

MEDIA RELEASE

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Baillieu's broken promises - Where's the Boost for Victorian Libraries ?

The Victorian Liberal Party policy promised to boost funding for Victorian Libraries, now they have backflipped and the result will be reduced funding for library services.

Australian Library and Information Association Executive Director Sue Hutley has spoken out today against the Victorian Government's \$5.7 million cutback in funding of the State's public and community libraries. In Victoria there are 261 branch libraries, 26 mobile libraries and 29 other service points.

ALIA is supporting statements made by Public Libraries Victoria Network (PLVN) and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) expressing grave concerns as to the ramifications of these funding cuts.

The recent report, *Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries* commissioned by State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network and undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning, found that for each dollar invested, \$3.56 of benefits were returned to the local community. The report is the result of a comprehensive three year project involving economists and analysts from SGS Economics and Planning.

"How can these cuts stack up with the State Government's commitment to Melbourne's status as an UNESCO City of Literature?" asked Carolyn Macvean, Public Libraries Victoria Network's Vice President. Has the State Government forgotten about the 2.8 million public library members who borrowed over 52 million items last year?"

Victoria is currently the fifth worst funded state in relation to public libraries and now looks like it will fall further behind the majority of States and Territories.

Sue Hutley, speaking on behalf of library colleagues across Australia, said, "Why would a state government reduce the funding to organisations who clearly show a high return on investment. We fear this may be the thin end of the wedge, with the State Government seeing public libraries as an easy target for spending cuts, now and in the future.

"As evidenced by the experience of the State Governments in Western Australia and South Australia last year, politicians attack public libraries at their peril. These institutions are much loved by taxpayers and voters, and even the most moderate of community members will rise up to defend their local library if they believe it is under threat.

ALIA encourages all of its members and library supporters to join the Facebook campaign at <http://www.facebook.com/stoplrarycuts> and to encourage Victorians to contact their local member.

Premier Baillieu, to use your own policy words 'Our communities deserve no less'. 1.

ALIA will be supporting PLVN in pursuing this line of debate with the Victorian Government. Facts and figures about Victorian public libraries are on the PLVN website.

ENDS

1. Policy information for the 2006 State Election 'Liberals to Boost Funding for Victorian Libraries'

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The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is the professional association for the Australian library and information services sector. It seeks to empower the profession in the development, promotion and delivery of quality library and information services to the nation, through leadership, advocacy and mutual support. ALIA represents the interest of 6,000 members, the profession and Australia's 12 million library users.

<http://www.alia.org.au>

National Year of Reading 2012 - <http://www.love2read.org.au>

Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries

The *Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries* report identifies the economic stimuli Victorian public libraries introduce into local economies

<http://www.plvn.net.au/node/20>

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Public Libraries Victoria Network is a collaborative and advocacy organisation comprised of Victorian Local Government Public Library Services.

<http://www.publiclibrariesvictoria.net.au/>

Issued on behalf of

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