MEDIA RELEASE

LITERACY OPENS DOORS: OFFICEWORKS AND ALNF ARE HELPING FIRST NATIONS KIDS WALK THROUGH THEM

The Annual Officeworks Literacy is Freedom Appeal launches once more, raising funds for important literacy access

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Almost half of Australian adults don't have the literacy skills they need for everyday life - and in very remote communities, only 36%* of First Nations students meet minimum literacy standards. That's why Officeworks is once again partnering with the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation for the *Officeworks Literacy is Freedom Appeal* this September, helping fund life-changing literacy programs that give every child the chance to read, learn, and succeed particularly in remote and Indigenous communities.

These figures highlight the urgent need to ensure every child, no matter their background, has access to quality literacy support from the earliest years. In support of education, Officeworks partners with ALNF to break down barriers to learning and give all children the chance to thrive. Through the Appeal, Officeworks helps fund ALNF's programs in schools, early learning centres and communities across Australia, equipping educators and families with the tools and training they need to build strong literacy and language foundations where they're needed most.

Since 2020, Officeworks' total community contributions have raised over $35.8 million, empowering more than 84,000 students to unlock their potential through the power of education, just like the children at Gillen Primary School. Whether it's meaningful contributions in local communities, or national appeals like Back to School, Make a Difference and Literacy is Freedom, each campaign has reinforced Officeworks' commitment to creating better educational outcomes for children right across Australia.

Officeworks Head of Corporate Affairs, Fiona Lawrie, **said:** "At Officeworks we're proud to support the incredible work of ALNF in delivering targeted, culturally relevant literacy programs that help break the cycle of disadvantage and empower children to reach their full potential. Together with the generosity of our customers and local communities, we are excited to help support students who need it most, enhancing equal access to education for all."

ALNF Co-Founder and CEO Kim Kelly said: "The Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation is dedicated to raising language, literacy and numeracy standards in Australia for our most marginalised communities. The Officeworks Literacy is Freedom Appeal helps Indigenous students to write their own bright future and the funds raised empower ALNF to continue our important work, inspiring the next generation of changemakers."

The Officeworks Literacy is Freedom Appeal forms part of Officeworks' People and Planet Positive commitments, which focuses on creating meaningful community impact by supporting education nationwide. To find out more about the Appeal or make a donation, visit the Officeworks **website** or pop into your **local Officeworks store** - remember, a small donation together can make a big impact.

– ENDS –

Research:

1. "In the typical Australian school classroom of 24 students, eight can't read well." Source: Grattan Institute's Report The Reading Guarantee, 2024

2. "In Australia, nearly 1 in 5 children are developmentally behind before they even start school. Sadly, those who start school behind, often stay behind."
(Source: "The National Early Language & Literacy Strategy", NELLC, 2021, https://speechpathologyaustralia.cld.bz/Proposed-National-Early-Language-and-Literacy-Strategy-WEB)

3. "Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that 44% of Australian adults don't have the functional literacy skills they need to cope with the demands of everyday life and work" (Source: ARAC, 2023, https://www.aracy.org.au/news/literacy-begins-at-birth/)

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ABOUT OFFICEWORKS

Established in 1994 in Richmond, Victoria, Officeworks is committed to making bigger things happen for its customers, team, the community, and stakeholders. It operates 173 stores across Australia, a website that is home to more than 40,000 products, a national call centre, and a business team that helps micro, small and medium-sized businesses start, run and grow and Australians to work, learn, create and connect.

Officeworks offers customers a wide range of office supplies, technology, furniture, art supplies, education resources and helpful services like print & copy and on-site and remote tech support through Geeks2U – delivering an experience that is easy and engaging, no matter how customers choose to shop.

Officeworks is focused on the safety, wellbeing, and career progression of the more than 9,000 team members it employs. It's also dedicated to operating in a sustainable manner, including building, and maintaining meaningful connections with the communities in which it operates, fundraising for its national partners and local community groups, continuing to reduce its impact on the environment and source responsibly.

ABOUT ALNF

The Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF) is a national charity seeking to assist people in our most marginalised communities to gain vital language, literacy and communication skills. ALNF's specialised, innovative and proven programs address the needs of a diverse range of individuals and communities – specifically supporting First Nations, refugee and other vulnerable Australians. ALNF believes that literacy is freedom- literacy allows individuals to access education, participate meaningfully in our society and to have a voice. It is a basic human right.

 We see a world where everyone, wherever they come from, however they identify, can confidently express themselves, engage with society and share their stories, embracing the extraordinary opportunities life brings.