LIANZA TOOLKIT
FREEDOM TO READ

KEY MESSAGES TO HAVE READY FOR CHALLENGES TO YOUR LIBRARY

Here are some examples of responses to have ready in case someone challenges an item in your collection.

Our library exists to provide materials, services and information for all members of our community.

- We try to have an inclusive collection which represents the diversity of our community. As such we hold a variety of different viewpoints and topics, respecting people's right to freedom of information.
- We do not remove books from our collection based on causing offence or being morally objectionable.
- We trust individuals to make decisions about what they read and believe.
- We recognise that there will be disagreements over certain content. However, we don't make individual decisions for other readers about what is appropriate.
- Our collections team assesses and places material into age-appropriate collections. Parents and caregivers are responsible for their child's selection and viewing of library materials.
- If you believe an item should be restricted or banned, you can contact Te Mana Whakaatu the Classification Office.
- The role of the library is not to hide or withhold access to challenging ideas but to present them in their proper context and in such a way that enables the library user to hold them up for critique and scrutiny.
- Defending the freedom to read doesn't mean you support sexism, racism, hatred, and so on. Instead, you support people's right to choose what they want to read and to make up their minds about the content.
- Banning or hiding controversial materials from the public interferes with intellectual freedom, which is an essential part of a democratic society.
- A commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession and 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 in Aotearoa New Zealand are guided by national and international policies and statements about freedom of information.
- Library and information professionals select and retain content based on their library's collection policy, which addresses the diversity and needs of their user community alongside organisational imperatives such as curriculum support or commitment to objectives such as improved Māori outcomes.