

Libraries, art gallery, museum



Users: Patrons

General Benefit: Education, cultural

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Rationale for assigning benefits

User charges contribute to but do not meet the entire cost of the direct benefits of the library service, the museum and the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Meeting the shortfall is shared between residential and commercial ratepayers, with the former allocated the highest proportion as they represent the largest user group. General benefits outweigh direct benefits for the library and the art gallery on the basis of the cultural, economic and social value of an educated and informed community. This is considered to be greater than the benefit gained by individuals in accessing and using particular information. The commercial sector gains general benefit from the availability of a literate, culturally sensitive work force.

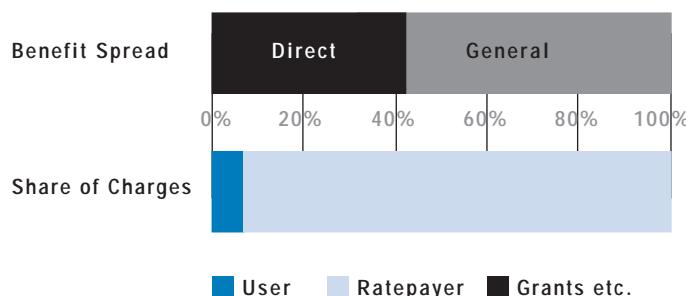
Other considerations

Free access to information is fundamental to the democratic process and should be available regardless of income. It is therefore Council policy to make library services available at nominal cost.

The cost of general benefits of the art gallery have been allocated on the basis of Council policy, practicality and fairness. It is in the community interest for people to see art regardless of income. Charging to fully recover costs has been considered but rejected as it would be likely to result in lower attendance, especially at exhibitions of local works, defeating the purpose of maintaining the gallery. The feasibility of charging non-residents for admission will be investigated in the future.

The Council is obliged by statute to make a contribution to the Canterbury Museum.

Who should pay?



The Council operates the Central Library and library facilities at 12 suburban locations. Libraries issue around 5,000,000 items each year to the 225,000 people who are members of the Canterbury Public Library. The service includes lending, information services, reference materials, other materials for lending and maintenance of the New Zealand collection of archival and reference material.

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery and the Annex maintain a collection of Canterbury and New Zealand art, undertake regular art education programmes at primary, secondary, tertiary and community levels, exhibit local, national and international art shows and are patronised by over 250,000 visitors each year.

They also play a critical and leading role conserving Canterbury's cultural heritage.

The Council also contributes to the operation of the Canterbury Museum.

The total annual cost of supporting these institutions is \$20.9 million – \$16.4 million to libraries, \$2.2 million to the art galleries and \$2.3 million to the museum.

Who Benefits?

