

Thursday, 28 March 2024

## KIDS TO HIT THE BOOKS FOR PREMIERS' READING CHALLENGE

The Allan Labor Government is calling on all Victorian children and young people to explore, learn and enjoy the world through reading as they embark on this year's Premiers' Reading Challenge.

Premier Jacinta Allan today visited Essendon Primary School to launch the 2024 Premiers' Reading Challenge, which promotes the importance of reading and setting children up for life with this essential skill.

The Challenge encourages students between early childhood and Year 10 to read a set number of books during the year, with their efforts recorded online. A book list recommends age-appropriate texts that children might like to try, but any book counts towards their Challenge totals.

Last year, Victorian kids read a huge 3.4 million books between them – so this year's Challenge sets an even higher goal of 3.5 million books, encouraging children to become voracious readers across different genres, authors and styles of literature.

This year's 'Explore, Learn, Enjoy' theme captures the excitement and sense of adventure that reading gives us all – and the theme is also reflected in the Prep Bags given to every new student at a Victorian government school, which also includes a range of carefully chosen books and educational play materials.

Children who have not yet started school are also encouraged to join the Challenge by reading 40 books with the help of their families – with picture books, short stories, poems or non-fiction books in any language all eligible for the Challenge.

In 2013, the Challenge was expanded to include young children from birth to five, following strong evidence indicating that reading to young children from birth promotes brain development and language learning.

Since the Challenge began in 2005, 4.3 million students across Victoria have read more than 60 million books. Victorian students are the strongest performers in the country for the all-important Year 3 Reading NAPLAN results.

Students participating can read books in Languages Other Than English and use alternative supports and resources. For more information on the Challenge and to see the book list, visit [vic.gov.au/premiers-reading-challenge](https://vic.gov.au/premiers-reading-challenge).

### Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

*"From toddlers to teenagers, the Premiers' Reading Challenge is about reading as many different types of books as possible – instilling a love of reading into every Victorian child."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

*"The Premiers' Reading Challenge has seen more than four million young people enjoy more than 60 million books over two decades – boosting literacy skills and a love of reading across generations of Victorians."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne

*"Many of the Challenge books can be found in our state's local libraries for children to borrow and enjoy for free."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

*"The Premiers' Reading Challenge provides a great opportunity for students to broaden their imaginations while developing key comprehension and language skills to set themselves up for life."*

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