

State Library of New South Wales Agency Information Guide 2011

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Introduction and contents of this guide

On 1 July 2010, new right to information legislation, the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act), came into effect, replacing the former freedom of information law.

The new law:

- creates new rights to information that are designed to meet community expectations of more open and transparent government
- encourages government agencies to proactively release government information.

The State Library of New South Wales (State Library) is committed to openness with regard to its information and requirement to comply with the GIPA Act.

Under the terms of the GIPA Act, the State Library must publish an agency information guide, reviewed annually. This document is the State Library's Agency Information Guide for 2011.

This Agency Information Guide tells you in general terms:

- what our structure and functions are
- how our functions affect members of the public
- how the public can participate in policy development
- what kind of government information we hold
- what kind of government information we will make available to the public and how
- whether or not there is a charge to access specific kinds of information
- information that is not available in response to an access application
- where to find out more information.

Our Structure and functions

About us

The State Library is the major public reference and information service for the people of New South Wales. With an extensive collection of over five million items, the State Library aims to collect, preserve and make accessible the documentary history, culture and life of NSW. The State Library offers access to information and resources both onsite and online, and hosts a dynamic range of public programs through community learning, exhibitions, talks, tours and movies. The State Library supports the NSW Public Library Network, including administering the annual public library grants and subsidies and providing advisory services.

The State Library is one of the oldest libraries in Australia. The Library's origins date back to 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 between the Royal Botanic Gardens and Parliament House on Macquarie Street, Sydney.

The State Library is open seven days a week, except for certain designated days. [Opening hours](#) are outlined on our website.

Structure and functions

The State Library is one of the State's cultural institutions within the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services.

The State Library operates under the *Library Act 1939* and *Library Regulation 2010*.

The *Library Act 1939* and Regulation is administered by the State Library 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 State Library is led by the State Librarian and Chief Executive who reports to the Library Council and the Director-General of the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services.

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.

Under the *Library Act 1939*, the State Librarian and Chief Executive is the Secretary of the Library Council and is responsible for the administration and management of the State Library, and the library and information services it provides.

Officers and employees of the State Library are appointed or employed under the [Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002](#).

The State Librarian and Chief Executive is supported by the Mitchell Librarian and five Directors responsible for the divisions of Digital Library Services, Library Services, Marketing and Business Development, Operations, and Public Library and Community Learning Services.

Further information on the structure and functions of the State Library is publicly available on the State Library's [website](#), including the following documents:

- [Annual Report](#)
- [State Library Organisational Structure](#)
- [Strategic Framework](#)
- [Corporate Profile 09/10](#)

Key committees

Standing committees of the Library Council include:

- Audit and Finance Committee
- Fellowship Committee
- Grants Committee
- Public Libraries Consultative Committee
- State Library of New South Wales Foundation Trustees
- LIAC Advisory Board

Further information on Library Council and State Library committees is included in the State Library's [annual report](#).

Our Collections

The State Library aims to collect, preserve and make accessible the documentary heritage of New South Wales. To this end, it holds over five million items in its collections including books, pictures, manuscripts, government reports, statistics, electronic resources, 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.

The collections comprise the Mitchell and Dixson Libraries collections and the State Reference Library collections.

Further information about [using the State Library](#) and the [State Library's collections](#), resources and databases can be found on the Library's [website](#).

Our Services

The State Library offers a diverse range of library and information services and public programs including:

- Onsite reading rooms provide study spaces, email and internet access, online resources, browsing collections and national and international newspapers.
- Information services are provided to clients from the information service desks in the reading rooms and across NSW via the "[Ask a Librarian](#)" service which answers enquiries made online, by telephone, fax or post.
- [Copying, imaging and document supply services](#) provide access to our collections in the formats required by our clients.
- [Family History service](#) helps people discover information about their ancestors and their lives.
- [Australian Indigenous information services](#) provide advice on family history as well as a range of information and collections related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- Specialist information services such as [drug Info @ your library](#), and the [Legal Information Access Centre](#) deliver up-to-date, relevant and reliable information.
- Up-to-date equipment provides easy access to our collections and adaptive technology is available for clients with a [disability](#).
- [Public Library services](#) provide support, advice, and research and professional development to NSW public libraries, as well as offering onsite consultations and service reviews. [NSW.net](#) provides NSW local government and public libraries with Internet connections and access to online databases.
- [Multicultural services](#) include books and audiobooks in over 40 community languages, which are made available on loan through local public libraries.
- The [talking book and large print book collections](#) are made available on loan through local public libraries.

- [Community Learning programs](#) provide learning programs, resources, courses, tours, talks and workshops to lifelong learners, students and teachers, children and families, and library professionals.
- [Events and Exhibitions](#) programs provide the public with opportunities to engage with the State Library's rich and diverse collections onsite, online and on tour, primarily highlighting the special collections in the Mitchell and Dixson libraries. The State Library also hosts talks, tours, movies and courses.

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.

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.

Further information about State Library services and programs can be found on the State Library's [website](#).

Effect of State Library functions on the public

The State Library's mission is to strengthen the community by being the trusted provider of quality information services by:

- providing equitable access to contemporary and historical knowledge
- collecting and preserving Australia's heritage
- promoting our role as a cultural destination
- collaborating with the NSW public library network.

The State Library's vision is that, for the community, we aspire to be a Library that is:

- a pre-eminent and welcoming cultural destination
- acknowledged for excellent client service and staff expertise
- an innovative gateway to information and cultural enrichment
- recognised for a unique and accessible collection
- an active advocate for the NSW public library network
- a proactive partner in knowledge creation.

State Library services and programs are designed for the public to meet the diverse range of interests and information needs of the people of NSW. Services are provided directly to people of New South Wales in Macquarie Street, Sydney, and to remote clients who make contact via telephone, mail, fax, email, or through the State Library's [website](#).

Members of the public who visit the State Library have direct access to the collections, resources and services in the reading rooms, exhibitions and displays, Library tours, special events for friends and supporters, community learning programs, the Library Shop, and Café Trim. The State Library also provides services to clients of the NSW public library network including document delivery services, multicultural services, and NSW.net.

State Library services are evaluated and monitored by a program of surveys and performance measurement which help to inform ongoing improvements in service delivery strategies.

Public participation in policy development

The public is able to provide input into State Library policy through the following:

- The *Library Act 1939* provides that there shall be a [Library Council of New South Wales](#) of nine members of the public, nominated by the Minister for the Arts, and appointed for a three year term by the Governor of NSW. The Act stipulates that members must include: at least one person who has knowledge of, or experience in, education; and at least one person who has knowledge of, or experience in, local government. 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 Library Council enables representatives of local government to participate in decision making and policy formulation with regard to the provision of public library services.
- The [Public Library Network Research Program Committee](#) enables representatives of public libraries to participate in decision making and policy formulation regarding the Public Library Network Research Program.
- 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](#).
- Volunteer and Staff Council ensures the principles and policy underpinning the Volunteer Program are achieved and communicated to Volunteers and Library staff.

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](#). Feedback can also be provided as follows:

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 conducts client research. The findings are used to improve our services and develop standards against which our performance levels in key areas of service provision are measured.

Other avenues enabling public comment include Library Blogs. The following blogs have been developed by the State Library to allow engagement with curators and experts about State Library collections, exhibitions and projects:

- [Dixson Map Collection Digitisation Project](#)
- [eRecords Project](#)
- [Exploring Heritage: Nelson Meers Heritage Collection](#)
- [HSC Legal Studies: News Watch](#)
- [Holtermann Collection Digitisation Project](#)

The [Public Library Services blog](#) provides information to NSW public libraries about the work of the Public Library Services branch and welcomes comments from NSW public libraries.

The public can contribute to the State Library through various fundraising and support programs including the State Library of NSW Foundation, custodians, bequests and cultural gifts, partnerships and sponsorships programs, Friends of the Library, and the Volunteers Program.

Kinds of government information held

Information is contained in the following documents held by the State Library:

- Policy and planning
- Procedures and guidelines
- Organisational strategy, planning, development and management
- Administrative and financial delegations
- Asset acquisition and management
- Catalogues and indexes containing records of the State Library's collections
- Client services including specialist services
- Client correspondence, membership, and use of services and programs
- Collection acquisition, management, organisation, preservation and storage, access and use
- Commercial activities
- Contracts and agreements
- Board and committee
- Educational and cultural programs
- Financial management, including budget, purchase, investment and audit
- Fundraising and support programs
- Industrial agreements, appeals and disputes
- Information and communication technology strategy and systems
- Joint ventures and initiatives
- Legal deposit
- Media relations
- OH&S management
- Personnel files including recruitment
- Professional relations
- Property management
- Public library advice, grants and subsidies administration, statistics, and support
- Publications and online resources, research guides, fact sheets
- Staff grievance, discipline, counselling
- Staff training and development
- Staff workers compensation and rehabilitation
- Correspondence with other cultural institutions, the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, the Minister, and other government agencies
- Internal working papers of the State Library
- Ministerial briefing papers.

The Library holds personal information about its clients relating to Library collections, the provision and delivery of services and programs, and sponsorship and donor information.

The State Library website is a rich source of information regarding its operations.

What kind of government information is made available to public and how?

Open access information

The State Library makes available, free of charge on its website, the following “open access information”:

- This agency information guide
- [Documents that are tabled in Parliament concerning the State Library](#) including the [Annual Report](#)
- [Policy documents](#)
- State Library’s [disclosure log](#) of access applications
- [Details of significant contracts](#).

Other pro-actively released information

In addition, the State Library pro-actively makes available, free of charge on its website, a large range of additional information, including the following:

- [Strategic Framework](#)
- Biographies of members of [Library Council of New South Wales](#), [State Library of NSW Foundation Board](#) and the [Board of Trustees](#)
- Annual Reports of the [State Library of NSW Foundation](#) and the [Legal Information Access Centre](#)
- Information about State Library [collections](#), [catalogues and indexes](#), [services](#) including [public library services](#), [collaborative initiatives](#), [awards and fellowship programs](#), [support programs](#) and [exhibitions and events](#)
- [Online catalogues and selected resources](#)
- Key [Library Publications](#) *
- [Media releases](#)
- [Preservation and storage Fact sheets](#)
- [Public Libraries Consultative Committee](#) and [Public Library Network Research Program](#) and Committee information including, agendas and minutes
- [Research guides](#) developed by the State Library to assist clients in researching selected topics
- [State Library of New South Wales Staff Code of Conduct](#).

* Please note that only past copies of [LIAC Hot Topics](#) and [SL Magazine](#) are available on the State Library website free of charge.

Information available on informal request

A request may be made at any time for government information held by the State Library. While the State Library reserves the right to require a formal access application to be made, the State Library will generally provide the following types of information in response to an informal request, without the need to make a formal access application:

- copies of correspondence, where the person requesting the correspondence was the person who sent it to the State Library
- documents that contain only personal information about a particular individual, where the person requesting the document is the individual in question
- documents that have already been made public in some other way

- other reasonable requests for information, the release of which would not raise any potential concerns in terms of public interest consideration against disclosure.

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.

Copies of all of the State Library's published material form part of the Library's collections and may be accessed from the State Library's reading rooms.

Access to State Library records that are older than 30 years may be provided under the provisions of the NSW *State Records Act 1998*. Access is by appointment only. Requests or questions regarding access to these records are to be directed to:

Enterprise Information Branch
State Library of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Contact details are as follows:

Email: records@sl.nsw.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 9273 1796 or (02) 9273 1433
Fax: (02) 9273 1255

Formal access applications for access to State Library information

If the information you are seeking is not available on the State Library website and is not routinely provided by the State Library, then you may formally apply for access to specific information held by the State Library (other than certain "excluded information", set out below).

A formal access application can be made by downloading and completing the [access application form](#).

Whether or not there is a charge to access specific kinds of information

A formal access application may be made for all other government information held by the State Library (other than certain "excluded information" as defined in the GIPA Act). Access applications are subject to [application fees and processing charges](#) in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

Information that is not available in response to an access application

A valid access application cannot be made for information contained in a record that forms part of the State Library's collections, as defined in Schedule 4 (Clause 13) of the GIPA Act. The State Library may hold copies of information that was originally created by another government agency. For the purposes of the GIPA Act, requests for such information should be made to the originating agency.

Information will not be made available in response to an access application if the information involves “excluded information” as defined under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

Although an access application may be made for all other government information held by the State Library, the State Library will not release information if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

Some of the particular information that the State Library cannot release in response to an access application includes:

- Cabinet Information (as defined in Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act)
- Executive Council information (as defined in Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act).

Otherwise, the State Library will release information in response to a valid access application unless there is an overriding interest against disclosure.

Where to find more information

The State Library publishes a large amount of material on its website at www.sl.nsw.gov.au. Information regarding the GIPA Act and the right to information is available at www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/rti/index.html.

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

Right to Information Officer
State Library of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Contact details are as follows:

Email: rti@sl.nsw.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 9273 1796 or (02) 9273 1433
Fax: (02) 9273 1255

Further information regarding the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* is available on the Office of the Information Commissioner’s website at www.oic.nsw.gov.au/.

Document history and version control

Version No	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
1.0	21 December 2010	State Librarian & CE	
1.1	04 February 2011	Acting State Librarian & CE	Addition of reference to Schedule 4 (cl. 13)
1.2	25 August 2011	Acting State Librarian & CE	Update subsequent to the reorganisation of the Public Service following the March 2011 State election