



**Gladys Berejiklian**

Premier of NSW

**Don Harwin**

Minister for Resources, Energy and Utilities, and the Arts

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **RECORD INVESTMENT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Public libraries in NSW will be able to expand their collections, carry out major upgrade work and extend their services thanks to a record \$60 million investment announced today by Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Minister for the Arts Don Harwin.

The funding will transform and modernise public libraries, especially those in regional areas, delivering key services and educational and cultural experiences across the entire State.

The money will be used to extend opening hours, expand book collections, deliver English lessons, provide HSC study help and classes and outreach programs for seniors.

It will also enable smaller libraries to expand and deliver mobile library services in remote locations, among other initiatives.

“This is a record investment in NSW’s public libraries – the biggest single cash injection in their history,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“I’m passionate about public libraries. They are at the heart of so many communities because they are so important to people of all ages, from children to the elderly.

“This historic investment will transform the way NSW’s public libraries deliver much-needed services, especially in regional areas, enhancing customer experience and convenience.”

Every one of NSW’s more than 370 public libraries will benefit from the new investment.

In recognition of the evolving role of libraries as community hubs, Service NSW kiosks will be placed in more libraries on an ‘opt-in’ basis, and library staff trained, meaning communities have easier access to Government services.

The kiosks will help more people access important cost of living initiatives introduced by the NSW Liberals and Nationals, including green slip refunds and help finding a better deal on energy prices, along with other important services.

Liberal candidate for Wagga Wagga, Julia Ham said, “For Riverina locals, this is an investment in libraries that will provide for a wide range of community needs such as better access to collections, children’s services, public IT, connectivity, events and programs.”

Speaking in Wagga Wagga on Friday, Minister Harwin said this is a landmark occasion for NSW public libraries, ensuring they remain at the heart of every community.

“All Councils will receive an increase in annual library subsidy funding between 40 to 50 per cent by 2022-23. This significant investment demonstrates that our Government supports the hundreds of libraries across the state,” Minister Harwin said.

“The funding will be particularly significant in areas such as Wagga, where populations are growing and library needs are evolving,” he said.

“The funding will also support the roll out of more Service NSW self-serve kiosks at public libraries, which will allow everyone to access key government services.”

Under the new investment, the per capita subsidy for public libraries will increase from \$1.85 per capita to \$2.85 per capita – the first time it has been increased in over twenty years.

While NSW Labor would only provide additional operational funding on a per capita basis, meaning many libraries in smaller communities would largely miss out, the NSW Liberals & Nationals will also provide a more than \$2 million annual boost in funding for libraries in disadvantaged and remote communities, to ensure these libraries receive their fair share of funding.

\$24 million for infrastructure grants will transform public libraries and ensure they can grow with and support their communities.

The state’s most remote towns will also benefit from the major funding boost, with a 100 per cent funding increase for Broken Hill’s Outback Letterbox Library, delivering important services to the Far West.

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