

# **Renew Our Libraries**

## Campaign report



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# Summary

## From start to finish

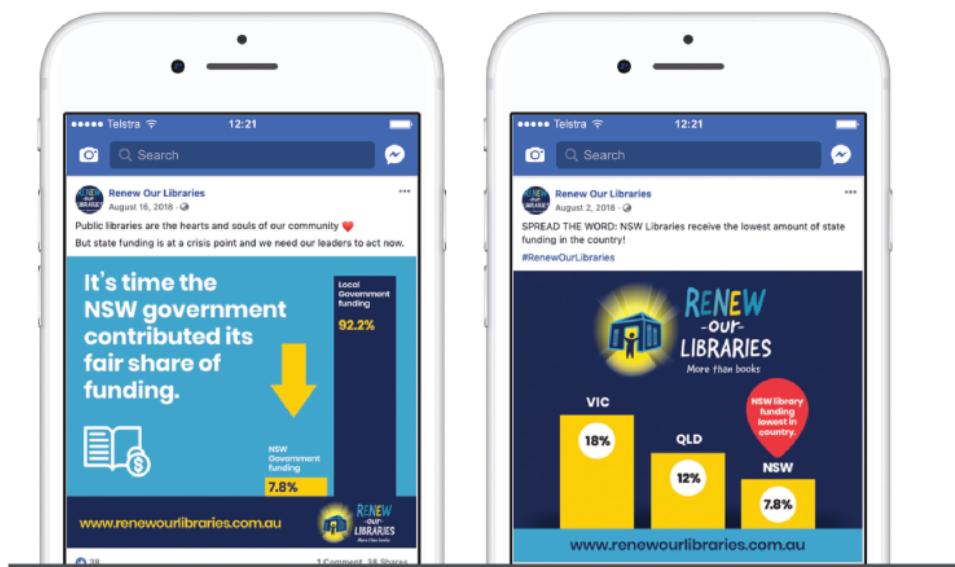
The Renew Our Libraries campaign began with a mission to address the funding crisis that NSW public libraries were facing after 40 years of successive state government funding cuts.

With demand for public libraries soaring but state funding decreasing, each year our public libraries in NSW were falling further into a crisis and struggling to meet the demands of the community.

The funding cuts became so severe that in 2018, NSW public libraries received the lowest state funding in the country.

This crisis meant that councils were having to shoulder more and more of the funding, to the point where local government was funding over 90% of the costs to keep our public libraries operating.

Local Government NSW and the NSW Public Libraries Association united to form the Renew Our Libraries campaign to fix this crisis, once and for all.



## Securing funding

**Just three weeks after our launch on August 1st, we had secured over 5,000 petition signatures and a commitment from the NSW Government to provide an extra \$60 million for public libraries over four years.**

Eight weeks after the NSW Government's announcement, in October 2018 the NSW Labor party made an announcement that beat the Government's commitment, by promising to provide an additional \$10.5 million, lifting their total commitment to \$60.5 million for public libraries over four years. NSW Labor confirmed this funding would be indexed.

After the initial commitments from NSW Labor and the NSW Government, the Renew Our Libraries campaign dived into a campaign to pressure the major political parties to 'Fill the Shelves'. Over 1,700 supporters sent an email to Gladys Berejiklian and Luke Foley or Michael Daley asking their parties to commit to our full funding objectives.

During this time, the campaign received a commitment from the NSW Greens that they fully supported all of our campaign objectives and would seek to fulfil them if in Government.

## Turning up the heat

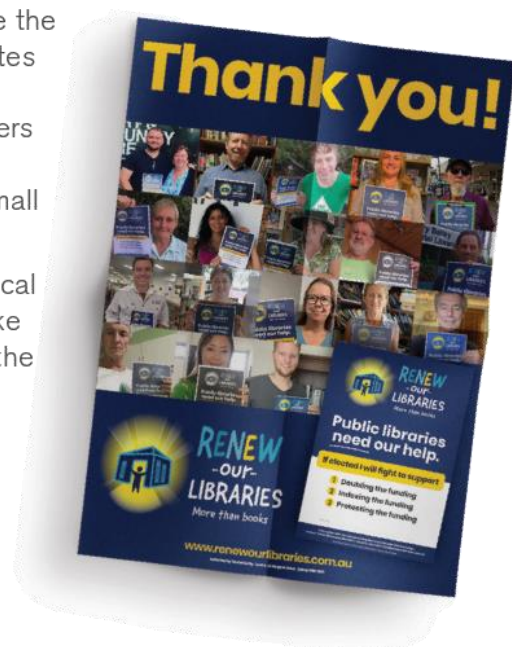
The last chapter of the campaign focused on mobilising supporters and candidates in the marginal target seats of East Hills, Coogee, Penrith, Monaro, Tweed, Lismore and the Upper Hunter.

Over the summer we built our supporter lists in the marginal seats through targeted advertising on Facebook. This prepared us to launch our candidate action tool in March, where we asked our supporters to email their candidates using an election tool.

This tool allowed supporters to use their postcode to easily send a pre-prepared message asking their candidates to take a candidate pledge. We asked candidates to take a pledge that, if elected, they would fight to support our goals.

We had over 30 candidates take the pledge. These included candidates from NSW Labor, NSW Greens, the Shooters, Farmers and Fishers party, the Socialist Alliance, the Animal Justice Party and the Small Business party.

While supporters asked their local state election candidates to take the pledge, we drove media in the marginal target seats including in the Muswellbrook Chronicle (Upper Hunter), Tweed Daily News (Tweed) and the Wentworth Courier (Coogee).



### **Finishing on a high**

After an incredibly successful array of candidate pledges from across the state, the Renew Our Libraries campaign distributed an Open Letter to NSW political parties to end the campaign on a positive note.

The open letter also served as a reminder to the incoming Government that they would need to fulfil their promises.

**With commitments of \$60 million or more from all three key political parties, 12,000 supporters and pledges of support from candidates across NSW, the Renew Our Libraries is a campaign to be proud of.**



## Campaign objectives

Our strategy developed in 2018 identified our goal of attaining \$50 million in extra funding over four years. Before the campaign launch, we increased this goal to 'double the funding' by \$94 million in order to set a higher bar after Labor pledged \$50 million prior to the campaign launch.

### External



Increase NSW Government funding of public libraries by \$50 million over four years.



Shift to new funding model – for NSW public libraries that is sustainable for the long term (recurrent/infrastructure).



Create a new perception of public libraries – as modern community infrastructure, vital in supporting education, growing economies and as a much-loved community space that accessible to everyone.



Establish public libraries essential to new communities – by linking their expansion to urban growth.



Establish public libraries as essential for literacy – by highlighting their importance in addressing child literacy.



Establish public libraries as essential for equity and access – by demonstrating that they bridge digital disadvantage.

## Media impact

Renew Our Libraries secured metro and local media across the state throughout the length of the campaign.

While featuring across metro and local newspapers, Renew Our Libraries spokespeople also had the opportunity to speak on radio including:

- ABC Sydney Breakfast interview with Robbie Buck and Wendy Harmer
- ABC Drive interview with Chris Bath – twice
- News grabs with radio stations including ABC Sydney, 2SM & regional ABCs





# Supporter engagement

**9.3m**  
Australian library users have increased to **9.3 million!**

renewourlibraries.com.au

THE MORE THAT YOU **READ,** THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL **KNOW.**  
THE MORE THAT YOU **LEARN,** THE MORE PLACES YOU'LL **GO.**  
- Dr Seuss

renewourlibraries.com.au

For every **\$1** expended, public libraries generate at least **\$4.24** of economic value.

renewourlibraries.com.au

It's time for both parties to **'fill the shelves'** and properly fund public libraries!

NSW Coalition's \$500m commitment  
NSW Labor's \$500m commitment  
**TARGET \$94m**

renewourlibraries.com.au

It's time the NSW government contributed its fair share of funding.

Local Government Funding: **92.2%**  
NSW Government Funding: **7.8%**

renewourlibraries.com.au

“ Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries. ”  
- Anne Herbert

renewourlibraries.com.au

“ I love sharing the joy of libraries with my daughter. Our local library is fantastic. ”  
- Charmaine Penhith

renewourlibraries.com.au

Library Lovers' Day!

renewourlibraries.com.au

“ This is a time that public libraries need improved funding. ”  
- Sarah O'Meara

renewourlibraries.com.au

Great news  
**Orange City Council** has joined the call for secure funding for our public libraries

renewourlibraries.com.au

IN 10 WORDS OR LESS  
**Why do you love your local library?**

Comment your answer below 😊

renewourlibraries.com.au

Great news  
**Port Stephens Council** has joined the call for secure funding for our public libraries

renewourlibraries.com.au

### Supporter growth

Month	Council sign ups	Supporter numbers	Facebook followers	Twitter followers
August	23	6,022	609	134
September	50	7,972	757	154
October	79	8,354	780	172
November	85	9,020	944	186
December	92	10,012	1,082	200
January	94	10,600	1,124	219
February	104	11,334	1,200	234
March	105	12,337	1,411	243

## Email engagement

Renew Our Libraries supporters have proven to be a highly engaged audience with an average email open rate of 45%.

Open rate averages vary from industry and audiences, but an open rate of above 25% is considered to be a strong result.

Email purpose/name	Sent date	Total recipients	Open rate	Click rate
<b>Campaign video share ask – public libraries are in crisis</b>	9 Aug 18	3,230	50%	20%
<b>Thanks to you, we've had a major win!</b>	25 Aug 18	6,455	52%	12%
<b>Fill the shelves email leaders action launch</b>	16 Oct 18	8,670	51%	30%
<b>Email Party leaders action chaser (follow up)</b>	24 Nov 18	8,713	42%	17%
<b>How your community can get involved</b>	7 Feb 19	93	45%	41%

<b>Happy Library Lovers' Day!</b>	14 Feb 19	11,246	40%	10%
<b>How your community can get involved (follow up)</b>	25 Feb 19	52	19%	10%
<b>Candidate action launch</b>	8 Mar 19	11,875	33%	30%
<b>To those who have not taken action – Just one week left to fix public libraries.</b>	16 Mar 19	11,090	52%	24%
<b>To those who have taken action – Just one week left to fix our public libraries</b>	16 Mar 19	1,130	52%	10%

## Advocacy outcomes



## **Delivering on funding goals**

In the original campaign strategy, the Renew Our Libraries goal was to achieve funding commitments of an additional \$50 million over four years from the major political parties.

Shortly before the campaign launch this bar was shifted to \$94 million over four years to be able to ask parties to 'double the funding'.

With this, our campaign objectives became:

**1. Double the funding by an extra \$94 million over 4 years**

**2. Index this funding to keep up with future demand**

**3. Protect this funding in legislation so that our libraries don't end up in this crisis again.**

The Renew Our Libraries campaign secured this full commitment from the NSW Greens, as well as pledges from candidates in minor parties such as the Socialist Alliance, the Animal Justice Party, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers party and the Small Business Party.

The Coalition committed to increasing public library funding by an extra \$60 million over four years.

NSW Labor committed to increasing public library funding by an extra \$61 million over four years, committed to indexing part of this funding, and protecting the funding in regulation, but did not go so far as committing to legislating it.

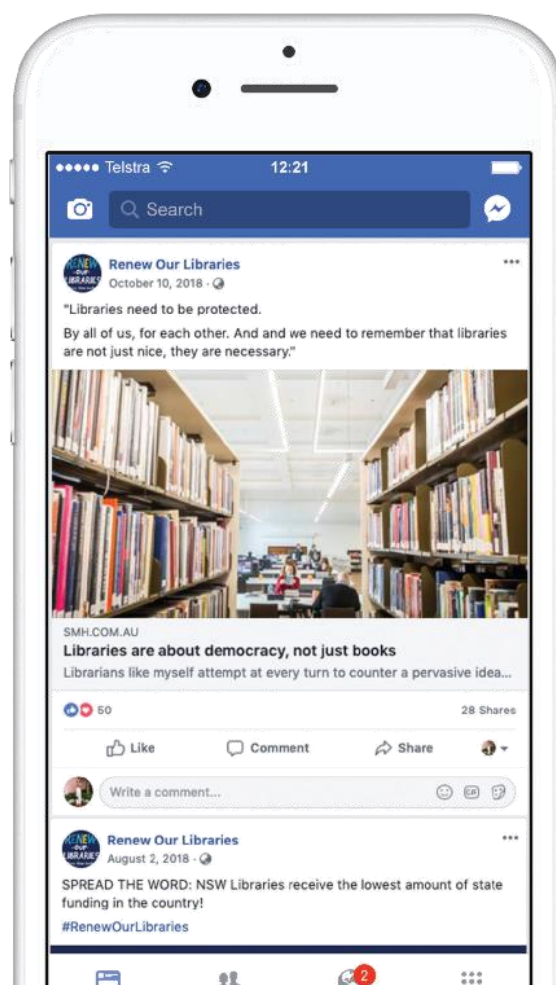
In the last month of the campaign, polling commissioned by the NSW Public Libraries Association found that one third of NSW voters said that how a party prioritised public library funding would influence their vote.



## Changing the public narrative

Through local and metro media, social media, online actions, digital advertising and internal member communications, the Renew Our Libraries campaign achieved a large amount of support for our message that libraries are more than books.

In the last month of the campaign, polling commissioned by the NSW Public Libraries Association found that:



**80%**

of NSW respondents said that libraries provide an essential resource to people with limited access to technology

**77%**

of NSW respondents said that libraries provide a key public service by running adult learning groups and children's activities

**59%**

of NSW respondents said that libraries are becoming even more valuable as technology increases