

**Grey District Library
Report to South Island Library Managers Conference
26-27 March 2007**

The last year has been one of change.

New staff and staffing structure

In March 2006, the District Librarian, Frances Buckley finished working at Grey District Library. Frances had been working at the library for 39 years - since she left school. I took up the position part way through July.

Following the retirement of the Deputy Librarian in October we had a slight restructuring of staff and library opening hours:

Previous staff structure:

District Librarian
Deputy Librarian
Assistant Librarian
2 Library Assistants
Runanga Library Assistant

New staff structure:

District Librarian
Deputy Librarian
3 Library Assistants (one position a 36
hour Tuesday-Saturday position)
Runanga Library Assistant

Outcomes: The library in Greymouth is open longer (3 hours) on a Saturday and with two staff members working, instead of one, now offers a full Saturday service. The 36 hour position includes a new children and teenagers services role. Customers have reacted favourably, staff no longer dread working on Saturdays, and there has been some savings in salary payments. The Assistant Librarian was promoted to Deputy Librarian, after internal advertising.

The small Runanga Community Library continues to be open 6 hours per week.

Technology

- .eLM was installed in June, 2007 to replace C2
- Our Online Library went live in March 2006. It includes links to the EPIC databases and to selected websites. This was a very exciting development for us. Computer literate customers are giving us good feedback.
- The West Coast Libraries are excited to be one of the four Library groups in the pilot Aotearoa New Zealand People's Network. This will allow us to offer our citizens much more – a step on the way to addressing equality in services delivered by urban and rural libraries
- We are about to get a new, modern, colour photocopier/printer
- We are lucky, compared with a lot of small libraries, to have technology support – an IT person with a part-time contract with the council. This has been of enormous assistance, especially in the setting up of our Online Library

Processes

Many changes have been made in the last 9 months, with the aim of streamlining processes and becoming more time-efficient. We are moving from handwritten recording and manual budgeting to computer generated records and spread sheeting. Library Assistants are learning to become responsible for a number of processes previously done by the District Librarian. Hopefully, this will free me up to concentrate on the things that need doing as part of the District Librarian role.

Staff Development

The current Professional Development/staff training budget is \$1000, including accommodation and travel. My manager has recognised the need to increase this. This year, for the first time ever, a librarian from Grey District has attended a LIANZA conference. That, and attending this conference have more than used the budget!

Updating and training Library Assistants has been, historically, an issue at this library. Many of you will know of Frances's strong belief that a national programme for the training and upskilling of Library Assistants is necessary. With our new staffing structure and my new customer services expectations, the front-line staff (generally the Library Assistants) have coped with a number of changes and have many new things to learn. From almost entirely doing circulation work at the front desk they are now being asked to move to a *yes we will help you with any query if we possibly can* model. This is involving changing ways of thinking, ways of communicating with customers, learning about reference interviews, learning to search electronically and learning to search the EPIC databases. While most of us have made these transformations in small steps the Library Assistants here are facing one large leap. We have introduced regular Friday morning in-house coaching for Library Assistants (coached by myself and the Deputy Librarian). Two Library Assistants have also attended the Kiwi Host programme.

I have introduced mini-performance appraisal/work-in-progress meetings, based on job descriptions to recognise successes and identify actions and strategies for improvement/learning. Staff reaction to this new development has been favourable.

The compliancy inspection

In about September we removed from the shelves and destroyed all videos, CDs and tapes that were not compliant (i.e. did not have NZ ratings on them or were copies). Many customers commented and one customer was irate. About 2 months later we had a surprise visit from Department of Internal Affairs officers to check that we were compliant (they had received a complaint). I'm pleased to say that we passed. We were also assured that we had done the right thing in destroying the items.

Other changes

- Starting a regular story time
- Joining the Reading Crusade (thank you Christchurch City Libraries)
- Becoming pro-active, to establish relationships with schools
- Establishing connections with local organisations and having joint organisation/library displays in the library
- Establishing comment books, inviting feedback from the public

- Changing the overdue notification time from 1 week to 2 weeks overdue. This to save on stamps and time (we do not have an automatic overdues system)
- No card charges for children and teenagers up to the age of 19 when joining the library (a charge of \$2.00 for a card for all new members applied previously and was a barrier for families)
- Children and teenagers up to the age of 19 can have as many free holds as they want (previous limit of 1)
- A new YA borrower category (allows them the free advantages of children's membership plus access to adult fiction)

The parking problem

An issue for this library – only the lucky can get a park near the library – difficult for parents with small children, some disabled and some elderly.

Collection and funding

The Grey District Library collection falls far short of the Standards for New Zealand Public Libraries. Reasons for this include:

- Not enough space. In 2003 the library was upgraded, resulting in a pleasant space for adult customers but far less space for books. Our collection total is 65% of the recommended level in the Standards and the library is full. The upgraded library is expected to meet needs for 20 years.
- Funding. Our 2006/7 book and magazine budget is \$40,748. (Our population is 13,244) It has been around \$40,000 for a number of years and is approximately \$15,000 less than it was 11 years ago. As well, magazines and newspapers now come out of the book budget, instead of the general budget as they did previous to this year. Major comparisons have not been made yet, but when comparing with our much smaller neighbour at Hokitika, who have a higher budget than us, our situation does not look good. Most public complaint is about the lack of new books and cancelled newspapers and magazines. It is hard to maintain issue rates (which we are not) and keep a fresh collection when there are few new books and years of low funding.

I am pleased, that in conjunction with the other West Coast Libraries, we will be subscribing to the full EPIC package in April. We are particularly pleased that we will be able to offer Encyclopaedia Britannica and feel that this more accessible database will encourage young people to use EPIC.

Income and rental collection

Since July 1st our library generated income has been \$43,143, so far equalling our yearly book budget. Most of the income comes from Rental fiction. 85% of our adult fiction is rental. Items in the adult free fiction area tend to be New Zealand fiction and books considered to be of literary worth. Interestingly, moving a book from free fiction to rental can increase the issue rate because many customers expect to find their type of book in the rental collection. It is also interesting that the segment of our population that are more literary (and possibly have more money) are the ones who get the free books.

Our other major income earner is the internet. Being at the end of the Tranz Alpine and on a major tourist route we get a lot of tourists using the internet. Another trend emerging is tourists coming in to download their photos on to disc – not technically

using the internet therefore not charged, but tying up our computers for an hour or so. We will need to come up with a policy to deal with this soon.

I have some professional issues with our charges but I must admit that many of our users are happy paying for fiction. Like many libraries we must generate income. I have not looked into generating income in different ways. I suspect, as a small district, that we do not have the funding or population base to make our income from other types of collections such as DVDs. I am hoping to eliminate the card charge on joining – it is a barrier to joining and more members equals more rental income.

Membership

In June over 3000 inactive members were removed from the database. Membership figures are tracking upwards and we now have 6857 members, 52% of the population. Our actual user figure is higher as many members share cards.

The future

There are more challenges ahead:

- Further streamlining of processes
- Upgrading and writing new policies and processes documents
- Reorganising the library to create a more attractive and bigger children's area, and hopefully an area for teenagers
- Widening staff viewpoints and continuing training and support to improve customer service
- Increasing public awareness of and use of the library and library services
- Evaluating the collection and collection needs, and establishing a collection development plan
- Convincing council to increase the book budget
- Establishing and expanding connections with education providers and other organisations in the district, especially to promote literacy in the area (as this has been identified as a need)
- Literacy promoting programmes for babies and children
- A work station for everyone
- Work safe processes and equipment to reduce likelihood of OOS
- Continuing to expand the West Coast Librarians and Libraries collaboration. Joint large print buying, large print and audio swaps, joint applications for People's Network and EPIC, sharing of our specialist areas and knowledge and general support of each other is invaluable. Thanks Sarah and Michaela

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