

MACKAY EDUCATOR CALLS OUT CLASSROOM 'BUNYIPS' AND DEMANDS RADICAL REFORM FOR LITERACY IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

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A Queensland educator and CQUniversity research fellow says Australian classrooms are lagging years behind other nations in reading and writing, in a new book exposing the 'bunyips' in our education system.

The classroom teacher and speech pathologist, literacy specialist and researcher wants radical changes to how Australian kids learn to read – and warns too many students are being left behind by clunky curriculum and overworked educators.

Dr Susan Galletly is launching her book *Bunyips in the Classroom: The 10 Changes* at CQUniversity Mackay Ooralea on Wednesday 19 October 2022.

The manifesto is built on Dr Galletly's five decades of experience in the education system, including 15 years researching literacy interventions with CQUniversity's School of Education and Arts.

She says many key issues she's raising currently aren't even being acknowledged by education leaders and policy-makers.

"While an elephant in the room is incredibly obvious, a bunyip in the room hasn't been noticed... but once pointed out, it's blatantly obvious and clearly an important issue!" she said.

"It feels both absurd and embarrassing that it could have been overlooked for so long – and my book is a polite request to reflect on those issues."

Dr Galletly highlights regular spelling systems in nations like Finland, where it takes early primary students just four weeks to learn to read and spell.

"Whereas, for our poor kids, we've got one of the world's most complex systems to learn to read and write, and we're starting them out at four and a half or five years old when many don't have the maturity for that complex learning," she said.

"As a result, English language and our orthography, or spelling system, is dragging us down. It actually takes six years on average to master word reading in Australia, and nine years to master spelling. That's a very long time relative to the weeks to months of so many other nations."



Researcher and author Dr Susan Galletly.

Dr Galletly has developed 10 changes she's recommending for the Australian education system, including better understanding the complexities of English spelling, and delaying formal literacy and numeracy education until mid-Year-2, when children then have stronger cognitive-processing and learning skills.

Dr Galletly graduated with her PhD from CQUniversity in 2004, and has worked as a lecturer and researcher at CQUniversity, preparing the next generation of teachers.

She highlights that teachers are not to blame for the struggling system, and actually dedicates the book to "our struggling Aussie teachers, working far too hard, amidst inadequate resourcing. Thank you so much! You're world class!"

Bunyips in the Classroom is the first of three books Dr Galletly is releasing, in a trilogy she's named Aussie Reading Woes.

CQUniversity Emeritus Professor Bruce Knight will also speak at the launch. To attend the free event on Wednesday 19 October at 4.15pm, RSVP here: [susangalletly.com.au/rsvp](https://www.susangalletly.com.au/rsvp) (<https://www.susangalletly.com.au/rsvp>).

The book is available to buy at the launch, or at Dr Galletly's website: [susangalletly.com.au/bunyips-in-the-classroom](https://www.susangalletly.com.au/bunyips-in-the-classroom) (<https://www.susangalletly.com.au/bunyips-in-the-classroom>).