

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

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READING CHALLENGE OPENS A NEW WORLD TO VICTORIAN KIDS

More than 71,000 young Victorians explored exciting new worlds and built their literacy skills this year as part of the Premiers' Reading Challenge, now in its seventeenth year.

Victorian kids aged from pre-school to Year 10 collectively made their way through more than 2.8 million books between March and September for the Challenge, which this year celebrated the theme 'Open Up a New World'.

The annual challenge encourages enthusiastic readers across households, early childhood centres and schools to read a set number of books – including picture books, short stories, poems or non-fiction books – and record their efforts online.

The challenge sets kids a goal of 40 books for children below school age with their parents or carers, 30 books for Prep to Year 2 students with or without assistance, and 15 books for students in Years 3 to 10.

Of this year's 71,342 participants, 8,315 readers were below school age – encouraging a love of books and stories in Victorian kids from a young age.

More than 12,000 books were listed on the Premiers' Reading Challenge booklist for each age group to choose from, with titles curated by an expert panel including teachers and librarians.

The annual challenge receives support from the Andrews Labor Government's Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund to help meet the extra demand for books.

An extra investment of \$1.1 million will ensure councils, regional library corporations and Vision Australia can buy the materials they need to support the 2022 Challenge and ensure all children have access to the listed books.

More than 3.5 million young people have read more than 54 million books since the challenge began in 2005. Each participant who meets the challenge receives a certificate of achievement signed by all Premiers since 1992 – celebrating Victorian Governments' decades-long commitment to literacy and a love of reading.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Reading not only fosters a lifelong love of learning, but helps kids build important literacy skills that will remain with them for life – a huge congratulations to every Victorian child who has picked up a book or 40 this year!"

"I also want to congratulate every parent and carer who has supported their child's learning and love of reading as part of this challenge – each word, page and chapter will go a long way in their education journey."

Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"I'm proud that we can support public libraries to make sure that no child misses out on the Premier's Reading Challenge – or the joy of books."