

LIANZA statement on proposed changes at the National Library and Archives New Zealand

LIANZA is concerned to hear about the proposed changes at the National Library and Archives New Zealand and the potential impact on specialist library expertise and services across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Any situation where library and information professionals are facing the possibility of losing their jobs, alongside potential reductions to the services they provide, is worrying. Our immediate thoughts are with colleagues whose roles may be affected by the proposal. The knowledge and expertise held by people working across our national institutions are important not only to those organisations, but to the wider library, information, education and heritage sectors.

Libraries play an essential role in communities across Aotearoa New Zealand, supporting literacy, learning and equitable access to information, while connecting people with knowledge, culture and our shared heritage. The expertise of the people who deliver these services is central to the role libraries play.

The National Library plays an important role within Aotearoa New Zealand's library and information ecosystem. Alongside collecting, preserving and providing access to our documentary heritage, it has a mandate to “supplement and further the work of other libraries in New Zealand”. Through this role, it provides services and infrastructure that support libraries across the country. This support includes shared digital services that many libraries, particularly smaller ones, would struggle to provide independently at the same scale, cost or consistent quality.

Of particular concern to LIANZA is the potential impact on services supporting schools, literacy and learning. These services provide important expertise and support to school libraries and educators across Aotearoa New Zealand, and we want to ensure that schools continue to have equitable access to high-quality library advice, resources and professional support.

We also recognise the importance of maintaining specialist capability in areas such as preservation, digital preservation, collection description and research. These are areas where expertise can take many years to develop and plays an important role in preserving and providing access to Aotearoa New Zealand's documentary heritage.

The National Library is facing many of the same pressures being experienced by libraries across the country, including rising costs, increasing demands and pressure on baseline expenditure. LIANZA recognises the difficult environment this creates and that the proposals are currently subject to consultation.

We understand that the National Library's wider services to the library sector are not proposed to be reduced through these changes, which is reassuring. However, we need to better understand any potential longer-term implications for services and professional capability.

LIANZA is also talking with sector partners, including PLNZ and SLANZA, and there is a shared concern about the potential loss of expertise and capability. We will continue to work together to support affected colleagues and services as the situation develops.

I will be meeting with the National Librarian shortly as part of the Strategic Sector Roundtable, which will provide an opportunity to better understand the proposed changes and their potential impact. LIANZA will continue to engage constructively with the National Library as the proposal progresses.

Where we can, LIANZA will also work alongside the National Library and the wider sector to support services and strengthen professional capability. We will continue to advocate for the value of libraries, the expertise of library and information professionals, and strong and sustainable library services for communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.



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