

Submission to Hurunui District Council on the Draft Annual Plan 2014 / 2015

LIANZA recognises that Local Government face tough economic times and supports the choice that Hurunui District Council has made in keeping in deferring capital work and other expenditure in order to maintain an average rate increase of 2.9% for the district for the 2014/15 year.

However, LIANZA wishes to express its concern around the impact of some of the proposed budget cuts to community services. As evident in the district plan the funding for Library Services will decrease with the library acquisitions budget dropping from \$67,000 to \$40,000 – a cut of 40%. This would mean that the only library with a lower purchasing budget on a per capita basis would be Kaipara.

Currently the Hurunui District libraries have a membership of 6,234 – just over 55% of the population and above the national average for library membership. With over 130,000 issues a year Hurunui District has up to 50,000 more issues than libraries with similar purchasing budgets, meaning any cuts would put significant pressure on the library collection.

It is also important to consider the value public libraries bring to the community in the widest sense – both in services and place. The Kiwis Count survey, carried out by the State Services Commission since 2012, shows New Zealanders are visiting public libraries more often and rated their service higher than any other public service.

The International Federation of Library Association / UNESCO Public Library Manifesto states:

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

This Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

UNESCO therefore encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries.

While we understand the need to pursue aggressive cost reductions in order to achieve the budget savings targeted by council, we would recommend that the Council not impose further pressures on the purchasing budget for the Hurunui District Libraries, and retain the current budget.

We do not wish to speak in support of our submission.

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