

18 October 2021

HEPBURN SHIRE SCRAPS LIBRARY FINES

Hepburn Shire Council has joined a growing number of public libraries around the world removing library fines for overdue returns.

Mayor, Cr Lesley Hewitt, herself a regular library user, said fining people for not bringing items back to the library in time only discourages people from using the library.

“Public libraries like ours are about encouraging as many people as possible to use their range of services and access to valuable information.”

“We know sometimes life is busy and it is easy to overlook simple things like returning a few books – fining people for this mean they are less likely to keep engaging with library and that is not the outcome we want.”

“There are better ways to make sure items are returned to the library and the experience of other libraries who have done this shows you are more likely to get items returned if there are not fines waiting,” said Cr Hewitt.

From Monday 18 October Hepburn Libraries will no longer impose fees for late returns, and instead simply limit the borrowing of our members until items are returned. Lost or damaged books will still have to be paid for, as is the case now.

CEO, Bradley Thomas said ending fines brings the Shire’s libraries into line with other libraries in the Central Highlands library network like those in the Shires of Ararat, North Grampians and South Grampians.

“We are delighted to be scrapping fines for overdue items and helping our thousands of members make the most of their local libraries.”

“For people with existing fines, we have decided to run a Forgiving Tree – fines will be erased with the donation of non-perishable food, which we will then donate to the food banks across our Shire,” said Mr Thomas.

Council ran a similar program in the past called the ‘Forgiving Tree’ which resulted in more than \$3,000 worth of food being donated for people who need it most.

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