

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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University helps deliver Books in Homes program to Tasmanian children

Books in homes help children in school. That is the truth behind a new program being launched in Tasmania this week.

The Books in Homes program involves local businesses sponsoring the purchase of books for children to pick from and take home to keep, as well as copies for the school library.

Having run successfully interstate and overseas for some time, the University of Tasmania is trialing an expanded version of the program this year with three primary schools in the North, the North-West and the South.

Manager of the University's pilot project, Natalie Edwards, said academics from the Faculty of Education would work with each of the schools involved.

"Not only will we provide nine books for each child involved, but our staff will work with the schools to provide a parent information session and professional learning sessions for teaching staff," Ms Edwards said.

"Our team will also carry out a small research project to assess what impact the program has on reading engagement within the home. We hope that by clearly highlighting its value, we will see businesses come on board to support the program in the future."

Lecturer in English Education at the University Damon Thomas, who will be working with Ravenswood Primary School, said the simple presence of books in homes could make a significant difference in the education of a child.

"We know that those children who are familiar with books and with reading have an advantage over those that aren't. That gap exists when children start school and it is very difficult to close," Mr Thomas said.

"It is widely recognised that Tasmania struggles with low literacy rates and we need to do all that we can to try and address that.

“With this program, we want to get books into homes that might not have many otherwise and, hopefully, to inspire a love of reading.

“We want these books to be special for the children in the program – they will be brand new, presented in a special bag at a special assembly and they will be books the children themselves have chosen.”

A book giving assembly will be held at Ravenswood Primary School today, with assemblies following in Rokeby and Havenview Primary Schools tomorrow and Friday respectively.

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