



*Library and Information Association
of New Zealand Aotearoa
Te Rau Herenga O Aotearoa*

SUBMISSION ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002 AMENDMENT BILL (No 3)

Local Government and Environment Select Committee

February 2014



The Library and Information Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa (LIANZA) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Bill (No 3) 2013 (the Bill).

About LIANZA

LIANZA is the professional organisation for the Library and Information Management Profession in New Zealand. Our vision is to be the vibrant, vital professional voice for those engaged in Librarianship and Information management.

LIANZA has a total membership nearing 2,000 individuals and institutions, reaching into every library sector including public, tertiary, business, health & medical, law, central government, school and theological libraries and their professional staff.

LIANZA makes this submission on behalf of the LIANZA governing body.

LIANZA's position on the amendment

LIANZA supports many aspects of the Bill, including the need for improving the guidance and training for local authorities regarding development contributions.

LIANZA does have concerns with the Bill relating to the proposed removal of the ability for Councils to charge development contributions for the development of library facilities in New Zealand. *Purpose and Principles (Proposed ss197AA,AB)*

LIANZA understands the primary goal underpinning changes to development contributions is the need for more affordable housing, however, the unintended side effect of these changes could be an increased burden on the existing rate payer to fund development of community infrastructure such as libraries.

LIANZA agrees that territorial authorities should be guided by a clear set of purposes and principles when preparing and administering their development contribution policies.

The proposed purpose of development contributions is to help territorial authorities recover a fair, equitable and proportionate portion of the capital costs of infrastructure associated with new development. The development of new or existing libraries comprises part of the essential infrastructure managed by territorial authorities. The ability of libraries to support their user communities is directly impacted by the developments from which these contributions are collected. Consequently, libraries should be included in the definition of infrastructure that may be funded from development contributions.

LIANZA wishes to rely on two of the proposed principles to direct and guide the use of development contributions:

- Need: new developments create a *need* for new or expanded libraries.
- Equity: local authorities should have the autonomy to determine who will benefit from the infrastructure, as well as who created the need for the infrastructure in order to determine development contributions.

Specific areas of concern

1. Use of development contributions – definition of community infrastructure (Clause 49: proposed amendment of s197)

Clause 49 alters the definition of community infrastructure in s197 of the Act. Sub clause (2) lists community infrastructure as community or neighbourhood halls, play equipment on neighbourhood reserves, and public toilets. Libraries are excluded from this list.

1.1. Importance to the community

LIANZA strongly believes libraries should be included in the list of infrastructure that services local neighbourhood needs. Libraries play a recognised part in the social and cultural well being of communities, along with resources such as halls and reserves. Libraries represent a place for learning and recreation, an opportunity to socialise and participate in community activities, and play an important role in providing a safe and impartial space. The Kiwis Count Survey (2013) identified public libraries as the most often used

community resource, highlighting the importance of retaining adequate library services in communities.

New developments, areas of high growth and subdivisions create a demand for community services such as libraries. While libraries are available to all residents, it is due to population increases as a result of development that a strain is put on existing services and spaces.

1.2. Lack of alternative funding

In order to compensate for the impact that the changes to development contributions represent, additional strain will be put on territorial authorities to find money elsewhere. Alternative sources of funding for libraries, such as rates, user charges, grants or other revenue sources are unlikely to be sufficient to meet the costs of expanding or developing libraries, and places an unfair burden on existing rate payers to pay for the essential infrastructure associated with new developments.

The already tight budget environment of libraries will be further impacted by this change, as authorities look to find additional funds for new or expanding libraries within existing sources. Population growth is causally linked with the need to expand and upgrade. If funding from development contributions is cut, this could lead to library projects being deferred or cancelled, resulting in the degradation of, or even absence of adequate library services.

1.3. Autonomy of local government

LIANZA agrees with Local Government New Zealand that territorial authorities and communities are extremely diverse. In order for New Zealand to have thriving local communities, territorial authorities need to have the autonomy to take into account regional characteristics when determining required infrastructure.

The Minister's aim is for developers to pay for the infrastructure that is required by the development, whereas communities pay for the infrastructure that will benefit the whole community. While libraries do benefit the whole community, it is the development that creates the NEED for the expansion of the infrastructure. If growth-related capital expenditure is required, then

Councils should be entitled to charge development contributions for library expansion and development.

Territorial authorities that have included libraries in their development contributions policies include Hastings, Tauranga, Hamilton, Waipa and Dunedin. These regions have all recognised that libraries and book collections may need to be expanded due to population growth, and consequently it is appropriate to charge development contributions for this expenditure.

While the libraries are included in these policies, there is no obligation on the authority to charge development contributions to fund libraries. This is up to the local need of the authorities to determine. This is evidenced by developments such as the small Blueskin Bay library, which was funded jointly by the Council and community fundraising. LIANZA strongly advocates for the decision to rest with the territorial authority. If territorial authorities are now required to better apportion the costs of infrastructure between those who benefit from new or expanded infrastructure to the community and those who create a demand for it, they should be entitled to include libraries in this analysis, and base their decision on the specific circumstances of their region.

Current usage of development contributions for library development

Greerton library has funds allocated for spending from development contributions to expand the existing library that is currently at a quarter of the size it should be based on the population size of the community.

New facilities such as libraries are likely to be located in new communities, and are predominantly used by new residents. Thus they are an appropriate use of development contributions. The libraries in Flat Bush in Auckland and Papamoa in Tauranga, are located in new communities. These libraries are clearly growth related, and thus it is appropriate for development contributions to be charged. Rangiora Library, in Waimakariki, is another example of a library currently having development contributions funds collected for an extension. Te Takere library in Horowhenua also used funds from development contributions for library development.

Recommendations

LIANZA submits that libraries should be included in the list of community infrastructure in clause 49(2). If population growth as a result of new developments has created a need for new or expanded libraries, Councils should be entitled to charge development contributions for the infrastructure costs.

Oral Submission

LIANZA would like to appear before the Committee, to make an oral submission.