

Living Libraries Infrastructure Program 2026-27 Grant Guidelines



Jorge de Araujo, Artificial Studios Australia



Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne.
Department of Government Services

1 Spring Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

Telephone 1300 366 356

© Copyright State of Victoria 2026

Department of Government Services March 2026

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Except for any logos, emblems, trademarks, artwork and photography this document is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia license.

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication. While every effort has been made to ensure the currency, accuracy or completeness of the content, we endeavor to keep the content relevant and up to date and reserve the right to make changes as required.

The Victorian Government, authors and presenters do not accept any liability to any person for the information (or the use of the information) which is provided or referred to in the publication.

To receive this publication in an accessible format, please contact the Victorian Government Contact Centre on 1300 366 356, using the National Relay Service 133 677 if required.

Available at Local Government Victoria's website:

<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/lgv-funding-programs/living-libraries-infrastructure-program>

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to lands and waterways upon which we depend, and we pay respects to their culture and their Elders past, present, and future.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we are committed to working towards social, economic, and cultural equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, and we acknowledge all other people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent living in Victoria.

Foreword



I am pleased to present the 2026-27 round of the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program (LLIP).

Victorian communities have always valued their libraries and in recent years their role in the community has evolved beyond just loaning books to include community spaces, adult classes, children's story time and access to support services.

For more than a decade, we have supported libraries to upgrade and reimagine their spaces to ensure they are welcoming to everyone and meeting the needs of our growing communities.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting the refurbished and upgraded Bulleen Library, which was supported by \$211,500 from LLIP to improve customer experience and accessibility, increase program, study and work spaces and bring the library up to meet the changing needs of the community.

This Government has invested more than \$57 million into 176 library infrastructure projects with a total project cost of \$522.4 million, supporting libraries in metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria and enriching their communities.

This investment has returned value for communities across the state, supporting our shared future by creating safe and welcoming community spaces for every Victorian.

Please take the time to read through these guidelines and find out how your library could be eligible for a grant. I encourage you to think about how your project can support your community and create local employment opportunities, both during the construction phase and beyond.

I look forward to announcing the successful projects.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hamer'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

The Hon. Paul Hamer MP
Minister for Local Government

Message from the Public Libraries Ambassador



Libraries are lighthouses, lifesavers and legacy spaces.

Accessing a library offers communities a chance to seek and find information, discover and appreciate new ideas, to feel inspired, informed, safe, welcomed and valued.

I grew up in libraries. I write my books in libraries. I raised my kids in libraries, and I bring stories to families in libraries. Every time I step into a library I am in awe of the sanctuary that a library is.

Investing in our Victorian libraries is investing in community.

Future community contributors often find their voices and vital causes in libraries. Young children shape their communication, new parents and newcomers build their connections, students dream their futures, seniors pursue their passions and preserve our history, and people enduring tough times can find empathy, safety and support.

Libraries are the places we need to reach for reading, information and connection.

As Victoria's library ambassador I have seen first-hand how the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program is a critical investment in ensuring libraries continue to be places that address the needs of communities across changing suburbs, towns and cities.

It offers opportunities to adapt outdated infrastructure to meet future community needs. It enables a library to grow in-step with its community. Updating buildings, technology, and infrastructure is costly, but critical for our libraries to continue to be relevant and responsive for Victorians.

These grants offer our libraries dedicated funding to adapt and allow for meaningful change, development and growth.

Valuing libraries is valuing communities. Like lighthouses standing tall they shine a welcome light on support, safety, informed directions and hope.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Rowe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Andrea Rowe
Public Libraries Ambassador

Contents

<i>What is the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program?</i>	6
Why is the Victorian Government funding this program?	6
Who can apply for funding?	6
What types of projects will be funded?	7
Minor works	7
Major works	7
What will not be funded?	7
What are the funding details?	8
Assessment criteria	9
What supporting documentation needs to be provided?	10
What are the conditions of funding?	10
What are the monitoring and reporting requirements?	11
Local Jobs First Policy	11
Acknowledgement and Publicity Requirements	11
Capital Works Signage Requirements	12
How to apply	12
Frequently Asked Questions	12
Is funding available for shelving and library furniture?	12
Is funding available for staff amenities?	12
Which components of a mobile library will the LLIP fund?	12
What documentation is required if a Regional Library Corporation, Your Library or Myli applies for a minor grant for a static library?	12

Living Libraries Infrastructure Program 2026-27

What is the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program?

The 2026-27 round of the *Living Libraries Infrastructure Program* (LLIP) is a \$4 million funding round which will enable councils, regional library corporations, Vision Australia (Victoria), Your Library, Connected Libraries and My Community Library (Myli) to deliver new or renewed library infrastructure for their communities.

The program supports the provision of library facilities that meet the needs of communities and, in doing so, enhances the role of libraries in strengthening communities and encouraging opportunities for community participation.

Funding is provided to support projects that deliver and demonstrate benefits for the community and/or aim to improve engagement and access to learning opportunities.

To achieve this, projects must:

- be accessible and meet appropriate standards for people of all abilities
- demonstrate flexibility in meeting the long-term needs of the community
- provide space to increase access to learning opportunities and programs
- incorporate principles of environmental sustainability design, such as the use of recycled/renewable materials, and improved energy and water efficiency.
- Provide a safe environment that community feel comfortable to attend and participate in library programs and services.

Why is the Victorian Government funding this program?

The Victorian Government recognises the important role of public libraries in fostering lifelong learning, facilitating access to information - both print and digital, and providing a safe, supported community space for local people to engage in a wide range of activities. Libraries provide free public access to information and technology, literacy support, and training and skills development that engage communities and enrich community life.

Who can apply for funding?

Victorian councils, regional library corporations, Vision Australia (Victoria), Your Library, Connected Libraries and Myli are eligible to apply for funding.

Councils, regional library corporations, Vision Australia (Victoria), Your Library, Connected Libraries and Myli that have not previously received funding through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program or have received limited funding from the program are strongly encouraged to apply.

Regional library corporations, Your Library, Connected Libraries and Myli may submit an application relating directly to mobile library services, or on behalf of a council under the minor works category for static libraries. (Refer FAQs).

Applications received from Vision Australia may receive special consideration due to the unique services they provide and the equipment they require to support people living with blindness or low vision get specialised support to help them navigate life.

Applicants must consult the LLIP team by 6 July 2026 on 0434 780 150 to discuss their project proposal prior to submission. Project proposals that have not been discussed will not be considered.

The LLIP website can be found at:
<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/lgv-funding-programs/living-libraries-infrastructure-program>

What types of projects will be funded?

Funding is available through two categories: minor works, and major works. One application per category can be submitted in the 2026-27 funding round.

	Grant Available*
Minor	\$10,000 – \$200,000
Major	\$200,001 – \$1,000,000

* dependent on funding co-contributions as outlined in Table 1

All applications must clearly articulate the exact elements of the project that the LLIP funding will be used for.

Minor works

Projects eligible under the minor works category will generally be cosmetic in nature, but may include small remodeling elements or upgrades of a mobile library service.

The total project cost for minor works must not exceed \$400,000.

Funding from the LLIP of between \$10,000 and \$200,000 can be used to:

- deliver creative, innovative spaces that support different programming and learning activities
- improve facilities for communities to ensure equitable access to library services across Victoria
- remodel or refurbish an existing facility to improve the facility for community use, accessibility and program deliverability. This may also include mobile libraries and the purchase of a mobile van including fit-out (Refer to FAQs)
- upgrade permanent fixtures and fittings critical to the efficient, effective and flexible delivery of library services.

Works must commence within 6 months from the grant being announced, and construction must be completed within 12 months of commencement.

Major works

Projects eligible for the major works category are likely to include significant structural changes to existing facilities or the construction of new, multi-purpose library facilities or a library component within a multi-use facility. This may also include significant investment in a mobile library service.

Funding of between \$200,001 and \$1,000,000 can be used to:

- renovate or extend an existing facility, or construct a new facility to provide or replace a public library
- incorporate a new library facility in an existing community facility
- implement or continue to deliver a library service through alternative delivery models.

Works must commence within 18 months from the grant being announced, and construction must be completed within 3 years of commencement.

What will not be funded?

- Projects that have already commenced construction prior to funding agreements being executed
- Freestanding IT equipment and electronic resources (Refer to FAQs)
- Materials such as books for collections and magazines
- Shelving or library furniture as a standalone project (Refer to FAQs)
- Funding from LLIP cannot be used for non-public areas (e.g. exclusive staff amenities, work rooms, offices etc.) (Refer to FAQs)
- Purchase of land or established buildings
- Ongoing or routine maintenance activities
- Duplication of services already in operation
- Repair of facilities where the damage can be or should have been covered by insurance
- Purchase of a mobile library van that does not include the cost of a fit-out and does not take into consideration OH&S practices e.g. hydraulic lift, trolleys on wheels etc.



What are the funding details?

Table 1 outlines the required funding contribution from councils.

Council contributions must meet the ratio requirements in the table below. Additional funding may be sourced from the Commonwealth and other state government programs, however these will not be considered as part of council's funding contribution.

In-kind contributions of up to 25 per cent can be considered towards the total council

contribution. In-kind contributions cannot be aspects of the project that are an actual cost to council. This includes any project management costs associated with the delivery of the project or ongoing costs of operation. In-kind contributions that can be considered are the re-purposing of equipment that is included in council's asset register, donation of materials, or volunteer time that is directly related to the project.

Where there are multiple sources of funding, the application must clearly articulate what the LLIP funding will deliver.

Table 1: Co-contributions required

Area	Ratio	Council
Libraries for metropolitan councils	LLIP \$1 : \$1 Local	Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Hobsons Bay, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Merri-bek, Monash, Moonee Valley, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Vision Australia (Victoria), Whitehorse, Yarra
Libraries for interface councils	LLIP \$1.5 : \$1 Local	Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Yarra Ranges
Libraries for regional cities	LLIP \$2 : \$1 Local	Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Wodonga
Libraries for large rural councils	LLIP \$3 : \$1 Local	Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Campaspe, Colac Otway, Corangamite, East Gippsland, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Macedon Ranges, Mitchell, Moira, Moorabool, Mount Alexander, Moyne, South Gippsland, Southern Grampians, Surf Coast, Swan Hill, Wellington
Libraries for small rural councils	No contribution required	Alpine, Ararat, Benalla, Buloke, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Indigo, Loddon, Mansfield, Murrindindi, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Queenscliffe, Strathbogie, Towong, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack

** Note: Regional Library Corporations, Your Library, Connected Libraries and Myli are required to meet the appropriate council's co-contribution requirements (where applicable) if applying for a minor grant for static libraries. For mobile libraries where the services are provided across multiple LGA's, the funding co-contribution will be applied to the lowest ratio

Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the criteria set out below. Percentage weightings are provided as a guide to the relative importance of different criteria in the assessment process. The same criteria will be applied across both minor and major funding streams, however, the level of detail provided in the application should be commensurate with the value of the project, i.e. applications for projects seeking funding of \$1,000,000

through the major funding stream should be detailed and well developed whereas a small renovation of an existing facility seeking less than \$200,000 should provide enough detail to describe the project and its benefits. Confirmation of other funding sources and funding from previous LLIP rounds will be taken into consideration during the assessment process. If applications for other funding sources are unsuccessful, applicants must identify how the shortfall will be funded.

Why?	<p>Applications will be required to demonstrate the extent to which the project addresses an identified need in the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identifying why the project is a priority • Demonstrating why the project is important to the community • Demonstrating how the project will provide increased access to learning opportunities and programs.
Who?	<p>Applications must clearly demonstrate the extent to which the project will deliver benefits to the local community and must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the communities that will directly benefit from the project • Articulate current library user statistics that support the project, including changes in use and/or need • Identify the benefits that the project will deliver for library users including the increase in programs and services the library will provide with the upgrades. • Identify who else is involved in the planning/design or implementation of the project, including an outline of their roles and contributions and, where applicable, details of shared use agreements.
What?	<p>Applications must clearly articulate or demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the LLIP funding will be used for • Details of the overall project and what will be delivered • What services will change as a result of the project.
How?	<p>Applications must demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sound approach to deliver the project, providing realistic timeframes for delivery and demonstrate the project represents value for money • Capacity to implement the project, including details of specific resource allocations (staff, time and funding) to deliver the project on time and within budget • Capacity to financially support the ongoing library operations and the ability to service the community within the opening hours specified in the application • Council's performance in delivering previously funded state government projects.



What supporting documentation needs to be provided?

Supporting documents can be submitted through the online grants system, provided the file size does not exceed 5MB.

Supporting documents that are relevant to the project are:

Minor Works	Major Works
Mandatory	Mandatory
Project plan and project budget	Project plan and project budget
Relevant costings/supplier quotations (less than 3 months old)	Relevant QS documents (less than 6 months old)
Concept designs and/or detailed floor plans	Concept designs and/or detailed floor plans
Council resolution or letter from CEO confirming committed funding and commitment to the project	Council resolution or letter from CEO confirming committed funding and commitment to the project
Meeting Pods – provide details on Council's requirements for the installation of meeting pods eg: permits, compliance etc (if applicable)	Meeting Pods – provide details on Council's requirements for the installation of meeting pods eg: permits, compliance etc (if applicable)

Evidence of community consultation undertaken

Desirable	Desirable
Confirmation of other funding sources where appropriate	Confirmation of other funding sources where appropriate
Applicable permits if available	Applicable permits if available
Evidence of community consultation undertaken	Evidence of community consultation undertaken
Relevant strategic/infrastructure plans the project aligns to	Relevant strategic/infrastructure plans the project aligns to

What are the conditions of funding?

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with Department of Government Services (DGS). Funding agreements establish the parties and outline their commitments and obligations to each other, as well as setting out the general funding terms and conditions.

Applicants should review the Victorian Common Funding Agreement standard terms and conditions before applying.

No funding will be released until the Department and the applicant have executed the funding agreement.

DGS reserves the right to withhold payments in cases where evidence has been provided but DGS deems that there are concerns relating to the delivery of the project. In this instance, DGS will release funding when appropriate actions have been taken to ensure the funded project is being delivered within the agreed timeframes.

In the event of a project being delivered for less than the budget stated in the funding agreement, two alternatives will be available to councils:

- return the unspent funds on a pro rata basis
- opportunity to put forward a case to have any unspent funds used to expand the scope of the underspent project.

Any reallocation request to DGS must include information about why there was an underspend on a LLIP project and how increasing the scope of the underspent project will further benefit the community.

DGS will use this information in making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government on the reallocation of any unspent funding.

What are the monitoring and reporting requirements?

Funded recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements outlined in the funding agreement. This includes participating in project and program evaluation activities implemented by DGS.

An outcomes report is required to be completed 12 months post construction. This will need to include information and data about:

- increased usability
- increased activities and programs
- visitation rates
- new initiatives that have been implemented as a direct result of funding from the LLIP.

Funded recipients are responsible for project delivery, including any project cost overruns should they occur. Funded recipients must take full responsibility for the cost of ongoing operation and maintenance of facilities through their asset management processes.

In cases where a project is delayed for an unreasonable length of time, where substantive changes of scope are made after funding has been approved, or where a project fails to be delivered, DGS reserves the right to cancel the grant and recoup any funds that have already been provided.

Local Jobs First Policy

The Local Jobs First Policy (LJF Policy) issued under the Local Jobs First Act 2003 supports businesses and workers by ensuring that small and medium size enterprises are given a full and fair opportunity to compete for both large and small government contracts, helping to create job opportunities, including for apprentices, trainees and cadets. The LJF Policy is implemented by Victorian Government departments and agencies to help drive local industry development. The LJF Policy applies to grant projects where the value of the grant is above the threshold values of:

- \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne, and
- \$1 million or more in regional Victoria.

Projects in regional Victoria funded through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program must comply with the Local Jobs First Policy.

Further information regarding the requirements can be found at:

<https://localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au>

Acknowledgement and Publicity Requirements

Successful applicants must acknowledge the Victorian Government's support through the LLIP. Promotional guidelines form part of the funding agreement and include the requirement that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material. Successful applicants must liaise with the LLIP team to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

Plaque proofs **MUST** be submitted to the LLIP team for approval before being displayed at any public event. This includes signage for mobile library vans and must contain the Victorian Government logo.

Successful applicants may be required to provide information on activity outcomes for use in program evaluation or in the Department's communication material.

Capital Works Signage Requirements

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the State Government's support for the project through appropriate signage consistent with the Victorian Government's Capital Works Signage Requirements (available at <https://www.vic.gov.au/capital-works-signage-guidelines>) or as otherwise specified by DGS.

How to apply

Applicants must consult the LLIP team on 0434 780 150 by 6 July 2026 to discuss their project proposal prior to submission. Project proposals that have not been discussed will not be considered.

To submit an application for minor and major works, please visit:

<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants/living-libraries-infrastructure-program>

Hard copy or emailed applications will **not** be accepted.

Applications open

1 June 2026

Applications close

17 July 2026 at 2.00pm

Assessment & decision making

July/August 2026

Announcements

From September 2026

Funding Agreements executed

By October 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Is funding available for shelving and library furniture?

Funding for shelving and library furniture is not eligible as a standalone project as the primary purpose of this program is to support the upgrading of library buildings and mobile library facilities.

However, if new shelving or library furniture is to be provided as part of a broader project, and it can be demonstrated that the project supports innovation and increased flexibility and deliverability of programs and activities, the application will be considered. A maximum of 30 percent of the total project cost can contribute to the cost of shelving and/or library furniture.

Examples of Items not eligible under library furniture but not limited to:

- Printers/ 3D Printers
- TV's freestanding or wall mounted
- Equipment for a maker space

Is funding available for staff amenities?

Staff amenities will not be eligible for funding. To be eligible, amenities must be available and accessible for community use e.g. kitchenette, toilets etc.

Which components of a mobile library will the LLIP fund?

The components of a mobile library eligible for funding must be integral to the functionality and deliverability of a mobile library service, and can include power supply infrastructure and necessary communications equipment, such as antennas.

The LLIP will only fund the purchase of a mobile library van if it includes a fit-out incorporating OH&S practices, e.g. hydraulic lift, trolleys on wheels etc.

Equipment such as PCs and iPads remain ineligible.

What documentation is required if a Regional Library Corporation, Connected Libraries, Your Library or Myli applies for a minor grant for a static library?

A letter from the relevant council's CEO is mandatory and **must** demonstrate support for the project and meet the co-contribution ratio as per the co-contribution table.



www.dgs.vic.gov.au