



Heather Butler, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier

Wednesday, 26 November 2008

Early Literacy Program for Northern Midlands

A program to support early year's literacy in local communities is now operating in the Northern Midlands municipality.

Launching the Let's Read program in Longford today, Member for Lyons and Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Heather Butler, said the State Government recognised the importance of early literacy development of babies and pre-school children.

"Reading stimulates brain development and babies who are read to regularly develop listening skills and familiarity with printed works which gives them a head-start with reading and writing," Ms Butler said.

"Let's Read promotes and supports parents to read aloud with young children from birth to five."

"In Tasmania, it's being delivered through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education, The Smith Family and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute's Centre for Community Child Health."

"Let's Read provides high quality reading resources to parents and trains trusted community members to work with parents. Community-wide activities provide opportunities to support parents."

Ms Butler said that the Northern Midlands community had set up a Let's Read Steering Group as part of its Early Years Group, people in the community were trained and materials had been ordered.

"This year every child in the region can receive a Let's Read pack consisting of a bag, age appropriate book, DVD, parent tip sheet and book suggestions."

"The full pack is designed to be delivered at one of four points during a child's development – four months, 12 month, 18 months and three and a half years."

"Parents' tips and book suggestions will continue at intervals between birth and five years and babies will receive the full pack for the next two years."

"Thirteen municipalities across the State are already delivering Let's Read and over 10,000 packs of resources have been delivered to these communities for families."

"The program is a fantastic way of ensuring that the youngest members of the Northern Midlands community are getting literacy support from an early age," Ms Butler said.