

STAFF REPORT

TO: Community Services Committee
FROM: Libraries Manager
REFERENCE: L407
DATE: 18 February 2009
SUBJECT: Libraries Manager's Report

LIBRARIES

December and January are always busy months for our libraries but this summer has been particularly busy. Not only are the libraries vibrant and buzzing with the computer users but also with more traditional book borrowing as well. Overall issues are up 4% compared with January of last year. Motueka up 6%, Takaka is up 9% on the previous year! The volume, district wide for January was 63570 books lent to borrowers. This represents 1.4 books for every resident of the district for the month of January alone.

Recently a study has been published about return on investment for libraries in Queensland. These studies have been completed widely in the US in the past but this is the first Australasian study I'm aware of. Direct return on investment was \$3.65 for every dollar spent on libraries. Conditions are sufficiently similar in Australian and New Zealand public libraries to assume that that figure would be similar here.

SUMMER READING PROGRAMME

This year's summer reading programme was more successful than ever with 97% of the 400 children who enrolled completed the programme with 100% at Motueka library.

The feedback from parents was extremely positive: "top shelf", "the boys have loved being able to talk to staff about the books they've read", "brilliant programme to encourage reading skills".

THE PROW

Sunday 15 February saw the launch of THE PROW website: <http://www.theprow.org.nz/>

This is the culmination of 4.5 years of hard work by our own Cathy Vaughan – Information Services Librarian along with colleagues at Nelson Public Library, NMIT library, Marlborough library. Apart from being a great resource which fills a real gap, this website is highly authoritative. All the research has been carried out by professional librarians, all references authenticated and included. Early indications from the local schools and colleges are that this website will be a tremendous asset to the teaching staff for local history and heritage content. The idea for the website came from Cathy and a colleague at Nelson. She has worked long and hard for the duration of the project and her contribution has been an

essential part of the success of the project. Her work on The Prow is not finished as she will continue to research, authenticate and input stories onto the site as well as being part of the editorial panel which will manage the growth of the site.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Reciprocal borrowing

Reciprocal borrowing continues to be a very popular service for both our residents as well as those from Nelson who are joining our library (607 Nelson residents have joined our libraries and 942 Tasman residents have joined in Nelson in the first six months). I would like to extend this to Marlborough as well. The impact to both libraries is likely to be small. However, it makes sense for the three districts to continue to look for ways to work together in a variety of ways to find synergies and economies of scale which allow us to do more with the resources, human, capital and other.

Top of the South Talking book consortium

This has recently been declined funding for the next round of Talking Book purchasing. This is unfortunate as it has been several years since we received the last grant for this great project.

LMS

The nationwide consortium for a Library Management System is unlikely to become a reality for at least three years. Our LMS software is already out-of-date and is no longer supported. Nelson and Marlborough have software that will continue to be supported for another two years. Nevertheless, I think it is appropriate that we investigate possibilities for sharing an LMS with our neighbouring districts. We will investigate options which will allow Nelson and Marlborough to merge into our system when they are ready. This is an area where there are potential efficiencies to be made. There are models available to us to investigate – in Auckland, Dunedin and Bay of Plenty. The capabilities of modern systems allow libraries to provide tremendously improved catalogue interfaces to the public, increasing access or “findability” of our stock.

I will meet with my counterparts in Nelson and Marlborough over the coming weeks to investigate more short and long term areas for collaboration.

Annual People’s Network

The People’s Network has been in place for just under four months. Overall it is tremendously successful. There are however, some issues still being resolved. My main concern is the internet cafe owners who have written to us with their complaints of damaging their business. We have undertaken various strategies in Motueka particularly, to try to mitigate these concerns. I will write a separate report about the issues to ensure you are all fully informed about all aspects of the APN impact in our communities.

Meanwhile, we have put a booking system in place in Motueka and Takaka and are encouraging local people to make phone bookings. We have arranged a per session data cap on wifi sessions. We have reconfigured/restricted the areas for wifi use. Despite claims to the contrary, much of the pc and wifi use in all the libraries is by local users and this use is growing as more people discover it. We will continue to promote the APN to local users especially as we know there are so many rural people who have either no access to broadband or who can’t afford a connection. Access to broadband today is like access to a

telephone was in the past, a necessity of life for communication, commerce, education and leisure.

I am not surprised that we are experiencing some teething issues. I suspect that in a year's time however, ubiquitous, free internet in public libraries and elsewhere will be a part of the fabric of our lives. However, for now we will work to ameliorate the problems we are experiencing in the community.

Agriculture Database

In the first two weeks we have had 77 people making a total of 192 searches on this new database. We are working to promote it and will be offering training sessions for people wanting to learn to use it.

LISA

I am relocating to the North Island and will soon be leaving my position here in Tasman. I have tremendously enjoyed working for TDC and will be very sad to leave. I have enjoyed the support from my staff, my manager: Lloyd Kennedy, and from the council.

We have achieved a great deal in the libraries over the past year and I have no doubt that the fantastic staff at the libraries will continue to achieve great things in the years to come.

Lisa Oldham
Libraries Manager

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