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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Building on more than books in Hindmarsh Shire**

The new decade will see the start of some exciting times and positive changes to Library services for residents of and visitors to Hindmarsh Shire.

As the first part of a multi-staged project to establish a community precinct, the footings and steel framework for the new Dimboola Library was constructed prior to the Christmas / New Year break and it is expected that contractors will be back on-site in early January to recommence construction of the building.

Hindmarsh Shire Council Mayor, Cr Rob Gersch said, "It will be an exciting time for residents of Dimboola to watch the progress of construction of the new library. Now that the steel supporting framework has been installed the construction process will begin in earnest".

Funding of \$600,000 was received from the Victorian Government's Living Libraries Infrastructure program that is being matched by Hindmarsh Shire Council. It is anticipated that construction of the new Dimboola Library will be completed by mid-2020.

In addition to the construction of the new Dimboola Library, Hindmarsh Shire Council has received funding of \$600,000 through the Australian Government to refurbish the existing circa 1870's built building that houses the Dimboola Library and Customer Service Centre.

Cr Gersch added "Council was thrilled to hear from the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Dr Anne Webster, Federal Member for Mallee that Council was successful in obtaining a grant of \$600,000 to refurbish the existing building and establish the Dimboola Community Civic Hub".

"The refurbishment will include internal and external works that will establish the building and surrounds as a multi-purpose facility that will be able to be used for community, business and Council meetings, business workshops and promotions, small business incubators, public exhibitions, displays, appropriate community and corporate events and activities. The current rear public carpark will be redesigned and landscaping will be undertaken to provide a green open

space with direct access to the river environment and public toilets.” said Cr Gersch.

Additional work at Dimboola will see the development of the Wimmera River Discovery Trail’s Dimboola Visitor Node in the rear car park enabling direct access to the commencement of the 63km trail along the Wimmera River corridor between Dimboola, Jeparit and Lake Hindmarsh.

Hindmarsh Shire Council has also secured funding of \$300,000 through the Victorian Government’s Living Libraries Infrastructure program to establish libraries in Jeparit and Rainbow.

Cr Gersch said, “Following a review of library services across the shire, Council resolved to withdraw from the Wimmera Regional Library Services effective 30 June 2020. Following notification that Council will receive funding of \$300,000 through the Living Libraries Infrastructure program, plans are now being finalised to establish joint libraries and Council Customer Service Offices in Jeparit and Rainbow”.

“The establishment of static libraries in Jeparit and Rainbow will provide an increase in the hours that library services are available. Jeparit and Rainbow are currently serviced by the mobile library receiving two hours and two and a half hours per fortnight respectively. The new service will provide a minimum of one and a half days of service per week which is a significant increase” added Cr Gersch.

Cr Gersch said “Libraries are much more than books on shelves these days. They are community hubs where people can read a paper, catch up with friends, access the internet, be educated and of course borrow a book in either hard copy or digital form”.

Hindmarsh Shire Council has recently employed a Coordinator for Library Services. Whitney Kingston will work with both Hindmarsh and Yarriambiack Shires coordinating library services within both. Whitney has worked in Libraries across Victoria and Queensland, both within the public library and education sectors. “I have a genuine passion for fostering lifelong literacy and learning cultures and believe libraries can be engaged spaces for social inclusion and community connection – which is integral to our rural communities”. Whitney also said that she looks forward to meeting with residents within the Shire to discuss their dreams and aspirations for their independent library service.

For more information, please contact Phil King, Manager Economic and Community Development, on 03 5391 4444 or email [pking@hindmarsh.vic.gov.au](mailto:pking@hindmarsh.vic.gov.au).

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