

Christchurch City Council
MINUTES ATTACHMENTS

Date: Thursday 27 January 2022
Time: 9.30am
Venue: Council Chambers, Civic Offices,
53 Hereford Street, Christchurch

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26.01.22

Malo lava,

Thank you Councillor Sara Templeton, and Councillors for requesting this report being written. Thank you also to the Council staff for their important recommendation.

We agree with the report and the work of Public Libraries New Zealand that there is "...no evidence that library overdue charges are an incentive for returning items on time. The experience of libraries in New Zealand and overseas is that overdue charges are a more effective deterrent and barrier to library usage, disproportionately impacting members of the community on lower and fixed incomes."¹

This change is also important as it will bring Ōtautahi to par with its peer Councils across Aotearoa who have removed these fines because evidence does not support that they work, and that they create barriers to access and learning. We have also seen post lockdown when the Council encouraged people to return books with a fee waiver we did, please today make this culture permanent.² In our current Red Traffic light level, and the pressure on families and our communities to have the supplies they need, and general increases in costs of living this is very timely. The timeframe indicated to implement this in March seems very reasonable.

Dominic and I put out a community poll which has been signed by 275 people in support.³ We also saw a number of stories told in The Press,⁴ and across social media platforms peoples real experiences shared. The University of Canterbury Students Association also wish that we convey their complete support of this removal and that it would help the wellbeing and access of students to our libraries and learning. Please see below some of the comments we received by members of our communities.

Fa'afetai tele lava,

Josiah Tualamali'i and Dominic Wilson

¹ Report to Dunedin City Council from 27 October 2021 when they decided in favour-
https://infocouncil.dunedin.govt.nz/Open/2021/10/CNL_20211027_AGN_1542_AT.PDF

² <https://newsline.ccc.govt.nz/news/story/libraries-issue-call-to-return-overdue-books>

³ At the time of writing - <https://our.actionstation.org.nz/petitions/end-library-book-fines-in-otautahi>

⁴ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/126986203/policy-of-overdue-library-fines-only-deprives-the-disadvantaged-say-critics>

Some of the community feedback in support

1. "Yes! They just axed fines in Auckland libraries. So good to see this take off, had many conversations with our local library manager about how the fines put families off using the library over the years."
2. Uso, finally after 24 years I can make my return to the library.
3. a. was once fined \$180 for a book I had returned. was only one copy in the city found it on the shelf, they hadn't returned it in system. refused to reverse the fine. never gone back since. I was 14 am now 34.

b. easiest petition ever to sign. Was fined \$180 for a 'lost' book (wouldn't have been worth that much) only one in city, found it on the shelf at old Central library. it wasn't returned properly. refused to reverse the fine, I was 14 never been back. I'm 34 the day of the motion
4. Fortunately, there are none for kids and they were ahead of the rest of nz in this. I am also very fortunate to have 4 kids, each with a library card. And that is to say they should STAY ahead by abolishing all fees!
5. Hard agree. The citizens that need libraries the most are exactly the ones that can't afford fines.
6. Was glad we made the decision at Auckland Council to drop library fines. Let the people read.
7. Let people read in peace
8. I didn't visit the library for a year because I couldn't afford the fines. A friend paid them off when she found out. So grateful to her.
9. This is a consideration to consider. I think you'll find that the fines that libraries/councils get rid of are for overdue items. Lost or damaged books still attract a replacement cost, but there is normally some discretion that allows meeting people where they are at.
10. The Calgary library ended fines in 2020 for exactly these reasons. Please see this link.⁵
11. Library fines disproportionately affect the poor - limiting their continued access to knowledge and recreation. It's time for them to go.
12. Yes, agree with this and have signed.
13. I so agree... my kids racked up massive library fines in the months after my husband died because I forgot that we had library books. It felt like an unforgiving system when I finally paid

⁵ <https://calgarylibrary.ca/library-news/calgary-public-library-fine-free-model>

