

AUTUMN/WINTER 2023

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National Backyard Cricket at Yarralumla – Residence of the Governor-General, Canberra



The national voice for 15 million Public Library Members

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message from the President	2	Friends Around Australia	10
2023 Grant-Winning Libraries	4	Message from the Governor-General	11
Cricket Grants Success Stories	5	Membership, Resources, About Us	12
Adult Literacy Support	9		

Message from the PRESIDENT



Budget Challenges Across Australia and A Record Year In Support for Country Public Libraries

Because Australia's public libraries are funded by local and state governments, they are often impacted by the vagaries of the economic climate. The past 12 months has proved challenging for many libraries as governments have sought to fight inflation by clamping down on spending. Unfortunately, it seems library budgets are often perceived as an easy target.

Part of FOLA's mission is to lend its voice any time libraries anywhere in Australia are threatened with unfair or unreasonable budget cuts. Because library staff are often unable to speak up, it's up to concerned citizens and local friends groups to speak out against short-sighted decision making that can have long-term impacts on the quality of community life.

This year, FOLA has become aware of budget challenges in South Australia and in the city of Geelong. We are always ready to lend our voice, so if you are aware of a situation that needs attention, please contact us. Governments listen when people speak up.

2023 marks the third year of National Backyard Cricket, the annual campaign run by the LBW Trust which raises funds for, among other causes, Australia's country public libraries. As the LBW



Trust's partner, FOLA solicited grant applications from across Australia, and we were gratified to receive nearly 80 submissions.

We are also incredibly fortunate to be able to provide funding to 78 libraries across rural and regional Australia, with grants ranging in value from \$500 to \$1,500. Twenty-nine libraries in NSW have received support, along with 19 in Western Australia, 13 in South Australia, 8 in Victoria, 5 in Tasmania and 4 in Queensland.

"Unfortunately, it seems library budgets are often perceived as an easy target."

"FOLA solicited grant applications from across Australia, and we were gratified to receive nearly 80 submissions"



Biyaal-a Armstrong Creek Library, City of Geelong, opening in 2024.

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it’s up to concerned citizens and local friends groups to
speak out against short-sighted decision making.”*

*“This includes
\$30,000 of
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tablets, and other
essentials.”*

The total amount of funding disbursed is a record \$110,126. This includes \$30,000 of support from the national retailer Harvey Norman to provide technology, including computers, televisions, tablets, and other essentials. The rest of the funding has come from the LBW Trust’s fundraising efforts and the generosity of many donors who are eager to make a difference.

You can read elsewhere in this newsletter about some of the projects the funding will support. Future editions of this newsletter - and FOLA’s FaceBook page - will share details about some of the grants and their impact for local

communities. It’s gratifying to know that already we are seeing that impact. During the winter school holidays Western Downs Libraries in southwest Queensland used their grant funding to bring a group called Street Science to their community to put on a hugely entertaining set of hands-on science experiments for local schoolchildren. Stories like this are a reminder of the value of public libraries and why they need our support.

Jack Goodman
President, FOLA

Libraries recently visited by Jack Goodman...



Free Library of New Hope, Pennsylvania



Trosa Library, Sweden



Rhodes Public Library, Rhodes, Greece

Congratulations to our 2023 **National Backyard Cricket Grant-Winning Libraries**

Alstonville Library, NSW	Naracoorte Library, SA
Ballina Library, NSW	Port MacDonnell Community Centre Complex, SA
Barham Library, NSW	Port Pirie Regional Library, SA
Bathurst Library, NSW	Victor Harbor Library, SA
Bellingen Shire Libraries, NSW	Waikerie Library and Visitor Centre, SA
Bland Shire Library, NSW	Yankalilla Library, SA
Brunswick Heads Library, NSW	Beaconsfield Library, Taa
Byron Bay Library, NSW	Deloraine Library & Westbury Library, Tas
Cessnock City Library, NSW	Friends of North Bruny Inc, Tas
Coolamon Shire Library, NSW	Longford Library & Campbell Town Library, Tas
Coonabarabran Branch Macquarie Regional Library, NSW	St Helens Library, Tas
Glen Innes Severn Public & TAFE Library, NSW	Ararat Regional Library, Vic
Grafton Library, NSW	Bannockburn Library, Vic
Gundagai Library, NSW	Colac Community Library, Vic
Hilltops Council Library, NSW	East Gippsland Shire Library, Vic
Kingscliff Library, NSW	Greater Hamilton Library, Vic
Leeton Shire Library, NSW	My Community Library, Vic
Lennox Head Library, NSW	Northern Grampians Libraries, Vic
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, NSW	Sebastopol Library, Vic
Macquarie Regional Library Narromine Branch, NSW	Albany Public Library, WA
Mathoura Library, NSW	Beverley Public Library, WA
Mid-Western Regional Council Library, NSW	Bindoon Public Library, WA
Mullumbimby Library, NSW	Boyup Brook Public Library, WA
Narrabri Shire Council, NSW	Bremer Bay Library, WA
Richmond Tweed Regional Library, NSW	Broome Public Library, WA
Shoalhaven Libraries – Nowra, NSW	Bunbury Public Library, WA
Singleton Library, NSW	Cervantes Library, WA
Temora Shire Library, NSW	Cunderdin Public Library, WA
Tweed Heads Library, Qld	Dowerin Public Library, WA
Western Downs Libraries, Qld	Franklin River Public Library, WA
Cunnamulla Library, Qld	Gascoyne Junction Library, WA
Somerset Libraries, Qld	Harold Williams Memorial Library, WA
Surat Library, Qld	Manjimup Public Library, WA
Adelaide Plains Library, SA	Murray Library, WA
Kangaroo Island Library, SA	R W (Bob) Farr Memorial Library, WA
Loxton Library and Visitor Centre, SA	Shire of Augusta Margaret River Libraries, WA
Lucindale School Community Library, SA	Steevi-Lee Thomas Library, WA
Mount Gambier Library, SA	Wandering Public Library, WA
	William Grundt Memorial Library, WA

National Backyard Cricket Grants

SUCCESS STORIES

National Backyard Cricket Grants

Over the past two years, 99 grants have been distributed to country libraries across Australia enabling these libraries to complete projects ranging from computer access for young people, to ESL classes, special needs programs and coding classes.

Here are just a few examples of the huge impact the National Backyard Cricket Library Grant program has had on our regional libraries.

Bordertown Public Library — Nature play event in December 2022

Educators from Nature Play SA provided free nature play activities for families with children of all ages in Apex Park, Bordertown. The hands-on activities included seed bombs, potions seed mosaics and clay sculptures. Library assistant Rachel McLellan said it was an opportunity for parents and grandparents to come together to learn, get their hands dirty but also take home a memento of the experience. [National Backyard Cricket Facebook post 9 Feb 2023]

Hilltops Council Library

Received a grant to support their Summer Reading@Hilltops program. The Summer Reading@Hilltops had a number of components to support reading and encourage engagement over the Summer period including: Summer Reading Club, Hilltops. Read. Share social media campaign, and Drop-In activities at Hilltops Council Library Branches.



Gundagai Library — July 2022 school holiday STEM program

During the July 2022 school holidays, Gundagai Library hosted a highly successful STEM program, which included access to Spheros (for coding with iPads), a remote control robot, Little Bits electronic kits and more. Not only do these items help develop engineering, coding, physics and mechanical skills, but they are also a lot of fun. [pictures from Gundagai Library Facebook post 7 Jul 2022]



School Holiday STEM!

To use an item on display:

- Take it to the front counter.
- Loan the item out for in library use.
- Receive the instructions and/or kit.
- Find an empty table or space in the library.
- Start your project!
- When you finish return the item to the library desk.
- Choose another project!



ITEMS AVAILABLE:

- *XCD Radio Kits
- *Little Bits Electronic Kits
- *Lego (for building & connecting to Little Bits)
- *Remote control robot
- *World Globe Interactive
- *Spheros (for coding with iPads)
- *Ipad for connection to tech/inet

f Gundagai Library



National Backyard Cricket Grants **SUCCESS STORIES**

(Continued)



Cessnock City Library — Manga drawing workshops — August 12, 2022

Cessnock City Library took illustrator/manga artist Matt Lin to three local high schools to deliver some awesome free manga drawing workshops to launch their Anime and Manga Club for teens (age 11+).

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council's (CGRC) Library

CGRC used their grant on special musical instruments for the Baby Bounce and Storytime programs, held regularly in the library. Cootamundra Librarian Penny Howse said the grant enabled the library to enhance the popular programs. These instruments will make a difference to the programs offered at Cootamundra library for our very young residents.

Ballina Library — Adult Literacy Collection

Richmond Tweed Regional Library used their grant to purchase a new collection of resources to complement their free one-on-one adult literacy skills lessons.

[Richmond Tweed Regional Library Facebook post Sept 16, 2022]



“CGRC used their grant on special musical instruments for the Baby Bounce and Storytime programs”



“If you know an adult who needs support developing their literacy skills, Ballina Library is the place to go. We have a brand new collection of resources funded by a National Backyard Cricket grant.”

"The hands-on activities included seed bombs, potions seed mosaics and clay sculptures."



Bordertown Public Library — Nature play event in December 2022

Educators from Nature Play SA provided free nature play activities for families with children of all ages in Apex Park, Bordertown. The hands-on activities included seed bombs, potions seed mosaics and clay sculptures. Library assistant Rachel McLellan said it was an opportunity for parents and grandparents to come together to learn, get their hands dirty but also take home a memento of the experience.



Adelaide River Community Library (Coomalie Community Government Council) N.T. — education Apps.

The Council used their grant to purchase educational apps that could be used by the community on the council's iPads. The Council said that the grant enabled the community to have access to technology that would not be available for them at home.

"Our [2022 Library Grant] has benefited the education and understanding of educational principles being taught at the adjoining schools."

National Backyard Cricket Grants 2023 APPLICATIONS

This year we received 79 grant applications from country libraries across Australia. It was my privilege to speak to some librarians about their 2023 National Backyard Cricket Grant applications. Their enthusiasm for their libraries and their communities was contagious. Here are a few of the highlights for me. I can't wait to hear about the positive impact these programs and resources have on our country libraries.

Cessnock City Library (NSW)

Are going to purchase resources to support their general Storytime and Rhymetime programs, along with themed sessions such as Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and storytelling around topics of nature and caring for the environment. Developing a library of Australian native animal puppets will enhance their existing Storytime delivery and the Indigenous Storytime resources will enrich their ability to present Australian Indigenous picture books, in conjunction with the Wayapa Wuurk storytelling program.

Western Downs Libraries (QLD)

There are nine branch libraries spread across an area the size of Tasmania! They are definitely constrained by the 'tyranny of distance'. Their 2022 application was successful, and Street Science (a company that travels to schools and libraries providing inter-active science workshops and shows that engage children of all ages) are travelling to Wandoan and Meandarra State Schools. This year's application will again fund Street Science travelling to another two far-flung state schools. The librarian told me it's a rare opportunity for kids from these remote (and tiny) schools to engage in a program like this and to socialise with each other.



Surat Library (QLD)

Surat Library is working to develop a 'kitchen library' that will offer library members the opportunity to borrow kitchen equipment, for free, that they may not normally have in their home or may not have the ability to purchase outright.

The library will be the first of its kind in the region and will complement monthly 'Food & Friends' events where community members come together for hands-on cooking demonstrations built around various food topics. Equipment will be used at these events, teaching participants how to use the appliances, before giving them the opportunity to borrow them.

"Surat Library is working to develop a 'kitchen library' that will offer library members the opportunity to borrow kitchen equipment."



Dowerin Community Resource Centre (WA)

This library is so isolated, it's very hard for them to purchase items for their after-school activities. Up to this point, staff have been bringing in their own arts and crafts supplies and lego from home. They will use the grant to purchase interesting arts and crafts supplies, together with classic lego sets and provide afternoon tea for the kids. They are keen to attract older kids to join the library and explore its resources.

Gaby Meares

"This year's application will again fund Street Science travelling to another two far-flung state schools."

Adult Literacy Support AT SINGLETON LIBRARY

“The library has organised the training of a pool of community members as adult literacy tutors.”

Since 2016 Singleton Library, in the NSW Hunter Valley, has offered an adult literacy program in support of community members with unmet literacy needs. The library has organised the training of a pool of community members as adult literacy tutors. These community members are then inducted as Council volunteers and, as organised by library staff, conduct one on one literacy support for community members who have come to us for support.

Around 44% of the adult population are reading at a level that limits their options around employment and in fully engaging with the world around them. Support options for adults with literacy challenges can be limited, especially in rural areas like Singleton. This is where library support fits in. Libraries are free, have that important, close connection with our communities, and usually have suitable, private spaces.

Last year I was awarded the Colin Mills Scholarship by the NWSPLA (new South Wales Public Libraries Association) after proposing a study on how libraries can better support adults with unmet literacy needs. The scholarship was able to fund trips to study some of Australia's most successful adult literacy support programs: *26Ten* in Hobart, *Read Write Now* in Perth and the Sunshine Coast's *Read and Write for Life*. The two main things I took from my travels were that a community volunteer supported approach is a viable one – all these programs succeed on the dedication of an army of community volunteers. The second was gaining a first-hand awareness of the extent of this issue in our communities, and how well used these

“Libraries are free, have that important, close connection with our communities, and usually have suitable, private spaces.”

programs are. As the film said, *If you build it, they will come.*

Not every library is able to provide the level of support of a one-on-one tutoring program. But it's still important that we are aware of how effective or not some of our communications will be for that 44% of our community with lower levels of literacy. It's also important that our front desk staff have some framework around assisting such community members. This Reading Writing Hotline document is very useful in this regard.

<https://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Readability-friendly-communication-guide.pdf>

One of the main barriers to providing such a program as Singleton's is finding a suitable training course for community members interested in becoming an adult literacy tutor. Last year Singleton was fortunate to have Jo Medlin come up to train community members. Jo is the President of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy and a star of the recent SBS documentary *Lost For Words*. Recently the Reading Writing Hotline produced a free training course intended to be presented by a librarian or community centre worker.

<https://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/adult-literacy-tutoring/>

If you have any queries around training options, contact the Reading Writing Hotline on 1300 6 555 06 or feel free to send me an email.

Rob Stewart
Team Leader of Library Programs
rstewart@singleton.nsw.gov.au



Adult Literacy Tutoring Program — Our session of the Reading Writing Hotline's new Volunteer Tutor Training Course has wrapped up for the day and our trainee tutors had a fantastic first session!

Friends Around Australia



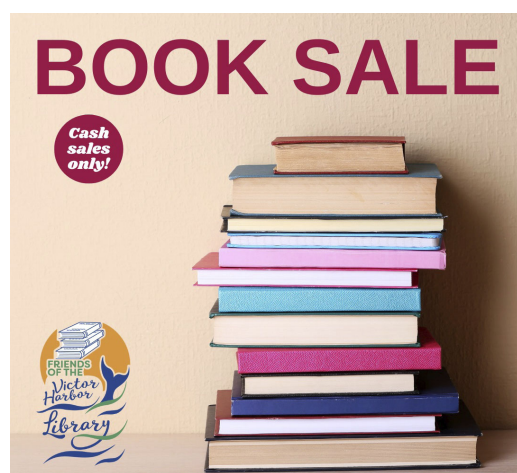
INVERLOCH (VIC)

Thanks to the wonderful support of FOIL they had a visit from Real Dinosaurs during the school holidays on 27 June at 2.30 pm to meet Toby the T-Rex.

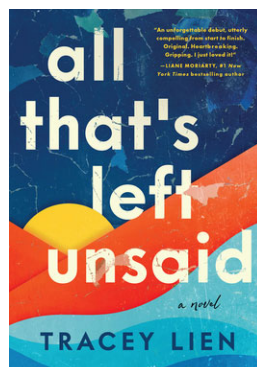


VICTOR HARBOR (SA)

The Friends of Victor Harbor continue to hold very successful booksales four times a year. These are the Friends main fundraisers enabling them to provide extra library equipment and help fund programmes especially in the school holidays. The book sales are held Monday through to Friday in the foyer outside the library. For June the Friends also held a successful sale of books in the bookcase inside the library with little bundles of children's books being especially popular.



BALMAIN (NSW)



"Thanks to the wonderful support of FOIL they had a visit from Real Dinosaurs."

The Friends Open Book Group at Balmain is very active. A recent post gave details of – *All that is Left Unsaid* by Tracey Lien. (Such a project is something other Friends groups might like to establish).

WOLLONGONG (NSW)

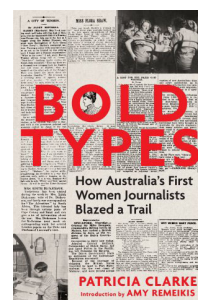


Thursday 20 July Friends welcomed Kelly Rimmer for a literary lunch, and hear her speak about her books, experiences and writing. Her latest novel, *The Paris Agent* was released in June.

"These are the Friends main fundraisers enabling them to provide extra library equipment and help fund programmes"

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA (ACT)

November last year, the Friends witnessed the launch of *Bold Types: How Australia's First Women Journalists Blazed a Trail* by Dr Patricia Clarke.



Clarification: The previous issue of NewsUpdate (102/103) Page 6, under Balmain (NSW), mentioned an event featuring Dr Meredith Bergman. The photo above the text contained Pauline Hansen. Apologies to Friends of Balmain for the unintended association.

Message from His Excellency

DAVID HURLEY, GOVERNOR-GENERAL



His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

14 March 2023

Mr Jack Goodman
President
Friends of Libraries Australia
Locked Bag 1315
TULLAMARINE VIC 3043

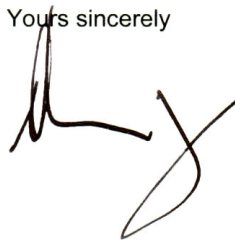
Dear Mr Goodman,

Thank you for your letter of 8 March last and the informative selection of FOLA News Updates.

I enjoyed our discussions during the National Backyard Cricket event at Yarralumla. It is clear that the funds raised from the LBW Trusts' efforts make significant differences to many small community libraries. I think half the problem today is that many don't see beyond books when thinking of libraries, thereby ignoring the breadth of community resources and activities provided by libraries. Thank you for your insights.

I wish you and all the FOLA members every success for the future.

Yours sincerely



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*"Half the
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