

Media Release

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



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VIC KIDS TURN THE PAGE TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE LITERACY

The Allan Labor Government is supporting the power of reading and literacy to enrich young minds as children across Victoria come together today to celebrate the 25th annual National Simultaneous Storytime.

Minister for Local Government Nick Staikos today visited the Geelong Library, along with Member for Geelong Christine Couzens, Member for Bellarine Alison Marchant and Victoria's Library Ambassador, Andrea Rowe, to recognise the important role public libraries play in Victorian communities, and introduce this year's book - The Truck Cat.

Written by Deborah Frenkel and illustrated by Danny Snell, The Truck Cat explores themes of immigration and identity, and touches on loneliness and the idea of home, through a special bond between a human and their cat.

National Simultaneous Storytime is an Australia-wide event that takes place in libraries, schools, kinders, childcare centres, family homes and bookshops.

Each year, the Australian Library and Information Association chooses a book that is age appropriate and explores meaningful themes, with the book read on the same day and at the same time across the country.

The event highlights the benefits of literature by showcasing a new story that teaches young Australians about important and timely issues in a fun and vibrant way. More than 2.3 million children in 21,000 different locations took part in the event in 2024.

Geelong Regional Library Corporation supports a network of 19 community libraries and three mobile libraries that house a diverse collection of print, multimedia and heritage items.

In 2024-25, the Victorian Government provided more than \$2.3 million to Geelong Regional Library Corporation through the Public Libraries Funding Program, and a further \$56,000 through the Premier's Reading Challenge Book Fund.

The government is supporting Victorian libraries to meet the changing needs of their communities through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program, which has invested more than \$49.3 million over seven years into 139 different library projects.

Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Nick Staikos

"Reading is a powerful force in the development of young minds and that's why I'm so pleased to read this year's National Simultaneous Storytime book, The Truck Cat, a heartwarming story about identity, loneliness and home."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"Victorian libraries play a crucial role in people's lives –especially children who learn to engage and explore a world of ideas at their local community library."

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Alison Marchant

"Our local libraries are about more than books – They give our communities and young people a safe and supportive environment to gather, share stories and gain knowledge. "

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