

STAFF REPORT

TO: Community Services Committee
FROM: District Librarian
REFERENCE: L407
DATE: 13 March 2006
SUBJECT: District Librarian's Report

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Librarians have long believed that when the economy goes down, public library use goes up. The United States has recently experienced an economic cycle contrary to New Zealand with a recession starting in 2001. In 2002, the American Library Association contracted with the University of Illinois Library Research Center (LRC) to study library use over the last five years, at the 25 U.S. public libraries serving populations of 1 million or more. Using data from 18 of those large libraries, the study found that circulation has increased significantly since March 2001, when the National Bureau of Economic Research pegged the beginning of the latest recession. Using statistical analysis, the LRC found that circulation in March 2001 was 8.3% higher than would be expected from the trend line that started in January 1997. It stayed well above that trend line, an average of 9% above, for the rest of the year.

Metronet (which is an association of the Public Libraries of New Zealand's 17 biggest cities) indicates a level trend for their libraries' issues statistics over a similar period of time:

Metronet libraries issue statistics

1997/1998	32,988,655
2004/2005	32,871,859

For all New Zealand Public Libraries, issue statistics are available for the years 2001/2002, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 and show a similar trend:

All New Zealand public libraries issue statistics

2001/2002	48,582,143
2002/2003	48,973,725
2003/2004	48,273,550

Detailed usage statistics for the Tasman District Libraries for the past six years are shown below.

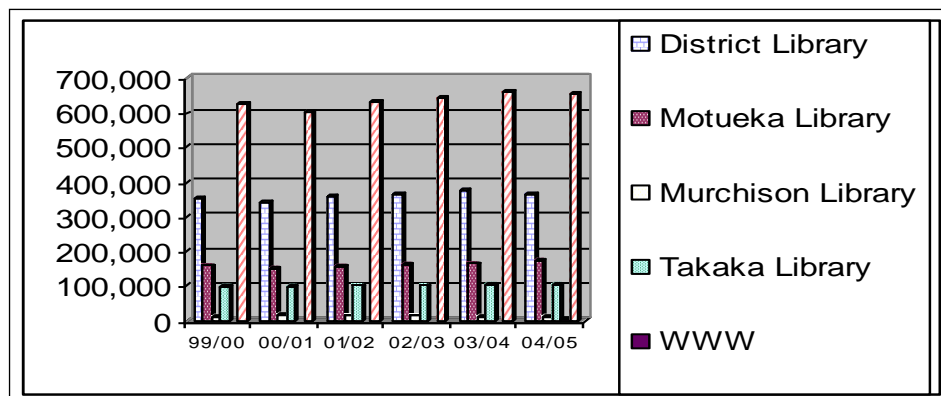
In 2001 during a four week reference period, Statistics New Zealand carried out a Cultural Experiences survey which found that purchasing books was the most popular cultural activity among adult New Zealanders, with 1.2 million people, or 44% of the adult population, having purchased at least one book in that time.

The second most popular activity was visiting public libraries – which an estimated 1.1 million people or 39% of the adult population had done during the reference period. Visiting public libraries differed from many other cultural activities in that older people, and those not employed (either unemployed or not in the labour force), were more likely than others to use libraries.

It is clear that the reading of books and the use of public libraries is still very much alive and well in the 21st Century. However it is important to note that public libraries today are not only about borrowing books. There is a growing understanding of the importance of public libraries as a social centre for communities. Libraries are often the only publicly owned indoor spaces where people can meet and relax in a secure and welcoming environment. As well as books, libraries offer access to electronic information sources and assistance to people to find the information they need. Libraries support the education of our children through programmes to encourage and improve literacy. Libraries offer activities to inspire and inform people of all ages.

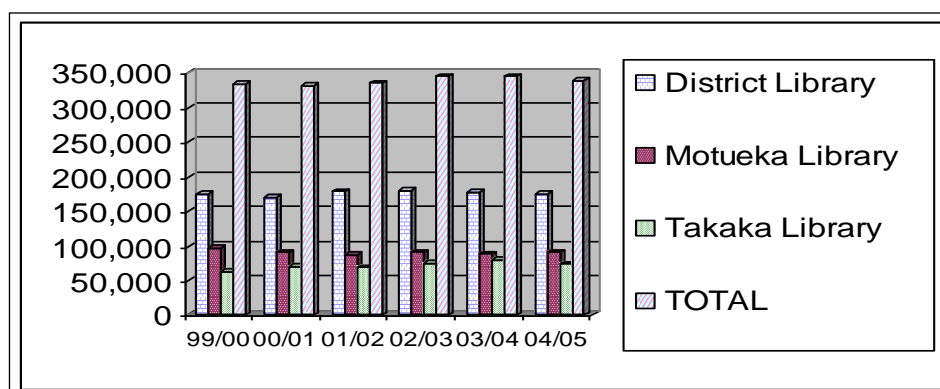
TASMAN DISTRICT LIBRARIES ISSUE STATISTICS - 1999/2000 TO 2004/2005

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
District Library	350,406	338,837	359,326	366,272	376,792	362,086
Motueka Library	158,943	151,487	156,868	163,101	164,593	172,505
Murchison Library	13,636	14,238	13,946	14,119	11,695	10,396
Takaka Library	99,698	98,769	100,947	100,801	105,588	104,473
WWW						4,702
TOTAL	622,683	603,331	631,087	644,293	658,668	654,161



TASMAN DISTRICT LIBRARIES DOOR COUNT STATISTICS - 1999/2000 TO 2004/2005

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
District Library	174,594	170,330	178,854	180,235	177,037	174,632
Motueka Library	96,717	91,017	87,495	90,243	88,415	90,724
Takaka Library	62,482	69,920	68,496	74,072	79,916	73,022
TOTAL	333,793	331,267	334,845	344,550	345,368	338,378



RECENT TASMAN DISTRICT LIBRARIES STATISTICS - JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2005 COMPARED TO JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2006

	2005	2006
Issues	105,304	110,207
Door count	54,914	57,035
Reservations*	1,213	1,649
Reference queries	2,338	2,331

* February only

ACTIVITIES

Friends of the Tasman District Libraries in association with Mark Raffills arranged an evening of poetry at which five local poets read from their work. In addition to Mark the poets were Cliff Fell, Ian Mc Donald, Jessica La Bas, and Rachel Bush.

Branch Librarian, Jay Robinson, and volunteers from the Friends of the Library provided a Library presence at the Council's stall at the Takaka A and P Show.

Various story time programmes were presented at the libraries during February.

In recent weeks, at schools throughout the Tasman District, children have received their medals of achievement for completing the *Reading is Fantastic* summer reading programme presented by the Tasman District Libraries. The programme is designed to reinforce the reading habit and improve the reading

skills of primary school-aged children by getting them to agree to read for 15 minutes each day during the summer holidays. Parents or caregivers agree to monitor and support the children in this commitment. The other key players in the programme are the librarians at the libraries in Richmond, Motueka, Takaka and Murchison. In order to complete the programme each child must visit the library at least four times and report to a librarian about the books they have been reading. As well as practicing reading the child learns to think about what they have read and to talk to another person about the book and their impressions of what they have read. In return library staff provide encouragement and suggest other books the child might enjoy. At each successful check-in the children are given a small reward as an incentive to continue reading through to the end of the programme.

“Lovely friendly staff with a great knowledge of resources available. 8 year old has discovered some wonderful new authors with their help”

“We enjoyed sharing books with our son which we had read as children, so great for us as well.”

This summer 405 children signed up for the programme and 370 completed it – a 91% success rate. Of the 370 children completing the programme, 163 were boys. Library staff had more than 1,700 individual interviews with children over the course of seven week programme. In the feedback given by parents the benefit of these check-in sessions is particularly highly valued.

“By reporting in the children needed to reflect on what they had read and attempt to summarise it. By reviewing the books they remember them. Our 10 year old son commented that the reporting gave him the confidence to discuss books and to practice speaking.”

This is the fourth year that the Tasman District Libraries have presented the summer reading programme. More children participated and completed the programme this year than ever before and places are keenly sought. Many parents were under starter’s orders from their children in December to be at the library on day one of registrations to be sure that they would have a place.

“An excellent and extremely beneficial programme to encourage children to read.”

Brian Paterson
District Librarian