



# Statement on voluntary work in library and information services

## ALIA objects addressed

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

## Principle

ALIA emphasises that the efficient collection, organisation and dissemination of information requires a highly-trained, paid library and information services workforce with increasingly sophisticated skills.

## Statement

Use of volunteers in library and information services for specific purposes is acceptable but must never compromise the quality of service provision, nor replace paid employment in any way.

Library services can be enhanced by well supported volunteers, and providing volunteers with meaningful community roles is a legitimate function of a public library service.

1. ALIA affirms that volunteers must not replace appropriately trained and paid staff:
  - I. to compensate for the reduction, or withdrawal of services caused by inadequate staffing establishments, failure to fill vacant posts, or cutbacks in overall library and information services funding; or
  - II. to establish and maintain library services or outreach programs which would normally be established and maintained by paid library staff.
2. The replacement of trained, paid library staff by volunteers can only lead to a deterioration in the standard and the effectiveness of services, be wasteful of resources and be detrimental to the interests of library users.
3. Management of volunteers in library and information services should be aligned with the organisations strategic aims and include structures that support and value the role of volunteers. This should be based on best practice guidelines\* and include a volunteer policy detailing clear direction on volunteer roles, responsibilities, rights and accountability.

\* Volunteering Australia <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/national-standards-and-s...>

