

Media Release

The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Suburban Development
Minister for Veterans



Monday, 14 December 2020

BACKING VICTORIAN LIBRARIES TO CHANGE LIVES

The Andrews Labor Government is investing in public libraries across Victoria with a record level of funding.

Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane has announced \$45.8 million in funding to support public libraries across Victoria to buy new books and collection items, run online services and deliver outreach programs.

Libraries provided tremendous support to their communities through the coronavirus pandemic. From virtual story times for kids and check-in phone calls for members, to book delivery and partnerships with Meals on Wheels, libraries have made a real impact during a challenging year.

Minister Leane made the announcement at an event to launch a new website and mobile app for the Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation. The corporation serves the Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges councils and will receive \$2.8 million from the funding package.

The funding represents a 2.5 per cent increase on last year's allocation from the Public Libraries Funding Program and is part of a record \$56.9 million commitment to libraries from the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*.

This is in addition to \$1.1 million from the *Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund*, which provides an annual allocation for books and materials to support the Premiers' Reading Challenge.

The Labor Government also funds the expansion, redevelopment and modernisation of libraries through the *Living Libraries Infrastructure Program*, which received an additional \$11.1 million over two years in the Budget.

Victoria is home to 276 permanent library branches, 31 mobile library services and 71 other library outlets, with more than 2.1 million library members registered in the state.

The new Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation website is now live at yourlibrary.com.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"Thousands of Victorians have joined libraries during the coronavirus pandemic and libraries have displayed ingenuity, resilience and commitment to their communities through their work."

"This record level of funding ensures libraries have the resources they need to keep up the amazing work they've been doing. Libraries really do change lives and they are about so much more than books."