

Submitter: Methven Library Committee (Julie Barlass)

Hi,

My name is Julie Barlass and along with the 11 other members of the Methven Library Committee, we would like to give our complete support and agreement to Liz and her committees's submission regarding community libraries.

I have lived in the Methven area for 47 years and taught at both Colleges. I have been a subscriber to the Methven Library for all of that time and a member of the library committee for 42 years. My husband has been a Trustee for over 20 years.

Our committee volunteer to provide a welcoming environment for our subscriber families and the general community and visitors as well. We charge a small subscription per family and a small book rental .There is no charge for children's books.

We have slightly under 100 adults enrolled and approximately 80 children have access to the library through their parents or grandparents.From time to time we have visits from the local schools and pre schools.

We receive a three monthly exchange collection from the Ashburton Library comprising adult and children's books. The large print we borrow from Ashburton are very much appreciated by the residents of Methven House. We can only borrow books one year old and older to leave the newest books available for Ashburton residents. We do not charge for any of the loan books in keeping with the Ashburton Library's system. We are grateful to the Ashburton Library and the staff for this privilege.

Our committee has had some new, young members join over the last few years and the members are all willing to do their duty at the Library,cover and repair books, do the cleaning, attend meetings and remove dated stock.

Our reader numbers have grown slightly with the new building,but the constant is that they want recent, up to date fiction as soon as possible after release. Without the certainty that we will receive a realistic grant from ADC we cannot be confident that we can do this. We too, purchase approximately \$500.00 worth of books each month, the majority locally. These books are then covered and accessioned by the committee.We also have subscriptions to several magazines.Our insurance is more expensive in the new building and fundraising, subs and rentals and the odd donation just cover this and other expenses plus book expenses not covered by the ADC grant.

This is not a financially comfortable position to be in. Uncertainty as to the ADC grant and the method and mechanism for receiving it cause us some anxiety. Local organisations and individuals are not spontaneously generous towards the Library because they assume we receive running costs from the Council as we provide a public service. They also note they pay a library rate.

We ask, in support of Rakaia's submission that a larger percentage of the \$1.8 million allocation to libraries is shared equitably with the rural libraries and that the work of volunteers in providing this service, so appreciated and vital in their communities is thereby recognised.

We would also ask that there is some certainty surrounding this financial support for book related expenses.The process for receiving the grant has become somewhat unwieldy and repetitive and has also been altered without warning or explanation several times over the last few years. This has caused a lack of confidence in the system and the support of the Council for our efforts and the Library itself. An accountability process as a requirement is understood and expected.

If we are to make the best use of the beautiful new Library and Museum building in Methven, we need to be confidently purchasing fresh,interesting and stimulating fiction and non fiction for our

community, maintaining and promoting our premises as a safe and comfortable space to come and meet people, to be stimulated and informed, to hold a meeting and meet like minded people. A Library is vital in any growing community and in most places a service provided by the local body.

The Methven Library has a proud history and it and the new and old buildings were established through the physical and fundraising efforts of volunteers. We respectfully ask that the ADC support us with a representative share of the rates take collected for Libraries, and that we can be confident from year to year of receiving the financial support we need to continue to make our Library a vibrant space, active in encouraging reading and literacy in the Methven community.

We completely endorse the comments, facts and sentiments of the Rakaia submission and I would like to personally thank Liz Depree for encouraging us to become involved in submitting and congratulate her and her fellow committee members on their excellent summary.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opinion and make our expectations clear. We have received help from Councillor McKay in the past concerning funding and he was of considerable assistance when we navigated the complexities of a joint use building and a post earthquake replacement building. A connection between the local body and the community is vital and our library can be a place to encourage and facilitate this. We would welcome a visit from Councillors to see and appreciate the asset the Museum and Library committee have established for the Methven community.

On behalf of the Methven Library Committee,

Julie Barlass