

THE FUTURE OF READING

Keep reading

The State Library of Victoria's Reader Development unit is engaged in developing and delivering programs and professional development that support the activity of keeping Victorians reading. In addition to the work of its Centre for Youth Literature, the library now also manages the Victorian Government's Young Readers program, and the adult-oriented recreational reading Summer Read program alongside other reading promotional projects in partnership with publishers, the public libraries, and other organisations. The library is currently preparing to deliver BookWell – a pilot project in bibliotherapy training as well as the Victorian roll out of Frontline, Opening the Books online reader development training course. Additionally it has contributed to the establishment of ACLA, the Australian Children's Literature Alliance – which seeks to provide a Children's Laureate (a reading advocate and reading role model). ACLA has already established a website linking professionals in the field and reading promotional organisations nation-wide. www.acla.org.au

At the core of this work is keeping young people reading for their immediate enjoyment, future wellbeing, and success. The critical links between literacy, school performance, and adult life chances and the converse negative health and social impacts of poor literacy skills are well documented. While not a literacy program as such, the Centre for Youth Literature's goal is to keep young Australians reading for pleasure. Continued engagement with reading also shows to have a positive impact on wellbeing and social engagement. Books provide young people with a way of understanding others' lives as well as their own, at what is possibly their most confusing time of life. Teenagers are hungry for ideas and are questing for what youth literature and other forms of reading material offer.

Peers, family members, trusted teachers, and bookstore specialists inform young people about their reading choices as well as the highly used website www.insideadog.com.au developed by the Centre for Youth Literature. The Centre presents professionals with information and insight about youth literature; provides authors and publishers with a platform; speaks directly with young Victorians about reading; and supports the development of dedicated youth literature bodies in other states and territories. It is also proactive in providing information and leadership in the landscape of young people's reading habits and behaviours.

Library Consultant Sue McKerracher has crafted and extended the research conducted on the Centre's behalf, as part of a strategic review process, into a report that provides an update on the highly valued *Young Australians Reading* report of 2001. The purpose of the research was to track the changes since the last strategic review of the Centre for Youth Literature in 2004; to describe the effect of these changes on young people, their families and professionals in the field; and to discover future trends that will help inform teachers, librarians, and the organisations involved in encouraging young Australians to read for pleasure. Each element of the chain is included, from the author through to the young reader, via publishers, bookshops, public libraries, and school libraries, with guidance from peers, parents, teachers, and librarians.



Keeping Young Australians Reading identifies:

1. Why it is important to keep young Australians reading
2. What the barriers to reading for pleasure are
3. How to overcome these barriers (particularly devastating for Indigenous students and those in remote areas)
4. Trends in young people's reading and
5. Challenges for professionals

Keeping Young Australians Reading provides facts and figures, observations, statistics, and quotes. It cites other reports, websites, and sources of useful information. It has been designed to be an advocacy tool as well as providing both insightful reading and professional toolkit armoury. The full report can be downloaded at the State Library of Victoria's website at www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies_reports/keeping-reading.html

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Currently reading *Cooee* by Vivienne Kelly

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