

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: 6 MAY 2024

PURPOSE

The objective of this policy is to ensure that library services are available to all members of the Wollongong community and that people are not excluded from participation on the basis of financial or personal circumstances.

POLICY INTENT

The main objectives of this policy are to:

1. establish the right of customers to request a reduction or waiver of fees and charges, and
2. define the principles that will inform consideration and approval of these requests

WOLLONGONG 2032 OBJECTIVES

Our Wollongong 2032 outlines the community's main priorities for the future and includes strategies for achieving them. This policy contributes toward Wollongong 2032 Objectives:

Goal 4: We are a connected and engaged community.

- 4.1 Provide our community with equitable access to information and opportunities to inform decision making
- 4.8 Council's resources are managed effectively to ensure long term financial sustainability
- 4.9 Excellent customer service is core business
- 4.11 Quality services, libraries and facilities are available to communities to access and gather.

POLICY

Council applies fees to some library services, programs, events and for replacement of lost or damaged items.

Council recognises that library customers may encounter unexpected circumstances that create significant hardship, which may impact on their ability to pay scheduled fees and charges and pose a risk to their continued access to library services. Library customers facing these extenuating circumstances will be advised of the right to request a reduction or waiver of fees and charges.

In instances where library customers request a reduction or waiver of fees, library staff will make an assessment of each request, applying Council's values, commitment to social justice and principles of fairness, integrity, respect for privacy, confidentiality and the maintenance of positive customer relationships.

The delegation for approval of a waiver or reduction of a library fee rests with the Manager Libraries + Community Facilities (Divisional Manager) while this delegation may be sub-delegated to the Service Team Leader level, for efficiency, approved requests for reduction or waiver will be reported to the Divisional Manager on a six-monthly basis.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every term of Council, or more frequently as required.

REPORTING

Reporting of approved requests to the Manager Libraries + Community Facilities on a six-monthly basis.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Wollongong City Libraries' Coordinators and Service Team Leaders will ensure that their staff are aware of this policy and that requests for reduction or waiver of fees and charges are considered within its ambit.

The Wollongong City Libraries Manager will monitor application of the policy and policy compliance. They will provide recommendations for approval of reductions or waivers, to the Manager Libraries + Community Facilities.

The Manager Libraries + Community Facilities will sub-delegate approval of requests for reduction or waiver of fees and charges and monitor requests and approvals on a six-monthly basis.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Libraries and Community Facilities
Date adopted by Council	6 May 2024
Date/s of previous ¹ adoptions	17 July 2017
Date of next review	31 May 2027

¹ Version adopted 17 July 2017 titled 'Reduction or Waiver of Library Fees and Fines'.