

INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND TEACHER LIBRARIANS IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS



Terms of Reference

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;
- the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy;
- the factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians;
- the role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians; and
- the impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians.

About YABBA:

YABBA is a volunteer organisation set up in 1985 to promote the reading of Australian created books for children. Each year YABBA runs a program where students nominate titles onto an annual shortlist. The students then read exhaustively from that shortlist and in October vote for their favourites. Teacher Librarians use YABBA as a springboard for Australian literature activities, classroom teachers use YABBA as an aide in creating vibrant literacy programs and activities, students participate in YABBA as readers and critics, authors and illustrators hear what their young readers think about their work. YABBA resonates with the whole educational community and the wider community.

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[The impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities;](#)

It should be of paramount importance to now optimise the considerable federal investment in school library facilities and technology, and to equitably affect curriculum reforms. Therefore measures are needed to ensure there is consistent and sufficient qualified staffing of school libraries across all jurisdictions in Australia. Additional technical and administrative staff must be appointed to further support the teacher / librarian position.

TEACHER LIBRARIAN ROLE

Collaborate with teachers in syllabus and curriculum planning that will enhance student learning.

Provide valuable input to Professional development for teaching colleagues.

Work directly with students to develop their recreational reading and information literacy skills.

Develop on-hand and on-line resources and purchase all materials.

TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF ROLE

Checking books and other resources in and out and chasing overdues.

Re-shelving of materials

Protecting and maintaining books and other materials.

Each State and Territory education authority needs current policy statement on school libraries and a senior policy officer / section responsible for supporting school libraries and teacher librarians; school libraries being such a large capital investment requiring ongoing maintenance and monitoring. The support of the teacher librarian in not only providing access to suitable resources within and beyond school, but also teaching students and providing professional development support for teachers in the requisite research skills and strategies, will be critical for students and teachers alike.

[the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy;](#)

In the face of considerable and well documented international research, the potential of school libraries and teacher librarians to contribute to improving educational and community outcomes, especially literacy, cannot be questioned. The issue is how that potential can be realised. Currently that issue is designated as a state government responsibility. This inquiry provides a significant opportunity to address that 'how to' issue and realise the true potential of school libraries and teacher librarians in the implementation of vital state and national curriculum reforms.

[the factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians;](#)

In the 1970's federal funding built school libraries across Australia and followed through with programs to train and place qualified teacher librarians in them. Now that those 40+ years old library buildings and their technology are being updated, there again needs to be a follow-through to address the shortage of qualified teacher librarians to staff them.

Teacher librarian training programs across Australia have shrunk dramatically. It behoves this inquiry to also consider the nature and extent/availability of university courses for teacher librarians and TAFE courses for library technicians. It should not be forgotten that sufficient and properly trained library support staff is critical in order for teacher librarians to properly fulfil their teaching role.