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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY PROGRAM LAUNCHED IN THE COONAMBLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

Coonamble Shire Council announces the launch of the innovative book gifting project – Dolly Parton's Imagination Library – that has a proven track record in improving literacy.

From January 2022, every newborn child registered in the program in the Coonamble Local Government Area will receive a free, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive book every month through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

To register, parents and carers need only complete a short form available from Community Health Child and Family Health Nurses or from the local library.

The NSW Government, Coonamble Shire Council, United Way and the Western NSW Local Health Service have all come together to deliver the program.

Initiated by Dolly Parton more than 20 years ago, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has seen over 160 million books delivered to children in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Designed to connect parents and children through a love of reading, the project has a proven track record of improving literacy rates and launching children on a life-long journey of reading, learning and discovery.

The aim of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is for all children to have access to their own library of literary resources from an early age. This helps them develop essential literacy skills they will rely on when learning at school.

"Early childhood census data shows children in the Coonamble LGA are lagging below the state average when it comes to literacy and communication skill levels," said Coonamble Mayor Tim Horan. "This is a practical approach at the local community level to better equip young children and to provide them with the resources to help lift those numbers," he said.

The highly respected charity organisation, United Way Australia, will work with council and administer the project in this area. United Way Australia works towards improving lives and strengthening communities, through its many successful programs.

As of 1 September, 46 children are registered from the Coonamble LGA to receive books for the next five years," Council's Librarian Raquel Pickering said. "We hope that this will encourage not just the children, but all the family to explore and read both individually and together. The Library itself is a great resource for children and adults alike, with fantastic board books, picture books, junior books and young adult books".

For more information about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library or for further enquiries please contact Coonamble Shire Library at [Coonamble.Library@coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Coonamble.Library@coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au) or call 02 68271925 during business hours.

Ross Earl  
**ACTING GENERAL MANAGER**



**Photo: Librarian Raquel Pickering (right) presenting a Hairy Maclary board book to Sharon Single and her daughter as part of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library – and she couldn't wait to get her hands on it.**