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Collection Management Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy provides the framework for the development and management of Whitehorse Manningham Libraries (WML) collections to ensure alignment with community requirements.

The document outlines professional and organisational principles; the processes of selection, acquisition, evaluation and de-selection. It is subject to financial investment in collections and the building and information technology infrastructure available.

2. Strategic Link

This Collection Management Policy supports the vision, mission, values and strategies of the Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation Library Plan 2025-2029.

The policy supports the provision of services in accordance with the Victorian State Government Public Libraries Funding Program.

3. Principles underpinning the Collection Management Policy.

Our library collections:

Are shaped by what our community want

Our collections are built on the informational, recreational and cultural interests of the community. We actively encourage participation and carefully consider all feedback and requests.

Reflect and celebrate who our community is

Our collections not only reflect our community but celebrate its uniqueness.

We will offer access to:

- A variety of formats to meet the diverse access needs and preferences of our community
- Collections in languages spoken by our community
- Materials of varying complexity to accommodate different educational backgrounds and reading abilities
- Resources to support English language learning
- Resources which represent and celebrate the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Collections managed with active consideration of gender representation, diverse perspectives and the potential impact on different gender identities and all LGBTQIA+ communities
- Resources that highlight the cultural heritage and history of the local area.

Support free and open access to ideas and information

Our library collections:

- Support intellectual freedom to read a diverse range of views, subjects and genres in alignment with Australia Library and Information Association statements
- Adhere to the Victorian Public Libraries Funding Program conditions: *Borrowing library material is free. Furthermore, materials that are not restricted or prohibited by federal or state law will not be excluded based on moral, political, racial, religious, language or other similar grounds. Nor will the inclusion of library materials be based solely on these grounds, regardless of pressure from individuals or groups*
- Reflect the diverse spectrum of community views. When a specific viewpoint is represented, we will actively seek to include materials offering universally recognised and legislated perspectives
- Reflect WML's commitment to the safety and well-being of all children and young people participating in our programs and visiting our libraries. We aim to create a safe and friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe. We trust our community to choose the materials that are right for them, including what is age-appropriate content for children in their care.

Are evidence-based and tested

- We will evaluate the effectiveness and success of library collections through analysis and benchmarking of performance data to ensure they continue to meet the evolving needs of our community.

The Collection Management Policy draws on a wide range of standard professional documents listed in the References section of this document.

4. Community focus and stakeholder engagement

WML is committed to engaging with the community and other stakeholders in the development of a customer-driven collection. Consultation methods include:

- Borrower suggestions for purchase are encouraged; online and in-person opportunities are offered
- Borrower material selection days
- Detailed community survey of users and non-users. Measures included satisfaction with and perceived importance of library collections
- Consultation with local subject matter experts
- Staff knowledge of local communities needs
- Formal customer feedback mechanisms including physical and electronic communication options
- Current use/turnover: statistics extracted from the Library Management System identify library material that is increasing or decreasing in popularity as well as reservation waiting lists
- Environmental scanning: monitoring of key sources which create demand e.g. television and print media, films, book launches etc. to anticipate community and societal trends.

5. The Collection Management Process

5.1 Selection

5.1.1 Selection mechanisms

Library collection material is selected using a combination of the following:

- Borrower suggestions - requests from the community are considered in accordance with the selection criteria and either purchased, or borrowed via Inter-Library Loan
- Standing orders - standing orders are titles automatically ordered prepublication in predefined quantities. Standing order lists are reviewed on an ongoing basis by staff and are modified to suit the demands of borrowers and budget availability
- Profiling - supply in response to detailed specifications developed by professional library staff. Profile specifications reflect community interests and demand and are continuously monitored to optimise alignment
- Online selection – supplier websites are used by professional library staff to select and order new release material
- Branch stock requests - professional library staff identify required specific titles or areas of the collection in their branch to be purchased, either new release items or replacement copies.

5.1.2 Selection criteria

Together with the annually reviewed Profile Parameters and Standing Order lists suppliers/selectors use the following criteria in choosing materials:

- Relevance and current community demand
- Currency and accuracy of content
- Publication date
- Authority and reputation of author, publisher, producer or illustrator
- Relationship and importance to the broader WML collection
- Suitability of format
- Quality of presentation appropriate to the content and audience
- Significance of subject matter, permanence or timeliness of subject
- Price and availability

Where all other selection criteria are equal, resources published or produced in Australia will be purchased.

The following material will not be acquired:

- Self-published works unless they have significant local relevance
- Adaptations and abridgements, except where such an edition is deemed to meet specific user needs, e.g. literacy, children's classics
- Textbooks or curriculum-based materials, except when they meet the selection criteria and have an appeal to a community broader than those undertaking specific formal education courses. Generally, the provision of prescribed textbooks and curriculum-related material is the responsibility of each educational institution.
- Very specialised, technical or academic publications
- Materials prohibited by law
- Rare or second-hand material

5.1.3 Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries (WML) prioritises collections that reflect human creativity, intellect and original expression. WML also acknowledges that works generated or co-authored with AI may still meet collection criteria for cultural significance, community interest or educational value. Therefore, library materials will not be rejected solely based on the work being generated or assisted by AI, provided the content meets the selection criteria for wholly human-authored works. WML will make reasonable efforts to ensure transparency about the known role of AI in content creation, using appropriate cataloguing practices to disclose when an item has been produced or significantly assisted by Artificial Intelligence.

5.2 Acquisition

5.2.1 Procurement

All Whitehorse Manningham Libraries (WML) procurement activities are undertaken in accordance with the principles outlined in the Whitehorse Manningham Libraries Procurement Policy.

As library collection material expenditure exceeds the minimum spend threshold, it is a requirement of the Local Government Act that expenditure is undertaken by public tender.

Victorian public library services have similar requirements for materials, cataloguing and end processing ensuring there are advantages in collaborative tender arrangements, including aggregated purchasing power that WML may not have if acting alone.

WML participates in a joint tender of Supply of Library Collection Material and is committed to purchasing the vast majority of material from suppliers nominated in the tender. Only specialist or exclusive material is purchased outside these arrangements. Where possible, suppliers deliver items already catalogued and end-processed to our specifications, removing the requirement to do this in-house.

WML is committed to exploring collaborative purchasing arrangements and resource sharing for process and budget effectivities.

5.2.2 Donations

Donations are accepted with the understanding that they will only be added to the collection if they meet our selection criteria and are deemed appropriate and needed. Like all potential acquisitions, donated items will be evaluated based on factors such as relevance, condition, and currency of information. WML reserves the right to decline accepting donations that duplicate existing holdings, are in poor condition, or contain outdated information.

As donations are seldom new, particular attention is paid to the following:

- Items must be in excellent physical condition with intact binding, pages clean and unmarked, with no yellowing.
- Nonfiction must have a publishing date within the previous two years unless the work is of permanent value or a standard work in that field.

Individual copies or short runs of periodicals and newspapers are not accepted.

Donations, once accepted into a collection, will be treated in the same manner and be subjected to the same regulations and procedures as any other item in the collection. Generally, donations will not be recognised in any particular way.

All donations become the property of WML and may be disposed of either through the library book sales or by other appropriate means. WML reserves the right to dispose of material it does not require.

5.3 Access & Shelf life

5.3.1 Access

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries (WML) makes its collection accessible by:

- providing knowledgeable, friendly and helpful staff
- housing collections in public areas and/or via the website, except when restricted due to legal requirements
- providing collections in a wide range of formats
- providing a live online catalogue offering 24/7 service
- providing reservations and a courier service between WML branches.
- purchasing multiple copies of items in line with demand and within budgetary constraints
- 'floating' nominated collections - items in a floating collection do not permanently belong to one library branch - if an item is borrowed from one library and returned to another, the item remains where it has been returned
- collections at individual branches which reflect the interests, borrowing patterns of the local catchment area and the size of the building.

5.3.2 Film and Literature Classifications

Public libraries have a duty to include in their collections a representative selection of materials which meet the basic selection criteria on topics of interest to their users, including materials covering a range of opinions and controversial subjects. Material prohibited by law is not made available.

The Office of Film and Literature Classification classifies all DVDs and computer games. A sign explaining these classifications is displayed in each library branch near the relevant collections. The rating classification is included on the cover of the item and in the catalogue record. G, PG, and M ratings are recommendations only. The MA 15+ and R ratings are legally restricted. The library management system enforces the following borrowing regulations:

MA 15+

Children under 15 may not borrow unless in the company of a parent or adult guardian.

R 18+

Borrowing restricted to adults 18 years or over. An adult card presented by an adult must be used. In the case of books, they are stored in closed access, cannot be put on public display and must be issued to an adult patron immediately on collection from the desk.

Print material will not be excluded from adult collections on the grounds that it is not suitable for children. Except for material rated MA 15+ and R 18+, it is the responsibility of parents or guardians to make the decision on what is suitable reading, listening and viewing for the individual child.

5.3.3 Collection maintenance and evaluation

Collections are WML's major material asset. Maintaining the integrity of this asset is an essential part of the Collection Management Policy and requires the same professional attention as the original selection. Maintenance includes the regular assessment of the physical condition of items as well as the appropriateness of their content and categorisation.

Collection maintenance, including de-selection, is undertaken by trained professional staff utilising principles outlined in this Collection Management Policy and in accordance with library collection maintenance guidelines. Information gained from weeding collections is one tool used to redress weaknesses and maximise strengths of collections.

Collections must be kept current and with a turnover rate appropriate to the nature of the material. Each item must earn its place on the shelves by its popularity or by its inclusion as an item contributing to the overall balance of the collection.

5.3.4 Discard and disposal

Through the regular program of evaluation, items will be identified for removal from the collection. Library materials are removed from the shelves for one or more of the following reasons:

- The item is in such poor condition that it cannot be repaired
- The item is worn out and can be replaced with other copies or more recent material, or where the information content is more adequately covered by other titles already in the collection
- The item contains dated or superseded information
- The item is a duplicate purchased to satisfy initial heavy demand
- The item no longer meets transient popular needs
- The item has not circulated in a given period of time (depending on the nature of the item and subject matter). These items may be relocated to another branch, depending on estimations of projected demand at another branch

The following will also need to be considered for audio visual collections:

- age and usage of items
- physical condition (e.g. visible scratches/cracks)
- feedback from users regarding clarity of sound or picture
- missing parts or loss (e.g. part of talking book set)
- obsolescence of format
- inability to be repaired cost effectively

All items discarded from collections will be disposed of appropriately. Discarded items will not be put aside for individuals. Items deemed suitable for sale will be sold via the ongoing book sale tables or via the Friends of the Library book sale. Other items not suitable for sale will be recycled wherever possible.

6. Objections or Concerns Regarding Resources

If a patron has an objection to a particular title held by the library, or they consider the title is not suited to the particular collection (e.g. Junior Fiction), the matter can be discussed in the first instance with the Branch Manager or the senior staff member on duty. They will provide the patron with the opportunity to read relevant sections of the Collection Management Policy and the ALIA Statement on Free Access to Information.

If the matter cannot be resolved, Victorian residents eligible for WML membership may submit a written request for re-evaluation of library material. Submissions will be considered by WML's Collection Resources Group. The Group's recommendation will be enacted and rationale communicated to patron. WML's legal requirement is limited to removing materials that have been officially recalled by publishers or deemed illegal by the Australian Classification Board.

7. Whitehorse Manningham Libraries Collection Categories

7.1 Fiction - Print

Fiction collections comprise traditional Fiction Collections arranged and accessed by author, and Genre Collections which are grouped by type of fiction. WML seeks to provide a wide range of fiction of all types, including books suitable for preschool children, beginner readers, young independent readers, young adults and adults. Fiction collections consist of high interest, popular, bestselling and enduring works in all genres and formats (including graphic) to involve all ages and encourage the love of reading for pleasure. The collection is regularly refreshed with new editions of classic and contemporary titles.

7.2 Non-Fiction - Print

The Non-Fiction collection encompasses a broad range of knowledge, interests and culture. It comprises books for both adults and children with reading levels ranging from the most basic up to that of an undergraduate level. Material targeted at primary-school aged readers will be classified into the Junior Non-Fiction collection. The collection scope is intended to provide only supplemental materials for individuals pursuing formal educational programs. The emphasis is on acquiring current, accurate, wide-ranging material suitable for the general, non-professional reader. Identified standard works suitable for public libraries are also acquired. Works on new and emerging subject areas are sought out. In areas of contention or controversy, a balance of viewpoints is provided where the other criteria can be satisfied.

7.3 Large Print

Large Print format collections are provided at every branch in the region to meet the needs of patrons who are more comfortable with this format than standard print. The library has established standing orders with large print publishers and attempts to achieve a wide coverage of titles. However, the selection of large print titles can be restricted by the availability of published titles in this format.

The primary focus of this collection is on fiction titles where demand is highest and on a smaller collection of nonfiction, particularly biographies, histories and other subjects where demand is demonstrated and titles are available. In order to maximise the number of titles that can be purchased, duplicate copies are kept to a minimum. To maximise usage of this collection and to provide a wider range of titles across the Region, items in the Large Print collection are rotated around the branches through an automated stock rotation process.

General selection criteria apply with particular emphasis on clarity and size of type. Weight and size of an item may also be a consideration for this format. Indication of patron demand from the library's Outreach Service is also considered when developing and maintaining this collection.

7.4 Magazines and Newspapers - Print

A wide range of periodicals are purchased to provide information on current events and on recent developments in particular areas of knowledge, as well as to cater for recreational and general reading. They provide a current, topical collection that complements and supports the lending monograph collection.

Satisfaction of patron demand is a high priority for periodical selection. This format is often used for recreational reading but a range of titles offering both information and entertainment will be sought. Subscriptions are assessed annually.

Newspapers play an important part in the dissemination of current information. A range of newspapers is provided throughout the Region, with at least one National and one Victorian daily newspaper at each branch, as well as all relevant local newspapers.

Permanent retention of newspapers is the responsibility of the State Library of Victoria; WML will keep local papers permanently for Local History purposes.

7.5 Local History & Genealogy

Local History refers to all events, people, geography, fauna, transport, commerce and industry, public services and social factors both past and present in the Whitehorse and Manningham municipal areas.

These collections are periodically reviewed as part of the normal collection management procedures. The collections are intended to complement but not duplicate the collections of local Historical Societies.

A separate Local History database, consisting of the catalogued Local History collections of the library, and the four local Historical Societies, makes information about these combined resources available to anyone via the Internet.

Genealogical collections support library users engaged in tracing their family history. Resources may include: indexes to birth, death and marriage records, directories, gazetteers, electoral rolls, rate books, census, cemetery records, shipping records. These are provided in different formats: hard copy; microfiche and online databases.

Increasingly, this type of information is sourced from the Internet, either from free sites or pay-for-use or subscription sites. The library's aim is to offer core or standard resources without attempting comprehensive coverage. Purchases will be made with reference to resources available at other sites for more specialised research.

7.6 Community Languages in addition to English - Print

The library's Community Language collections support WML's aim of providing in supplying access to materials in those languages most appropriate to the communities within the Region in the following circumstances:

- Where a language group is 1% or more of the total population of Whitehorse and Manningham, magazines and newspaper titles will be acquired
- Where a language group is 3% or more of the total population of Whitehorse and Manningham, book collections will be established

Demographic data produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is used to establish the size of language groups and will be monitored for changes.

7.7 English Literacy - Print

The English Literacy collection is aimed largely at independent learners who do not have English as a first language and who are engaged in improving their English language skills and competency. The collection contains fiction, nonfiction, audio visual, online and mixed media items.

7.8 Digital Collections

A range of downloadable, streaming and online resources are available for recreational reading and listening, life-long learning and informational needs. These include eBooks, eAudiobooks, magazines, local and global newspapers, genealogy, films and documentary streaming, language and literacy resources.

Criteria used when considering downloadable and online resources for the collection are: ease of use; content quality; price of print versus electronic; authority; accuracy; frequency of updating; anticipated demand; remote access capability, licensing and usage restrictions.

7.9 Audio-Visual

The Audio-Visual collections aim to provide listening, viewing, recreational and instructional material to complement and support the print collections.

New formats will be acquired when:

- sufficient variety of items is available for purchase
- the level of resource funding is sufficient
- there is demonstrated demand.

A wide variety of formats are provided including DVDs, talking books and music compact discs. These collections reflect the diverse interests and needs of the library's patrons and are aimed at all ages.

7.10 Non-Traditional Library Collections – Library of Things

As trends and technology evolves, WML aims to provide non-traditional collections which will continue to fulfil library or member Council strategic goals and priorities. These collections currently include Outdoor games, Board games, Home Energy Audit Kits, Bird Observation Kits and Portable Induction Cooktops. These collection items will be dynamic and evolving and are subject to budgetary constraints.

References

- [ALIA free access to information statement](#)
- [ALIA Statement on Public Library Services](#)
- [UNESCO Public Library Manifesto](#)