



# *Burwood Council*

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## **BURWOOD LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY HUB STATEMENT ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

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## Purpose

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To provide a framework for the provision of free, open and equitable access to recorded knowledge, information and creative works for the residents of the Burwood Community and visitors. This policy is framed with reference to the *Library Act 1939* and the principles expressed in the Australian Library and Information Association's statements on *Free Access to Information*, *Online Content Regulation* and *Open Access*. It is also based on the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' *Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom* and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

## Scope

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This policy applies to all library staff and to people who seek to access information.

## The Statement

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### Collections

The Burwood Library and Community Hub (hereafter referred to as the Library) develops and maintains collections of resources to meet the informational, recreational and educational needs and interests of its community. The Library has a Collection Development Plan to assist in the selection of resources.

1. The Library has a role as an unbiased source of information and ideas, including online information. It accepts responsibility for providing free access to resources and information presenting as many points of view as possible on current and historical issues, including controversial issues.
2. The Library endeavours to provide access to comprehensive and balanced collections that meet the needs of its community as far as budget, space and availability of resources allow.
3. Library resources that have not been subject to Federal or State restriction or prohibition will neither be included nor excluded from the Library on moral, political, racial, religious, sexist, language, or other sensitive grounds alone, whatever pressure may be brought to bear by individuals or groups.
4. The arrangement of the collection aims to facilitate access. Restricting access to certain titles or classes of materials, e.g. by holding them in special collections available on request, can be an indirect form of censorship. No resources should be held in closed access except for the express purpose of protecting them from damage, theft or due to Office of Film and Literature Classifications restrictions.<sup>1</sup>
5. Adult collections will not be limited because of the possibility that items may fall into the hands of children. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to monitor the reading material of their children.

### Library Use

6. Everyone has the right to use a public library whatever their age, sex, race, religion, cultural identity, language, disability, socioeconomic status, individual lifestyle, political allegiance or social views.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government Office of Film and Literature Classification <http://www.oflc.gov.au/>

7. Library patrons must be sensitive to the values and beliefs of others when displaying potentially controversial information or images on computer screens located in public areas (see explanatory note). Where a patron is found to be using library computers to access pornographic, offensive or objectionable material, or for any unlawful purpose, the Library reserves the right to direct the patron to leave the Library, to not re-enter the Library for a specified period, and to report unlawful conduct to the relevant authorities.
8. Burwood Council has a responsibility to the community to ensure offensive and objectionable content, including violence, illegal activities and pornography, are restricted from display. To this effect, filtering software has been installed on the Library's computer and wireless systems to screen out offensive content.<sup>2</sup>
9. Burwood Council supports the right and responsibility of parents and guardians to direct the use of the Internet by their children. Parents and guardians who wish to limit or restrict access to online content by their children should personally oversee their use of the Internet service and other forms of electronic information.<sup>3</sup>
10. A parent or guardian must grant permission for any child under the age of 18 to access the Internet service and other forms of electronic information in the Library by signing the appropriate section of the membership form permitting Internet use.

### **Disabled Access**

11. There is wheelchair access to the Library from both Conder and Hornsey Streets. There is a lift in the building and accessible toilets. There is also parking for the disabled in the car park in Conder Street.
12. A range of adaptive technology is available for patrons with vision impairment.
13. The library has a collection of large print books, captioned DVDs and MP3s available for loan.

### **Role of Library Staff**

14. Staff should not exercise censorship in the selection of resources by rejecting, solely on the grounds mentioned in point 3, resources which are otherwise relevant and which meet the standards of the Library. Notwithstanding their opposition to censorship, librarians must strictly observe laws, which may ban or restrict access to certain resources.
15. Staff have a role in educating patrons in the safe and informed use of the Internet, guided by relevant policies.
16. The Library promotes and supports access to information, including electronic information, through its Internet and online services. Library staff are available to assist patrons in the use of the Internet and the Library's online resources and to recommend websites on particular subjects.

### **Further Information**

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#### **Explanatory notes**

The *Library Act 1939* Regulation 2010, Section 17(1)(b) states that library users may be directed to

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<sup>2</sup> Library Council of NSW (2007) Access to information in New South Wales Libraries

[http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public\\_libraries/docs/accesstoinformation.pdf](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/docs/accesstoinformation.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Library and Information Association Guidelines relating to online content regulation

<http://www.alia.org.au/about-alia/policies-standards-and-guidelines/alia-online-content-regulation>

leave if the person's condition, conduct, dress or manner is likely to give offence to any person in the library or to interfere with any person's use of the library.

This may include accessing websites that may reasonably be considered to offend, displaying images of deceased persons which can cause offence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or displaying adult content.

Where there may be legitimate reasons for accessing such material, special arrangements can be discussed with the library staff.

### **Related Documents**

- Burwood Library Internet Access Policy 2013
- Burwood Library Collection Development Plan 2011-2015
- Library Regulation 2010  
[www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)
- Library Council of NSW  
Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries 2013  
[http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/policies/docs/childrens\\_policy\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/policies/docs/childrens_policy_guidelines.pdf)
- ALIA Statement on Free Access to Information 2007  
<http://www.alia.org.au/about-alia/policies-standards-and-guidelines/statement-free-access-information>
- ALIA Statement on Online Content Regulation (Amended 2002)  
<http://www.alia.org.au/about-alia/policies-standards-and-guidelines/alia-online-content-regulation>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom 2013  
<http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-statement-on-libraries-and-intellectual-freedom>
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998  
[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol\\_act/papipa1998464/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/papipa1998464/)

### **Review**

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The Burwood Library and Community Hub - Statement on Access to Information will be reviewed every four years.

### **Contact**

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