

Where Stories Grow: *The power of reading in Tamworth and Circular Head homes*

Celebrating the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, local community organisations, and the families they inspire through a shared love of reading.

Date: Wednesday 18 September 2025

Time: 3.00 pm – 4.30 pm (AEST)

Duration: 90 minutes

Program

- **Welcome and introductions – Professor Bruce Wilson**
- **Keynote Speaker: Claire Galea – Impact of the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Tamworth Regional Council, Australia**
- **Community speakers from the UNESCO Learning Region of Circular Head, Tasmania**
- **Reflections, Question and Answers led by Professor Bruce Wilson**
- **Summary and close – Professor Bruce Wilson**

Program Roles and Speaker Profiles

Hosts

The Australian Learning Communities Network (ALCN) and Wyndham City Council are co-hosting the event as part of the ALCN Learning Forums. ALCN is a national network of leading-edge practitioners building sustainable communities using learning as the key element. Wyndham is a proud and active member. ALCN and Wyndham work together to champion learning communities and lifelong learning across Australia.

Facilitator / MC



Professor Bruce Wilson, *Director of the European Union Centre of Excellence at RMIT*

In this role, Bruce provides insights to and leads research and debate on EU-Australian relations, encouraging mobility for staff and students, and for building partnerships between Australian universities and organisations and their European counterparts. Bruce is a leading voice in lifelong learning; he has been instrumental in advancing learning city frameworks in Australia and internationally.

As MC, he will guide the session, lead Q&A and provide reflections.

Keynote Presentation – Tamworth Case Study



Claire Galea, *Head of Research, United Way Australia*

Claire is a biostatistician and completed her PhD at Macquarie University. Claire has a passion for revealing the story that data can yield as a powerful narrative tool supporting her desire to showcase positive change for children throughout the globe. She co-authored a key study on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) in Tamworth and will present key findings from the project, now in its fifth year.

Contributors – Circular Head Case Study



Kate Grey, *26TEN Community Coordinator, Circular Head Council*

Kate supports adult literacy and lifelong learning through the Circular Head Learn for Life Literacy Action Plan. Kate will talk about the Learn for Life Project and Learn for Life Literacy Action Plan that was recently launched.



Amber Power, *Connected Communities Officer, Circular Head Council*

Amber facilitates programs that support literacy, wellbeing and community inclusion, contributing to Circular Head's commitment as a UNESCO Learning City. Amber will talk about our region's history of lifelong learning initiatives.

Emma Thompson, *HIPPY Coordinator*

Emma will talk about the Home Interactive Parenting Program for Youngsters.

Glen McLaren, *Rotary Club of Smithton*

Glen will talk about their initiative to provide each child in pre-kinder kids with a book.

Pat Joyce, *Soroptimist International Circular Head*

Pat will talk about their Books for Babies initiative.

Acknowledgements



Kay Delahunt, *Manager, Learning Communities, Tamworth Regional Council*

We acknowledge Kay for her leadership in supporting local literacy efforts and coordination of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. **Tamworth Regional Council**, partnered with United Way Australia to deliver DPIL locally, with ongoing community and Council support, helping foster early reading from birth to five.

References:

ABC National Radio, 2025, Tamworth's Big Win for Little Readers. Available from [Tamworth's big win for little readers - ABC listen](#)

Circular Head Council et al, 2025. Circular Head Learn for Life Literacy Action Plan 2025-2028. Available at: <https://www.circularhead.tas.gov.au/community-and-recreation/education>

Claire Galea, Serje Robidoux, Andrea Salins, Clayton Noble & Genevieve McArthur (22 Apr 2024): [The Impact of Shared Book Reading on Children and Families: A Study of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Tamworth, Australia](#), Journal of Research in Childhood Education.

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