



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Help children learn to read with St John

Do you have an hour a week to spare? St John (NSW) is running Early Literacy Courses in Tamworth for parents, grandparents, family friends or community members who want to help teach kids to read.

With an OECD study revealing that Australian students are beginning to fall behind their counterparts overseas, it has never been a better time to help students improve their literacy skills.

The St John (NSW) course covers both the theoretical and practical aspects of the reading process as well as addressing values and attitudes and communication skills. It has been developed in consultation with the NSW Department of Education and Training K-6 English Syllabus.

The three day course costs \$10 and will be held in Tamworth on 18, 19 and 20 August.

This course has been kindly supported by Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal and Australia Post's *Stretching the Envelope* Program.

People who complete the course receive a certificate, and are invited to join the St John (NSW) Program to Aid Literacy (PALs®), a volunteer program designed to help primary school students who have problems with reading and writing.

PALs® operates in primary schools across NSW, linking volunteers with a child who needs that extra bit of help with learning. Volunteers spend an hour a week during school time assisting children one on one or in small groups.

"Many PALs® volunteers have been participating in the program for a number of years and find it extremely rewarding to provide that extra help to a child learning to read and write," said Marcia Chalmers, Community Care Manager.

"The Early Literacy Course provides the skills for people who are interested in becoming a PALs® volunteer, as well as encouraging mums, dads and grandparents to help out their own young ones," she said.

### **Course Details**

- Location:** Tamworth Community Centre, Darling Street, Tamworth  
**Date:** Three-day course over the following days: 18, 19, 20 August  
**Time:** 9.30am to 3.30pm each day  
**Cost:** \$10 *due to the support of Stretching the Envelope Program*  
(participants who apply and are accepted as a volunteer can apply for a refund after active volunteering for six months)  
**Bookings:** 02 9219 6842

**ENDS**

### **Further information and interviews:**

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