

# Guidelines for **Australian Special Libraries**

Special libraries provide a client focused library and information service. Special library staff obtain, organise and provide access to selected relevant, current and authoritative information sources for their organisation.

Special library staff use information resources and technology to facilitate effective and efficient client access to information that support the goals and business of the organisation. Special libraries provide value adding services such as:

- building a dynamic collection of information resources based on a deep understanding of clients' information needs
- training and assisting clients to effectively access information and use relevant technology
- gathering evidence to support decision making
- current awareness of emerging technologies and best practice in information and knowledge management
- competitive intelligence and market research for business development.

Information and data are essential for evidence, innovation and competitive advantage, and special libraries play an important role in organisations working in the information and knowledge age.

## 1. Management

### 1.1 Role/Status

**Guideline:** The library should be regarded as a management unit within the organisation. Management of the library is the responsibility of a qualified librarian. The library manager should be responsible to senior management and should be consulted on all decisions which have an impact on the operation of the library.

### 1.2 Administration

**Guideline:** The library manager should be responsible for the provision of all management and professional functions of the library. The library manager and all other library staff should have job descriptions and classifications in accordance with ALIA guidelines. The management of a library includes the development, implementation and maintenance of policies and procedures achieved through:

- standardised procedures
- staff training, development and performance management
- communication and teamwork
- management of financial, human, information and communication technology resources
- resource management
- strategic planning
- marketing.

### 1.3 Communication

**Guideline:** The library manager should seek support to actively liaise with senior management and key stakeholders throughout the organisation to ensure the library understands client needs and provides a relevant library service.

### 1.4 Performance measurement

**Guideline:** Performance indicators and measurements should be developed, evaluated, reported and revised annually to improve the quality of the service provided.

## 2. Staffing

### 2.1 Duties and qualifications

**Guideline:** The library should be managed by a qualified librarian and additional staff may consist of librarians, library technicians and assistants. Full details of the duties and qualifications required by personnel undertaking librarian, library technician and library assistant positions are available from ALIA. Appropriate salaries for these positions should be determined using the ALIA salary scales as a minimum.

The library manager should be responsible for the employment of library staff as required in consultation with management and human resources personnel.

### 2.2 Professional development

**Guideline:** Continuing professional development is essential for library staff to ensure the provision and management of an effective information service. The library manager and all eligible library staff should participate in the ALIA Professional Development Scheme to maintain a high level of competency in their education and skills. Employers have an obligation to encourage and facilitate the participation of their employees in activities conducive to professional development.

## 3. Finance

**3.1 Guideline:** The library manager should be responsible for the financial management of the library which should include the following procedures:

- preparation of budget estimates for the fiscal year
- approval of the budget by the organisation
- responsibility for the management of expenditure.

Budgetary items may include:

- salaries
- operational costs
- subscriptions
- acquisitions
- training and professional development
- capital items.

## 4. Resources

### 4.1 Resource management policy

**Guideline:** The library manager should formulate and review the policy annually to identify core information resources, both physical and electronic, to be acquired and managed for the organisation. The library manager should also provide guidelines for the selection, acquisition and disposal of information resources.

### 4.2 Resource access

**Guideline:** To facilitate efficient access to information, resources should be catalogued and/or indexed, classified and arranged according to recognised standards and provided in a format that best meets the information needs of the organisation using an appropriate online library management system.

## 5. Services

### 5.1 General

**Guideline:** The library manager should establish and maintain a range of quality and relevant services in alignment with the objectives of the organisation using relevant and current technology. The library manager should provide accurate and current information efficiently.

### 5.2 Marketing

**Guideline:** The library's marketing strategy should inform clients of the resources and services offered by the library. The marketing strategy should be aimed at increasing awareness of the value of the library to the organisation.

### 5.3 Information services

**Guideline:** In consultation with the client, library staff should efficiently and effectively utilise all available and relevant information resources to provide quality information. The library manager is responsible for evaluating, assessing and providing the most appropriate methods of information dissemination to meet clients' information needs.

## 5.4 Resource sharing

**Guideline:** The library manager should develop and participate in co-operative networks to provide document delivery and facilitate resource sharing. Wherever possible, consortia arrangements that provide benefits to the organisation should be negotiated. The library manager should always be aware of information that is confidential or has a competitive advantage and, act to protect this information within accepted professional and ethical codes of conduct.

## 5.5 Access

**Guideline:** The library manager has a commitment to facilitate client access to information within the library. It is essential for the Library to provide or organise training for clients to enable them to access information resources efficiently and effectively. Library clients should be informed of their obligations to comply with freedom of information, privacy and copyright legislation in the various Australian jurisdictions.

# 6. Work environment

## 6.1 Planning of location and access

**Guideline:** The library manager should be responsible for the planning and maintenance of library facilities in compliance with the appropriate Australian Standards. The library's location should offer convenient access for all staff and clients. Entrance and exit points should not be blocked by equipment or furniture which may impede emergency access. Due consideration should be given to the security of both personnel and resources.

## 6.2 Floor Loading

**Guideline:** Floor loading should comply with Australian Standards. Attention should be paid to the building's structural allowances with regard to placement and loading of stacks. Storage and shelving should be conveniently located.

## 6.3 Space requirements

**Guideline:** Space allowance should consider the library's requirements and comply with relevant Australian Standards. Initial choice of the site for the library should allow for reasonable expansion.

Floor space allocation should allow for the following library functions:

- staff work-space
- shelving and storage
- service and client activities.

## 6.4 Occupational health and safety

**Guideline:** The special library's environment should comply with occupational health and safety legislation and relevant Australian Standards.

For example some environmental factors to be considered are:

- acoustics - the library should be free from excessive noise and vibration
- lighting - adequate lighting levels should be provided in accordance with Australian Standards.
- power - special attention should be paid to the appropriate placement of outlets for technology
- other conditions - adequate ventilation, temperature and humidity control, dust and pest control should be provided for the preservation of library resources, maintenance of technology and comfort of staff and clients.

## Glossary

For the purposes of these guidelines, the following definitions are applied:

**Collection** is the resources obtained and provided by the library to achieve the information needs and objectives of the organisation.

**Professional development** relates to activities and training to keep staff informed on current developments in librarianship, information management and technology, and in their subject specialty to strengthen their technical and professional knowledge, skills and competencies.

**Resources** are information sources in the form of physical items or electronic content, either held locally or accessed from offsite storage or remote websites.

**Special libraries** are libraries which provide specialised services; serve a particular clientele; or have special collections.

## Bibliography

Australian Library and Information Association. Library and information sector: core knowledge, skills and attributes. 2005. <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/core.knowledge.html>

Australian Library and Information Association. Professional Development for Library and Information Professionals. 2005. <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/professional.development.html>

Australian Library and Information Association. Salaries for Australian librarians and library technicians 2008-2009 <http://www.alia.org.au/employment/salary.scales/>

Australian Library and Information Association. Statement on library and information services staff appointments. 2008. <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/library.staff.html>

Health Libraries Australia. Guidelines for Australian health libraries. 4th edition. 2008. <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/health.libraries.html>

International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions. Guidelines for libraries of government departments. Report No 106. 2008 <http://www.ifla.org/en/publications/guidelines-for-libraries-of-government-departments>

Special Libraries Association. Competencies for information professionals of the 21st century. 2003. <http://www.sla.org/content/learn/members/competencies/index.cfm>

## Appendix - International and Australian standards

AS 1170 SAA Loading Code

AS.1170.4 Supp-1-1993 Minimum design loads on structures (known as the SAA Loading Code) - Earthquake loads – Commentary (Supplementary to AS 1170.4 -1993).

AS/NZ 1170.1:2002 Structural Design Actions – Permanent, imposed & other actions.

AS1428 (Set) 2003 Design for access & mobility.

AS 1470-1986 Health & safety at work – principles and practices.

AS/NZ 1680.1:2006 Interior and workplace lighting – general principles and recommendations.

AS 2342-1992 Development. Testing and implementation of information and safety symbols and symbolic signs.

AS 2107-2000 Acoustics- recommended design sound levels and reverberation times for building interiors.

AS 2834-1995 Computer Accommodation.

AS/NZ 3260:1993 Approval and test specification – safety of information technology equipment including electrical business equipment.

AS 3590.1-1990 Screen-based workstations – visual display units.

AS 3590.2-1990 Screen-based workstations – workstation furniture.

AS 3590.3 -1990 Screen-based workstations – input devices.

AS 3671 Acoustics: Road traffic noise intrusion - Building siting and construction renamed AS 3671-1989 3671 Acoustics: Road traffic noise intrusion - Building siting and construction.

AS 3757-1990 Acoustics: Declared noise emission values of computers and business equipment.

AS 4196:1999 Information and documentation: Open systems interconnection - Interlibrary loan application service definition.

AS 4197.1:1999 Information and documentation: Open systems interconnection - Interlibrary loan application protocol specification – Protocol specification.

AS 4197.1:1999 Information and documentation: Open systems interconnection - Interlibrary loan application protocol specification – Protocol specification conformance statement (PICS) proforma.

AS/NZS 4279(Int) Information and documentation: Information retrieval services protocol.

AS/NZS 23950:1999 Information and documentation – Information retrieval (Z30.50) – Application of service definition and protocol specification.

ISO 2789:2006 Information and documentation – international library statistics.

ISO 11620:1998 Information and documentation – library performance indicators.

Sources:

International Organization for Standardization <http://www.iso.org/iso/home.htm>

Standards Australia <http://www.standards.org.au/default.asp>

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