

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture
Acting Minister for Local Government
Acting Minister for Suburban Development



Wednesday, 1 September 2021

GRANTS FUND NEW PLAYGROUNDS, COMMUNITY CENTRES, LIBRARIES

The Victorian Government is helping local councils upgrade libraries, improve playgrounds and build better community facilities for growing communities.

Acting Minister for Local Government Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the opening of the \$50 million *Growing Suburbs Fund* and the \$10.1 million *Living Libraries Infrastructure Program*.

Some 16 urban fringe councils can now apply for funding through the *Growing Suburbs Fund*, which will deliver more playgrounds, parks and community centres in the state's fastest-growing areas.

Previous projects supported include \$4.3 million for the Southern Peninsula Integrated Youth Services Hub and \$1.5 million for the Brunt Road Integrated Child and Family Centre in Cardinia Shire.

Since 2015, the *Growing Suburbs Fund* has delivered more than \$325 million towards 256 projects, creating over 8,800 jobs.

All councils and regional library corporations across Victoria are now able to apply for funding to upgrade or deliver a new library.

Under the program, councils can apply for grants of up to \$1.5 million to expand and modernise existing libraries, build new libraries or buy new mobile library vans through the *Living Libraries Infrastructure Program*.

Earlier this year Glen Eira City Council began work on modernising the popular Bentleigh Library, funded through the program. The library will soon expand to be a community centre and base for the council's youth services, including counselling and career advice.

Since 2015, the Government has invested more than \$32 million into 95 *Living Libraries* projects, as part of \$236.8 million for new libraries, upgrades to existing facilities and library vans.

Public libraries provide a safe and inclusive space for people to gather, learn and connect and have continued to adapt and serve their communities throughout coronavirus restrictions.

For more information, visit localgovernment.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Local Government Mary-Anne Thomas

"More than ever, feeling a part of a well-connected community is something all Victorians deserve – regardless of where they live."

"This funding will deliver the infrastructure Victorian communities need and facilities they deserve while creating work for local tradies and businesses."

"Our local libraries have done an amazing job in serving the community in challenging times and we're proud to be supporting councils and regional library corporations in continuing their valuable work."

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