

WOULD YOU LIKE TO READ A BOOK WITH THIS BLOKE?

We're guessing the answer's yes, so it is with great delight we can reveal William McInnes has accepted the role of patron of the National Year of Reading 2012. While we can't promise he will be dropping in to read to you at home, he will be helping library professionals everywhere spread the good word about the critical life skill that is literacy.

Chair of the National Year of Reading founder partners (not to mention incoming ALIA President and State Librarian of Western Australia) Margaret Allen says the award-winning actor and bestselling author will be a highly credible and enthusiastic advocate for reading.

"We wanted someone who was familiar to all Australians, both keen readers and people who struggle with literacy," Margaret says.

"William McInnes is the author of four highly-regarded books, including *The Making of Modern Australia*, which became an ABC TV series in 2010. He writes with humour and affection, and we're sure this, combined with his status as a much-loved household name, will add considerable weight to our campaign."

There are 15 organisations behind the National Year of Reading, including all the state libraries, territory libraries, the public library associations across Australia and ALIA. Although libraries are the driving force behind the campaign, partnerships are being forged with writers, publishers, booksellers, schools, government, media and the companies behind some of Australia's most famous household brands.

The founders recognise the great work that Australian reading promotion and literacy organisations already do and hope that by attracting further attention to the issue for a 12 month period, there can be a step-change in people's awareness of the enormous value of books and the joy of reading.

Because the shocking truth is that, according to the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*, nearly half of all Australians (46%) don't have the literacy skills they need to cope with everyday life and work. And we can help change that.

"If we can use the National Year of Reading to help embed a reading culture in the home and at school, we can improve the lives of current and future generations of Australians. Recreational reading has the power to influence well-being in the way it inspires, informs and transforms our thinking," Margaret said.

The official launch of the National Year of Reading will be on 14 February 2012 and the countdown has already begun. Watch each issue of inCite for updates on the program and the people and start planning now for your organisation's NYR2012 events. More at www.love2read.org.au

*www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4228.0

"Being asked to be Patron of the Year of Reading is as great a pleasure as it is an honour. It's easy to be blasé about reading and books - easy to take them for granted. Yet when I think about it, reading to me is the key to so much. The key to a wider reach of information, a path to learning, the joy of entertainment and the exciting of the imagination. It's just so much fun. Helping to encourage people to remember that and maybe to discover that, is something I look forward to very much."

William
McInnes



**National
Year of
Reading
2012**