



8. INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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Corporate Plan Output: 8.2.4 Advice	

The purpose of this report is to update and inform the Committee of the involvement of the Libraries Manager in the International Network of Public Libraries and to document the contribution made by Canterbury Public Library to the outcomes of the Network.

The International Network of Public Libraries is funded by the Bertelsmann Foundation in Gutersloh, Germany. The Foundation is known to the Council for its sponsorship of the International Cities of Tomorrow network of which the Council is a member.

The International Network of Public Libraries had its inaugural meeting in Gutersloh in 1996. Sue Sutherland, as Libraries Manager of Canterbury Public Library, was invited to participate along with Chief Librarians from Australia, United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada and Germany. Selection was based on a number of factors, including technological innovation and reputation. Canterbury Public Library was recommended by the Department of Library and Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. In addition our web site (the first for a public library in Australasia) and other innovations such as the Trustbank funded computers for children were also taken into consideration.

The objectives of the network are to pool international know-how, to strengthen the exchange of experience among public library experts, to develop successful concepts and above all, to promote their practical implementation.

The International Network has been through two iterations of its project cycle and is currently in the middle of a third cycle. Each project cycle has seen the participants either research and produce papers outlining model solutions on a particular topic or implement the model solution outlined by someone else. New members joined the Network in 1998/99 from USA, Netherlands and Finland and again there were new members joining for the third cycle in 1999/2000. This included a second member from New Zealand, Alison Dobbie, Dunedin City Librarian.

Canterbury Public Library has contributed to three papers during this time. They are:

- *Organisational change in a public library – a case study*, by Nicola Campbell and Sue Sutherland
- *Strategic management, a study in implementation* by Sue Sutherland
- *Public Library Administrators in the public arena* by June Garcia and Sue Sutherland

A fourth contribution is in preparation on the topic of *Learning from others*. The original papers have been published in German and Spanish, and in English by Scarecrow Press in the USA.

Participation in the Network has been of real benefit to the Library and the Council through the learning opportunities it has provided the Libraries Manager. In addition the profile of our library service and the city has been considerably enhanced by the involvement. Our libraries compare favourably with their counterparts overseas both in terms of use by citizens and in technology uptake, collections and services. But we can always learn from others – new ways of doing things, new approaches, and new services. Unfortunately the Network has not met here in New Zealand, so we have not had the opportunity to host other countries so that they can experience us first hand. Meetings of the network have been held in Canada, the USA, England and Finland as well as Germany.

The costs of the International Network of Public Libraries have been fully met by the Bertelsmann Foundation. I have conveyed, in the past, the gratitude of the Library and the Council, for this sponsorship, which has made it possible for the Libraries Manager to be a participant.

A copy of the brochure on the International Network has been separately circulated.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.