

Ask a Librarian service policy

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Maintained by	Information Services Branch
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Next review date	June 2029

1. Authority

This policy is applied by the authority of the State Librarian and CEO (SLCEO).

2. Responsibilities

The Director, Information Services is responsible for the management of the Ask a Librarian service and communicating this policy to staff and clients.

The Coordinators, Information and Client Services are responsible for managing day to day processes relevant to service standards outlined in this policy and ensuring adherence to these standards.

State Library staff are responsible for the delivery of Ask a Librarian services to clients and complying with this policy while doing so.

Ask a Librarian services are delivered in alignment with State Library's commitment to children and young people.

3. Policy statement

Ask a Librarian services connect people with State Library's expertise, content and resources to meet their information needs. The service also equips clients with the skills to carry out independent research.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the Ask a Librarian service and provide guidance for its delivery to clients. It also outlines the level of support provided, establishing a shared understanding for clients and staff.

This policy aligns with the National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) [Service Guidelines: Information and research services at NSLA libraries](#).

5. Scope

The policy covers research and information enquiries to State Library, received through the Ask a Librarian service and managed by the Information and Client Services team.

The service is available to anyone who has an information need, including members of the public, government agencies, organisations and educational institutions

State Library also provides research and information services to Queensland Government departments through subscription services (GRAIL); these are outside the scope of this policy.

Enquiries received by other teams at State Library outside of the Ask a Librarian service are considered outside the scope of this policy.

6. Definitions

Word	Definition
Content and resources	State Library's content and resources include books, maps, photographs, newspapers, manuscripts, audio, eresources, video and digital material as well as self-help tools such as information or research guides, webinar recordings and instructional videos
Eresources	Subscription and free resources such as online databases, journals, newspapers, magazines, ebooks, online training courses, company information and Australian standards, music scores and encyclopaedias.

7. Service objectives

The Ask a Librarian service aims to:

- Provide a range of enquiry channels for client needs seek assistance with collections and services.
- Support clients to find, evaluate and use information, while building their capacity for independent research.
- Deliver high quality enquiry services in an efficient, timely and sustainable manner.

8. Ask a Librarian service

Ask a Librarian comprises an enquiry service that provides initial assistance at point of need, and a research service for more complex or in-depth enquiries. These services are available through a range of channels, which include:

- face-to-face at service desks
- telephone
- web-forms and email
- letters
- online chat service
- face-to-face, online or telephone appointments.

8.1. What we can do initially

State Library staff can spend up to 10 minutes on initial enquiries received in person at State Library, on the telephone or via the online chat service. Staff can provide:

- advice on a research strategy
- support on the effective use of search tools
- suggestions for appropriate resources.

Enquiries that cannot be answered in a short time-frame may be referred to the extended enquiries service.

Enquiries may be referred to another information provider if this is the most appropriate place to meet the information need.

8.2. Extended enquiries services

This service is provided for:

- Queensland residents
- anyone wishing to access information relating to the jurisdiction of State Library (Queensland)
- anyone wishing to access information which is unique to State Library collections.

What we provide for extended enquiries

We will provide:

- Up to 1 hour of research on each enquiry. We may spend more time on enquiries if researching materials unique to our collection.
- Up to 6 enquiries for any individual during a single calendar year.
- Up to 10 copied pages free of charge, within the provision of copyright legislation. You will be advised that the provision of additional material is possible through State Library's Document Delivery service and may incur a fee.
- Guidance on search strategies and relevant resources to help with your research.

Appointments

In certain circumstances, an appointment may be more appropriate to meet a client's needs. Appointments, up to 1 hour, are available in-person, via telephone and online.

Response time

Enquiries are allocated to staff on the day they are received. We aim to provide a response within 10 working days.

Feedback

Clients are invited to provide feedback on the quality of the Extended Enquiry service via an online evaluation survey link provided with each response.

9. What we are not able to provide

We are not able to provide:

- Supervision of examinations or proofreading documents.
- Interpretation or provision of legal or medical advice.
- Detailed technical assistance with personal hardware or software.

- Lengthy or ongoing research that exceeds the parameters of an extended enquiry e.g. extended family history, newspaper searches, or searches through manuscript collections.
- Extended research assistance to people interstate or overseas asking for information that is readily available in their own state, territory or country.
- Detailed assistance with assignments.
- Searches for missing persons.
- Valuations.

In these instances, we may give you guidance on search strategies and relevant resources to get you started in your research or refer you to your local library or another information provider.

10. Service disclaimer

We aim to provide the most current and accurate information. We do not assume responsibility for any errors or omissions in the information provided, or for any action which relies on this information. Information is provided in adherence to copyright legislation and State Library's Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) principles.

11. Privacy

State Library complies with the Queensland Privacy Principles (QPPs) and is subject to the [Information Privacy Act 2009](#). Personal information collected is only used for internal activities and functions (as outlined in the *Information Privacy Act 2009*) and will not be disclosed unless required by law. For more information, please refer to State Library's privacy statement: [Information privacy and website security](#).

12. Human rights

When applying this policy State Library will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to all human rights, as required by the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

13. Risk management and mitigation

14. References

This policy is supported by:

Queensland Government

- [Child Safe Organisations Act 2024](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009](#)
- [Libraries Act 1988](#)

State Library of Queensland

- [Responsible Client Conduct Policy](#)
- [Client complaints management policy and procedures](#)

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- [Information privacy and website security](#)
- [Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property principles](#)
- [State Library's Commitment to children and young people](#)

Other

- [Copyright Act 1968](#)
- [National and State Libraries Australasia *Service guidelines: Information and research services at NSLA libraries*](#)
- [National and State Libraries Australasia *Position statement: Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property \(ICIP\)*](#)

15. Approval

Approved by State Librarian and CEO on 26 June 2026.

16. Creative Commons

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