



Library and information services for people with a disability

ALIA Constitution Objects addressed:

To promote and improve the services provided by all kinds of library and information agencies.

Principle

The Australian Library and Information Association adopts in principle the right of people with a disability to equitable access and inclusion in all library and information services, and supports current Commonwealth, state and territory disability discrimination legislation.

Statement

1. The Association recommends that all library and information providers enable the inclusion of all persons with a disability by removing all barriers in order to create an environment that is free of limitation.
2. The Association recommends that all library and information providers, as part of their core services, provide services, collections, equipment and facilities, which will assist individual users with a disability to access and use resources that meet their particular information needs.
3. The Association recommends that library and information service providers actively engage with individuals with a disability, and groups representing them, in the planning, development and ongoing delivery of services.
4. The Association acknowledges that the best services are provided by professionals who are aware of the needs of, and service options for, people with a disability. Therefore the Association:
 - a) encourages all library and information service providers to ensure that staff are adequately trained and available to work with users with a disability;



- b) supports career-long professional development and formal library and information studies programs, which will facilitate the strengthening of equitable library and information services to people with a disability; and
- c) encourages the development of partnerships and networks amongst staff and organisations which facilitate, improve, and work towards the increased access, use, and inclusion in information services for people with a disability, carers, and family members.

5. The Association supports efforts to ensure the best level of access and utility to existing and emerging resources by people with a disability through service agreements, referrals and sharing of resources between library and information services; and between these and other organisations specialising in services targeted for people with a disability, whether government, corporate or voluntary.

6. In addition to meeting legislative requirements, the Association encourages the observation of universal design principles⁽¹⁾, guidelines and standards to ensure that library and information services, collections, equipment and facilities meet the identified needs of users with a disability. These apply to:

- a) the production of collection material and equipment for people with a disability - whether produced by commercial, government or voluntary agencies;
- b) the design of catalogues, databases and guides to resources;
- c) the development and application of hardware and software;
- d) the construction of buildings and signage;
- e) the building safety and emergency procedure; and
- f) e-resource compatibility and website content ⁽²⁾.

7. The Association supports efforts to ensure that copyright legislation supports the equal access by people with a disability to information from all libraries and information providers, including to copies of materials in alternative formats⁽³⁾.

8. To promote the efforts outlined in this statement, the Association encourages:

- a) library and information services to develop organisation-wide disability access and inclusion plans for the continued development of their services to people with a disability; and
- b) all funding bodies adequately resource library and information services for people with a disability.



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Useful definitions

1. Principles of Universal Design

https://projects.ncsu.edu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf

“Universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006).

2. World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes ver 4.1 (2014) Retrieved from <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/world-wide-web-access-disability-discrimination-act-advisory-notes-ver-41-2014>

3. Marrakesh Treaty. Retrieved from <http://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/marrakesh/>

Supporting documents

Australian Government. Federal Register of Legislation. (2016). *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Retrieved from <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>



United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF]. (2007). Promoting the rights of children with disabilities, *Innocenti Digest*, 13. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/children_disability_rights.pdf

World Health Organization. (2011). *World report on disability*. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf