



# Libraries After Dark Community Campaign

by Fairfield Multicultural Interagency (FMI)



# What is the Libraries After Dark Community Campaign?

by FMI

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Fairfield Multicultural Interagency (FMI) is running a campaign to secure funds from the State Government to establish the Libraries After Dark Program in Fairfield City.

The Campaign is asking the State Government to invest \$300,000 over two years to pilot the program.

# Background

Libraries After Dark, initiated in Victoria, is a program that uses libraries to provide gambling & alcohol free activities which a wide range of community groups can access. The program extends library opening hours into the evening and employs a project manager to enable the coordination of socially inclusive and safe recreational activities. It builds on the local community networks, of service providers and artists to deliver activities which are fun and educational. Some examples of activities that can be delivered include games, craft circles, movies, guest speakers, music, English conversation club, poetry performances, men's discussion groups and kids IT. The program can also provide soft entry for community education on social issues, including the impact of gambling on the community. In Victoria, the Libraries After Dark Program was funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, and was delivered in four Melbourne council areas (Hume, Whittlesea, Darebin and Moreland) as a pilot program. Since then, the Victorian State Government has provided another \$4 million to roll out the program across the state.

# Why?

Residents of Fairfield City are asking for affordable evening activities that are family friendly, and free from alcohol and gambling. Fairfield City Plan 2016 –2026 has identified the need to provide inclusive activities at low cost, develop and promote programs for children, youth, and people with disability. Libraries After Dark can provide one strategy to address this identified need for Fairfield.

Gambling Harm in Fairfield City is significant, and the City is ranked one of the highest councils in regards to poker machine losses. In Fairfield LGA \$1.4 million a day is lost through poker machines, which equates to 517 million per year. Fairfield residents can be considered at high risk of gambling harm. Gambling harm is also strongly linked to issues of family breakdown, domestic and family violence, financial stress and poverty, crime, and mental health issues. Most residents of Fairfield have been negatively impacted or know of someone who has been impacted by gambling.

Libraries After Dark will provide a soft entry point to educate the community on social issues which impact them, like gambling. This will help break down the shame and stigma around gambling problems, strengthen community resilience towards gambling harm, and build a stronger community.

FMI believe that this request is timely, as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and the community adjust to a post COVID-19 world, the need for reconnection and inclusive and affordable activities is likely to intensify. Libraries After Dark can build and strengthen social networks. It provides the community with culturally appropriate activities and creates additional local employment. It offers a venue for our residents who are socially isolated, older people, younger people and families to reconnect.

# What is the investment?

\$300,000 over 2 years to run the Libraries After Dark activities in Fairfield City Library branches

This is equivalent to only 0.06% of what Fairfield loses a year to poker machine losses



# What are the next steps?

FMI is undertaking this role through advocating for Libraries After Dark in Fairfield. We have the support of Fairfield City Mayor to lead the campaign.

We are asking community organisations and agencies in Fairfield City to support this campaign by putting all their logos on the drafted letter. The letter will be from community organisations based and working in Fairfield and addressed to the NSW Premiere asking for the NSW Government to invest Libraries After Dark in Fairfield. We are aiming to have 20 logos to demonstrate the strong community support by October 9th.

Please email your agency logo, or if you have any further questions please contact

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