

The state of authorities at the State Library of New South Wales

Background

The State Library of New South Wales migrated from Millennium to Alma in 2016 and the Data Quality team immediately started investigating its features for managing authorities, such as the Authority Control Task List (ACTL) and integration with external sources such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), Library of Congress Name Authorities (LCNA) and Library of Congress Genre Form Terms (LCGFT) from the community zone.

As part of the migration, the Library migrated all the existing Millennium authority records into Alma as local authority headings.

Goals

While the Library uses LCNA and LCSH where possible, the heavily Australian nature of the Library's collection is often not reflected in those thesauri.

The State Library of New South Wales is a major contributor to the Australian National Bibliographic Database (ANBD) distributed nationally and internationally through LibrariesAustralia and Trove. As such, the Library catalogues original bibliographic records directly on to the ANBD using the Libraries Australia Cataloguing Client (LACC). The Library also uses the Cataloguing Client to amend existing authority records, where required, and to create original authority records in accordance with the LibrariesAustralia [guidelines](#) for establishing name and subject authorities and amending existing name authorities.

Most importantly:

LibrariesAustralia participants are permitted to change established or authorised personal name headings under the following circumstances:

- a). there is a need to distinguish between two authors with the same name.***
- b). the original heading clearly no longer represents predominant usage.***
- c). the established heading for a non-Australian name differs from the Library of Congress Name Authorities (LCNA) form.***
- d). additional or updated birth and death data becomes available for an Australian heading.¹***

Libraries Australia will follow the form of heading established in the Library of Congress Name Authorities (LCNA). LCNA will take precedence over most name, title and series headings which have already been verified as authorities in the Australian Bibliographic Network or Libraries Australia, and these headings may be retrospectively changed to conform with LCNA.

²

The subject authority file on the Libraries Australia database is based on Library of Congress Subject Headings, but is not identical to LCSH.

All subject headings must be checked in the most current edition of LCSH and the list of approved subject headings available at [Australian Extension to LCSH](#).

Free-floating subdivisions are to be checked in the most current edition of LCSH, or the LC subject cataloguing manual. Most free-floating subdivisions have restrictions on their application, and must be

¹ National Library of Australia. *Guidelines for changing name authorities in the Australian National Bibliographic Database*

<https://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/sites/nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/files/changing-name-authorities.pdf>

² National Library of Australia. *Guidelines for establishing name authorities for the Australian National Bibliographic Database*

<https://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/sites/nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/files/establishing-name-authorities.pdf>

used in accordance with certain guidelines which can be found in the scope notes given under each subdivision in LCSH, and also in the LC subject cataloguing manual.

When creating authority records in Libraries Australia, the following references should be added from LCSH:

- *UF (input as 4XX)*
- *RT (input as 5XX)*
- *BT (input as 5XX)*
- *scope notes (input as 6XX).*

The references NT and USE are not be added as these are created automatically by the system when a BT, RT or UF reference is added to the reciprocal heading.

*The Macquarie Dictionary has been accepted as the standard authority for the spelling of proposed subject headings and references.*³

The State Library of NSW has primary responsibility for the provision of access to NSW archival and published material and gives priority to original cataloguing of its unique and heritage materials. This includes the establishing of name authorities for authors of these collections, whether they be people, corporate bodies or conferences, where there is conflict or may be conflict, or where government departments change their structure and the headings require change on a larger scale. Original research into an author's birthdates or name can be required or this information may be provided with the collection in hand, whether it be published materials or original materials, such as manuscripts, oral histories or pictures.

Procedural inefficiencies

The State Library of NSW uses two local cataloguing systems, one for original materials / archival collections (Adlib) and one for published materials (Alma). For original material name authorities, the Library has traditionally copied and pasted the existing name authorities from LibrariesAustralia into the archival management system. This continues to occur with the new archival management system, Adlib, although the Library is investigating the linking of headings to external authorities.

For published material, the cataloguers now amend or create authority records on LibrariesAustralia, then download the authority record into Alma by copying and pasting the record into Notepad, making delimiter changes, amending the ANBD control number field, then pasting the record line by line into Alma. That's one line at a time in the metadata editor. After nightly processes, the cataloguers check for changes to bibliographic records. Previously this process was streamlined through the interoperability of the Z39.50 protocol, which allowed for the seamless import of the whole authority record. This process has become less efficient because of the lack of integration between Alma and LibrariesAustralia authority records. The Library has discussed the issue with the National Library and with ExLibris and is willing to be a development partner for any improvements.

Lynne Billington
Manager, Data Quality, Systems and Standards
State Library of New South Wales
28 May 2018

³ National Library of Australia. *Establishing subject authorities*.
<https://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/establishing-subject-authorities>