

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE Monday 1 June 2026

60,000 books delivered across Glenelg Shire through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

A remarkable 60,000 books have now landed in the hands and homes of children across Glenelg Shire through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL), marking a significant milestone in one of the region's largest early literacy initiatives.

The achievement was recently celebrated at Heywood Library by United Way Glenelg, Portland Aluminium, Glenelg Libraries, families and community supporters who have helped nurture a love of reading for local children since the program began in 2013.

A special community celebration was held at Heywood Library, bringing together families, early learning services and community partners who have supported the program over many years.

DPIL provides children with free, age-appropriate books delivered directly to their homes each month from birth until age five. Since launching locally in 2013, the program has continued to grow across Glenelg Shire, helping create positive reading routines and increasing access to books for local families.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Carr said the 60,000-book milestone reflected years of strong community collaboration and investment in local children.

"Reaching 60,000 books was an incredible achievement for our community and something everyone involved should feel proud of," Ms Carr said.

"Every book that arrives in a child's letterbox creates an opportunity for connection, learning and imagination. These small moments shared between children and the adults reading with them can have a lasting impact on development and wellbeing."

Ms Carr said recent international research involving more than 86,000 families across Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland reinforced the importance of early shared reading experiences.

"The research showed children participating in the program were significantly more likely to show stronger early literacy skills, greater interest in books and more engagement during shared reading," she said.

"After receiving just 10 books, children in the program were found to be four times more likely to demonstrate stronger emerging literacy skills compared to children not receiving the books."

Ms Carr said the findings aligned strongly with what local families and educators had been observing across Glenelg Shire for many years.

"We regularly hear from families that children become excited checking the letterbox for their books and begin building positive reading routines at home from a very young age," she said.

“One of the most powerful parts of the program is that it reaches families wherever they live. Whether a child lives in Portland, Heywood, Dartmoor, Nelson, Casterton or one of our smaller communities, they receive their own book addressed personally to them each month.”

Ms Carr said the milestone also highlighted the importance of long-term partnerships.

“This milestone simply would not have been possible without the support of our partners, sponsors and community. Portland Aluminium have played an important role in helping us continue to grow the program and reach more local children.”

Anna Impey, Senior Community Relations and Communications, from Portland Aluminium said the organisation was proud to support initiatives that create long-term benefits for children and families.

“Supporting children's literacy and learning helps strengthen the future of our community,” Ms Impey said.

“Dolly Parton's Imagination Library creates excitement around reading from a very young age and helps families build important routines together at home.”

“We were proud to support a program that is making such a positive and practical difference for children across Glenelg Shire.”

Tanya Flockhart, Manager Libraries and Arts from Glenelg Libraries said libraries play an important role in fostering lifelong reading habits and welcoming spaces for families.

“Libraries are about much more than borrowing books, they are places where curiosity, imagination and learning begin,” Ms Flockhart said.

“It is wonderful to see children excited about books from such an early age arriving at the library already recognising stories and characters they have received through the program.”

As part of the celebration event, families enjoyed children's entertainment from Tara Grice from Child at Heart Entertainment, story time activities and the unveiling of a new interactive hopscotch installation at the entrance to the library.

The colourful hopscotch will remain permanently in place to encourage playful learning, movement and engagement as children and families visit the library into the future.

Ms Carr said the celebration recognised the collective effort behind every book delivered.

“This milestone belongs to the whole community,” she said.

“It belongs to the families reading bedtime stories, the librarians encouraging children to explore books, the educators supporting literacy every day, and the organisations and businesses that continue investing in the future of local children.”

United Way Glenelg | Media Release



The event celebrated not only 60,000 books delivered, but the thousands of shared reading moments now taking place in homes across Glenelg Shire.

Photo: *Nicole Carr EO United Way Glenelg and Anna Impey Senior Community Relations and Communications Portland Aluminium celebrate 60000 books!*

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