

## Guidelines on Joint-Use Libraries



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## APPROVAL & DATE EFFECTIVE

The Library Council of NSW issues guidelines for local authorities operating NSW public libraries under section 10(5) of the Library Act 1939.

Guidelines for joint-use libraries were developed by the Library Council of New South Wales and approved by the Premier in 1983.

The Guidelines were updated in 2014/15 by the State Library of NSW in consultation with TAFE NSW and NSW public libraries, and were endorsed by the Library Council of NSW's Public Libraries Consultative Committee on 20 July 2015.

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## DOCUMENT HISTORY & VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
2.0	20 July 2015	Public Libraries Consultative Committee, Library Council of NSW	Replaces the Guidelines for Joint Use Libraries, 1983. Note the People Places guideline also relates to Joint-Use Libraries.
1.0	1983	NSW Premier Library Council of NSW	Guidelines for Joint Use Libraries

# 1. Purpose and scope

This guideline applies to local authorities in NSW entering into collaborative arrangements for joint-use library services with universities, TAFE, schools and other organisations. This document sets out the principles to be observed for the planning and implementation of joint-use libraries and joint-use arrangements.

# 2. Background

A Library Council of NSW Guideline on joint-use libraries was approved by the Premier in 1983. This document set out a range of principles to be observed for the planning and implementation of joint-use public, TAFE and school libraries. The Guideline also established a Consultative Group charged with making decisions on joint-use library proposals. The Group was convened by the State Librarian and included senior Department of Education representatives.

In 2014 a number of NSW TAFE Institutes approached NSW local authorities to enquire about joint-use or collaborative library arrangements. It was agreed at a meeting between the State Library and TAFE management in July 2014 that it was timely to revise the 1983 document to reflect contemporary needs. A more flexible approach to collaborative arrangements and decision making has been considered in this revision of the Guideline.

# 3. Policy statement

The objectives of the component types of library service – public, school, TAFE or university – are implicit in any statement of the objectives of joint-use libraries. It is recommended that the first stage in considering a joint-use library would be consultation at State level with the respective authorities. Developing agreements at this stage is preferable, to ensure that the unique concerns of all parties are addressed.

The objectives of joint-use libraries and joint-use arrangements are considered to be:

- a) To provide a level of service at least equal to and preferably better than that which would be provided by alternative means, to all groups normally served by the component types of library service.
- b) To provide resources, including electronic resources, and services to enable each participating authority to meet the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the community and the educational institution(s) as appropriate.
- c) To provide a more economic use of services and resources
- d) To meet the standards applicable for the partner agencies for the types of library service to be given.
- e) To provide access to library networks of various kinds, in particular those serving public libraries and those serving libraries of educational institution(s).

# 4. Definitions and acronyms

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions have been adopted:

A **joint-use library** is one in which two or more groups of users are served in the same premises, the governance of which is collaboratively agreed between two or more separate authorities. A joint-use library implies joint governance from separate parent entities.

A **collaborative arrangement** is where one entity agrees to deliver a library service to clients of another entity according to a service-level agreement. The arrangement may include a funding agreement or an in-kind arrangement. Where NSW local authorities agree to enter into a collaborative arrangement for library services involving their public library, the *NSW Library Act 1939* and the current Regulation need to be considered, along with relevant Guidelines and Standards and the *FAMOUS: principles for delivery of external agency information* endorsed by the Public Libraries Consultative Committee. Other organisations entering into an agreement with a public library may also need to meet applicable Acts, Regulations, Awards and Policies relevant to their business.

## 5. Joint-use libraries: factors to be considered

Before making any commitment to a joint-use library, the fullest consideration should be given to alternative methods of resource sharing and distribution, including those made possible by communications and data storage technology. Any joint use with an educational institution would need to consider the complexity of licensing agreements for educational purposes and related remuneration and reporting to agencies such as Screenrights and the Copyright Agency Limited.

### Motivation

Before examining the detail of any proposal, there is a need for a thorough understanding by all parties of the issues involved in joint-use libraries. The purpose of the proposal should be to improve the service available to all groups of users. It is essential, therefore, that all parties have a positive commitment to improving the quality of library services available.

### Siting

Siting is a key consideration for a library and there may be different priorities for different types of libraries that need to be resolved. A public library should generally be located close to shops and transport routes, at the centre of the community. A school or TAFE library should be central to the educational complex. The objectives of the types of library to be accommodated should be carefully balanced against potential compromises and benefits. Factors such as parking and access, including access for people with a disability and access in the evening and on weekends should also be taken into account.

### Design

The functional requirements of participating libraries need to be taken into account and adequately catered for when making design decisions. Care should be taken to avoid psychological as well as physical barriers to use. The various users' service areas should be made as welcoming and attractive as possible. Furnishing will ideally enable use by all age groups and provision for student use should not inhibit or preclude public access. However, it is recognised that there is a need for learning spaces if the joint use is between a public library and an educational institution

### Capital costs

Agreement should be reached on the management and apportioning of costs by the relevant authorities. This should take account of set-up and ongoing maintenance costs including building costs, site improvements and furnishing as well as of equipment, ICT requirements and the feasibility, implications and cost of integrating materials from different systems. A comprehensive review of library collection

development policies, licensing agreements and pricing models for electronic resources would need to be undertaken to assess the viability of a public library providing access to educational resources. A review of current and future educational partnership arrangements and agreements, especially with universities, would need to be undertaken and included in any joint use library agreement.

## **Recurrent costs**

Ongoing funding arrangements for staff salaries and resources, as well as building and general maintenance, telecommunications costs and purchase of additional equipment etc. must be determined and agreed to. This requires an ongoing financial commitment by the cooperating parties and could be related to the benefits to be derived by each partner.

The cost of processing and ownership of materials should also be taken into account in this context. It is important to establish mechanisms through which improvements to facilities or extension of services can be assessed, funded and implemented.

## **Management responsibilities**

Arrangements for policy development, management of staff, budgeting and selection policy, should be documented and agreed between the parties. Initial agreement needs to be reached by the participating authorities on issues such as line responsibility and the relationship to the parent bodies, including formal requirements and regulations.

## **Agreement**

In addition to the wider issues, the following matters require careful consideration in drafting of an agreement:

- a) ownership of property, resources, etc
- b) responsibility for insurance of property, resources, public risks, workers' compensation, etc
- c) security of premises, equipment and collections
- d) liability for cleaning and maintenance
- e) liability for telephones, ICT
- f) procedures in case of dissolution
- g) records management.

## **Staffing**

Responsibility for staffing must also be agreed upon prior to entering into any joint-use agreement. If the library is a joint-use library, staff may need to be employed by the parties separately.

If the model is for a collaborative arrangement i.e. a public library receiving funding from TAFE or another body to provide services, the local authority would normally be the employer. Due to the complexity of educational standards and reporting requirements for educational institutions, especially those related to higher education, any collaborative arrangements would need a more detailed review.

While it is recognised that the success of a joint-use library depends to a very great extent on the commitment of the library staff, it is impractical to depend on personal commitment for the success of the venture. It is, therefore, essential that consideration be given to matters such as lines of responsibility, demarcation of functions and appropriate industrial awards. Agreement should be reached on these

at an early stage in the negotiations. All aspects of industrial relations concerning differing staff award agreements and conditions would need to be considered and documented to overcome potential conflicts.

The capacity of staff to co-operate in a joint venture and their commitment are relevant matters to be considered where staff are appointed specifically to these positions. All staff associated with a joint-use library should be recruited with this in mind. Relevant staff should be informed if they will be working with other staff employed under different reporting lines and industrial awards.

## **Access to materials and services**

Users of a joint-use library include clients of all the component types of library involved in the venture. It should be noted that these may include children, pupils of government and non-government schools, and students enrolled in TAFE. The widest possible range of materials should be provided for all users. However, the availability of certain items such as 'special reserve' material or material relating to a specific trade such as explosives or lock smithing may need to be restricted. Students enrolled in an educational institution using a joint-use library should not be disadvantaged by losing access to identified course related resources and facilities.

Services should be planned to allow free access by all appropriate groups and the physical arrangement of stock should encourage use by any group. Facilities such as meeting rooms, group study rooms, computer equipment should also be available to all users during opening hours.

## **Hours of opening**

Must take account of the needs of all user groups and be determined by agreement between the parties concerned.

## **Collections and resources**

### *Selection policy*

A selection policy should be drafted to take account of the needs of all user groups. All types of media should be included with emphasis on particular categories as appropriate. Only those materials proscribed by law should be excluded from consideration.

### *Level of provision*

User groups must have available to them at least the range and quality of material which would have been provided by separate authorities. Some duplication may be necessary for materials known to be in high demand by more than one user group.

### *Collection services*

In some instances, collection integration is desirable, in others not so. The nature and scope of the joint-use/collaborative arrangements should inform issues such as collection arrangement and collection development policies.

### *Acquisition and Discard Procedures*

Procedures should be established to meet the requirements of the relevant authorities. Similarly, arrangements should be made to establish uniform procedures for writing off deselected library materials.

### *Cataloguing*

Special consideration needs to be given to cataloguing to ensure the needs of the educational institution and the public library are met. Established library management systems for educational library networks allow state-wide/national resource sharing as do those for public libraries but these two library networks are not usually interlinked. Students using a joint-use library should not be disadvantaged by losing access to the established educational library network, nor should public library customers lose access to the public library network. A thorough review of the options and implications for establishing and maintaining a joint library management system would need to be undertaken.

## **Circulation**

A thorough review of the options and implications for establishing and maintaining a joint library management system for the circulation of materials would need to be undertaken, including consideration of the management of client records.

## **User services**

A joint-use library is expected to provide or offer access to a range of services appropriate for all user groups. It is considered that a minimum acceptable range will include reference and information services, inter-library loan, children's, youth and older adult services, services to support culturally and linguistically diverse people, services support disabled people, including home library services, curriculum support and user education. Refer to Living Learning Libraries: standards and guidelines for NSW public libraries for suggested targets on the range of services. Refer to specific educational institution library services for specialist services to students, especially in relation to electronic resources.

## **Procedures**

The structure of any joint-use or collaborative arrangements must ensure compliance with relevant legislation including the NSW Library Act 1939 and relevant educational legislation, where applicable

## **Collaborative arrangements**

Collaborative arrangements between public libraries and other partners such as TAFE Institutes may be made locally. The decision from the public library perspective would rest with the local authority and from the TAFE Institute perspective, the decision would rest with the local TAFE institute. It is recommended that these Guidelines and TAFE NSW Library Guidelines, where applicable, are utilised for assistance.

## **Joint-use libraries**

The decision for a public library to enter into a joint-use library venture is primarily one for the local authority. However, local authorities must seek advice from the State Library of NSW in relation to Library Act and Regulation matters.

It is also recommended that advice is sought from the State Library on library service and administrative matters, including Guidelines and Standards.

The decision for an educational institution to enter into a joint-use library venture with a public library is primarily the responsibility of the educational institution and must comply with relevant Acts, Standards and Guidelines.

Joint-use proposals that involve shared building ownership, library assets and shared staffing would be best managed through consultation between the State Library, the local authority and the Executive of the other partner in the proposal (for example TAFE NSW).

Before any firm commitment to a joint-use project is made, there must be agreement in principle by all funding authorities.

Proposals for joint-use libraries should include the fullest possible information e.g. Names of participating bodies, school, TAFE enrolments, local populations, existing resources (including electronic resources), any other facilities as well as the reasons for seeking a joint-use library and an outline of the proposal.

Proposals for the establishment of joint use libraries will be considered at the State level by the respective authorities.

## **6. Legislative and policy framework**

Most relevant legislation:

- Library Act 1939

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

- FAMOUS – principles for delivery of external agency information
- People places: A guide for public library buildings in New South Wales
- TAFE NSW Library Guidelines.