

PREMIER KICKS OFF 2010 READING CHALLENGE

Students from across NSW will begin flooding school libraries from this week with the start of the nation's biggest ever book club - the 2010 NSW Premier's Reading Challenge.

Premier Kristina Keneally today announced the 2010 Challenge is now open.

"The Premier's Reading Challenge has grown from strength to strength, with more than 13.5 million books already read as part of the Challenge since it began in 2001," Ms Keneally said.

"Last year, a staggering 180,142 students from over 2,000 schools - the highest number of participants on record - successfully completed the Challenge.

"More than 1,000 new books have been added to the booklist for the 2010 Reading Challenge to cater for students who continue to participate in the Challenge each year.

"It's fantastic to see so many NSW students developing a love of reading and taking part in the biggest read-

ing challenge in Australia.

"NSW was the first State to introduce an initiative of this kind and we are seeing the benefits through improved literacy as more students than ever before are choosing to read.

"A child with a book is never lonely. Children enjoy reading because they can get lost in the narrative of the stories.

"I encourage students across NSW to participate in the 2010 Premier's Reading Challenge."

Premier Keneally said the 2010 book list is available for students via the Premier's Reading Challenge website www.schools.nsw.edu.au/premier-readingchallenge.

The 2010 Premier's Reading Challenge is a NSW Government initiative and is open to students from all government, non-government and home schools from Kindergarten to Year 9.

The Challenge is completely voluntary and involves students reading

a prescribed number of books from an age-appropriate booklist of selected titles.

Students and schools can register their involvement in the Challenge by visiting the Challenge website from March 1. There are four categories for the Challenge - K-2, Years 3-4, Years 5-6, Years 7-9.

Students doing the K-2 Challenge must experience 30 books, at least 25 of them chosen from the Premier's Reading Challenge booklist, by reading independently, joining in a shared reading of the book or having the book read to them.

Students in Years 3-9 must read 20 books independently with at least 15 of them chosen from the Premier's Reading Challenge booklist for their level or above with guidance.

Students in Years K-2 who are independent readers are encouraged to attempt the 3-4 Challenge for independent readers.

The Challenge is supported by Dymocks Children's Charities, OPSM, and The Sun-Herald.

Temples of Light

With this poem respected Greek Australian educator and writer, Yota Krili, laments the downgrade of the Greek section at Marrickville Municipal Library:

In antiquity
lovers of enlightenment
built communal libraries
to protect and share
their treasures of knowledge.
Even today we are enchanted
by their remains
like the Villa of the Papyri
at Herculenum.

Centres of learning
like a red rag for bigots.
Pagan libraries were destroyed
by Christian fundamentalists
books burned to heat bathwater
for soldiers
by jihadists
the Nazis made bonfires with them.

In this land, in this city
a public library
became patron of migrant book-lovers.
Under its roof was created
the multicoloured Temple of Light
to ward off the darkness of ignorance.

I often paid homage to this library
till I discovered
that today's neo-managers
don't value history and the classics.

I returned George Finlay's book
Volume I
The History of the Greek Revolution,
published in 1861
and desperately searching for Volume II
when I was told:

"Those books are old,
people don't like them any more
you're welcome to borrow our new ones
the series Mills & Boon is very popular.
The old books are on sale
on such a day."

Volume II was not to be found.
But at the grand sale,
there were thousands of books
for two dollars each.
In the Greek section,
classics by Sophocles, Euripides,
Plato, Aristotle
Plutarch, Kazantzakis, Palamas,
Seferis, and countless others!
Translations in Greek:
The Grapes of Wrath,
Crime and Punishment
King Lear, War and Peace,
and many, many more!

Books in hard cover,
some beautifully illustrated.

For a moment,
I leaned against the wall and looked.
People, myself included,
falling upon them like vultures.

Useless, incapable of protecting
and preserving
our communal treasure,
the Temple of Light.

Yota Krili

Family learns of teen's death via Facebook

Two sisters discovered their brother had died in a horror smash when they logged into Facebook to check messages wishing them a happy birthday.

Angela and Maryanne Vourlis, who are twins, logged onto the social networking site on their 20th birthday and were confronted with the news their 17-year-old brother Bobby had been killed in a crash in Sydney's west, the Daily Telegraph reports.

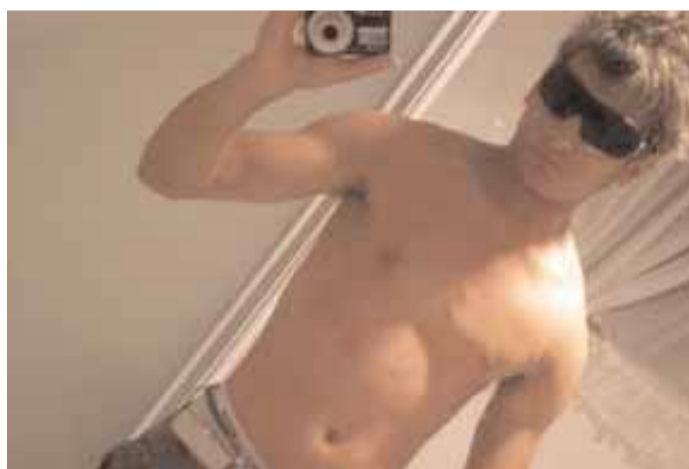
Two of Bobby's friends - Chris Naylor, 19, and Kelsie Coleman, 15 - were also killed in the crash.

"I didn't get it - all these people were writing 'RIP Chris Naylor' and 'RIP Bobby', and I thought: 'What's going on?'" Angela told the Telegraph.

Angela tried calling her brother's phone but there was no answer.

"So I rang mum and said: 'Chris Naylor must have died - I just read it on Facebook. But Where's Bobby? People are writing 'RIP Bobby' too,'" Angela said.

Her mother informed her Bobby was in the same



car as Chris Naylor.

A delay from the police in notifying them of Bobby's death meant both mother and daughter found out via Facebook, leading Mrs Vourlis to ring St Mary's police to confirm her son's death.

Bobby had been a passenger in a Ford Falcon XR6 driven by Naylor, a P-Plater who lost control in the wet on Sunday morning.

Two more of their friends, who were driving a Commodore behind the ill-fated car and witnessed the crash, told investigators they hadn't been drag racing.

Police believe the driver was doing the 80km/h speed limit but it was still too fast for the slippery conditions after a night of heavy rain.

The car crossed two



(Clockwise from top) Tragic lesson ... police have warned young drivers to reduce speed, particularly in poor weather conditions, mourning...friends grieve at the scene, Bobby Vourlis and Kelsie Coleman. Photo: Steve Siewert, Matt Black

lanes of the Great Western Highway at Colyton at about 3am (AEDT) before it ended up a crumpled mess near the Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall.

The bumper bar landed

behind the church's fence.

"The reason why the accident has happened is no doubt the (car) has aquaplaned and lost control with the water," Superintendent Ray Filewood told reporters in Sydney on Sunday.

It's not yet known if the driver had been drinking.

The two survivors, 16-year-old Laura Daniel and 17-year-old Racheal Graham, were taken to Ne-

pean Hospital where they had surgery to their legs.

Police said the group were on their way home after a night out and weren't far from their destination.

Article from Ninemsn