

Item No: C0219(2) Item 4

Subject: HARMONISING OF LIBRARY OPERATING HOURS

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SUMMARY

As part of harmonising Library & History Services, it is proposed that Library operating hours be streamlined from 1 July 2019. The paper is seeking Council's approval to put the proposed operating hours for Council's branch and neighbourhood libraries on public exhibition for 28 days. Following the public exhibition, a further report will be brought back to Council.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

- 1. Place on public exhibition the proposed Library operating hours shown in Table 1, for 28 days;**
 - 2. Notes that Library staff will conduct head counts at the four branch libraries at the beginning and end of the day and report back following the public exhibition over a four week period.**
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BACKGROUND

Inner West Council delivers Library services across eight locations in the Inner West with various operating hours.

To ensure consistency of service across the LGA, to make it easier for customers to recall library operating hours and to assist with rostering / staffing, it is recommended library operating hours be harmonised.

The libraries are divided into two categories:

- **Branch Libraries - Ashfield, Balmain, Leichhardt and Marrickville**
These libraries have longer operating hours, larger collections, more programming, more staffing and behind the scenes functions such as collection development, home library etc.
- **Neighbourhood Libraries - Emanuel Tsardoulis, Haberfield, Stanmore, St Peters**
These libraries are staffed by two people. are smaller in size, with smaller collections and reduced hours. These libraries are significantly quieter than the branch libraries.

It is proposed the following library operating hours be placed on public exhibition.

Table one – Proposed library hours to go on exhibition

Opening days / hours	Branch Libraries	Neighbourhood Libraries
Monday – Wednesday	9am-7.30pm	10am-5.30pm
Thursday	9am-7.30pm	12pm-7.30pm
Friday	9am-5.30pm	10-5.30pm
Saturday	10am-5pm	10-4pm
Sunday	10am-5pm	Closed

Following the public exhibition, a further report would be bought back to Council for consideration.

Should the proposed Library operating hours go ahead, this would result in an increase of 19 openings hours across the service. **Attachment 1** provides an overview of the existing library operating hours and highlights what changes would occur at each location should the proposed operating hours be endorsed.

It is to be noted that should Library and History Services be conducting an author talk or event that goes beyond the proposed operating hours, the Libraries would remain open to the event.

Determining the hours

Library and History Services recently conducted community consultation with the community to prepare for the Library and History strategy (not yet reported to Council). When asked if they were happy with the existing opening hours:

- 507 respondents were happy
- 128 were not happy

Those that were not happy were asked what operating hours they would prefer (and had the opportunity to respond to more than one answer):

- 27 said the library should be open earlier Monday to Friday
- 58 said the library should be open later Monday to Friday
- 75 said the library should be open longer on Saturdays and
- 87 said the library should be open longer on a Sunday

Resulting from this feedback the recommended operating hours were established following discussions with the Library Operations Manager and the Branch Librarians. The Branch Librarians have reported that all libraries are generally quiet from 6.30pm.

The feedback from the Branch Librarians was given more weight when determining the operating hours than the door counts as the current available information only provides information on how many visitors pass through the door but does not indicate whether they are entering or exiting the library ie between 6.30pm and 7pm, we cannot determine whether a lot of people are visiting library or they are all exiting. To address this, Library staff will randomly monitor the number of people in (and entering the libraries) at the beginning and end of the day to assist with the decision making over a four week period. This information will be reported back following the public exhibition.

Implementation

Should the proposed hours be accepted, it would be proposed that the new operating hours for Marrickville, Haberfield and St Peters Libraries not be implemented until their new facilities have been completed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current proposal would be possible within Library and History Service's existing budget.

Should Council wish to consider extending the Sunday operating hours for the neighbourhood libraries, the annual price would be approximately \$25,000 per neighbourhood library to operate for four hours on a Sunday totalling \$100,000. However, given the low numbers at the neighbourhood libraries, this is not recommended.

OTHER STAFF COMMENTS

Nil.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

It is recommended the proposed operating hours be placed on public exhibition for 28 days. Following this a further paper will be brought to Council. .

ATTACHMENTS

1. [↓](#) Proposed Library Operating Hours

ATTACHMENT 1: Proposed Operating Hours of Library services

Neighbourhood Libraries	Days of the Week	Current Hours	Proposed	Change	Increase/Decrease Hours
Emanuel Tsardoulas / Dulwich Hill	Monday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Tuesday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Wednesday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Thursday	12pm - 7:30pm	12pm - 7:30pm	No change	0
	Friday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Saturday	9am - 12pm	10am - 4pm	Open 1 hour later, for 3 hours longer	3
	Sunday	Closed	Closed	No change	0
Change / Week					3
Haberfield	Monday	9am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	Open 1 hour later	-1
	Tuesday	9am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	Open 1 hour later	-1
	Wednesday	9am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	Open 1 hour later	-1
	Thursday	9am - 5:30pm	12pm - 7:30pm	Open 3 hours later, for 1 hour less	-1
	Friday	9am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	Open 1 hour later	-1
	Saturday	9am - 12pm	10am - 4pm	Open 1 hour later, for 3 hours longer	3
	Sunday	Closed	Closed	No change	0
Change / Week					-2
Stanmore	Monday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Tuesday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Wednesday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Thursday	12pm - 7:30pm	12pm - 7:30pm	No change	0
	Friday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Saturday	9am - 12pm	10am - 4pm	Open 1 hour later, for 3 hours longer	3
	Sunday	Closed	Closed	No change	0
Change / Week					3
St Peters	Monday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Tuesday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Wednesday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Thursday	12pm - 7:30pm	12pm - 7:30pm	No change	0
	Friday	10am - 5:30pm	10am - 5:30pm	No change	0
	Saturday	9am - 12pm	10am - 4pm	Open 1 hour later, for 3 hours longer	3
	Sunday	Closed	Closed	No change	0
Change / Week					3
Total Changes to Branch Service					7

Branch Libraries	Days of the Week	Current Hours	Proposed	Change	Increase/Decrease Hours
Ashfield	Monday	9am - 7pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open 0.5 hours longer	0.5
	Tuesday	9am - 7pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open 0.5 hours longer	0.5
	Wednesday	9am - 7pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open 0.5 hours longer	0.5
	Thursday	9am - 7pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open 0.5 hours longer	0.5
	Friday	9am - 7pm	9am - 5:30pm	Close 1.5 hours earlier	-1.5
	Saturday	9am - 4pm	10am - 5pm	Open later for the same length of time	0
	Sunday	12pm - 4pm	10am - 5pm	Open earlier, for 4 hours longer	4
Change / Week					4.5
Balmain	Monday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Tuesday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Wednesday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Thursday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Friday	9:30am - 5pm	9am - 5:30pm	Open 0.5 hours earlier, close 0.5 hours later	1
	Saturday	10am - 4pm	10am - 5pm	Open 1 hour longer	1
	Sunday	10am - 4pm	10am - 5pm	Open 1 hour longer	1
Change / Week					3
Leichhardt	Monday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Tuesday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Wednesday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Thursday	9:30am - 8pm	9am - 7:30pm	Open and close 0.5 hours earlier, same length of time	0
	Friday	9:30am - 5pm	9am - 5:30pm	Open 0.5 hours earlier, close 0.5 hours later	1
	Saturday	10am - 4pm	10am - 5pm	Open 1 hour longer	1
	Sunday	10am - 4pm	10am - 5pm	Open 1 hour longer	1
Change / Week					3
Marrickville	Monday	9am - 7:30pm	9am - 7:30pm	No change	0
	Tuesday	9am - 7:30pm	9am - 7:30pm	No change	0
	Wednesday	9am - 7:30pm	9am - 7:30pm	No change	0
	Thursday	9am - 7:30pm	9am - 7:30pm	No change	0
	Friday	9am - 7:30pm	9am - 5:30pm	Close 2 hours earlier	-2
	Saturday	9:30am - 5pm	10am - 5pm	Open 0.5 hours later	-0.5
	Sunday	1pm - 4pm	10am - 5pm	Open 3 hours earlier, for 4 hours longer	4
Change / Week					1.5
Total Changes to Branch Service					12