Supplementary Submission
to Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools.

by The Children's Book Council of Australia

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The CBCA School Library survey 2010 was open for 10 days, from 22 March 2010 – 1 April 2010. During that time there were 624 respondents to the survey with 100% completion rate.

A further analysis of libraries receiving BER funding, as well as the financial status of libraries across different educational sectors is included below:

BER Libraries

127 schools indicated that they had received $500,000 or more in BER funding for their library; 85 of those received over $1,000,000. (Other libraries received smaller amounts of funding, however these have not been counted in the figures below.)

Staffing:
Of these 127 schools, almost one in five (18%) do not have a qualified teacher-librarian in their library. In fact, the figures may be worse than that, as if there is no teacher-librarian in charge, the library would most likely be 'out of contact' with teacher-librarian listservs and other such professional networking tools.

Budgets:
The average library budget of these 127 BER libraries was $16,895.
Over 65% of BER school library budgets received $10,000 or less.
30% of BER school library budgets were $5,000 or less.

 It could be concluded, therefore, that many BER libraries will be limited in services and collections, including digital collection, because of their operating constraints due to staffing and limited budgets.

Comparison of Educational Sector School Library Budgets in Survey (not just BER)

Anglican Schools:
Average Library Budget: $44,762.
80% of Anglican school library budgets are greater or equal to $20,000.
5 stated that their budgets are unknown. One commented: "We do not have a budget. We spend until told to stop."

Independent Schools:
Average Library Budget: $37,220.
74% of Independent school budgets are greater or equal to $20,000.
6% of those schools had library budgets of over $100,000.

<u>Catholic Schools:</u>
Average Library Budget: $20,732.
39% of Catholic school library budgets were greater or equal to $20,000.
Less than 1% were $50,000 or greater.
43% were $10,000 or less. 22% were $5,000 or less.

<u>Government Schools:</u>
Average Library Budget: $10,606.
13% of government school library budgets were greater or equal to $20,000.
Only 2 (.5%) of the 375 schools had a budget exceeding $50,000.
66% had a library budget of $10,000 or below. 36% were $5,000 or less. 3% were $1,000 or less.

Financially, there is a great information divide between libraries in different educational sectors, with average budgets ranging from $10,000 (Government), $20,000 (Catholic), $37,000 (Independent) and $44,000 (Anglican) schools.

The cost of an annual subscription to one electronic database and one online encyclopedia is approximately $5,000 (even with bulk purchase such as the National Library or UQ Cyberschool). Further to that, subscription to video streaming amounts to approximately $3,000 p.a. At a time when there is a focus on digital literacy and online resources, many schools simply do not receive budgets which enable such resources to be used. As a result, many students from these schools will be ill prepared for tertiary studies.

This information divide is also evidenced in the number of teacher librarians in schools.

We believe that it is in the best interest of Australia's future that ALL Australian children have access to information and to people who can help them to critically evaluate and use it. This takes place both through the provision of resources suitable to them and through people who help provide them with access skills. Teacher librarians are extremely important as they provide and facilitate these processes for EVERY child in the school, both during and outside school time, in real and virtual environments.

The experience of gaining BER funding varied widely – from excellent to tragic experiences. In some instances TLs were not involved in the change process nor consulted re facilities needed. This led to areas not meeting needs – too small, unsuitable spaces for work flows, staff office used for other purposes etc.

> *"The BER funding is providing a new library. That's great! BUT…there has been no consultation whatever. This is a frustration. How do I know that this new library will offer what our school needs? …What will be provided? What will the physical layout offer? How will the physical move take place?"(Q.10 #500)*

The process of change and transition for many schools was also difficult.
- Whole library collections were packed into boxes, stored in sheds, and unavailable to school communities for up to a year.
- Where TLs were involved in the planning of this move, some anticipated resources needed, ensuring their availability during the interim period.
- Often, libraries were used as classrooms while other areas of the school were being renovated. In one case, the Library is now used for After School Care and Choir! *(Q. 10 # 223)*
- There are concerns about Library staffing – one will only have staffing available halftime; in another the TL has been deployed elsewhere in the school *(#297).*

> *"My concern is that we will not have suitably qualified staff to make best use of this excellent resource when it is completed later this year." (Q.10 #609)*

> *"New resource centre but teacher librarian being deployed elsewhere for NCT purposes! Library aide to manage resources!" (Q.10 #97)*

Where, however, TLs were consulted and involved in planning, they seem immensely pleased with the results of their refurbished/new facilities. Not only have some of the new spaces led to a range of different activities within those libraries, they have led to a regeneration of the TL's role in information services:

> *"I have been on the planning committee from the beginning. Committee members have worked well together to come up with a vision for the Library and plan accordingly. I have researched new library buildings, fittings, furniture. Plans almost finalized."(Q.10 # 493)*

> *"We now have new facilities, a IWB and room to seat a whole class on the floor. We can work on cyber-safety, information literacy, ICT skills etc. as a whole class in the library. The space is bright, clean and new and many more children are visiting at lunch and break and after school to read and borrow books. They constantly remark on how much they love the new library."(Q.10 # 134)*

"We renovated…it has given a 16 year old facility new life…everyone loves it."
(Q.10 # 240)

"A new building with 21st century learners in mind." (Q.10 # 262)

"…more space, better supervision, ergonomic computer furniture, easier access to the books." (Q.10 #481))

"The library program is expanding and student use has been greatly increased." (Q. 10 #264)

"Plans for the new library have encouraged us to think about online learning activities and creating flexible learning spaces. Whole class lessons especially with the senior primary classes may be modified due to these changing ideas and space requirements.: (Q.10 #513)

"…are having discussions about reviewing the current role of the TL within the school and how to use the new building effectively."(Q.10 #607)

How have recent policies at both state and local level affected your school library and its activities?

- No consistent library policy Australia wide. Policies varied greatly from state to state, system to system and school to school.

Northern Territory:

"In the NT, TLs are very rare – schools are staffed according to student enrollment – TLs are part of a general pool – it is up to the principal as to how the staffing allocation is used – with the result that most schools have no TL, and an untrained office person in the library."(Q11 #133)

Queensland:

"In Queensland there is no real support for TLs in State schools. No role description for secondary TLs. Use by schools of their TL for teaching timetabled subjects, internal relief."(Q11 # 339)

"Until it is mandated that every primary and high school has access to a qualified TL, principals in EQ schools are at liberty to erode this very important role." (Q11 #90)

Victoria:

"There are no policies regarding employment of trained TLs in Victoria." (Q11 #104)

Tasmania:

"Cutbacks in budgets to individual schools has resulted in very few TLs in primary schools in Northern Tasmania."(Q11 # 277)

"TAS Government does not recognize the position of teacher librarian in its staffing. No guarantee or expectation that teachers in the library are qualified... Staffing formulas are big issue." (Q11 #498)

• Teacher librarians suffer from a lack of systemic and regional support and advocacy.

"Lack of Library Advisor at Head Office has meant isolation of TLs and lack of advocacy at higher levels." (Q11 #1)

"Taking out TLs from state schools has made remaining TLs work harder to show how necessary they are." (Q11 #53)

• Staffing levels in libraries have deteriorated.

"Nice libraries – not enough staff to share the resources properly." (Q11 #9)
"We are providing more services and people expect more of us with less staff." (Q11 #28)

• National Curriculum and NAPLAN provide resource challenges and opportunities.

"LOVE the new National Curriculum...a return to some common sense in curriculum and delivery." (Q11 #190)

"National Curricula release has involved the library directly in planning and purchasing for resourcing the new curricula as well as planning and purchasing for literature circles and resourcing units of classroom work." (Q11 #198)

"Undue emphasis on NAPLAN testing so a decline in time for reading for pleasure and information." (Q11 #273)

"NAPLAN highlights literacy shortfalls. Libraries and TLs can help lift literacy levels. National Curriculum needs appropriate resourcing. ..Research data shows that well resourced and professionally staffed libraries show better student results." (Q11 #491)

• Greater emphasis on technology in learning has both positive and negative effects. Push for 'paperless' schools has affected resource allocation.

"The integration of ICT into the curriculum has taken away the focus on reading for enjoyment and literature activities…" (Q11 #4)

"Move away from 'literature' towards technology and information literacy." (Q11 # 292)

"Current policies seem to encourage buying more and more computer facilities, either desktops or laptops. What is needed is more support in terms of trained personnel." (Q11 #205)

"Very limited support for the integration of ICT into programs." (Q11 #273)

"Push for paperless schools has radically reduced my budget from $10-$12K to $4(k)." (Q11 #24)

- Budget restrictions have led to restricted resourcing of the curriculum.

"Diminished school library budget has led to restricted resourcing of the curriculum." (Q11 #1)

"lack of specific funding for library collections and library staffing means an inability to offer quality resources and services." (Q11 #334)

- Teacher librarians need to be recognized by educational leadership so that the TL role is not eroded by other school duties such as teaching and teacher release.

"What policies? ASLA standards and ASLA's 'Learning for the Future' documents are not acknowledged by my school or system." (Q11 #369)

"have to constantly fight to prevent teacher librarian being used for other teaching duties…" (Q11 #11)

"Change from cooperative teaching and planning to RFF – reduced time to bond/negotiate/work with teachers, less skills taught and less output from lessons. Lack of understanding of importance of reading and information skills – at all levels of leadership from school to head office, feels like it is more about content than skills or lifelong learning AND more about saving money than student achievement." (Q11 # 45)

"Far more babysitting of disengaged senior students…for non class periods…" (Q11 #135)

- Devolution and school-based staffing decisions have led to increased TL stress. Morale of TLs has suffered because of poor precedents e.g. Loftus School (NSW)

"Devolution to schools means school libraries depend upon the good will and support of principals, which varies according to individuals and their backgrounds."(Q11 #240)

"Seems to be a devaluing of libraries and associated information literacy skills. Great faith is placed in students' ability to 'just know' how to research. Little recognition of students' focus on gathering rather than reading and creating new knowledge." (Q11 #289)

"Morale is low, days have been cut but the work load increased. Many feel undervalued and frustrated by none or low budgets and less hours." (Q11 #155)

"Stupid trial of Loftus Public School (NSW) principal deciding staffing needs and not employing full-time QUALIFIED Teacher-Librarian…instead using untrained clerical assistant. This has meant that I've had to continually justify, fight and explain to community AND teachers why you need a Teacher-Librarian, instead of concentrating on providing library services and curriculum support and teaching." (Q11 #189)

"Recent policy and talk makes me feel undervalued as a professional managing a diverse, demanding and ever increasing range of knowledge and skills. I constantly strive to be accountable." (Q11 #138)

- Increasing diversity and change is evident in the Teacher librarian's role. Some positive changes have been enabled by new facilities (such as BER library.)

"Library has more status because of the new building grant. Emphasis on digital learning has helped us because I have worked hard to get good ICT facilities for the students into the library, teach ICT skills and use digital resources for teaching." (Q11 #406)

"Library is at the centre of teaching and learning in the school, but recent policies mean there is a far greater workload eg impact of technology, teaching ICT skills, preparing online resources, training myself how to use Web 2.0 tools, then teaching teachers, stresses due to inefficient… [library]…system, cutback in clerical hours. Trying to teach and provide RFF while also running a Library." (Q11 #95)

"…it is impossible to find the time to do everything well." (Q11 #4)

"We envisage that our activities will be more associated with providing resources in digital format as our school moves towards a laptop program. Our role will move away from a traditional vision of the library – our building changes will enable a pivotal dynamic resource centre with a range of media for students and teachers to interact with." (Q11 #245)

Concluding comments:

> *"I am fortunate that my Principal…values my role and sees the benefits that flow on to the students and staff through my input into literature and literacy. The policy whereby a Principal can decide how he will staff his school is fraught with dangers. This brings about inequalities among schools. One school may benefit from the work done by a qualified teacher-librarian whereas another school misses out on all these benefits." (Q11 #413)*

> *"Students coming in Year 7 from primary schools not staffed by teacher librarians have very poor research/information literacy…over reliant on Google with little understanding of research planning. Literacy skills also down compared to other students." (Q11 #241)*

> *"Schools that have no trained teacher librarians are suffering. Trained TLs can ensure a reading culture is developed within the school. It would be interesting to compare the NAPLAN results of such schools with those that have trained teacher librarians. Library programs are often reflected by good NAPLAN results for that school." (Q11 #102)*

> *"…the inequity between schools…is amazing." (Q11 #276)*

In your opinion, what factors influence the recruitment and further training of teacher-librarians?

- **The TL role itself and society's poor perception of it**

  1. **Not valued**

"The perception that libraries are old fashioned & outdated, fear of becoming irrelevant may influence people's choices. The level of professional respect accorded to the T/L role also impacts recruitment." (Q12 #380)

"The status of librarians amongst the wider community. Seen as a 'soft' job." (Q12 #96)
 "The view of a Librarian as a middle aged, female conservative person interested only in books and shelving which is at odds with the actual job, but which does not appeal to young techno-savvy students looking for a career." (Q12 #4)

 "The public perception (as encouraged by appointment of a non librarian as NSW State librarian) that teacher-librarians can be replaced by a clerical assistant/classroom teacher/parent volunteer who "loves reading"!!!" (Q12 #212)

  2. **Lack of understanding of the role**

*"Lack of recognition of what the job entails - it is something of an **invisible profession** within education, so most people don't think of trying it."* (Q12 #43)

"Lack of understanding on the part of student teachers/teachers/education academics and school executive of what is involved in the teacher librarian role." (Q12 #45)

*"**Many stereotypes exist**...and they simply do not give an accurate picture of what it is we do."* (Q12 #165)

3. Not clearly defined and TL role varies from school to school

"The lack of clarity of expectation in some schools." (Q12 #31)

4. Complexity of role

"Conferences, study, experience, skills in ICTs, collaboration skills, leadership qualities, information literacy awareness, skills." (Q12 #139)

"Realistic expectations of what can be achieved by TLs when they micro manage most of the school's resources, teaching spaces and unsupervised students during class times as well as being available recess and lunch times for students for assistance with school work as well [as] encouraging and promoting literacy through recreational reading." (Q12 #158)

5. Change in TL role less appealing to some possible recruits

"Some teachers are seeing that the role of the TL has changed too much into the ICT professional and do not want this role." (Q12 #13)

- **No incentive to do further training**

1. Lack of recognition and financial reward for retraining

"Lack of professional recognition for additional study." (Q12 #230)

"The fact that there is no pay increase of change of classification for the Teacher who undertakes this study, makes it an unattractive career choice." (Q12 #288)

"Further qualifications seem a waste of time when these are not recognised by either better pay or promotion to leadership positions." (Q12 #291)

2. Lack of available jobs and uncertainty of future employment

"Lack of availability of jobs on completion of higher education." (Q12 #1)

"Uncertainty about our future – rumours of our demise and replacement by computer related positions." (Q12 #133)

"The question mark over our existence makes it an unpopular career path." (Q12 #544)

3. Lack of a career path

"Lack of career paths, poor salaries considering length of training and demands of the job..." (Q12 #44)

"Lack of official recognition (and salary) as HEAD of a department..." (Q12 #212)

- **Courses**

1. Level of study required to do the job

"...there are very few universities that offer TL courses at an undergraduate level." (Q12 #571)

"I am concerned that if the only available course to qualify as a Teacher Librarian is a "Masters" ..." (Q12 #10)

2. Lack of available courses in geographic area

"Lack of face to face courses." (Q12 #571)

"Availabilty and ease of access to appropriate Post Grad courses." (Q12 # 542)

3. Courses not relevant to work situation

"...relevance of the course to the coalface..." (Q12 #413)

4. Cost of course

"...it is hard to justify spending $10,000 to do a masters for no monetary benefits." (Q12 #5)

"At the school level, there is no support for teachers wanting to undertake TL tertiary studies. The expectation is that they do this in their own time and at their own expense." (Q12 #256)

     5. Time constraints – family and job – fitting in extra study

- **Lack of available support to TLs**

     1. State and federal governments

"Lack of support from the state and federal governments. If they made TLs compulsory in the school library the TLs would be guaranteed to [be] working in the field that they have been trained [in]." (Q12 #46)

     2. Levels above principal

"Someone is influencing principals in Qld that TLs are not necessary." (Q12 # 89)

     3. Little support at systemic level

"...no systemic voice speaking for TLs..." (Q12 #537)

     4. Educational philosophy of principal

"Unpredictability of the work environment based upon the whims of school administrators." (Q12 #273)

     5. Inadequate clerical support at school level

- **TL job conditions (or lack thereof)**

     1. Workload

"...overloaded with timetabled classes..." (Q12 #19)

"Using TLs for non-contact time and generally poor working conditions." (Q12 #88)

"...exhausting workload." (Q12 #245)

"Many times no time for morning tea/lunch – having to help staff, students, time never made up...expected to open before and after school..." (Q12 #144)

     2. **Isolation**

"Networks not easy when there is no other in the school to chat with about problems etc. Often isolated because you are not part of the stage." (Q12 #78)

3. Part-time role

"The fact that the position is not a full time position in most primary schools eliminates many talented people from be[ing] recruited into the role." (Q12 #241)

4. Outdated resources

"Highly trained, technologically literate TLs are often placed in school libraries with almost no technological infrastructure to develop modern learners." (Q12 #299)

5. How role is presently misused

"...many do not understand the complex role of a TL and therefore undermine their effectiveness with additional duties that take them away from their core purpose." (Q12 #87)

"...RFF in most primary schools...leaves very little time for developing the role as a teacher librarian." (Q12 #241)

- **Present ad hoc job selection processes for TL positions (with non TLs)**

"Recruitment seems to be ad hoc. If a teacher shows an interest and there is a vacancy then they can act in the role and may continue in the role at the Principal's discretion." (Q12 #324)

"Rather arbitrary. Not based on the suitability of the person for the position. Often teachers who are in the right place get the position or a person who is no longer able to teach is placed in the school library." (Q12 #105)

"...if a classroom teacher can be 'in the library' then why would anyone bother to be trained?" (Q12 #459)

"Thanks to the 47 school pilot with Loftus and Revesby losing TLs, there seems to be no future for the TL profession." (Q12 #218)

- **No recruitment drive or general plan to develop the profession**

"The recruitment of TLs appears to be on a school by school basis with no general plan to develop the profession as a whole." (Q12 #329)

Conclusion:

*"Potential candidates will be attracted to the course if they themselves have worked in a school with an active, productive and effective library programme driven and executed by a teacher-librarian. It is their awareness of such a library programme which will attract them to the position and engage them in the ideals and objectives of teacher-librarianship. Increasingly however, we are seeing the attrition of effective library services as more and more school school libraries are staffed by general classroom teachers or library technicians. Thus we are potentially **losing our professional 'blueprint'**. How then will potential recruits envision themselves as a teacher-librarian, if they have never actually seen such a role executed."* (Q12 #538)

*"...having to **continually defend the role** despite many years of advocacy."* (Q12 # 52)

*"Media – poor image of the profession. Personal experience – **inspired by a passionate TL**."* (Q12 #280)

*"...the best TLs will often put up with the difficulties as they **love the job**."* (Q12 #84)

How could the recruitment and further training of teacher-librarians be encouraged?

Mandate the position

> *"TLs need to be seen to be integral to learning experiences offered in the school."* (Q12 #147)

> *"By the government legislating that **each school** must have TRAINED TLs in each school library – primary AND secondary – and that the industry standards as set out in 'Learning for the Future' be adhered to."* (Q13 #9)

- **Link positions to accreditation and funding**

> *"Staffing level mandates linked to accreditation and funding, i.e. specification ...that each school ...have a library program of a certain standard, with a particular budget per number of students, and staffed by a certain number of qualified teacher librarians per number of students. Further, that...funding be reliant on this as one of a number of key indicators."* (Q12 #401)

- **Providing stability of employment**

"Employment prospects! Teachers are not going to undertake further study if there are limited employment prospects." (Q13 #14)

"By making the position separate from the general staffing allocation." (Q13 #149)

Change principals' discretionary role

"...no Principal discretion on budget amounts or staffing." (Q13 #26)

"...ask for expressions of interest for TL positions throughout [state], then interview for the best person...The Principal should be forced to give that person the job..." (Q13 #18)

Provide training incentives

"Grants for study...to either allow time or finances to assist those already passionately working in the field." (Q13 #7)

"Need to reintroduce fulltime training on full pay." (Q12 #16)

"Targeting QUALITY teachers for retraining." (Q13 #84)

"...recruitment via university Education departments need to be implemented to gain younger teacher librarians." (Q13 #116)

"Go back to the system where experienced and effective teachers are recruited and paid to train as teacher librarians." (Q13 #182)

Improve the profile of teacher-librarians

"Future recruits need to see that the position is a valued and intricate part of the teaching and learning of the school, and not just a management one."(Q13 #140)

- **TL self-promotion evidence-based**

  *"Through **evidence based** inquiry detailing how the TL support and enhance learning." (Q13 #178)*

  "Promotion of positive research results that show the advantages students gain from a well resourced library and qualified teacher librarians." (Q13 #213)

- **Input into teacher training courses**

  "...the role of the teacher librarian needs to be covered in initial teacher training to ensure that new teachers are aware of how teacher librarians may provide

assistance – this in turn may assist in more people looking at training for these positions." (Q13 #168)

- **Change image to appeal to younger recruits**

  "...change the image of a librarian and advertise the challenges and possibilities of the role in a way which will appeal to young people." (Q13 #4)

  "...students and staff see it as a fantastic career...Promotion of libraries and TLs being part of the technological revolution." (Q13 #401)

- **National School Library Day** (Q13 #60)

Improve teacher-librarians' career pathway

"A clear career pathway needs to be developed." (Q13 #147)

"Status similar to HOD [Head of Department] within a school." (Q13 #20)

"It needs to be seen as a viable career path." (Q13 #361)

"Only position that requires a Masters Degree in a school! Yet they are being replaced by people with no qualifications. A TL should be an essential part of the curriculum team; it should be a senior position within a school and seen as an advancement in career." (Q13 #174)

"Recognise the additional qualifications and experience of TLs and acknowledge this with an additional increment in the pay scale..." (Q13 #182)

Redefine the role
- **Establish new role statement**

  "A clear role for teacher librarians in the 21st century needs to be developed." (Q13 #221)

  "Creation of a real TL role should be written within ASLA professional standards guidelines." (Q13 #374)

  "Focus on information literacy, ICT, inquiry, multi-modal learning and multi literacies." (Q13 #228)

  "CPT should be incorporated into curriculum documents. 'ICT skills' should be replaced by 'Digital literacy' – which incorporates information literacy." (Q13 #273)

  "...need for information literacy as distinct area of skills." (Q13 #263)

- **Phase out less competent and/or untrained people working in TL jobs**

"The technology side of the job should be emphasised...as it is the side which is under recognised and very exciting...those who cannot pass a technology test should be eased out." (Q13 #68)

"All unqualified teachers currently 'filling' Teacher Librarian positions to obtain specialist university degree and NOT do band-aid 6 week courses and on-the-job mentoring/ training." (Q13 #206)

Provide more training opportunities

"Availability of tertiary courses locally." (Q12 # 123)

"Improve the number and quality of training courses." (Q13 #161)

- **Undergraduate courses with major in Teacher Librarianship**

"There should be undergraduate training in education degrees...English and Teacher Librarianship as majors, then there would be a pool of those with appropriate qualifications in smaller and regional schools who could do part-time TL positions." (Q13 #18)

"Allow keen teachers to do the 4 subject CSU course which would give them a library qualification in a year." (Q13 # 139)

"All authorities need to invest in the value of teacher librarian training." (Q13 #399)

"Mentoring programs that DET NSW runs seem to be productive and collegiate and have encouraged new TLs to stay in the profession." (Q13 #151)

Improve conditions and budgets

"...very clear award conditions on work of TLs; many are exploited by principals and systems without recourse...and without support from others in the school or their unions." (Q13 #277)

"...individual TLs shouldn't have to negotiate their own working conditions." (Q13 #239)

"Resource libraries sufficiently with both staff and budget so that TLs feel they can actually achieve something." (Q13 #114)

Increase advocacy

"Advocacy through networks and professional organisations." (Q13 158)

"Reinstate a Library consultant." (Q13 #261)

"Having a permanent voice at systemic level to lobby for the case for including qualified Teacher-Librarians and showing how they can contribute to literacy appreciation and better reading levels in schools." (Q13 #15)

Summary

"There is much discussion about us being phased out. That needs to be stopped." (Q13 #135)

"There should be more parity between government and private schools otherwise all the good TLs will just travel across and leave the government schools struggling to find committed and trained staff." (Q13 #332)

"Give every school with low reading-engagement and poor information literacy outcomes a great TL for at least 6 months, with money to refresh the collection and time to collaborate with staff, and the school communities will turn around and put pressure on funding bodies to create TL positions and provide more training. There needs to be a demand at the grass-roots level AND support and funds from the top." (Q13 #42)

What suggestion/s would you give to the Federal Government's 'Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools'?
(Please note: Comments selected below have been chosen to reflect, in the main, different points-of-view to those already expressed in answers to other questions, and/or for the pertinence of their summary.)

"Increased funding to support the Federal Government policies on education - National Curriculum, BER libraries, NAPLAN, opportunities for Teacher Librarians to TEACH rather than manage." (Q14 #550)

"Value libraries and understand they have a lot to do with improving the literacy in primary schools. They need to have the proper staff which includes a trained teacher librarian to operate fully." (Q14 #547)

"School library buildings were a government priority back in late 1970s where many schools were funded for buildings on condition they would have someone to staff them. Now that most schools have a library it seems there is no need to have teacher-librarians running them!!! How absurd. It remains at the principal's discretion as to how much time a T-L has in the library...or if indeed the library is … left unmanned to be "visited" by the classes with their teacher. My library has a collection of over 10,000 items valued at $645,000. Why should it be "at the discretion of the principal" to allow these resources to be used for the benefit of the school - to resource the curriculum, to engage children in reading, to ensure access of resources for the whole school community?" (Q14 #544)

"If the Federal Government wants a clever country with critical thinkers, problem solvers and participating citizens who can exercise their democratic responsibilities then TLs are the front line in this fight -we have the big picture in education and use the past to inform the future. We are a diverse human resource that education cannot afford to lose in this rapidly evolving information explosion where critical thinking may be the only way to preserve our true democracy." (Q14 #542)

"Buildings and resources, whether print or digital, do not create literate citizens with inquiring minds, a thirst for learning and the ability to problem solve and create solutions. With expert knowledge library collections are just that - collections - not windows into new worlds. A wealth of resources in magnificent surroundings will not translate into effective information seeking and application. These are skills that need to be taught and nurtured." (Q14 #540)

"Provide funding for a full time teacher librarian in EVERY Australian school - no matter what the size to support class teachers with modern and up to date teaching and learning strategies which incorporate the use of libraries and ICTs into the curriculum." (Q14 #539)

"Ask parents what they want for their child from a school library. In addition to a well-stocked, attractive library with age appropriate resources that have been selected by a professional educator with the needs of their child in mind, they will tell you that they also want someone who will provide quality programs, support and advice that will inspire their child to become a keen reader who enjoys and values books. They will also want their child to know how to make the best possible use of their school library to do research for assignments and other class work using a wide range of resources, thereby ensuring that their child develops the skills necessary for them to become independent learners. Who better to meet these needs than a dual qualified Teacher librarian, who can provide sound, educational resources and programs, utilise their professional expertise in library management and share their enthusiasm for books and the importance of reading with their students?" (Q14 #519)

"It is tokenistic and naive to assert that the mere construction of a physical library building is sufficient to yield any meaningful, tangible educational outcome. This is a first step which must be backed up by a commensurate commitment to the human resourcing of these facilities." (Q14 #516)

"If the library is valued and appropriate people chosen to work in it, then it will be seen as a valuable position. We don't just need 'more' TLs, we need the right sort of TLs. Extra pay for extra relevant study would be great as well." (14 #513)

"Invest in the future of our students by providing real support. Teacher-Librarians are specialist teachers with classroom experience and a passion for empowering students with a thirst for knowledge, a love of literature and the skills to succeed in a world of emerging technologies. Our staff and students deserve the best support from the best people for the job... trained Teacher-Librarians." (Q14 #484)

"Work out what focus teacher librarians should have. Do you want us to equip students and staff with lifetime information literacy skills and a love of learning and reading or do you want us to be a stop gap in the timetable?" (Q14 #483)

"Knowledge is the future of our country. School children are not getting the broad spectrum of sourcing knowledge. Seeking knowledge seems to be directed to Google Search. This saddens me. Libraries can teach a multitude of other ways to tap into learning skills." (Q14 #460)

"Separate grants to be spent just on school libraries-- the BER blurred the distinction-- any school without a hall would go for a hall before a library! The old Commonwealth Grants profiled libraries... I think the 30 year cycle may be starting again as I see schools without trained people building new libraries." (Q14 #437)

"Survey all libraries in all schools in respect to funding all aspects - staffing, resources and equality within all sectors." (Q14 #421)

"The Federal Government needs to support the BER and the National Curriculum by ensuring that a qualified Teacher Librarian and Library Technician are attached to all schools with a library so that they can be managed properly and so that literature can be promoted according to the new national Curriculum. Culture is built on "story" ... we seem to have forgotten this very important part of our culture. Elevate the TL position in each school to the HOD Information Technology and our children will reap the reward. It is one thing to build a field but you need someone to tend the crop." (Q14 #415)

"Realise the importance of the Teacher-Librarians to not only help with information literacy but with literacy. If a child cannot read they cannot use digital resources effectively." (Q14 #409)

"Firstly, I would like to see an assessment of the value of databases for student learning. Not just in terms of content, but also readability and ease of access for students. This should be compared to books, as I feel this latter resource is now undervalued. Secondly, I would like to see an audit of the various jobs done in libraries and the development of staffing models required to do the tasks." (Q14 #344)

"TLs are overworked and haphazardly assigned roles in schools that deter from their function as a teacher Librarian. We need clear unambiguous working conditions that do not have to be negotiated or begged for at a school level as the power imbalance in negotiating is always in the hands of the principal." (Q14 #327)

"Equip the next generation with competent readers and users of information." (Q14 #282)

"Compulsory that all Teacher Librarian positions be filled by trained Teacher Librarians....Dentists don't deliver babies!" (Q14 #281)

"…teacher librarians be considered essential staffing in every primary, secondary and central school. We are in the Information Age so specialist information teachers are crucial to support the BER revolution and other education programs the Government is and will be implementing. TLs are crucial to alleviating the growing stresses classroom teachers face by collegially working side by side with their colleagues for the benefit of their students." (Q14 #211)

"A library without a Teacher-librarian is just a room full of resources." (Q14 #190)

"Read carefully the research that has already been carried out regarding the results that can be achieved through resource based learning, enquiry based learning etc., then look at the major assessment processes ie: NAPLAN, School Certificate, Higher School Certificate! The teaching is aiming at equipping students with skills and knowledge - but the assessments only test knowledge - which is the more unimportant of the two!!" (Q14 #186)

"Look closely at overseas initiatives where they have demolished libraries and removed TLs to see the impact it has had on their literacy scores." (Q14 #184)

"The school library professional role is as critical as ever, it is much broader now and open to constant change. It needs to be filled by a professional with high level multi-modal literacy knowledge and skills." (Q14 #153)

"Part of the national curriculum should ensure work units include team teaching activities across all KLA's with the TL." (Q14 #149)

"The role needs to be standardised as other jobs are. Specific role statements, qualifications and areas or responsibility need to be stated." (Q14 #90)

"Fund libraries from a special grant for each school similar to ICT grant so that admin can't strip away money from library services when other needs arise." (Q14 #83)

"Require TLs to have ICT competence - they need to have the highest skills base of all regular teaching staff. Require them to do a report to heads of schools of their input into the curriculum... More accountability must be instigated to remove the dead wood from the profession, and ensure the new recruits do the right thing." (Q14 #72)

"Visit school libraries - long visits, not 15 minutes whip-arounds. Those without TLs, and then those where there is a great TL who collaborates with classroom teachers, builds a warm community atmosphere and works well with students. Look at the differences in reader behaviours and research skills. Then the benefits of having a qualified TL will become far more apparent than nebulous 'results of a study in 5 countries' type data." (Q14 #41)

"Do not look back to what libraries were, but to the space and resources that students need in this increasingly rich information world." (Q14 #29)

"With a new National Curriculum rolling out, now is the perfect opportunity to throw some solid support behind T-L's, encourage collaboration in planning sessions with teachers to improve resourcing, integrating ICLT's in classrooms and libraries and make a solid contribution to raising literacy standards in all sectors of Education. This could easily be done by re-allocating existing systemic staff who have a passion for increasing Literacy standards with no further cost to government or private sectors, as this has been done before." (Q14 #14)

"If meaningful teaching and learning is to be achieved in the form of pedagogical fusion between learning, information, technology, people and place, then all schools require a qualified Teacher Librarian." (Q14 #10)