



# Collection Policy

Updated March 2025 v7

## 1. Policy objectives

The policy underpins the Library's strategy. The Policy is an essential tool for the library's first priority: provide a comprehensive and authoritative collection (Library Strategic Priority 1).

This policy is designed to achieve the outcome: Judicial officers, the profession and community have access to authoritative legal information when needed. Judicial officers and the profession have flexibility about where and when they access legal information.

The Library is responsive to Court Services Victoria (CSV), jurisdictions, and the profession and their respective needs.

## 2. Strategic fit

The Policy prioritises purchasing digital resources so that they may enhance legal research capabilities for judicial officers and the profession (Strategic Priority 2).

The Policy will be communicated to judicial officers and the profession as part of the Library's communication plan. Judicial officers and the profession may have input into collecting decisions (Strategic Priority 3).

The Policy is intended to complement the collections of key organisations, and foster collaboration with publishers (Strategic Priority 4).

Good management of the Policy, and its effective implementation, will enhance library governance (Strategic Priority 5).

## 3. Measuring effectiveness

The effectiveness of the policy, and the effectiveness of its implementation, is measured by:

- Use of the digital library represents no less than 95% of total library use.

Collections management improvements are achieved through:

- Annual review of the collection policy;
- Ongoing review of content across digital and print resources, and annual review during the procurement cycle;
- Analysis of collection content requests from the judiciary and legal profession;
- Participating in user consultation forums and negotiations with publishers on their business models for electronic publications.

## 4. Scope of policy

The policy guides all purchasing decisions, with certain considerations including:

- a. Unless otherwise stated (for example, where 'monographs' are specifically referenced), Collection Guidelines are for publications purchased in digital form, with licence agreements that provide access via the internet for all lawyers who have paid a library fee on admission to practice.
- b. Print format will be purchased instead of digital if the licence agreements referenced in 4. a. do not demonstrate value for money.



- c. Print format for titles in the core collection will only be discontinued when digital access by all lawyers who have paid a library fee on admission to practice to the equivalent material is secured under agreement with the publisher for a period of three years hence or greater.
- d. When material is being purchased by request as part of a service agreement that includes payment for particular publications with specific access arrangements, purchasing decisions for such agreements may take precedence over Collection Guidelines in this policy.

## 5. Delegations

The Library Committee is the approver of this Policy.

Primary responsibility for selection recommendations lies with the Assistant Director Library Digital and Collections working closely with the Manager, Reference Services, based on Collection Guidelines in this Policy, advice from the Collections Librarian and Reference Librarians, previous usage data, uniqueness/substitutability, and cost.

The Assistant Director Library Digital and Collections actively seeks input on collecting decisions from jurisdictions and the profession.

Decision-making for acquisition of items for the collection is subject to delegation of expenditure conferred by the Library Committee.

Issues related to purchasing decisions are referred to the Director Law Library of Victoria for resolution and final decision.

The Policy is supported by collection procedures which contain further detail.

## 6. Recognition of the value of Books in the Balance Sheet

The value of the Supreme Court Library print collection is recognised as an asset in the Balance Sheet. The value reported in the Balance Sheet is based on an independent valuation carried out by a suitably qualified valuer.

A revaluation of the Supreme Court Library Collection carried out by a suitably qualified valuer should be undertaken every five years or as determined by the Library Committee and the Governance Policy and Procedure Manual.

## 7. Publicly available information

Links to authoritative digital resources which are freely available on the internet are included in the Digital Library. Examples of content includes:

- Legislation of Victoria, Commonwealth and all other Australian states and territories;
- Commonwealth and Victorian parliamentary debates;
- Victorian government gazettes;
- Journals and other legal publications;
- Websites or publications of legal organisations.

## 8. Collection guidelines

### 8.1 Core collection

- Authorised and general law reports and digests for Victoria and all other Australian jurisdictions, and England;



- Specialised law report series from all Australian jurisdictions and England covering select subjects;
- Legal encyclopaedias, dictionaries, citators and indexes covering Australia and England;
- Legal journals published in Australia and select international journals;
- Texts covering Victorian law.

## 8.2 Auxiliary collection

- Authorised and general law reports and digests for Canada, New Zealand, and other common law jurisdictions;
- Legal encyclopaedias, dictionaries, citators and indexes covering New Zealand, Canada and the United States;
- Texts covering Commonwealth and interstate material and other common law countries;
- United States material is purchased only if the content has not been dealt with extensively by any of the common law jurisdictions listed above.

## 9. Language

English is the predominant language of the collection.

## 10. Purchase requests

The Library provides a facility via the Library website to recommend new items for purchase for the Supreme Court Library Collection via the Contact Us form.

Requests will be considered against the Collection Guidelines outlined in this policy.

The final decision to purchase a resource may be made by the Director, Law Library of Victoria.

## 11 Special collections

### 11.1 First Nations materials collecting

Collecting First Nations published legal information material is a priority for the Library. The Library will consult to identify the potential for discovering, preserving, and using public First Nations legal information.

### 11.2 Judgments

The Library maintains a collection of publicly available judgments from select jurisdictions. Where permitted, these judgments are made accessible on the Judgments Database via the online Library catalogue.

Victorian Supreme Court and Victorian Supreme Court of Appeal Judgments are made available electronically to AustLII, BARNET JADE and other legal publishers as the agent of the Council of Law Reporting in Victoria.

### 11.3 Judges' speeches

The Library maintains a collection of welcome and farewell speeches. Access is by request to the Reference Librarian on duty.

### 11.4 Rare books and the Classics Collection



The Classics Collection of 18th century books was collected during the early years of the establishment of the Supreme Court Library. It consists of a range of generalist texts and classic novels. This collection is housed in the Classics Room. Access to the collection is at the discretion of the Library Director. The Library does not pursue additional purchasing to supplement these collections. However, donations may be accepted. The collections are maintained for historical purposes and are included in the Library catalogue.

The Supreme Court Library also holds many other rare and old books. Access to these items is at the discretion of the Reference Librarian on duty.

### 11.5 Collections from prominent retired Judges

The Library holds a small number of legal textbook collections from prominent retired Judges. Incorporation of collections is at the discretion of the Director, Law Library of Victoria.

## 12 Resourcing

### 12.1 Collaboration and partnerships

The Library is a party to a Memorandum of Understanding to the Australian Courts Consortium (AUCC). The Consortium's strategic objectives include facilitating co-operative collection development. The Library strives to cooperate with other substantial law libraries, such as the Melbourne Law School, and the State Library of Victoria, to maintain a combined comprehensive collection available locally and nationally. This includes community legal service libraries, law firm libraries, university libraries and the Victorian Government Library Service.

### 12.2 Funding the collection

The Law Library of Victoria is funded from several sources. Funding determines the extent to which resources are purchased, with two fundamental guiding principles:

- Digital resources available to judicial officers is purchased with funds from the Courts or the State;
- Purchase of print material held in the Supreme Court Library and digital resources for the profession is purchased with funds from the profession, or profession-related organisations.

### 12.3 Gifts and donations

The Library accepts donations of hardcopy publications on the basis that they become the property of the Library and any item not required will be offered for donation to other organisations or persons, or discarded.

Donations will be refused if material does not meet the selection criteria outlined in this policy or is already held by the Library and duplicates are not required.

The cost of cataloguing, storage and conservation are also important considerations in determining acceptance, therefore donated materials may need to be accompanied by funds to cover those costs. The Library accepts donations of superseded material from other libraries if they meet the criteria outlined in this policy.

All donations of collection materials to the Library are gifts. The Library will not accept donations of material on a permanent loan. Once material is accepted and added to the Library collection, the



Library reserves the right to catalogue, store, conserve, provide access to, and discard material at its absolute discretion.

The Library does not usually accept donations with access restrictions, except for restricted Judgments. However, the Library may accept materials which due to their rarity or value may be deemed important to hold in closed or restricted access.

Unencumbered monetary donations are also welcomed. The Supreme Court Library has deductible gift status.

## **13 Curate Victorian legal history material**

### **13.1 Preservation**

The Library will curate and preserve the historic print legal collection taking into consideration the selection criteria. Binding, digitisation and conservation will be undertaken if required and when funds permit, following the guidelines in the Collection Procedures, the library's Disaster Recovery Plan and Business Continuity Plan.

### **13.2 Collection maintenance**

Maintenance of the collection will be undertaken by Library staff or other experts when required. All formats making up the collection for a particular subject area i.e. books, journals, digital resources, etc. are assessed on a regular basis.

### **13.3 Storage**

Other than for publications purchased according to terms of service agreements, the Supreme Court Library is the usual place for storage of Library material.

Where offsite storage is appropriate or a Public Records Office of Victoria approved storage facility is used.

### **13.4 Deselection**

The Library actively manages the collection which includes, from time to time, deselecting material for discard. Discard decisions are in alignment with the collection profile as described in this policy. The Library may use the following methods of disposal of materials from its collections:

- Donation to other libraries or appropriate institutions, including donation through programs to libraries or legal bodies in developing countries;
- Sale to a reputable book seller;
- In the case of publications not required by other libraries or institutions, and unsuitable for sale, secure recycling disposal is arranged.

## **14 Cataloguing**

The Library is part of the AUCC, which shares a Library Management System (LMS), with each library contributing items to the catalogue, as per the AUCC cataloguing guidelines and procedures. Copy catalogue records are sources from Libraries Australia with holdings added to the LMS for uploading to Libraries Australia.



Any new original cataloguing input by the Law Library of Victoria will meet Libraries Australia required data elements using MARC21 (Machine-Readable Cataloguing) standards.

The Law Library of Victoria follows the standards recommended by Libraries Australia:

- The standard for descriptive cataloguing in Libraries Australia is Resource Description and Access (RDA);
- The standard for subject heading classification in Libraries Australia is Library of Congress Subject Headings;
- The standard for name heading classification in Libraries Australia is Library of Congress Name Authorities.

The Law Library of Victoria uses the 23rd edition of Dewey Decimal Classification and relative index (DDC 23) for assigning classification numbers. This Policy is supported by cataloguing procedures with further details.

## **15 Review of the Collection Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually to meet the strategic priorities of the Library, the changing needs of the Library, judiciary and the legal profession.