

Media Release



Community feedback helps confirm future of Mitchell Library

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Readers and writers will continue to research the State Library's world-renowned Australian collections in the iconic Mitchell Library Reading Room under a revised plan which responds to community feedback, the NSW State Librarian announced today.

"We have listened carefully to people's concerns since our December 2013 announcement of plans to renew the Mitchell Library building, and have been working on a proposal to address them as fully as possible," says Alex Byrne, NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive.

"The depth of passion expressed for the Mitchell Library and our expert staff has been tremendous and highlights the important roles this Library plays in the lives of readers, near and afar," says Dr Byrne.

"Our revised plan confirms that researchers, readers and visitors will continue to read and work with our rich collections surrounded by the grandeur of the Mitchell Library Reading Room, which we are continuing to restore."

Under the revised plan the current special collections area inside the Mitchell Library Reading Room will be extended in the coming months for researchers and readers to access the Library's original materials, related reference books and card catalogues for manuscripts and Mitchell printed books. Expert librarians will continue to provide advice and assistance at a dedicated service desk.

The State Library will continue its plan to restore the magnificent heritage features of the Mitchell Library Reading Room, such as cleaning and repairing the stained glass windows and fittings, removing the glass structure around the stairs and replacing the floor covering.

The State Library will also continue to restore heritage spaces on the ground floor of the Mitchell building, including providing better located and improved facilities for recipients of the Library's fellowships and volunteers.

"We will also be refurbishing the beautiful Friends Room, a lounge located in the original first stage of the Mitchell building which offers our Friends an ideal meeting place or quiet spot to relax," says Dr Byrne.

The revised plan for the ground floor of the Mitchell building is available on the State Library's website www.sl.nsw.gov.au. Members of the public will have until Friday 9 May to comment, with work expected to commence in July 2014.

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“At the heart of libraries are its readers. They define how spaces are used, how collections are researched, how knowledge is shared, and their habits inform change locally and globally,” says Dr Byrne.

“While we must work in an environment of reducing budgets - a situation we share with other public sector agencies in NSW and nationally - like all great libraries, the State Library will continue to respond to the changing needs of readers and visitors.”

For more information and to provide feedback on the State Library’s plan to restore the Mitchell Library building, visit www.sl.nsw.gov.au.

Dr Alex Byrne is available for interviews.

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