



# Removing Library Fines:

## Improving community access and investment

Fines were introduced to encourage members to return books. Evidence suggests this is ineffective and creates barriers to use. The fines model is outdated considering increases in e-resources. Overdue fines are out of step with Council strategies to increase use of libraries, empower communities and further their well-being. 31% of NZ public libraries are completely fines free and this is increasing each year.

### Fines are not a sustainable form of revenue

#### If everyone returned their items on time, there would be no revenue

33%

33% of fees & charges incurred was never collected by Auckland Libraries in 2020. Libraries' revenue from fines has decreased over the last 5 years due to increased use of e-resources.

\$\$\$

Collecting fines is expensive -costs include hours of staff time, collection agency costs and ill will. Some libraries reported it costs them more to collect fines than the amount they were collecting.

### Fines don't bring back materials faster

Libraries that have eliminated overdue fines get materials back at the same rate (or even faster). Your Library will continue to send overdue notices and charge borrowers for items not returned.

5%

Salt Lake Public Library's late-return rate dropped from 9% to 4% following fine elimination.

3x

Without the threat of a library fine books were *three times* as likely to be returned -The City of Sydney.

### Fines DO have a negative impact

35,000

Prior to being fines free about 35,000 Tamaki Makaurau library members were blocked annually from borrowing because they owed more than \$10.

"I didn't want to come back to the library -I was scared about the fine. I'm so happy now there aren't fines." ~Upper Hutt Library Customer.



Most libraries report that those blocked from borrowing for unpaid fines are over-represented in poorer neighbourhoods, and by Māori and Pacific.

"We didn't have books in my house so I went to the library for my homework. Then I got some overdue fines, and my family couldn't afford to . pay them. I never went back".

### Dropping fines will increase use

16%

16% ↑ children's issues after removal of fines at San Rafael Library.

18%

18% ↑ in membership after of removal of fines at Library Upper Hutt City Libraries.

8,000

8,000 ↑ in membership in Tasmania when overdue fees were scrapped.