

# Collection Acquisitions Policy



Version: 1.0

Last Amendment:

Approved by: NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive

Policy owner/sponsor: Director, Library Services

Policy Contact Officer: Coordinator, Collection Development & Acquisitions

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## 1. Summary

Collection acquisition is a core function of the State Library and an annual endowment for the purchase of collection material is mandated under the *New South Wales Library Act 1939*. The aim of the Collection Acquisition Policy is to ensure the most cost-effective, efficient and timely acquisition of collection material for the Library through a fair, transparent and accountable acquisition process, consistent with the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

In a volatile market place that is subject to many outside forces the policy provides a framework to manage acquisitions consistently and systematically across all acquisition categories and formats including published, original, online and born digital categories.

### Context

The Acquisition Policy for Collection Material was revised in 2004 to reflect the entire range of categories of material acquired. The current version includes updates relevant to the acquisitions process and incorporates procedural changes in the appendix to make use of advances in the electronic acquisition processes.

## 2. Policy statement

### Funding and Audit

The State Government annually provides capital funding to the State Library of NSW to be used for additions to the collection and a recurrent allocation for online resources.

- All published items where it is envisaged the cost will be over \$1,000 and all original materials must be individually recommended for purchase
- All recommendations for purchase, license or subscriptions must be approved by a staff member with the appropriate delegation, ensuring that funds are available
- Weekly audit lists of published material are approved by an officer with the appropriate delegation and filed in the Library's records management system
- The link between the Library's integrated library management system and the Library's financial management system must be maintained
- The Finance branch undertakes audit and payment functions in line with internal payments procedures

## Suppliers

A range of suppliers is selected, where possible, to ensure cost-effective fulfilment of orders.

- The Library will give preference to consolidating purchases through library suppliers, subscription agents and specialist suppliers
- When appropriate the Library will use auction houses, second-hand and antiquarian suppliers to supply unique or rare heritage materials
- Suppliers must provide an appropriate range of value-added services based on current standards
- Suppliers are reviewed annually and evaluated against criteria appropriate to the type of supplier and material supplied

### *Exceptions*

- Legal Deposit and government deposit suppliers who must be used for statutory reasons
- Donors, individuals who self-publish or offer single items of their own collections

Details of guidelines relating to supplier requirements, documentation and evaluation criteria are provided in Appendix 1.

## Sources

Material is acquired through:

- Direct offers to the Library by commercial or private vendors; sale catalogues (bookseller or antiquarian dealer); auction catalogues (with subsequent bidding at public auctions); private individuals; Cultural Gifts and Cultural Bequests Programs; collecting projects or individual approach by the Library to a potential donor or vendor
- Country of origin supply is preferred for material published overseas
- Country of origin material is priced based on the overseas retail price
- New material published overseas required urgently may be obtained through a local retailer
- Local supply is preferred for online resources where standards and licenses are consistent with the local environment
- Heritage and original material must be purchased where and when it is identified

## Selection Criteria

The following criteria are used in the assessment process for potential acquisitions:

- Relationship to the parameters of the Library's *Collection Development Policy*
- Significance of individual items to the Library's existing holdings and particularly the New South Wales and Australian historical record
- Pricing is based on the market value
- Physical condition of the material
- Resource implications such as staffing, storage or IT infrastructure required to make the contents accessible to clients

Details of guidelines relating to specific category requirements are provided in Appendix 2.

### 3. Legislative and Policy Framework

Most relevant legislation

- *NSW Copyright Act 1879 (Legal Deposit Provision, ss5-7)*
- *NSW Library Act 1939*
- *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*
- *State Records Act 1998*

Related and/or most relevant State Library and government policies

- Premier's Memorandum 2000-15 Access to published information – Laws, Policy and Guidelines (library deposit)
- State Library Code of Conduct
- State Library Financial Delegations Policy
- State Library Collection Development Policy
- State Library Retention and Disposal Policy for Collection Material and Donations

### 4. Responsibilities

Executive Committee members are responsible for leading the implementation of this policy including its conformity to legislative and other compliance requirements, communicating this policy to managers and supervisors and other relevant activities regarding specific policy implementation.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for managing processes relevant to this policy and communicating this policy to staff.

Staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.

### 5. Approval

This policy was approved by NSW State Librarian & CE on 13 July 2012.

### 6. Implementation

This policy is implemented on 18 July 2012.

### 7. History

This policy replaces the Collection Acquisition Policy, 2004.

### 8. Related Policy

This policy is related to:

- State Library Collection Donations Policy
- State Library Collection Development Policy
- State Library Retention and Disposal Policy for Collection Material and Donations
- State Library Metadata Framework Policy
- State Library Depreciation Policy
- State Library Storage and Service Delivery Policy
- State Library Preservation Policy

### 9. Prepared by:

Coordinator, Collection Development & Acquisitions  
February 2012

### 10. Document History and Version Control

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
1.0	13/07/2012	NSW State Librarian & CE	First release

## **Appendix 1**

### **1.1 Guidelines relating to supplier requirements**

#### **Selection criteria for suppliers**

Suppliers must provide a range of flexible and efficient services to support cost-effective use by Library staff. The following selection criteria are arranged in the order of importance.

#### **Capacity to meet the Library's basic requirements**

- Reliability, integrity and business record are critical
- Provide current information about services and policies
- Process orders using a range of suitable technologies
- Communicate effectively with Library staff
- Invoice correctly and as specified by the Library
- Report correctly on overdue orders at negotiated intervals
- Use a range of appropriate bibliographic and research sources
- Provide accurate supply: high fulfilment rate with low error rate
- Material received in excellent condition
- If supplying original material, can effectively describe the material on offer

#### **Effective customer service**

- Individual point of contact for most inquiries
- Process requests and claims efficiently and reports results
- Communicate effectively to resolve supply issues and problems
- Provide responsive and ongoing customer support, particularly critical in the case of electronic resources

#### **Cost**

- Make current pricing policy available
- Pricing policy clearly outlines freight and handling charges, special charges or surcharges for specific services and any other factors affecting the cost of material such as policy on exchange rate
- Pricing policy is understandable in application
- Pricing is competitive

#### **Timeliness**

- Speed of supply appropriate to category of material and competitive in the Australian environment
- Supplier must be able to meet agreed deadlines for special purchases, renewal invoices or renewal lists

**Range of services complementary to the Library's requirements** - Specific services may include

- Urgent order service
- Selection support, blanket, approval and standing order services
- Capacity to obtain special formats or types of resources
- Inspection, valuation and reporting on heritage material
- Bidding at auction on heritage material
- Consolidation services for books and serials
- Electronic invoicing
- Cataloguing and processing services as specified
- Local staffing, representation or visits
- Identifying and locating out of print material

## **Allocation of orders to suppliers**

Allocating orders to individual suppliers is managed to achieve

- Correct suppliers for particular formats and categories of material
- Appropriate channels with regard to country of origin
- Minimum staff time spent following up orders
- Basis for comparison between suppliers where realistic
- Regular processing ensuring continuous throughput and meeting commitment goals
- Sufficient orders to individual suppliers to ensure custom is valued and appropriate service level will be provided

## **1.2 Procedures relating to supplier documentation**

### **Communication with suppliers**

Communication with suppliers is ideally managed on a number of levels including formal written documentation about services and pricing and less formal telephone or e-mail discussions about individual items, claims, and deliveries. It is the role of any staff member dealing directly with a supplier to maintain a professional manner and to ensure that communication is open, clear, does not waste the time of either party and achieves the desired cost-effective service for the Library.

### **Recordkeeping**

Files will be created in the General Office files in the Library's records management system for individual major suppliers of books and serials, audiovisual, microform and electronic publications, a single file for miscellaneous suppliers in these categories and a single file for prospective suppliers in these categories.

Current information about suppliers' terms and conditions and copies of all agreements with suppliers will be maintained in these files. Correspondence with suppliers relating to services, performance and general matters should also be placed on these files. These may be used as a basis for discussing performance with suppliers.

Prospective suppliers may be asked to send information about their terms and conditions to be placed on the prospective suppliers file to be submitted for annual review by the Coordinator, Collection Development & Acquisitions. General Office files relating to current major suppliers, miscellaneous suppliers and prospective suppliers should be kept in number order in the filing system in the Collection Services Branch.

Current information about suppliers of heritage materials and their offerings will be maintained in the Mitchell Library files.

## **1.3 Procedures relating to supplier evaluation**

### **Monitoring and evaluating supplier performance**

Supplier performance is monitored through formal supplier evaluation and through continuous informal assessment during daily processing. Individual members of staff are required to report their observations to supervisors, particularly in the case of poor supplier performance or a change in supplier performance.

In the integrated library management system environment, substantial information about supplier performance may be accessed as required. From time to time it is gathered, interpreted and placed on file to support discussions with suppliers about their performance.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Guidelines relating to specific category requirements**

#### **Significant high value material**

Significant high value material is acquired through direct offers to the Library by commercial or private vendors; sale catalogues (bookseller or antiquarian dealer); auction catalogues (with subsequent bidding at public auctions); private individuals; Cultural Gifts Program; collecting projects or individual approach by the Library to a potential donor or vendor.

#### **Selection criteria**

Material is often of high value and either original and unpublished; existing as unique items and not replicated in multiple forms; or rare editions of retrospective publications. No matter what the source of the material, the following criteria are used in the rigorous assessment process for potential acquisitions.

- Relationship to the parameters of the Library's *Collection Development Policy* and other relevant specific subject or format policies
- Significance of individual items to the Library's existing holdings and particularly the New South Wales and Australian historical record
- Validity of the price at which the material is offered or bids are set and how this compares with valuations by accredited valuers, prices for equivalent material purchased recently, or listings in published records
- Physical condition of the material

Resource implications such as staffing or storage, for example, in the case of the Library acquiring large, unsorted collections.

#### **Process for evaluating material to be acquired**

Material on offer should normally be sighted by the Library officer recommending purchase in order to assess its status and condition. When this is not possible an agent may be commissioned to view the material on behalf of the Library and report on its condition.

#### **Determining the appropriateness of the price**

When material is offered for sale, the appropriateness of the price has to be determined. Curators or senior librarians are usually responsible for ensuring the validity of the price. Aspects to be considered in determining a price or price range include:

- Published prices in sale catalogues are usually not negotiable
- Published estimates in pre-sale auction catalogues are indicative only of the low range in which the material is expected to sell
- Private vendors nominate prices which are often negotiable or request that an offer be made
- Prices of equivalent material purchased recently supported by registers of previous sales maintained by the Library are indicative
- Published price listings and compilations of prices realised at art and book auctions are indicative and subject to the condition of the material

Assessment by skilled staff or valuation by accredited valuers acknowledges the complex range of criteria used to identify a price or price range.

#### **Preparing submissions and recommendations**

The Library staff member responsible for negotiating and recommending the purchase of an item prepares a written recommendation and attaches this to a Mitchell Library file named preferably to include the title of the item and/or the vendor's name. The file

number is recorded on internal or external transactions relating to the item, the sale, the catalogue or the vendor.

The recommendation is prepared and finalised at the conclusion of discussions and negotiations between staff, vendor and valuers. The recommendation must include:

- A statement of the material's significance in its own right
- A statement about the relationship between the material and the Library's existing collection, *Collection Development Policy* and holdings
- Reasons the material is required as an addition to the Library's collections
- Comparative prices of similar material and/or supporting documentation justifying the price
- The recommendation to purchase at a specific price or price range

The dated signature of the Library staff member responsible for the negotiation and compiling the recommendation

### **Acquiring material using Library Foundation Funds**

The Library Foundation administers funds that can be accessed for acquiring Library material. The funds may contain specific conditions attached to their use. Details of the conditions associated with a specific Library Foundation endowment or bequest can be obtained from the Executive Director, Foundation.

At the time a recommendation to purchase is submitted the Manager, Collection Services; the Manager, Original Materials; the Director, Library Services or the Mitchell Librarian may consider the use of Foundation Funds. This can only occur where the conditions of the use of the fund is in accord with the material being recommended for purchase.

In these cases a memo requesting use of the appropriate Foundation Funds, signed by the Director, Library Services, will be sent to the Executive Director, Foundation. The Executive Director, Foundation will then prepare a formal submission to the Board of the Foundation for the release of the funds. Once the Board of the Foundation have agreed to release the funds for the acquisition the Executive Director, Foundation will request the transfer of funds through Finance.

### **Approval process for high value material**

The recommendation is then submitted with all supporting evidence on file to the Manager, Collection Services, or the Manager, Original Materials for consideration and approval or endorsement at delegated level. Further Library signatories may be required with delegations specified in the Instrument of Financial Delegation Schedule.

When approval for purchase has been granted and the transaction completed with required signatures, the vendor's invoice is noted on the Library's integrated library management system and a copy completes the General Office file or Mitchell Library file created for the purchase or the category of purchases. The acquisition must be clearly documented and all records placed on file.

### **Material received on approval**

Original material, rare books and retrospective material for the heritage collections will normally be requested on approval for evaluation and comparison prior to acquisition. Material received on approval must be registered or documented on file by a curator, team leader or staff member and a receipt provided. Material on which a decision to purchase is being awaited must be stored securely. When a decision has been made to acquire or not, the supplier must be informed and the material must be paid and accessioned or returned undamaged to the supplier with despatch. The acquisition must be clearly documented and all records placed on file.

Similarly new printed material on blanket orders or approval plans is received subject to selection decisions. This material must be processed as a matter of priority to provide the best possible service to clients, and the decisions reported to suppliers with despatch. Lists of this material are printed, approved and retained on file for audit purposes.

### **Material offered at auction**

Recommendations for material to be purchased at auction must be prepared, approved and price ranges for bids confirmed before auction. Approval should be arranged to the amount of the final bid for the lot including any associated premiums and fees. It is normal practice to decide whether a discretionary bid should be authorised to go one bid over the envisaged range, if this can be justified based on the situation on the floor of the auction. However, this must also be approved prior to the auction.

If it is possible that the material will be purchased at an amount (comprising the final bid and the premiums) which will result in an expenditure over the delegation of the approving officer, it must be approved by an officer with a higher delegation prior to the auction.

Staff from the Library or a bidding agent may represent the Library at auction. Use of an agent ensures confidentiality. The basis for the agent's commission must be on file prior to the auction. Material should be inspected prior to auction by a member of staff or an agent and a written report obtained. Instructions for bidding agents (or in the case of the submission of a prior bid directly to the auctioneers) must be provided in writing by letter, fax or e-mail and receipt confirmed prior to the auction. The acquisition must be clearly documented and all records placed on file.

### **Material for which the Library unsuccessfully bid and is offered subsequently**

If a recommended item on which the Library has unsuccessfully bid is passed in at auction or sold to a dealer or individual who subsequently approaches the Library with a view to selling, the Library may review the original recommendation. The value of the item must be reconsidered based on recent comparative price data, the uniqueness or rarity of the item and critically, the relationship to the existing collection. An addendum to the initial recommendation or a new recommendation must be prepared by an individual other than the person who made the original recommendation. This must be endorsed and approved at the appropriate delegation levels. The acquisition must be clearly documented and all records placed on file.

### **Material offered for purchase by individuals**

- There is no obligation for the Library to purchase collection material offered by individuals. The same selection criteria should apply as would to any other item under the Library's *Collection Development Policy*
- Physical condition of the material is critical
- Long term or permanent loans will not usually be arranged
- The individual must own the item offered, and an acquisition form must be completed to this effect and to indicate where copyright rests

The staff member should seek approval in principle for the purchase from the Manager, Collection Services; the Manager, Original Materials or the Director, Library Services or the Mitchell Librarian before taking the time to prepare a submission and recommendation. Material must be valued by experienced curators, archivists or an independent valuer. The submission for the acquisition must be recommended and approved by Library staff with the appropriate delegations as must payments for valuations from independent valuers. The acquisition must be clearly documented and all records placed on file.

### **Material offered as a donation**

- There is no obligation for the Library to acquire collection material offered by donation
- Selection criteria for donations is detailed in the Library's *Collection Donation Policy*
- Physical condition of the material is critical
- Resource implications such as staffing or storage, for example, in the case of the Library accepting large, unsorted collections must be considered
- The individual must own the item offered, and a donation form must be completed to this effect and to indicate where copyright rests

Individual donations are approved in line with the Collection Donations Policy.

### **Material offered on Cultural Gifts Program**

The Cultural Gifts Program (CGP) seeks to give the donor a tax concession over up to five years in return for donating material of cultural significance to a listed cultural institution.

- There is no obligation for the Library to acquire collection material offered through the Cultural Gifts Program. The same selection criteria should apply as would to any other item under the Library's *Collection Development Policy*
- Physical condition of the material is critical
- Resource implications such as staffing or storage, for example, in the case of the Library considering large, unsorted collections must be considered
- The individual must own the item offered, and appropriate forms and valuations must be completed

The team leader or senior staff member must seek approval in principle from the Manager, Collection Services or the Manager, Original Materials for the acquisition before proceeding to arrange valuations. All material offered through the CGP must be treated in accordance with conditions and processes detailed on the *Office for the Arts* website.

Notification of material accepted and processed successfully through the Cultural Gifts Program will be communicated to the Executive Director, Foundation who will ensure that appropriate acknowledgement is given to the donor.

### **E-Resource products; license agreements**

Electronic material are identified and selected by working groups with the aim of recommending for purchase those resources that meet the criteria determined by the Library. Any material purchased subject to a license agreement will not be paid or a credit will be sought if the Library's criteria cannot be met by the supplier or another satisfactory agreement cannot be negotiated.