

lies...the world. As we seek information far and wide we can now seek ideas, support, a forum to speak and friendship. I have been interested to learn that many of the issues faced by our international colleagues bear remarkable similarity to our own challenges. The level to which teacher librarianship has developed in Australia has us well-placed to contribute on many topics. We can be proud of our achievements and announce them in an international forum. We can contribute as much as we can gain. I urge teacher librarians throughout the world to take advantage of these new networking opportunities and so benefit from the wealth of peer support that is found there.

#### REFERENCES

1. Dillon, Ken. and Hay Lyn, (1995). 'Big time news: a listserv for Australian

teacher librarians.' *Access* 9(3):7  
 2. Hay, Lyn and Henri, James (eds.) (1996). *A meeting of the minds: ITEC virtual conference*. Canberra: Australian School Library Association.

#### RESOURCES

Subscription details for listservs where teacher librarians hang out:

1. **OZTL\_NET**: To subscribe, send a message to:
  - OZTL\_NET-request@listserv.csu.edu.au
  - In the subject line type the command subscribe
  - Leave the message field blank. Switch off your signature.
  - OZTL NET Web Site: <http://www.csu.edu.au/research/cstl/oztl\_net/>
2. **LM\_NET**: Send an email message to:
  - LISTSERVE@LISTSERVE.SYR.EDU

- In the first line of the message type: SUBSCRIBE LM\_NET First-name Last name (Substitute your actual name in the line such as SUBSCRIBE LM\_NET John Doe).
- Leave the subject line blank

3. **LM\_NET Web Site**: <http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\_net/>
4. **THE BIG SIX Web Site**: <http://ericir.syr.edu/big6/home.html> Provides a link for subscribing to the listserv.
5. **IASL Web Site**: <http://www.rhi.hi.is/~anne/iasl.html> Provides a link for subscribing to the listserv.

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# Special Report

## THE STATUS OF TEACHER LIBRARIANS IN AUSTRALIA: AN UNOFFICIAL OVERVIEW

Compiled by Georgia Phillips

**A**t the Darwin conference last July, I was disturbed to hear how moves towards school-based management are affecting school libraries in so many states. As no session was held to discuss this, I felt compelled to attempt to compile a national overview of the status of teacher librarians. What I present here are unofficial reports from ASLA and other colleagues in all states and territories, to whom I owe thanks. I have only taken the time and space to cover state departmental school systems. Independent and systemic systems are not included. If nothing else, I believe this brief overview does show the need for a more official survey.

*Here is what I asked my colleagues in other states:*

- Is there an acknowledged role statement for teacher librarians?
- Do teacher librarians provide relief time for their colleagues as their preparation time? Do they get such a thing themselves? Is there any

systemic commitment to cooperative program planning and teaching (CPPT)?

- If you can provide some statistics on the number of schools without teacher librarians or staffed by teachers with no teacher librarian training or by technicians alone, this would be helpful.

I think it is the primary situation which has been most affected by economic rationalisation, but if you feel the secondary situation is worth mentioning please do so. An additional, but nonetheless, vital issue, that could canvas comment, is the demise, or restructuring, of library support services. I have for some time been concerned by the lack of information regarding this issue in our national professional journals. I hope together we can begin to redress this omission.

*Here are the replies:*

#### ACT

From the ACT, Jan Sismey, Executive Officer, School Library Services, ACT Department of Education and Training,



describes the current status of teacher librarians:

91% of ACT government schools have trained teacher librarians. Three with enrolments of 15, 30 and 90 don't have trained teacher librarians. Of the remainder there are 3 primary schools with enrolments each of approximately 200, 300, and 400 which have a teacher in their library. All others have trained teacher librarians. Overall, then, staffing is quite good. The issues for us are individual school variations in role, adapting to IT requirements, the extent to which release from face to face is provided and, similarly, the facilitation of co-operative program planning and teaching.

Whilst teacher librarians here may sometimes feel overworked, undervalued or their role not understood, the majority of principals value their library/resource centre. Some principals in schools with smaller enrolments express concern at their inability to employ a full-time trained teacher librarian. In 1998, we expect to be looking for trained teacher librarians. Neither of the ACT universities is training in this field so our new recruits are completing courses interstate.

The information literacy process is increasingly being understood by teacher librarians and teachers. The integration of technology into the process is a current issue. For a role statement, we refer principals and others to *Learning for the Future* (1993:43). The extent to which teacher librarians provide relief is determined by the principal who uses two factors:

- points available for staffing the school. These are largely decided by enrolment figures and the principal has control of their use. The amount of time the teacher librarian has for cooperative planning and teaching is thus in proportion to class sizes (larger classes saves points) and the school's choice of patterns for using other specialist teachers.
- the principal's understanding of the role of the teacher librarian and extent to which the teacher librarian has been able to sell the concept of cooperative planning and teaching leading to enhanced learning outcomes.

Teacher librarians are entitled to the same release time as other teachers on the same level.

It is also significant that 99% of ACT school libraries are automated or are in the process of doing so. The last 4 of 5 ACT schools are automating their library collections. The one remaining is looking at moving that way and only has an enrolment of 30 in two classrooms each with its own class library.

1997 has been the first year of school-based management and schools have been given control of energy, grounds and cleaning. Staffing procedures haven't changed. Nevertheless, I sense a heightened awareness amongst principals of value for money and that is a reason for looking closely at issues such as teacher librarians' lack of use of SCIS products.

Library Support Services (School Library Services) continues with one Level 2 (librarian) and one library technician. We also have a centralised resource library which supports both schools and departmental officers. It provides many of the more expensive

resources to schools and research support. There is an increasing reliance on electronic and print document delivery with a marked rise in utilisation of this service by departmental officers. Both School Library Services and the O'Connell Information and Resource Centre are to be reviewed as part of an analysis of staff development.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

In NSW, in 1995 a survey was conducted by the Teacher Librarians' Special Interest Group (SIG) in the NSW Teachers' Federation and presented to its Council in August of that year. Thanks to the Federation's librarian, Maureen, for obtaining a copy for me.

The response was from 541 primary, 22 central and 172 secondary teacher librarians. 653 respondents were female and 82 male. This survey represents only one third of all schools. Here is a summary of results:

### • Training

There were many untrained primary teacher librarians (24%) and central teacher librarians (27%), but this was negligible in secondary schools (.58% of respondents). 47% of the trained primary librarians had a University or CAE qualification and 27% did the DSE school-based training course. 59% of central and 92% of secondary teacher librarians had University or CAE qualifications.

### • Technology

At that time nearly a quarter of primary schools were not using OASIS library management system. The figure would now be negligible, as even the smallest school now has OASIS and personnel has had some training. The problems of OASIS support and ongoing training remain, although a new position overseeing OASIS training has recently been appointed.

The surveyed teacher librarians estimated that between 26% and 50% of their time was spent showing staff and students how to use computer technology. What must it be now that the Internet was put in all 2226 schools at the end of 1996, most of which have gone into school libraries? Additionally, all schools are receiving a roll-out of leased computers in order to provide a minimum 1:14 computer: student ratio.

### • Relief from face to face (RFF)—the provision of preparation and marking time for teachers

23% of primary teacher librarians stated they had no administration time. 37% had their administration

time combined with RFF. 67% of secondary teacher librarians say they had no administration time. 53% were supervising senior students, 26% for more than 10 hours per week.

### • Ancillary support

48% of secondary teacher librarians had less than one full-time ancillary person, which is a huge retrograde step since the abandonment of the staffing formula which assured a full-time assistant in secondary schools. 25% of primary teacher librarians had no ancillary support. 58% had from 5-10 hours per week. Ancillary staff is now multi-skilled and flexibly placed by the principal. 22% reported ancillary staffing to be at the principal's whim.

20% of secondary teacher librarians were doing playground duty and 57% had their libraries staffed outside of the traditional school day, 48% by the teacher librarian.

Most (64%) of central school teacher librarians taught in another subject area. 16% of secondary teacher librarians taught outside of their subject area. 40% did sport.

### • Support services

Outside of schools support services have worsened. In the 1980's, the Department of School Education (DSE) Library Services had 10 education officers, 4 librarians and 8 support staff, in addition to Small Schools Box Library personnel. In 1986, the *School Library Handbook* was first issued; in 1987, *Libraries in New South Wales Government Schools Policy Statement* was launched; in 1989, the *Information Skills Policy* implemented. While we have two excellent policies, they do not include an official role statement. Through the combined efforts of professional associations, a role statement has been developed which has been endorsed by these bodies as well as the New South Wales Teachers' Federation, but not the DSE, as yet. The Federation is currently looking at formulating a campaign to improve the working conditions and status of teacher librarians.

In the 1990's, under the Schools Renewal, we lost Library Services, Teaching Resources, and the State Film and Video Library. By 1992 most of the regional consultancies were gone. There remains one Senior Curriculum Adviser (Library and Information Literacy) and the SCIS/SCAN team of Review Coordinator and Editor and cataloguers (3 librarians, 2 technicians). SCAN may be the only state teacher librarian professional journal left from all those of the 1970's and 1980's. It remains because it is self-supporting.

At the same time what has increased

in terms of staffing and funding? A million dollar plus program has put the Internet into all 2226 NSW schools and trained at least one person in each. The *Computers in Schools Policy* is a top priority. Technology Directorate (born from the former Management Information Services) now includes a School Technology Support Centre of 30 officers, plus officers in each of the five state offices and head office. The forty newly restructured districts have no library consultants, and only one resource centre remains. All have a technology adviser. A further restructuring is about to commence as the DSE and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) have just been amalgamated! The central DSE library, moved several times in the past decade, is again undergoing review.

ASLA (NSW) has also been active, of course. Terry Bruce, Immediate Past President, wrote to OZTL NET on 19 November 1997. The swell of passion about the stresses and strains of our roles has been taken up by ASLA (NSW) who has been lobbying steadily for teacher librarians in New South Wales. For the second year in a row, we have a representative as a Director on the Joint Council of NSW Professional Teachers' Associations. On July 1, 1997, we sent a considered lobbying document to the Minister and Director General outlining serious concerns in the staffing formulae for the appointment of primary school libraries in New South Wales. A reply has been received dated 3 December, 1997 which reiterates staffing formulas. The dialogue continues.

#### NORTHERN TERRITORY

Giselle Pryer, President, School Library Association Northern Territory (SLANT) sends this summary:

The Northern Territory does not have an acknowledged role statement for teacher librarians. Industrial agreements have resulted in two hours of non-face-to-face contact time for all primary teachers. Provision of teacher librarian relief time for colleagues varies in primary schools. There is no systemic commitment to co-operative program planning and teaching but SLANT promotes this approach among its members.

Of the 175 schools, 110 are too small to have specialist library staff. In the 65 schools which are considered large enough to have library staff, the percentage of trained library staff is as follows: primary schools have 54.5%, area schools have 60% trained and secondary schools have 89% trained. The total percentage of qualified library staff for the 65 schools is 68% which is an increase since five years ago when the figure was 43%.

The majority of teacher librarians are within formula staffing and staffing decisions are made by the school principal and the school council. However, there are some anomalies, such as the two Schools of the Air in Katherine and Alice Springs and the three government area schools where the teacher librarian positions are in addition to formula staffing. There are 32% of schools which have a teacher-in-charge of the library and approximately three schools which have library technicians in charge.

#### QUEENSLAND

Joan Jenkins, President, School Library Association of QLD, has kindly provided the following information:

No comprehensive, statewide data is available on conditions of work for teacher librarians in Queensland schools. At present our conditions are vulnerable as a result of three major influences:

- Computer technology has had a major impact on the teacher librarian's role. In some cases, primary school teacher librarians have the dual role of computer coordinator and teacher librarian. In some secondary schools, teacher librarians have been given responsibility for the management of the computer program in the school.
- Primary school teachers have been awarded non-contact time. Some principals are scheduling teacher librarians onto classes to provide this time. This is in opposition to both department policy and union policy and has been the subject of an industrial dispute which has gone before the Industrial Relations Commission. Although the avenue of the grievance procedure is there for teacher librarians wishing to confront the issue, in fact, many are too afraid of the consequences to pursue the issue. Separate official role statements for primary and secondary teacher librarians are in place and the department has stated that they have no intention to change these in the near future. These statements affirm that the major role of the teacher librarian is cooperative planning and teaching.
- Queensland is moving to school-based management which makes principals more powerful. They have the right to direct teacher librarians to do duties as they require. It is very much up to schools to decide on staffing requirements. Hence, teacher librarians may negotiate working conditions within the school. In some instances they have managed to do so for the better.

Unfortunately, the position of Education Officer-Curriculum Resources

(the position which liaises, monitors and contributes to policy on all resource service matters in schools) has now been vacant for almost a year. One light is that the Department (now Education Queensland) is funding a *Professional development and laptops for teacher librarians project*.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Elwyn Henderson, President of The Resource Centre Teachers' Association (SA teachers' union association for teacher librarians), has kindly provided the following report from South Australia:

I am quite happy to answer your questions regarding the status of teacher librarians in South Australia. Remember that my answers are not official but that I have had quite a lot to do with teacher librarians in government schools.

The Council of School Library Associations' role statement for teacher librarians has been updated earlier this year. Although widely promoted and accepted as the role statement for teacher librarians, it does not have any official recognition within the DETE (Education Department).

All primary and secondary government schools in SA have teacher librarian time allocated. The number of full or part-time teacher librarians provided within the formula are sent to each school. Secondary schools are allocated teacher librarians as follows:

- up to 500 students ..... 1.0
- 501-750 students ..... 1.5
- 701-1000 students ..... 2.0

Beyond 1.0, the teacher librarian has to provide .25 instruction time which in most schools is not taken as resource-based learning with classes but means that the teacher librarian spends some time with classes outside of the library. For example, at my school, we have 930 students and 2 teacher librarians. Between us we teach 3 classes (beyond teaching role in resource-based learning). I am the Year 10 coordinator with other management responsibilities. Personally, I love escaping to teach English as I am in control there and I know what is going to happen.

Unfortunately not all schools use the teacher librarian time allocated to the library for teacher librarians. I know of several schools where non-teacher librarians have been placed in the library to avoid displacements.

State junior primary and primary schools in SA use a formula which moves in steps from .1 teacher librarian for a school with 1-60 students to 1 full-time teacher librarian for 361-499 students. 650+ attracts 2 teacher librarians. Where a school has more

than 1.0 teacher librarian allocation by formula, teacher librarians will contribute part of their time allocation to the school teaching time. (Thanks to Alle Goldsworthy for this information.)

Elwyn continues: Having just looked at several private schools, I believe that they often do not have additional teacher librarians if there are over 500 students. Decisions, in state schools, about how many teacher librarian positions are filled are decided by a Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) which consists of the principal or nominee, an equal opportunity representative and a union representative. The PAC makes recommendations to the principal who has the final say regarding the blend of staff in a school.

Professional bodies are particularly keen to remind us that we have VIP roles in schools and to encourage us to advocate for what we believe is best for student learning. But still there is no recent official department school library policy. The nearest we can go is *Partners in learning: a position paper on library resource services* (Adelaide: Education Department of South Australia, 1988). Over the last few years we have had about 14 official department policies released on all sorts of things such as harassment and gifted learners but we have not had an information literacy policy. I think it is urgent that such a policy is written and acted on.

The support for government school libraries is minimal. There are no regional advisory people and the former regional libraries have been shrunk into two. As far as I know there is no support in head office apart from a Dynix support person in the EDSAS computing advisory support team. Also, there are very few leadership positions for teacher librarians (eg coordinators) and I know of two which are filled by non-teacher librarians to save displacements of other coordinators and therefore two less coordinator positions for teacher librarians of which to apply. I have also heard of increasing numbers of non-teacher librarians appointed to school libraries, eg the English as a Second Language teacher or primary deputy principals counting it as their teaching load.

In November, we had a professional development meeting which was attended by about 120 people and it showed us just how much schools are depending on professional bodies for training and development.

## TASMANIA

Sharron Hewer is President, ASLA (Tasmania), and Librarian (School Libraries), Library and Information Centre, Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development. In 1996, Sharron coordinated a survey and wrote a report on the Tasmanian teacher librarian situation, with quite a bit of emphasis on the technology situation in school libraries. Because of numerous problems, the report was only just released to the public in June 1997.

The 1996 survey found that in Tasmania, 70% of primary libraries are run by teacher's aides. Only 21 positions are full-time in the library. Tasmanian school libraries have 41% of professional staff as recommended in *Learning for the Future*. 42% do not offer information skills instruction for students. 59% of school libraries do not have automated systems. At that time, 77% had no access to the Internet. 57% of school libraries receive less than 40% of the recommended funding for resources.

It makes depressing reading, but already the outcomes of this report are being altered by the government's recent *Directions Statements* which will have a large impact on school libraries. For instance, all schools should have had a connection to the Internet by February/March of this year. *Directions Statements* are available at <http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au> and the *Directions for Education* are available on the Department's home page at <http://www.tased.edu.au/> with *Monthly update bulletins* available at <http://www.tased.edu.au/directions/upmmenu.htm>. As a result of *Directions*, in 1998 schools will have one computer for every five students, and each full time teacher will have a laptop. Technology professional development is really active, and we in the Library and Information Centre (LIC), and ASLA (Tas) have an integrated role, working together on programs to meet teacher librarians' needs. We are presently negotiating with Charles Sturt for the LIC to be actively involved in providing access to distance education for Tasmanian teacher librarians.

## VICTORIA

The following information is courtesy of Bronwen Parsons, President, School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV):

There are no longer departmental teacher librarian role statements as such in Victoria. Under the *Schools of*

*the Future* staffing policy, teacher librarians are counted as part of the teaching staff, and each school is able to define that person's job brief. However, the School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV) has put out a book called *Skilling up*, which has suggested/accepted role statements from other state and national professional library bodies, "to enable staff to define their role within their school in terms of an accepted standard or benchmark."

*To answer your questions:*

### • Do all schools have teacher librarians?

No, many primary schools do not have teacher librarians. They have suffered more harshly than secondary schools to date. Where the teacher librarian has been placed back in the classroom, teachers with no library training at all are given library allotments for a year and then it is often rotated with another teacher the next year. In some schools, library assistants and/or parents are operating the library. Therefore professional cataloguing, selection of materials and appropriate automation processes are virtually impossible, and regulated, indexed access to acceptable Internet sites unavailable. It will be interesting to see what happens to information management when these schools have to develop their own Intranets over the next couple of years. Schools will link into the Department of Education's Intranet, which will be delivered to all schools via VicOne, the whole of government Intranet. The people in the schools who are trained to organise and manage the information access in the schools are the teacher librarians.

### • Are secondary teacher librarians being put back into the classroom?

Yes, many have a subject teaching allotment, as well as teaching face to face in the library. They are also being placed back into the classroom to cover subject allotments.

### • What has happened to CPPT?

Yes, what has happened to it!

### • Are teacher librarians trained?

Most teacher librarians are trained, through Melbourne, Monash and Ballarat Universities, RMIT and the TAFE courses. Some, of course, do recognised interstate off-campus courses, and many have completed the ALIA registration papers in the past. It is heartening to see the new courses which have been developed by Monash University, whose Department of Librarianship, Archives and

Records is now located within the School of Information Management and Systems within the Faculty of Information Technology. The Department of Education will be launching its new Professional Development Framework for teachers early in 1998. This will bring new directions for teachers, with negotiated professional development activities being given credit towards further university qualifications. But, there are people who call themselves a teacher librarian because they work in the library and are qualified teachers!

• **Are any standards being upheld?**

There are suggested ones, but no, not universally. There is no staffing directive in government schools regarding the number or categories of library staff per number of students and their appropriate qualifications.

• **Has staffing been handed over to principals—school-based management?**

Yes, check out the SOFWeb (Schools of the Future) pages on school management (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/leaders/staff.htm>) for further background.

• **Also are there any support services?**

Yes, SLAV! The Department of Education provides SLAV with a percentage of an Executive Officer's salary. SLAV must raise the funds to pay the remainder of this salary. There is no longer a Library Branch or even a teacher librarian contact person in the Department's administrative sections. There are professional development programs for teachers provided by the Department of Education which are very applicable to the teacher librarians, such as Learning with the Internet and How to Become Part of a Collaborative Project (see SOFWeb). SCIS cataloguing is also supported by the DoE at present.

• **Any representation in Head Office?**

No. Since I worked at the Department of Education in Head Office two days a week last year, there seems to have been more contact through me to SLAV this year. For example, we completed a review of library software in the state, which will be an ongoing annual process from 1998.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

*Pauline Tremlett, Executive Officer, Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA):*

There are a number of challenges to the

position of teacher librarian in government and non-government schools in Western Australia. In the last year, in particular, some decision-makers have been attempting to make the role/job/tasks/skills/career of teacher librarians increasingly flexible. This has happened together with increasing opportunities in information technologies, increased workloads and responsibilities, and increased attempts to exchange the teacher librarian with another type of library staff.

Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA) discussed this topic at a public meeting, to gain feedback from its members, and get a clearer picture of WA teacher librarians' views. The result of this will be reported in a future *Access*.

*The situation is explained in more detail by Philippa Ryan, Relieving Consultant, School Libraries, Education Department of WA:*

Issues related to the status and role of Western Australian teacher librarians are in a state of flux at present. The situation in WA has been that all secondary schools had an allocation of a trained teacher librarian. A staffing formula was used based upon student numbers, that is, .2 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) for the first 135 students, then .2 for each 90 students beyond this to a maximum of 3 FTE teacher librarians.

District high schools (K-Yr 12), smaller schools in country regions, have had some allocation of a teacher librarian as described. Primary schools do not have trained teacher librarians, although all would have a library resource centre. The primary school principal decides what specialist staff the school should have, and so the library resource teacher has to compete with the physical education, art, or music specialist to get appointed. However, if the principal decides to use the resource teacher as a duties other than teaching (DOTT) provider (planning and preparation time for classroom teachers), there can be a resource teacher for any number of days depending on the size of the school. Some enlightened principals do appoint resource teachers in a support role, but this is quite rare. Based on the standards in *Learning for the Future*, we have figures to show what allocation of the resource teacher's time should be spent in management duties as opposed to face-to-face contact with the students. In most schools, however the actual management time in the library is far

less than what is suggested. 63% had less than 2.5 hours/week allocated for administration purposes in a recent McNair survey done for the Education Department.

Many of the resource teachers in primary schools are, in fact, trained teacher librarians, but this is not a requirement of the job. Each year, many teachers find themselves as the library resource teacher in a primary school and have no idea of what to do. The Education Department provides a four-day course to give these teachers some idea. Approximately 66 people went through this course in Term 1, 1997. It is a great course, designed by Norma Jeffery, Cathy Scott, Gay Tierney, Sue Goddard, Leonie McIlveny and Marie Green, and the participants were glowing in their praise for it. Many, at the end of this course, thought they would enrol in a Graduate Diploma in Library Studies as a result of the inspiration they received from the four day Resource Teachers' Training Course.

The problem remains that the resource teacher's position is at the whim of the principal and personalities can be changed at any time. Many resource teachers, who have trained as teacher librarians and who had the job for years, suddenly find themselves back in a classroom. Some 39% of schools have no library resource teacher in the recent McNair survey.

There is some commitment to cooperative program planning and teaching (CPPT), but this varies from school to school. Information skills and literature programs were taught by library resource teachers in 45% of primary schools surveyed, 17% using CPPT. 39% of classroom teachers stated they taught information skills and a literature program on their own.

A further complication is a new staffing formula due to hit schools this year. Secondary schools will find that, rather than being allocated their teacher librarians according to the above mentioned formula, they will be given a total full-time equivalent for the school and the principal can decide how these positions should be allocated. There is a worry that teacher librarian time will be reduced. However, to date, the principals are being guided by the previously used formula and requesting similar allocations in staffing. Some schools are increasing their teacher librarian allocation. If teacher librarians are providing good programs and services they are appreciated and often their time is increased.

*Margaret Phillips, Teacher librarian, Wanneroo Senior High School, has added:*

As of 1998, secondary schools have a staffing formula that is calculated on student numbers with an additional percentage for various disadvantages/special needs (isolation/aboriginal, etc). It is no longer calculated on student numbers alone with additional specialist teachers, such as a Youth Education Officer and remedial reading teacher. In other words, the school can opt not to have a teacher librarian or it can opt for an increased number. This is where primary schools have always been. They had a small number, often fractional, of specialist teachers which could include sport, resource teacher, music, and/or art. Under this new formula, our senior high school, with the same student numbers, will lose 1.7 staff next year. There are NO standards being insisted upon. Every school is given a Library Officer allocation. This is a Level 1 clerical position and varies from one half day a week for very small schools to almost 2 FTEs in large schools. Officially there are no technicians in the government system.

Central support for school libraries is undergoing restructuring. The outcome is not clear at this stage. There was a time when Library Services had 140 people, but with automation and streamlining we now have the library consultant's position with a change of name this year to Curriculum Officer, Library and Information Services, plus approximately 23 FTEs which comprise the Curriculum Materials Information Services (CMIS). CMIS handles the cataloguing and evaluation of curriculum resources and provides approximately 40% of the SCIS records.

## CONCLUSION

This survey is not meant to be definitive. It only gives an unofficial overview of the national situation and suggests the need for a systematic study for greater accuracy. However, a troubling pattern seems to emerge even here. In many states, the notable exception being the ACT, staffing of school libraries is being downgraded, either in terms of flexibility or qualifications or both. Tasmania has had 70% of its primary libraries run by teacher's aides. Victoria is using parents in many schools to run libraries and most states use untrained teachers all too frequently. Secondary teacher librarians are increasingly used back in the classroom, as in a bygone era (SA, VIC, QLD). And provision of preparation time for classroom teachers has seriously eroded co-operative program

planning and teaching in primary schools.

No states or territories have an official role statement for teacher librarians, with the exception of Queensland. (Western Australia has one in draft form.) Few spokespeople remain in central departmental positions. WA, ACT, TAS, and NSW have one person representing school libraries where once large support services existed. QLD, VIC, and SA have no one. The few support services left are under constant review. Departmental training courses have been shortened, university librarianship programs such as that of the University of Ballarat look like being terminated, and professional development is left (however competently!) in the hands of volunteer professional association members.

Energies and budgets are being increasingly directed toward technology as the answer. Technology support services and personnel are on the increase in every state.

This paints a fairly bleak picture for the state of our nation's school libraries. For a clever country intent on making its citizens literate and information literate, a national promotion of our role as it relates to student literacy and learning outcomes could not be more timely. Studies such as the Colorado Study (1993) must be used as weapons in a war to save school libraries. Staffing has become or is about to become school-based in the NT, WA, QLD, VIC, and TAS. When this happened in Edmonton, Alberta, 50% of their teacher librarians were made redundant or sent back to the classroom. Robert Fletcher (1997) states, "School communities must be given the opportunity to understand the direct correlation of trained teacher librarians who have well resourced school libraries with student academic achievement. Otherwise where will you be when school staffing is handed over to your principal and staff?"

## ADDENDUM: THE COLORADO STUDY

*The impact of school library media centers on academic achievement* by Keith Lance, Lynda Welborn and Christine Hamilton-Pennell (1993:92), or the Colorado Study, involved 221 Colorado public schools during the 1988-89 school year. Here are the highlights of this study:

- The size of a library media center's (LMC) staff and collection is the best school predictor of academic achievement. Students who score higher on norm-referenced tests\*

tend to come from schools which have more library media staff and more books, periodicals, and videos. This is whether their schools are rich or poor and whether adults in the community are well or poorly educated. (\*Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Tests of Achievement and Proficiency).

- The instructional role of the library media specialist shapes the collection and, in turn, academic achievement. Students who score higher on norm-referenced tests tend to come from schools where this instructional role is more prominent.
- The degree of collaboration between library media specialist and teachers is affected by the ratio of teachers to pupils. Collaboration of this type depends on the availability of both media specialist and teacher to engage in this important work. Specialists who play an instructional role tend to have teacher colleagues whose workloads also permit such collaboration.
- Library media expenditures affect LMC staff and collection size and, in turn, academic achievement. Not surprisingly, the size of the LMC collection is related to the amount of funding available for such purposes. Students who score higher on norm-referenced tests tend to come from schools which spend more on library media programs.
- Among predictors of academic achievement, the size of the LMC staff and collection is second only to the absence of *at risk* conditions, particularly poverty and low educational attainment among adults.

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