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## JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

Riverina Regional Library (RRL) member councils came to an agreement on the distribution of accumulated RRL assets when they met with Wagga Wagga City Council (WWCC) on Wednesday, 24 January 2024.

Operating since 1978, RRL is a non-profit collaborative that provides central library services to ten member Councils, 19 branch libraries, and a mobile library that services 21 remote and rural communities.

WWCC ceased to be a member of the library service on 30 June 2022 and, following failed attempts to reconcile the matter, the parties entered into an arbitration process to resolve the dispute.

A distribution of assets was required following Wagga Wagga City Council deciding to provide all library services to its community directly and both parties agreed to limit the first stage of the arbitration to key points about whether particular terms in their agreement applied to the asset distribution.

The partial award was handed down by the arbitrator in September 2023 who found a further round of arbitration would be required to resolve the dispute unless the parties were able to negotiate an agreed position on the division of assets.

Following formal offers made by both parties, the Mayors and General Managers of WWCC and RRL member councils agreed to come together to try to find some middle ground. WWCC and RRL member councils ultimately agreed to split the difference between the two offers put by each party. Legal representatives for the parties will now prepare a Deed of Release for the parties to sign.

WWCC and RRL member councils are very pleased with the equitable outcome of negotiations and, more importantly, that the RRL organisation can now move forward and continue to provide valuable library services to the region.

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