

Public Libraries of NZ : a strategic framework

Submission from : New Zealand Law Librarians Inc. (NZLL)

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Official Information Act 1982 and Privacy Act 1993 requirements

The NZLL does not have any objections to the release of this submission, in whole or in part.

“In a modern state committed to upholding the rule of law, it is...a cornerstone... that for citizens to comply with the law they must know what the law is.”

<http://www.pco.parliament.govt.nz/corporatefile/soi2005-2008.shtml#outcomes>

NZLL's focus is the role public libraries must play in the provision of legal and government information to citizens. We have responded to those questions to which we feel we can contribute.

Public libraries are indeed key institutions of civil society and could be the channel for bringing government information to citizens.

Central and local government both have a responsibility to citizens, to ensure that government information is available **locally**, and public libraries may be the only and best point of free access to both paper and Internet-based government and legal information. It is imperative that

- i) public libraries provide free access to these resources
- ii) expertise in government and legal information is available to citizens

Question 4 : Collaboration

In the “Central government” paragraph (p26) it is proposed that central government will assist public libraries to provide government information to the public.

NZLL proposes that:

- i) law and government librarians collaborate with public libraries to provide their clients with an 'Ask a Librarian' service for legal / official / government information sources.
- ii) it assist the National Library to facilitate courses for public librarians to build their knowledge of this material
- iii) National Library and the Parliamentary Library provide leadership to government, official, regulatory agencies to facilitate ease of access to their publications.
- iv) collaborative developments such as the Citizens Advice Bureau located in Wellington Public Library are to be encouraged.
- v) local government must assume responsibility for adequate storage of and access to the regional deposit collections that already exist. Deposit collections in regional areas are critical to the role of public libraries in providing access to information about government and New Zealand's democratic institutions.

Question 6 : Public Library Act

We think that a Public Library Act would be valuable if it enabled public libraries to become the conduit for citizens to gain access to information about government and civil society.

Access requires guaranteed funding and ongoing support for connection, high-speed broadband access and for sufficient bandwidth, equipment, upgraded programmes and IT support.

Question 8 : Building strong communities

We think that public libraries 'have a role in contributing to the building of strong communities...' by assisting people to be well-informed citizens who can play an active, responsible and informed role in civil society.