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Ipswich kids bookmark 2005 Festival of Children's Literature

Opening children's eyes to the wonder of books is the aim of the sixth biennial Ipswich Festival of Children's Literature, launched today at the Gallery of Ipswich.

Member for Ipswich, Rachel Nolan, representing Education Minister, Rod Welford, said the 2005 festival, which coincides with National Literacy and Numeracy Week, would encourage young people to 'read for the love of it'.

Ms Nolan said the increasingly popular event—featuring over 80 national and international authors and illustrators—would this year run for two weeks instead of the usual one.

"The event is bigger than ever, offering children more opportunities to meet popular authors and illustrators through storytelling and online chat sessions," Ms Nolan said.

"There will also be an exhibition of illustrators' work and a camp for aspiring young writers and illustrators."

The program caters to both primary and secondary students in the Ipswich region and accomplished children's book authors will visit local schools throughout the festival.

A weekend program for young adults, teachers, librarians, emerging writers and illustrators and anyone interested in children's literature is also on offer.

The event had been organised and funded by the Ipswich District Teacher Librarian Network. Activities will be held at Woodlands of Marburg, West Moreton Anglican College, the Gallery of Ipswich and the CWA Hall.

This year's festival included an online component, with approximately 5000 students and 150 teachers from 75 schools participating in over 100 activities.

The online program at Education Queensland's Learning Place website has been developed in partnership with the Queensland State Library.

Ms Nolan encouraged teachers to engage students in literature through active participation in the chat rooms, forums and online projects.