



To: Secretary, Australian Parliament House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training

Re: Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

My name is Marianne Musgrove and I am an Australian children's author. I am deeply concerned by the decline in the number of teacher librarians in Australian schools and wish to submit to you some points which I ask you to consider in your deliberations.

As part of my work as a children's author, I visit primary schools, almost always conducting my sessions in school libraries. I have been in the position of witnessing, first hand, the effect on students at schools where a fully-funded teacher librarian is present versus the effect on students when a teacher librarian is absent. Several things stand out:

- When a teacher librarian is employed at the school, the level of engagement of the students in reading and learning is significantly greater.
- The students are more knowledgeable about what books are available and how to access them.
- The students' enthusiasm for reading is higher.

I believe no school should ever be put in the position of having to choose between employing a teacher librarian or increasing the staff/student ratio. Literacy rates are directly affected by the engagement of children with books and teacher librarians are vital in facilitating this engagement. For this reason, I urge you to:

1. ensure adequate funding is provided for teacher librarians, and
2. develop national school library standards so that all children have equal access to quality education.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Marianne Musgrove
12 April 2010