

## **New Children's Library opens in 150<sup>th</sup> year of free access to books**

**8/10/2019**

A new Children's Library, the first space devoted entirely to young readers and families at the State Library of NSW, will open to the public on Saturday 12 October as part of a free Open Day.

According to State Librarian John Vallance, the opening of The Children's Library could not have come at a better time as "the State Library celebrates this month 150 years of providing free community access to books and other reading materials\*."

"Given children are some of the most voracious readers in our community, we're thrilled to be giving young readers and families their very own space to get lost in books and stories," says Dr Vallance.

This beautiful new maze-like space has been designed in-house around the discovery and enjoyment of books and reading. Located within the Bashir Reading Room, The Children's Library will be brimming with Australia's best children's books, as well as classics from overseas authors. Children around the world can explore thousands of books, sit or lie down and just enjoy reading.

"The best thing about libraries is that everyone is welcome – and have been since the Free Public Library (the precursor to the State Library) opened in 1869. We want to see more people using our spaces, exploring our collections and participating in our learning and public programs," says Dr Vallance.

The Children's Library follows the \$15 million transformation of the State Library's historic Mitchell Building 12 months ago, with the opening of the Michael Crouch Family Galleries, the refurbished Dixson Galleries and purpose-built John B Fairfax Learning Centre, all supported by private benefaction.

Similarly, The Children's Library has been made possible by community support with close to \$500K raised in less than six months through the State Library Foundation.

"The rapid response to our public appeal was incredible and confirms what we already know about the extraordinary value the community places on libraries, books and reading," said Dr Vallance.

# Media Release



“We know that children’s readership is up, borrowing is booming and libraries are more popular than ever. It is my dream to see kids pestering their parents to take them to the library, instead of pestering them for more screen time. I don’t think I will have to wait too long.”

The State Library will publicly launch The Children’s Library on Saturday 12 October at 10.15am, as part of a free Open Day. Everyone is welcome.

## **OPEN DAY – FREE FAMILY FUN – Saturday 12 October, 10am-4pm**

### **Smoking ceremony at 9.45am**

- Grand opening of The Children’s Library at 10.15am
- Curator talks and tours
- All day craft, storytellers, kids tours and roving book characters
- Battle of the children’s author
- Behind-the-scenes tours and workshops
- Live recording of Radio National’s *The Bookshelf* at 2pm
- View the Library’s world-class exhibitions and displays

View the full Open Day program: [www.sl.nsw.gov.au/openday2019](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/openday2019)

### **For more information, interviews and publicity images, please contact:**

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\* October 2019 marks 150 years since the opening of the Free Public Library (the precursor to the State Library of NSW) and importantly, 150 years since members of the public could freely access books and other reading materials.

According to Public Library Statistic 2017-18, 12.3 million items were borrowed from children’s collections and 563,050 registered children library members.