



***Future Libraries Reference Group
Metropolitan Region of DET Queensland***

Purpose of 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.

Rationale of the Future Libraries Reference Group

Established in November 2008 to challenge the current, practicing teacher-librarians to proactively answer the question:

"How will your library engage and challenge the 2010 prep student throughout their educational journey?"

Charter of Operation of the Future Libraries Reference Group:

- **Provide a conduit** for two-way communication between established Teacher Librarian networks, District/Regional/Central offices, External bodies eg QUT , SLQ. SLAQ,
- **Proactively investigate future trends** in information services provision
- **Enable Teacher Librarian's to proactively inform and develop their future role** as integral to curriculum development and implementation in schools

by

- assisting existing teacher-librarian networks with increased support from Schools, Districts and Regions
- recognising and promoting that teacher-librarians are doing great work in a variety of spaces with a range of pedagogies and partnerships
- developing a teacher-librarian group which provides a strategic direction to proactively inform policy on the future role of teacher-librarians in schools

Future Libraries Reference Group Members

- **12 Teacher-Librarian networks** representing over **220 cross-sector (State, Private and Independent) schools** which have one representative each on this Reference Group
- **Qld Department of Education and Training, Library Services** represented by Paul O'Neill (Manager Library Services)
- **Qld Department of Education and Training, eLearning Branch,** Mark Staines (Senior Project Officer)
- **School Library Association of Qld (SLAQ)** represented by Chris Kahl (President)
- **State Library Qld** , represented by Lea Giles-Peters (State Librarian)
- **Queensland University of Technology** represented by Professor Annette Patterson (Head, School of Cultural and Language Studies in Education which runs the Masters in Teacher Librarian courses)
- **Regional Principals** represented by Judy Thompson , Principal West End State School (Chair)
- **Regional Offices Representatives** – represented by District Performance Education Officer - School Improvement and Human Resources Senior Officers

Summary:

As such, the results of this inquiry should specify that:

- a national policy and standard be developed for school libraries
- school libraries be staffed by qualified teacher-librarians to support curriculum needs
- formula for staffing and resourcing schools in Australia be developed
- data should be collected on a national basis on the resourcing of school libraries, to include personnel, resources and programs
- training courses for teacher-librarians be reviewed and increased to meet the needs of school library management
- funding supports the resourcing of school libraries to meet the needs of curriculum changes and necessities, school – based programs and student needs
- representatives of school library professional associations and education authorities form a peak reference group to consider these issues . **This is an area where the framework of the already established Future Libraries Reference Group may be able to assist**
- federal bodies recognise State and Territory School Library Associations and the national School Library Association, as the bodies with the closest association and understanding of school library needs

Terms of Reference:

1. What *evidence* and *examples* can you provide of the impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities?

Members of the Future Libraries Reference Group have reported that:-

Feedback

The most pronounced positive impact of recent policies and investment has been a dramatic re-focussing on the importance of school libraries and a re-vitalization of their activities as critical to student learning.

Some schools have reported a low-level impact due to the absence of supportive leadership and untrained, unqualified library staff.

Findings:

The degree of success of the implementation of these recent policies and investments is reliant upon having a competent and qualified teacher-librarian at each school and having school leadership which supports and acknowledges the professionalism of teacher-librarians.

Recommendation:

That the National Standards for Teacher-Librarians (Australian School Library Association and the Australian Library and Information Association) be mandated by all educational authorities.

2. What is the *future potential* of school libraries and librarians to contribute to *improved educational and community outcomes especially literacy*?

Members of the Future Libraries Reference Group have reported that:

Feedback:

The potential is unlimited. School libraries can be vibrant centres of learning when they are resourced by trained, qualified teacher-librarians in a climate that is responsive to their community needs.

Findings:

Role of Teacher Librarian in 21st Century includes:

- Curriculum Liaison - supporting Literacy, Develop Research Skills, Promote Literature
- Director of Information Services
- E Learning Mentor
- Asset Manager –Physical , Virtual
- Community Hub Space Developer
- Children’s Activity Centre Coordinator

Recommendation:

All school libraries are flexibly funded and resourced to respond to their community needs with innovation and learning driven by qualified teacher librarians operating and implementing the National Standards for Teacher Librarians.

3. What factors influence recruitment and development of school librarians?

Members of the Future Libraries Reference Group have reported that:

Feedback:

High level personnel will be attracted to a valued profession – teacher-librarianship

Findings:

Need Clear Role Statement to ensure high standards of the profession.

Defined career pathway which acknowledges and recognizes qualified teacher-librarians.

Integral role in the school strategic decision making processes.

Continuing professional development is crucial.

Also refer to our **Future Library Reference Group member’s submission** from:

Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

School Library Assn of Queensland (SLAQ)

Recommendations:

Teacher-librarian qualifications are mandatory for systemic recruitment procedures
Universities provide relevant courses which addresses the range of both current and potential teacher librarian roles

4. What role do different levels of government and local communities and other institutions have in partnering and supporting school librarians?

Members of the Future Libraries Reference Group have reported that:

Feedback:

Reference Groups such as ours, that have been established based on the needs of Teacher Librarians Networks to network from the ground up, are very powerful in providing fast feedback loops to inform policy.

Findings:

Refer to our Future Library Reference Group **member's submission** from:

State Library of Queensland (SLQ)

School Library Assn of Queensland (SLAQ)

Queensland Dept of Education and Training, Library Services (DET)

Recommendations:

Utilize established frameworks consisting of intergovernmental, inter- sector reference groups with links to universities and public and state libraries – such as the Future Libraries Reference Group

5. What is the impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support school libraries and librarians?

Members of the Future Libraries Reference Group have reported that:

Feedback:

The impact and potential is **unlimited** when resourced with the qualified teacher-librarians who can inspire students to engage in digital technologies

Findings:

Also refer to our future Library Reference Group **member's submission** from:

- Qld Department of Education and Training (DET) eLearning Branch submission
- School Library Assn of Queensland (SLAQ)

Recommendations:

A virtual world is enhanced when scaffolded with the technological pedagogy of qualified teacher librarians

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY:

1. That the National Standards for Teacher-Librarians (Australian School Library Association and the Australian Library and Information Association) be mandated by all educational authorities.

2. All school libraries are flexibly funded and resourced to respond to their community needs with innovation and learning driven by qualified teacher librarians operating and implementing the National Standards for Teacher Librarians.

3a Teacher-librarian qualifications are mandatory for systemic recruitment procedures

3b Universities provide relevant courses which addresses the range of both current and potential teacher librarian roles

4 Utilize established frameworks consisting of intergovernmental, inter- sector reference groups with links to universities and public and state libraries – such as the Future Libraries Reference Group

5. A virtual world is enhanced when scaffolded with the technological pedagogy of qualified teacher librarians

NOTE: In preparing this submission, data was electronically collected from our members via the OnePortal site of Dept of Education and Training Qld. This data was considered and forwarded to our representative member from the School Library Association of Qld for inclusion in their submission to the Inquiry.

This submission is sent of behalf of the Future Libraries Reference Group:

Judy Thompson (Chair)
Principal
West End State School