



Fran Handley, teacher librarian at Queanbeyan Public School, shares how participation in the *Great Book Swap*, fosters a love of books and an understanding of the value of sharing with others.

Creating active citizens

Queanbeyan Public School is situated a unique rural setting in NSW, right next door to the Nation's Capital, Canberra. The school has a diverse student population, including students from many different cultures, students with intellectual and physical disabilities, Aboriginal and distance education students.

The school aims to provide opportunities for students to become *successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens* ([Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians](#), MCEETYA, 2008). Learning is designed to develop key competencies and positive habits of mind within each student.

Creating learning opportunities with the *Great Book Swap*

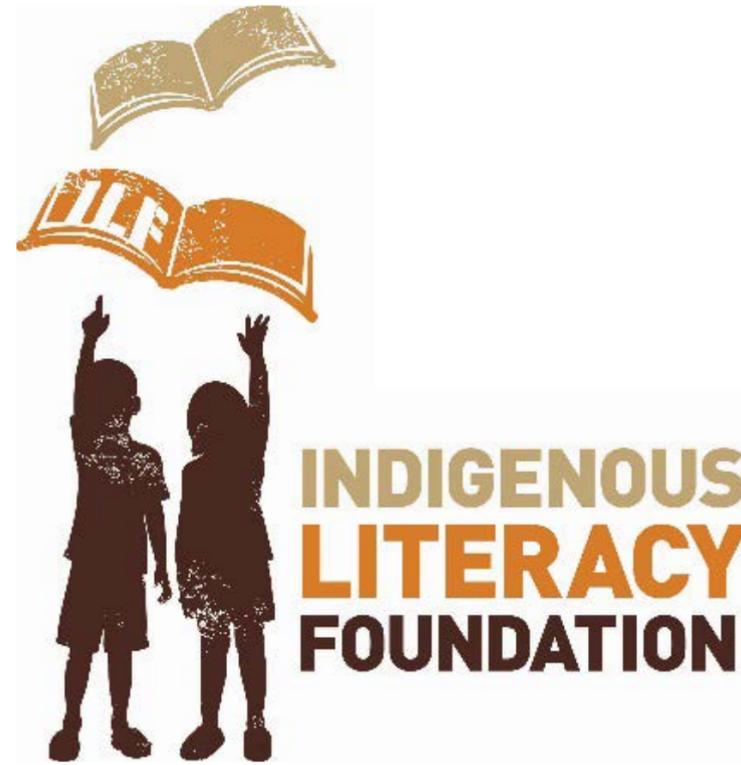
The *Great Book Swap* is one such opportunity. Through the simple act of swapping a book and donating a gold coin, students are able to see the value of helping others and learn that giving can have a positive impact on their own lives. Participating in the Book Swap allows students to see how small, individual actions can bring about positive change and how a community can come together to make a positive impact.

The Great Book Swap *brings our attention to remote Aboriginal communities across Australia. This opportunity enriches the school community. It helps students to think beyond themselves, to reach out to others, to consider differences.*

A sense of belonging is built as students understand that they are part of something big. The learning they achieve through their actions reinforces a sense of being, as well as becoming, an active, informed citizen of Australia.

**Kym Hawes, Principal
Queanbeyan Public School**

What is the *Great Book Swap*?



The *Great Book Swap* is an initiative of the [Indigenous Literacy Foundation](#) (ILF). It is a fundraising event designed to involve primary and secondary students, including staff. Participation is simple, cheap and very enjoyable. The aim of the ILF is to raise literacy levels of indigenous children in remote communities, through the provision of appropriate quality books in the home and community.

Creating student leaders

At Queanbeyan Public School, the *Great Book Swap* has provided leadership opportunities for students at the school. In 2014, the school nominated an Aboriginal student to be a Student Indigenous Literacy Ambassador. She travelled to Sydney to meet authors and other professionals who were also ambassadors to the Foundation. Our Student Ambassador returned to promote the *Great Book Swap* throughout the school.

No matter how data from NAPLAN is represented, or what very minimal progress has been made over the years, we cannot ignore or sugar-coat the fact that Indigenous children in remote and very remote locations are being significantly outperformed by non-Indigenous students and students living in metro locations. One clear statistic shows that between 40% and 60% of Indigenous children in very remote locations across WA, SA and NT are achieving below minimum standard in Reading in Year 3. This is certainly something as a nation we cannot ignore.

Indigenous Literacy Foundation

This year, Library monitors took over this role, creating posters and advertising and building excitement through talks at students' Stage assemblies.

Organising the event

Leading up to the Swap, momentum for the event was built across the school, through discussions in library visits with the librarian and in classrooms. The process and purpose was discussed so students could go home and talk to parents and carers. The School newsletter, *Isa news*, was also used to advertise the *Great Book Swap* to the school community.

Students brought in the book they were swapping and the gold coin donation before the day. The books were brought to the library for collation into stage groups and fiction/nonfiction in preparation for the event, which took place in the library. Donations were collected through the class teachers and the office. Records were kept of all students who made a donation and students were able to bring in more than one book but were restricted to choosing only one to take home on the day. It was found that students and parents happily donated additional books. The school also collected additional second hand books, through staff and library donation, so that

enough books were available and the choice was broad enough for all students.

Staff also got involved in the *Great Book Swap*. Books and donations were kept in the staff room so adult participants could make their book choice anytime throughout the day.



Students in school uniform browsing the books on offer at Queanbeyan Public School's *Great Book Swap* event

On the day of the event, students visited the library in class groups so they could access books appropriate to their reading levels. All participating students came to the library with at least one additional teacher, at a set time. The students sat down on the floor and the appropriate books were laid out on the tables. It was explained to students that they should have a good look through all the books to find a book that they believed they would enjoy. Once they had chosen a book, they sat down and enjoyed it while they waited for everyone to finish. Some students were asked to share why they enjoyed their new book with their class. Sometimes students were able to find out who donated their book, which added to the excitement of the day.

Have you heard? Have you heard the news?

The Great Australian Book Swap's here? Whoop! Whoop!

It's amazing and magnificent, come down and swap a book.

Read your life away, you get to more than look!

Georgia, Year 6, QPS

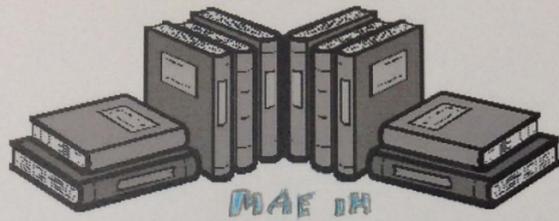


Evaluation

After the event, the success of the day was communicated to students at follow up library lessons and to the community at large through the *Isa news*. Also discussed were the potential ways that money raised could positively

change the lives of other children and how the school community had worked together for the common good.

The Great Book Swap



On Friday at Qps we had a Great Book swap. I had one book called dragons halaween. I wrote that book because I do not use it any more. My new book is called Dora saves the snow princess. I have not read it yet but it looks like a good book. I think it is good we are giving money to the indigenous literacy foundation because they can help people learn to read.



Student evaluation of the *Great Book Swap*

The Great Book Swap is a perfect time to show the kindness and gratitude that we all hold inside.

Alana, Year 6, QPS

In the lead up to the 2015 event, many students reflected on the Swap from the previous year and we were able to build on this foundation. A *tradition* feels like it is being established and a lovely atmosphere surrounds this important school event.

The 2015 event was a fabulous success with many students taking part and raising much needed funds for the ILF. Understanding the needs of others and how it is possible to help them has been life enhancing for staff and students and everyone had great fun in the process. Participating in the *Great Book Swap* in 2016 highly recommended.

The Great Book Swap is an opportunity to address the disadvantage that so many remote communities encounter due to the lack of quality literacy resources. This event is an excellent occasion for students to make a difference in the lives of children and their families living in Aboriginal communities. Raising much needed funds to purchase books for children who are learning to read and speak in their second language, English, will lead to greater educational success.

Rosemaree Whitehead, Aboriginal Education Community Group President and teacher at Queanbeyan Public School

The Great Book Swap is a perfect time to show the kindness and gratitude that we all hold inside.

Alana, Year 6, QPS



Students in school uniform browsing the books on offer at Queanbeyan Public School's *Great Book Swap* event

I loved the Great Book Swap. It was so cool. I handed in a book I didn't want anymore and chose a new book that I could sit down and enjoy. It felt nice to help others too.

Emily, Year 6, QPS

References and further reading

Indigenous Literacy Foundation 2015, *Indigenous Literacy Foundation*, accessed 19 October 2015.

MYCEETYA 2008, *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*, accessed 19 October 2015.