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**State Library Victoria
Public Libraries Victoria**

Libraries Change Lives

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Captioned by: Malinda Monks

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Well, welcome, everyone, to the Public Libraries Victoria and State Library of Victoria Covid-19 program showcase. My name is Brian Nankervis, I am excited to be with you today to highlight the library programs across the State that are supporting local communities in these toughest of times, the Covid-19 emergency. I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which each of us joins this meeting today and honour their elders past, present and emerging. We are connecting library communities from every corner of Victoria this morning. For those still working at home during stage four restrictions in Melbourne, through to every pocket of regional and rural Victoria where you may be lucky enough to be back at, welcoming library users through the door surrounded by books. To all of you, an enormous welcome.

Today we will be joined by the Victorian Minister for Local Government, the Honourable Shaun Leane, the President of Public Libraries Victoria, Chris Buckingham, and the CEO of State Library Victoria, Kate Torney. But, the stars of the show are you and your communities. Today is about sharing examples of the great work public libraries have done in a situation that none of us ever expected. It is about inspiring each other with new ways to reach out to people that need their library community now more than ever and thinking about how libraries can do even more in the months and the years to come.

To kick off I would like to welcome the Minister for Local Government, Shaun Leane. Welcome, Minister.

HON SHAUN LEANE: Thank you, Brian.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: How are you? I should have RUOK?

HON SHAUN LEANE: I'm okay and I hope you are too, Brian.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: I am, all things considered.

HON SHAUN LEANE: I think we're going alright and we'll get there.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Yes.

HON SHAUN LEANE: Thank you, Brian. Thank you for welcoming me and can I thank Chris Buckingham President of Public Libraries Victoria for asking me along to this great event today. I would like to begin by acknowledging for traditional owners of all the lands we're currently meeting on via this medium and my pay respects to elders past, present and emerging. I would like to acknowledge some other people that are online today with this event, the Honourable Maxine Mc Hugh, a board member of the State Victoria library and also there are a number of State MPs that have joined, John Kennedy, member for Hawthorn, Darren Cheeseman, member for South Barwon, Jordan Crugnale, Member for Bass, an Upper House representative of the southeast region, Pauline Richards member for Cranbourne and the Member for Frankston, I would like to acknowledge Kate Torney, CEO of the State Library of Victoria and also especially the staff of councils and of libraries across the State and just acknowledge - great to acknowledge the great work they do.

I see my role as the Minister for Local Government is - part of my role is to be an advocate of the good work that Local Governments are doing and I've got to say a lot of Local Governments have really stepped up in a number of different ways to support their community during this challenging time and of course libraries have been pivotal to that support so once again I want to acknowledge the great work libraries and their staff have been doing during this time and providing communities access

to books has been just a challenge, I know, but you've done some great work.

And, of course, libraries over the years have become vibrant community hubs and have been a safe space for social inclusion, digital connection, lifetime learning and access to services and support. When I spoke to Chris Buckingham and a few of his team from Public Libraries Victoria and Brian mentioned RUOK Day. Chris mentioned to me that for a long time librarians have been asking people inside libraries if they're okay if someone seems a bit distressed or out of place, a librarian will ask them how they are and suggest that a social worker will be in the premises in a few days that they can talk and help them out or other professionals that can help them out. So libraries have been so important and, of course, during the challenge of the pandemic libraries have had to change their ways along with all of us, how we live, work and interact with communities, and under the health restrictions, the innovations that libraries have shown across the State has just been fantastic and the ability to move fast on their feet is just nothing more than admirable and I've got to say that it's good news that from the 14th, even though we're going to be in stage four restrictions in the metro area, that the Chief Health Officer has agreed that libraries can now do click and collect deliveries in those areas and I've got to say the Chief Health Officer's a tough person to negotiate with but I'm glad we got that important change.

I know libraries, speaking of the good work they've done in challenging times, I think story time has been invaluable work. Check-up calls on vulnerable people from librarians and staff, getting back to R U OK, what a great initiative, people making calls from libraries to their usual clients that sometimes are lonely and by themselves and been making sure - getting back to someone to talk to and checking if they're okay and I

think the availability to books, particularly for children, has been so important.

My wife and I have got two grandkids and we haven't been able to see them for a few months, obviously for the right reasons, but we turned to sending them a letter a couple of times a week and we'd send along a book inside that letter for both the grandkids. My oldest grandchild is a boy and I've got to say 7-year-old boy books, they're out there. Issues were things about school principals that have underpants with superpowers and some stories about individuals' bums going rogue and taking over cities. It is all there to get kids to learn and I was thinking that I'm a very fortunate that I can - I'm in a position where I can afford to buy a book and send it to my grandkids but there's so many families with challenging times now that that's just not available to them so libraries have always been important but they've become more and more important in this global pandemic.

I think libraries have got themselves in a good space because they've significantly increased their online resources and programs, making them, as I said, important community hubs both physically and virtually. And it is really interesting the thousands of Victorians have joined libraries during the pandemic which I think just goes to show, as I said, how important libraries have been but how more important libraries have become. There's parents in lockdown where the availability of books for pleasure is difficult. I want to acknowledge the great work libraries are doing at this time.

So, also, of course, students which are - students in primary and high schools are in a challenging time particularly in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Without access to the library's online services it would be just so difficult for them to study in the position they've found

themselves in and I'm sure that assistance will make sure that they'll get through this year as good as possible.

So, I think that - like, the State Government - we have been - it's been a great thing that we have been able to support public libraries and through a number of programs, the Living Libraries Infrastructure program, the Premier's Reading Challenge which is always very popular and the Public Libraries funding program and I'm a big advocate of these funds, obviously, and that's my job and that's my role to be so but I had a really good conversation with Chris and his team, as I said, in recent times, and really open to any initiatives that they want me to push and, as I said, it's become so important.

I'm looking forward to hearing from the speakers and as I said it is great to be here today. I promise not to mention people's bums going rogue and taking over cities ever again. Saying that, this is a great area making a great deal of difference to the community and I look forward to working in with public libraries in coming years to support you to endeavour in your great services. Thank you.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Thank you, Minister Leane. Thank you, Shaun. Great to hear about you sending books to your grandchildren and beautiful. Beautiful. Great to hear about the State Government support for public libraries. Next up, I would like to introduce a wonderful woman, State Library Victoria CEO Kate Torney. Good morning, Kate. R U OK?

KATE TORNEY: I'm well. How are you? I'm looking at your beautiful record collection. Very jealous. I want an invite over.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Yes, lots of vinyl. Lots of books as well.

KATE TORNEY: Good. Good. Thank you and, Minister, lovely to hear your stories and I reckon your grandkids will be absolutely loving those books. Great choices. Importantly, really wonderful to hear your support for libraries and acknowledging the importance of the sector. Thank you so much. And it is lovely to be here connecting with other library teams. Hello, everyone.

I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet today and honour elders past, present and emerging. We are coming together under the banner of libraries changing lives. September 2018, long before COVID led us to lockdown, hundreds of us came together in person to launch Libraries Change Lives. The campaign was aimed at giving us a strong and unified voice for our sector and to celebrate the extraordinary role and value of Public Libraries across the State. Has been about creating an environment where libraries and the people who rely on them can thrive. Two years later as we prepare for a long road to COVID recovery, I think this is more important than ever.

You will remember that one of the really key objectives of the campaign was to challenge the perception that libraries are nice to have when we know that they are absolutely critical and more so now than ever before. We wanted to explode the myth that libraries were quiet, quaint relics of an earlier time and I think we have been able to do that.

We wanted every within to know that we welcome 30.5 million visitors a year that we provide more than 4 million free Wi-Fi sessions annually. It is extraordinary. In the first year of our campaign we talked a lot about the economic contributions of our public libraries and the fact that we return \$4.30 of value for every dollar invested into that sector, into the sector. And in the second year of the campaign we turned our focus to the social impact of libraries, thinking really deeply about the health and

wellbeing of our communities and the work libraries can do in that space and the Minister quite rightly pointed to R U OK, the fact we have been working in this space forever.

Before COVID hit we were already focussing on 200,000 Victorians who were out of work and how we could support them to reengage with employment. Libraries were already thinking about the one in five people who are lonely and how our network of services can help people overcome that sense of isolation that eats away at the quality of life. We were working with financially disadvantaged Victorians many who rely on libraries to bridge the digital for access to devices. When Covid-19 struck, we were better placed than most organisations to understand who would be hardest hit and we went to work. Now all of us have been responding in different ways, really important the SLV, we welcome 2 million visitors in a normal year but we quickly moved to bringing the library to homes around Victoria so just like many of you we've had author talks, story readings, discussions, debates, direct to loungerooms, remote study and help, expanded online collections, live chat services, online festival supporting international students and even bibliotherapy sessions and you've all done similar things. All keeping our community connected, supported and engaged through this really difficult time.

While it was heart breaking for all of us to close our doors in March, we also found amazing ways to deliver new services. We were agile, we were innovative prior to this but I think this period of time has really highlighted that. We have kept working that way. 20,000 new members found their way to join us, joining public libraries online in April and May when they couldn't visit the library and what a testament that is to the services that all of you are delivering.

So in closing, I have to say this is not how we expected to be marking the two-year anniversary of Libraries Change Lives but I can't think of a better way to demonstrate what libraries mean to the community and the example that we are setting for a post-COVID future so thank you to all of you and thank you, Brian.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Thank you, Kate. Absolute pleasure to be here. Certainly whet my appetite to hear more about what library services have been up to. Now, today we're going to look at library programming across five key areas. Firstly, we'll look at programs that are Bridging the Digital with a special shout out to Goldfields Library then programs helping Victorians find work, hello to greater Dandenong library staff who are all watching from home. We're going to show some video highlights of a couple of fantastic programs and then I'll invite Public Libraries Victoria President Chris Buckingham to chat about what other libraries have been doing in the space.

>> I'm Lucy May, manager of engagement at Goldfields Library corporation. Libraries are recognised places of community connection and hubs where people can come together to either be social or not be social. They're not as we might remember them of our childhood, places where you have to get hushed and be quiet. They're places where people can come and be part of groups or activities, events, get help with digital connectivity and we certainly find that people who are otherwise very isolated gravitate towards our library spaces for social connection.

We have adapted our services at this time of it pandemic in lots of ways with two particular threads, one is through online engagement and one is through recognition that not everybody is connected online. On that first front, online, we've got Library in your Loungeroom, a collection of e-books, audio books, magazines, things you would normally find on our

website and also includes all our programs, events and exhibitions have gone online and they're also all available to people through our Library in your Loungeroom.

We have had fantastic engagement with our online programs. We had a story time that went all the way to Japan, a family who had moved back to Japan to be closer to family during the pandemic had reconnected with story times from their local library in Bendigo, we've certainly had some feedback from older patrons, one couple in particular who used to access audio books on a regular basis and sat every night doing cross-stitch together and listening to audio books and were devastated to have lost that in their lives and reached out and we were able to lead them to our website where audio books were still available and they were thrilled to have access to our audio book collection in a way they hadn't realised was available to them.

We've got a Be Connected program which is about helping people who aren't already connected online to get online and we have digital mentors trained to support people over the phone to learn to use their device and Internet. We have project called Finding Connection and libraries reaching out. Our librarians have been making phones calls to more vulnerable community members to see how they're going and offer a kind word. We're also available to answer any questions people may have of librarians normally around a research project or a best-read suggestion.

The last thing we have is Life in Lockdown project which is a social history story catching project to capture people's stories and thoughts of this time through photography, art, poetry, written word and we'll be putting those into a book and exhibition to be captured for time to come. Certainly, we've had lots or engagement in our programs to what we

might get physically through people being able to watch in their own time, in their own space, in their own way.

We look forward very much to returning to service and opening our buildings more broadly so that people can come back to their community lounge room.

>> My name is Nanette Davis and I'm the literary officer at the city of greater Dandenong Libraries. The language and literacy program normally offers personalised one-on-one assistance with making resumes, job applications, job searching help, form-filling, letter-writing and finding classes for people in the community.

>> Like all public library services in metropolitan Melbourne, our library facilities in Dandenong have been closed under stage three and four restrictions. All of our library staff have been work from home engaging with the community over Skype and other online platforms through our virtual programming.

>> During this time it has become clear how many people in this area have no IT access beyond their phone, making difficult for them to be compliant with things like job applications and in completing government forms. We've been able to help 90% of the people who have contacted us and they've been very grateful for that help.

>> We are using a combination of phones, screenshots, emails and sometimes an interpreter. We are still able to help with the basic needs for resumes, job searching and application and form-filling.

>> I recently had a young IT professional ask me to help him update his resume. He was successful in getting an interview for a job which sadly he

didn't get but he was over-joyed to see his resume working for him and to know that it would help him to reach the next level in his search for employment.

>> Wow. We have just seen two great examples of the work being done around digital literacy and helping Victorians find employment at a time when so many of us are working from home and technology is the only way we can work and socialise, my heart goes out to people who don't have the knowledge or devices or who are unable to connect. Our work in this space is critical because if we don't do it I don't know who can. Goldfields isn't the only library doing great work in this space. Yarra Libraries do letter drops to let people know they are offering phone support to members of the community. Greater Hamilton, Mildura and Maryborough libraries provided tech support for older users over the phone. Fantastic work.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: We're now going to look at three other programs. Keeping Vulnerable Communities Connected, Supporting Students and Helping Border Communities. Firstly, let's take a look at how Yarra Plenty reached out to thousands of community members by telephone and online and then we'll see how Goulburn Valley is assisting community members to manage border passes during Covid-19 and then a snapshot of Melbourne Library Services work supporting one of the groups hardest hit by the pandemic, international students.

>> Hello, I'm Jane Cowell from the Yarra Plenty regional Library and we deliver services in the outer northeast and Melbourne suburbs. One of the key issues for us particularly in the first lockdown that we knew was that our seniors were feeling quite isolated and, yes, the library physical buildings were closed but we were still open with our digital library and we really wanted to connect them back to library.

One of the key things we found was that everybody was missing the library so much and we really are part of the social fabric of their lives.

>> Important thing that has come out of the calls was the overwhelming response that people were just glad to hear another voice or whether it was the information or the services we offered it was just gratitude which was just lovely and some of the people we've been able to help along the way has been a 93-year-old woman, we've helped her download her first e-book much to her delight which has been wonderful to see we're able to help people stay in touch with the library.

>> We were able to ring over 8,000 senior members over the time. The key aspect was the gratitude of hearing another person's voice. Really in isolation your social world shrinks and being able to connect with another person is really important and our staff got such wonderful feedback of how valued the library was in everybody's life that it was gratitude on both sides, both our staff and our community.

So one of the key aspects of libraries is, of course, connecting people to people and that's particularly our staff but also connecting people to content which we are able to do whether our physical libraries are closed or open. Overwhelmingly, people do want a physical book though and one of the key aspects coming out of lockdown will be access to our collections and also our Wi-Fi which we're really looking forward to. Thank you so much for allowing us to present today and we wish you all the best.

>> Hello. Welcome to the Cobram Library. I'm Kevin Preece, CEO of Goulburn Valley Libraries and I'm pleased to show you how we have supported communities during Covid-19. Our staff have continued to work

from each of our 10 libraries with modified working hours and conditions to ensure proper COVID hygiene and physical distancing. Throughout lockdown we have offered a click and collect service with contactless pick up at all Libraries. This involves a lot of phone contact with patrons to meet their needs and arrange pick-ups and assist with technology.

We are also arranging contactless deliveries for our house-bound and home library patrons when possible. We have increased online offerings with e-books and audio books available. E-book usage and online access of resources has gone through the roof. Having access to our collections has helped lonely and isolated people cope with lockdowns. At our administration and support centre at Shepparton we are operating with a skeleton crew with most working from home if they can. Staff producing stay at home story times, craft and coffee programs, we held a successful series of programs online via Zoom webinar for Law Week. When the need for border crossing permits for NSW and Victorian residents was announced, we were open to the public after lockdown one. A Facebook post advising that the library could help saw us inundated with concerned residents who either didn't have access to a computer to apply for a permit, didn't have adequate Internet access at home, didn't have an email address, didn't know how to apply for a permit or didn't have any computer skills and they couldn't print their permits, they were required to carry their permits when they crossed the border at all times.

We have two libraries on the border, Yarrawonga and here in Cobram. In the days before the borders closed we helped many Victorian and NSW residents. We brought in additional staff to support the demand, all the while maintaining COVID-safe work practices and capacity limits in the library. Our patrons have been supportive and grateful that we have been able to continue to make our collections available. The knowledge that we were still here when so much has been taken away, a book, a simple

phone call means so much when you're isolated and lonely and faced with so much uncertainty. Thank you.

>> Hi. My name is Louise and I am the coordinator library programs and partnerships for city of Melbourne libraries and it is my pleasure today to talk to you about just one of the ways in which we have been supporting international students during Covid-19. Since 2013, city of Melbourne libraries have been running English conversation clubs across several of our library branches. While there are no prerequisites for joining these sessions they are overwhelmingly populated by international students who enjoy not just the chance to brush up on their English-language with skills but also really enjoy the social connections and the sense of belonging they get from these sessions. In April this year we moved these sessions online, not really knowing whether they would be meaningful or whether they even would still be wanted, however, every week 80 to 100 participants continued to prove the power of people coming together even if it is for just one hour over Zoom.

In each one hour of conversation we've heard incredible stories of resilience, isolation, loneliness but ultimately of hope. Even though staff know that for some this conversation may be the only one that they have with someone in Melbourne for the week, positivity and just pure joy permeate and sustained these groups week after week. Well, that and the promise of a coffee in real life some time soon.

>> The club organised by city of Melbourne libraries, I think it is one of the highlights during my lockdown life and here I met up with friendly and supportive librarians.

>> The very good part of my day when I talk with the other people in this conversation club.

>> The best part is connection. I feel more connected to Melbourne.

>> I think it's really helped me to meet new people and talk in English and after a few months my English is very good and become more fluent.

>> This club allows me to practise my spoken English, meet different friends and increase my knowledge.

>> Thank you to everybody for the chance to speak and encourage ideas or have discussions on some specific issues.

>> I really hope other people can use the program and have online connection and practise their speaking. Participate in this program. I think it is really great.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Again, incredible examples of libraries shape-shifting to fit the needs of their communities. I love how different the programmes are for each community. Thank you to Goldfields library, city of Greater Dandenong, Yarra Plenty, Goulburn Valley and Melbourne Library Service for sharing your stories. When I was doing research for today's event, one of the library services that really jumped out at me, and partly maybe because I'm an ex primary school teacher, was this idea of free tutoring for primary school, high school and university students. Chris, I know that your libraries at Casey Cardinia provide that free tutoring through Studiosity as well as libraries at Brimbank, Dandenong, Gannawarra, Swan Hill and Wyndham. What a great service for young people who are learning at home. And, of course, as a music fan I'm very happy to hear the Purl Jam knitting group is one of the social clubs meeting online through Geelong Regional Library.

Let's have a change of pace now. It is time to start thinking about the future. What's going to happen in libraries in the months and the years ahead? Let's welcome back Local Government Minister Shaun Leane, Kate Torney and Chris all together this time for a panel discussion on libraries after Covid-19. So, I think we might throw the first question to you, Shaun. What do you see as the role of libraries in our recovery period?

HON SHAUN LEANE: Thank you. I've had a lot of conversations with lot of councils in recent months, as you can imagine, and I'm convinced - and I'll pass this through to State Executive - that Local Governments are going to be so important - such an important pillar of COVID recovery and, of course, libraries will be in the epicentre of that recovery and just looking at those videos and the extra services that libraries manage to create, as I said, before quite nimbly and quite quickly, I just think that everything...there is going to be the COVID-normal we talk about and hopefully going to be the normal but the normal we used to have won't be the normal we will have in it had future and libraries will be in the same position and some of those extended services that libraries have created are so good that I can't see them actually expiring when we get to the new normal.

So, one of the important things in the recovery, obviously, is employment and I see in the next few years anyone that's got their health and a job will probably be travelling alright, the way things have panned out. And libraries - in some of those services stay have created, I mean, libraries can be really employers as well. When I did have a conversation with Chris a few weeks ago, one thing he mentioned to me is the gender balance in libraries is toward 80% women and there's a lot of conversations around COVID recovery and stimulus that's talking about infrastructure and I'm an ex-construction worker. When I was a

construction worker the construction industry was really blokey. It's got a little bit better but it's still blokey.

So, I mean, the hardest-hit cohort of people because of the COVID is women over 50 years of age and I think this is the perfect area for us to really work with Public Libraries Victoria and others about this job creation and how we can really support that cohort that's been hardest hit.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Thank you, Shaun. Let's go to you now, Chris. To your mind, what do you think libraries will look like after Covid-19?

CHRIS BUCKINGHAM: I think in the first instance we're going to see a lot more people in our libraries with complex needs. We're certainly going to face challenges around how we manage our spaces and keep staff and communities safe. That said, I'm confident we'll meet these challenges with gusto, in the same way we have met the issues in the past few months. I think we'll see more libraries built in communities that need them over coming years. Thank, Brian.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Kate, your turn now. What are some of the best cultural and creative Covid-19 programs that you've witnessed?

KATE TORNEY: Well, I think we saw some of them in the packages. Just a sense of librarians really understanding their own communities and therefore understanding how to respond and, you know, whether or not it was Jane's beautiful example of the telephone calls or whether or not it was the international students, I think it's that beautiful sense of bespoke responses from...

BRIAN NANKERVIS: I think we might have lost you there, Kate. You could be a victim of this COVID not in a health way but just in a technical way.

Alright, we might see if we can get you back but in the meantime, let's just go back to the Minister, Shaun, what about memories that will stay with you from this time? Has it changed the way you feel about your work?

HON SHAUN LEANE: Brian, it's changed my work completely actually. When the COVID issue started I was the President of the Legislative Council so I was the guy that was trying to keep the MPs on the red seats in line during parliament sittings but also as the President of the parliament we were pretty proud - the parliament got involved and the parliament kitchens cooked I think it's thousands, hundreds of thousands of meals for people in need that's been distributed by great groups like the Salvos and other foundations. I was President of the council and became a catering manager as well and with the turn of events I am...Minister for Local Government but in saying that it is a privilege that - just watching those videos and what people in libraries and local councils are prepared to do to support their community, it has been an absolute privilege to find all that out and I'm really looking forward to the next few years and I don't intend to waste this opportunity at all. I think it's great.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: And don't stop cooking, Shaun. Take that culinary knowledge book home and cook up those meals for the grandchildren. Chris, what about you, memories that will stay with you from this time and how has it affected your work?

CHRIS BUCKINGHAM: Before I do reflect I want to give the Minister a tip. 'Walter the Farting Dog' works for any child under the age of 10. It is a classic bestseller, you can't go wrong. For mine, Brian, I'm going to look back fondly on the way the sector came together when things got tough. I've got no doubt we'll emerge with a strong sense of identity, greater

confidence in who we are and more united than ever and I think the thing I miss the most right now is being in branch with my team and my community. I can't wait to get back out on the library floor.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Excellent. Kate, miraculously, we have you back so we might get you to finish that question that I asked before: The best cultural and creative Covid-19 programs you saw. Then just to wrap up a couple of your memories from this period? Oh, look, we tried but ultimately she slipped out again. She's probably gone to get that book or check out one of your recipes, Shaun.

We might leave that group chat there because it's time to award the Margery C Ramsay Scholarship. A little bit of background. The Ramsay Scholarship has been awarded by State Library Victoria since 1990 for the development of emerging leaders in Victoria's public libraries. It is currently offered every two years and provides funding of up to \$20,000 to support a professional development program devised by the recipient. Margery C Ramsay was a trail blazer who did much to shape the development of modern public library services in Victoria and Tasmania. She was the first qualified librarian appointed to a public library in country Victoria. In the 1940s, she headed up the Ballarat Library and was instrumental in the formation of the central highlands regional library service, one of Victoria's first regional library services. From 1954, Ramsay was librarian in charge of all municipal library services in Tasmania, returning to State Library Victoria in 1968 as principal of the Library Training School. In 1974, she became the State Library's principal librarian until her retirement in 1981. I'll now hand over to Minister Shaun Leane to announce the recipient of this year's Margery C Ramsay Scholarship.

HON SHAUN LEANE: Thank you. It is a great pleasure for me to announce the Margery C Ramsay Scholarship for 2020 has been awarded to not one but two emerging leaders in the Victorian public libraries. They are Subha Simpson from the Geelong Regional Libraries and Hayley Martin from the Melton libraries. Subha and Hayley will use their scholarship funds to undertake an important research project for the sector. They will conduct a comparative analysis by the response of the Victorian Public Libraries of Covid-19 and identify a set of key principals for adoption in the organisational disaster management and business community planning. Their project aims to ensure the sector can learn from the experience of Covid-19 and strengthen frameworks for responding to future challenges. This is great leadership work and congratulations once again to Subha and Hayley.

SUBHA SIMPSON: Good morning. I would like to thank the library board of Victoria for providing me and Hayley Martin with the opportunity to undertake this critical research. I also want to thank Paddy Monolis and the Geelong regional library corporation. I can stand tall knowing I have your support. I would also like to acknowledge State Library of Victoria and the wonderful role it plays in supporting library industry professionals in their chosen career paths and research.

I humbly accept the Margery Ramsay Scholarship. This has been a tough year for everyone. Libraries as a whole have seen the effects first-hand and have endeavoured to create opportunities to reach out, build resilience and connect. This reaching out is visible in the various means libraries have utilised from cutting edge technology and platforms delivering books and resources, providing aid to those most vulnerable to simple yet poignant phone conversations. Never have libraries been more important in the communities. To this end, we will use the research to highlight what we have done to help our communities and to provide

room to reflect and improve which is what libraries have demonstrated again and again over the years. In the end, I just wanted to say thank you and we hope for a better 2021.

HAYLEY MARTIN: Hi, I'm Hayley Martin, recipient of the Margery C Ramsay Scholarship in partnership with Subha Simpson for 2020. Public Libraries have a history of responding to various disruptions in their services and have proven important institution for resilience of cities. To serve this function they too need to remain resilient. It is this intersection that is important to me and our intention this Scholarship will strengthen our sector's understanding of how a network of public libraries can continue as front-line service providers to contribute to community resilience and recovery during times of crisis. Having a richer understanding of the decision-making landscape that involves multi-layered policy contexts and grasping the strategic and operational capacity of public library service in critical times will certainly strengthen my ability to advise or be involved in high-level decision-making and a stronger advocate of public library work. I hope it will help us participate in multilateral conversations about critical public librarianship about times of crisis globally. I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to the Library Board of Victoria for bestowing us this opportunity and to our respective library services for their support of the application. Thank you.

CHRIS BUCKINGHAM: Wow, congratulations to Subha and Hayley, two very capable graduates of the 2019 shared Leadership program who will no doubt deliver a really valuable piece of research for the sector. I would like to thank everyone for joining today's event. I hope it leaves you feeling energised and a bit proud of who we are and what we do. Libraries under the social and economic repercussions of Covid-19 will fall disproportionately and we're offering support to those affected. My personal take-away from the Covid-19 period is libraries know how to

step up, we've got a good handle on what people need. We want to work to rebuild the economy and society after the pandemic. Minister Leane, I want to acknowledge your commitment and resolve to advocate on behalf of libraries, it is deeply appreciated. We have a fantastic Living Libraries infrastructure program funded by the State Government. If we grew that fund we could create world leading educational assets, create local jobs and ensure every library has the right IT infrastructure to support community needs. There are opportunities for us to provide more programs in the library seeking to support job seekers, dis engaged youth and indeed people experiencing social isolation and mental health. Our economy is changing fast. We are seeing people who have secure employment for decades find themselves out of work and in the job market, people falling through the gaps, some people don't have an email address let alone a resume and we need to be the safe place that people can come together and get help when they need it. We have a shared commitment to making sure people will always be welcomed, respected, supported and have a sense of belonging to a community. We have seen the true value of libraries during Covid-19 and look forward to playing a critical role supporting the community recovery. Libraries really do change lives. Thank you.

BRIAN NANKERVIS: Thank you, Chris, and also thanks to State library CEO Kate Torney and our very special guest today Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane. We are going to close with some footage of the earlier Libraries Change Lives events. I hope you enjoy it. I hope you have a wonderful day. Make sure that everyone is doing okay including yourself. Thank you very much.

(CAPTIONED VIDEO PLAYS)

>> Thank you to the library for my awesome new books.

>> Thank you for my books.

>> Thank you for sending me my books.

>> Thank you Craigieburn library for sending us our amazing books.

>> Thank you for sending this book.

>> Thank you, Craigieburn library for getting me these cool books.

(End of transcript)