disability areas over the last 11 years and has lived in Bundaberg for the past 6 years. Currently, in addition to her *Let's Read* role, she works as an assistant in a C & K Kindergarten at South Kolan, just outside of Bundaberg. Cheryl also has experience in working with volunteers from her involvement in the local Autism Support Group. As well as supporting the professionals who are delivering the program, she will focus on supporting the many volunteers in the Bundaberg & Isis communities who will be conducting reading sessions. Cheryl can be contacted on (07) 4152 5056, 0414 901 158 or by e-mail cheryl.henningsen@thesmithfamily.com.au for any enquiries in regards to the Bundaberg/Isis area.



Col Sutcliffe, is the Project Officer for *Let's Read* **Brisbane South** and has 4 diverse and widespread locations, Ipswich City area, Toowoomba on the Darling Downs, Coomera on the Gold Coast and the Redlands area on Moreton Bay.

Col has a background in education and has at various times been teacher, principal, District Inspector of Schools and Director of Education throughout Queensland. He worked in indigenous education in outback Queensland for many years as well. He was also responsible for the development of Queensland Schools of the Air into a new model of education for isolated and remote students. He was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore overseas models of distance education as part of this development. Col's community activities have included Apex, Rotary and Toastmasters International as well as involvement in numerous show societies, sporting clubs and community organisations. He recently completed 9 years, including 7 as Vice Chair, of the UnitingCare (Community Services) Board of the Uniting Church, Queensland Synod. He was also Chair of the State Blue Care (Blue Nursing) Board and is presently a member of the Princess Alexandra Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee. He has also been an active Scout Leader and established of Scouts of the Air in Charters Towers. As a form of relaxation Col is a collector of bush yarns, bush poetry and bush sayings. Col can be contacted on 0439 425 011 or by e-mail colin.sutcliffe@thesmithfamily.com.au





Fiona McCarthy, has recently commenced as the new Project Officer for Let's Read in Townsville. Fiona's background is mainly in the disability field. She has spent time working in mental health, & has spent the last 6½ years coordinating a service for people with a physical disability, predominantly those with a spinal cord injury. Fiona has a Bachelor of Health Science (Public Health) from the Queensland University of Technology, & can be contacted via e-mail at fiona.mccarthy@thesmithfamily.com.au or on 0448 858 481.



TAS News from Tas Trainer Sally Mollison Continued enthusiasm!

Up-Coming training:

Kingborough, Northern Midlands, Georgetown, Sorell, Tasman, Dorset, Southern Midlands, Glenorchy, King Island.

Training delivered in June/July:

Flinders Island, Launceston, Meander, Latrobe/Kentish, Wynyard/Waratah, Burnie and Devonport

Latest TOTAL of participants 168

- 53 Maternal and child health nurses
- 6 Librarians
- 22 Child carers
- 2 Home visiting
- 43 Primary school teachers
- 21 Teacher Aides
- 23 others

Participant Comments:

"I will be able to deliver the *Let's Read* program to parents on a one to one basis because the concept is really quite simple and the delivery model is really good".

Program Coordinator- Launceston

"The DVD demonstrates how more interesting an interactive story teller is than a straight style". *Kinder-prep Teacher- Meander*

"*Let's Read* is open to all the community to own and we all have a role to play."

Playgroup Coordinator- Kentish/ Latrobe

"The training session fulfilled my expectations. It was completely new to me and beneficiary." *Migrant Resource Playgroup Coordinator- Launceston*

"*Let's Read* will help me develop relationships with parents. It will help parents to feel valued and important in their child's development". *Childcare Centre Coordinator- Wynyard*

"I have been encouraged to spend more time with parents explaining and offering ideas and suggestions". *Teacher Aide- Ulverstone*

The most beneficial aspect of the training was the role playing. It was especially helpful because it gave you a chance to experiment with different deliveries of the information to the parents." *Community House Coordinator- Devonport*

Feedback

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

