

State Library of New South Wales Agency Information Guide



Introduction and contents of this guide

The State Library of New South Wales (State Library) information guide details our structure and functions and how we provide access to the information we hold in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act).

This information guide is updated regularly to ensure its accuracy and to confirm the State Library's commitment to openness in providing information and complying with the GIPA Act.

The information referred to in this guide does not include information held as part of the Library's collections. Access to the collections is via the Library reading rooms or the [website](#).

About us

The State Library provides public reference and information services for the people of New South Wales. The Library collects and preserves materials and evidence relating to our place in the world and makes them accessible to everyone in New South Wales and beyond. The Library exists in order to support and encourage research, debate, conversation, inspiration, learning and enjoyment. We welcome all people and strive to serve them all equally well, whether they visit us in person on Macquarie Street, online, or through their local public library.

History

The State Library is one of the oldest libraries in Australia, dating from 1826, with the opening of the Australian Subscription Library. The New South Wales Government took over the private subscription library in 1869 and created the Sydney Free Public Library. From 1895 to 1975 the Library was known as the Public Library of New South Wales. It was renamed the State Library of New South Wales in 1975.

Location and opening hours

The State Library is situated on Macquarie Street, Sydney, between the Royal Botanic Garden and NSW Parliament House.

The State Library is open seven days a week, except for certain designated days. See the [website](#) for opening hours.

Structure and functions

The State Library operates under the Library Act 1939 and Library Regulations, which the State Library administers through the Minister for the Arts. The Library Council of New South Wales (Library Council), constituted under the Library Act 1939, is the governing body of the State Library.

The Library Act 1939 defines the powers, authorities, duties and functions of the Library Council. The Library Council's responsibilities relate to the promotion, provision and maintenance of library and information services for the people of NSW; and advising the Minister and local authorities on matters of policy and administration relating to library services.

The State Librarian is the Secretary of the Library Council, responsible for the administration and management of the State Library, and the services it provides. The State Librarian is

supported by four Directors who are responsible for the divisions of Library and Information Services, Digital Experience, Operations, and Engagement.

Further information on the State Library's structure and functions is available on the [website](#).

Key committees

Standing committees of the Library Council include:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Public Libraries Consultative Committee
- Grants Committee
- Legal Information Access Centre Advisory Board
- Education and Scholarship Advisory Board
- Indigenous Advisory Board

The State Library's [annual report](#) includes further information on the Library Council and State Library committees.

Our Collections

The State Library aims to collect, preserve and make accessible the documentary heritage of NSW. The collections comprise the Mitchell and Dixson Libraries, the State Reference Library and other specialist collections. They include books, manuscripts, pictures, digital and electronic resources, government reports, born digital publications, statistics, posters, ephemera, sheet music, talking books, maps, CD-ROMs, newspapers, microfilm and microfiche, films and videos, computer software, kits, sound recordings, photographs, architectural plans, coins, postage stamps, and other objects.

Our Services

The State Library offers access to the collections and an extensive range of library and information services and resources both onsite and online and hosts a dynamic range of public programs through community learning, exhibitions, tours, talks and events for members and friends, schools and the wider community. Specialist services include Indigenous information and engagement services; family history resources; legal information and drug information access; learning programs aimed at school children; multicultural and community language resources and awards and fellowships program. State of the art equipment is available, including adaptive technology for readers with a disability. Copying, imaging and document supply services enable readers to make copies of information in a range of formats.

The State Library supports the NSW Public Library Network, including administering the annual public library grants and subsidies and providing advisory services.

Our support, partnership and sponsorship programs include the State Library of New South Wales Foundation, custodians, bequests and cultural gifts, Friends of the Library, and the Volunteer Program through which the public can support and contribute to the State Library.

Other activities include the Library Shop specialising in Australian books and prints as well as reproductions of items from the collections of the State Library, Café Trim, and Venue Hire offering a range of onsite spaces for hire.

The Library publishes more details on the services provided on the [website](#).

Community feedback

The public can provide input into State Library policy through the following:

- The Library Act 1939 which requires the establishment of a Library Council of New South Wales of nine members of the public, nominated by the Minister and appointed for a three-year term by the Governor of NSW. The Library Council's responsibilities relate to the promotion, provision and maintenance of library and information services for the people of NSW; and advising the Minister and local authorities on matters of policy and administration relating to library services.
- The Public Libraries Consultative Committee of the Library Council enables representatives of local government to participate in decision making and policy formulation regarding the provision of public library services.
- The LIAC Advisory Board of the Library Council enables representatives from a range of stakeholder organisations to guide the strategic development of the Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) service.

The State Library also monitors Ministerial correspondence and customer feedback to identify policy issues that may need review. The State Library welcomes public comment. Suggestion forms are available for this purpose at service points in the State Library, as well as through the State Library website feedback form:

Email: library@sl.nsw.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 9273 1414
Facsimile: (02) 9273 1255
Written: State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

The State Library regularly surveys readers and conducts research to inform improvements to its services and develop standards against which our performance in key areas of service provision are measured.

The State Library also publishes blogs and social media posts that allow engagement with curators and experts about the collections, exhibitions and projects and provide an opportunity for feedback.

Type of information held

The State Library holds a range of information, including:

- Policy and planning documents, procedures and guidelines
- Internal working papers related to services, collections and facilities
- Catalogues and indexes containing records of the State Library's collections
- Publications and online resources, research guides and fact sheets for readers and the community on how to access the collections and services
- Correspondence with Ministers, other NSW government agencies and organisations, national and international cultural institutions and the public
- Details of membership, fundraising and support through the State Library of NSW Foundation and Friends of the State Library
- Documents related to NSW public library services, grants and subsidies

Open access information

As required by the GIPA Act, the following information is available free of charge on the [website](#):

- Annual Reports of the Library Council of NSW and State Library of NSW Foundation
- Documents tabled in Parliament concerning the State Library
- Current policy documents
- This information guide, the disclosure log and details of significant contracts and tenders as required under the GIPA Act.

Other proactively released information

The State Library also makes available a broad range of additional information, free of charge on the [website](#), including:

- Inside Out: Strategic Plan 2019-2023
- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Publications and other resources related to our collections and services
- Media releases
- Details of members of the Library Council of NSW, State Library of NSW Foundation and Foundation Trustees
- Publications and other resources related to NSW Public Library Services

Accessing State Library information

Please note that a valid access application cannot be made for information that is contained in a record that forms part of the State Library's collections, as defined in Schedule 4 (Clause 13) of the GIPA Act.

Information that is available on request

You may request information held by the State Library at any time. As a rule, the Library will make available copies of the following types of information without the need to make a formal application:

- Correspondence sent to us by you
- Documents containing your personal information
- Documents that have already been made public in some other way
- Records that are over 30 years old
- Documents which have no potential to raise concerns in terms of public interest considerations against disclosure.

You do not need to complete a formal application for this information; however, your request must be in writing. There is no application fee.

The State Library may release information in response to an informal request subject to any reasonable conditions that the State Library thinks fit to impose. In some situations, the Library may charge for services such as photocopying.

The State Library reserves the right to require a formal access application to be made for any information at any time.

Formal access applications

You may apply for access to all other information held by the State Library. You should submit a formal access application using the [access application form](#). Under the [GIPA Act](#), access applications are subject to application fees and processing charges.

Information that is not available

Information that we are unable to release in response to an access application includes:

- Cabinet information (as defined in item 2 Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act)
- Executive Council information (as defined in item 3 Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act)
- Information contained in a record that forms part of the State Library's collections but was created by another agency (as defined in Clause 13 Schedule 4 of the GIPA Act). Requests for such information should be made to the originating agency.

The State Library will not release information if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

To make an application or seek more information

Informal requests, formal applications or questions on the operation of the GIPA Act at the State Library should be directed to:

Right to Information Officer
State Library of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Email: rti@sl.nsw.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 9273 1796
Fax: (02) 9273 1255

Information regarding the GIPA Act and the right to information at the State Library is available at www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/rti/index.html.

Further information regarding the GIPA Act is available on the Information and Privacy Commission website at www.ipc.nsw.gov.au.

Document history and version control

Version No	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
2.0	12 April 2017	A/State Librarian & Chief Executive	Revised and updated
3.0	10 Dec 2019	State Librarian	Updated with Executive Committee consultation