



# Libraries ACT Collection Policy 2013-16

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**Responsible Officer: Manager, Collections and Policy**

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## **1. Purpose**

The Collection Policy serves as a working document and planning tool for the selection, acquisition and deselection of library materials.

It ensures consistent and balanced growth of the collection, assist collaborative communication and application of uniform business processes between branches, facilitate resource sharing and inform the public. The policy relates directly to the strategic direction of Libraries ACT.

Libraries ACT collections form an important and valuable community asset and need to be well managed to provide maximum use and benefit to the community.

Libraries ACT aims to both be a catalyst and a supporter of lifelong learning for the people of the ACT and region. Collections must be timely and vibrant and must inform, entertain, educate and engage the community.

## **2. General guidelines**

### **2.1. Rationale**

Libraries ACT aims to meet the needs and expectations of Canberra's library users. Careful selection and management of material by professional, experienced staff, along with the input of our users, will ensure the integrity of the collection is safeguarded and that the wide-ranging educational, cultural, recreational and information needs of library users are met.

In addition, we hope to play an important part in achieving the ACT Government's vision for Canberra as a learning city through providing high quality collections; Inclusive, safe library spaces; new technologies and learning programs.

We seek to facilitate lifelong learning in Canberra underpinned by a fully literate society sharing a love of reading. We aim to engage the community in the exploration of ideas, knowledge and skills and contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of Canberra. An informed citizenry is the basis of a vibrant democracy.

### **2.2. Selection Principles**

Libraries ACT collects high quality library materials in existing and emerging future formats. For the people of the ACT these library materials will have broad popular



appeal; enhance learning opportunities; aid individual, social and business aspirations; and inform, entertain and connect people, groups and communities.

### **2.3. Collection formats**

Libraries ACT aims to provide a variety of high quality print, video, audio and electronic formats. It also aims to support lifelong learning, but not replicate school, college, tertiary, or other curriculum materials.

New and emerging formats are considered for collections based on the need to make them available for the community to try, potential use, and their accessibility and sustainability.

Online reference collections now offer comprehensive, continuously updated information. As a result, print reference collections in most Libraries ACT branches are now very small and limited to major encyclopaedias and dictionaries. Some libraries, depending on size, have no reference collections.

### **2.4. Collection development processes**

The collections and electronic services team of Libraries ACT:

- identifies new collections and collection priorities
- selects new library materials and resources
- works with portfolio staff to engage community members in the growth and development of collections
- acquires new library materials and resources through best value contracts and procurement processes
- maintains, reviews and evaluates collections in an ongoing and collaborative way with all staff
- assists branch staff in managing resources, including deselection processes, promotion of collections and making resources readily accessible and discoverable.
- facilitates the ‘second life’ program which donates deselected materials to charities.

### **2.5. Identifying new collections and collection priorities**

Libraries ACT analyses patterns of use to identify trends. Library staff attend conferences, scan current literature, meet regularly with suppliers, and liaise with



staff, the community and government groups to remain aware of user demands and trends. Emerging issues at a local, national, and international level are monitored.

## **2.6. Selecting new materials and resources**

The collections and electronic services team have the overall responsibility for selecting new library materials and resources. However they are guided by community needs, analysis of collection use, customer and staff suggestions, community engagement activities and new and emerging issues and knowledge. Libraries ACT will also liaise with key ACT community groups and cultural organisations to develop collections of relevance and interest to these communities.

## **2.7. Selection Guidelines**

New library materials are selected using the following guidelines:

- Popular interest and appeal
- Potential use
- Present and future community needs and demographics
- Currency
- Balance in opinions and views across a subject
- Popularity and reputation of the author, illustrator or producer.
- Format and presentation
- Literary merit
- Relevance
- Known gaps in the collection (balanced growth)
- Local interest
- Value for money
- Availability
- Positive reviews and prize long or short listing
- Emerging authors, series, topics of interest

New electronic resources are selected using the above guidelines but with additional criteria around:

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- Accessibility in current online environment
- Support from vendor
- Technical issues and support
- Ongoing licence fees
- Ease of use
- Associated hardware requirements
- Emerging demand and user expectations

## **2.8. Suggestions from library customers**

Libraries ACT encourages suggestions from library customers for materials not already in the collection. Libraries ACT views this as a valuable way of connecting with the community and acquiring materials users want and need. Items that fit within Libraries ACT selection guidelines will be purchased, if possible. The purchase suggestion form is available on the library website:

<http://www.library.act.gov.au/functions/suggest>

## **2.9. Donations**

Libraries ACT only accepts donations in exceptional circumstances, such as items of local historical significance or gifts from governments or organisations. Libraries ACT does add materials to the collection for community use that have been provided for by other ACT Government agencies.

## **2.10. Controversial materials**

- Libraries ACT supports the “Statement on Free Access to Information” released by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) (see appendix 1).
- Libraries ACT provides a range of materials which reflects a spectrum of community view points. Selections will not be hindered by any anticipated approval or disapproval, but are based on the criteria listed.
- Libraries ACT aim to support the interests and diverse views of the whole community unless they are prohibited by law.
- Libraries ACT endeavours to be culturally sensitive. An example is consideration of the ATSLIRN Protocols and [NSLA National Policy Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Services and Collections](#) (2007).

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- R Rated materials are identified as such and can only be borrowed by persons over the age of 18.
- It is the responsibility of parents, not library staff, to guide children and teenagers in their selections.

### **3. Acquiring new library materials and resources**

#### **3.1. Supplier Contracts**

Libraries ACT contracts a panel of suppliers selected according to ACT Government procurement guidelines to provide library materials.

#### **3.2. Consortium Purchasing**

Libraries ACT is a member of the National and State Libraries Australasia Consortium and Electronic Resources Australia which purchases online resources for member libraries.

#### **3.3. 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 every year.

#### **3.4. Profile orders**

Libraries ACT has developed collection profiles which suppliers use to select new items. These profiles are based on statistical analysis of collections and usage trends. Strict parameters are associated with profiles to ensure Libraries ACT receives the highest quality materials. Parameters include: currency, media interest, reputation of authors and publishers, literary merit, literary and other prizes and format.

#### **3.5. Inter library loans**

Libraries ACT can facilitate loans from other library services (inter library loans) for items that Libraries ACT does not hold and which are otherwise unsuitable or unavailable for adding to its collections. A cost recovery charge is levied on inter library loans.



## **4. Maintaining, reviewing and appraising collections**

### **4.1. Recording and Describing Collections**

Libraries ACT maintains an integrated library management system that includes a comprehensive database of all holdings. This allows for a catalogue to be used to search and discover items held in the collection.

Libraries ACT is part of a network of libraries sharing records nationally and internationally, using agreed upon standards are used to describe collections. Catalogues and in-house systems are continually updated and improved.

### **4.2. Removing items from Collections**

Libraries ACT aims to have current, vibrant and attractive collections and aims for 50-60% of the collections to be less than five (5) years old.

Libraries ACT actively removes items from collections based on the following criteria:

- Currency and accuracy of information
- Physical condition
- Use
- Availability of information elsewhere (for example on line)
- Storage capacity of libraries across the ACT.

Libraries ACT endeavours to replace titles if they are classic texts or of lasting appeal.

Titles removed from the collection may be:

- Donated to charity
- Recycled or otherwise disposed of.

## **5. Responsibilities**

Key accountability: Manager, Collections and Policy, Libraries ACT.

Community engagement, selection and deselection input - Community Portfolio

Teams and professional librarians.



## 6. References and further information

### **Australian Library and Information Service (ALIA) Statement on Free Access to Information**

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:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- Catering for interest in contemporary issues without promoting or suppressing particular beliefs and ideas;
- protecting the confidential relationships that exist between the library and information service and its clients;
- 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;
- observing laws and regulations governing access to information and ideas but working towards the amendment of those laws and regulations which

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inhibit library and information services in meeting the obligations and responsibilities outlined in this Statement.

Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

[http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_ccpr.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm)

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

<http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/iflastat.htm>

IFLA internet manifesto and guidelines

<http://www.ifla.org/en/publications/the-ifla-internet-manifesto>

National Policy Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island library services

<http://www.nsla.org.au/publication/national-policy-framework-indigenous-library-services>

ATSILIRN Protocols 2012 <http://aiatsis.gov.au/atsilirn/protocols>

## **7. Review**

Annual review after budget allocation (July – October).

Review coordinated by SOG C Collections and Policy Manager,

Policy to be approved by operations Manager,

Policy to be signed off by Director, Libraries ACT , Executive Director, PACS