

The Secretary of the Inquiry into School Libraries,



Please accept a late submission if possible to your inquiry.

I am a fully qualified Teacher-Librarian and am currently employed full time on four separate contracts covering four workplaces. These include a regular primary school (0.6), an Education and Training Facility for young offenders (0.2), a community learning centre for students with intellectual and/or (mostly and) physical impairment (0.1) and an Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (0.1). I work with four tremendous teacher aides (or equivalent) in these libraries none of which are staffed full time. Three are starting the process of building new libraries as all the schools are growing.

The system views and uses Teacher-Librarians as an extra rather than an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. The casual attitude of school staff to proper borrowing procedure has led to loss rates of over one book every two working days for teacher reference in the six year period between stocktakes. In one library where I teach NCT (non-contact time) classes there is no electronic, white, black or even pinboard for use. No other teacher in the school works under these conditions. In this growing school my current budget is 20 % of the year 2000 allocation. Why aren't the year six and seven students reading? Few new books for them in the most accessible library .

Schools are not the only difficulty; a district office staff member told me (January 2010) "you are not a priority" when I was trying to organise work before school started. Currently I liaise directly with schools and we send in the paperwork. So far I have started five individual contracts in this way, this year. Only one extends beyond the end of term two. This creates great uncertainty within the schools especially as we get our second new Principal this year starting in term 3. This will really impact hard as decisions are made on the BER library.

From district office to school staff the role and abilities of Teacher-Librarians are consistently undervalued. With data showing how much a qualified Teacher-Librarian can impact student learning and teacher comments "they are just so engaged in ..."; "I can see their enthusiasm for reading growing", I know I am making a positive impact on students' learning. All students deserve this opportunity to thrive at school.

Yours faithfully,  
Fleur Forsyth METL (CSU)