



PLV Statement on Provision of Public Library Services in Victoria

Public Libraries Victoria is a collaborative and advocacy organisation and the peak body for Victorian public library managers, comprising representatives of every public library service in the state. Public libraries in Victoria are vital community hubs that provide access to a wide range of content and foster learning, creativity and imagination. Public libraries are delivered to their local communities by municipal councils; and to people with blindness and low vision by Vision Australia.

In accordance with Victorian State Government funding agreements, councils and regional library corporations undertake a range of activities to support and meet the information needs of their communities, including:

- Providing free access to, and lending for a period of time, the library's information resources, in a range of physical and digital formats and mediums;
- Providing free access to the Internet for information resources;
- Providing assistance in the use of collections and the retrieval of information;
- Facilitating lifelong learning, including the development and maintenance of reading, digital, information and literacy skills;
- Providing any additional services that enable access to library services and programs;
- Providing physical and virtual space for the community.

PLV supports the Australian Library and Information Association's Statement on Public Libraries:

Each member of the Australian community has an equal right to public library and information services regardless of age, race, gender, religion, nationality, language, disability, geographic location, social status, economic status and educational attainment.

A public library services its community through the provision of access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources and services. It does this through access to materials in all formats in order to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development through learning, including recreation and leisure.

Public libraries have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving individuals access to a wide and varied range of information, ideas, opinions, and skills.

The role of public libraries is essential in developing an educated society through programs that improve literacy and information literacy including lifelong learning opportunities. Public libraries contribute to economic prosperity by helping people improve their skills and life chances.

Public libraries provide the first point of access for information for the general public and for the public's access to the national and international system of library and information services.

The satisfaction of a person's information needs must be independent of an ability to pay.

Local, state/territory and Commonwealth governments have an obligation to work in partnership to provide agreed public library services to all members of the library's clientele without direct charge to the user.

The Australian Library and Information Association believes that public library services have particular responsibilities to monitor and proactively respond to the changing demographic characteristics and trends of their communities, to consult with their communities and to meet information, learning and recreational needs of an increasingly diverse society. Public library services should ensure that they have policies, guidelines, and procedures in place to respond to and meet relevant legislative requirements. (Amended 2009)

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