



Don Page MP
Minister for Local Government
Minister for the North Coast

MEDIA RELEASE

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**MINISTER BACKS RESOURCE SHARING BETWEEN
COUNCILS TO BOOST LIBRARY SERVICES**

The NSW Minister for Local Government and the North Coast Don Page has welcomed the introduction of legislation into Parliament that would allow two or more Councils to jointly manage library services.

The *Library Amendment Bill 2011*, which was introduced by the NSW Minister for the Arts George Souris yesterday, would legally entitle a group of NSW Councils to run regional libraries or mobile library services together, with the approval of the Arts Minister and the Minister for Local Government.

The *Library Act 1939* presently states that one council should operate a library.

Mr Page said the new legislation would allow councils to have greater flexibility over how they managed their libraries.

“This amendment will fix a problem experienced on the North Coast last year when Tweed, Byron, Ballina and Lismore Councils saw a highly successful joint mobile library program jeopardised simply because of the wording of the old legislation,” Mr Page said.

“The mobile Richmond Tweed Regional Library service had been operating well for 30 years when Lismore Council, which first operated the mobile service alone, took over control of it last July.

“The move caused the three other Councils to consider withdrawing from the service.”

Mr Page said that while it was operating as a joint library, Richmond Tweed Regional Library had one of the highest library memberships in NSW.

Mr Page commended the work of his colleague, The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC, for her substantial work on this issue during her time in Opposition, which included introducing similar legislation prior to the last State Election.

“I also acknowledge the dedication of Martin Field, the former director of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library, whose work saw the facility become one of the most vibrant and well patronised libraries in NSW,” Mr Page said.