

Books Alive – the way forward

The Books Alive Reference Group has agreed on a way forward for the Books Alive! campaign. Input will now be sought from the book industry and detailed market testing will be undertaken.

Deputy chair of the Australia Council and chair of the Books Alive Reference Group, Dr Helen Nugent, said that the proposed campaign will enhance the book sector by increasing the reading, purchasing and borrowing of books.

The agreed approach includes a high profile national book week and a subsequent children's book week. Later developments could include additional themed weeks or months promoting particular genres of books. Each program will include a 'call to action' as an incentive to encourage book industry and community participation.

Proposed strategies to support an initial book week include an annually changing topical theme, consumer incentives, major national events, promotional material targeted to the needs of bookshops and libraries and flexible opportunities for industry and community participation.

To support the program, a flexible, outcomes oriented and consumer driven organisational structure is proposed.

Dr Nugent said 'It is extremely pleasing to see the high-level of agreement around the table with all members of the reference group supporting the proposed approach to make the best use of current government support to create a sustainable program that will grow the book sector.'

The reference group developed the proposals on the future shape of Books Alive! after thorough analysis of specially commissioned AC Nielsen research and direct communication with a number of prominent overseas book promotion campaigns that operate through co-operative industry involvement. The reference group interviewed key representatives of the CPNB (Collective Promotion of the Dutch Book) in The Netherlands; World Book Day in the United Kingdom (Publishers Association and Booksellers Association); and Get Caught Reading (American Association of Publishers) in the USA.

The Books Alive Reference Group comprises representatives of booksellers, publishers, libraries, government, authors, schools and literacy advocates and is co-ordinated by the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body. ■

National meeting of professional educators

Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism: Towards a common approach

A national meeting of professional educators held in Canberra on 3–4 April built on the work of the Australian College of Education over the past two years towards a common and collegial approach to teacher standards, quality and professionalism. The emphasis was on quality teaching and the promotion of the teaching profession.

The 250 delegates included practising teachers, representatives of teacher organisations, subject associations and unions, educators, statutory bodies, and employer bodies. Panel discussions over the two days focused on key issues related to clarifying the challenges for the teaching profession. They provided an opportunity for stakeholders in the profession to debate critical issues.

Along with panel discussions, there were several keynote addresses. Dr Brendan Nelson indicated a commitment from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training both to the project and to enhancing the public image of the profession. Dr Carol Adams, chief executive of the General Teaching Council in England focused on the importance of the discussion around teacher standards being 'done with' and not 'done to' teachers. Dr Ken Boston, president, Australian College of Education, and Stuart Hamilton, Secretary DEET, Victoria and chair of the MCEETYA taskforce for Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership also spoke.

The panel sessions were supported by roundtable discussions. Time did not permit adequate discussion of the issues

raised in these roundtables, however records of the discussions are available at <http://www.austcolled.com.au>.

The conference identified a need for immediate action on the development of a national statement for the teaching profession, which will take into account existing sets of standards. Delegate responses emphasised the need for broad consultation within the teaching profession — teacher-librarians need a voice within this debate, which can best be provided through the ALIA/ASLA joint policy advisory group.

Further details of the meeting can be accessed on the Australian College of Education's web site <http://www.austcolled.com.au>.

Kris Johnstone, ASLA/ALIA Taskforce

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