

Read Aloud Summit

Whoever you are, wherever you are — you can read aloud

The inaugural Read Aloud Summit was held at the Novotel Brighton, NSW, on Wednesday 31 August and Thursday 1 September. Participants from all over Australia gathered to hear distinguished guest speakers including Rosemary Clarke (head of Bookstart UK), Dr Robert Needlman (co-founder, Reach Out and Read, Boston), Professor Frank Oberklaid (director, Centre for Community Child Health, Victoria) and children's author Mem Fox.

Conference participants represented a broad range of practitioners including teachers, librarians, health workers, childcare workers, parents, authors, business people, politicians, social workers, government at all levels and non-government organisations.

With presentations, workshops and networking, participants heard of developments in Australia and overseas in the crucial area of literacy for the 0–5 age group. Topics covered everything from engaging boys, indigenous and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities to encourage reading, to focusing on the positive impact that reading aloud has on both literacy and broader educational outcomes. A wide range of existing programs was showcased during the

workshop sessions, and facilitated breakout sessions provided the opportunity to share ideas.

During the summit, attendees also had the opportunity to listen to great stories from Literacy and Numeracy Week champion, author Christopher Cheng, and from 'read aloud' guru Mem Fox. The storytelling theme was continued by storyteller and presenter Graham Davey, who entertained and delighted the group with his stories at the conference dinner.

The Read Aloud Summit was hosted by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, with special contributions by the federal Education Minister, Dr Brendan Nelson, Mem Fox and Dymocks Literacy Foundation CEO, Julie Urquhart.

In the words of Julie Urquhart: 'It was fantastic to see such strong interest in this crucial issue from so broad a range of stakeholders. We are confident that this will inspire even greater interest in what we can all do, as a community, to ensure the right of every child to be read aloud to from birth.'

Carolyn Bourke, ALIA representative, Read Aloud Summit Steering Committee



Dymocks Literacy Foundation CEO, Julie Urquhart



'Read aloud' guru and children's author Mem Fox



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