**VISION AUSTRALIA INFORMATION LIBRARY SERVICE**

**COLLECTIONS GUIDELINES**

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1. **Introduction**

The Vision Australia Information Library Service (VAILS) is the National Library for People with Print Disabilities in Australia and provides information in alternative formats to people with print disabilities as defined by the Australian Copyright Act (1968) Part VB. ([Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Definition))

VAILS is committed to working cooperatively with other key information providers to facilitate access to the full range of information for all Australians with a print disability. Library membership is available to all Australians who have a print disability that can be verified by a suitable referee. For further information on eligibility, please see the Vision Australia Information Library Service Conditions of Service.

The VAILS Collections Guidelines are intended to inform our clients and the wider population of the direction that the Library is committed to, and guide the staff about the principles upon which selections are made. It provides a clear and consistent rationale for the selection, maintenance and de-selection of materials independent of bias, and an authoritative framework for requests and complaints regarding the library collection.

The aim of Vision Australia (VA) is to provide a balanced collection of informational and recreational resources in accessible formats, and provide further content through inter-library loan where appropriate. This collection must be 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. ([Appendix 2](#_Appendix_2:_UNESCO) )

1. **Scope and Definition**

The Collections Guidelines covers all materials held by the VAILS, excepting for those materials that are circulated and maintained by agreement with other organisations. Responsibility for the development and maintenance of these collections shall rest with the organisation as per the signed agreement.

VAILS will regard as part of its collections any electronic resources selected according to the Collections Guidelines, regardless of whether the resource is added to its own collections or accessed as a service to clients; electronic supply of newspaper and magazine content, and all donated materials.

Vision Australia endeavours to provide a comprehensive range of material in an accessible format, however limitations do occur due to budget allocations and the time and cost it takes to convert materials into an accessible format.

1. **Strategic Context/Aim**

Vision Australia is a partnership between people who are blind, sighted or have low vision. We are united by our passion that people who are blind or have low vision will have access to and fully participate in every part of life they choose.

The role of the VAILS is to provide an informational, recreational and cultural collection in a range of accessible formats that is current, relevant and responsive to the needs of the whole print disabled community. The Library will acquire titles that are whole and complete, rather than single chapters or excerpts.

The desired impact of the Library’s activities on the print disabled community is to enable free access to information that will enable people to fully participate in every part of life they choose.

1. **Copyright**

The Australian Copyright Act of 1968 allows Vision Australia, as a registered institution assisting people with a print disability, to:

* Make master copies for people with a print disability, of literary or dramatic works that are not commercially available;
* Update existing masters to newer formats, eg: cassettes to Daisy

However unless permission from the publisher is granted, we cannot:

* Sell copies
* Continue to use a master if a commercial edition becomes available. In this instance, we are required to destroy the master and purchase the commercial version.

1. **Collections Principles**

The following principles underpin the Library’s Collections Guidelines:

1. **Production of in-house content**

Production of content will be guided by the following precedence in order to create a collection of contemporary and popular interest:

Australian titles of enduring value;

Client suggestions;

Award winning and best-selling titles;

Continuation of series previously produced for the collection

All client suggestions for Braille titles will be produced provided that the title is still readily available in print.

Those titles which are self-published will be acquired upon the basis of overall demand and supply of e-text for downloading.

Where possible, the Library will work with publishers to ensure that titles produced in-house are with the copyright holder’s consent, or are of a non-commercial nature that is suitable for long-term retention. Non-fiction titles suggested by clients will be considered for synthetic voice production, dependent upon content, availability of a digital file and time constraints.

Content will not be rejected upon the basis of moral, religious, racial or political grounds.

1. **Purchase of content**

DAISY-audio titles available from commercial suppliers will be purchased using the following precedence in order to create a collection of contemporary and popular interest:

Client suggestions;

Award winning and best-selling titles;

Genres in the Top Twenty Subject Interest Codes as identified by client demand;

Writers in the Top Twenty Authors as identified by client demand

Content will not be rejected upon the basis of moral, religious, racial or political grounds. Titles available in synthetic voice will only be purchased if no commercial alternative is available. If a human narrated version becomes available, this will be purchased subject to client demand.

1. **Braille**

The Library supports the production, dissemination and retention of Braille as a community resource and as a literacy tool for all clients.

Music Braille items will be made available for lending or electronic download to all individual library members of Vision Australia. This content will be sourced from currently held materials and overseas producers, and only complete transcriptions will be accepted into the collection.

Unified English Braille was proposed in 2004 to standardise Braille production. Australia adopted this standard in 2007 and all Braille items produced by Vision Australia are made to this standard. Titles produced prior to this period, or those which have been acquired from other agencies will not be converted to this standard.

1. **General**

No excerpts, individual pages or chapters shall be included in the Library’s collection.

Through client surveys, clients have indicated that all books acquired should be unabridged and whole.

Content will be stored and delivered digitally, in order to ensure long-term preservation. All materials that require conversion to a digital format will be assessed to determine if they are of sufficient quality, or they are suitable for permanent retention.

Electronic information resources are considered formats and do not change the criteria for the collection and retention for each of the Library’s collections.

In order to maintain an active, robust and responsive collection, the Library will engage in de-selection processes to remove materials upon the basis of poor condition, contain outdated information, or consist of parts of an incomplete title.

1. **Formats**

The Library will collect materials in the following formats:

* Daisy
* Braille
* Print/Braille picture books
* Music Braille
* Daisy e-text

The Library works collaboratively with the Australian Public Library Network to enhance the utilisation of locally held materials and complement collection strengths. As music compact discs and large print materials are readily available through the public library network, these will not be collected by the Library.

From time to time, these formats will be reviewed in line with improvements in accessible technologies.

1. **Policies Relating to Specific Areas of the Collection**

In addition to its general selection criteria Vision Australia applies the following guidelines to the purchase of materials in specific areas.

1. **Fiction**

Vision Australia 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.

1. **Non-Fiction**

Vision Australia aims to provide an up-to-date, balanced collection in all subject areas likely to be of interest to library users. Subject to budgetary constraints, key retrospective works on all subjects will be included.

Suitable material will also be provided for all age groups, from preschool children through to adults.

1. **Education**

Vision Australia 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 by alternative format producers.

All instructional manuals produced under the Personal Support scheme, and are whole and unabridged, shall be added to the Lending Collection.

1. **Indigenous materials**

The Library recognises the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and will actively collect indigenous materials in consultation with the indigenous community. The collection is built to enrich understanding of the past, present and future of country and its peoples through a comprehensive collection of accessible materials.

1. **Reference**

Vision Australia will maintain information on the broadest possible range of subjects. 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 publications which are the recognised authority on their subject.

Currency of information will be of the utmost importance. Most items in the reference collection will be replaced as new editions are published, unless superseded by an electronic version available through electronic databases.

1. **Local and family history**

Vision Australia will develop local and family history materials as well as provide access to additional research materials through interlibrary loan or referral based on budgetary constraints.

Oral histories will be made available in digital format, and will be acquired upon the basis of eyewitness accounts and insights into Australian society and its changing values and attitudes.

1. **Newspapers and Periodicals**

Vision Australia will provide access to as many local and national newspaper newspapers and periodicals likely to be of interest to library users, ranging from popular general publications to those focusing on special interests.

As the timely despatch of current information contained in periodicals is of primary importance, they will be produced with synthetic voice wherever possible.

All periodical and newspaper subscriptions will be reviewed annually, and client recommendations taken into consideration subject to budgetary constraints.

1. **Community Languages**

Vision Australia recognises that the number of community language speakers in Australia is increasing. The library aims to provide collections of fiction and non-fiction for clients where possible. Community language materials will also be sourced via international blindness agencies, under a variety of arrangements and dependant upon copyright and client numbers.

The Australian Public Library Network holds a number of English language learning audio materials, and the Library will work cooperatively to ensure that access to this collection is made available to people with a print disability.

1. **Children’s collection**

Vision Australia supports the promotion of literacy through the Feelix library, use of early readers, chapter books and Braille.

1. **Requests and Suggestions**

Library clients will be encouraged to make requests and recommendations for items that are not already in the collection. A range of avenues for requests and suggestions will be provided, and the results of library surveys will also be taken into account.

The Library maintains knowledge of current publications and identifies and evaluates materials for purchase or acquisition by using a range of trade and professional journals, book reviews and other bibliographic tools. The Library also maintains strong links with specialist suppliers and the publishing industry.

For items that are available in other libraries, Inter Library lending maybe undertaken so as to ensure that clients receive materials that are beyond the library’s collection.

1. **Donations**

Vision Australia welcomes financial contributions and donations of Braille or tactile materials. VAILS reserves the right to evaluate donated items and to dispose of them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials. No other conditions may be imposed relating to any gift except by prior negotiation. Financial contributions may be eligible for tax deduction.

1. **Online databases**

The Library will provide access to online resources, with a commitment to sustaining resources that are accessible and authoritative.

1. **Use of library materials**

Vision Australia upholds the ‘*Statement on Freedom to Read’* by the Australian Library and Information Association. ([Appendix 3](#_Appendix_3:_Statement))

The Library recognises that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some library users. 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.

Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. For further information, please refer to the Vision Australia Information Library Service Conditions of Membership.

1. **Collection Evaluation**

The Collection Services Manager and key staff will continually review the currency and relevance of the collection to ensure it remains up-to-date and attractive.

1. **Review of Collection Development Guidelines**

These guidelines will be reviewed every year and revised at least once every three years.

1. **Related Policies**

The Library endorses the following policies:

* ALIA Library and information services for people with a disability (2009) <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/disabilities.html>
* ALIA Library and information services and indigenous peoples (2009) <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/aboriginal.html>
* ALIA Statement on public library services (2009) <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/public.library.services.html>
* ALIA Statement on free access to information (2001) <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html>
* IFLA Statement on libraries and intellectual freedom (1999) <http://archive.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/iflastat.htm>
* IFLA Declaration on libraries, information services and intellectual freedom (2002) <http://archive.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/gldeclar-e.html>
* UNESCO Manifesto on Public Libraries <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html>

1. **Compliance**

Materials received by all Library members are subject to copyright under the Australian Copyright Act 1968. No unauthorised reproduction or communication of these materials is permitted.

1. **Comments**

Comments and questions on the application of the guidelines are welcome and should be made in writing and directed to the National Manager, Vision Australia Information Library Service, 454 Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong, VIC, 3144 OR library@visionaustralia.org.

1. **Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Definition of Print Disability taken from the Australian Copyright Act 1968**

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/ca1968133/s10.html#person_with_a_print_disability>

A *"person with a print disability"*means:

(a)  a person without sight; or

(b)  a person whose sight is severely impaired; or

(c)  a person unable to hold or manipulate books or to focus or move his or her eyes; or

(d)  a person with a perceptual disability.

**Appendix 2: UNESCO Public Library Manifesto**

<http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/libraman.html>

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|  **UNESCO** **Public Library Manifesto**  **1994** |

 November 1994

 Original: English

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 depend 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 users.

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 users 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 conditions 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 which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of 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 achievements 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 programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

**Funding, legislation and networks**

* The public library shall in principle be free of charge.
* The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed 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 coordination and cooperation, 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 and 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 organized effectively and professional standards of operation must be maintained.
* Cooperation 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 requires well situated library buildings, good reading and study facilities, as well as relevant technologies and sufficient opening hours convenient to the users. 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 users and resources. Professional and continuing education of the librarian is indispensable to ensure adequate services.
* Outreach and user education programmes have to be provided to help users 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.

The Manifesto is prepared in cooperation with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

**Appendix 3: Statement on Free Access to Information**

<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html>

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 citizens. 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 individual level, citizens 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 citizens to information regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, cultural identity, language, socioeconomic status, lifestyle choice, political allegiance or social viewpoint;
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 their clients have access to information from a variety of sources and agencies to meet their needs and that a citizen's information needs are met independently of location and an ability to pay;
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.

Last updated: March 2013

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