

# Supporting literacy in Tasmania

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The State Library of Tasmania has an important role in providing support for the development of pre-school literacy, by providing children and parents with free access to a wide range of quality literary resources. The main strategies depend upon introducing children to literature — books, reading, stories, rhymes, word games and so on — from a very early age, and then maintaining a program of regular contact.

The State Library provides an excellent range of resources and a number of activities to encourage parents and children to use their local library. The three key areas being targeted are:

- improving and enhancing story-telling sessions;
- adding value to library resources by providing improved professional advice, reading lists and supporting materials for parents and carers; and
- expanding the program piloted at Burnie and Kingston Libraries.

## *Babies who read, succeed!*

Kingston Library in partnership with Blackmans Bay Children's Services, developed an early literacy kit for parents and carers to use in the home with their child.

*Babies who read, succeed* encourages parents and carers to read to babies from the earliest opportunity by lending copies of a package of pre-selected children's books and supporting information about the value of reading to children.

Packs have been developed for three age groups: 0 to 1 years, 1 to 2 years and 2 to 3 years. Each pack contains five books appropriate to the particular age group, and an attractively presented 'Picture book list' of recommended titles that can be borrowed from State Library collections.

Following a very successful launch in May 2002, the Kingston Library trial of *Babies who read, succeed* has proven to be very popular. In 2003–04, all city libraries and five key branches were provided with Baby book packs and a number of packs were also made available for statewide reservation. The program has been publicised through all Tasmanian child-care centres and the response has been very positive with most libraries reporting an overwhelming demand.

The program is being assisted by Acer Computers who have provided \$15 000 over three years to help develop the resources and publicise the program. This

has allowed the program to be extended to all libraries statewide in 2004–05.

Also in 2004–05, the State Library has partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services to include a publication on nutrition education as a standard item in each of the Baby book packs.

## Supporting family literacy

Current experience in Tasmanian schools, libraries and childcare services — through programs such as *Babies who read, succeed* — indicates that there is much to be gained by children and their parents from family involvement in literacy programs. Family literacy programs, however, have not been used explicitly as a tool for improving adult literacy within Tasmania.

The State Library is currently working in partnership with the Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training (OPCET) to develop a pilot program for implementation in two libraries in low socio-economic areas, with a view to extending to other locations if the trial is successful. Hugh Fielding, senior project officer — adult literacy, is currently on secondment part-time from OPCET and will manage the pilot program. Hugh has extensive experience with the Institute of TAFE Adult Literacy program. The program is to be known as Literacy Education for Adults and Families (LEAF), and the objectives of the program include:

- enabling opportunities for parents/carers and children to learn and think about literacy practices in their everyday lives; and
- recognising and building on the literacy strengths of both parents/carers and children.

The program will develop from the needs and interests of all participants.

## Burnie CLASP

Burnie Library is delivering a CLASP (Connecting Libraries and Schools Program) project to schools in the Burnie area. The program targets children in Kindergarten, Prep and Grade 1, with library staff delivering a reading and activity session in the classroom. The program forges a link between the class and the library and aims to encourage the students to further their literacy skills by visiting the library with their parents. The project has achieved a marked increase in junior library registrations and attendance, with an associated increase in attendance at regular storytime sessions.

## Extension of storytime

A pilot program is being developed for Saturday morning story sessions at the

## The cake was cut, the system was launched!

Librarians from all over south-east Queensland joined Bond University Library and Technology Services staff to celebrate the launch of the Aleph500 library management system recently. After an exciting, and sometimes unpredictable journey through the evaluation and implementation stages, it was time to celebrate and thank everyone who had helped out along the way.

Bond University Library director, Gulcin Cribb extended thanks to the many libraries that had assisted with site visits and valuable advice. Ms Cribb also commended Bond University's Technology Services team and the various Library teams for their commitment and dedication to the project.

Peta Hopkins, project manager for the implementation, outlined some of the challenges encountered during the implementation phase and talked about the significant developments anticipated in the coming months.

'One of the major benefits for the Bond community will be enhanced access to information as we maximise the potential for linking to full-text electronic resources,' said Ms Hopkins.

After the launch, visitors took a tour of the newly refurbished John and Alison Kearney Law Library and tested their searching techniques on Bond's new library catalogue.



Claudette Pope, Peta Hopkins and Gulcin Cribb cut the cake