

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Children
Minister for Disability



Tuesday, 17 October 2023

ACCESS TO TOY LIBRARIES FOR MORE VICTORIAN FAMILIES

The Allan Labor Government is giving more Victorian families access to high-quality toys and equipment for children to explore and learn through play – with grants to establish new and support existing toy libraries now open.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today announced an investment of \$1.9 million will establish 8 new toy libraries and support around 135 existing not-for-profit toy libraries with grants of up to \$10,000.

Grants of \$40,000 are available to eligible organisations to establish a new toy library in their local area, with funding to be used for educational toys, books, equipment and learning resources.

Expanding toy libraries means more families will be able to access high-quality educational toys and resources nearby and at low cost – helping save money and encouraging play-based learning at home.

To further support Victoria's toy libraries, not-for-profit services can now also apply for one-off grants of up to \$10,000 to renew their toys and equipment, and grow their membership. Funding is also able to be used for one-off costs, such as buying furniture or equipment to improve accessibility.

Toy libraries are important community hubs that provide children and families with access to creative and educational toys, ensuring children get to use their imaginations and explore through equipment offered by the services.

They offer an alternative to buying toys, help teach children about recycling, provide social and emotional support, and connect parents and carers with other community services.

Largely staffed by volunteers, toy libraries also promote the importance of early childhood education among their members – so more children from diverse backgrounds can access and attend kinder.

Toy Libraries Australia – which represents the sector across Victoria – will also receive \$300,000 from the Labor Government over 4 years as part of the grants program. This will help promote toy library membership, build the sector's profile and assist existing toy libraries to apply for and use their funding.

Applications for the first round of toy library grants close on Sunday, 19 November 2023. To find out more, visit vic.gov.au/toy-library-grants-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

“Toy libraries offer so much value for local communities – this initiative will make them more accessible, save families money and give countless children hours of learning through play.”

“Expanding access for Victorian families to toys and equipment will help inspire children to explore and use their imagination, no matter their background or financial situation.”