

ZERO, ZILCH, NADA

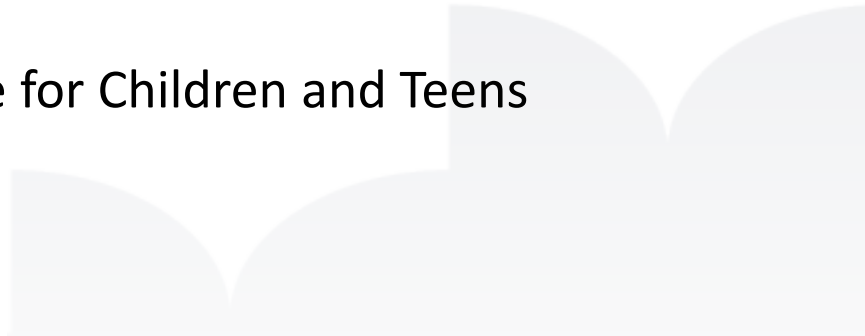
Zero Fees Implementation Upper Hutt Libraries

*Presented by Raschel Eesa-Danes
Access and Content Team Leader
Upper Hutt Libraries*

*Co-authored with Marion Read
Former Libraries Manager, Upper Hutt Libraries*



Introduction

- 16 November 2020 Upper Hutt Libraries became 5th NZ Library to go Fines Free
 - Earlier adopters: Rangitikei, Central Hawkes Bay, Masterton and Selwyn
 - Global trend started in 2017
 - 2021 - Auckland, Nelson, Waimakariri, Opotiki and Wairarapa Libraries
 - 75% of New Zealand Libraries fine free for Children and Teens
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Background

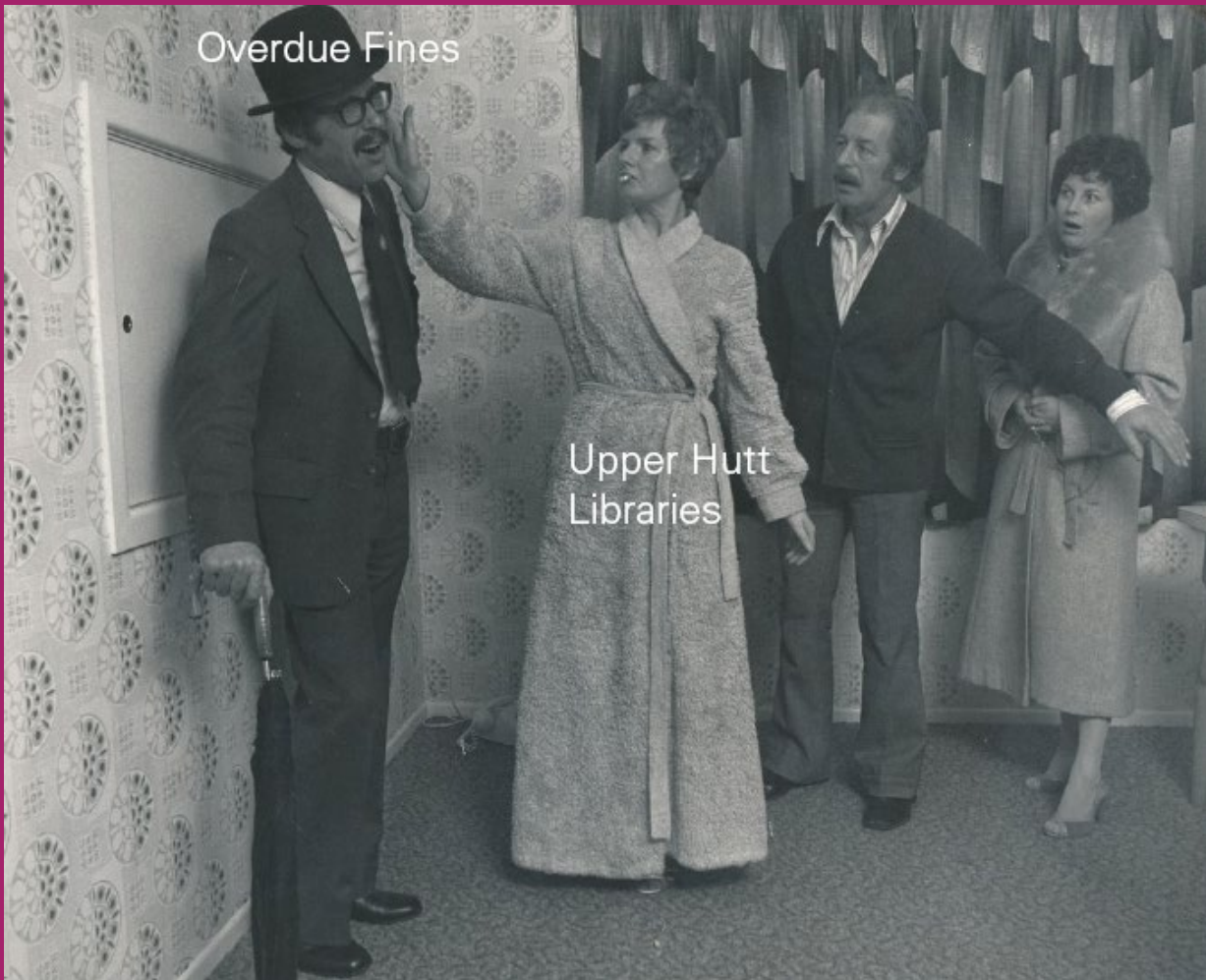
- Use of Physical resources declining
- Impact of Building closure 2018/19 and COVID-19 Lockdowns 2020
- Other socio-economic factors including financial barriers
- Barrier free access to Libraries and their resources is identified as a key factor for community wellbeing and that libraries play a positive role in community recovery.
- Fining” as an incentive to return items on time, is more of a deterrent to using the library than an effective tool to manage overdue items
- Growing support for Fines Free trend

ZERO

~~Overdue Fines~~

Overdue Fines

Upper Hutt
Libraries





ask here

pātai māi

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NOW**

*We've got
no fines!*

www.upperhuttlibrary.co.nz

  @UHLlibrary

 Ngā Puna Mātauranga o
Te Awa Kairangi ki Uta
Upper Hutt Libraries

Removing fines works

- Barrier free access to Libraries is identified as a key factor for community wellbeing
- Impact of removing fines in UK:
 - 6.5% in new members,
 - 4% increase in items issued
 - 3% increase in visitor numbers
- Detractors argue that removal of fines provides no incentive for patrons to return items
 - Studies prove that reverse is true – examples of increased return rates






Presenting the Case

- 2015 Fines for Children removed
 - 8% increase in collection usage
 - No significant difference in non-returned items
- Research Research Research – do the homework
- Get management support
- Socialise idea first – used annual Activity Plan process
- Communicate the Benefits for Council
- Know the outcomes you want to achieve

Identifying the right opportunity and timing

- Alignment to the New Zealand Libraries Partnership Programme with the focus on community recovery from Covid-19.
- Fee Waiver scheme for New Zealand Libraries.
- The premise for this scheme was that the savings generated for each local authority be utilized to strengthen their community's access to their libraries.
- For Upper Hutt City Libraries this provided us with an additional \$43,000 for each of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years, a total of \$86,000
- Key argument is more effective use and return on Council's investment in libraries

Current State – The problem


- Active membership only 28% of population
 - Young people discouraged from using adult collections
 - Families using one shared card –discouraging independent use for young people
 - 8147 non returned customers including 3669 young people
 - 3126 were barred for unpaid fines
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Financial implications

- Debts under \$50 held on Library system – not referred for debt recovery
- 29% of overdue charges never paid
- \$41,529 debt over 2 years old
- Each year average of \$7,800 written off
- Fee waiver subsidy enough to enable all outstanding debt to be wiped

Implementation and promotion

- Implementation date 16th November
 - “Welcome Back” campaign
 - Amnesty
 - Customer education on managing their Library Accounts
 - Tighter overdue management process
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Outcomes

- Amnesty resulted in 100 items being returned to the collections
- No customer complaints / arguments about overdues
- Improved environment – happier, more positive customers and staff
- Positive patterns emerging
- Increased membership
- Little or no impact on number of overdue notices and debt referrals
- Higher result of returned items from bill notices

Customer Feedback

“ I didn’t want to come back to the library – I was scared about the fine – so happy I don’t have to pay anything!”

“the fear of ending up with a huge bill had always scared her off coming to the library with her kids in the past”

"What do you mean, nothing to pay? Really? That is such a relief, I was so worried about coming in and finding out how much I owed!"

“Lovely what you are doing for the community – thank you”

"What a sensible thing to do, so community minded"

WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE WHEN YOU FIND OUT

YOUR LIBRARY HAS WIPED OVERDUE FINES

Conclusions

- In this post lockdown period and with Covid-19 still a threat for all New Zealanders, we need to ensure our libraries are barrier free and easy to access for all our communities.
- The expected outcome of the overall increase in library membership and usage is beginning to be realised
- It will also assist in creating a more positive and welcoming environment, removing the barriers and negative connotations that a fines system generates.

Questions

