
Policies

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2002

1. Introduction

The purpose of Eastern Regional Libraries' Collection Development Policy is to guide librarians and inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. The judgement of librarians will be exercised within the framework of this Policy, the stated goals and boundaries of which will assist them in choosing from the vast array of materials available.

Collection Aims

The aim of Eastern Regional Libraries is to provide a high-quality, attractively presented, usefully organised informational and recreational collection in a range of media that is current, relevant and responsive to the needs of the whole community. This aim is drawn from the principles laid out in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (Attachment 1).

Responsibility for Managing Collection Development

The Corporation delegates responsibility for the management of the collection to the Collection Development Team, a team of professional librarians co-ordinated by the Resources/Youth Services Manager and which includes the Information Services Manager who is responsible for reference materials for all ages.

Final responsibility for the collection lies with the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO will authorise other staff to apply this policy in building branch library collections. Unusual problems will be referred to the CEO who, in exceptional cases, will inform the Corporation.

The Collection

Access to the collection of Eastern Regional Libraries is provided free of charge according to the subsidy conditions laid down by the Victorian State Government. It is also in accordance with the policies of the Australian Library and Information Association and the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services (Attachments 2, 3, 4).

The collection can be accessed at 13 branch libraries and 3 mobile libraries.

Each library and holds its own core collection of reference and lending stock, including both fiction and non-fiction in a variety of formats, suitable for all age groups, and responsive to the particular needs of the locality. The quantity of materials held in each branch library is variable and is dependent upon the size of the facility, the requirements of the community service and budgetary considerations.

The collection is owned by the Corporation, and is managed as a single regional collection. However, items can be transferred temporarily or permanently around the region, according to demand.

2. General Policies for the Selection of New Materials

The primary purpose of selection is to collect materials of contemporary interest and significant value. The Library will always be guided by a sense of responsibility to both present and future library users in adding materials which will enrich the collections and maintain an overall balance. The Library recognises an immediate duty to make available current, high demand, high interest material in a variety of formats for persons of all ages. It will also provide timely, accurate and useful information for community members in pursuit of their job related and personal interests.

Selection Criteria

The Collection Development Team will select material according to the following recognised criteria:

- Authority and competency of the author/creator.
- Comprehensiveness in breadth and scope.
- Appropriateness to interest and skills of intended users.
- Relation to existing collections.
- Relative importance in comparison with other materials on the subject.
- Importance as a record for present and future use.

All staff members selecting library materials will be expected to keep these principles in mind and apply their knowledge and experience in making decisions regarding the inclusion of particular items. Community and staff input may be sought when considering local needs.

2.1 Guidelines for Selection

The library does not attempt to duplicate the services and materials offered by other library providers. Through co-operative agreements with the State Library of Victoria, academic libraries and other municipal libraries, the resources of these libraries may be available to Eastern Regional Libraries members through Inter Library Loan.

- The Library acknowledges the educational needs of students of all ages in the area. Text books and curriculum related materials are provided only where these materials also serve the general public or where they provide information not otherwise available.
- Legal and medical works will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the layman.
- The library acknowledges a particular responsibility to collect, preserve and organise material relating to the natural history, flora and fauna, social, economic, cultural and political aspects, both current and historical, of the local area. "Local" refers to the Eastern Regional Libraries region and adjacent localities if appropriate. Realia will not be collected.
- As the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational background and reading abilities, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.
- In selecting materials for the collections in any particular branch, the Library will pay due regard to the special, commercial, industrial, cultural and civic needs of that community.
- Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collections and in serving the interest of the Eastern Regional Libraries' community.

2.2 Requests and comments from library customers

Library users will be encouraged to make requests and recommendations for items that are not already in the library collection and to comment generally on any aspect of the collection. A range of avenues for requests and recommendations will be provided. The results of library surveys will also be taken into account.

General comments on the collection will receive a written response, wherever the name and address is supplied.

2.3 Donations

The Library welcomes gifts of materials and/or financial contributions. Eastern Regional Libraries reserves the right to evaluate donated items and to dispose of them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials. Gifts which do not accord with Eastern Regional Libraries' objectives and policies will be refused. No other conditions may be imposed relating to any gift except by prior negotiation.

Donations may be eligible for tax deductions.

3. Policies Relating to Specific Areas of the Collection

In addition to its general selection criteria Eastern Regional Libraries applies the following guidelines to the purchase of materials in specific areas.

3.1 Fiction

Eastern Regional Libraries aims to provide a wide range of fiction of all types, including books suitable for pre-school children, books for beginner readers, books for young independent readers, books for teenagers and books for adults. The fiction collection will include classic literature, works of literary merit and popular titles of current interest to library users. Australian authors will be well represented in the collection. The collection will also include a representative cross-section of material published overseas.

The collection will be regularly refreshed with new editions of standard and classic titles.

Where demand for particular titles is high, such as in the area of best seller fiction, extra copies will be purchased for each branch in order to keep waiting lists to a minimum.

Abridgments of classic titles, and novelty books, will not normally be purchased.

Hardcover editions are preferred as their lifespan is generally longer than softcovers. However, softcover fiction will be purchased where hardcover editions are not available, or where it is deemed that library users would prefer softcover editions, or where demand is high and additional copies need to be purchased.

3.2 Non-Fiction

Eastern Regional Libraries aims to provide an up-to-date, balanced collection in all subject areas likely to be of interest to library users. Key retrospective works on all subjects will be included and replaced as necessary.

Suitable material will also be provided for all age groups, from preschool children through to adults. Where demand is very high multiple copies of a title will be purchased.

Every effort will be made to fill any obvious or reported gaps in the collection's coverage.

Eastern Regional Libraries will not purchase course text books unless these have some value to the wider community. In meeting the needs of students for non-fiction material, the library aims to supplement rather than merely duplicate material held in school libraries.

Hardcovers are preferred for their durability, however softcovers will be purchased where hardcovers are not available.

3.3 Large print

Eastern Regional Libraries aims to provide a collection of large print books for library users who are unable to read ordinary print, although the collection should be accessible to any library user. The majority of large print readers are likely to be elderly. In response to demand, the collection should be comprised predominantly of popular adult fiction of all types, supplemented by a smaller amount of popular non-fiction. Material will be purchased in both hardcover and softcover, with increasing numbers purchased in the softcover format as it is lighter to hold and easier to handle.

3.4 Audio visual

Eastern Regional Libraries aims to maintain up-to-date lending collections of audio books, music cassettes, compact discs and videos. New audio visual media, such as DVDs, will be introduced to the lending collection as the technologies develop and demand arises, subject to budgetary considerations.

The audio visual collections complement the book collection as well as assisting those with sight or hearing disability.

All audio visual collections will contain materials for adults and for children.

The selection of audio visual material will be governed to a large extent by the technical quality of the material. Only high grade audio and visual recordings will be purchased for reasons of durability.

Audio books

Full-length recordings only are held in the adult audio book collection. Some dramatisations of children's classics are included. Children's "read-along" kits are also purchased to encourage the development of literacy skills.

Audio cassettes and compact discs

The adult collection will consist of compact discs representing the full range of musical styles. Recordings by well-known artists of standard works that are likely to have enduring appeal are preferred. Children's music and stories will continue to be purchased in tape cassette format until demand decreases significantly.

Videos

The video collections for adults and young people contain quality feature films, television tie-ins and non-fiction material

3.5 Reference

Eastern Regional Libraries will maintain a collection of 'not for loan' material, containing information on the broadest possible range of subjects, that is always available for use during library opening hours. The collection will be used for answering ready reference enquiries, providing a starting point to research on a subject, and assisting further in-depth research.

The collection will include atlases, statistics, dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, handbooks,

yearbooks, government publications, indexes and monograph publications which are the recognised authority on their subject. The titles will vary according to the particular needs of each library. Currency of information will be of the utmost importance. Most items in the reference collection will be replaced as new editions are published.

The material purchased for the reference collections may consist of books, microfiche, CD-ROMs, electronic databases or any other formats considered relevant.

3.6 Family history

Eastern Regional Libraries will provide basic genealogical reference materials, primary reference tools and guides to sources for family history research, as well as providing access to additional research materials through interlibrary loan or referral.

Genealogical records and resources are acquired for Victoria, other parts of Australia, and for other countries with strong relationships through past immigration links.

General selection criteria apply to the selection of genealogical resources. The collection should be housed separately from the main collection with suitable identification.

Family Histories will generally be accepted as donations but not purchased by the Library.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Eastern Regional Libraries will subscribe to a carefully selected number of daily newspapers and periodicals likely to be of interest to library users, ranging from popular general publications to those focusing on special interests.

As the currency of information contained in periodicals is of primary importance, it follows that they will be retained in each branch library collection for a limited period, generally not longer than two years.

All newspapers will be reference only. Back copies of newspapers will be kept in branches, the length of time depending on space constraints.

Local papers will be bound and kept at the appropriate branch.

All periodical and newspaper subscriptions will be comprehensively reviewed

3.8 Languages other than English (LOTE)

In response to the small number of non-English speakers within the Region, Eastern Regional Libraries provides small collections of fiction and non-fiction books in languages other than English.

Eastern Regional Libraries' policy is to monitor demand for this type of material and to adjust the collection accordingly. Bulk loans of LOTE materials may be obtained from other library services.

Current languages held are Chinese, Dutch, Italian and Vietnamese for adults and Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Italian, German, French and Japanese for children.

Language learning instructions in the major European and Asian languages are purchased in a variety of formats and provided as part of the lending collection.

3.9 Literacy

Eastern Regional Libraries provides cataloguing, processing and shelf space to the Outer Eastern Literacy Group. Access to the literacy collection is provided through the Eastern Regional Libraries database.

4. Use of library materials

The Library recognises that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some library user. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no item will be removed from the collection except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft. Access to particular material may be restricted in response to legislated or legal requirements.

The use of rare and scarce items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm.

Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

Complaints regarding library materials should be detailed in writing to the CEO.

Eastern Regional Libraries upholds the 'Statement on Freedom to Read' by the Australian Library and Information Association. (see Attachment 2).

5. Access to the collection

Every opportunity should be taken to enhance the community's access to the collection and to other sources of information.

6. Collection Evaluation

The Collection Development Team and branch staff will continually review the currency and relevance of the collection to ensure it remains up-to-date and attractive.

7. Review of Collection Development Policy

This policy will be revised at least once every three years. Major changes will be referred to the ERLC Board for ratification

Attachment 1 - Unesco Public Library Manifesto 1994

Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depends on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

This Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

UNESCO therefore encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the

development of public libraries.

The Public Library

The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its customers.

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those customers who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example, linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and condition are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.

Collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor commercial pressures.

Missions of the Public Library

The following key missions relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of the public library services:

1. Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age
2. Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels
3. Providing opportunities for personal, creative development
4. Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people
5. Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievement and innovations
6. Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts
7. Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity
8. Supporting the oral tradition
9. Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information
10. Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups
11. Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills
12. Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programs for all age groups and initiating such activities if necessary

Funding, Legislation & Networks

The public library shall in principal be free of charge. The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and finances by national and local governments. It has to be an essential component of any long term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education.

To ensure nationwide library co-ordination and co-operation, legislation and strategic plans must also define and promote a national library network based on agreed standards of service.

The public library network must be designed in relation to national, regional, research and special libraries as well as libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

Operation & Management

A clear policy must be formulated, defining objectives, priorities and services in relation to the local community needs. The public library has to be organised effectively and professional standards of operation must be maintained.

Co-operation with relevant partners - for example, user groups and other professionals at local, regional, national as well as international level - has to be ensured.

Services have to be physically accessible to all members of the community. This require well situated library buildings, good reading and study facilities, as well as relevant technologies and sufficient opening hours convenient to the customers. It equally implies outreach services for those unable to visit the library.

The library services must be adapted to the different needs of communities in rural and urban areas.

The librarian is an active intermediary between customers and resources. Professional and continuing education of the library is indispensable to ensure adequate services.

Outreach and user education programs have to be provided to help customers benefit from all the resources.

Implementing the Manifesto

Decision makers at national and local levels and the library community at large, around the world, are hereby urged to implement the principles expressed in this Manifesto.

Attachment 2 - Australian Library and Information Association Statement on Freedom to Read

The Australian Library and Information Association, believing that freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if its citizens have access to information and ideas through books and other sources of information, affirms the following principles as basic and distinctive of the obligations and responsibilities of a librarian:

1. A primary purpose of a Library Service is to provide information through books and other media on all matters which are appropriate to the library concerned.
2. A library must protect the essential confidential relationship which exists between a library customer and the library.
3. The functions of the librarian include
 - to promote the use of materials in the librarian's care
 - to ensure that the resources of the library are adequate to its purpose
 - to obtain interest in all relevant facets of knowledge, literature and contemporary issues, including those of a controversial nature
 - but neither to promote or suppress particular ideas and beliefs
4. A librarian, while recognising that powers of censorship exist and are legally vested in state and federal governments, should resist attempts by individuals or organised groups within the community to determine what library materials are to be, or are not to be, available to the customers of the library.
5. A librarian should not exercise censorship in the selection of materials by rejecting on moral, political, racial or religious grounds alone material which is otherwise relevant to the purpose of the library and meets the standards, such as historical importance, intellectual integrity, effectiveness of expression or accuracy of information which are required by the library concerned. Material should not be rejected on the grounds that its content is controversial or likely to offend some section of the library's community.
6. A librarian should uphold the right of all Australians to have access to library services and materials and should not discriminate against customers on the grounds of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, economic conditions, individual lifestyle or political or social views.
7. A librarian must obey the laws relating to books and libraries, but if the laws or their administration conflict with the principles put forward in this statement, the librarian should be free to move for the amendment of these laws.

Attachment 3 - ALIA Statement on Free Library Services to All

It is the expressed view of the Australian Library and Information Association that each Australian has an equal right to information regardless of the way or for what purpose it is used.

Freedom of access to information is essential to the democratic process and to the social welfare of the community. That freedom can be inhibited as much by poverty as by censorship. Satisfaction of a person's information needs must not be contingent upon ability to pay.

The Australian Library and Information Association therefore opposes any direct charge or fee to individuals for information or information services provided by libraries and information services established to serve the general public.

Attachment 4 - Aust. Council of Libraries and Information Services Statement on Professional Ethics

Librarians and Library Technicians significantly influence or control the selection, organisation, preservation and dissemination of information. In a political system dependent upon an informed democratic society, they are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. Librarians and Library Technician have a special obligation to

ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present the future generations.

Both librarians and library technicians are dependent upon one another for the bibliographical resources used to provide effective information services and this dependence imposes obligations for the maintenance of the highest level of personal integrity and competence in the performance of their duties.

Librarians & Library Technicians

1. Must provide the highest level of service through appropriate and usefully organised collections, equitable service policies and skillful, accurate and unbiased responses to all legitimate requests for assistance.
2. Should not exercise censorship in the selection or use of materials, by rejecting on moral, political, racial or religious grounds alone, material which is otherwise relevant to the purpose of the library and meets the standards which are appropriate to the library concerned. Material must not be rejected on the grounds that its content is controversial or likely to offend some sections of the library's community.
3. Must protect each customer's right to privacy with respect to information sought or received and materials consulted or borrowed.
4. Must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of an employing institutional or professional body.
5. Must avoid situations in which personal interest might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library customers, colleagues, or the employing institutions.