



Clerk Assistant (Committees)
representatives

The Secretary of the Committee

Submission to the Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

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;**

I am a secondary teacher librarian, but in discussion with fellow Primary Teacher Librarians, there are many recent policies that have impacted on their teaching within their limited time. Firstly RFF (Relief from face to face) in primary schools, is often taken by the Teacher librarian. One teacher could not attend a conference for teacher librarians (a whole day event with Professional Development money for a relief teacher) as there was no one to cover her and she had nine classes that day for RFF.

- **the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy;**

It is proven that children become better readers and learners including writing by reading. Teacher librarians are specialists in encouraging reading and literacy. They do this by a variety of ways including encouraging voluntary reading, that is reading for pleasure.

IF reading was not important why does the NSW Government have the Premiers Reading Challenge annually – that is to encourage reading and improving literacy rates.

Not only do Teacher librarians encourage reading for pleasure, they are specialists in teaching information literacy. Thus developing skills in students that will enhance lifelong learning skills, a must in this information driven society. The wider community expects students to have the literacy skills to exist in the workplace, where they seek different viewpoints and are able to critically analyse their research sources.

- **the factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians;**

Teacher programs have decreased in number especially over the last twenty years since Macquarie University amongst many others stopped it's teacher librarians course in 1988. How do young undergraduates even develop awareness that such courses are available when there are so few around?

Even if you are qualified it was very hard to be transferred into a teacher librarian position, in my case it took twelve years before I was assigned a position.

School libraries need to be run by qualified teacher librarians who have the deeper knowledge of librarianship to develop a school library collection that not only provides support to students but the teaching staff of the most up to date resources for the school's curriculum. This factor is indeed more important in the ever increasing information technology of the 21st Century.

In the current National Agreements on school library staffing in NSW it impacts on the actual role and status of a qualified Teacher Librarian.

- **the role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians;**

- **the impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians.**

Teacher Librarians are fully aware of the added addition to their collection that digital technologies have brought and will continue to do so for their school community.

Teacher Librarians through network meetings, conferences and inservice courses are continually updating their skills and knowledge. This they then pass onto others at their schools,

They have the necessary skills to select the newest technology, whether it be a database, webquest or a DVD with collaboration with teaching staff. In addition a balance needs to be maintained between books and technology, to supply the best all rounded collection to support the curriculum within the school.

SUBMISSION

Barbara Harrison

Teacher Librarian