indyreads Collection Development Policy

October 2026

1. Summary

The indyreads local eContent management platform provides the NSW public library network with the technical infrastructure and legal framework to enable libraries to operate as community aggregators of important digital content.

The platform is host to a statewide consortia collection of general fiction and nonfiction titles licensed directly from Australian independent publishers using the *NSW Public Library Agreement for the Purchase of Electronic Content*. Additional material is also purchased through the Odilo Marketplace.

2. Purpose

The Collection Development Policy describes the principles that define and govern the indyreads collecting strategy.

Collection development guidelines are largely documents for Library professionals and provide guidance for those making selection decisions

3. Background

In 2016 the State Library of New South Wales undertook research into the Australian publishing sector. The investigation indicated that the domestic and international publishing sector continues to be transformed by the ongoing impact of the technological revolution. The democratisation of the means to publish and distribute works has provided opportunities for smaller independent publishers and self-published authors to efficiently publish and distribute titles to a global audience.

The indyreads pilot identified that many of the small Australian publishers approached by the State Library of NSW did not have a distribution agreement with any of the library aggregator platforms operating in Australia. Furthermore, research undertaken by an ARC funded grant into the Social Dynamics of eLending in Australian Public Libraries concluded that time limited metered access licenses combined with inflated library pricing was having an adverse impact on public library collection development practices. Specifically, that due to the cost of acquiring metered access licenses and the need to continually replenish collections libraries were focusing specifically on popular fiction and non-fiction to the detriment of lesser-known authors and smaller publishers. Recent research into Australian Literary Fiction and Poetry also indicated that small independent publishers are increasingly responsible for the publication of these genres (Stinson, 2016).

Also, a study by Driscoll demonstrated that an increasing percentage of Australian romance, crime and fantsy genre fiction is now self-published (Driscoll, 2018). In 2020 the Soon to be Famous Illinois Author project reported that 32% of Amazon best sellers were self-published.

The primary aim of the indyreads statewide collection is to ensure that NSW communities continue to have access to a broad range of quality Australian and international content regardless of the pathway to publishing. The indyreads statewide collection is intended to complement the existing digital collections held by public libraries.

4. Selection Guidelines

Materials originating in Australia

4.1 Independent Australian Publishers

The primary collection emphasis is to license *general fiction* and *non-fiction* titles from independent Australian publishers. General is defined by the type of material commonly found in public library collections which supports recreational reading, literacy, primary and secondary students and lifelong learning.

4.2 Award Winners and Classic titles

Award winning Australian titles including Classic Australian fiction and non-fiction work.

4.3 Self Published

The best examples of domestic and international general fiction and non-fiction self-published material will be acquired. Bestseller lists and reviews and ratings from social platforms such as Goodreads will be used to assess the quality of titles.

4.4 Local Studies Material

Local history digitised publications whereby the NSW public library is the copyright holder, the library has licensed the right to upload the work onto the platform using the NSW Public Library Agreement for Purchasing Electronic Content, the copyright is extinguished, or the content is covered under a suitable Creative Commons license will be considered for inclusion on the platform. Priority will be given to books and journals that have been published along with oral histories and transcripts.

4.5 Languages other than English (LOTE)

indyreads LOTE collections reflect the cultural diversity of the NSW community and provide first language support. Potential users include migrants, refugees, international students and English speakers learning a language. These collections also support the public library network to provide material in language when they may not have a community large enough to implement their own collections. These collections complement the State Library's bulk loan service for public libraries. Material will generally be sourced from publishers in the originating country of language, rather than Australian publishers. The collection will include:

- Titles by domestic authors, including current popular and classic significant titles
- Popular translated international titles
- Translated Australian titles where available

- Collections sourced from multiple countries representing widely spoken language, ie Spanish and Latin American publishers
- Resources to learn English

4.6 Materials originating Overseas

General fiction and non-fiction titles from independent publishers, emerging authors, new edition classics and award-winning genre fiction titles.

4.7 Professional Development Collection

Library and Information science titles to support the professional development of NSW public library staff.

5. Format Considerations

EPUB is the preferred format for eBooks. PDF will be accepted for children's picture books, image rich titles such as cookbooks and local studies material.

6. Artificial Intelligence

The indyreads collection is exclusively for works authored by humans. The intent is to support the publishing sector and the creatives whose imagination and research enrich our communities.

No AI generated work will be purchased for the collection. Any AI authored work that is accidently acquired will be removed from the platform.

Works that are AI assisted may be considered for acquisition. AI assisted works will be assessed on the extent to which AI has been used to create the work.

AI narrated audiobooks will only be considered from small independent publishers and self-published authors where it is unlikely that a human narrated version will be produced. The quality of the narration will be a determining factor.

7. License Considerations

Preference will be given to perpetual access and perpetual simultaneous access licenses. Twenty-Six loan limit with no expiration date is the preferred metered access model. When the metered access licence is time limited 24 months plus is preferred over lesser time durations.

8. Collection Development Exceptions

General fiction and non-fiction titles from all domestic and international publishers will be considered for acquisition to assist the NSW public library network to meet the unprecedented community demand for eBook and Audio titles.