

Burnie Works

For over seven years, Burnie Works has been facilitating a place-based systems change response to create the conditions for positive change in Burnie. We work with many local organisations and community members to support initiatives of interest to the community in areas including children, youth and families, education, and employment. Increasingly life-long literacy is a critical piece.

We would like the Literacy Advisory Panel to know about a current Burnie Works initiative in partnership with the local Launch Into Learning teams, the families stakeholder group and Communities For Children is the Books In Homes program which we began to roll out in term 3 in 2021.

Books in Homes is a national charitable organisation, that supports the development of a love of reading by providing 3 books of choice per term to children and families. The program operates from early years through to year 6 in funded schools. Families develop a library of books, normalising reading at home and a foundation for developing literacy skills while building excitement about books. The program includes additional Caught being Good books, and chosen books come with a name label in a book bag. The program can be adapted to the needs of communities, enabling it to be linked with community volunteers, organisations, and a range of learning activities.

The University of Tasmania trialled Books in Homes in 2015, with one of the sites at Havenview Primary School. The program was well received, however funding after the trial was limited.

Burnie Works and Communities for Children Burnie are funding Books in Homes for 3 terms, commencing in Term 4 2021 for families and children enrolled in Launch in to Learning at public primary schools or who attend Burnie Child and Family Learning Centres. This utilises the early childhood and pre-school packs, allowing families to choose from the catalogue best suited to their child's reading level. Through this program, we hope to understand the impact on literacy and school preparedness of making books of choice widely available in homes across Burnie. Over 276 children received books in Term 4 2021, totalling 828 books. We have heard from the LILs teacher that several families re-engaged with the LILs sites through the way that the books were promoted, presented and used in the sessions.

Term 1 2022 has been postponed due to COVID impacts in schools. Burnie Works will seek funding to continue Books in Homes beyond Term 4 2022 and explore the potential to run Primary programs (across four reading levels) to create further positive reading outcomes in our community. We are still in the early stages of this program and understanding its impact in Burnie. We will be working to understand the impacts, and opportunities to use Books in Homes to support Launch into Learning and Child and Family Learning Centres as they recommence and navigate COVID disruptions.

We would be happy to provide any additional information on this important initiative. All the best with your work to achieve the vision for Lifting Literacy, Lifting Tasmania.