

Media Release

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



Thursday, 28 January 2021

EXPANDED LIVING LIBRARIES PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The Andrews Labor Government is modernising and upgrading libraries across the state, with councils now able to apply for dedicated new funding.

Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane today announced applications for this year's round of the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program were open.

The \$10 million round was funded in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21* and is be the biggest in the program's history – more than double the \$4.5 million available in 2020.

Increased funding for the Living Libraries program is part of a record \$56.9 million commitment to libraries in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*. Under the program, councils can apply for grants of up to \$1 million to expand and modernise existing libraries, build new libraries or buy new mobile library vans.

Minister Leane opened the fund on a visit to the Ballarat Library, which received a \$500,000 Living Libraries grant towards a major upgrade and expansion in 2019.

Since 2015 the Victorian Government has invested more than \$22.5 million into Living Libraries projects, allowing a total investment of \$170 million.

Thousands of Victorians joined libraries during 2020 and they proved a valuable source of support, entertainment and education during a challenging year.

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. For more information on Living Libraries and this year's application guidelines visit localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants/living-libraries-infrastructure-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"The Living Libraries program has delivered a legacy of high-quality investment in libraries across Victoria. Its projects create local jobs and deliver fantastic facilities and programs for our communities."

"This fund delivers new libraries, library expansions and modern upgrades and mobile libraries for remote communities, ensuring that all Victorian have access to a public library."

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"The redevelopment of Ballarat Library will deliver a new Digital Hub and Children's Discovery Zone, making the library a welcoming a modern place for young families, students, job seekers and workers."

Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle

"With more funding available than ever before, the Living Libraries program will continue to ensure that libraries like the Ballarat Library can provide access to digital resources, IT and children's programs that encourage lifelong learning."

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