



## **Submission on Teacher Librarians and School Libraries in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

All schools from primary schools through secondary schools, including Central Schools and K-12 schools should have a range of professional staff (Teacher-Librarians), para-professional staff (Library Technicians) and clerical staff in their school librarians, to provide learning environments supporting educational objectives and curriculum outcomes.

### **The impact of Government policies and investments in school libraries:**

Policies which provide improvement of library infrastructure (computer systems) and buildings (including computer laboratories, resource housing, and learning spaces) MUST consider how these will be utilized and operated, ideally under the guidance of professional staff. Professional staff can : organise and maintain the physical and virtual spaces; provide access to resources that cater for different needs for reading levels, curriculum areas and learning styles; can develop curriculum with classroom teachers integrating all formats of resources, including online, print, visual, audio; and correlate resources with the curriculum needs of their school.

### **Potential of school libraries and teacher-librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literary:**

**(Teacher-Librarians have teaching qualifications, plus experience in the classroom, postgraduate qualifications in Librarianship, and teaching Information skills)**

Teacher-Librarians are able to communicate and design curriculum programmes with teachers which incorporate a range of resource formats, provide access to quality digital resources which support curriculum and student learning outcomes, and design programmes which train students in effective, efficient and appropriate use of digital resources as well as print and other formats of resources.

Publications from the many Library Associations in Australia and overseas, support the premise that assistance and guidance from professional staff can enhance the learning and literacy outcomes for students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

### **Factors influencing the recruitment and development of Teacher-Librarians in Australia:**

1. Urgent need: With the shortage of qualified Teacher-Librarians in schools across Australia, and the aging of the teaching population, succession planning and sustainability of supply of Teacher-Librarians is becoming critical.
2. With the explosion of the Information Highway, and the globalisation of economies, all citizens of the world need graduated secondary level education with information literacy skills, in order to participate in the information and monetary economy.
3. In Australia, only three tertiary institutions currently prepare Teacher-Librarians for their professions, Charles Stuart University, Edith Cowan University, and Queensland University of Technology. (Tyranny of distance once again making graduation difficult).
4. Libraries which are not sufficiently staffed are frequently seen as not performing and making a difference, and hence down sizing again, reducing their efficiency and effectiveness below that expected by parents of students. (My school has no para-professional or clerical assistance, thereby reducing the role of the professional Teacher-Librarian to one of supernumerary and eliminating a observable high educational outcome).

### **The role of governments and professional bodies in supporting and extending the range and effectiveness of teacher-librarians:**

Teacher-Librarians operate within a highly pro-active professional community and respond to and create links with Public Library sector, digital communication networks, and provide information services for the school community, including teachers, administration, and parents and citizens as well as students. Such links create an equity of access for all students and their parents.

Teacher-Librarians can provide programmes to assist students in transition through all levels of the education system.

## **The impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of schools and Teacher-Librarians:**

In order for students and teachers to fully utilise digital technology there needs to be training for teachers and students in information literacy, keyboard skills, and general literacy and numeracy.

In schools, it is the Teacher-Librarian who provides specialist knowledge and support for training of staff and students in the use of digital information. The Teacher-Librarian can work with other professional staff on the educational rationale for inclusion of digital technologies in the curriculum and the management of technologies for equitable access, the infrastructure and policy development required for acceptable and appropriate use of all formats of resources and technologies combined

For updated and enhanced school library facilities to reach their optimum potential, professional teacher-Librarians on every school staff are essential. Otherwise resource waste and non-utilisation can occur, and investment in infrastructure will not reach full potential.

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