

Communiqué from LIAC following the meeting of 25 September 2009

Broadband

LIAC continue to be interested in the rollout of broadband across the country. Over recent years LIAC has held the opinion that ubiquitous, fast and affordable broadband access is necessary for achieving social and economic success for New Zealand in the digital information age. It is clear from pre-election statements that the new Government is committed to facilitating and building capability for increased high-speed broadband connections throughout the nation.

LIAC sees a central public role for libraries in any broadband network in providing access to a digital 'public space', a fundamental function that public libraries have carried out in the analogue world for over a century. Libraries are also able to offer a space for building digital literacy and capability. In line with this view, LIAC firmly believe libraries should be part of the first wave of the broadband rollout. While fibre is important, LIAC see that alternative technologies have value and think that New Zealand must be flexible in looking at solutions.

Local Government Act review

LIAC support the Association of Public Library Managers' view that public libraries are at the core of infrastructure at both a local and national level, therefore support the amendment of section 142 of the Local Government Act. Public library services are a core part of local government provision across New Zealand and deliver front-line services supporting literacy and learning. Amendment to section 142 would not require additional spending on service provision by local authorities and local control could still be maintained.

Copyright

Copyright is a mechanism for society to reward creators of 'original expression' to maximise the benefits to that society. Technology changes the way in which copyrighted material is distributed as copyright sits at the intersection of creativity, technology, and commerce. While the Copyright (New Technologies) Amendment Act 2008 attempted to update our copyright law for modern technology we argue there are enough deeper untouched problems that a wholesale review of copyright law in New Zealand is needed. LIAC appreciates that Government has recognised a problem with Section 92A and is taking steps toward a solution however libraries and the information sector have issues beyond 92A.

Increases in library usage

LIAC Commissioner Bill Macnaught has written an article for the June issue of Library Life about increases of usage of libraries in tough economic times.

The next LIAC meeting is 25 September.

Brian Pauling
LIAC Chair

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