

State Library of South Australia

Media Release



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STATE LIBRARY DIRECTOR GEOFF STREMPER SET TO RETIRE

State Library of South Australia Director, Geoff Stempel has announced his intentions to retire from his position in October this year, after six years in the role and a distinguished career in library services spanning more than 40 years.

Geoff has presided over significant growth at the State Library since becoming Director in 2018.

Before his appointment as Director, Geoff led the delivery of services and support to South Australia's 140 public libraries as Associate Director, Public Library Services. In this role, Geoff led significant change in the state's public library network, including the establishment of the One Card Network.

Geoff has been instrumental in guiding the State Library through numerous successes and challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It has been an honour to lead the State Library of South Australia for the past six years through significant growth but also the challenges associated with the COVID pandemic," he said.

"I will leave the State Library of South Australia with a clear strategic plan for the future and am deeply honoured to be part of its legacy and helping to shape its future.

"Personally, I am looking forward to spending more time with my family including my grandchild and I hope to enjoy reading a few more books – two great passions of mine, as I enter the next phase of my life."

Under Geoff's collaborative leadership, the State Library has set an optimistic and long-term vision for where the Library needs to go in a fast-changing world as well as the development of a visitor activation strategy to deliver an exciting and vibrant future.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed managing a much-loved South Australian cultural institution which has been reinvigorated in recent years through a number of unique partnerships and activations," Mr Stempel adds.

Geoff has overseen and been instrumental in a number of significant collection acquisitions including Scott Hicks' personal archive of film memorabilia, over 100,000 images from famed SA aerial photographer, Douglas Darian Smith's career and a never-before-seen Town of Port Gawler map.

Geoff is a passionate supporter of keeping libraries relevant in today's ever-changing world. He has been a contributor to the National and State Libraries of Australasia (NSLA) consortium and chairs a national advisory committee for the National Library of Australia.

He was recently awarded the HCL Anderson Award which is the Australian Library and Information Association's highest honour. This award recognises outstanding service to the library and information sector within Australia and to the profession.

Libraries Board of South Australia Chair Bruce Linn said Geoff has had a major impact on the transformation of the library sector in recent years.

"Under Geoff's leadership, the State Library and the public libraries have transformed into a stronger cohesive network," he said.

"Geoff's wealth of experience and breadth of skills across the libraries network has helped him drive the State Library of South Australia's strategic direction as he continually finds new and innovative ways to keep sharing the stories of the past with current and future generations to enjoy, experience and learn from."

Minister for Arts Andrea Michaels MP extended her best wishes to Geoff on his retirement following a distinguished career.

"Geoff's career has been dedicated to connecting communities with libraries. His contribution to the library network and public sector has been outstanding," she said.

"I wish to thank him for his exceptional leadership as he leaves the State Library with a strong plan for the future."

The State Library will now undertake a national recruitment search for Geoff's replacement as Director.

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