

LIANZA Statement on Freedom of Information 2020

LIANZA endorses the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 19* which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

LIANZA holds that all human beings have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity, and intellectual activity and to express their thoughts in public.

LIANZA holds that:

- A commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession
- Libraries should be a vital force for intellectual freedom in their communities
- Libraries should be a dynamic part of community life, throwing a spotlight on topical issues to stimulate learning and the exchange of information
- Libraries and library staff should adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom; uninhibited access to information; freedom of expression; and, the protection of their users’ privacy

Libraries, when delivering services (in person or online), should:

- 1) Avoid censorship and promote non-discrimination
 - a) Acquire, preserve, and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of their communities.
 - b) Ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral, or religious views.
 - c) Where relevant in their library service, make space available for and arrange displays and talks to stimulate learning and the exchange of information, while ensuring all in the community feel welcomed and safe.
 - d) Make materials, facilities, and services equally accessible to all lawful users, not discriminating due to ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical, sensory, or intellectual disability¹ or for any other reason.
 - e) Adhere to the law regarding restricted and objectionable materials², including online, but also engage with appropriate processes to challenge such restrictions when they believe freedom of expression is being unduly constrained.
- 2) Promote information literacy and critical thinking, and protect privacy
 - a) Support their users to effectively access and evaluate information and to protect their online identity.
 - b) Protect the personal information of their users and the confidentiality of their use of the library.

¹ **The UN Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:**

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

² As defined by the Films, Videos and Publications Act (1983)



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Please note:

This statement does not address issues of indigenous knowledge management. LIANZA and Te Rōpū Whakahau are working on this separately, and a separate statement or addition to this one will be forthcoming.

Approved by LIANZA Council November, 2020