



PREMIER HONOURS NSW'S YOUNG READERS

1 December 2008

Premier Nathan Rees today congratulated the record number of NSW students who tackled this year's Premier's Reading Challenge during a celebration at Parramatta Riverside Theatre.

Joined by the Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, the Premier congratulated the students' commitment to improving their literacy skills.

"This year was a huge success, with 156,774 students completing the Premier's Reading Challenge and strengthening their reading abilities," Mr Rees said.

"I congratulate each and every one of these students on taking the opportunity to find enjoyment in reading while also improving their literacy skills.

"These students represent nearly 2,000 primary and secondary schools across NSW, and have collectively read more than 4 million books this year.

"That means more than 12.4 million books have been read since the Challenge was introduced in 2002.

"These students should be extremely proud of their achievements – reading between 20-30 books in seven months means putting aside the easy distractions of life outside school.

"Congratulations also to the teacher-librarians, classroom teachers, public librarians, and parents who supported them."

Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, said the Premier's Reading Challenge was getting stronger and stronger each year.

"This year there was a 13% increase in the number of students who took part," Ms Firth said.

"There has been an overwhelming 2,557% increase since 2002, when 5,900 students successfully completed the first year of the Premier's Reading Challenge.

"In 2008 we are also awarding 12,401 students with gold certificates, which are given to students after their fourth year of participating in the Challenge.

"I am confident that next year's Challenge will be even bigger - 554 new books have been added to the list to give our enthusiastic readers a wider choice."

Mr Rees said that as part of the new ambassadors program, we are also welcoming seven ambassadors to the Challenge.

"They will help us encourage students across the State to take part in the Reading Challenge," Mr Rees said.

“Four of these ambassadors – Peter FitzSimons, Hazem El Masri, Deborah Abela and Libby Gleeson - are here today to help us celebrate the achievements of the students who competed in this year’s Challenge.

“This is all part of the NSW Government’s \$616 million four-year investment to further improve literacy and numeracy rates at NSW public schools.

“The Reading Challenge is one of the reasons our public schools have some of the highest literacy rates in the world.”

The Reading Challenge is supported by principal partner Dymocks Literacy Foundation, media partner The Sun-Herald and supporting partners Laubman & Pank and OPSM.

Schools representatives:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Al Faisal College, Auburn• Ashfield Boys High School• Burnside Public School• Concord West Public School• Davidson High School• Emu Heights Public School• Hilltop Road Public School• Metella Rd Public School• Nepean High School• Oatlands Public School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redeemer Baptist School, North Parramatta• Rowland Hassall School• Sacred Heart Primary School, Westmead• Sefton High School• Seven Hills West Public School• St Patrick’s Primary School, Parramatta• Tara Anglican School for Girls• The King’s School
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