

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education



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## PREMIERS' READING CHALLENGE INSPIRING KIDS TO READ MORE

Victorian children and young people are preparing to take on the challenge to read more books – as the Premiers' Reading Challenge gets underway.

Minister for Education James Merlino today launched the Premiers' Reading Challenge 2019, with thousands of avid readers expected to take part at schools, in early childhood centres and in homes across the state.

Now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, the Premiers' Reading Challenge continues to inspire more children to read, helping to build essential literacy skills that support their education.

Accomplished Melbourne-based children's illustrator Adele Thomas designed this year's Premiers' Reading Challenge posters, inspired by the taglines 'Spark their imagination' for the early years, 'Reach new heights' for primary level and 'Expand your universe' for secondary level.

Students in Years 3-10 need to read at least 15 books in the six months from February to September in order to complete the challenge. For prep-Year 2 students, the challenge is to read or experience 30 books.

More than 12,000 books feature on the list - 200 of them new. Children can read picture books, short stories, poems or non-fiction books in any language as part of the Challenge.

Children who have not yet started school are challenged to read or experience 40 books with the help of their families as part of the Premiers' Reading Challenge for the Early Years.

A key Education State target is increasing the number of Year 5 and Year 9 students reaching the highest levels of achievement in reading by 25 per cent, and the Challenge is an important literacy initiative in striving to meet this target.

Last year, 266,950 participants in 965 local schools, 1,947 early childhood services and homes across the state got lost in the pages of more than 4.4 million books.

Since the Challenge began in 2005, more than 2.8 million students in Victoria have read nearly 49 million books. For more information, visit: [education.vic.gov.au/prc](http://education.vic.gov.au/prc).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"Good luck to every household taking on the Premiers' Reading Challenge in 2019 – I hope that you find adventure on every page."*

*"Supporting children to read is one of the most powerful things you can do to encourage a love of reading and literacy - developing skills that will set them up for life."*