

## REPORT TO SOUTH ISLAND LIBRARY MANAGERS' MEETING

This report covers twelve months to March 2007

### **New key appointments**

The review of library accountabilities earlier last year led to a reorganisation of our structure and the implementation of a new matrix structure. Fourteen positions were disestablished and fifteen new roles were created, with a new leadership team comprising five new and two existing roles. The remaining new positions are a mixture of team leaders and specialist roles. The last six months have been a time of intensive recruitment to implement these changes. All but one of the new leadership positions were filled by internal appointments and the new team was in place by early November 2006. Following initial team building there has been a strong focus on planning and delivery of numerous projects as well as communicating with the wider library about the new roles, working within the new matrix structure and identifying key priorities and projects for the next six months.

Following the departure of our Digital Library Services Manager, John Truesdale, in December, recruitment has taken place for a new Digital Library Services Manager and the appointment should be finalised in the near future. However, staffing changes continue for the leadership team with Margaret Clune's resignation earlier this month from one of the two Community Library Manager positions. Applications have just closed for this role.

All other new positions have been filled and the new teams are working together very well. In addition there has been a big recruitment drive since January with 24 library assistant vacancies filled by an equal number of internal and external candidates.

### **Christchurch City Libraries Performance Year to Date (February End)**

Circulation figures of just over 4 million year to date reflect a 21% increase on the same period last year. The big impact is largely related to the opening of our Upper Riccarton library and the inclusion of the Banks Peninsula Libraries into the network.

Footcount is consistent with Circulation, 26% up on the same period last year. Again this is a reflection of Banks Peninsula Libraries and Upper Riccarton.

Our collection turnover for February was at 46% of borrowable stock. This is slightly back on previous months reflecting February as a traditionally quieter month. The variance between library collections is 20% to 70% reflecting the impact of the changing use of our libraries following the opening of Upper Riccarton. Collection sizes are being considered as part of our collection policy development.

Self Issues are at a relatively stable 29% throughout the network although our new libraries have rates of up to 42%.

Reserves are nearly 18% up on last year. 16,765 new members have enrolled since July, 15.4% up on last year. Fingertip Library is handling around 7,000 calls per month.

**LTCCP** – There was an overwhelming response from the community to the library cuts proposed in the draft LTCCP earlier last year, with 1047 submissions received. As a result the proposal was not supported by Council when it finalised and confirmed the plan in June 2006. However, the content of the submissions gave valuable information which will be

incorporated into the 2025 Plan. Some trends that emerged includes the Libraries' role in lifelong learning, libraries as heart of the community, access issues and comments about transport and congestion on the roads. The Mayor was quoted in media saying that "councillors had underestimated the value of suburban libraries and had forgotten how important they are to the everyday lives of people".

### **Bindery Review**

Work began at the end of last year on a review of the Bindery operation in response to a Council recommendation to investigate the feasibility of outsourcing Library bindery services to provide operational expenditure savings. This had originally been proposed in the draft LTCCP.

The review has focussed on determining the level of operational efficiency of the current bindery operation through analysis of current work, benchmarking with two similar Library bindery services and establishing market interest by seeking expressions of interest from potential commercial providers. The latter process has been conducted by the Council procurement team and revealed that there is insufficient interest in the market to conduct a formal tender process. The results of the review will be presented to Council management shortly.

### **Collection Development Plan**

With a new Content Manager and team leaders in place, a policy framework for collection development with core principles has been created. Library staff focus groups are currently being conducted to gather feedback on the core principles. Once these have been refined and finalised, the detailed policies and management procedures will be developed.

### **Online Services**

*Monthly Edition*, a magazine-style experience of some of the Library's best online content, was launched with in January. A new themed edition will be published at the start of every month, with a refreshed focus each week. The visual appeal of the website has been enhanced with a fresh, clean look and constantly renewed and expanded content.

### **Debt Management**

In December new tougher measures were introduced to better manage and reduce the debt related to overdue and non returned items. Customers are now notified earlier and more frequently about overdue items using email and telemessaging. This is running smoothly and early indications are that customers are bringing items back earlier as a result of the earlier and more frequent reminders. The feedback is generally positive with some suggestions for minor improvements. The project has been a complex and protracted body of work for both library and the Council debt recovery staff, requiring significant changes to systems and processes. Work has nearly completed to finalise new "end" processes when an invoice is issued and debtors are handed to a collection agency. Measures are also being developed to accurately gauge the effectiveness of the changes.

### **Riccarton Library 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday**

As part of Upper Riccarton Library's 1<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations a very successful initiative took place entitled Our Family, Our Library, Our Community. This was a photographic project to capture Upper Riccarton library customers and their families. 25 families participated by having their photographs taken by a professional photographer and then sharing their stories. The results are on display until the end of March.

### **Future funding for South Learning Centre**

Work began mid way through 2006 to secure ongoing funding from central government to contribute to the ongoing operational running costs of the South Learning Centre. The centre has been funded in part by the Ministry of Education who provided a significant one off grant

when it opened. This grant, for funding programmes for schools in the South Christchurch area will be used up by mid 2007.

A project team, involving local principals, worked with the library to prepare an application for renewed MOE funding. This was defined as a partnership renewal proposal with a joint research project to measure outcomes and monitor performance for both partners. It was forwarded to the Minister of Education and the local Christchurch office for consideration in December and the response to date is that it is under discussion.

### **Libraries 2025 Facilities Plan**

Planning for the library facility plan is underway again after a lengthy hiatus in 2006 and the first meeting of the project team was held in February. The team is led by Sally Thompson, Places and Spaces Manager, and has representation from several other Council units and shared services. A project brief is currently being prepared for the Council Executive. It is expected that the plan will not be completed until next year because the public consultation process will be delayed by Council elections later in 2007.

Carolyn Robertson  
Libraries and Information Manager, Christchurch City Libraries

March 2007