

29 January 2020

The Honourable Adem Somyureck MLC
Minister for Local Government
Level 16
121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Minister

Support for Public Libraries - Victorian State Budget Submission 2020-21

I am writing to you as the Minister for Local Government to ask you to support the public library sector ahead of the Victorian State Budget 2020-21.

Victoria needs public libraries. Every day our community relies on public libraries for free and universal access to education, resources and programs. They rely on public libraries to provide a safe and welcoming space to go when they feel lonely or isolated.

Victoria's public libraries are in demand. Every year they welcome more than 30.5 million visitors. They lend more than 45 million books, ebooks, language kits, DVDs and devices. In 2018-19, public libraries recorded 15.5 million hours of Wi-Fi use, supporting job seekers, students and small businesses to get online.

Modelling by SGS Economics in 2018 shows every dollar invested in libraries delivers \$4.30 in benefit to our society. They deliver early literacy programs to more than 16,000 preschool children each week, and 40 per cent of libraries offer English language or adult literacy classes.

Libraries change lives. These safe, free and inclusive spaces are critical to the health and wellbeing of our communities. We need your help to ensure they continue to meet growing community demand.

Public Libraries Victoria (PLV), the peak body representing the state's 276 public libraries has developed, with support from State Library Victoria, a Budget submission seeking:

- **\$10 million for new resources to support libraries to drive education and wellbeing outcomes**
- **\$20 million in new funding for the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program**
- **\$15 million in additional operational funding for public libraries**

These requests align with many of the Victorian Government's priorities, including in areas of education, health, employment, local government, small business, youth and creative industries.

I encourage any support you can provide to this Budget request, and would appreciate it if you could call on the relevant Ministers for their support.

As a local member, I know that you want to hear about services that make a real difference in our community. I encourage you to visit our local library and see these incredible public spaces in action.

Yours sincerely

STUART JAMES
Mayor & Oakleigh Ward Councillor

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