



Media release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Clarence joins push for adequate library funding

CLARENCE Valley Council has joined a state-wide campaign calling on the State Government to double funding of public libraries.

On Tuesday Council joined the NSW Public Libraries Association and Local Government NSW in launching a major grassroots push to deliver a sustainable funding model after the NSW Government reduced funding in its recent budget.

Mayor, Jim Simmons, said public libraries were the heart of communities and valued places where people met, accessed knowledge and shared ideas.

“Each year local councils like ours contribute more than \$314 million to support more than 360 libraries while the NSW Government provide just \$23.5 million in recurrent funding,” he said.

“This is an unfair burden for us to bear, particularly when local council budgets are already stretched.

“At around 7.8% of total funding, the NSW contribution to libraries is the lowest in Australia, far behind Victoria (18%) and Queensland (12%).

“It’s time the NSW Government paid its share.

“If NSW Government funding fails to increase, local library services could be affected.

“We don’t want to have to shut the door on students, parents with children and older library users because we don’t have the money to keep the lights on.

“That’s why we are calling on all political parties to urgently address this funding crisis in NSW public libraries by doubling recurrent funding and creating a sustainable funding model.”

Regional librarian, Kathryn Beward, said providing high quality library services was a job officers took very seriously.

“That’s why we’re proud to support Renew Our Libraries,” she said.

“Demand for local library services has increased, but NSW Government funding has failed to keep up with demand.

“If we don’t address this funding shortfall we may see shorter opening hours, fewer programs and services and reduced book and digital collections.

“If you care about your local library we’re asking every member of the community to get involved by signing the petition. We’ll keep people up to date and provide information on what actions they can take to support their local library.”

Ms Breward said Renew Our Libraries arose from the 2017 LGNSW Conference, where NSW councils resolved unanimously to advocate for improved NSW Government funding to enable public libraries to meet the growing needs of local communities and to raise public awareness of the multiple roles public libraries played in supporting the educational, social, cultural and economic outcomes in local communities.

For more information visit: www.renewourlibraries.com.au

Release ends.

For media inquiries contact Clarence Valley Council communications coordinator, David Bancroft, on 6643 0230 or 0429 104 118.