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Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Reference: School libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

THURSDAY, 27 MAY 2010

CANBERRA

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Thursday, 27 May 2010

Members: Ms Bird (*Chair*), Dr Jensen (*Deputy Chair*), Ms Collins, Mrs D'Ath, Mr Irons, Mr Oakeshott, Mr Sidebottom, Dr Stone, Mr Symon and Mr Zappia

Members in attendance: Ms Bird, Ms Collins, Mr Sidebottom and Mr Zappia

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The role, adequacy and resourcing of school libraries and teacher librarians in Australia's public and private schools. Specifically, the committee should focus on:

- the impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities;
- the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy;
- the factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians;
- the role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians; and
- the impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians.

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Committee met at 9.41 am

CHAIR (Ms Bird)—I declare open the fifth public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training as part of its inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools. I welcome representatives of the Australian School Libraries Association of the ACT to the hearing. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I advise you that the hearing is a legal proceeding of the parliament and therefore has the same standing as proceedings of the respective houses.

[9.41 am]

GLAVIMANS, Mrs Anne Margaret, Public Officer, Australian School Library Association (ACT)

MARTIN, Ms Susan Jill, Committee Member and Past President, Australian School Library Association (ACT)

NEILSON, Ms Olivia Danielle, Vice-President/Publications Councillor, Australian School Library Association (ACT)

PLOWMAN, Miss Anne, Teacher Librarian Representing Dennis Granlund, Libraries Services Officer, Catholic Education Office

CHAIR—The proceedings today are being broadcast on the internet as a public hearing. We have a written submission from the ACT branch, and I am quite keen to ask a few questions around that. Would you like to make an opening statement? Anne, do you also want to make an opening statement on behalf of the Catholic Education Office?

Miss Plowman—I just have a few sentences.

CHAIR—We will do the statement to the written submission and then we will get Anne to make a statement. Sue, are you going to commence?

Ms Martin—Yes. We wish to support the submission made by us as part of ASLA National on Wednesday, 28 April 2010. We appreciate being given the opportunity to give feedback and suggestions. We thank you for inviting us here today. I will begin by introducing the representatives who are here. We each work in different settings and with different age groups. We have Olivia Neilson, who has been teaching for 11 years in ACT government primary schools and who is a passionate supporter of public education. Recently she completed a formal qualification in teacher librarianship and has been working as a teacher librarian at her school since 2005.

I previously worked as a librarian. I worked in TAFE libraries and in public libraries for 15 years. Then I retrained to become a primary teacher and became a teacher librarian in 2002. Anne Glavimans is an experienced teacher librarian with over 20 years experience. Anne has worked in the government and non-government sector and currently is working in an ACT secondary college. Olivia and Anne work in government schools. I work in an independent school that caters for children aged from three years to year 12.

ASLA (ACT) represents teacher librarians working in primary schools, secondary schools and colleges. Our members work in a number of different school sectors—government, Catholic and independent schools. In preparing the ASLA (ACT) submission, information was gathered at general meetings and at a forum. The problems raised in our submission have been of concern to ACT teacher librarians for a number of years. This morning we would like to bring just five of our major concerns to your attention.

Our first concern is the decreasing numbers of teacher librarians in primary schools and the growing tendency of some schools to replace teacher librarians with untrained staff. ACT teacher librarians believe there is a lack of understanding in many school communities of the complexity of the teacher librarian's duties and of the substantial contribution that a trained teacher librarian can make to improving student learning outcomes across many areas of the curriculum.

Our second concern is that often funding for school libraries is inequitable across our schools. Many libraries suffer from long-term underfunding of both staff and resources. This means that students' access to current, relevant and high-quality resources is compromised. We see that schools are using an argument of students' high usage of the internet to justify cutting of their library resources and their library staff while, at the same time, failing to recognise that students need the information and literacy skills that are taught by the teacher librarian to be able to locate and select appropriate information on the internet.

Our third concern is that not only are the numbers of teacher librarians decreasing but in the majority of primary schools teacher librarians are used to provide classroom teachers with release from face-to-face teaching so that teachers can have administration time. This arrangement limits the teacher librarian's capacity to teach content and skills which can be transferred both into the classroom learning and used beyond the classroom. Flexible timetabling is preferable to release from face-to-face teaching because it provides an environment where teacher librarians are able to both collaboratively plan and teach with classroom teachers. This enables the teaching of information literacy skills to be embedded into the classroom program. Library classes can be then planned on a needs basis, and the learning of information literacy skills becomes more meaningful for students. As well, teachers are provided with opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of information literacy.

Our fourth concern is training and succession planning for teacher librarians. The lack of local teacher librarian courses within our tertiary institutions and incentives for teachers to retrain as teacher librarians means that we are likely to be in a situation within the next five years where few students will have access to the services of a trained teacher librarian. Government and higher education bodies could do more to encourage people to enter the profession. We believe that this could be achieved through, firstly, improving pay rates for teacher librarians to recognise the fact that they hold dual qualifications; providing access to flexible teacher librarian courses that are structured around busy and less busy professional times in the teaching year; offering targeted scholarships to assist teachers or librarians to meet the cost of undertaking further study to attain the dual qualification of a teacher librarian; providing opportunities for teachers to work in tandem alongside an existing teacher librarian for a period of time to gain a greater understanding of the position and to ascertain whether it is a career path they would like to pursue; and providing opportunities for preservice teachers to complete a unit of study related to school libraries and information literacy.

Our last concern is about schools underutilising their teacher librarian's knowledge and skills of ICT. There is significant potential for teacher librarians to play a pivotal role in assisting schools to integrate new technologies into the school's teaching and learning program. Use and integration of digital technologies provides many challenges for educators, in particular keeping up with the rapidity of change. A major facet of the teacher librarian's role is to assist staff and students to navigate digital environments, requiring teacher librarians to stay informed and up to date with technological advances. One possible model for assisting schools to incorporate new

technologies could be the targeted central training of teacher librarians who then return to their schools to disseminate the information and provide professional development to staff and students.

Although these concerns are problematic, we believe they are not unsolvable and we welcome the opportunity to discuss these and other issues concerning teacher librarians and school libraries with you today.

CHAIR—Thank you, Sue. Anne, do you want to make a few opening comments too?

Miss Plowman—I have just a few other comments. I represent Dennis Granlund from the Catholic Education Office and head the submission that was put forward on behalf of the Catholic Education Office under Dennis Granlund. I support that statement and I also support the ASLA submissions that have been placed both in the ACT and New South Wales. I have over 25 years of experience as a teacher librarian in Catholic schools in New South Wales and the ACT, including in Catholic Education Office schools and Catholic independent schools and another independent school for a short time.

I strongly support professional associations representing teacher librarians. As a member of ASLA, I am currently the vice-president of professional learning of ASLA New South Wales, and I represent New South Wales on ASLA National. I have also been involved in the ALIA school library sector at the New South Wales level and at the national level for many years. I had an active and executive role in those committees. I have been involved in the Catholic Secondary Teacher Librarian Association in the Sydney region for some time as well.

The submission prepared by Dennis Granlund is a collaborative effort of the teacher librarians employed in the Catholic systemic education in the diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. This includes ACT and New South Wales schools. Dennis Granlund's role as library services officer is to support the teacher librarians in these CEO schools. In fact, Canberra is very lucky to have Dennis in that role as a library services officer as, in most other Catholic dioceses, this role has become redundant due to funding cutbacks. In the Sydney Archdiocese, for example, that position ceased many years ago.

In preparing this submission, information was gathered at general meetings in the ACT and at forums. I will support what Sue has put forward and look at the concluding remarks that Dennis has made that school libraries and teacher librarians are central to the teaching and learning programs of schools. The Australian federal government, through BER funding, has provided for the construction of new school libraries throughout Australia. However, we need a well-established collection of resources and adequate staff to manage the collection and to teach students information literacy skills that allow them to become independent learners.

Teacher librarians and library support staff are well placed to provide the collection, maintenance and teaching programs that will improve learning outcomes for students. Opportunities for improved learning outcomes for all students in Australia can be provided by the Australian government through the support of recommendations for: standard staffing of school libraries by qualified teacher librarians and library technicians outside the staffing formula of the school; the provision of funds to provide adequate staffing of all school libraries; the reintroduction of the annual Commonwealth book grant for all school libraries; and funds to

support adequate technology in school libraries. Again I welcome the opportunity to address you today.

CHAIR—Thanks, Anne. We are conscious that in the ACT there have been some announcements around school based management. Across various jurisdictions it has been raised as a concern with us in terms of the impact that may have on the provision of a qualified teacher librarian or part thereof to schools. We first heard of it in New South Wales, which, so far, is all the evidence we have. That is the only state where there is an entitlement to a pro rata teacher librarian for each school. It has been raised with us in subsequent states as we have gone along. One of the interesting conversations we are having is about whether the problem is the structure of school based management or whether it is the lack of appreciation of the significant role and capacity of a teacher librarian to contribute to the overall achievement of the school.

Certainly in states where there is no entitlement to a teacher librarian, it is quite clear that some principals—I think we heard about one case in Tasmania where the principal was a former teacher librarian and was very passionate, and so they had a very well-resourced public school with a teacher librarian and also were achieving very good results.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—But it was an individual decision rather than structural?

CHAIR—It was an individual decision rather than a system decision. That is exactly right, Sid. I would be interested in your reflections on whether there is something inherent in the structure of school based management that you have a concern about or whether it is a dual issue and it is no good just addressing that if you do not also address the understanding and valuing of the role. Sue, do you want to begin?

Ms Martin—I will. From my personal experience, I think it is very much the principal's prior experience with teacher librarians that sways them one way or the other about whether they are passionate about their school librarian, or whether they do their darnedest not to have one. Under school based management, I think it is a win-win for principals who appreciate their school teacher librarian and it will be an excuse not to have one for those who do not.

CHAIR—Olivia, do you wish to make a comment?

Ms Neilson—I think it needs to be tackled on two levels. Perhaps we need to do a bit more to promote our role to other staff. But I also think that giving the principals that sole responsibility for how they choose to distribute their staffing points can sometimes sacrifice the best interests of the students for other things because you have competing needs. I can use my school as an example. We have a very highly mobile population at the school where I work. Nearly half our students come from mobile families. We used to have a full-time teacher librarian when I started there in 2003, and that continued in 2004. It has since been cut to 80 per cent because the points were required for learning assistance to help the mobile students who had lots of gaps. I am working really hard to try to improve things now that I have a better understanding of the role since I completed my training.

I just think that sometimes when there are other things crowding in, if there is not a separate pot of points specifically allocated to a teacher librarian, it is very easy, depending on the

principal's point of view and their value of the role, for them to decide how they will redistribute the points.

CHAIR—You see those two aspects as feeding off each other?

Ms Neilson—Yes, I think so. I think we need to address both of them to build things back up to a good level.

CHAIR—Anne, your experience is secondary school experience, is it not?

Mrs Glavimans—Year 11 and 12 at the moment, at a government college. We are an International Baccalaureate school. As part of our registration to present that program, there are standards that the library has to meet and they are external standards. I have to say that there is a primary school that is now approaching registration. As a result of the International Baccalaureate's requirements and standards, additional staff and resources have been allocated to that library.

CHAIR—In the submission you refer to the practice used in the International Baccalaureate as a base for the issue. Certainly we heard evidence from a consultant specialist in Tasmania who does international work in the library sector. He says he just spends all his time in Asia because their education systems are passionate about establishing high-level modern libraries and having well-staffed teacher librarians in them. The international perspective is very interesting for us.

Mrs Glavimans—It is the standards that are attached to the registration.

CHAIR—Exactly. Thanks, Anne. Anne?

Miss Plowman—I would concur with that. The other point I wish to raise is that it very much depends on the principal's experience of teacher librarians and the impact they have made on student learning in various other schools. If you have principals who are passionate about the role, they will employ teacher librarians and trained, duly qualified teacher librarians. If they are not so sure, they will employ people who maybe have not even been in a library before. It is too important a role to have that situation occur. I am in a school of 1,200 girls. If I do not have trained staff, that library could fall over.

CHAIR—Okay. One of the other big conversations that we have noticed so far in the evidence has been around—both your submissions allude to it—the new information age and the underlying presumption that young people can get all the information they now need off the internet and why do we need libraries or indeed information specialists, such as teacher librarians? It also was presented to us that all teachers will have to be information specialists in this new world. I would be interested in your comments from the perspective of whether many people, including school leavers, would be of the view that some of the things required for students learning in an information age, which you have been talking about, should be delivered by every classroom teacher anyway; therefore, why is the specialist skill in the library so important?

Ms Neilson—If you were to give, say, classroom teachers sole responsibility for that, that is adding something extra into their already crowded lives and curriculum expectations of what

they are meant to deliver. I think it is important that they have a good understanding of information literacy and where it ties in, but I would argue that they do not have the time to familiarise themselves at the moment with a lot of new technologies. My staff are looking to me to help them integrate new technologies and to understand how to navigate and use some of the new digital technologies. I think that it assists them.

Ms COLLINS—It is reassuring.

Ms Neilson—It is. It reassures them to have someone with them, supporting them in that way. We are also advocating the flexible timetable as opposed to providing release because it enables us to team-teach with the classroom teachers, and that helps to develop their understanding. We can work together to really embed that learning meaningfully into what the children are doing rather than involving other teacher librarians, or having me, see the children for a half hour to 45 minute slot a week when you cannot do too much if you have to do borrowing as well.

CHAIR—Are you of the view that for the vast majority of teachers without that support, they simply will not engage at that level and that it will just be too much?

Ms Neilson—I think some will, but I think you increase the chance of more teachers doing it, if they are doing it in that supported environment, particularly given the age of a lot of our teachers. We have an ageing population. At my particular school, we have a lot of teachers who are nearing retirement. They find using technology really scary.

CHAIR—Do you wish to make a comment, Sue?

Ms Martin—My experience is that, both with digital technology and information literacy and digital literacy, teachers have a passion maybe in one area. It might be note-taking or using one of the Web 2.0 technologies. They will know about that and they will teach that, but that is a small part of the whole gamut. We give the cross; we give the whole package, so students will come out with high-level skills.

Miss Plowman—Not only that, there is a whole range of Web 2.0 skills. Certain activities in Web 2.0 could be more relevant to a particular class than others. For example, one English class may do a blog on what they are reading and others may up a wiki, depending on the teacher's use of the technology and depending on where that class is at the time. It is developing those digital skills as well as information skills that makes the role of teacher librarians unique.

CHAIR—Anne, I wonder if you could add another perspective to what has been raised with us? Apparently there is a fairly poor understanding of identifying sources on the net for research purposes, as the students get older, on what is reliable, what is authentic, how they can identify the author, and that Google is not the answer to everything.

Mrs Glavimans—Google is a wonderful commercial company. They have amazingly adapted to incorporating new features into their search engine. At the moment I am working through the humanities classes in my school, promoting the use of ACT library databases, which are free if you are a member of the ACT Library. Yesterday we were doing a search on a sociology class. Just by pulling up three different databases we found 1,428 articles in one, 59 in another and 125

in another database. I think our students are information rich and question poor and search skills poor.

CHAIR—That is a very nice way to describe it.

Mrs Glavimans—I see us as being the people who can assist them in skills development. But I also have to say that often the training of the skills becomes invisible because students pick up the skills or a strategy so quickly that they have assumed it and moved on with their lives without really recognising that they have been shown a strategy.

CHAIR—My background is English and history teaching. We were having this debate at one of the other hearings with people saying that a history teacher who had to teach about sources should be able to do that. I said yes, but if you told me I had to go and find the textbooks, order them and buy them and analyse them before I used them, I would have shot you. I would have been out on the grass, to be quite honest, because I just would not have the time or the capacity to do that. You rely on your subject specialist to do that. I would think that would be an important role.

Mrs Glavimans—We were searching for a document to be used in a history ‘document study’. The topic was India in 1857. We searched the internet up and down and inside out. We finally found a document in a book on the shelves. It took us quite some time, I have to say. But thank you for your attention.

CHAIR—Exactly. Thank you for that. I will ask my colleagues whether they have questions as well.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—We are having a dialogue so that is good. You mentioned that you think one of the issues is that you do not promote well enough what you do. Just listening to you today, taking in what some of the witnesses have said, as well as reading some of the very good proposals, you play an important strategic role in your schools. Frankly, if you are not part of the leadership group, you should be, by the sound of it. I am wondering if we can tease this out a bit.

Is your firepower in terms of promoting yourselves strong enough? How do you think you should go about that? Considering the role you play, particularly in the new digital technologies and expanding digital technologies, it strikes me that calling yourselves librarians or teacher librarians—and that the term ‘library’ may, in a sense, be your Achilles heel. Do not get me wrong: I love books and I love libraries, but I am really beginning to wonder whether that is an Achilles heel for you.

Finally, if this is not too much, with the rolling out of the BER—which I hope you find highly appropriate and beneficial to your schools—what role have you played in the BER and has it enhanced your case for recognition of the role you play in your schools, particularly as many of you may have picked up libraries and related infrastructure. Anyway, that is just my contribution.

CHAIR—We may take comments by starting at the other end this time.

Mrs Glavimans—May I speak to the BER?

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—Yes.

Mrs Glavimans—I have only been at my current school for 18 months. Prior to that a development was made of the library and the teacher librarians were very much involved in the decisions that were made and the discussions on how that particular development would occur. It tripled the space, which was quite a small space. The impact of that has been that, I think, 10 per cent of the school population can now work in the library at any one time. That is very useful for our school.

CHAIR—Did you say 10 per cent, with the expansion?

Mrs Glavimans—Yes, 20 per cent in total.

CHAIR—How many could fit in previously?

Mrs Glavimans—A very small number.

CHAIR—It often strikes me that the messages we send by those pokey little spaces that we provide for libraries that it is not helpful.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—Yes.

Mrs Glavimans—Can I just promote that the previous space was extremely well used.

Ms Neilson—I would like to respond to Mr Sidebottom's first question about the role promotion. Having just entered the profession recently and being recently trained, I think there is scope for teacher librarians to mobilise, if you like, and have a look at how we can be a bit more strategic in promoting our roles in schools. I have joined the school board because, with that holistic point of view, that has allowed me to develop and build a relationship with the parents as well as get a really thorough understanding of what is going on at a whole-school level, which I found really helpful. There are things that we could be doing perhaps more effectively.

It is a bit tricky because my principal is already open to working collaboratively with me so I am already looked at as a member of the leadership team. It is a bit more challenging for teacher librarians in schools where principals do not share the point of view that they are important and that they have a vital role to play. But I certainly found it helpful to provide suggestions to my principal on how what I was doing in the library could support our school plan and our school goals. Perhaps we could be encouraging our membership to perhaps develop a little brochure or something like that of some good ideas that have been effective.

CHAIR—One of the things raised with us in the New South Wales hearing was that yes, it is great that there is an entitlement, but it is pro rata for small schools, so the teacher librarian may only be there one day a week.

Ms Neilson—That is right.

CHAIR—So then it is very difficult to engage in leadership and collaborative roles. Would you agree with that?

Ms Neilson—Yes, I would agree with that. My previous school was a north side government school. We had a trained teacher librarian there for only three days a week. A teacher, who does not have librarianship training, has been performing that role since I left there in 2002.

CHAIR—Clearly it is unrealistic to say that a very small school could advocate a full-time teacher librarian. Have you seen examples of where that shared role across a number of schools actually works better because there are some things in place? We are looking for some recommendations.

Ms Neilson—I have not really been aware of it myself, but one of the others may be able to field that question.

CHAIR—Sue, do you want to address the question that Sid asked?

Ms Martin—I want to address the question about the name of the library. I have been a librarian for, give or take, 25 years, and I have seen people try to change the name of libraries. We have gone from resource centre to learning centre, and we are now back to libraries. No matter what happens or how they try to sex up the library, people just still call it the library. Maybe what we have to do is promote that libraries are not just books anymore.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—Yes.

CHAIR—It is interesting that one of the very well-resourced independent schools that gave evidence to us—you would just salivate—has an online library and their school website has a connection to their online library. Students presume that the library is both physical and online, which I thought was very interesting.

Mrs Glavimans—Every school should have one.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—Of course what you are saying is right, and I was not being disparaging about it.

Mrs Glavimans—Of course not.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—But maybe people do not understand that the library does not mean books alone. It means all this exciting stuff. It is an exciting world. That is maybe the message you need to send.

CHAIR—Sue, do you want to comment on some of the others as well?

Ms Martin—No, I just add my agreement to what Anne and Olivia have both said.

CHAIR—Anne.

Miss Plowman—I will take you up on the point about the online library. There are lot of teacher librarians who are calling themselves information resource specialists. They are providing online services through the school's Studywiz or whatever learning management system the school has. For example, if a teacher gave me a topic, I would prepare a pathfinder

with links for the students with search terms they may use, give them suggestions and websites, and then they can take it from there. That is available 24/7 via the student's home computer and their access to the databases.

CHAIR—There are some very exciting examples going on. To some extent we are hoping that if you have a case study of what you do and would like to send it to us for our report, I would like the report to paint a bit of a picture of the new and exciting ways these things are happening. I encourage you to do that. Perhaps that will help address some of the issues that Sid has spoken about.

Ms Martin—That has huge possibilities for remote schools, providing them with a library service and a teacher librarian. It is very exciting.

CHAIR—Earlier I mentioned other models, and that is the sort of thing where a shared position may be effective.

Ms Martin—Yes.

CHAIR—If you know of an example, like the one you have just given, Anne, or the research work you were talking about with the senior students, send it to us.

Mrs Glavimans—You can have a virtual presence of a teacher librarian in a school, not necessarily a physical presence. That may in some ways assist smaller schools.

CHAIR—Exactly.

Mr ZAPPIA—Thank you for your presentations. It seems that in the course of this inquiry we have heard on several occasions that school principals tend to give a lower priority to their librarians per se. My question to you, if you can answer it, is this: why would school principals, who I would have thought would be in a good position to make judgments about what ought or ought not be given priority, be making those decisions? What do we need to do to get the school principals on side? Perhaps I could rephrase the question this way: if this inquiry was looking into, for example, physical education teachers, science or maths teachers, could the same strong case not equally be made by other teacher groups within each school?

Mrs Glavimans—Can I answer the first part of that question. I think in schools there are so many conflicting demands made on the time and money of the school that the priority is to have teachers in classrooms and then other things come in after that. Unless you hold fast to the value of a particular position then that position, if it is not face-to-face, has to assume a lesser role because the principal has to do the core activities of the school first. We are a service, we are a support and we are additional. I cannot remember the second question, I am sorry.

Mr ZAPPIA—The second question was: if we were focusing on a different aspect of teaching, whether it was science, maths or even physical education, could those teachers also not argue that they are not given adequate resources? It would be my view that you could always argue that each sector within the school could be better resourced. The real question is: are teacher librarians being under-resourced to the extent that we are now seriously disadvantaging our students?

Miss Plowman—The simple answer is yes.

CHAIR—Part of the evidence we have had is that the under-resourcing and staffing issue has led to a poor-quality service; therefore, people do not appreciate and value the service.

Ms Martin—Yes.

CHAIR—That is the type of evidence we have been hearing that Tony is referring to.

Ms Neilson—Because we have responsibility across the curriculum, the position of school libraries is even more tragic when you consider that it is not just one subject area but actually all of them.

Ms Martin—I also think with PE teachers and science teachers, it is a matter of putting in dollars this year to update our equipment in the science lab or in the gym, whatever, but we are talking about long term. The nature of the publishing industry, particularly in Australia, is such that books are available only in short print runs and only for a selective amount of time. We deal with that. If there have been years of financial neglect in the library, it will take a lot more dollars to build up the collection.

Mr ZAPPIA—Earlier Anne referred to ‘previous principal experience of teacher librarians,’ or words to that effect, affecting the way that principals value their librarians.

Miss Plowman—That is right. I have had a vast array of experience in schools and had a number of principals over that time. I have been aghast when I have heard of the situation in other schools where the teacher librarian has not had support, or you go to professional development meetings or conferences and you find that not everyone has the support of the principal that I have been fortunate to have.

In terms of the figures, this week I did a collection summary and looked at the age of my collection. We are looking at supporting the new curriculum that is coming through. A lot of us are looking at what is going on and talking to our departments and areas in the school to ask what they will be doing so that we can make sure that we have resourced the collection. We need funding for that.

For example, if I look at resources that were published after 2005 in my collection, 14 per cent of my collection is current, and that is not a lot. From the year 2000, I have only 27 per cent. When I look at the funding that the school has provided for me, over time that collection has dated and that will need to be replaced to support the new curriculum.

CHAIR—Finally, one of the very interesting issues that has been raised with us is the potential to create an equitable field so that all schools can be part of Electronic Resources Australia, which is the range of databases provided by the National Library. The last time we were down here, they spoke to us about putting a package of particular resources together at a particular price unit that could be provided to all schools. Can you indicate if your library already has membership of that or already has access to that, and the value that you may or may not see in that? Anne.

Miss Plowman—I understand that St Clare's College, which is the school I am at currently, is a member. We have two databases that have been bought by the school. I encourage the girls to support the databases that are available through membership of the National Library card and through membership of the ACT libraries.

CHAIR—What databases are you using, Anne?

Miss Plowman—I have the Facts On File databases and I have the Australian and New Zealand Reference Centre.

CHAIR—Thank you. Sue.

Ms Martin—My school, the Burgmann Anglican School, is not a member. That is a cost decision. We need to separate primary schools and secondary schools because secondary schools are the big users of the additional databases. I cannot really speak from the perspective of a secondary school.

CHAIR—Olivia, is it the same situation for you?

Ms Neilson—We do not have membership, and I am not sure how relevant it would be in our primary environment.

CHAIR—Have you had a chance to have a look at what is on that database?

Ms Neilson—No. To be honest, I have not had time.

CHAIR—Plus, why would you do it, if you are not going to be able to access it anyway?

Ms Neilson—I appreciate that too.

Mrs Glavimans—We vigorously promote the databases of the ACT library because they are free to members of the ACT. There are four particular databases that I promote in the humanities area. There are two literature ones for the English area. There is a wonderful jazz database for music students. Because the ACT library is concerned with providing resources from quite a young age to quite an old age, they have a variety of resources that are available to ACT residents. I do not see the point of having to pay for something that I can get for free.

CHAIR—We are pretty much out of time. Thank you very much for your written submissions and your verbal evidence today. It has been of great use to us. I encourage you to have a look for case studies that may add a real story to the broader comments that the report will make. If you want to have a think about that, it would be good, although I appreciate it that it will be another task on top of busy lives. But if we want the general public to read the report and understand what it is we are talking about then some of those real examples would be very useful.

Thank you for your attendance today. If you have been asked to provide additional material, would you please forward it to the secretariat. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence, to which you can make corrections of grammar and fact. Once again, thank you for your participation in the inquiry.

Mrs Glavimans—Thank you.

Resolved (on motion by **Ms Collins**):

That this committee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 10.23 am