



# National Year of Reading 2012

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the aim of the National Year of Reading?

Our vision is 'Australia, a nation of readers'.

We have two aspirational objectives: to create a universal appreciation of the benefits of reading for pleasure and to encourage a reading culture in every home.

### Why is this important?

Nearly half the population of Australia (46%) struggles without the literacy skills to meet the most basic demands of everyday life and work. It is a particular concern among Indigenous communities.

Inability to read puts people at a serious disadvantage in our society. People from low socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to complete secondary education and undertake further education and more likely to be unemployed and face long term economic disadvantage. Typically, 60% of offenders in prison cannot read or have low levels of literacy.

If we can improve the level of literacy in our society, we can help to break the cycle of disadvantage.

### Why reading, not writing?

Reading focuses the attention on the consumer; writing focuses the attention on the producer. Most of us are able to improve our reading skills, not all of us have the creative gift for writing.

### What will happen during the year?

When the UK ran its National Year of Reading in 2008, there were more than 6,000 activities, most of them organised at a local level. Participants in Australia are already beginning to register their interest and ideas, and there will be plenty of great initiatives being planned, which will be promoted via the website [www.love2read.org.au](http://www.love2read.org.au).

There will be three major national initiatives: a public library membership drive, One Country Reading and My Story – more information about these will be available on the website.



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## Who owns the National Year of Reading?

It is a collaborative venture by Australian libraries who have commissioned the Library Agency to scope the project, initiate the design and identity, create an online presence, establish a community and develop the partnership framework. The founder-partners are:

- Australian Library and Information Association
- ACT Library and Information Service
- Northern Territory Library
- Public Libraries Australia
- Public Libraries New South Wales (Country)
- Public Libraries South Australia
- Public Libraries Victoria Network
- Public Libraries Western Australia
- State Library of Queensland
- State Library of Tasmania
- State Library of Victoria
- State Library of South Australia
- State Library of Western Australia

## What is The Library Agency?

The Library Agency comprises Sue McKerracher and Donna McDowell. Sue McKerracher is a library specialist who worked with the British Library and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in England. Now based in Victoria, she has been involved with several ALIA public library initiatives in 2009, including the Public Libraries Summit and the creation of a national vision and framework for public libraries. She has carried out projects for the Centre for Youth Literature and produced a report on teenage literacy for the State Library of Victoria entitled *Keeping Young Australians Reading*. Donna McDowell spent 30 years in the health sector, latterly in administration. Donna handles project management and administration.

## Where will the funding for 2011 and 2012 come from?

Our fundraising drive takes place in two phases, from July 2010 to December 2010 and from January 2011 to June 2011. Our aim is to gain sufficient funding for the management of the National Year of Reading in the first round, and a greater sum in the second round to pay for the collateral and expenses incurred in running the campaign itself.

Although federal government funding is being sought, library managers should budget for National Year of Reading activities in case the full amount requested (\$7m) is not forthcoming.

**Other questions? Email [donna@thelibraryagency.org.au](mailto:donna@thelibraryagency.org.au).**