



United Way Glenelg

***MEDIA RELEASE***

March 2015

## **Books from birth stimulates early love for reading but community supported needed**

United Way Glenelg is asking the community to get behind its high impact early literacy program the *Dolly Parton Imagination Library* as the enormous success of the initiative has meant that there is now a waiting list to register for the program.

Currently 500 children from across the Glenelg Shire are signed up to receive a free book delivered to their mailbox each month from birth until five years. To date over 6800 high quality, age appropriate books have been distributed since the program commenced in 2013.

Enormous community support, including corporate support from major partner Portland Aluminium and philanthropic funding from the Andrew Jack Charitable Trust has seen the program grow rapidly to include government and non-government agencies, businesses and individuals to raise awareness of the importance of reading to children from birth and giving vulnerable families the skills and support to do this.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Angelino said the program had proven so popular that further help was needed.

“We have completed financial forecasting to ensure the 500 children that we have registered will receive their books to graduation and we are pleased to confirm this.”

“However we are now carefully considering our options for families who have registered their children from December 2014 onwards. The *Dolly Parton Imagination Library* has really resonated with families in our community and has grown quickly meaning we have now reached capacity,” Ms Angelino said.

“We encourage families who have benefited from the program, and who are in a financial position to do so to pay it forward by considering sponsoring another child to join the program,”

“This cost is just a tax deductible \$6.50 per month and is a way we can work together to foster a lifetime love of learning in our youngest community members,”

“We have contingencies in place to ensure children identified as vulnerable by our Community Partners will be registered immediately” she concluded.

Interested individuals and businesses are also encouraged to support the program if they can, either via workplace giving or a one off donation.

Portland Aluminium Plant Manager Peter Chellis reiterated Ms Angelino’s words and encouraged others to get involved

“As a business we want to be sustainable well into the future and being able to provide educational opportunities for our local children and help build our future employees is an important goal for Portland

Aluminium. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is a fantastic program that benefits so many people and engages the whole of community. I encourage as many people as I can to become involved in some way”.

Thankfully for those families on the waiting list there are still many ways to share the joy of reading;

- Access local library storytimes – Friday 11am in Portland, Thursday 11am in Heywood and Wednesday 11am in Casterton.
- Tune in to community radio 3RPC at 9.30am each Friday to hear local personality “Aunt Hilary” read the latest books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.
- Utilise the monthly newsletter and book tips which will be sent to those on the waiting list.
- Attend UWG literacy events held throughout the year.

For more information On the *Dolly Parton Imagination Library* including how you can support the program please contact Nicole Angelino on 0410 51 3305 or via email [mail@unitedwayglenelg.com.au](mailto:mail@unitedwayglenelg.com.au)

Donations can be made via Workplace Giving, a direct debit to UWG BSB - 033 656 Account Number - 127910 or cheque made out to United Way Glenelg and sent to PO Box 1032 Portland, 3305.

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**Media enquiries to Nicole Angelino on 0410 513 305.**