

**MM-2 MAYORAL MINUTE - PUBLIC LIBRARY FUNDING CAMPAIGN
UPDATE**

Department Executive Services

Author Initials: AT

REPORT

At the 1 April Meeting, Council considered a Mayoral Minute on Public Library Funding. The report was supported unanimously, with the following resolutions:

1. *THAT Council make representation to the State Member, John Sidoti, in relation to the need for additional funding from the NSW State Government for the provision of public library services.*
2. *THAT Council write to the Hon. George Souris, Minister for the Arts, calling upon the Government to implement the Reforming Public Library Funding submission of the Library Council of NSW for the reform of the funding system for NSW public libraries.*
3. *THAT Council approve the distribution of NSW Public Library Associations campaign information in Council libraries.*
4. *THAT Council take a leading role in activating the campaign locally.*

I would like to update Council on the progress of this funding campaign.

Following the above resolutions, I wrote to both the Member for Drummoyne and the Minister for the Arts, seeking support for increased funding, to redress the imbalance of Local Government funding 93% of operating public libraries. Due to a cabinet reshuffle, The Hon. George Souris MP changed portfolio shortly after my letter was sent. The current Minister for the Arts is the Hon. Troy Grant, MP. To date, I have not received any response to these letters.

Our Libraries have been displaying posters outlining the decline in State funding and encouraging community members to sign a petition calling on the State Government to increase funding to \$30M annually for the four years from 2013/14. To date, almost 1,000 signatures have been collected, contributing to the 52,000 signatures collected across the State since the beginning of this campaign.

The Public Libraries Funding Campaign petition is being presented to the NSW Parliament in tranches of 10,000 signatures. The first two tranches of petitions triggered a debate on 7 August 2014, with a second debate scheduled for 11 September 2014 and the possibility of a third.

The NSW State Budget for 2014/15 delivered a four-year \$15M Public Library Infrastructure Grant program to be allocated from 2014/15 to 2017/18. This delivers a \$1M increase on the State Government's total public library funding for the 2013/14 financial year across 152 LGAs. Despite this increase the 2014/15 NSW State public library grant funding will only be restored to 2005/6 levels.

NSW State funding for 2014/15 is \$27.5M, well short of the \$30M per annum being requested by the New South Wales Public Libraries Association. To be effective, this funding needs to be recurrent and indexed to population growth or CPI. NSW State public

library funding has fallen behind without the per capita indexation component. In real terms, this funding has remained at \$1.85 per capita since 1995.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Council make representation to the State Member, John Sidoti, to support the need for additional funding from the NSW State Government for the provision of public library services during upcoming parliamentary debates triggered by the Public Library Funding Campaign petition.
2. THAT Council write to the Hon. Troy Grant MP, Minister for the Arts, calling upon the Government to implement the *Reforming Public Library Funding* submission of the Library Council of NSW for the reform of the funding system for NSW public libraries.