

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



Tuesday, 14 September 2021

RECORD INVESTMENT ON THE BOOKS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Victorian Government is supporting public libraries to expand and adapt their services for local communities, providing connection and learning opportunities during the pandemic.

Acting Minister for Local Government Mary-Anne Thomas today announced that public libraries and Vision Australia will receive a 3.5 per cent increase to their funding from last year, to grow their library collections, boost online services and increase library programs.

The funding boost is thanks to record funding of \$47.4 million under the Government's *Public Libraries Funding Program*.

Public libraries are vibrant community hubs that offer a safe space for social interaction, digital connection, lifelong learning and rich cultural experiences.

As Victorians continue to feel the impacts of the pandemic, libraries have demonstrated dedication to their communities by delivering online programs, adopting a book delivery partnership with Meals on Wheels, offering a click and collect model as well as checking in with members over the phone.

Maribyrnong City Council has introduced the Book Bundle initiative, currently being rolled out across its libraries. From a short survey, Maribyrnong library staff will curate a personalised reading and viewing collection unique to each library member to enjoy from home.

Students who are members of Glen Eira libraries can access free homework and study help 24/7 via an online portal while Brimbank libraries offers "Stay at home" trivia – with registrations open to individuals and groups.

Casey Cardinia library members can access a digital library portal where users can download books and kids' entertainment, stream music and watch movies.

The *Public Libraries Funding Program* provides annual funding for councils, regional library corporations and Vision Australia to support a range of activities and library services across 277 branches.

This funding contributes to the purchase of physical and electronic collection items, information technology, library and outreach programs, and other services provided by Victorian public libraries.

Since 2015, the Government has invested more than \$306 million through the *Public Libraries Program*. For more information, visit localgovernment.vic.gov.au.

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

"Our public libraries provide endless access to knowledge, social connection and entertainment, and this record investment ensures they can continue to deliver for all Victorians."

"Victorians have embraced libraries during the pandemic, and I commend library staff for continually looking for ways to connect with their communities and give people access to books, resources and support networks."

Media contact: Stephanie Hobbs 0429 275 437 | stephanie.hobbs@minstaff.vic.gov.au