

Policies Register
incorporating
policies, procedures and protocols
Clarence Regional Library

Collection Development Policy

Policy, procedure, protocol	Policy
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Responsible officer

Collections and Reference Librarian
Regional Librarian

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Part 1 Background

1.1 Our Vision

To be a recognised and valued provider of services, facilities, collections and programs that help build community cohesion, capacity and connection.

A regional library service that:

- Facilitates and provides targeted and relevant life long learning opportunities
- Connects the community with the past, the present and the future
- Is committed to the free flow of information and ideas to inform and inspire
- Is a trusted and valued source of information
- Is an investment in the well-being of the community
- Focuses on social inclusion of individuals including target groups
- Builds and strengthens partnerships to enhance service delivery and engage the community
- Supports technological trends and makes them available to the community

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to assist in the acquisition and management of library resources and to account to our member councils and the public for the selection of such resources. Measurement of the success of the policy to meet the collection needs of our communities will be measured through the Collection Needs Survey every 2 years.

The reasons for preparing a Collection Development Policy include:

- Enabling the Library to provide a balanced collection of resources that provide for the educational, informational, recreational and cultural needs of the people served by the Library
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the collection as a whole, and to redress any weaknesses and to continue to build on strengths
- To act as a guideline for future collection building

1.3 Background

The Clarence Regional Library provides library services for the people of Clarence Valley Council and Bellingen Shire Council. Seven branch libraries and a mobile library serve these communities. The branch libraries are situated at Grafton, Maclean, Yamba, Iluka, Bellingen Urunga, and Dorrigo. The mobile library operates within Clarence Valley Council area.

Regional Services are located within the Sir Earle Page Library and Education Centre at Grafton and is headed by the Regional Librarian. All centralised tasks such as acquisitions, accessions, cataloguing, ILLs, reference and rotation of stock are carried out at Regional Services and then are delivered to other libraries via couriers. Rotated stock includes adult and junior fiction, talking books, large print books and junior easies. This rotation allows our branches to have an injection of new books at regular intervals, additional to newly acquired stock.

All lending stock is available to every library member in the region through our reservation system and may be returned to any library in the system. Items may be reserved via our online catalogue or from within our libraries.

1.4 Community profile

The total population of the Clarence Valley Council and Bellingen Shire areas that fund Clarence Regional Library is 63339. The population of each is shown below:

Bellingen	12668
Clarence Valley	50671

Table 1. Age distribution in each Local Government Area

Local Government Area	Total Pop.	0-4	Under 15	Over 55
Bellingen	12 668	605 (5%)	2 199 (17.5%)	5 257 (41.5%)
Clarence Valley	50671	2470 (5%)	8311 (16.5%)	21 349 (42.2%)
NSW	7 480 228	465 135 (6%)	1 386 328 (19%)	2 207 416 (28%)

Table 2. Age distribution in each major centre served by Clarence Regional Library

Town	Total Pop	0-4	Under 15	Over 55
Grafton	18 668	1 117 (6%)	3 487 (18.5%)	6 746 (36%)
Yamba	6 076	257 (4%)	771 (13%)	3 215 (53%)
Maclean	2 628	92 (3.5%)	320 (12%)	1 374 (52.5%)
Bellingen	3 779	220 (6%)	846 (22%)	1 284 (34%)
Urunga	3 000	107 (3.5%)	392 (13%)	1482 (49%)
Iluka	1718	51 (3%)	184 (11%)	1087 (64%)
Dorrigo	1191	50 (4%)	156 (13%)	603 (51%)

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census.

The above figures indicate that the percentage of the population served by the Clarence Regional Library in each LGA for individuals aged 0-4 and Under 15 is comparable with NSW state figures. However the percentage of the population for over 55 within each of the LGA's is noticeably higher than the state figure.

Table 2 figures also highlights the difference between the state's population for those individuals that are over 55 and the figures for each major service centre within the Clarence Regional Library service area. It can be clearly seen that the percentage of the population at each of these centres is much higher than the state average.

1.5 Ethnic Characteristics

The 2016 Census provides the following information about the birthplace of our residents.

Table 3.

	Bellingen	Clarence Valley
Australia	10 173	42 432
England	568	1 283
New Zealand	169	560
Germany	91	157
Netherlands	67	162

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census. Note: These figures indicate the main responses, not all responses.

It can be seen from the above table that the majority of residents come from English speaking backgrounds.

Part 2 Selection criteria

Selection is undertaken using a range of resources

- Catalogues/reviews
- Bibliographic tools
- Library supplier visits and promotional material
- Standing orders
- Supplier profiling and selection lists
- Bookshop and warehouse visits
- Suggestions for purchase from the community and staff

2.1. General selection criteria

As one of the main duties of the Library is to provide free and equitable access to information for all sections of the community:

- The Library must accept responsibility for providing free access to materials, presenting, as far as possible, all points of view on current issues
- The librarian must not select materials based on personal, moral, political, social or ideological views, except where subject to State or Federal prohibition
- Each type of material should be evaluated on its own merits and its suitability for its intended audience.
- Regular weeding of the collection is needed to keep it useful and up-to-date.

- School, TAFE and university text-books will not be collected unless no other suitable material is available. Where these items are requested the borrower is advised of the Inter-library Loan option.
- Multiple copies of materials are only bought for high demand fiction, and to a lesser extent, non-fiction. In many subject areas, where the interest is in the subject, rather than particular titles, the Library will purchase several different titles on the same subject. In this way, the library can add variety and depth to the collection. Duplicate copies of the following materials will be purchased:
 - Best selling fiction authors
 - Literary award winners (Booker Prize, Miles Franklin Award, Children's Book of the Year, etc.)
 - Reference books needed on a regular basis at each branch (e.g. Law Handbook, World Book Encyclopaedia, Legal Tool Kit titles).
 - HSC materials
 - Popular DVD titles
 - Local history titles (loan and reference copies).

Materials being considered for purchase by the Library, should meet the following criteria:

2.2 Community Demand

- Popular authors
- New reading trends
- Media influence e.g. Television programs and movie tie-ins

2.3 Content

- Subject matter should be current or present current views on historical matters
- Care should be taken that collection in any subject area is balanced and presents all viewpoints
- Representation of significant genre or national culture
- Priority should be given to Australian views of subjects.

2.4 Arrangement & Style

- Indexing and bibliographies should be included where appropriate
- Arrangement, language and style should be suitable for the intended user.

2.5 Format

- The format should be suitable for the material presented, and convey the information to the user in the most appropriate way
- Trade paperbacks will be purchased in preference to hardback editions in most instances

- Hardbacks with library binding will be purchased when no paperback edition is available

2.6 Other

- Cost, value for money
- The availability of information via the Internet should be considered when selecting and weeding materials for the non-fiction collection.
- Due to budgetary constraints, the price, or value for money, of an item, may be considered.

2.7 Reasons for non-inclusion

- Items of a highly technical, highly academic or specialised nature, or those items fulfilling a one-off technical request, may be provided through inter-library loan
- Material that is suggested that is out-of-date, very expensive, published in an unsuitable format, or where there are suitable alternative titles in stock on the subject
- Material classified by the Office of Film and Literature Classification as R rated.
- Individual titles from a multi-part series for which no other titles are held, whether in print or DVD format.

2.7.1 Censorship

Censorship powers are vested in both State and Federal governments. Materials prohibited by law will not be included in the collection. Material will not be rejected on moral, political, racial or religious grounds if it otherwise meets the Library's selection criteria. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians, rather than library staff, to determine the suitability of materials used by their children.

This policy endorses the ALIA Statement on free access to information and the ALIA Statement on public library services and also the Library Council of New South Wales, Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries (see Appendices 1-3).

2.7.2 Controversial Material

The Library aims to include in the collections a representative selection of materials which meet basic selection criteria, are on topics of interest to its readers, including items covering controversial subjects, providing they are not prohibited by law. The Library aims to provide materials which collectively represent all sides of controversial issues

Part 3 Collection Statements

3.1 Reference Collection

The aim of the Reference Collection is to provide access to a broad range of up-to-date information for study and research. It should be of high quality in its content, format and expression. The reference collection is not for loan and includes a range of formats including

both print and non-print formats. The Reference Collection also encompasses a number of special collections including Australian Bureau of Statistics publications, Legal Information Access Centre and Drug Information @ your Library materials.

Criteria for selection

- Up-to-date
- Written by an authority in the particular field
- Easy to use, with appropriate arrangement for the subject, good indexes and bibliographies, illustrations, photographs, maps and timelines.
- Relevance to the needs of our patrons
- Value for money
- Specified by the State Library LIAC and Druginfo coordinators

As is the trend in public libraries, and largely due to internet resources, the Reference collection is reducing in size. Many reference books are being interfiled into the general Non-fiction collection.

3.2 HSC Collection

Each library within the Clarence Regional Library service holds a suitable number of duplicate titles specifically published to assist students with their HSC studies. These include past exam papers, study guides and selected texts for English areas of study. The core titles are purchased as a standing order and are displayed in a defined area of each library.

3.3 Issues in Society

A copy of recent 'Issues in Society' publications is purchased for each library in the Clarence Regional Library service as a standing order. These publications provide a current, unbiased and balanced viewpoint on a range of topics.

3.4 LIAC Collection

A copy of each title specified by the State Library of NSW Legal Information Access Centre is obtained for each library in the Clarence Regional Library service as part of the Find Legal Answers collection. This collection is maintained on a regular basis as per updated lists from the State Library.

3.5 DrugInfo Collection

A copy of each title specified by the State Library of NSW Drug Information Centre is obtained for each library in the Clarence Regional Library service as part of the DrugInfo collection. This collection is maintained on a regular basis as per updated lists from the State Library.

3.6 Local Studies Collections

The aim of the Local Studies collection is to provide a comprehensive collection of resources relating to the communities served by the Clarence Regional Library. The collection is intended to preserve and make accessible materials of past and present for the future of a cultural, historical, social and environmental nature in a variety of formats. All library locations collect material related to the local history of their area, including Council reports and other documents.

The collections will include monographs, newspapers, periodicals, annual reports, pamphlets, photographs, maps, sound recordings, video recordings, manuscripts, microforms. All subjects related to the local area will be covered including history, biography, geography, social conditions, Aboriginal and migrant groups and local industries. Careful attention will be paid to the proper conservation and storage of items. The Library will not collect realia such as costume or furniture (with the exception of some artefacts for display purposes), as this is the responsibility of the Local Historical societies.

The Library will acquire items for the Local Studies collection through purchase, donations and transfers from other Council departments. Items are identified through suppliers, local contacts, and other library staff.

All local history titles will have at least one copy "not for loan", with duplicate copies available for loan, if resources allow.

For greater detail please refer to the Local Studies Collection Development Policy (in Appendix).

3.7 Digitised Collection

The library maintains a digital collection of documents. Those produced digitally by both Clarence Valley Council and the Bellingen Shire are usually in pdf format. These are harvested from each council website on a regular basis by Regional Library staff or when identified by other staff.

Once downloaded these documents are catalogued to the library Digital Asset Management module within the Library Management System and made available via the library catalogue.

Criteria for selection:

The documents added to this collection are selected for their long term historical value for potential future consultation. They are snapshots of Council processes that have cultural, environmental and historical significance.

Ideally they will contain;

- Local statistics and graphs
- Local historical details
- Cultural details
- Comparisons to state and federal statistics and situations

Draft documents will not be collected, only final published versions.

3.8 Non-fiction Collection

The non-fiction collection contains resources for the recreational and informational needs of all people of all ages in our communities. Material should be collected that allows members of the community to understand and participate in our society, to follow personal interests and to pursue life-long learning. The non-fiction collection should also support school (and other)

students carrying out research for projects, local business people and council employees in the course of their work. Hardcover and paperback monographs are collected, depending on price and availability.

Criteria for selection:

- Material should be accurate, up-to-date, and non-biased (or if a work presents a clearly-stated viewpoint, it should generally be balanced by another work presenting a differing viewpoint).
- Authority of author(s) and publisher
- Easy-to-use and containing indexes, bibliographies, photos, illustrations, maps and timelines (depending on the nature of the work)
- Relevant to the needs of our patrons
- Good quality
- Value for money

3.9 Aboriginal collection

The library actively sources titles that have aboriginal content and which have particular significance to local aboriginal communities, their culture and their histories. A portion of the non-fiction budget is specifically allocated to developing this collection and all available contacts and resources are used to identify and purchases titles. Multiple copies of locally significant publications are purchased.

These titles are highlighted through a subject heading in the catalogue record and specific spine labels. Care is taken not to include these titles in the de-selection process.

3.10 Parenting Collection

The library sources titles that cover topics such as general parenting, child birth and development, childhood illnesses, nutrition and behavioural issues. These titles are highlighted through a subject heading in the catalogue record and specific spine labels.

3.11 Adult Fiction

The adult fiction collection includes all types of fiction suitable for adult readers, including literary and popular works. Multiple copies of best-sellers and award winners are purchased through standing orders, and particular attention is paid to buying Australian fiction (including Aboriginal authors). The purchase of trade paperback books is preferred.

Criteria for selection:

- Literary merit
- Imaginative writing
- Effective plot and characterisation
- In popular demand
- Part of existing series
- Standard genre fiction - western, mystery, romance, thriller, science fiction and fantasy.

3.12 Large Print

The Large Print collection is targeted at those patrons who have difficulty reading normal print. It consists of largely fiction titles, with some popular non-fiction (such as biographies) included. The large print collection should include all genres and best-sellers. Softcover will be bought in preference to hardcovers where possible, in consideration for aged or arthritic users.

Criteria for selection:

- Literary merit
- Imaginative writing
- Effective plot and characterisation
- Standard genre fiction to be included
- In popular demand
- Bestselling authors

3.13 Magazines

The magazine collection is purchased to provide titles of general interest to all ages of the community. Australian publications are the preferred option when selecting, and should complement and add currency to the collection. The subscriptions to these are reviewed on a regular basis with input from each library.

Criteria for selection:

- Of general interest to the community
- Reputable publisher
- Regular publishing schedule
- Australian publications preferred
- Cost
- Popularity
- Content

3.14 Young Adult Collection

The young adult collection is aimed at children between the ages of 12 and 18. The collection will include both literary and popular authors, with an emphasis on Australian writers. The collection should contain books of high interest to teenagers to encourage the habit of reading for pleasure.

Criteria for selection:

- Literary merit
- Original writing
- Effective plot and characterisation
- Subject matter of interest to young adults
- Includes latest trends and genres
- Attractive format, including graphic novels
- Award winning titles and authors

3.15 Junior Fiction

The junior fiction collection is targeted at children between the ages of 6 and 14. The collection will include both literary and popular authors, with an emphasis on Australian writers. The

collection should contain books of interest to children to foster and encourage a lifelong love of reading and literature.

Criteria for selection:

- Literary merit
- Original writing
- Effective plot and characterisation
- Of interest to children in primary school
- Includes latest trends and genres
- Attractive format, including graphic novels
- Award winning titles and authors

3.16 Junior Easy

This collection should introduce children to reading as an enjoyable and rewarding experience by providing a range of titles, which stimulate the imagination, introduce children to language and their cultural heritage, and add to their knowledge of the world. The Junior Easy collection is for children from 0-6 and includes picture books, nursery rhyme and fairy-tale books, books for parents to read to children, easy books for children who are learning to read. Australian authors and illustrators should be emphasised.

Criteria for selection:

- Literary merit
- Illustrations that enhance text
- Original writing
- Attractive presentation
- Suitability for the age
- Award winning titles

3.17 Readers

To assist with making early literacy resources easier for the community to locate and easier for staff and volunteers to shelve the libraries source and highlight Readers as a separate collection. A reader is a book in which clearly states on the cover or inside that it is a reader and/or gives a reading level. These are purchased through standing order and are highlighted through a subject heading in the catalogue record and specific spine labels and physical location in the libraries.

Australian authors and illustrators should be emphasised.

3.18 Stack

Items from various collections that are not suitable to remain on public display may be retained in the library stack. Usually these are works of literary merit, fragile items, items of historical interest, items of perennial interest, and items now out of print and valuable items. Stack resources remain on the CRL catalogue and are available for loan via reservation.

3.19 Audio Books

The aim of the Audio Book collection is to provide clients of all ages access to a wide range of books in a spoken word format. Criteria for selection should be similar to fiction and non-

fiction, taking into account the needs and interests of patrons of this collection, as well as the following criteria

Criteria for selection:

- Unabridged versions where possible.
- Quality and clarity of reader's voice.
- Physical quality of CD cases.
- Availability of replacement CDs.
- Downloadable file sources to be included in this format.

It will be necessary to monitor trends in technology to ensure that the Library's talking book collection is providing clients with new and alternative formats as they are developed, such as the mp3 and eAudio formats.

3.20 DVD's

The Library's aim is to develop a DVD collection that enhances the fiction and non-fiction collections. It will support and stimulate the information, educational, recreational and cultural needs of all members of the community. The selection of audio visual material is aimed at providing viewing, listening and instructional materials to complement and/or supplement the print collections.

Criteria for selection:

- Documentaries
- Do-it-yourself and instructional presentations
- Performance of dramas or screenplays with particular emphasis on Australian works
- Popular series, classic films, drama, comedy, award winning films and films with an Australian interest
- R-rated DVD titles will not be added to the collection

3.21 eResources

3.21.1 Databases

The Library provides its clients with access to a range of electronic databases provided by NSW.net consortia or purchased individually by the Library. A number of these databases provide remote access for clients. These are reviewed annually for usage and relevance.

3.21.2 eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines

Electronic formats such as eMagazines, eAudio and eBooks are to be selected using the same criteria as traditional magazine, book and talking book formats:

- Literary merit
- Imaginative writing
- Effective plot and characterisation
- In popular demand
- Part of existing series

- Standard genre fiction - western, mystery, romance, thriller, science fiction and fantasy.
- Unabridged versions where possible.
- Quality and clarity of reader's voice

This policy endorses the Library Council of New South Wales, Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries statement (see Appendix 3)

3.22 Donations

Donations play an important part in enriching the collection. Donations of material are accepted on the understanding that they become the property of the Library and as such the Library reserves the right to evaluate, use or dispose of the materials as it deems appropriate. Any books not considered suitable for our needs will be sold at the Library's book sale, given to charity or recycled. There is to be no coercion on the part of the donor imposing conditions relating to any gift either before or after its acceptance by the Library.

Donations must meet the selection criteria outlined in the Collection Development Policy for each individual collection area.

3.23 Suggestions for Purchase

Library patrons are encouraged to make suggestions for the purchase of library materials on our "Suggestions for Purchase" page on our Library Catalogue, which can be accessed from home from the library website: www.crl.nsw.gov.au .

We may not buy all the items that are requested for purchase, if we do not consider the item to be suitable for our collection in terms of this Collection Development Policy, we will attempt to obtain the item through our ILL system, and this service will attract a small processing fee.

3.24 Deselection

Deselection is an on-going process that ensures the Library's collection maintains its effectiveness, quality, currency and integrity.

In general, factors for deselection mirror those used for selection: content, arrangement & style, format and so on.

Additional criteria for deselection

- Physical condition – dirty, tatty or items damaged beyond repair should be discarded.
- Titles that have not been borrowed for two years should be considered for deselection, however this is to be determined on a title-by-title basis for Non-Fiction subjects. .
- Items that contain outdated or inaccurate information should be removed.
- Items superseded by a new edition should be removed.
- Incomplete sets or series may be withdrawn, depending on the usefulness of the remaining parts of the set or series.
- Duplicate copies in the collection (2 copies of the same title is recommended for older titles)

Deselected items are withdrawn from the catalogue, have their barcodes and spine labels obscured with permanent marker and RFID tags de-commissioned.

Material that is withdrawn from stock is not automatically replaced unless it is a standard work, a popular title or subject. Withdrawn items are offered to the subject specialisation library, sold or recycled.

3.25 Complaints

All requests for the review of a selection decision shall be submitted in writing to the Regional Librarian. All queried titles will be re-evaluated by senior library staff and if the original decision is still considered to conform to the selection criteria, the title in question will remain on the shelves. If the criticism is considered to be valid, the title will be placed in another collection (such as Stack) or will be withdrawn. All written complaints will be answered. The final decision will rest with the Regional Librarian.

4 Revision of Policy

This collection development policy should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it meets the goals and objectives of the Library. Revisions should take into consideration changes in the community, the publishing and information industries, economic conditions or the role of the public library.

Appendix

1. ALIA Statement on free access to information
2. ALIA Statement on public library services
3. Library Council of New South Wales, Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries
4. Clarence Regional Library Local Studies Collection Development Policy

ALIA Statement on free access to information

ALIA objects addressed

To promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interests of all Australians and a thriving culture and democracy.

Principle

Freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if its citizens have unrestricted access to information and ideas.

Statement

There are several different levels at which the free flow of ideas can be impeded. At the societal level, legislative bodies of all kinds are expected to consider the legal and regulatory frameworks they put in place to support the free flow of information and ideas about the interests and concerns of citizens. At the institutional level, library and information services are expected to encourage the free flow of information and ideas within the scope of their roles and responsibilities. At the individual level, citizens are expected to make informed decisions in exercising their rights and responsibilities.

The Australian Library and Information Association believes that library and information services have particular responsibilities in supporting and sustaining the free flow of information and ideas including:

1. Asserting the equal and equitable rights of citizens to information regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, cultural identity, language, socioeconomic status, lifestyle choice, political allegiance or social viewpoint;
2. Adopting an inclusive approach in developing and implementing policies regarding access to information and ideas that are relevant to the library and information service concerned, irrespective of the controversial nature of the information or ideas;
3. Ensuring that their clients have access to information from a variety of sources and agencies to meet their needs and that a citizen's information needs are met independently of location and an ability to pay;
4. Catering for interest in contemporary issues without promoting or suppressing particular beliefs and ideas;
5. Protecting the confidential relationships that exist between the library and information service and its clients;
6. resisting attempts by individuals or groups within their communities to restrict access to information and ideas while at the same time recognising that powers of censorship are legally vested in state and federal governments;
7. Observing laws and regulations governing access to information and ideas but working towards the amendment of those laws and regulations which inhibit library and information services in meeting the obligations and responsibilities outlined in this Statement.

Adopted: 2001

Amended: 2007

ALIA Statement on public library services

ALIA objects addressed

To promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interests of all Australians and a thriving culture and democracy.

To promote and improve the services provided by all kinds of library and information agencies.

Principle

Freedom of access to public library and information services is essential

- to enable members of the Australian communities, including new residents and emerging communities to participate in all aspects of Australian life, including the democratic process;
- to actively contribute to social inclusion for all members of the Australian community; and
- to enable Australians to contribute to the economic wellbeing of their families and the nation.

Statement

Each member of the Australian community has an equal right to public library and information services regardless of age, race, gender, religion, nationality, language, disability, geographic location, social status, economic status and educational attainment.

A public library services its community through the provision of access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources and services. It does this through access to materials in all formats in order to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development through learning, including recreation and leisure.

Public libraries have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving individuals access to a wide and varied range of information, ideas, opinions, and skills.

The role of public libraries is essential in developing an educated society through programs that improve literacy and information literacy including lifelong learning opportunities. Public libraries contribute to economic prosperity by helping people improve their skills and life chances.

Public libraries provide the first point of access for information for the general public and for the public's access to the national and international system of library and information services.

The satisfaction of a person's information needs must be independent of an ability to pay.

Local, state/territory and Commonwealth governments have an obligation to work in partnership to provide agreed public library services to all members of the library's clientele without direct charge to the user.

The Australian Library and Information Association believes that public library services have particular responsibilities to monitor and proactively respond to the changing demographic characteristics and trends of their communities, to consult with their communities and to meet information, learning and recreational needs of an increasingly diverse society. Public library services should ensure that they have policies, guidelines, and procedures in place to respond to and meet relevant legislative requirements.

Adopted: 2004

Amended: 2009

File Number: 8547 & 8450

Library Council of New South Wales

Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries

Guideline

Introduction

This guideline is framed with reference to the Library Act 1939 and the principles expressed in the Australian Library and Information Association Statements on Free Access to Information and Online Content Regulation and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom.

Policy Statement

The State Library of New South Wales and the state-wide network of public libraries provide free and equitable access to information for the people of New South Wales.

Collections

Public libraries develop and maintain collections of resources to meet the information needs and interests of their communities. Libraries have collection development policies and guidelines to assist in the selection of library material.

1. A public library has a role as an unbiased source of information and ideas, including online content. It must accept responsibility for providing free access to materials and information presenting, as far as possible, all points of view on current and historical issues, including controversial issues.
2. Libraries should endeavour to provide access to comprehensive and balanced collections that meet the needs of their communities as far as budget, space and availability of materials allow.
3. Library materials that have not been subject to Federal and State restriction or prohibition should not be excluded from a public library on moral, political, racial, religious, sexist, language, or other sensitive grounds alone. Nor should library materials be included on these grounds alone, whatever pressure may be brought to bear by individuals or groups.
4. The arrangement of the collection should facilitate access. Restricting access to certain titles or classes of materials, e.g. by holding them in special collections available on request, can be an indirect form of censorship. No materials should be held in closed access except for the express purpose of protecting them from injury, theft or due to Office of Film and Literature Classification restrictions.¹
5. Adult collections should not be limited because of the possibility that materials may fall into the hands of children. Monitoring the reading of children is the responsibility of their parents or guardians.

1 Australian Government Office of Film and Literature Classification <http://www.oflc.gov.au/>
W:\pls\policies\accesstoinformation2007.doc

Library Use

6. Everyone has the right to use a public library whatever their age, sex, race, religion, cultural identity, language, disability, socioeconomic status, individual lifestyle, political allegiance or social views.
7. Library clients must be sensitive to the values and beliefs of others when displaying potentially controversial information or images on computer screens located in public areas (see explanatory note). Where a client is found to be using Library computers to access pornographic, offensive or objectionable material, or for any unlawful purpose, the Library reserves the right to direct the client to leave the Library, to direct that the client not re-enter the Library for a specified period and to report unlawful conduct to the relevant authorities.
8. The Library Council does not support the use of censoring software as it inhibits free access to information (see 3) and it does not provide adequate protection for children from all material that may be harmful on the Internet.
9. The Library Council supports the right and responsibility of parents and guardians to direct the use of the Internet by their children. Parents and guardians who wish to limit or restrict access by their children should personally oversee their use of the Internet and other forms of electronic information.²

Role of Public Librarians

10. Librarians should not exercise censorship in the selection of materials by rejecting, solely on the grounds mentioned in (3), material which is otherwise relevant and which meets the standards of the library concerned.
11. Notwithstanding their opposition to censorship, librarians must strictly observe laws, which may ban or restrict access to certain material.
12. Librarians have a role in educating clients in the safe and informed use of the Internet, guided by acceptable use policies.

The continuous review of library materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a current and useful collection. This procedure should not be used as a means of removing materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by sections of the community.

² Australian Library and Information Association Guidelines relating to online content regulation <http://www.alia.org.au/>

Explanatory note:

The Library Regulation 2005, Section 17(1)(b) states that library users may be directed to leave if the person's conduct or manner is likely to give offence to any person in the library or to interfere with any other person's use of the library. This may include accessing websites that may reasonably be considered to offend. Examples may include displaying images of deceased persons which can cause offence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or displaying adult content.

Alternatively, there may be legitimate reasons for accessing such material requiring special arrangements to be made with the library staff.

Procedures

It is recommended that public libraries implement procedures to address certain situations or offences that may occur. These include:

- Under the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995 persons are taken to have publicly exhibited a film or computer game where they have “superintendence of management” of the public place where the exhibition or demonstration takes place. It is advisable that the Library develop appropriate procedures to be observed where clients are found to be accessing material on library computers or on library premises which would otherwise be restricted under this Act.

The suggested procedure is for staff to instruct the client to stop accessing the material. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to contact the relevant authorities. In other circumstances it may be appropriate to suggest that the client accesses the material in a different part of the library not accessible to the general public.

- It is possible that the Library may, as a result of a client’s unlawful internet use, inadvertently come to possess child pornography (if downloaded to a computer drive). Section 91H of the Crimes Act 1900 contains defences that should protect library staff from criminal liability in these circumstances. It is advisable that the Library develop a policy to address circumstances where clients are found to have accessed child pornography.

Such procedures would involve reporting the incident to the NSW Police Force, ensuring that the material is not able to be accessed by other clients using the computer(s), and once advised by the authorities that is appropriate to do so, deleting the material from the Library’s system.

Related documents

Library Regulation 2005

www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

Access to Information in New South Wales Public Libraries 3

File number: 8547 & 8450

Library Council of NSW

Children’s Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries March 2005

http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/pls/policies/pdf/childrens_policy_2005.pdf

ALIA Statement on Free Access to Information <http://alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html>

ALIA Statement on Online Content Regulation
<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/content.regulation.html>

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom <http://www.ifla.org/V/press/pr990326.htm>

Library Council of NSW, endorsed 24 April 2006 (updated 27 August 2007)

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/pls/policies/

Review date: March 2008

Information on this Guideline is available from the State Library of NSW, Public Library Services division.