

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



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FREE PREP BAG BOOKS TO INSPIRE YOUNG READERS

The Allan Labor Government is making sure next year's Preppies get a great start to their education – giving every student starting at a government school a library bag full of fun and engaging story books.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Education Ben Carroll today visited Carlton Gardens Primary School to reveal the titles of next year's books – which will help around 65,000 students improve their reading skills at home.

To help build a love of reading and learning, each student will receive five specially chosen books:

- *A Crocodile in the Family* – written by Kitty Black and illustrated by Daron Parton
- *Walk of the Whales* – written and illustrated by Nick Bland
- *Bernie Thinks in Boxes* – written by Jess Horn and illustrated by Zoe Bennett
- *Koala Ark* – written and illustrated by Stephen Michael King
- *No Way Yirrikipayi!* – by children from Milikapiti School, Melville Island, with Alison Lester

To make sure every young student can enjoy the stories, the books will also be produced in Braille, with tactile illustrations by the Statewide Vision Resource Centre – supporting students who are blind or have low vision.

Research has shown how important it is for parents and carers to regularly read aloud to young children, particularly as they prepare to move from kinder to primary school and adjust to the next important phase in their life.

By reading together, families can help kids to expand their vocabulary, make connections between spoken and written words, and strengthen the bond they share with their children.

First launched by the Labor Government in 2019, this initiative supports children's literacy and ensures Prep students and their families have access to great books, suitable for children aged 4 to 6 – with more than 1.9 million books delivered through the initiative so far.

Each year, all books in the Prep Bags are selected by literacy experts – which this year including a current Children's Book Council of Australia judge, Prep teachers and a librarian.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

*"Our family loves reading together – and when the kids were younger, books like *The Magic Beach* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* were on high rotation."*

"With a Prep Bag full of books, we're helping families find some new favourites and encouraging more young Victorians to discover a love of reading."

Quote attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"There are so many benefits to reading with children from a young age. This initiative will help parents and carers support their child's reading skills from the very start of their school journey."