

LIBRARY - SUBSIDY

TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL  
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 LIBRARY / GENERAL

REC'D 19 MAR 2013

ASSIGNED TO: FYI David Owen

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*major has noted - NFAK*



Public Libraries  
 New South Wales -  
 Country

Cr. Graham Smith  
 Chairman  
 PO Box 3  
 Kurri Kurri NSW 2327  
 Ph: 0408 333 604  
 Fax 02 4936 2634  
 E: [cllgrahamsmith@gmail.com](mailto:cllgrahamsmith@gmail.com)

12 March 2013

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you as the elected leader of a member council within Public Libraries NSW. The purpose of this letter is to alert you to the current funding situation for public libraries within the state, and to seek your continued support in attempts to improve the situation.

Since I wrote to you or your predecessor in 2010, public library funding from NSW Government sources has continued to diminish, to the point where it is expected that if no action is taken in the 2013 Budget, there will be no general Library Development Grants made available in coming years. Indeed, within two years, if no change is made to the current dysfunctional funding formula, population growth will begin to cannibalise recurrent subsidy funds as well.

Last October, I wrote to your council outlining the cooperative approach between Public Libraries NSW, NSW Metropolitan Public Libraries Association and the State Library of NSW in submitting a compelling evidence-based submission, endorsed by the Library Council of NSW, to government for consideration. This letter was supported a broad summary, titled *Reforming Public Library Funding*, which was released for circulation to NSW public library network stakeholders across the state. I attach a copy of the submission for your information.

Later in the year, I circulated to your council a draft notice of motion on library funding, with the request that it be submitted and if supported directed to the Minister via your local member. With a couple of exceptions every member council of this Association is represented by a Government member, so this is an opportune time for such a campaign. I attach a further copy of the draft for your information.

We are at a crucial point in the Budget process. It is evident that the Minister's office is receiving significant lobbying efforts. If your council has not already passed the motion in support of the funding reform proposal, I would urge it to do so in the near future.

This reform was also supported by the executives of the then Local Government and Shires Associations and remains the policy of the unified organisation. I urge your council to continue to lobby strongly for this reform which will provide sustainable funding for public libraries into the future, without disadvantage to any council across New South Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Chairman  
 Public Libraries NSW-Country

RECEIVED-RECORDS

Date 2/4/13  
 Time 2.45pm

## **A DRAFT NOTICE OF MOTION FOR COUNCILS ON THE ISSUE OF LIBRARY FUNDING**

**NOTICE OF MOTION:** That Council write to the Minister for the Arts, the Hon George Souris MP, through Mr/Ms AB, Member for XYZ, calling upon the Government to implement the submission of the Library Council of NSW for the reform of the funding system for NSW public libraries.

### **RATIONALE**

The funding system for public libraries in NSW is broken beyond repair, and within two years will become unsustainable, as grant funds either expire or are completely depleted by the necessity to meet recurrent funding needs due to population growth.

#### ***Transparent reform***

The Library Council recommends a fairer, simplified and more transparent method for the distribution of funds. The following principles for a new approach are recommended:

- **Establish a base level of funding** for councils with populations below 20,000 people (*a safety net* for small councils).
- **Grant a modest increase in per capita allocations** for all councils to recognise cost movements since 1994
- **Address disadvantage transparently** through the application of appropriate disability factors
- **Phase out anomalies** in current allocations due to former council amalgamations
- **Ensure sustainability** by providing that no council receives less recurrent funding than 2012/13
- **Build and maintain infrastructure** via a substantial capital fund, entitled the *Building Library Infrastructure Program*.

#### ***A modest proposal***

The Library Council recommends that recurrent public library funding to councils be modestly adjusted from the current \$26.5M to \$30M per annum from 2013/14 and indexed from the following year. This would be allocated as follows: 68% (\$20.4M in 2013/14) to councils by population with a base level of funding for councils with fewer than 20,000 residents, 17% (\$5.1M) to councils by NSW Local Government Grants Commission (LGGC) disability factors to explicitly address disadvantage and 15% (\$4.5M) applied to Statewide Programs.

#### ***Capital Needs***

In addition, a *Building Library Infrastructure Program* of \$30M per annum for building and maintaining infrastructure is recommended to replace the now defunct provision of grants from operating funds. This program will enable councils to renew library buildings, systems, collections and equipment in regional, urban and growth areas. It is proposed that this be phased in, rising to \$30M over the 4 years from 2013/14 and indexed thereafter.