

## **LIANZA STATEMENT**

LIANZA The Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa were aware of the proposed restructuring of Waitaki District Libraries. We met with and heard the concerns of some members who worked at these libraries.

A letter was sent to the Mayor on these issues.

In our letter, LIANZA made these key points:

- Librarians are critical to providing their communities with high-quality information and the resources they need. They are experts in information management, research, and technology and are dedicated to helping people find the resources they need to succeed in education, work, and life.
- A wide range of skills are needed in public libraries, from programme management and communication to dealing with complex social situations and research and analysis skills. Customer service technicians cannot be substituted for trained and qualified librarians and library assistants.
- Library staff are more than 'customer service representatives,' although that is one of their many skills. Libraries provide diverse support in response to the changing needs of their local communities and are vibrant centres of local activity, learning, and connection.
- To retain a fit-for-purpose service in six different libraries, LIANZA believe skilled library and information professionals and leadership are needed.
- Replacing trained and qualified librarians with 'customer service' staff would result in a decline in the level of service and support available in libraries as they do not have the same level of expertise, training, and experience.

In addition to these comments, LIANZA would like to add that public libraries' provision of council services in addition to library services is not new. There are other library-council service hubs over the country managing the range of services and this is a trend.

While service desks might be found in these community hubs, they tend to have the trained library staff to provide the expertise needed for library work.

The revised [2022 IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto](#) is a useful resource.