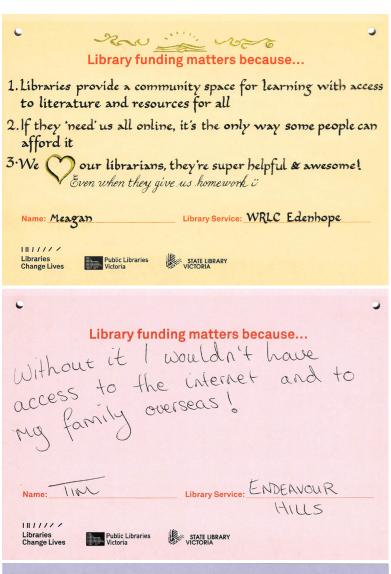
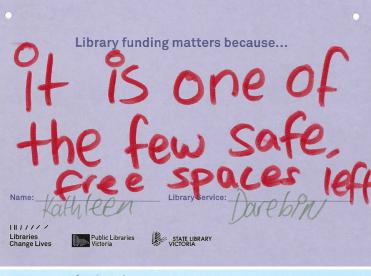
III / / / / Libraries Change Lives

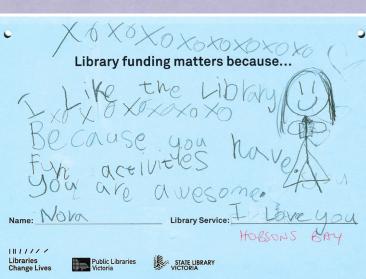
An initiative of Victoria's public libraries

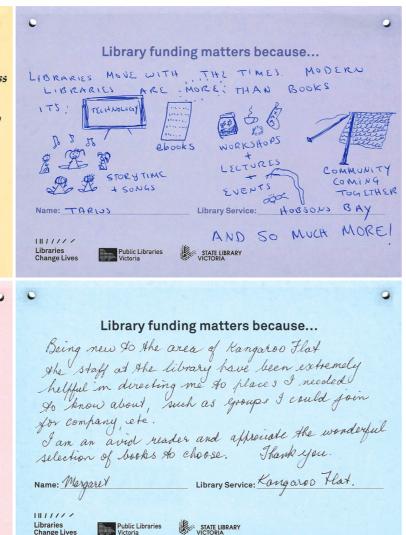
Victorian State Budget 2020–2021











Library funding matters because... It brings the commonly together at minimum rost. Today I started at the knitting group. I didn't know how to knit but within minuter I had lovely people eager to help me. I went be cause I live a solitary life and realised I needed to interact with others Today cost mo nothing and I left feeling very satisfied I had come to the group feeling very satisfied I had Name: LINDA Library Service: Knitting + crochet Group

Library funding matters because... With Knowledge we become empowered, confident, creative, inventive, mobile, entrepreneurial educated, productive, mentally stimulated and a million other things! Library funding matters because MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS * Name: Antonietta Library Service: Melbourne, City Libraries Change Lives Public Libraries Change Lives

Victoria needs public libraries

'Libraries offer spaces for people of all ages to make connections in their community, learn and grow.'

Minister for Local Government, The Hon Adem Somyurek MLC

Each year communities rely on public libraries for free and universal access to education, resources and programs. They need libraries for computer and Wi-Fi access, to get online to create a resumé, to look for jobs and to search for information. They need a safe and welcoming place to go to when they feel lonely, and libraries provide this too.

Victoria's public libraries contribute to healthy communities by providing education, combatting feelings of isolation, and supporting the wellbeing of Victorians at every stage of their life. Libraries change lives.

Over the past five years, Victoria's population has increased by 700,000 people. While visits to libraries are increasing, library funding is not keeping up with population growth.

Victoria's public libraries are popular, attracting more than 30.5 million visits annually.

Each year, one in three Victorians participates in at least one library program, from early years Storytime sessions to seniors technology classes. Public libraries lend more than 45 million books, ebooks, language kits, devices and more each year, and in 2018–19, public libraries logged 15.5 million hours of Wi-Fi use across the state.

The Victorian public library sector is grateful to the Victorian Government for its ongoing investment in public libraries. But while funding has increased in absolute terms each year, per capita funding (adjusted for inflation) has continued to decrease each year, from \$6.74 in 2013–14 to \$6.04 in 2018–19.

Ensuring Victoria's libraries have the people, books, technology, educational resources and space they need – and the funding to keep these services running – matters. It matters because libraries change lives in every Victorian community.

As part of the State Budget 2020–21, the Victorian public library sector calls on the State Government to deliver the following priorities:

- An additional \$10 million investment over four years in new resources to support libraries to drive education and wellbeing outcomes;
- 2. A \$20 million increase over four years in the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program; and
- A further \$15 million investment over four years in operational funding to account for CPI and population growth.

These investments will help to ensure that Victoria's public libraries can continue to improve education rates, deliver innovative responses to increasingly complex social challenges, contribute to community wellbeing and deliver cost savings to the Victorian economy.

Importantly, this investment will have a visible and positive impact right across the state.

CASE STUDY

Community lunches at Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy Library

When one in four Australians feels lonely¹

Yarra Libraries partners with Melbourne charity Open Table to offer a free fortnightly open invitation to community lunches at Bargoonga Nganjin in Fitzroy North.

With every community feast, library staff and Open Table volunteers not only provide a free meal for anyone in need, they also create opportunities for people who might otherwise feel isolated to socialise in a safe and welcoming environment.

More than 100 local families, students and new migrants visit Bargoonga Nganjin every time the lunch is on offer. Attendees often linger to spend time with new friends or chat to librarians about the pre-loved library books available to take home for free.

The program has been so popular that Yarra Libraries has scheduled Open Table to host a community lunch every Saturday in 2020. It's a great win for the library and for the local community in addressing social isolation and offering inclusive opportunities to learn and connect.

1 Australian Psychological Society, Australian Lonelines Report, November 2018. Retrieved from http://psychweek.org.au.

Overview

As communities grow, so does the pressure on public libraries. More Victorians are visiting their local library than ever before, yet libraries are still considered by some as nice to have rather than a necessity.

With their shared commitment to ensuring that Victorian libraries are able to support community growth and deliver services that communities rely on, Public Libraries Victoria and State Library Victoria partnered in September 2018 to deliver the Libraries Change Lives community campaign (Libraries Change Lives.org.au).

Public Libraries Victoria is the voice of Victorian public libraries. Public Libraries Victoria represents every one of Victoria's 47 public library services, including 276 individual branches, 31 mobile libraries and 71 other library outlets.

As an iconic cultural institution, State Library Victoria actively supports the development of Victoria's knowledge-based economy. Through its educational and outreach programs, State Library Victoria engages with people of all ages, including researchers, students, families, lifelong learners, culture creators and regional Victorians.

State Library Victoria lends its support to Public Libraries Victoria's State Government Budget Submission 2020–21.

The State Government currently supports Victoria's public libraries through:

The **Public Libraries Funding Program** provides annual funding that supports library operations.

The Premiers' Reading Challenge
Book Fund provides funding to public
libraries for the purchase of books and
other materials to support children and
young people undertaking the annual
Premiers' Reading Challenge.

The Living Libraries Infrastructure
Program helps councils to meet
the needs of their communities
through the funding of public library
infrastructure projects.

The Community Infrastructure Loan Scheme is open to applications from local councils seeking to build new or upgrade existing library infrastructure.

Libraries Change Lives

Victorian State Budget Submission 2020–2021

CASE STUDY

Renovation makes more space for Rhyme Time at Point Cook Library

When more than 16,000 Victorian pre-school children go to Storytime each week²

Wyndham City has experienced a years-long baby boom, with the district currently welcoming over 90 babies every week.

Local libraries were among the first to feel the surge as they worked to keep up with demand for crucial early years programs. Point Cook Library in particular struggled to maintain the program's intended impact – as many as 190 parents, carers and children arrived at every Rhyme Time and Storytime session.

Librarians did their best to manage attendance by introducing a booking system and an early morning Rhyme Time session before official opening hours. These measures, in combination with a renovation funded in part by a Living Libraries Infrastructure Program grant, meant the library was able to meet community demand for quality early years programs.

Point Cook Library recorded 10,881 attendances at early years programs in the 2018–19 financial year. It has already reported an enormous pro-rata increase in numbers in the current financial year, with 4,722 Storytime and Rhyme Time attendances from July to October 2019.

2 State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria, Reading and Literacy for All: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries, 2019.

What is happening in Victoria's libraries

Just as visitation rates have changed, so have the reasons why Victorians use their public libraries.

The increase in visitors to Victoria's public libraries can be attributed to three core reasons:

- Education while program offerings vary between individual public libraries, lifelong learning is a key reason why Victorians are visiting their local service more than ever before. In particular, over the past five years, record numbers of people have participated in workshops to improve their digital literacy skills. The topics covered in these workshops range from using the internet and digital devices to coding and robotics.
- Access public libraries provide a universal service.
 The programs and resources they offer reach people from all walks of life, from new migrants seeking to improve their English, to people living with disabilities who want to join a reading group.

 Public libraries are one of the last free open doors in our community. They also have a direct line into Victorian homes, offering more than 750,000 digital items for loan. This digital accessibility helps to remove barriers to library collections for people who live remotely or have mobility issues.
- Health and wellbeing support public libraries provide safe and welcoming spaces, with opportunities for regular social connection. Most importantly, libraries remain an integral part of the social fabric of communities across Victoria. They continue to act as 'soft' entry points for community members accessing information, services and education aimed at combating social challenges such as youth disengagement, unemployment and family disharmony.

As part of the health and wellbeing support they offer, Victoria's public libraries also provide a safe place to maintain good mental health, recover from mental illness and find respite.

No other institution is able to offer safe and inclusive public spaces at the same scale as public libraries.

The Libraries Change Lives campaign welcomed the State Government's establishment of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. Public Libraries Victoria was pleased to make a submission to the inquiry (available at https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/submissions). The submission focused on libraries as safe places for people to maintain and pursue good mental health and find a form of accessible respite.

The submission called for the Royal Commission to consider endorsing the placement of social workers in Victorian libraries:

'Public Libraries Victoria believe it is worth exploring a model of service delivery that would see social workers embedded in public libraries as a readily available and highly accessible resource for people seeking help'.

With more than 30.5 million visits to Victorian public libraries annually, the equivalent of five visits for every Victorian, public libraries are well placed to assist the Victorian Government with its commitment to implementing the Royal Commission's recommendations.



CASE STUDY

Library social worker initiative for City of Melbourne Libraries

When library outreach programs reach nearly 350,000 Victorians each year³

Victorians rely on libraries for access to information, education and essential digital services. For Victorians experiencing homelessness, these services are crucial, but libraries also offer something more fundamental – a space that is safe, warm, welcoming and free to visit.

The City of Melbourne's six public library branches will be better equipped to respond to this need thanks to a partnership with Launch Housing that will see a social worker engaged to provide specialised support services to the community.

The Victorian offering is based on similar library initiatives rolled out in cities including New York, San Francisco and Denver. These US-based programs were developed in recognition of the reliance of vulnerable populations on libraries for safety and access to essentials such as Wi-Fi and computers.

Social worker programs are a logical extension of the suite of critical social support services and mental health and wellbeing programs available at Victorian libraries.

3 Public Libraries Victoria, Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2018–19.

Every dollar invested in public libraries generates \$4.30 in benefits to local communities

It makes economic sense to invest in public libraries. This finding is amply detailed in the report *Libraries Work! The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians*, produced by SGS Economics and Planning in 2018. The research findings were compelling: **every \$1 invested in public libraries returns \$4.30 in benefits to the community**. The report found that increased investment will deliver an increased return at a similar rate.

In June 2019, the sector came together to take this message directly to decision-makers with the **Libraries Change Lives Parliament Showcase**. The event demonstrated the many free programs and resources public libraries provide to their communities to enable life-long learning and positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Displays from libraries across the state included:



Trilingual storytime in English, Mandarin and Italian, from Monash Public Library Service – an example of public libraries' free early years learning programs catering to culturally and linguistically diverse families. These are in high demand.



A MiRo and NAO robot programming demonstration, from Hume Libraries – public libraries provide STEM learning programs spanning multiple age groups, including coding sessions for young people, preschool sensory play activities, and digital literacy programs for job seekers and seniors.



A seniors knitting group, from Maribyrnong Library

Service – one of the many ways public libraries foster social connection and creativity in their communities, particularly among older Victorians.



A display of picture book illustrations, from Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries – bringing to life the incredible physical – and digital – collections and resources public libraries curate for their communities.

In the lead up to the event, the campaign received support from nearly **2000** community members who wrote postcards articulating why library funding matters to them.

Public Libraries Victoria is grateful to the Minister for Local Government, The Hon Adem Somyurek MLC, for reiterating his support for public libraries at the event, naming them the state's 'most popular community facility'.

The experience of funding pressures on Victoria's public libraries

No two public libraries in Victoria are the same. Public libraries serve metropolitan Melbourne, sprawling growth corridors, and regional and rural communities. While a targeted approach to investment will ensure public libraries can respond to the individual demands of their communities, there are some common pressures that are consistent across the state.

The Libraries Change Lives campaign held consultations with over 460 library staff to help identify these pressures. A comprehensive online survey was subsequently emailed to approximately 1800 library staff. Respondents raised a number of concerns, with the most common ones outlined below:

Infrastructure demands – the issue of siloed approaches to funding, especially for infrastructure upgrades, refurbishments and rebuilds, was raised by library communities across the state. Libraries that had received Living Libraries Infrastructure Program grants reported greater visitation rates and user satisfaction.

Funding not keeping pace with community demand

- current funding is insufficient to keep up with demand caused by population growth. Staff reported that libraries were unable to keep pace with the expanding and increasingly complex needs of their communities. Challenges include constrained opening hours in the face of increasing user numbers and even greater pressure on staffing levels. In a nutshell, public libraries are doing more with less. The situation is becoming untenable and a growing number of Victorian communities do not have ready access to public library services.

Stretched resources limiting the ability of libraries to innovate and keep up with the needs of each community – Victoria's public libraries have a proud culture and history of innovation. Library services continue to evolve to meet the needs of their communities, which includes maintaining pace with advances in technology. However, the recurring efficiency dividend is now affecting public libraries' capacity even to deliver core services, let alone to innovate.

Victorian public libraries

276branches

31 mobile branches

More than 1800 full-timeequivalent library staff Open
12,000
hours per week
(average of 40 hours
across library branches
and mobile libraries)

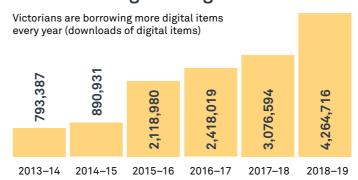
Libraries build informed communities

1 in 3
Victorians is a member of a public library

Victorians borrowed **41.12m** books, DVDs and magazines in 2018–19 Victorians
visited libraries
more than
30.5m
times in
2018–19

Victorian libraries recorded **2.2m** attendances at library programs in 2018–19

Libraries bridge the digital divide



3.6 million Victorians used **15.5 million** hours of Wi-Fi in 2018–19

Victorians booked library computers 3.4 million times for 6.9 million hours of computer use in 2018–19

Per capita library funding is decreasing

Victorian Public Library Funding – \$/capita (operating) from State Government



Libraries deliver return on investment

Every dollar invested in libraries generates **\$4.30** in value for the local community

Public libraries generate \$328 million in economic activity per year across Victoria

The net community welfare contribution of public libraries is estimated at \$847 million

CASE STUDY

Seniors technology training pilot at Echuca Library

When 57% of seniors don't connect online4

Social Seniors is a program that enables seniors to learn basic tech and online communication skills. Originally funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and Telstra, the pilot program was rolled out from Campaspe Regional Library Service at Echuca Library.

The program builds seniors' confidence with technology through three workshops, usually run over three weeks. Library staff work with seniors to create social media profiles and set up groups with friends or people with similar interests. Workshop participants then plan and create a two-minute mini-film on a subject of personal interest to share with their new networks.

The pilot in August 2018 empowered seniors with the knowledge they needed to more easily and safely connect with friends and family and to find and post information online. Since the pilot, the program has been delivered at more than 30 Victorian public libraries – three quarters of them in regional locations – and has reached more than 200 seniors in Campaspe Shire.

and Media Authority, *Digital* lives of older Australians, August 2019. Retrieved from https://www.acma.gov.au/.



Libraries Change Lives

Victorian State Budget Submission 2020–2021

Our investment proposal

Priority 1: \$10 million investment for universal and targeted program delivery

A \$10 million investment over four years to direct targeted resources to public libraries in metropolitan Melbourne, growth corridors and regional and rural communities.

Victoria's public libraries are unlike any other service, and the support they provide creates significant cost savings to the Victorian economy. To maximise the capacity of public libraries to lead educational and wellbeing initiatives, the sector calls for funding to support a combination of the following:

Rollout of government-funded children's and youth librarians

Every year, Victorian public libraries deliver thousands of comprehensive programs that support children from their earliest developmental stages through to their final school year to ensure the best possible literacy and education outcomes.

Libraries need to be funded to engage specialist children's and youth librarians to design and deliver programs that support achievement, engagement and wellbeing for Victoria's rapidly growing child and youth population.

Over the next four years, it is anticipated that 72,000 additional students will enter the Victorian school system, increasing the overall cohort from 971,000 to more than 1 million students. More than two thirds of these students will attend a government school. In addition, the 0–4-year-old population is forecast to grow by 78 per cent in growth areas and 21 per cent in all other council areas over the 20-year period from 2011 to 2031.

Well-funded library programs will help Victorian families ensure that every child starts school ready to learn and remains engaged with books, reading and STEM throughout their school years.

Two-year pilot program placing social workers in public library services

Public libraries often find themselves on the front line on a range of societal issues, from homelessness, mental illness and substance abuse to youth unemployment and disengagement with education.

Victorian libraries are already providing social and community services and can play a vital role in addressing disadvantage in their communities. However, few library workers have the specialised training required to support people with complex needs.

Implementing a two-year pilot to employ social workers across the Victorian public library network will improve access to social support services via outreach and enable libraries to provide the targeted assistance their communities need most.

This investment will support the Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2019–2023 to achieve:

- A reduction in the prevalence of mental illness, and increased resilience among Victorian individuals, families and communities;
- Reductions in the gap in social and emotional wellbeing for at-risk groups including Aboriginal Victorians, with an emphasis on reducing loneliness and increasing social connectedness; and
- More place-based approaches to improve public health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce inequalities.



Investment to update STEM collections

Victorian public libraries are a key state-wide provider of STEM programs for children and the only free provider outside government schools.

Children without access to technology programs risk being left behind. Public libraries want to continue to engage Victorian children and young people in educational STEM programs, but require hardware and resources to continue this essential training and development. Specifically, Victorian libraries would like to expand availability of:

· Little Bang Discovery Kits

Developed by the Children's Discovery Museum in partnership with public libraries, these kits target pre-schoolers and early primary school aged children, providing activities and resources to develop knowledge, skills and creativity to inspire early years scientific interest and inquiry.

· STEM hardware and software

Public libraries offer a range of programs to develop technological understanding and coding capabilities for people of all ages, with a particular focus on young people. These programs include introductory robotics, using LEGO Mindstorms, MiRo and Nao robots, green-screen technology and virtual reality experiences.

Expanding the STEM lending collection will equip public libraries to support the Victorian Government with the following Education State priorities:

- Achieve a significant improvement in STEM capability among Victorian school students;
- Build foundational STEM skills when children are very young; and
- Improve student engagement with STEM, especially for girls.

Libraries Change Lives

Victorian State Budget Submission 2020–2021

Priority 2: \$20 million increase over four years in the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program

A \$20 million increase over four years in the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program to deliver better library infrastructure, including essential digital upgrades.

Modern and accessible library facilities play a key role in enabling community engagement and learning opportunities across Victoria. The Living Libraries Infrastructure Program has successfully delivered new and improved library facilities to local communities.

An increase in Living Libraries Infrastructure Program funding, paired with a higher cap and a broadening of project eligibility, will enable the provision of world-leading library facilities to more Victorian communities.

A dedicated funding stream is required to ensure libraries are equipped to meet demand for digital infrastructure and online services. This in turn will enable public libraries to maximise their contribution to the State Government's transformation of Victoria into the Education State.

Priority 3: A further \$15 million investment over four years in operational funding to account for CPI and population growth

A further \$15 million investment boost over four years in operational funding to account for CPI and population growth will ensure library services keep pace with demand.

Public Libraries Victoria has deep knowledge about how public libraries in metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria are operating today, and what they need to meet growing and changing community demands.

Any investment would be modelled to enable equitable allocation of resources across the metropolitan area, growth corridors and regional and rural communities.

Public Libraries Victoria would welcome the opportunity to work with the Victorian Government to assist in developing the internal economic modelling that is used to guide government expenditure across public libraries.



CASE STUDY

24/7 self-service access at Foster Library

When nearly 40% of Australians feel rushed or pressed for time⁵

Gippsland's Foster Library recently introduced Victoria's first 24-hour library, giving members round-the-clock access to the collections at a time that works for them.

Almost half of the town's residents work more than 35 hours per week, so an extension to the library's open hours was not sufficient to meet community need.

Foster's library members can now opt to gain swipe pass entry to the library to access books, workspaces, free Wi-Fi and more at a time that works for them.

West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation plans to roll out 24/7 access to more libraries across its region.

5 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Gender Indicators, Australia, September 2017. Retrieved from https://www. abs.gov.au/ausstats/.

Libraries Change Lives: 10 reasons to keep investing in our public libraries

Reason 1

Every dollar invested in Victorian public libraries generates \$4.30 of benefits to the local community a high return on investment.

Reason 2

Economic activity generated by public libraries equates to \$328 million per year across Victoria.

Reason 3

Public libraries currently employ more than 1,800 full time equivalent staff. The additional spending and economic activity resulting from this employment means public libraries support a further 500 jobs in the Victorian economy.

Reason 4

Public libraries in Victoria welcome more than 30.5 million visitors annually. equivalent to five visits for every Victorian. Visitation growth continues to outpace population growth.

Reason 5

Victorian public libraries provide a universal service that every Victorian can access. They support creativity and lifelong learning. People can access collections, technology and Wi-Fi, find information, and participate in free or low-cost programs and training.

Reason 6

One in four Australians is lonely. Public libraries reduce social isolation by providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive space that supports vulnerable Victorians. They offer access to information, programs and services for those who need help, and provide opportunities for regular social connection through clubs, classes and conversations.

Reason 7

An hour of reading each day gives children a head start at school. Public libraries provide free access to children's books and early years literacy programs, including Storytime, Baby Bounce and Reading Buddies.

Reason 8

Public libraries lend more than 45 million books, DVDs, ebooks, tablets, ESL resources, language kits and more to Victorians each year for free, improving literacy and learning no matter a person's age, background or postcode.

Reason 9

Public libraries help nearly 200,000 Victorian jobseekers find work through free access to computers, the internet and career development resources.

Reason 10

Public libraries are unique. No other institution offers the same help and information, equal and free access to services, social engagement, and sense of safety and belonging. Public libraries offer all this and more via a state-wide network of nearly 300 branches.

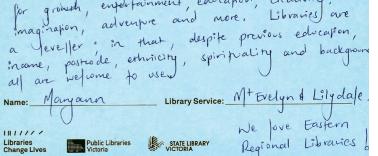


to be able to access a warm place for free to be able to hold a perprecious book for free to be able to access technology for free to be able to guther and discuss in a space for free to be entertained for free to be able to access poetry and music by free to be able to rest and feel safe for free are the elements of a & civilised society. CASTLEMAINE, VIC

Library funding matters because...

I CAN ATTEND MEETINGS FOR RURAL AUSTRALIAN FOR REFUGEES ALSO WORKING BEES TO SEW CLOTH BAGS FOR PLASTIC BAGS FREE ECHUCA - MOAMA. I CAN CATCH UP WITH FRIENDS HAVE A COFFEE AND ATTEND MOVIE AFTERNOONS ALSO THE STAFF A VERY FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL,

Library Service: CAMPASPE 5HIRE Name: MR DAULD 111/1//



growth, entertainment, education, creativity,

Library funding matters because...

people with low incomes use our library as an extreme weather refuge -duning heat waves - heavy ravifall (storms - cold, ret, windy days as they cannot afford their own heating I cooling

Name: GANNAWARRA Library Service: Sue - Staff member LIBRARY SERVICE 111/1//



For further information related to Public Libraries Victoria's budget submission please contact:

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With support from



LibrariesChangeLives.org.au