

Chairperson's Report

Welcome to 2026 Hands Up 4 Kids!

Thank you to all our returning volunteers and so happy to see new faces joining us in so many areas.

"Australia runs on volunteers."

A quick comment by a family member reminded me and made me think a little deeper.

When you have a look around our community and take stock, where would we be without the community volunteers?

Firefighters, Ambulance drivers, Paramedics, Marine rescue, Brownies, Guide and Scout leaders, Coaches in all the sports, Administrators of the sporting clubs, Service clubs, Soup kitchen, School canteens, Parent groups in schools, After school care, Pet and Wildlife rescue, Snake catchers, Rubbish cleanups and the list goes on...

Fortunately, we have volunteers that believe that reading is important. We have volunteers that believe that every child needs the chance to progress and be able to make their way in life. We have volunteers that believe education is important and we have volunteers that care.

Take a bow, volunteers, your contribution to the community is valuable and is valued!

Best wishes for a successful 2026 in our schools.

Helen Foan

HU4K Chairperson

Christmas 2025

The 2025 Christmas luncheon for Bunbury and surrounds was well attended with 72 volunteers who all enjoyed a delightful lunch spread catching up with friends and fellow volunteers. Lorraine Schram, head chef along with numerous volunteers provided the most lavish Christmas feast. Thanks to Lorraine and her army of kitchen volunteers. Roma Murray, Harvey volunteer and florist dressed each table with festive cheer with lights, holly and baubles. Thank you, Roma. Ten-year recognition certificates and pins were presented to Lorraine Schram, Mary Cain, Joy Kent on the day. Janet Rapkins and Yvonne Smith could not make it but are also 10 year recipients. Congratulations to all.

Lorraine made a unique pandora's box of gingerbread for a raffle and Garry and Carolyn Oxer sought donations from Coles and Woolworths that contributed to our fabulous luncheon, but also three other raffles. It certainly made for fun and entertainment on the day. Thanks to Garry and Carolyn for sourcing and also to Coles and Woolworths for supporting Hands Up 4 Kids.

School Terms for 2026

Term 1: Monday 2 February – Thursday 2 April

Term 2: Monday 20 April – Friday 3 July

Term 3: Monday 20 July – Friday 25 September

Term 4: Monday 12 October – Thursday 17

December



Left: Congratulations to Lorraine with her 10 year certificate. Right: Suzanne, one of the lucky raffle winners.





On 27th of May 2026 is National Simultaneous Storytime. Luna Roo the Kangaroo Baller is an energetic underdog story written by football veterans Adam Jackson and Adrian Lloyd, illustrated by Jake Minton, and published by Little Book Press. National Simultaneous Storytime is an annual celebration of books and reading held by the Australian Library and information association. Every year a picture book, written and illustrated by an Australian author and illustrator, is read simultaneously in libraries, schools, pre-schools, childcare centres, family homes, bookshops and many other places.

If you read regularly, you are two and a half times less likely to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia.

2025 speech pathology book award

HU4K Focus invited Cheryl McQueen for our Spotlight Questions in our first newsletter for 2026. Many thanks to Cheryl for joining in.

- How long have you been a HU4K volunteer? *I am in my 10th year at HU4K.*
- What do you like most about being a volunteer? *I enjoy seeing the children with smiles on their faces when they read to me.*
- Where did you grow up? *I grew up in Scarborough.*
- What was your favourite childhood book? *My favourite book was Noddy. There was not much to choose from in our tiny library in the Church Hall.*
- What is your favourite comfort food? *Comfort food is nougat or chocolate.*
- What are you reading right now? *I am reading a book given to me at Xmas called Bolter written by a lady in Donnybrook about women convicts in Australia in the 1820's.*
- If you were stranded on a desert island, what would you take with you? *I would take a good book.*
- Any tips or advice for new HU4K volunteers? *Enjoy!*

The Speech Pathology Australia book of the year awards is presented to Australian children's authors annually. They "are for books that promote oral language development and literacy" according to organisers. "Each award is based on the book's appeal to children, their interactive quality and ability to assist speech pathologists and parents in communication and literacy development."

Age 3 – 5 years Don't Worry, Felix by Yohann Devezy, Katharine Alice & illust. Zoe Bennett

Age 5 – 8 years Willow's Gumboots by Beverley McWilliams & illust. Helene Magisson.

Age 8 – 10 years The Audition by Penny McNamee

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's book Country by Aunty Fay Muir, Sue Lawson illust. Cheryl Davison

Feel connected with a book

1 in 4 readers say that a book has helped them realise that other people have gone through the same thing and therefore feel better about their situation.

AUSTRALIA
"READS"



YOUR ZONE COORDINATORS:

Even though you may be contacted by one HU4K Coordinator, we have several wonderful Zone Coordinators who keep in touch with their volunteer teams and support them in every possible way. Our Zone Coordinators are: Lorraine Schram, Cheryl McQueen, Colleen Fogarty, Ruth Fiddian, Ron Mildenhall, Madeline Kiernan-Smith, Jenny Pyper, Susan Niven and Mary Cain. We are ever grateful to our Zone Coordinators and they great job they do. Wishing all Coordinators the best for 2026.

Children's Laureate 2026 announced:
Andy Griffiths has been named the Australian Children's Laureate for 2026/27. Andy is the author of over 30 books and is well known for his Treehouse books. The Laureate's role is to promote literature and reading to children, adults, educators, libraries and booksellers. Andy plans on touring all over Australia during his appointment and aims to promote "Reading is an Adventure".



Reading has been found to reduce stress up to 68%, outranking even listening to music which came in at 61%.



Slinky Malinki?

A serial thief has been visiting a New Zealand school for over a year, stealing clothing, towels and shoes. The school installed a video to catch the thief in action. Turns out it was a cheeky black cat caught dragging stolen items across the courtyard.

Contact was made to the owner who confirmed their pet was a notorious thief! The cat has been nicknamed Slinky Malinki after the well know book by NZ author Lynley Dodd.

Volunteer Networking Exchanges (VNE's)

VNE's offer the opportunity to meet up with other HU4K volunteers from every school and swap notes, gather a few hints, hear a few stories, as well as brag about "your own kids and their reading styles". You can also ask any questions that you need clarification about. As you would have heard before – no question is too simple or too complex.

VNE's are held regularly, attendance is entirely optional and of course it is FREE. What's more there are usually sumptuous eats thanks to our members who enjoy baking.

Attendance provides an opportunity to find out more about the process of "learning to read".

Jan A, our Regional Coordinator selects presenters she believes can provide information that may be helpful in working with specific children who appear to be hesitant about learning to read.

Ref: Newsletter March 2021, Jan Pedersen

Days Gone By

It is always interesting to look back on occasions as it gives us pause for thought on how things have changed or not.

Boulder Primary school was established in 1897 and is a historically significant Federation Arts and Crafts style building built from local stone. When gold was discovered in the region in 1893 it was only 4 years later that this substantial building was erected demonstrating the importance of education to the early mining community.

The first Arbor Day celebrations in the eastern Goldfields was held at Boulder Primary School in 1899 and some of the trees planted on that day are still on the site.

The school has produced notable alumni, including 3 Rhodes Scholars, editor of the West Australian newspaper and our own Jan Akaczzonek, HU4K Regional Coordinator.

If any of our HU4K Focus readers would like to share historical details of a school you attended or in your area please email Suzanne: suzgratwick@gmail.com

