Using the Library's collections [1]

The Library has a rich and unique set of collections that you're welcome to explore. Here's a handy guide on how to access them.

Getting started

With a Library card, you can use most of the Library's eresources from anywhere, anytime - you just need to be a New South Wales resident. Don't have a Library card but have a NSW public library card from a participating library? Register your card [6] to get instant access to the Library's eresources.

If you would like to use original material and rare printed material, you will need to get a Special Collections card [5]. Find out more about how to use special collections [7].

You don't need a Library card to use the material on the shelves in the reading rooms.

We're a reference library so we can't lend to you. But you can borrow some of the Library's books and other collection material through other libraries. Speak to your public, academic or work library about requesting an interlibrary loan.

Learn more about searching the Library's collections [8].

**How to request material**

Use your Library card [5] to request books and other collection material. You can request most material via the catalogue. You will need to complete a stack request slip or the access to collections form to request material that's not available to request in the catalogue.

You can request material up to seven days in advance. Request material at least one hour before the Library closes [9] to use it that day.
Most material will be ready to collect in 30-45 minutes. Sometimes it can take longer during busy periods.

**Books**

You can request books through the [catalogue](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) anytime, anywhere. Find out how you can [request material](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) in the catalogue.

**Other collection material**

Complete a stack request slip to request other material from the Library's collections.

Need to request material before you visit? Complete the [Access to collections](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) form. We will get back to you within 4 working days.

**Original material and rare printed material**

With a [Special Collections card](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) you can request original material and rare printed material. Complete a stack request slip for each item, box or album.

Need to request material before you visit? Complete the [Access to collections](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) form. We will get back to you within 4 working days.

Some material has restrictions and you may need permission or an appointment to use the material. Check the catalogue record and if there are restrictions, complete the [Access to collections](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) form. Appointments are between 2 pm and 3 pm, Monday to Friday.

[Learn more about using the Library’s special collections](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au).

The [Special Collections area](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) opens Monday to Saturday.

**Offsite material**

When you're at the Library you can request most offsite material through the [catalogue](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) but for some material you will need to complete an offsite request form. Ask staff at the desk for the form.

Need to request material before you visit? You will need to [contact us](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) during [opening hours](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au) to request offsite material that you can't request through the catalogue.

**Offsite delivery times**

Material requested from offsite will be available **after 4 pm the next working day**. Deliveries from offsite are not available on weekends and public holidays.

**Where to collect material**
Pick up most items from the Collect shelves in the Governor Marie Bashir Reading Room [14].

You may need to collect material from the request desk near the shelves if you need to use the item in the special materials area. There will be a note on the Collect shelves if this is the case.

Original material and rare printed material

Collect original material and rare printed material from staff in the Special Collections area. The Special Collections area is in the Mitchell Library Reading Room [15].

You can choose to collect all requested items, including material from the Governor Marie Bashir Reading Room, in the Special Collections area. You will need to have a Special Collections card [5]. Ask staff about updating your collecting preferences.

How to reserve material

Return items back to the Collect shelves to continue to use them for up to seven days. Ask staff at the request desk to reserve material for longer.

Special materials area

Speak to staff at the request desk about reserving material for up to fourteen days.

Special Collections area
Ask staff at the Specials Collections desk about reserving material for up to fourteen days.

**How to borrow material**

Because the Library is a reference library we can't lend books and other collection material to you. But you can borrow some books and collection material from the Library's collections through your public, academic or work library.

Speak to your public, academic or work library about requesting an interlibrary loan to borrow material. See the Library's Interlibrary Lending Policy [16] to find out what you can borrow.

**Using material at other libraries**

You can also use material from our collections at the National Library of Australia or your state library.

- [State Library of Western Australia](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/about-our-collections/eresources-collection) [23]

View the Australian Interlibrary Resource Sharing Code (ILRS) [25] for the latest pricing to use our material at the national library or your state library.

Contact the National Library of Australia or your state library to arrange an interlibrary loan. See the National and State Libraries Australasia’s Collaborative Lending Principles [26] to find out more.

**Using other Libraries’ material**

If the Library doesn't hold a particular title, you can request a loan or partial-copy of the material from another library. If we are able to locate the title at another Library you will be able to view it in the Governor Marie Bashir Reading Room. To request an Inter Library Loan speak to staff at the desk. View the Australian Interlibrary Resource Sharing Code (ILRS) [25] for fees.


**Links**


