

STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM POLICY

Purpose

Intellectual freedom is the freedom to seek, receive and impart information without restriction within the context of the law. The policy outlines how the State Library of Western Australia addresses its responsibilities to intellectual freedom.

Scope

The policy:

- applies to all State Library staff, volunteers and members of the Library Board of Western Australia;
- encompasses the content of collections the State Library offers to the public and its services, events, programs and exhibitions; and
- relates to the use of State Library venues.

Context

Intellectual freedom is a fundamental human right. Everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. These rights are enshrined in international human rights instruments to which Australia is a signatory and are essential for a democratic society and culture (see Supporting Documents section below).

The policy is based on the premise that a key responsibility of libraries is to oppose any infringement on intellectual freedom. To this end, the State Library collects and makes available the widest variety of ideas and knowledge, reflecting the diversity of Western Australian communities.

Principles

Equitable access

Everyone should have same opportunity to seek, receive and impart information no matter their age, gender, race, religion, disability, cultural identity, sexuality, language, socioeconomic status, political allegiance or social viewpoint.

Anyone may enter the State Library either in person or online and expect to receive the same level of service. Exceptions to this are people who have been asked to leave for not abiding by the *Library Use Policy* or excluded from entering under the *Library Board (State Library) Regulations 1956*.

Freedom of opinion and expression

The right to freedom of opinion is the right to access, hold and express opinions, without exception or restriction (within the law).

State Library collections are developed to be inclusive, without censorship or bias, to represent the diversity of our community and create a sense of belonging and connection, while recognising the colonial bias of its historic materials.

State Library events and programs express a range of different viewpoints. Clients should be able to explore a topic from all sides to form their own opinion.

The State Library provides a variety of venues for hire. Supporting intellectual freedom, anyone may apply to hire a venue as outlined in the Library's *Venue Hire Policy*.

Privacy

State Library clients have the right to privacy. The Library's *Privacy Policy* and *Privacy Statement* sets out the way client's personal information is collected, stored and made available.

Freedom from censorship

Censorship is the suppression of ideas, no matter how they are expressed, whether it is the written word, speech or images.

The State Library doesn't promote or discourage particular viewpoints and generally does not censor material, except where State and Federal law restricts access to materials.

The *State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia* establishes the way in which State and Local Governments work together to deliver public library services across the State. One of the guiding principles of the agreement states, "Access to information and ideas, free of censorship and the influence of sectional interests, will be unrestricted, within legal and regulatory obligations."

The State Library filters some content retrieved through its public internet connections and wifi service. Recognising that content filtering is a form of censorship, access to the following types of internet content may be restricted:

- content restricted by law (State and Federal),
- pornography,
- sites that offer gambling; and
- sites that facilitate the unauthorised sharing of copyrighted materials.

The Library will consider requests for specific websites to be unblocked if they are acceptable for members of the general public.

The State Library welcomes families and young people to use its facilities, collections and services. The selection of heritage and general collection items is not influenced by the possibility that children might view them. The supervision of reading and viewing activities and attendance at library programs by children and young people under 18 is primarily the responsibility of their parent or caregiver.

Aboriginal self determination

The State Library acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self - determination is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to which Australia is a signatory. In particular, the State Library supports Article 13 that states, "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalise, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories,

languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.”

The State Library acknowledges the colonial origins of many of its collections and will work with Aboriginal people and communities to reverse and repair harm, identify and sustain cultural knowledge and preserve its integrity and value.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Library Board of Western Australia that:

The State Library supports the right of all Western Australians to access information within the law regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, cultural identity, sexuality, language, socioeconomic status, political allegiance or social viewpoint.

The State Library is committed to the principles of equitable access, freedom of expression, freedom from censorship, privacy and Aboriginal self determination.

Responsibility for this document

Chief Executive Officer and State Librarian (content)

All State Library staff (implementation)

References

All these documents can be found by searching the State Library’s website.

- *Privacy Policy*
- *Privacy Statement*
- *Library Use Policy*
- *Client Code of Conduct*
- *Membership Terms and Conditions*
- *Collection Strategy*
- *State and Local Government Agreement for the Provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia*
- *Freedom of Information (guide applications under the Freedom of Information Act 1992)*
- *Public Internet Access Guideline*
- *Venue Hire Policy*
- *Copyright Takedown Position Statement*

Supporting documents

All these documents can be found by searching the internet.

- United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- United Nations *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*
- United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *ALIA Free Access to Information Statement*

- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *Libraries and Privacy Guidelines*
- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *ALIA on Online Content Regulation*
- International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) *IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom*
- International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) *IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*

Authorisation and Review

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