THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government support for Australia Reads

The Morrison Government is contributing $100,000 towards the 2020 Australia Reads and Australia Reads at Home campaigns, to support literacy, connection and wellbeing.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said he was pleased to support Australia Reads and to promote the importance of reading.

"We know reading is critical for building literacy and knowledge, but it can also be a great way to relax, unwind and keep us entertained. Reading can also bring people together – be it sharing a moment with your children reading their favourite picture book, or discussing the latest best seller with your friends. This is more valuable now than ever as we respond to challenges of COVID-19," Minister Fletcher said.

Australia Reads is a new initiative that will deliver a 12 day program of events to promote reading across Australia. It builds on the popularity of the Australian Reading Hour, which reached more than 11 million Australians in 2019.

"It's great to see the Australia Reads program expanding in 2020 from a single event to a 12 day reading festival. This year, Australia Reads is also encouraging people to share their love of reading with the hashtag #AustraliaReadsAtHome while we're spending more time at home due to social distancing measures," Minister Fletcher said.

"I commend those working in bookshops, libraries and schools who have come up with innovative ways to help Australians continue to access books throughout COVID-19, and to authors and publishers who have worked with the library and school sectors so children across the nation can enjoy virtual story times, helping foster a love of books in Australia's young people."

Australia Reads will run from 1 to 12 November 2020, and the Australian Reading Hour will take place on 12 November 2020.

For more information about Australia Reads visit: australiareads.org.au

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Additional Information

It is estimated that more than 65 per cent of Australians over the age of 14 read for pleasure at least once a week with six million Australians identifying as heavy readers. Two in three Australians have read one or more books over the past 12 months.

Research shows that reading reduces stress by 68 per cent, working even faster than listening to music, going for a walk or enjoying a cup of tea. Being read a story at bedtime six days a week can put young children almost a year ahead when they start school.