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FUND**

The **Reading** Hour



# Report 2016



The Reading Hour is one of the most celebrated annual reading initiatives in Australia, and supports individuals, families and communities to discover and rediscover the joy of reading.

The Reading Hour emerged from the National Year of Reading 2012, and is an ongoing campaign from Love2Read, funded by the ALIA Australian Public Library Alliance and in partnership with the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

The Reading Hour reminds parents, caregivers and families that reading together doesn't have to be a massive undertaking in their increasingly busy lives, but rather encourages the 'anytime, anywhere' mantra, building a foundation in society whereby reading is a gift, given freely.

**'Anytime,  
anywhere'**

The Reading Hour aims to spread  
the simple message,

**‘Share a book with your child  
for 10 minutes a day, an hour a week,  
and give the gift of reading.’**

With our key mission statement being:

**‘Anytime is Reading Time!’**



Driven by Australian libraries, Love2Read raises the status and visibility of reading and literacy nationwide, promotes the benefits of reading and storytelling as critical life skills and catalysts for wellbeing, and unifies the national literacy network.

The Reading Hour provides an opportunity for libraries, authors, illustrators, educators and other professionals to work together towards the goal of Australia being a nation of readers.



## Objectives

- Raise awareness and visibility of reading in Australian homes and classrooms.
- Support the shared goals of schools, parents, and educational bodies in raising and steadily promoting the value of reading.
- Be an on-going and consistent reading resource for parents, teachers, and caregivers, by connecting them with a network of libraries and other reading organisations.
- Continue to strengthen Australia's reading culture, driving the consumption of books and literature.



## 2016 National Ambassador: Magda Szubanski

Chrissie Swan did a terrific job as The Reading Hour's 2015 Ambassador. The decision for the next ambassador was very important to The Reading Hour Team and another beloved Australian was the top of our list. We were thrilled when Magda Szubanski stepped up for the role.

One of Australia's most loved TV personalities; Magda Szubanski has a background in comedy, appearing on several sketch shows including *Kath & Kim* as Sharon Strzelecki. Her first book *Reckoning* recently won the Indie Award for Non-Fiction, Douglas Stewart Prize for Non-Fiction at the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and both Biography and Book of the Year at the Australian Book Industry Awards.



With her sparkling sense of humour, a new book just released and loved by Australians everywhere, Magda filled the shoes of Ambassador perfectly.

*“At four years old I could read, and I’ve been a keen reader ever since. And I would actually say that that effort that my mother put in in those early years – this is in 1965 – very much laid the foundation for my later career, in terms of a love of words, a love of reading. Everything I’ve done has been involved with the reading of scripts, of plays, of films – and, now, the writing of a book. So...you can’t underestimate how important reading is. But I’m also very much of the view that we’re surrounded by visual images, but the only way I can tell you what’s going on in my head and in my heart is through words. As we say, ‘use your words.’” Magda*

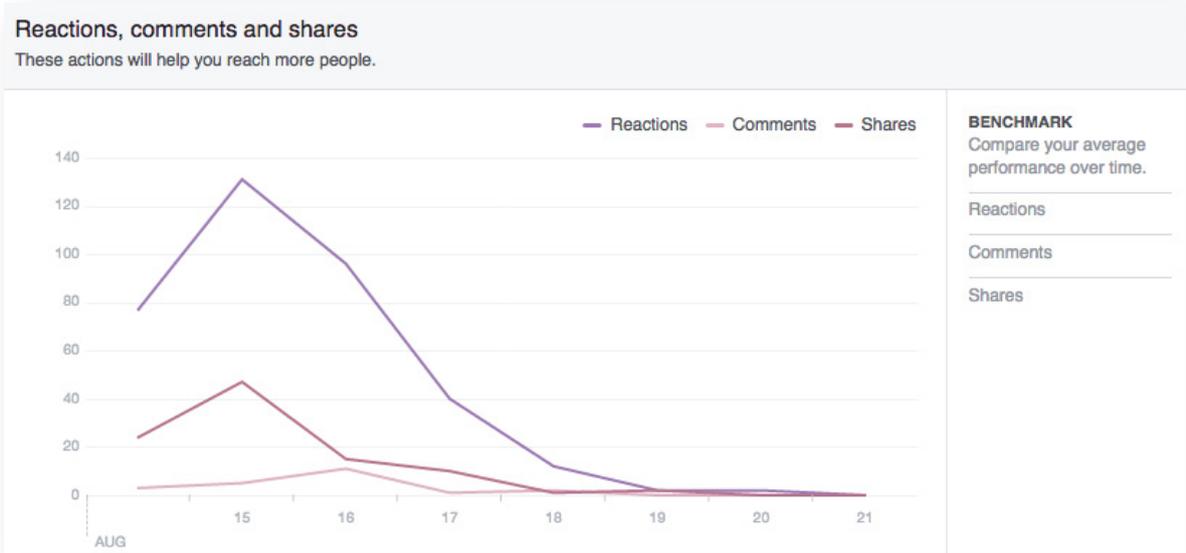


Magda was an engaging speaker with a personality that resonates to young children as much as parents. She conveyed The Reading Hour mission excellently within her two separate events and illustrated the importance of reading with flair. We recommend the next ambassador be as loved by Australians as Magda, as she received a phenomenal response.

# Event Highlights

The 2016 Reading Hour was held on Tuesday the 16th of August. It is promoted as a synchronised event, whereby a myriad of participants such as libraries, schools, book clubs, community groups and families gather across the country to spend time with each other and hundreds of different fictional characters and stories. The event's intended hour is always encouraged to be flexible. We told participants and interested reading communities that it could be anytime that week as the concept is to incorporate reading into every day, but on this one day in particular you can be a part of something bigger.

The Reading Hour is a year-round effort to promote reading in every day life, and its featured hour acts as a beacon in the campaign where we can measure engagement and participation rates, and get a feel for the true impact of the initiative. The graph below indicates a large spike in web traffic to the Love2Read Facebook page on the 16th August 2016.



Magda participated in two fun story time events for this year's Reading Hour. The official event was held at the Elsternwick Library between 11 am and 12pm, where Magda did a reading of *'Ten Little Fingers, Ten Little Toes'* and had a sing along with the help of Blinky Bill and the librarians.

The second event was held at St. Kilda Library as a bedtime story time between 6pm to 7pm. Madga read *'Where is the Green Sheep?'*, participated in more songs and had a ball dancing with the children. Promoting the importance of reading with ease by relating her own stories of her mum reading to her as a child, Madga had the two venues inspired, leading the events to be a great success on the day.



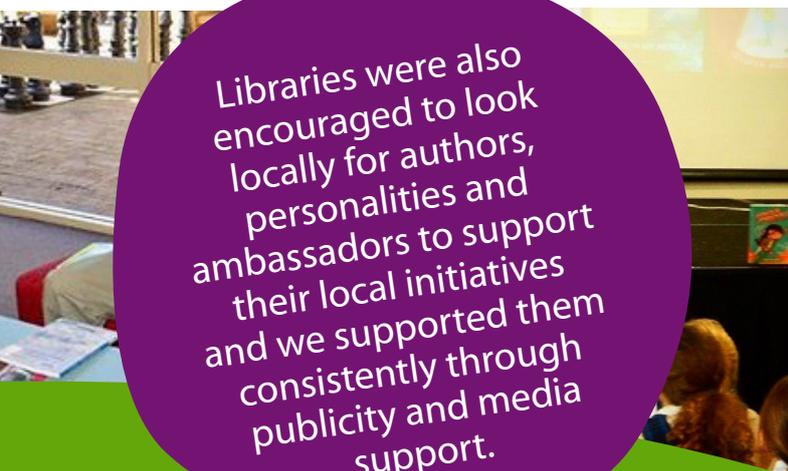
Thanks to the generous support of CAL Cultural Fund Australian authors and illustrators participated in TRH events around the country.

In addition to our beloved ambassador, we engaged Australian authors to participate in local events, which proved to be very successful.

- **Ann James** celebrated this year's Reading Hour at a fun story time session for the whole family at Albert Park Library where she read and did illustrations for the children and parents.
- **Deb Hunt** read a selection of Australian poetry, Australian short stories and extracts from longer classic Aussie novels at Leichardt Library. There was lots of laughter and excellent feedback from the audience at the end.
- **Kylie Howarth** enthusiastically shared her love of animals at Cambridge Library where she read her books *Fish Jam* and *Chip*.
- **Jeff Apter** had a great night at Rockdale library. The room full, the crowd was engaged and The Reading Hour was mentioned many times.
- **Peter Macinnis** had a Wild Reads and author talk at Auburn Library and had the crowd enthralled with his adventures.
- **Jacqueline Harvey** had a wonderful time at Gordon Library with her Alice-Miranda pyjama party at Gordon Library.
- **Rachel Spratt** entertained lovers of the *Friday Barnes* series and *Nanny Piggins* at a lovely night at Bowral Library, celebrating the Reading Hour.
- **Deborah Abela** launched The Reading Hour at the Erina Fair library by having fun, signing books and reading to over 120 kids!



Thank  
you!



Libraries were also encouraged to look locally for authors, personalities and ambassadors to support their local initiatives and we supported them consistently through publicity and media support.



**Events**  
Over 100 events were registered with the Love2Read website, and many more were held nationally.



National Ambassador  
Magda Szubanski

Celebrate The Reading Hour officially - 16 August 2016 6-7pm

We are excited to announce that Magda Szubanski, award-winning author and performer, is our National Ambassador for 2016.

Magda Szubanski has a background in comedy, starting in university revues before appearing on several sketch shows including *D-Generation* and *Fast Forward*, as well as everyone's favourite friend, Sharon Strzelecki on *Kath & Kim*. She's also acted in several movies, including *Babe: Pig in the City* and *Happy Feet*.

Her first book, *Reckoning*, is an engaging and soul-searching memoir, one that hooks us from the word go and is as page turning as any great fiction. *Reckoning* recently won the Indie Award for Non-Fiction, Douglas Stewart Prize for Non-Fiction at the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and both Biography and Book of the Year at the Australian Book Industry Awards!

Huge welcome to Magda from everyone on The Reading Hour team.

#### Got a question?

We'd love to hear from you! [Email us](#) if you'd like to hear more about The Reading Hour, or help plan an author event for your reading community.

Stay connected with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) as we count down to the Reading Hour again this year and continue to help us share the love of reading across the country.

Anytime is reading time!  
The Reading Hour Team

"Magda is a great advocate for books and reading - we're just thrilled to have her on-board!"

Cheryl Akle, Project Director

[GET INVOLVED!](#)

#### Founders and partners

In partnership with  
The Copyright Agency Cultural Fund



## Promotion

The Reading Hour is an event driven initiative that is promoted through social media, existing databases and partnerships.

With our help, we encouraged the reading communities involved to do their own social media promotion, leading the events to be spread nationally at a much faster rate.

Over 6,000 people reached through the EDM promotional program with 22.44% opening.

**Love2read**  
August 8 · 🌐

Join Magda Szubanski, The Reading Hour ambassador for 2016 at the St Kilda Library for bedtime story time!

Get excited! Magda Szubanski will be joining us for a special bedtime story time to celebrate this year's **The Reading Hour**.

Each year we celebrate **The Reading Hour** to remind grown-ups that spending just 10 minutes a day reading with their child, most days of the week, adds up to an hour of reading each week. This delightful habit fosters a life-long love of reading and literacy! [www.readinghour.org.au](http://www.readinghour.org.au)

Suits ages: pre-school and early primary school children and their families.

**Tuesday 16 August, 6pm-7pm** **Free!**  
**St Kilda Library**

Book online through the library website  
Information 1221 6633 or [library@stphilip.vic.gov.au](mailto:library@stphilip.vic.gov.au)

**PORT PHILLIP LIBRARY SERVICE**

**Love2read**  
August 16 at 9:30am · 🌐

The Reading Hour is today! Have you checked our events to see if your local library is participating?

(Image Pinterest)

**Love2read**  
August 15 at 7:00pm · 🌐

Spread the simple message - 'Share a book for 10 minutes a day, an hour a week, and give the gift of reading'.

(Image from Pinterest)

**Love2read added an event.**  
August 7 · 🌐

**The Reading Hour with Ann James!**  
Storytime!

**AUG 16** **The Reading Hour with Ann James!**  
Tue 8 PM - Melbourne, VIC

★ Interested

**Mackay Regional Council Libraries**  
August 15 at 8:30am · 🌐

Get excited everyone! There's only one more sleep till the reading hour AND it's National Science Week! Pop into your local library for some seriously 'sciencey' stories to read from 6pm-7pm tomorrow night.

#First5Forever #TheReadingHour #natsciwk

**Love2read** shared **Cockburn Public Libraries's** post.  
August 3 · 🌐

**Cockburn Public Libraries**  
August 3 · 🌐

Come to Success Public Library to join in on Love2read's The Reading Hour on Tuesday 16 August, 6-7pm

The Reading Hour is an annual event to celebrate and encourage sharing books and promoting literacy in Australia.

**Storytime Before Bedtime - The Reading Hour 2016 - Cockburn Libraries**  
Storytime Before Bedtime @ Success Library Tuesday 16 August, 6-7pm at Success Library Family event - all ages welcome The Reading Hour is an annual event to...

COCKBURNLIBRARIES.COM.AU

**Love2read added an event.**  
August 6 · 🌐

**2016 National Reading Hour @ Bowral Library**

**AUG 16** **National Reading Hour at Bowral Libra...**  
Tue 5 PM - Bendooley Street Bowral, N.S.W. Aus...

★ Interested

**Love2read added an event.**  
August 9 · 🌐

An invitation to **The Reading Hour**

**AUG 16** **The Official Reading Hour Event**  
Tue 10:45 AM - Elsterwick Library 4 Staniland ...  
3 people interested · 1 person going

★ Interested

**Love2read**  
August 10 · 🌐

Make sure you check out our upcoming Reading Hour events!

**THE READING HOUR**  
Tuesday 16 August, 6-7pm

Primary school aged children and their parents are invited to come and listen to a reading out loud of *Fortunately the Aids* by Neil Gaiman.

The Reading Hour is about promoting reading to children and the social and educational benefits it brings.

Mona Vale Library  
Free  
Ages 1 - (costs available for younger children)  
Refreshments will be provided  
Bookings 955 2000

NORTHERN BEACHES MONA VALE LIBRARY [northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](http://northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au)

**Love2read**  
August 5 · 🌐

Author Jacqueline Harvey joins The Reading Hour at the Ku-ring-gai Library for an Alice-Miranda pyjama party!

Reading Hour WITH JACQUELINE HARVEY

To celebrate Reading Hour, the Ku-ring-gai Library is excited to host an Alice-Miranda pyjama party, with special guest and bestselling author, Jacqueline Harvey!

There will be readings, games, craft and food in the hour as well as plenty of chances to ask Jacqueline how she writes her stories about Alice-Miranda and Clamontine Kook. There may even be a sneak peek at the new Alice-Miranda story that is due to be released at the end of August.

BOOK ONLINE [lmc.nsw.gov.au/libraryship](http://lmc.nsw.gov.au/libraryship)

Age: 7-10 years  
Date: Tuesday 16 August  
Venue: Gordon Library  
Time: 5:30pm - 6:30pm

Jacqueline Harvey

**Love2read**  
August 17 at 7:00pm · 🌐

We can't believe the response The Reading Hour got this year. Have any photos of your event? Please upload them, send them to us, tag us in them and share the love of reading!

**Love2read added an event.**  
July 28 · 🌐

**The Reading Hour**  
The annual Reading Hour event is on again in 2016!

SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday 16th August 2016

Join **Kylie Howarth** from 5:30-6:30 pm at **Cambridge Library**

Kylie's obsession with animals also extends underwater as she has braved lionfish in Egypt, piranha and pink dolphins in the Amazon, marine iguanas and hammerhead sharks in the Galapagos Islands and swam with white sharks and manta rays at Ningaloo, Western Australia.

Her books have been published in Australia, New Zealand, France and the U.S. and this year *Fish Jam* has been shortlisted for the 2016

**AUG 16** **The Reading Hour with Kylie Ho...**  
Tue 5:30 PM in UTC+08 · Cambridge Library  
6 people interested

Over 300,000 people reached through Love2Read/TRH Facebook page

**Love2read**  
August 13 at 2:27pm · 🌐

Check out all the amazing events the Brisbane City Council are hosting at their local libraries for The Reading Hour!

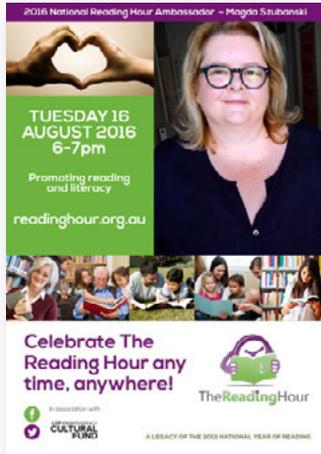
**Library events | Brisbane City Council**

Brisbane City Council's libraries are a great place to find free events, classes, workshops and activities. Use the what's on in Brisbane's libraries calendar to find upcoming events and things to do in your local library. You can take the kids along to the weekly sessions of children's storytime or...

BRISBANE.QLD.GOV.AU



Over 9,000 people reached on the Better Reading Facebook page, as well as many libraries & publishers promoting and sharing their events through their own Facebook & Twitter accounts.



Promotional assets available to download online at the Reading Hour website for convenience and customisation. POS material was provided to organisations holding The Reading Hour events.

**Michelle Collins** Children & Youth Services, St Kilda Library

*"The library is still buzzing with the excitement of Tuesday evening. My colleague, Catie, raved about Ann James' story-time and how the age groups in the crowd were so diverse and yet Ann managed to speak to all of them. She couldn't speak highly enough of the evening. Meanwhile we're getting feedback coming from all directions (verbally, through our inbox, through feedback forms, from parents, library colleagues and 'non-library' council staff) about how wonderful The Reading Hour was. We feel so blessed to have hosted such wonderful ambassadors for reading!"*

**Ann James** Illustrator

*"It was fun. A lovely bunch of little, bigger and big readers – they were great picture book fans too. We did some magic drawing and mud painting together – with a dash of charcoal and watercolour thrown in. Thanks to all who organised it - and Catie for being so hospitable and supportive!"*

**Margaret Adams** Marketing and Information Services Librarian, Glen Eira City Council

*"We were thrilled to have the 2016 Reading Hour launch event at Elsternwick Library with National Ambassador Magda Szubanski. Magda was greeted by 160 excited babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and their parents and her reading of Mem Fox's classic "Ten Little Fingers, Ten Little Toes" complete with Scottish accent was a big hit! There was also a guest appearance by iconic Australian book character "Blinky Bill". Everyone enthusiastically joined in with the stories, rhymes, songs and puppetry that showcased the important Reading Hour message of the benefits of sharing books and reading with your child"*

**Melissa Cranenburgh** Better Reading Representative

*"The Reading Hour's official opening kicked off in fine style. Ambassador Magda Szubanski joined Elsternwick Library's lively storytime event – reading Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury's delightful picture book "Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes" – to an audience of over one hundred, including numerous pre-schoolers and their engaged parents. Event sponsors were thanked and key libraries acknowledged. And many of those present lined up for pictures with Szubanski, who – by the end – had been photographed, Santa Claus style, with a good many of the children and their parents. It was an event that I'm sure patrons and librarians will remember for some time to come."*

**Community  
Feedback**

In 2016, the Official Reading Hour campaign was a resounding success. With over 100 registered events across the country, The Reading Hour managed to create unprecedented levels of participation, not just from libraries and schools, but also from families in their homes and bed-time routines.

Engagement across social media reveals the proliferation of reading culture and its steady growth in Australia. By continuing to regularly post interesting and original content, updating the website and strengthening the online community, while maintaining its reputation as a recognised literary and educational resource, Love2Read and the Reading Hour will see its impact surge over the coming years. We can't wait for 2017!

**Conclusion**

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NSW Public Library Associations



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to our  
partners