



**DATE ADOPTED: 24 OCTOBER 2023**

**VERSION: 3.0**

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this policy is to:

- ensure fair and equitable access to the internet as an information resource
- establish guidelines for acceptable use of the internet at Maitland Libraries
- ensure the safety and integrity of Maitland City Council's Information Technology Network

## **POLICY SCOPE**

This policy applies to the use of the internet from public access computers at Maitland Libraries. Use of wireless internet access on personal mobile devices within Maitland Libraries is subject to the same principles of appropriate use.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

This is the content of the policy:

### **1. PRINCIPLES**

Maitland Libraries is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of the community.

The library provides a welcoming environment, including free public access to the internet to support lawful

- Access to information and services
- Access to recreational material
- Avenues for community engagement and participation

### **2. ACCESS**

#### **2.1 General**

Access to the internet is free of charge to visitors at Maitland Libraries.

Maitland Libraries does not have control over information available on the internet and does not accept responsibility for accuracy of information, or for any consequence arising from that information.

As some internet sources may cause offence to some people, users are asked to be sensitive to the values and beliefs of others when displaying information or images on screens located in public areas.

Maitland Libraries does not guarantee availability of the internet or internet sites at any time, nor is Maitland Libraries responsible for technical difficulties or loss of data resulting from delays, service interruptions or viruses.

All public access computers have filtering software in accordance with Council policy, which limits access to inappropriate and offensive materials.

However, Maitland Libraries cannot guarantee filtering software will block all offensive material to which users may gain access. Nor, that filtering software will not restrict access to sites that may have legitimate research or other value. Maitland Libraries staff, in collaboration with Council's IT officers, will endeavour to provide access to legitimate sites.

## **2.2 Children**

Parents and guardians are responsible for their children's access to all Library resources, including digital information and their use of the internet.

Children under the age of 16 years must have the consent of their parent or guardian before using Maitland Libraries computers to access the internet.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to work with their children in using the internet. Maitland Libraries staff are available to assist with information and access requests; however, Maitland Libraries does not accept responsibility for monitoring children's internet access.

## **3. Inappropriate Use**

Users may not access Maitland Libraries internet facilities to transmit materials and/or statements that are:

- Illegal, fraudulent or part of any unlawful activity
- Slanderous, libel or defamatory
- Offensive, obscene, pornographic, or in bad taste
- Abusive, threatening of violence
- Incitement to break the law
- Harassment based on age, sex, race, disability or other protected status
- Anonymous or repeated messages designed to threaten, annoy, or torment.

## **4. Copyright**

Users are responsible for complying with international and federal laws protecting copyrighted material. Maitland Libraries has no liability or responsibility resulting from copyright infringement by users. When printing or downloading material from the internet, users should refer to and comply with any directives given by the author of the material.

## **5. Privacy**

Maitland Libraries respects users' rights to privacy and does not monitor information or sites accessed. However, Maitland Libraries may be required to provide internet logs to officers legally empowered to investigate use of the internet where there are reasonable grounds for that officer to suspect illegal use.

## **6. Security**

Security in the online environment cannot be guaranteed and users are warned that all internet transactions and communications are vulnerable to unauthorised use. Maitland Libraries does not recommend using public access computers for purchasing, banking or other financial transactions. Maitland Libraries cannot assume responsibility for the safety and security of any transactions carried out on the internet, including loss of data, funds, or identity that may result from use of the internet at Maitland Libraries. Users are advised to log out of services and refrain from entering sensitive information, such as tax file numbers and banking details, while using library facilities.

## 7. Downloading

Downloading files and copying them to an external storage device is permitted, as long as executable software is not opened on the hard drive of the public access computers. A scan of external storage devices for viruses will occur on connection to the computer. Any files found to contain viruses and malicious software will be wiped during this scan. Note that files are not retained on public access computers.

## 8. Electronic Communication and Interactive Networking

Users are permitted to access email, web-based games, chat and social networking services, but must observe Maitland Libraries policy on inappropriate use of public access computers.

## 9. Wireless Access

Wireless internet access is available from all Maitland libraries for use by anyone with an internet-enabled mobile device. Maitland Libraries is not responsible for the security of communication over the wireless network.

Where Maitland Libraries customers or visitors are using their own internet-enabled devices, appropriate use of the device is governed by the principles of this policy.

## 10. Fees

Maitland Libraries provides free access to the internet, including electronic communication services, as part of its mission to meet the information needs of the community. This complies with Section 10 of the NSW Library Act (1939), which states that:

*Any person, (whether or not a member of the library) is entitled to free of charge access to any book of the library and to any information forming part of the information service of the library for use on library premises.*

## 11. Infringement of Conditions of Use

Users who do not comply with Maitland Libraries Conditions of Use may have their internet session terminated or be denied access to the service.

## POLICY DEFINITIONS

**Copyright:** The exclusive and assignable legal right given to the originator for a fixed number of years to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material.

**WiFi:** Wireless networking technology that allows computers and other devices to communicate over a wireless signal.

## POLICY ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS GROUP:	Culture Community and Recreation
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Manager Libraries & Learning
COUNCIL REFERENCE:	Ordinary Council Meeting 24 October 2023 – Item 11.6
POLICY REVIEW DATE:	Three (3) years from date of adoption
FILE NUMBER:	86/1
RELEVANT LEGISLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Library Act (1939)</li> <li>• NSW Library Regulation (1018)</li> <li>• Copyright Act (1968)</li> </ul>
RELATED POLICIES / PROCEDURES / PROTOCOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALIA Statement on Online Content Regulation</li> <li>• State Library of NSW <i>Internet Policy Guidelines for NSW Public Libraries</i></li> <li>• Maitland Libraries <i>Conditions of Use Public Access Computers</i></li> <li>• Maitland Libraries <i>SOP Managing Use of Public Access Computers</i></li> </ul>

## POLICY HISTORY

VERSION	DATE APPROVED	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1.0	13 October 2009	New policy adopted
2.0	27 August 2019	Policy reviewed and checked against current legislation and guidelines.
3.0	24 October 2023	Policy reviewed and checked against current legislation and guidelines in collaboration with IT Officers.

## **CONDITIONS OF USE: PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTERS AND INTERNET**

Use of Maitland City Library Public Access Computers and internet services implies acceptance of the following Conditions:

### **BOOKINGS**

Access is available free of charge to those living, working, and visiting in the Maitland area. Public access computers may be booked in advance by phone or in person using a library membership number. Bookings are available to a maximum of 1 hour per user. If there are no other bookings or requests to use a computer, the hour can be extended in 60-minute blocks, depending on demand, (up to 4 hours per day). Users are encouraged to become Library members for a seamless experience with PC bookings and printing payments. Computer access ceases 10 minutes prior to closing.

### **PRINTING**

Charges are incurred for printing as per current Maitland City Council Fees & Charges – A4 & A3 printing is available in black and white and colour. Print jobs are not stored and are cleared at the end of each user session. Printers are in public areas and printouts may be visible to other Library customers.

### **CHILDREN'S ACCESS**

Parents of children under 16 years must assume responsibility for their children's use of the internet while at the Library. Internet users under the age of 16 years require the signed permission of a parent or guardian. Maitland Libraries does not monitor and has no control over the internet and cannot be held responsible for content, validity, accuracy of information, technical difficulties, or service interruptions.

### **SAVING & SECURITY**

Downloading files and copying them to an external storage device is permitted if executable software is not opened on the hard drive of the public access computers. A scan of external storage devices for viruses will occur on connection to the computer. Any files found to contain viruses and malicious software will be wiped during this scan. Note that files are not retained on public access computers. Maitland Libraries does not guarantee availability of the internet or internet sites at any time, nor is Maitland Libraries responsible for technical difficulties or loss of data resulting from delays, service interruptions or viruses. All public access computers have filtering software in accordance with Council policy, which limits access to inappropriate and offensive materials.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF USERS**

Misuse of the computer or inappropriate use of the internet, including illegal and unlawful activity, will result in loss of computer privileges. This includes harassing other library users, and damaging equipment. Access to material subject to censorship regulations or deemed offensive by library staff is prohibited. Clients must not make an unauthorised reproduction of material protected by copyright, or use audio-visual items in which copyright subsists, without permission. Library staff should be notified if any problems are experienced with public access computers.

### **ASSISTANCE**

Library staff can provide limited assistance, which may be further impacted in times of peak library use. Inexperienced users are encouraged to consult Library staff about convenient times to request basic instruction or extended assistance. (*Be Connected*) training, support and troubleshooting is provided at Maitland Libraries by arrangement at a mutually convenient time. Maitland Libraries respects users' rights to privacy and does not provide assistance with job applications, online training courses and inductions, editing documents or emails, homework or completing assignments e.g. university or TAFE, completing online forms, buying and selling online and building websites.