

Policy title	RTRL Access to Information Policy
Policy number	1.3
Objective	To affirm Richmond Tweed Regional Library's commitment to free and equitable access to information, subject to legal and safety obligations.
Last reviewed or updated	08/09/2025
Last endorsed by Committee	17/09/2025
CM reference	ED2025/070025

Contents

Introduction	2
Scope of Policy	2
Related documents	2
Responsibilities and administration of the Policy	3
Review requirements	3
Policy approval	3
Policy	3
Policy Statement	3
Collections	4
Library Use	4
Role of Public Librarians	5
Explanatory note	5
Document history and version control	6

Introduction

This Policy is framed with reference to the [Library Act 1939](#) and the principles expressed in the Australian Library and Information Association Statements on Free Access to Information and Online Content Regulation and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom.

Scope of Policy

This Policy applies at all Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) branch libraries and Support areas.

RTRL branch libraries include: Lismore, Goonellabah, Ballina, Alstonville, Lennox Head, Byron Bay, Mullumbimby, Brunswick Heads, Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah, Kingscliff, Research and Family History Centre and the RTRL Mobile Library.

Related documents

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all applicable documents and legislation.

RTRL operates under the [Library Act 1939](#) and the [Library Regulation 2018](#).

[Library Council of NSW Children's Policy Guidelines for NSW public Libraries](#)

[Access to Information in NSW Public Libraries : Library Council Guidelines](#)

[ALIA & APLA Joint Statement on Free Access to Information](#)

[ALIA Online Content Regulation](#)

[IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#)

[Classification \(Publications, Films and Computer Games\) Act 1995](#)

[Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#)

[RTRL Collection Development Plan](#)

[RTRL Exclusions and Directions to Leave Policy](#)

[RTRL Member and Visitor Code of Conduct](#)

[RTRL Young People in the Library Guidelines](#)

Responsibilities and administration of the Policy

The RTRL is managed by Lismore City Council as Executive Council and is 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 in implementing the Policy.

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.

RTRL members and visitors to the RTRL Library are responsible for abiding by the intent of this Policy.

Review requirements

This Policy will be reviewed annually, with a full review undertaken every four years in line with Local Government procedures.

Policy approval

Policy approval will be undertaken through the RTRL Committee.

Policy



Policy Statement

RTRL provides free and equitable access to information for the people of four Council Areas of Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Tweed. Access is subject to compliance with RTRL Policies and Procedures.

Collections

The RTRL develops and maintains collections of resources to meet the information needs and interests of the communities it serves and has a [Collection Development Plan](#) and guidelines to assist in the selection of Library material. Collection is based on the following principles:

- A public library has a role as an unbiased source of information and ideas, including online content. It must accept responsibility for providing free access to materials and information presenting, as far as possible, all points of view on current and historical issues, including controversial issues.
- Libraries should endeavour to provide access to comprehensive and balanced collections that meet the needs of their communities as far as budget, space and availability of materials allow.
- Library materials that are not subject to Federal or State restriction or prohibition are included in the public library collection on the basis of their value and relevance. Selection decisions are made to ensure broad access to information, ideas and perspectives, regardless of moral, political, racial, religious, gender, language or other sensitivities, and independent of external pressure from individuals or groups.
- The arrangement of the collection will aim to facilitate access. Restricting access to certain titles or classes of materials, e.g. by holding them in special collections available on request, can be an indirect form of censorship. No materials should be held in closed access except for the express purpose of protecting them from injury, theft or due to Australian Classification restrictions (<https://www.classification.gov.au>).
- Adult collections are selected to provide a wide range of information and ideas for adult users. Parents, guardians, and carers are encouraged to support and guide their children's use of Library materials to ensure age-appropriate reading and enjoyment. Monitoring the reading of children is the responsibility of their parent, guardian or carer.

Library Use

- Everyone has a right to use a public library whatever their age, sex, race, religion, cultural identity, language, disability, socio-economic status, individual lifestyle, political allegiance, or social views.
- Libraries should protect each user's rights in regard to confidentiality and privacy.
- Library patrons must be sensitive to the values and beliefs of others when displaying potentially controversial information or images on computer screens located in public areas (see explanatory note). Where a Library patron is found to be using computers to access pornographic, offensive or objectionable material, or for any unlawful purpose, the Library reserves the right to request patron to cease accessing material, direct the patron to

leave the Library, to direct that the patron not re-enter the Library for a specified period and to report unlawful conduct to the relevant authorities. Please refer to the RTRL Exclusions and Directions to Leave Policy and RTRL Member and Visitor Code of Conduct, for further detail.

- RTRL does not support the use of censoring software as it inhibits free access to information, and it does not provide adequate protection for children from all material that may be harmful on the Internet.
- Parents, guardians and carers are encouraged to oversee, support and guide children's safe and responsible use of the Internet and other forms of electronic information, in line with this Policy.

Role of Public Librarians

- Librarians select materials based on their relevance and contribution to a broad and useful collection for the communities they serve. Selection decisions reflect professional standards and are guided by the Library's objectives, rather than moral, political, racial, religious, gender, language, or other sensitivities.
- Librarians must comply with all laws regarding restricted or prohibited material.
- Librarians have a role in supporting and educating Library members and visitors in the safe and responsible use of the Internet, in accordance with Policies and procedures.
- Library materials are regularly reviewed to ensure the collection remains current, relevant, and useful. This Policy and the RTRL [Collection Development Plan](#), guides collection management rather than removing materials solely because they may be controversial or disapproved by parts of the community.

Explanatory note

The [Library Regulation 2018](#), Section 17(1) (b) states that Library users may be directed to leave and not re-enter the Library for such a period as the staff member directs, if the staff member is of the opinion that the person's condition, conduct, dress or manner is likely to give offence to any person in the Library or to interfere with any other person's use of the Library.

This may include displaying images or information that may reasonably be considered to offend. Examples may include displaying adult content or displaying images of deceased persons which can cause offence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Alternatively, there may be legitimate reasons for accessing such material requiring special arrangements to be made with the Library staff.

Document history and version control

Version #	Date approved	Approved by	Description	CM ref #
1.0	17/09/2025	RTRL Council	Complete review of all RTRL policies has resulted in revised numbering & documents.	ED2025/070025