

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Local Government

Minister for Suburban Development



Tuesday, 14 February 2023

NEW LIBRARY PROGRAM KEEPS SENIORS CONNECTED IN DIGITAL AGE

Seniors needing help to navigate the ever-changing digital world will soon be able to access free training through their local library, backed by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne today announced the \$2 million Digital Literacy for Seniors Program, supporting public libraries to conduct hands-on digital training programs for Victorian seniors in 2023.

Training programs include one-to-one or small group sessions on both hardware and software topics such as how to manage mobile phones, data and apps, understanding the internet, and how to get the most out of laptops and tablets.

The program also funds the hiring and training of staff to deliver programs, upgrade library digital devices like laptops and iPads, and minor changes to library facilities to better facilitate programs.

Funding will be allocated to eligible public library services through councils, regional library corporations, My Community Library (Myli) and the Vision Australia Library.

According to the Australian Digital Inclusion Index, older people are most likely to be excluded from a range of digital activities. Victorians over the age of 50 now make up more than 35 per cent of public library users, with 17.2 per cent aged over 70.

Libraries provide direct access to computers, internet linked devices and free Wi-Fi.

Having access to a program like Digital Literacy for Seniors was life changing for Williamstown's Wilma Robarts, aged in her 80s.

Learning how to use her iPhone effectively in a dedicated program offered by Altona North Library has helped Wilma get the most out of her smart phone and feel more independent.

For more information on programs available through Victoria's public libraries, visit localgovernment.vic.gov.au/public-libraries.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne

"Local libraries are a trusted source of information in the community – what better place for our senior citizens to learn great new skills for the digital age."

"This is about growing practical knowledge, building confidence and providing the opportunity for people to expand their social networks."

Quotes attributable to Altona North Library member Wilma Robarts

"Keeping up with technology is a challenge for everyone, particularly seniors who are retired and aren't using this technology on a daily basis for work."

"The digital literacy programs offered by Hobsons Bay's libraries have been a big help in adapting to technologies that are now in everyday use, but also rapidly changing."

Media contact: Isobel Loschiavo 0431 963 479 | isobel.loschiavo@minstaff.vic.gov.au