



Trish Doyle MP

Member for Blue Mountains



02 4751 3298 | bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au | 132 Macquarie Rd Springwood NSW 2777

New South Wales Parliament Legislative Assembly

Library and Information Week

24 May 2018

I contribute to this matter of public importance as this week is *Library and Information Week*. I thank the member for Swansea for bringing such an important matter to our attention. We have heard already about the importance and significance of libraries in local communities. I am enthusiastic about public libraries both as a learning and education resource and as a social hub in our communities.

People use local libraries to connect with our histories, with the world and with friends and colleagues. For many older people, local libraries are places where they can most easily access the internet to stay in touch with families and friends out of town, interstate or overseas.

Library patronage statistics reveal the importance of libraries in our communities. Some 35 million physical visits occur each year at our public libraries, making them a vital community asset that deserves adequate funding and support to continue that important work.

Labor is getting behind local community libraries by promising to double the per capita funding of public libraries in New South Wales. In recent years the funding of our public libraries has been allowed to stagnate under the Government. This puts at risk the services and resources they offer and devalues their important role.

As a consequence, New South Wales now has the lowest per capita investment by a State government in local libraries, trailing smaller economies such as Tasmania and South Australia, which lead the nation.

On top of the recurring per capita funding, Labor will also set aside \$25 million for a public library infrastructure fund to upgrade local facilities and purchase new equipment. This announcement has been received warmly by communities across the State but especially in the Blue Mountains.

Labor loves local libraries. Labor will put its money where its mouth is to ensure that libraries are provided with adequate resources to flourish and thrive. Unfortunately, our enthusiasm is unmatched by the New South Wales Liberals.

When I announced the \$25 million public library infrastructure fund that Labor will introduce, the dreary member of the Legislative Council Shayne Mallard complained that we stole the idea from them.

We have not stolen their idea because, once again, the best idea they can come up with is a cut. They will cut Labor's funding pledge by \$21 million.

Labor loves local libraries. We think libraries are important. We will put our money where our mouths are and fund them properly. I offer my many thanks to all local librarians for gathering and sharing information with dedication and innovation.

I particularly thank the Hon. Peter Primrose and his staff for their hard work across the State.