



# Open letter to NSW political parties on funding NSW public libraries

## More than books

Over the last eight months, communities across NSW have taken a stand in support of their local public libraries.

In that time the central role libraries play in our suburbs, our regional centres and our country towns has been brought into sharp relief.

From Bondi to Broken Hill we've brought to life a basic truth:

**that libraries are more than books – they are central points of information that connect communities.**

When this campaign was launched our libraries were in crisis.

For more than 40 years successive NSW governments had underinvested in public libraries, leaving NSW libraries the most neglected in Australia.

## Ending the damage

To end the crisis the next NSW government needed to double its funding, index the contribution and enshrine that funding in law.

The Renew Our Libraries campaign was launched by the NSW Public Libraries Association and Local Government NSW in August 2018 to secure this commitment.

The response has been overwhelming:

- 107 councils (84%) across NSW have endorsed the campaign
- a network of committed librarians were given the tools to garner the support of their communities
- more than 12,000 public library supporters from the local community have signed up to Renew Our Libraries.

Over the last two weeks alone, these supporters have sent over 7,800 messages to state election candidates from their local areas, calling on them to pledge support to our public libraries.



## A historic achievement

Because of these incredible efforts from councils and community members alike, NSW public libraries have succeeded in securing significant additional funding from the major parties.

- the NSW Coalition Government has committed \$60 million over four years
- the NSW Labor Opposition has promised \$61 million over the next term and have also committed to indexing part of the future funding.
- the NSW Greens and Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have both fully committed to all Renew Our Libraries objectives.

**We thank all these political parties for these commitments and for acknowledging the concerns of the community on this important issue.**

This represents the first significant funding boost for NSW public libraries in over 40 years.

And it was only achieved due to the passion and energy of our incredible supporters.

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to thank all participating councils and Renew Our Libraries advocates.

## More to be done

While we have achieved so much together, much work remains to be done.

The next NSW government must be held to account, to ensure that the promises made in this election campaign are delivered in the new term.

And while both major parties have made some funding commitments toward reaching our \$94 million target of doubling funding to NSW public libraries, neither of the major parties have undertaken to fulfil this goal.

We will continue to encourage the incoming government to fully commit to the Renew Our Libraries objectives to double the funding, index the funding and protect that funding for the future in law.

Together, we can fix NSW public library funding once and for all.

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*Councillor Dallas Tout*  
*President*  
*NSW Public Libraries Association*

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*Councillor Linda Scott*  
*President*  
*Local Government NSW*