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To whom it may concern

Closure of libraries page 8 Summary version

It is of great concern to us as Christchurch ratepayers and for me Hazel as a practising primary school teacher to read of the council's proposed plan to close some suburban libraries plus the Mobile Library service as cost – cutting measures to keep rates down. We have lived in the Burnside area with our family for over thirty years and regularly used the Bishopdale library as have many friends and neighbours.

Public libraries provide a community service that cannot be measured in terms of monetary value. They are an integral part of the local community providing numerous resources to a complete cross – section of the neighbourhood from which they are located from the youngest to the oldest person irrespective of income, gender, race or religion. They are a great facility for immigrants to New Zealand.

Public libraries especially suburban ones provide a community centre to the local people and if necessary could be further utilised to meet the increasing needs of the neighbourhood.

As a primary teacher I have used the Bishopdale library for class lessons and to extend my own teaching resources as well as my own personal reading. I have observed families using the facilities that otherwise apart from school would not have the access to the range of books etc

Books are vital for children encouraging them to read, to develop the necessary communication and cognitive skills essential to meet the demands of a changing world.

To reduce the number of libraries is to deny ready access to a local amenity already operational, especially when it is part of the local shopping centre. Trends seem to advocate one stop shopping and at Bishopdale we have exactly that. With increasing petrol prices and growing congestion on the roads we have a facility that is easily accessible and within walking distance to many local homes as well. Surely this is a more viable option with a view to a sustainable future.

To close local libraries and the mobile library would be a short sighted and backward step. With an increasingly fragmented and diverse population we have a responsibility to safeguard the interests of those who have less opportunity and access to the "tools" needed to enable us to become educated members of society.

I realise and accept that there are limits to what we can afford but libraries make a huge contribution to the quality of life across the nation. We have to look at alternative options.

Yours faithfully

  
Hazel and Warwick Fyfe