

MELBOURNE LORD MAYOR CHAMPIONS LIBRARIES



Melbourne Lord Mayor Robert Doyle

Melbourne Lord Mayor Robert Doyle, a champion of libraries, was a recent speaker at the ALIA Library Design Awards held on Monday 19 June at Library at the Dock in Docklands, Victoria. INCITE asked the Lord Mayor why he loves libraries and why they were important to him in his formative years.

WHEN YOU FIRST BECAME LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, DID YOU IMAGINE YOU WOULD BECOME A CHAMPION OF LIBRARIES FOR THE CITY AND WHY DID YOU AND YOUR FELLOW COUNCILLORS DECIDE TO INVEST SO STRONGLY IN NEW AND REFURBISHED BUILDINGS?

As an ex-English teacher, I've always been a champion of libraries. One of the fascinating things I discovered when I first became Lord Mayor is that, as more and more people move back to the centre of the city, we need to retrofit community facilities that had disappeared. Libraries were high on that list, so now we have built the Kathleen Syme, Library at the Dock and the Southbank Library at Boyd and refurbished East Melbourne. We are also looking for a new home for the City Library.

WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE CITY OF MELBOURNE LIBRARY?

They're like children: I can't pick between them! MELBOURNE IS ONE OF FIVE UNESCO CITIES OF LITERATURE AND THE CITY BECAME HOME TO A CITY OF LITERATURE OFFICE. WHAT HAS THIS ADDED TO THE CITY?

It's an expression of the character of the city. I was delighted to rename one of our laneways Literature Lane in

honour of being a City of Literature, and it's an important selling point for Melbourne as a cultural hub.

WHAT ROLE DID LIBRARIES PLAY IN YOUR CHILDHOOD?

Libraries were very important in my childhood. We were very poor when I was growing up and so, being an avid reader, I paid a lot of visits to the mobile library in Myrtleford. But I also hung out a lot in the libraries when I was away at school in Geelong.

WHAT ARE YOU READING AT THE MOMENT?

I'm reading three different books at the moment. I've really enjoyed *Black Box Thinking: The surprising truth about success* by Matthew Syed. I've just finished *The Captain Class* by Sam Walker – a fascinating study in leadership and sport – and I've just begun *Utopia for Realists* by Rutger Bregman.

Having a three-year-old son at home I'm also reading a lot of *Cars, Trucks and Things That Go* and *What Do People Do All Day?* Very funny, given that they are the same books and the same author, Richard Scarry, whom I read to my older son who is now 32. 📖

