



Intellectual Freedom Policy

Policy Number:	SR-CS-1113-V05
Records File Number:	815/380/086
Maintained By:	Strategy, Planning and Policy
Review Date	December 2019

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Revisions
01	Library Board	6 Feb 2006	Original version
02	Library Board	16 Feb 2012	Links and references, addition of policy's scope
03	Director Corp. Services	12 Dec 2013	Administrative review: updated links and references
04	Director Corp. Services	14 Jan 2016	Administrative review: updated links and references
05	Library Board	7 Dec 2017	Strengthened the links to the IFLA <i>Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom</i>

1. Authority

The Library Board of Queensland.

2. Scope

Public policy.

3. Purpose

Intellectual freedom is the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. It is a fundamental human right, enshrined in enduring international statements and instruments, and is vital to a thriving democratic society and culture.

Libraries contribute to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom and help to safeguard democratic values and universal civil rights.¹ Libraries also support the free flow of information and ideas, have a responsibility to oppose the infringement of intellectual freedom. This responsibility includes safeguarding against infringement by omission (neglecting the needs of individuals and communities) and by commission (exclusion, the violation of privacy and censorship).

This policy outlines how the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) addresses this responsibility.

¹ [Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#), International Federation of Library Associations, 2003.

4. Principles

Equitable access and freedom of expression

The right to know and freedom of expression are two aspects of the same principle. The right to know is a requirement for freedom of thought and conscience; freedom of thought and freedom of expression are necessary conditions for freedom of access to information.²

Through its own services and as a partner to, and advocate for, Queensland public libraries, SLQ works to ensure that all Queenslanders have access to library services that empower, stimulate and enrich.

Priorities integral to this objective are:

- overcoming the impacts of remoteness, disability, poverty and other forms of disadvantage
- developing inclusive library services, which effectively address diverse needs, affirm and strengthen individual identities, and foster tolerance and appreciation of difference
- providing welcoming places for everyone, free access to a wide range of information and opportunities for the free expression of ideas and exposure to different perspectives.

Privacy

The right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas free from surveillance is fundamental to intellectual freedom. Library clients have the right to personal privacy and anonymity. Notwithstanding exceptional requirements under law:

- surveillance of clients is strictly limited to the requirements of maintaining a safe and welcoming environment at SLQ;
- personal information is collected, used and disclosed strictly subject to the consent of the person that the information is about.

Censorship

Libraries have a responsibility both to guarantee and to facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity. To this end, libraries acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society.³

SLQ acquires and provides access to material in order to ensure that the range of needs and interests within the community are equitably addressed, and to ensure representation of a diversity of perspectives on any particular subject. This principle is subject only to exceptional requirements under law. The selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.⁴ Personal views or values, or any perception of the potential of material to offend or cause controversy, do not limit the materials SLQ acquires and makes accessible.

SLQ limits the filtering of content retrieved through its Internet connections, recognising that automatic content filtering is a form of censorship.⁵ SLQ takes measures to exclude content that is illegal as well as malicious sites intended to have negative impacts on ICT infrastructure. SLQ also places conditions on children's access to the Internet, as required under law.

Without resorting to censorship SLQ protects its clients from risk of offence by:

- empowering clients to search for information effectively
- requiring all clients to be mindful of the possible sensitivities of others.

² [Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#), International Federation of Library Associations, 2003

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ The scope of this policy provision is public access Internet in SLQ. Internet filtering by a local government, library or Indigenous Knowledge Centre does not preclude or limit SLQ cooperating with the local government, library service or other third party.

5. Supporting documents

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), 1948, viewed 30/10/17, www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Assembly of the UN, 1966, viewed 30/10/17 www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx

Sustainable Development Goals, Assembly of the UN, 2015, viewed 30/10/17, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

Statement on free access to information, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), 2001, viewed 30/10/17, www.alia.org.au/about-alia/policies-standards-and-guidelines/statement-free-access-information

Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) 2003, viewed 30/10/17, www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-statement-on-libraries-and-intellectual-freedom

Information Privacy Act 2009, Queensland Government, viewed 30/10/17 www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2009-014

Libraries and Privacy Guidelines, ALIA, 2005, viewed 30/10/17 www.alia.org.au/about-alia/policies-and-guidelines/alia-policies/libraries-and-privacy-guidelines

Statement on online content regulation, ALIA, 2002, viewed 30/10/17 www.alia.org.au/about-alia/policies-standards-and-guidelines/alia-online-content-regulation

The IFLA Internet Manifesto, IFLA, 2004, viewed 30/10/17 www.ifla.org/publications/node/224

6. Related State Library policies and standards

[Content Strategy](#)

[Responsible Conduct Policy](#)

[Public Access Information and Communication Technology \(ICT\) Policy](#)

[Service Level Agreements](#) (with Local Governments)

[Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#) (for SLQ employees)