

Takedown Position Statement



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Approved by: Executive Committee

Policy owner/sponsor: Executive Director, Library & Information Services & Dixson Librarian

Policy Contact Officer: Senior Advisor, Strategy and Government Relations

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Policy Statement

The State Library of New South Wales, as a member of National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA), has endorsed a position statement on public requests to take down content from our website and/or collections. The position statement outlines how the Library will respond to takedown requests.

Target audience

This policy applies to anybody who requests the Library to take down content from its catalogue and/or website.

Operational requirements

Takedown requests

National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA) is committed to the principles of freedom of expression and universal access to information and knowledge. These principles are fundamental to the library profession and recognised as pivotal components of our democratic traditions; represent a major driving force in the creation of new ideas and innovation; and support cultural understanding and sustainable socio-economic development.*

Responding to the proliferation of digital technologies and enhanced community expectations for 'anywhere, anytime' access to information, libraries are continuing to build and deliver online collections, providing the greatest possible access to local and global communities.

NSLA libraries have mandated roles to collect and preserve cultural heritage, provide open and equitable access to information, and support the growth of knowledge and ideas. Given these responsibilities, materials provided online will be taken down (or have other access restrictions imposed) only in extraordinary circumstances.

In making collections available online NSLA libraries act to respect jurisdictional legal considerations. However, NSLA recognises that despite best efforts there may be occasions when material made available online is considered to breach copyright or other relevant law or contains information that is culturally sensitive. In terms of copyright infringements, Australia has recently legislated to extend safe harbours protection to include cultural, educational and disability groups where they provide online services to the public. The Copyright Amendment (Service Providers) Act 2018 sets the services and compliance requirements to which safe harbours may apply. As well as being relevant to takedown of material uploaded by third parties, these changes are relevant for those providing public access computers or search services. Further information is available from the [Australian Libraries Copyright Committee](#).

As a means of promoting a consistent response to takedown requests, NSLA libraries agree to take into account the following general principles:

- The broadest possible online access to collection materials will be provided.
- Permanent access restrictions, deindexing or takedown will be considered as an exceptional response.
- Requests for access restrictions, deindexing or takedown will take into account the relationship of the requestor to the material.
- Requests for access restrictions, deindexing or takedown will take into account specific jurisdictional legislation and related exemptions.
- Access restrictions or takedown of material made available online should, as far as practical, be openly acknowledged with a statement noting the takedown.
- As circumstances change, or after a period of time, online material that has been taken down, restricted or deindexed should be reviewed and may be reinstated.

* NSLA is a signatory to the 2014 [Lyon Declaration on Access and Development](#) and supports the [United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

Making a takedown request

If a member of the public is concerned about material made available through the State Library of New South Wales catalogue and/or website without permission, and/or which contravenes privacy laws, is defamatory, or is in breach of copyright law, they can contact the Library in writing stating the following:

1. Contact details
2. Full description and details of the material
3. Reason for request, including (but not limited to) copyright law, privacy laws, data protection, defamation, proof of rights to the material, etc.

Requests should be addressed to:
Senior Advisor, Strategy and Government Relations
State Library of New South Wales
Shakespeare Place
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

Or

Can be made via the Library's online [Feedback](#) form marked to the attention of Senior Advisor, Strategy and Government Relations

Responding to takedown requests

The State Library of New South Wales will acknowledge takedown requests in writing and will make an initial assessment of the request. The material may be temporarily removed from the State Library catalogue or website until a final decision is agreed upon.

The State Library of New South Wales will make all possible efforts to resolve takedown requests quickly and to the satisfaction of both parties, with the following possible outcomes:

- Access to the material is restored unchanged
- Access to the material is restored with changes
- Access to the material is removed

There will be regular reviews of takedown decisions. Where the circumstances of the original takedown request have changed over time, it may result in access to the material being restored.

Takedown requests will be assessed according to the following criteria, including whether or not:

- Online access to the identified material is in breach of copyright law.
- The identified material is subject of a suppression order or other legal restriction on availability, or is subject to specific jurisdictional legislation or related exemptions.
- Online access to the identified material contravenes conditions imposed by a donor.
- The identified material is defamatory or objectionable under Australian law.
- There is a need to mitigate harm and legal liability.
- The identified material includes personal information about someone who is still alive and continued online access would cause serious invasion of privacy or harm.
- Removal of the identified material would undermine freedom of speech.
- Online access to the identified material is in breach of the protocols maintaining the right of Indigenous peoples to determine access provisions for heritage materials which reflect their history, culture, language and perspective.

NSLA Takedown Position Statement also available here:

<http://www.nsla.org.au/publication/position-statement-takedown>

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.

The Privacy Contact Officer is responsible for providing advice in relation to takedown requests and related matters of privacy and relevant legislation, and determining any requests referred to them.

The Senior Advisor, Strategy and Government Relations is responsible for receiving all takedown requests submitted at first instance for assessment and acknowledgement, registering, assessing and determining the requests, unless they are referred to the Privacy Contact Officer.

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.

Related Key Legislation and Policy

Most relevant legislation:

- *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)*
- *Library Act 1939*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *State Records Act 1998*

Related and/or most relevant State Library and government policies:

- [Reader and Visitor Code of Conduct](#)
- [Internet Usage Policy](#)
- [About Copyright \(SLNSW website\)](#)
- [Privacy Management Plan](#)

Refer to the Legislative Compliance Register for relevant legislation.

In rare instances there may be no related legislation or policy. In this case use the text: There is no related legislation or policy.

Definitions

NSLA - National and State Libraries Australia

Takedown -To remove or restrict access to material on the State Library of New South Wales website

Document history and version control

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
1.0	26 June 2015	State Librarian & CE	Adoption of NSLA position statement on takedown; implementation of related procedures
1.1	3 July 2015	Executive Director, Library & Information Services & Dixson Librarian	Minor amendments to ensure consistency between web text (HTML) and PDF attachment of Policy Statement.
2.0	26 July 2016	Library and Information Services Management Committee	Privacy responsibilities of Manager, Corporate Governance transferred to Privacy Contact Officer
3.0	30 July 2019	Executive Committee	Policy updated with latest text from NSLA