

**BALLARAT
LIBRARIES**
LOVE YOUR LIBRARY



Library Collection Development

Guidelines Review 2025





Executive Summary

The City of Ballarat is reviewing the guidelines that shape what's in our public library collections. These guidelines determine how books and resources are chosen, managed, and updated in libraries across the Central Highlands.

Why this matters

A well-managed collection means:

- Everyone can find something that interests them.
- Our collections reflect the diversity and experiences of our community.
- We can adapt to changing needs, interests, and formats.

Community feedback is essential to ensuring these guidelines remain inclusive, diverse, and responsive. Whether you visit regularly or occasionally, your voice helps shape a collection that reflects and challenges the community it serves.

The guidelines provide the framework for:

- Selecting and acquiring new materials.
- Updating and maintaining existing items.
- Retiring items that are no longer relevant or useful.

They are guided by national best practice, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) principles, and a commitment to free access to information.

Key theme – Challenge and Curiosity

A standout message from the community was the value of collections that both reflect familiar interests and spark exploration of new ideas. People want a library that:

- Offers fresh perspectives.
- Promotes discovery beyond the familiar.
- Sparks curiosity.

Our approach

Our approach To inform this review, we invited the public to share their thoughts through:

- In-person workshops at Wendouree, Sebastopol, and Ballarat Libraries.
- A public online survey via MySay Ballarat.
- Stakeholder workshops with community organisations and cultural groups.
- A Kids Think Tank session with 15 young voices.

In total, 266 people participated between the 17th March and 23rd May 2025, providing valuable feedback on diversity, discoverability, and access. What's next The insights gathered will guide updates to:

- Strengthen representation of diverse voices and cultures.
- Improve collection organisation for easier browsing.
- Maintain high standards of transparency and accessibility.

The revised guidelines will balance professional standards with community priorities, ensuring the collection continues to be inclusive, engaging, and reflective of the people it serves.

Background Context

The Collection Development Guidelines are a key resource shaping how library collections are managed across all Central Highlands Libraries (CHL), a shared library service consisting of the following councils, City of Ballarat, Ararat Rural City, Central Goldfields, Hepburn, Moorabool, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees and Southern Grampians.

They guide what is added, how it is maintained, and when it is removed. The aim is a consistent, thoughtful approach that is relevant, inclusive, and responsive.

These guidelines are developed in collaboration with CHL member libraries and are informed by sector-wide documentation, ALIA principles, and best practice from other public libraries. This ensures they are practical, evidence-based, and flexible enough to adapt to changing community needs and library trends.

Consultation Process

To ensure the updated guidelines reflect community needs, we ran a mix of in-person, online, and targeted engagement activities:

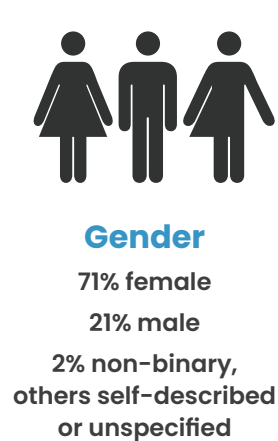
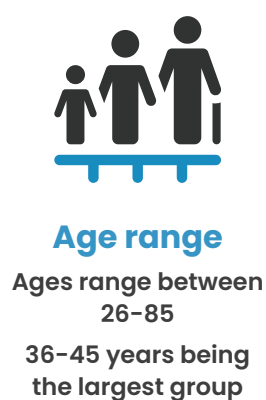
- **Promotion** – Launched at the Let’s Chat Expo (20–21 March) with details on in-person sessions and the MySay online survey.
- **Workshops** – Three sessions at Wendouree, Sebastopol, and Ballarat Libraries at varying times of day.
- **Online survey** – Open 17 March to 20 April 2025, with 74 responses.
- **Targeted sessions** – Stakeholder workshops with community organisations and cultural groups.
- **Children’s engagement** – A Kids Think Tank with 15 participants aged 10–12.

Who We Heard From

In total, 266 people participated:

- Let’s Chat Ballarat: 139
- MySay survey: 74
- Stakeholder workshops: 22
- Library workshops: 16
- Kids Think Tank: 15

The survey respondents represented a diverse cross-section of the community, with varied ages, genders, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences, underscoring the need for an inclusive, representative collection.





Key Themes

- **Challenge and Curiosity** – Collections should both reflect familiar interests and spark new thinking.
- **Satisfaction** – Confidence in finding materials, appreciation for diversity, and recognition of inclusive spaces, especially for children and young children.
- **Diversity** – Representation across cultures, languages, and perspectives is essential, not optional. A recurring theme was the desire for people to see themselves and their communities represented in the library's collection and spaces.
- **Organisation** – Support for clearer organisation, such as genre-specific stickers and improved signage.
- **Children's feedback** – Young readers value variety, digital and audio options, and feeling welcome in library spaces.

Next Steps

Feedback will inform updates to:

- Improve access to high-demand items.
- Increase representation of diverse voices and materials.
- Improve organisation for easier browsing.
- Maintain transparency and accessibility.

The City of Ballarat and CHL will continue engaging with the community as changes are implemented, with ongoing monitoring and further targeted consultations to keep collections responsive to community needs. Future updates to the Collection Development Guidelines will be available from the Ballarat Libraries website by **Monday 1 September 2025**.
libraries.ballarat.vic.gov.au

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