

2.1 LIBRARIES CHANGE LIVES BUDGET BID 2019-2020 (JS.)

Responsible Director: Julie Salomon

RECOMMENDATION

That Council provides a letter of support to join the Public Libraries Victoria and State Library of Victoria's advocacy campaign Libraries Change Lives Budget Bid 2019-2020 calling for the State Government to allocate additional funding in the following three priority areas:

- 1. Boost operational funding for public libraries through a \$15 million investment increase in public libraries over four years;*
- 2. Invest in library infrastructure through a \$20 million increase in the Living Libraries infrastructure program; and*
- 3. Deliver early years education to create literate and educated communities through a \$10 million investment to deliver early years programs.*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries Change Lives is a State-wide advocacy campaign led by Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) and the State Library of Victoria (SLV) that highlights the benefits public libraries bring to their communities as places to learn, create and belong.

This report seeks Councils endorsement to join the Libraries Change Lives advocacy campaign for additional funding for public libraries in three key areas (operational, infrastructure and early literacy programming) by providing a letter of support for inclusion in the PLV and State Library Libraries Change Lives 2019-2020 Budget Bid proposal to the State Government.

BACKGROUND

The public library is a trusted, inclusive and safe public place for the community that provides opportunities for community engagement and lifelong learning. Since 2018 per capita library funding started to fall and on current projections will continue to fall. Additional funding to support and grow service offerings is crucial.

PLV the peak library representing the state's 272 public libraries and the State library are conducting a state-wide campaign about the value and impact of Victoria's public libraries and the role they play in healthy communities. This campaign is called Libraries Change Lives.

The campaign is asking the State Government for additional funding in the 2019-2020 Budget in three priority areas:

1. Boost operational funding through a \$15 million dollar investment increase in operational funding over four years to account for CPI and state population growth to ensure library services keep pace with demand;
2. Invest in library infrastructure through a \$20 million increase in the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program to better deliver library infrastructure, including digital enhancements; and

3. Deliver early years' education to create literate and educated communities through a \$10 million investment to deliver early years' programs to improve educational outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Victorian Public libraries are busy community hubs that welcome more than 30 million visitors a year and more than 5 million free Wi-Fi and computer sessions and deliver early literacy support to more than 15,000 preschool children and their families each week. For every dollar invested in libraries, \$4.30 of benefit is delivered (SGS Economics, Libraries Work! 2018).

Public libraries are primarily funded by local government with the Victorian government contributing on average 15 percent (2016-2017.) While a year on year funding increase for library operations and collections is evident, libraries are experiencing a decrease in funding on a per capita basis.

Increased operational funding from State Government over the next four year accounting for CPI, will ensure that library services including Monash Public Library Service keep pace with community demand and expectations of a contemporary library service in particular around lifelong learning and digital literacies.

The Living Libraries Infrastructure Program assists Councils to meet the needs of their communities through the funding of public library infrastructure project. Support for additional \$20 million to fund improved library infrastructure including digital enhancements will bring significant benefits to communities. Libraries that have received Living Libraries Grants reported greater visitation rates and user satisfaction.

A \$10 million investment over four years to deliver enhanced early years literacy and numeracy programs to improve educational outcomes is natural alignment for public libraries who are a leading provider of early literacy support to pre-school children and their families via Story time, Rhyme time and other literacy programs. This funding would benefit Monash families and support children deemed 'vulnerable' or at 'risk' in relation to language and cognitive skills.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Victorian public libraries remain an integral part of the social fabric of their communities and continue to act as a builder of community capacity and contributor to social harmony. Monash Public Library Service offers safe, inclusive and valued public spaces with opportunities for lifelong learning and social connection for all ages aligned with Monash's diverse demographic. This contributes to the building of a healthy and resilient community. Supporting the Libraries Change Lives Budget Bid 2019-2020 will help secure these benefits for the residents of Monash in an ongoing capacity.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The letter of support for the Libraries Change Lives Budget Bid 2018-2019 is in keeping with The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and its four themes of

- (i) freedom;
- (ii) respect;
- (iii) equality; and

(iv) dignity.

CONSULTATION

Community engagement in the Libraries Change Libraries Budget Bid 2019-2020 will be two-pronged.

A template letter will be available for local library supporters and users to ask their local MP to support the State Government budget Bid.

Secondly postcards will be made available where library users or the broader community can complete the statement, 'Library funding matters because...'. These post cards will capture what the community values most about their library and will be collected for use at a Parliamentary Event planned for May 2019.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Libraries Change Lives Budget Bid 2018-2019 has no financial implications to Council.

CONCLUSION

Public Libraries benefit the whole community. They are the community living room. They build capacity, social inclusion and provide meaningful activities that support creativity and lifelong learning. The Monash Public Library Service curates not only collections and spaces but provides a range of programs and services that builds a more resilient City.

The Libraries Change Lives Budget Bid 2018-2019 is designed to support the critical work of public libraries, especially over the next four years.

It is recommended that Council supports this Budget Bid to the State Government for additional funding in three priority areas, with a letter of support.