

Media Release

The Hon Nick Staikos MP
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister for Local Government



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NEW FUNDS AND A NEW FACE FOR VICTORIAN LIBRARIES

The Allan Labor Government is helping to drive education and creativity across the state with Public Libraries Victoria set to receive a funding boost and its first state libraries ambassador.

Minister for Local Government Nick Staikos this week visited Bentleigh Library and Youth Hub to announce a more than \$200,000 funding boost for libraries across Victoria and named celebrated author Andrea Rowe as the inaugural Victorian Public Libraries Ambassador.

The Public Libraries Funding Program supports councils each year to deliver library services and statewide library projects, creating joint services for Victorians.

The latest grant will support a range of projects including:

- a young adult handbook for public libraries to guide effective engagement with young people
- the Warm Winter Read campaign that encourages reading during the winter months
- a multicultural libraries toolkit and a guide to multilingual story time in Victoria's public libraries in both print and digital formats
- support for a two-week campaign to engage library users who speak a language other than English.

As the new Victorian Public Libraries Ambassador, Ms Rowe will celebrate the importance of libraries in Victorian communities as places of knowledge, creativity and information sharing.

Ms Rowe will also work with the Minister for Local Government and Public Libraries Victoria to highlight the role that government plays in delivering critical library services.

Ms Rowe's picture book, *Jetty Jumping*, was awarded the 2022 Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year and the 2023 Australian Speech Pathology Picture Book of the Year.

More than \$53.1 million has been delivered to public libraries this year, including through the Public Libraries Funding Program, the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program and the Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Nick Staikos

"This funding ensures libraries will continue to be vibrant community hubs that provide all Victorians with information at their fingertips."

"Libraries give our communities and young people a safe and supportive environment to come together to share stories and knowledge, and we are proud to support them to continue their vital work."

"Andrea Rowe is the perfect choice to be our first ambassador in this important program. Ms Rowe loves to write stories that capture the imagination and inspire conversation and this role will help motivate the next generation of authors to follow in her footsteps."

Quote attributable to Victorian Public Library Ambassador Andrea Rowe

"Libraries are a place of knowledge, information and creativity. I'm excited to step into this newly formed ambassador role that helps to shine a light on the inspiring role that libraries play in our community."

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