# Libraries ACT: Collections Development Policy

## October 2026

### Purpose

Our Collection Policy sets the principles and guidelines for the selection, acquisition, deselection and disposal of resources for the Libraries ACT collection.

### General Guidelines

We aim to meet the needs and expectations of Canberrans. We want to encourage the community in the exploration of ideas, knowledge and skills and contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of Canberra.

We contribute to achieving ACT Government's vision for Canberra through a high-quality collection, inclusive and safe spaces, new technologies and learning programs.

Our team of professional and experienced staff, along with input from users, ensure the integrity of the collection and that the cultural, recreational, information and lifelong learning needs of our customers are met.

### Freedom of Access and Freedom to Read

We are committed to:

- The fundamental role of libraries in providing access to information to support an informed and inclusive society. Access includes both the opportunity and right to use resources.
- Human rights as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights articles 18 and 19 and the ACT Human Rights Act 2004. This includes
    - The rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief,
    - Freedom of opinion and expression.
- Freedom to read, offering freedom of access to information. We do not censor.
- Reflecting a broad variety of subjects, viewpoints, cultural understanding and diversity of people, places, events, issues and ideas.
- Providing access to information, stories and experiences in a variety of forms including books, film, audio, programs and events and exhibitions.
- Allowing everyone to decide what they use or borrow from the library and what experiences they engage with.

- Freedom of choice and access is fundamental to democracy, an inclusive and informed society and to the values and ethics of public libraries

- Not removing or censoring resources, programs and events or exhibitions due to personal convictions or disagreement, controversy or lobbying.

People should be free to decide what books/resources they borrow from their public library. People should also be able to find stories that represent their culture, their families and their identities. This freedom of choice and access to information and stories that represent them is a fundamental pillar of democracy.

We support the ALIA position on access, intellectual property and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) which are core ethical principles that guide the broadest possible access to information resources while upholding the moral and legal rights of copyright holders, creators and distributors of intellectual property.

## Censorship and Classification

We are required by law to abide by the Australian Classification Board classification ratings. All items, including DVDs, are lent in accordance with the classifications Office of Film and Literature Classification.

## Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

The ACT Government recognises the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and surrounding region. The Government acknowledges that other people and families also have a traditional connection to the lands of the ACT and region and we respect this connection to country. Libraries ACT is committed to respect and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, culture and country.

## Selection principles

Selection is based on the principles of unrestricted access and freedom from censorship. Selection carried out by specialist staff who use professional judgement in applying the following criteria:

- Popularity of the author, illustrator, artist, producer or publisher
- Customer demand
- Currency and accuracy of information (except for those of historical/research interest).
- Suitability of format
- Authority of source
- Literary/artistic merit
- Positive reviews and/or prize winners, long and short lists
- Price, value for money
- Duplicate copies to satisfy demand
- Balance in opinions and views across topics/issues/subjects
- Known gaps in the collection
- Emerging authors/artists
- Availability

New digital resources are selected using the above guidelines but with the following additional considerations.

- Technical, privacy, and security issues and support
- Accessibility in current online environment
- Ongoing licence fees
- Ease of use
- Associated hardware requirements
- Emerging demand and user expectations.

## What our collections include

We aim to provide access to high quality publications and material across different formats and platforms: print, audio, audio-visual, digital and online. New and emerging formats are regularly reviewed for addition to the collection against potential use, accessibility, sustainability and value for money.

- Books:
    - Fiction
    - Nonfiction
    - Graphic novels
    - Large print
    - Picture books
    - First Readers
- Audiobooks
- DVDs
- Music CDs
- Resources in community languages
- Bi-lingual picture books
- Magazines and newspapers
- Digital resources eBooks, eComics, databases, eMagazines and eNewspapers, eAudiobooks, video streaming, music streaming, information databases
- Curated sets including book clubs.
- Specialist formats such as the dyslexia friendly collection, Rapid Reads and large print
- Reference material such as encyclopedia and dictionaries, are made accessible online, ensuring continuous update of information.

## What our collections don't include

- Items of inappropriate physical dimensions, extremely small, large of heavy
- Expensive of rare items inappropriate for a public library
- Ephemeral material
- Out of date
- Fragile items
- Resources in languages not represented in the community
- Items not of high quality e.g. poor formatting, sentence construction, spelling
- Items unlikely to withstand public library use.
- Resources of a technical or highly specialist nature, including textbooks and syllabus items for study purposes
- Curriculum activity books, write in workbooks and write in puzzle books etc.

- Items that include hazardous parts and materials, such as button batteries
- Second hand items
- Donated items

## Community Languages

We provide resources in a selected range of languages with print, DVD and digital resources for adults and children. Languages offered will evolve over time. It is not possible for all languages spoken in the ACT to be represented in our collections. The assessment and review of language resources is informed through the ABS Census data, review of usage statistics, settlement and refugee data. We strive to make informed decisions, languages and resources offered are dependent on funding and availability.

## How we buy resources

Resources are purchased from reputable suppliers in a range of formats to suit customer preferences. Libraries ACT review and negotiate contracts with suppliers on a regular basis. Once contracts are in place, the Collections team provides suppliers with established profiles outlining the scope of resources required. Regular review meetings are held to ensure these profiles are current and reflect agreed collection development requirements.

## Standing Orders

Standing orders with suppliers are used to ensure rapid acquisition of known popular authors or series that are usually in high demand. Standing order plans are reviewed regularly.

## Profiles

Specialist library suppliers are provided with detailed selection documents for each collection. These documents describe what should be selected based on analysis of collections and usage trends, community and staff feedback and publisher's information. Selection is monitored by library staff to ensure specifications are being interpreted correctly and to identify any parameters which may need refinement.

## Suggestions for purchase

Libraries ACT encourages suggestions from library customers for materials not already in the collection. Items that fit within LACT guidelines will be purchased if possible. The suggestion for purchase form is available on the library website.

## Donations

Libraries ACT does not accept donations. We do not accept donations to replace lost or damaged books, nor do we accept donations from authors. We may, under exceptional circumstances, accept donations at our discretion. Items of local historical significance can be donated to the ACT Heritage Library.

## Local Authors

Our standing orders and profiles include local authors. Local authors seeking to make donations should contact the ACT Heritage Library.

## Independent and self-published items

To be considered for inclusion in our collections, independently and self-published authors may be referred to a contracted library supplier and will be assessed against our policy and selection principles. Titles must also have been published within the last 12 months and be edited professionally and without errors.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Libraries ACT support the position of Creative Australia whose principles 'promote a thriving creative industry, centred on human creativity, that generates opportunities for a broad range of practitioners and businesses and supports artists to engage in creative practice.'

We support the protection of intellectual property rights and the right of creators to provide consent and be remunerated when their work is used by AI.

We are committed to building a collection that reflects the creativity, expertise and intellectual work of human authors, artists and creators. We will make reasonable efforts not to purchase or include materials that have been generated wholly, substantially or partially by artificial intelligence. AI-assisted content, works created by human authors who use AI tools for editing, refinement or error checking, will be considered under the same criteria as wholly human authored works.

We will make reasonable efforts to ensure there is adequate human oversight and intervention to ensure we meet our stated commitment.

## Collection management

**Deselection**

We aim to have current, vibrant and engaging collections with 50-60% of the physical collection to be less than five (5) years old, in line with ALIA guidelines. We aim to replace titles if they are classic texts or of lasting appeal or part of a series.  We actively remove resources based on:

- Currency and accuracy of information
- Physical condition
- Use
- Availability of alternatives elsewhere (e.g. online)
- Storage capacity across all our branches
- Duplication where large numbers have been purchased to meet high customer demand.

## Libraries and the circular economy

Sustainability is a key priority for our library. Wherever possible, titles removed from the collection may be: redistributed through sustainability programs or recycled when the condition is not acceptable for continued use and where items meet recycling criteria.

**This policy will be reviewed in 2029**