Collections Policy

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The Geelong Regional Library Corporation acknowledges the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin nation, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Maar nations as the Original Owners of the lands on which our library services operate. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and celebrate First Nations Peoples of this land as the custodians of learning, literacy, knowledge and story.

1 Introduction

The Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) is committed to providing a diverse, inclusive, accessible and dynamic collection that reflects the needs and interests of our communities.

A library collection is a significant asset to any community; it provides access to knowledge that can empower and transform individuals and the community at large. GRLC collections are an essential resource for residents and visitors alike, offering a range of physical and digital resources.

2 Purpose

The Collections Policy guides the development and maintenance of print and digital library collections to meet the needs and interests of all communities serviced by Geelong Regional Libraries.

This policy serves as a guiding document for decision-making and helps communicate GRLC's commitment to providing a relevant, inclusive, and high-quality collection. Additionally, it outlines the key responsibilities of GRLC in meeting community needs while adapting to changes in technology, information consumption, and cultural diversity.

The strategic goals of our library collections are defined by the GRLC Library Plan and the GRLC Collections Strategy 2023-2027.

3 Scope

The GRLC Collections Policy includes what is selected, acquired, or created for customer use.

This policy is format neutral. The Library selects and acquires or provides access to whichever format best meets customer needs. In many instances this means providing both print and digital formats to meet needs and expectations, whereas in other instances the resource may only be available in one format.

The GRLC is committed to the preservation and dissemination of material pertaining to Geelong and its regions. As a major regional public library, the GRLC considers its responsibilities at both a regional and state level in its collection development and management practices.

4 Definitions

Collection: The diverse range of resources available to the public, including print, digital, and multimedia formats.

Deselection: The process of carefully evaluating and retiring materials to keep the collection relevant and engaging.

Floating Collection: A flexible system that allows materials to move freely across branches based on borrowing patterns.

Intellectual Freedom: Our commitment to ensuring the community has access to a broad range of perspectives and information.

5 Principles

The following principles underpin the Collections Policy:

- Recognition of the Wadawurrung, Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples as Traditional Owners of the GRLC service regions including their rights to cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and intellectual property.
- Accessible to people with diverse learning and reading needs
- Responsive to community needs and community demand
- Representative of a diverse range of views, subjects and genres
- Enabling unfettered access to ideas and information fundamental to a democratic society
- Free and universal access

6 Policy

6.1 Collection development & management

The Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries highlights that public library collections should aim to provide a wide coverage of subjects, formats and genres to cater for the diverse needs of the community, while adapting to emerging trends and formats as appropriate. The collection supports the library's important role in lifelong learning, reading for pleasure and the documentation and preservation of cultural memory. The Library does this by:

- developing the collection to reflect the community's demographic and economic needs.
- providing access to resources in a variety of formats including print, audio and digital.
- ensuring appropriate and efficient access for all members of the community.
- documenting, preserving and presenting the historical and contemporary development of the local community.

GRLC operates a floating collection model to enhance accessibility and ensure resources are optimally distributed based on community borrowing patterns.

6.2 Financial Management

GRLC provides materials to the community in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible. Content is added based on the community's needs, priorities outlined in the library plan, and strategic objectives within the library network.

6.3 Acquisition and purchasing

GRLC acquires resources through statewide tendering contracts, ensuring best value for the community and adherence to local government procurement guidelines. A variety of suppliers are used to ensure that GRLC can deliver high-value resources across its physical and digital collections.

6.4 Access to information and classifications

GRLC upholds the core values of intellectual freedom, equitable access to information and the rights of individuals to form their own opinions which are outlined in the ALIA Statement on Freedom to Access Information, the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto and the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom.

The core values expressed in these documents are :

The Freedom of Access to Information – GRLC seeks to provide a balanced library collection, reflecting the diversity in our community and the views of our customers. The Library will provide access to materials representing a wide range of viewpoints, in recognition of the community's right to seek and receive diverse information.

Libraries as a Pillar of Democracy – GRLC supports the role of public libraries as vital facilitators of lifelong learning, cultural development and informed citizenship through providing unrestricted access to knowledge.

Intellectual Freedom – GRLC emphasises the library's role in safeguarding the free flow of information and ideas. It affirms its commitment to resisting censorship in any form and offers material that reflects the diversity of community interests and opinions.

Legal Compliance – GRLC complies with Australian classification laws and does not include materials prohibited by Federal or State legislation. The powers of censorship and classification are vested in the Federal and State government, GRLC does not act as a censor.

It is recognised that a particular item may offend, however, items will not be removed from the collection based on having caused offence to an individual or groups. Decisions regarding retention or deselection are made in accordance with professional guidelines, legislative requirements and publisher recall.

Responsibility for the reading, listening and viewing of library materials by children remains with their parents or legal guardians. GRLC assumes no role in monitoring or restricting children's borrowing or access to library materials.

Complaints are reviewed against GRLC's policies ensuring decisions are objective, consistent, and aligned with the library's commitment to intellectual freedom.

6.5 Self-published, self-printed and print on demand materials

Items that are added to the collection have typically gone through a thorough editing and production process, ensuring quality and accuracy. Items published through traditional publishing companies use these processes to measure the authority of an author and the legitimacy of the information it proports. Self-published, self-printed or print-on-demand materials may lack editorial review, accuracy checking or peer review. Because of this, the library will generally not acquire these types of items for the collection.

6.6   Donations

The library accepts a limited number of donations, as processing these items incur additional cost to GRLC to cover labour and processing materials. Acceptance of donations is subject to:

- selection criteria – donated materials must meet the same standards as purchased resources.
- donations not meeting these criteria may be declined or redistributed.
- donations of library materials containing local area subject matter or origin may be added even if condition is poor.

The terms of the donation are required to be clarified with the potential donor before acceptance of any items. GRLC accepts no responsibility for the condition or retention of donated items.

6.7 Content analysis

The collections are regularly and effectively evaluated to ensure that the goals of collection development are being met and that emerging gaps are identified.

Content use and scope is monitored regularly, to ensure the Library continues to provide the content customers demand. GRLC uses a range of data sources and community feedback to evaluate collection performance.

6.8 Collection Maintenance and Sustainability

GRLC's collection is continuously reviewed to maintain its appeal, relevance, and alignment with community needs. Regular evaluation ensures:

- Items match customer needs
- A balanced collection
- A network perspective
- Physical condition and accuracy

GRLC integrates sustainable principles into collection management practices by prioritising quality, condition, and relevance to ensure continued community value. Deselection is an essential activity for maintaining a high-quality, responsive collection. The GRLC Deselection Guidelines outline procedures for reviewing, replacing, or removing outdated or underused items. Deselected items are recycled, donated, or repurposed to minimise waste and support local community initiatives.

6.9   Selection

Suppliers are selected following formal tendering processes undertaken in line with State and Local Government policy, and identified during the evaluation process as best fulfilling tender specifications. Collection materials are selected based on data, customer needs and professional judgment.

6.10 Selection criteria

Selection is guided by criteria tailored to each format. These criteria ensure that acquisitions meet community needs, align with GRLC's strategic objectives and deliver best value to customers

6.10.1 Physical Collections

- Relevance and community demand
- Format accessibility
- Subject matter including style, accuracy and reading level
- Authority and competency of creator and/or publisher
- Relationship to existing collection
- Construction and production quality
- Currency of information and/or date of publication
- Durability and physical suitability for sustained library use
- Cost
- Availability elsewhere in the community
- Items with an intended audience or interest to the general community
- Adherence to legal and copyright or digital rights management requirements affecting use or access by public library users
- A strong emphasis is placed on Australian authors and content to reflect Australian culture

6.10.2 eCollections

- Local or community emphasis
- Vendor support
- Access requirements
- Technical considerations and features such as authentication and compatibility with current GRLC systems
- Community need or potential use
- Download capability
- Useability
- Cost
- Currency including updates and maintenance
- Contract provisions (limitations of subscriptions)
- Content availability and coverage (Australian sources)
- Authority and competency of creator and/or publisher
- Adherence to legal and copyright or digital rights management requirements affecting use or access by public library users

6.10.3 Serials

- Number of issues per year
- Availability in alternative formats

6.10.4 New and Emerging Formats

- Potential level of customer receptiveness and demand
- Impact on physical space
- Durability of format for public library use
- Technical quality

- Compliance with industry standards
- Suitability for circulation
- Items not offered by other local organisations

6.10.5 Languages Other than English (LOTE)

- Availability of materials to build a viable collection
- Literacy needs and demands of a particular population
- Literacy culture of a particular population
- Resources aimed at customers who are culturally and linguistically diverse will be considered based on demographic data and community driven demand.

GRLC collaborates with other library services to enhance LOTE offerings through resource sharing arrangements via interlibrary loan.

6.10.6 Library of Things (non-book items)

- Assist with positive wellbeing outcomes
- Are not available to community members for no or low cost elsewhere
- Align with the strategic priorities of Geelong Regional Library Corporation
- Provide opportunities to engage with technologies
- Are selected to ensure suitability for loan, usability and best value.

7 Regular review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or following significant incidents if they occur, or after any relevant legislative changes.

8 Related Legislation and Documents

8.1 Legislative Context

- Australian Classification of Films and Computer Games
- Copyright Act 1968
- Local Government Act 2020
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

8.2 Supporting Documents

- Geelong Regional Library Corporation – *Library Plan*
- Geelong Regional Library Corporation – *Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028*
- Australian Library and Information Association - *ALIA free access to information statement*
- Australian Library and Information Association - *Statement on public library services*
- Australian Library and Information Association - *Statement on information literacy for all Australians*
- Australian Library and Information Association - *Library and information services for people with a disability*
- Australian Library and Information Association - *Libraries and information services and Indigenous peoples*
- Australian Library and Information Association - Guidelines, Standards and Outcome Measures for Australian Public Libraries
- International Federation of Library Associations - *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 2022*
- International Federation of Library Associations - *IFLA Internet Manifesto*
- International Federation of Library Associations - *IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto*
- International Federation of Library Associations - *IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom*
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