

Press release

We know that reading is vital to academic success.

A conference being held this Friday by the School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV) will confront the barriers to engaging students with reading and offer evidence-based solutions.

The conference, *Choose, Read, Succeed: Partnerships of Practice*, at Etihad Stadium, Docklands, brings together authors, academics and school library practitioners as they explore recent research and share narrative in all its formats, discuss gender and diversity, genre preferences and teaching programs and strategies that work to create a positive reading environment and the freedom to choose.

Encouraging and supporting reading in children and young people is a key focus of the Victorian Government's Education State agenda. The Government target - that by 2020 for Year 5 students and 2025 for Year 9 students, 25 percent more students will reach the highest levels of achievement in reading - mean that effective school library literacy and reading programs are necessary in all our schools and for all our children to succeed.

Australian Children's Laureate and loved author and illustrator, Leigh Hobbs, will provide the opening address. Leigh has travelled the country as Children's Laureate and has been vocal in expressing his support for well-resourced school libraries. His call is echoed by the findings of Deakin University researchers and presenters at the conference, Leonie Rutherford and Katya Johansen in their report, *Teen reading in the digital era*. "School libraries seem to be the primary enablers of access to, or advice about, good books. Forty-eight percent (48%) said that having more good books at their school library would help them read more, contrasted with only 30% for their public library. This suggests that a priority should be resourcing school libraries with trained teacher-librarians to drive collection and provide informed reader advice." P.7 Snapshot Report, March 2017.

SLAV President, Di Ruffles, explains, "This conference is both a celebration of the vital role that school libraries play as well as a forum to share creative strategies that empower students to choose the books that will engage their imagination. There is so much wonderful evidence-based practice by our members using social media, peer interaction, and even storytelling that needs to be showcased."

Conference details:

Title: *Choose, Read, Succeed: Partnerships of Practice*

Date: Friday, 24 November 2017 commencing at 9.00am

Venue: Accolade Room, Level D, Gate 6, Etihad Stadium, Docklands

<http://slav.org.au/a/wp-content/uploads/Choose-Read-Succeed-conference.pdf>

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