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| Name of policy: | Library | | |
| Adoption by Council: | 27 October 2021 | Minute number: | 349/2021 |
| Last review date: | August 2021 | | |
| Review timeframe: | 4 years | | |
| Next scheduled review date: | August 2025 | | |
| Related legislation: | <i>Library Act 1939</i> <i>Library Regulation 2018</i> <i>Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)</i> <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> | | |
| Associated policies/documents: | MidCoast Libraries Collection Development Strategy | | |
| Responsible division: | Liveable Communities | | |

Policy objective

The objectives of this Policy are:

- to support the provision of a library service across the MidCoast Local Government area via a network of physical facilities and online resources;
- to acknowledge the important legislative frameworks that apply to the provision of a public library service in NSW;
- to recognise the principles that underpin the provision of MidCoast Libraries.

Policy statement

Council is committed to the provision of a public library service as a core part of its overall functions. Council will adhere to the NSW Library Act 1939, NSW Library Regulation 2018 and any other legislation relevant to the provision of a public library service. It supports the principles of free service provision and equity of access.

Coverage of the policy

The policy applies to all staff working in the library service of MidCoast Council along with visitors and Community members.

Strategic Plan link

Value - *Our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities*

Objective 1 - *We are a diverse community that works together to care for all our members*

Objective 2 - *We will embrace the uniqueness and creativity of our communities*

Value - *A connected community*

Objective 3 - *We feel connected to each other*

Objective 5 - We utilise technologies to connect us locally and beyond

Policy content

Council recognises the library as a core service to be provided to the MidCoast Community. It supports the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) principles of free and equitable access to core library functions and resources. It also recognises the diverse roles the Library now plays in the community.

Council further acknowledges the requirement to adhere to the NSW Library Act and Library Regulation in regards to the provision of library services.

The Council mission is to deliver benefits for the community in a way that adds value and build trust. The Library vision is to provide access to information and opportunities that engage, empower and are inclusive. To achieve these goals the following principles will apply to this Policy:

- 1) the Library will acquire, preserve and make available book and related library materials in organised collections;
- 2) collection resources will be provided and maintained across a diverse range of subjects that aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time;
- 3) collection content will be freely accessible. It should reflect a spectrum of viewpoints, be balanced and from a reliable source;
- 4) collection development will be guided by the MidCoast Libraries Collection Development Strategy;
- 5) library visitors are provided with a facility where they can relax, feel safe and participate in appropriate social interaction;
- 6) equity of access is underpinned through collection development, (supporting a variety of formats including literacy resources), free access to core library services, building design and collection layout;
- 7) accessibility underpins provision of services through library facilities and access to collection, both physical and online;
- 8) membership of the library will be freely available to all visitors, subject to meeting reasonable membership requirements. Certain conditions to membership may also apply, subject to the age of the member and the level of membership detail provided;
- 9) exclusion of access to library services and collections will only be based on behavioural breaches by Library visitors and users;
- 10) Council reserves the right to suspend library privileges if a library user exhibits inappropriate behaviour or inappropriate use of library services;

- 11) the Library is committed to the provision of online content and downloadable resources as part of its overall collection of resources;
- 12) Internet access and access to online resources will be provided free of charge.
- 13) the Library respects the privacy of patrons and does not monitor information on the Internet. Parents/guardians of young people are solely responsible for a young person's access to and use of the library's Internet facilities, including access to sites, their subject matter and content;
- 14) 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.
- 15) where a client is found to be using Library computers to access pornographic, offensive 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.
- 16) through the Library website there are links to interesting and useful sites and resources. The Library does not monitor these sites or any of the subsequent links available from them and does not accept responsibility for the content or availability of these sites;
- 17) access to copyrighted materials can be obtained through the Library and this includes electronic materials. Responsibility for infringement of copyright law lies with the customer. The Library expressly disclaims liability or responsibility resulting from copyright infringement by customers;
- 18) when downloading information from the Internet, customers should be aware of the possibility of downloading computer viruses which can harm the computer systems used by the customer. The Library Service is not responsible for damage to disks/memory sticks, computer systems, loss of data, damage or liability that may occur from a customer's use of the Library's electronic information resources;
- 19) in addition to collections the library will provide services and activities that encourage social inclusion and wellbeing;
- 20) the Library recognises that it plays an important role in community educational learning outcomes and will provide services and resources that support lifelong learning;
- 21) organisations that encourage reading and library use in the community will be supported; wherever possible;
- 22) personal information provided for library membership will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act;
- 23) Council will support the State-wide public library association, currently NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA), and relevant Statewide initiatives that lead to improvements in library service provision;
- 24) the Library is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of young people. The Library strives to provide a welcoming environment, and provides targeted resources and programs to meet the needs of young people;
- 25) community members who have mobility constraints will be supported, wherever possible, through access to a home library service that extends to individuals and relevant community organisations.

The Policy will be underpinned and interpreted by relevant operational processes and guidelines as required.

Definitions

Collection is any material that the library provides access to and either owns or is a subscriber to. This includes digital content.

Inappropriate behaviour is that which is deemed to breach the NSW Library Act, NSW Library Regulation.

Membership is formal process of registration where visitor details are used to create a membership record with the Library.

Visitor is anyone accessing the library service, including online services. A visitor does not have to be a library member.

References and related documents

MidCoast Libraries Collection Development Strategy

Internet Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries (State Library of NSW) Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries (State Library of NSW) MidCoast Council Customer Service Charter

Free access to information statement (Australian Library and Information Association)

Responsible officer (position)

Manager Libraries and Community Services

Attachments

Free access to information statement (Australian Library and Information Association)



Free access to information statement

ALIA Constitution Objects addressed:

- To promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interest of all Australians and a thriving culture, economy, environment and democracy;
- To endorse the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 19 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in response to the many challenges faced by the world today and into the future.

Principle

Freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if individuals 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 individuals.
- 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 personal level, individuals 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 individuals to information regardless of age, citizenship, political belief, physical or mental ability, gender identity heritage, education, income, immigration and asylum-seeking status, marital status, origin, race, language religion

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or sexual orientation

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 individuals have access to information from a variety of sources and agencies to meet their needs and that an individual's information needs are met independently of location and an ability to pay, and therefore supporting internet neutrality
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, 2015. Reviewed 2018.

(Replaced "Free library services to all, freedom to read". Adopted 1971; amended 1979, 1985)