

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE

5 September 2024

Successful Indigenous Literacy Day Celebration Brings Community Together

Heywood became a focal point for the community, where close to 100 people, including local kinder & school children, gathered to engage with the timeless tradition of Indigenous storytelling.

On the first Wednesday of September, Australia unites in celebration of Indigenous Literacy Day, a vibrant annual event that honours the rich stories, cultures, and languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Led by United Way Glenelg, the event celebrated these cultural narratives but also launched materials to nurture early literacy among Indigenous children, making it a day of profound connection and shared learning.

With a heartfelt Welcome to Country, Aunty Eileen Alberts set a respectful tone for the morning by sharing stories from her own childhood.

Indigenous storyteller Braydon Saunders followed with several powerful stories, each offering a poignant reminder of the role storytelling plays in preserving heritage and strengthening community bonds.

"Through his engaging storytelling, Braydon showed how stories not only pass down cultural knowledge but also foster a deeper understanding and connection between generations," said Nicole Carr Executive Officer of United Way Glenelg.

"We continue to learn, understand, and honour the traditions and wisdom of the Gunditjmara people," said Ms Carr.

The morning was both a celebration and launch of an initiative aimed at promoting early literacy among Indigenous children and families.

"Dolly Parton Imagination Library, an early literacy program, is available to all children in the Glenelg Shire, offering free books each month to promote early literacy and foster a love of reading. However, we've observed a lower uptake among Indigenous families."

"We wanted Indigenous families to feel that the Imagination Library was also for them as well as non-Indigenous. With the guidance of Kate Mee, Koorie Engagement Support Officer, we embarked on a journey to create materials that are beautiful, joyful and inclusive."

"We were fortunate to collaborate with the talented emerging artist Saige Bell, whose work brings these stories to life, explained Ms Carr.

Local photographer Nicole Cleary captured stunning photos of our wonderful models, Jess Lovett Murray with her son Wirin, and her cousin Luka Jefcoate.

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Interactive literacy activities, facilitated by Glenelg Libraries, United Way Glenelg, Heywood Kindergarten, and DWECH Playgroup, kept the children engaged throughout the event.

Enrolment forms are available at Winda Mara and Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly & Community Health Service Inc.

If your organisation would like to display posters and enrolment forms, please contact Nicole Carr at United Way Glenelg on 0410 513 305.

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