

# **Burnside Library**

## **Book Discussion Group Guidelines**

Date of Issue: Jan 2023

Book Discussion Group Coordinator: Heather Filmer

### **Background**

Burnside Library (quite possibly) hosts of the largest number of Book Discussion Groups in the world.

Currently we have 135 external book groups and 28 internal book groups (Jan 2023). This includes one Non-Fiction group, an audiobook group, three Chinese language groups, one ESL book group and one Young Adult book group. This means that we have over 1400 patrons using our service. Burnside Library service our patrons with over 420 book sets in our collection

These book groups do not just service patrons in the City of Burnside, but members from all over South Australia.

These Book Discussion Groups (BDGs) are an integral part of our community because they promote a key objective of the City of Burnside which is to promote a resilient happy, healthy and connected community. We acknowledge that these groups enable people of like interest to share their experiences and connect on a meaningful level. These groups meet approximately monthly to reinforce the friendships formed during the meetings.

Burnside Library offers the two types of book discussion groups: Internal Book Groups (where members meet at or near the Burnside Library) and External Book Groups (where members meet in homes or mutually agreed upon places). We have found that the optimum number of members is 10 and this is the maximum number of titles we provide in each set. Groups may wish to request a copy of our book lists; however, this will incur a charge of \$11.00 (subject to change). Alternatively our current Book list is available online at [www.burnside.sa.gov.au/bookclubs](http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au/bookclubs) - Please note that these lists are only valid for approximately three months as the collection is modified every quarter.

These two groups function differently so please refer to the appropriate document attached.

# Internal Book Discussion Groups

## Booking Book Sets

Our current book sets can be accessed at [www.burnside.sa.gov.au/bookclubs](http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au/bookclubs). Hard copies of the book set list are accessible at Burnside Library Customer Service desk.

Once consultation has been entered into with the group members, BDG Volunteers will use the blue folders near the library customer service desk to schedule their yearly reading program. Bookings can be made for the current year and the following calendar year. When using this system please ensure that booking sheets are returned the correct location and the Volunteer makes a note of the group's reading schedule. It is essential that a copy of this reading schedule is given to Burnside Library's BDG Coordinator, so staff can assist each group appropriately.

Each book group has access to one book set for up to six weeks. Please note: Burnside Library permits some flexibility during December & January but we ask that groups do not take advantage of this leeway.

## BDG Coordinator

Burnside Library employs a highly experienced and dedicated BDG Coordinator who currently works on Wednesdays and Thursdays. It is recommended that the volunteer in the group email [library@burnside.sa.gov.au](mailto:library@burnside.sa.gov.au) to make an appointment time with the BDG Coordinator.

The role of the BDG Coordinator is:

- Communicate with each group's Volunteer or Coordinator
- Submit purchase requests for the BDG collection
- Keep the BDG book list up to date on a quarterly basis
- Process new book sets prior to adding to the collection
- Manage booking sheets for the BDG collection in the blue folders
- Keep compactus orderly so that titles are easily accessible
- Coordinate the Volunteers
- Promote and support new groups
- Collection management
- Regularly meet with other BDG coordinators to share best practice

## Volunteer Facilitator

Each Internal BDG has a designated City of Burnside Volunteer who has been inducted into the City of Burnside Volunteer Program. This person is the first point of call for each group member. This individual is required to assist with the organisation of their group by:

- establish the meeting time
- consult with members regarding the yearly reading program
- manage the bookings of the titles
- create a 'discussion leader' roster (if appropriate)

- liaises with the Burnside Library BDG Coordinator
- ensure each group member has opportunities to contribute during the meetings
- problem solve if issues arise in the book group
- provide a copy of the yearly reading program to each member and a copy to the library
- ensure all books are returned on time
- discuss any issues with the BDG Coordinator

If the volunteer facilitator of an internal BDG changes or resigns, it is the responsibility of the previous volunteer to communicate the change and contact details to the BDG Coordinator. This new person will need to be inducted as a City of Burnside Volunteer.

### **Collection of Book Sets**

Internal Book Discussion Groups collect their book at the monthly meeting. The volunteer will collect the book set from the BDG compactus prior to the meeting and distributes them to the members who attend. Those members who were unable to attend the previous meeting will have their book, marked with a named bookmark, on the Internal BDG shelf. When collecting a book from this shelf simply remove the bookmark and placed on the bookmark box on that same shelf. Books will not be sent to other libraries for collection.

Members must take their individual copy to the Library Customer Service Desk and a staff member will set the due date to the next date that the group is meeting as per the blue booking folder.

When returning the individual book, it is ideal that books are returned at the following meeting. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, then please return the book to Burnside Library as soon as possible. Do not return a book discussion group title to another library as this delays access to this set for the next group.

### **Establishing your BDG effectively**

The first few meetings of a BDG are extremely important in setting the tone. Some groups like to read socially or for leisure, others for academic purposes or literary merit. It is important that each member considers if they are a good fit for the group. It is a good idea to discuss and decide the reading preferences of the group before moving forward so member's expectations are established.

It is important that all group members contribute positively to the discussion at each meeting. If members feel that some people are dominating the conversation, then it is necessary for the Volunteer to invite others to contribute. The following points may assist the Volunteer in establishing a positive experience for all members:

- arrive on time and with a positive attitude
- reinforce that no opinion is wrong
- treat each member with respect and sensitivity
- listen carefully to all contributions
- support the group by participating
- make an effort to welcome and engage with new members
- RSVP to every meeting through your Volunteer (or a designated contact)

## Issues

Occasionally issues will arise between members of BDGs. We politely request that these issues are sorted about amongst the group, rather than involving the BDG coordinator. By following the steps in the paragraph above, issues amongst members should be kept to a minimum.

## Meeting Times

Burnside Library BDG Coordinator will liaise with the group Volunteer to establish a monthly meeting time for the group. These times are around the Burnside Library opening hours. Internal BDGs usually meet monthly at a nominated time; for example second Thursday of each month at 10:30am.

## Meeting Location

Burnside Library have worked hard to establish a convenient place for our internal BDGs. This designated space is called *The Living Room*. Certain groups may apply to the Burnside Library Team Leader to meet elsewhere in the library if a *substantial* barrier is preventing group members from getting the most out of these meetings. Please see someone at the Library Customer Service Desk to make an appointment with the Library Team Leader.

If a book group is dissatisfied with the allocated space for their meetings, then that book discussion group may wish to become an External Book Discussion Club. Please refer to the External Book Discussion Club Guidelines document to pursue this option. If you wish to change please speak to the BDG Coordinator to arrange this change.

## Membership

Membership and participation in Burnside Library's Book Discussion Group program is **free**. Patrons who are interested in joining an Internal Book Discussion Group are asked to complete an online *Application for Membership* form. These forms are available from the Burnside Library Website or at the Library Service Desk. Once complete, this form is forwarded to the BDG Coordinator. When a vacancy becomes available the BDG Coordinator will contact the new member and allocate that person to an appropriate group.

Once there are three or more new members, together with an inducted group Volunteer Facilitator, the BDG Coordinator will create a new group, contact the member(s) and suggest a meeting time.

Internal Book Discussion Group members will use their own library card to borrow their copy of the current book. Each member is responsible for their own copy as per the terms and conditions stated in [https://www.burnside.sa.gov.au/files/assets/public/community-amp-recreation/community-venues/burnside-library/general-information/burnside\\_library\\_conditions\\_of\\_membership.pdf](https://www.burnside.sa.gov.au/files/assets/public/community-amp-recreation/community-venues/burnside-library/general-information/burnside_library_conditions_of_membership.pdf)

Internal Book Discussion Groups are numbered #200 – (theoretically) #299. It is important that participants remember their book group number that they have been allocated to.

## Suggestions / Feedback / Exceptions

BDGs are welcome to make recommendations for new book set titles via their Volunteer Facilitator. The BDG Coordinator will follow this selection criteria:

- Availability and price
- Title has flexibility in terms of audience (leisure reading versus literary merit)
- Paperback editions are purchased in preference to hard back
- Popularity of author and/or title
- Ability to give a discussion

Suggestions for new titles can be made by asking your volunteer to email the BDG Coordinator with the following information:

- Burnside Library Book Group Number
- Name of person suggesting the new title
- Title and author of the book

If or when this title becomes available, the BDG Coordinator will advise the group that it has been added to the collection. It is then the responsibility of the group Volunteer to book that title in their yearly reading program.

Feedback regarding your BDG experience and this guideline document is welcome. Our BDG Coordinator works very hard to ensure our members have a positive and rewarding experience through their community experience.

Occasionally there will be reason for the BDG Coordinator to make exceptions to this guideline due to the variety of people in our community who utilize this service. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the BDG Coordinator, and in consultation with, the Burnside Library Team Leader. We ask that members respect and accept these decisions.

### **Weeding our BDG Collection**

Book sets are weeded regularly to keep the collection fresh, contemporary and a reflection of our reader's preferences. Worn out or damaged items are replaced when necessary or if appropriate. Also, book sets that have not been borrowed for three years are removed from the BDG collection. Burnside Library will endeavor to purchase new book sets regularly, however this is dependent on budget allocations. Please check that you have the latest information on what is available.

# External Book Discussion Clubs

## Setting up an External Book Discussion Group

External book discussion groups receive a Burnside Library borrower's card. All items are borrowed out on this one card. The Contact Person must use this card when borrowing items for the external book discussion group. Due to the high number of titles, we hold in our collection, printing of titles and plot summary has become too expensive.

## Booking Book Sets

Our current book sets can be accessed at [www.burnside.sa.gov.au/bookclubs](http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au/bookclubs). Hard copies of the book set list are accessible at Burnside Library Customer Service desk.

Once consultation has been entered into with the group members, the BDG Contact Person will use the blue folders near the library customer service desk to schedule their yearly reading program. Bookings can be made for the current year and the following calendar year. When using this system please ensure that booking sheets are returned the correct location and the Volunteer makes a note of the group's reading schedule. It is essential that a copy of this reading schedule is given to Burnside Library's BDG Coordinator, so staff can assist each group appropriately.

Each book group has access to one book set for up to six weeks. It is usual to have two items on a card at once to allow for the change over. Please book your book set for six weeks to give some room for human error. Please note: Burnside Library permits some flexibility during December & January but we ask that groups do not take advantage of this leeway.

## BDG Coordinator

Burnside Library employs a highly experience and dedicated BDG Coordinator who currently works on Wednesdays and Thursdays. It is recommended that members email [library@burnside.sa.gov.au](mailto:library@burnside.sa.gov.au) to make an appointment time with the BDG Coordinator.

The role of the BDG Coordinator is:

- Communicate with each group's Volunteer or Coordinator
- Submit purchase requests for the BDG collection
- Keep the BDG book list up to date on a quarterly basis
- Process new book sets prior to adding to the collection
- Manage booking sheets for the BDG collection in the blue folders
- Keep compactus orderly so that titles are easily accessible
- Coordinate the Volunteers
- Promote and support new groups
- Weed book sets (quarterly)
- Regularly meet with other BDG coordinators to share best practice

## **Coordinator / Contact Person**

Each External BDG has a designated Contact Person who is the first point of call for each group member. This individual is required to assist with the organisation of their group by:

- establish the meeting time and a program
- consult with members regarding the yearly reading program
- manage the bookings of the titles
- create a 'discussion leader' roster (if appropriate)
- ensure each group member has opportunities to contribute during the meetings
- problem solve if issues arise in the book group
- ensure all books are returned on time
- liaises with the Burnside Library BDG Coordinator

## **Collection & Return of Book Sets**

The Contact Person for all External Book Discussion Groups collect their book set prior to the monthly meeting. This person will go to the blue folders, find their book title and approach the staff at the Burnside Library customer service desk. The staff member will get the book sets from the compactus and borrow the items out on the Book Club Library Card.

The Due date will be set as the date recorded in the appropriate blue folder.

When returning book sets, please place them in the returns chute or the after hours returns chute on Hyde Street. Do not return a book discussion group title to another library as this delays access to this set for the next group.

Book sets MUST NOT be sent to other libraries for collection.

## **Establishing your BDG effectively**

The first few meetings of a BDG are extremely important in setting the tone. Some groups like to read for leisure or social, others for academic or literary merit. It is important that each member considers if they are a good fit for the group. It is a good idea to discuss and decide the reading preferences of the group before moving forward so member's expectations are established.

It is important that all group members contribute positively to the discussion at each meeting. If members feel that some people are dominating the conversation, then it is necessary for members to invite others to contribute. The following points may assist the Volunteer in establishing a positive experience for all members:

- arrive on time and with a positive attitude
- reinforce that no opinion is wrong
- treat each member with respect and sensitivity
- listen carefully to all contributions
- support the group by participating
- make an effort to welcome and engage with new members
- RSVP to every meeting through your Volunteer

## Issues

Occasionally issues will arise between members of BDGs. We politely request that these issues are sorted about amongst the group, rather than involving the BDG Coordinator. By following the steps in the paragraph above, issues amongst members should be kept to a minimum.

## Meeting Times & Locations

External Book Groups are responsible for establishing their own meeting times and mutually agreed upon locations. These are usually in private homes or public spaces such as a pub, café or hall.

Burnside Library is not responsible for any issues that occur during these meetings

## Membership

Membership and participation in Burnside Library's Book Discussion Group program is a **free** service. Patrons who are interested in joining an Internal Book Discussion Group are asked to complete an online *Application for Membership* form. These forms are available from the Burnside Library Customer Service Desk or online. Once complete, this form is forwarded to the BDG Coordinator who will communicate with the Contact Person.

External Book Discussion Groups are numbered # - #199. It is important that participants remember the book group number they have been allocated. This number is to be referred to in any communication with the Burnside Library.

## Suggestions / Feedback / Exceptions

The External BDG Contact Person is welcome to make recommendations for new book set titles on behalf of the whole group. The BDG Coordinator follows this selection criteria:

- Availability and price
- Title has flexibility in terms of audience (leisure reading versus literary merit)
- Paperback editions are purchased in preference to hard back
- Popularity of author and/or title

Suggestions for new titles can be made by asking your group's coordinator to email the BDG Coordinator with the following information:

- Burnside Library Book Group Number
- Name of Contact Person
- Title and author of the book
- When the book set would be required (allow 6 months notice)

If or when this title becomes available, the BDG Coordinator will advise the group that it has been added to the collection. It is then the responsibility of the group Volunteer to book that title in their yearly reading program.

Feedback regarding your BDG experience and this guideline document is welcome. Our BDG Coordinator works very hard to ensure our members have a positive and rewarding experience through their community experience.



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You can contact the Burnside Library by email [library@burnsie.sa.gov.au](mailto:library@burnsie.sa.gov.au) or phone 83664280.