

I wish to address this important issue. For our Australian school students - in both public and independent schools - it is of vital importance that we all get this one right

POINT ONE OF THE SUBMISSION

1. Recent investment on school libraries has been woefully inadequate. This has meant that the job description of teacher/librarians now includes providing release-from-face-teaching sessions for classroom teachers. This should not happen. To really create an impact and to prepare students adequately for the future, Teacher/librarians should be available to work in a collaborative and integrated way with classroom teachers developing units of work and teaching information skills in the school library setting.

2. The OASIS LIBRARY system is an inefficient model (in terms of reliability and performance) compared to comparable systems. Because of this, the image which the general public (parents and students in this context) receives of the school library is not always positive. A greater investment in a good quality library system which does not require constant calls for help to DET technicians is essential .

3. To date, when there is a "roll-out" of computers to each school, the computers usually go into classrooms. In order to really make school libraries places of excellence capable of inspiring the students to greater things , there should be regular roll-outs of computers especially ear-marked for the school libraries.

POINT TWO OF THE SUBMISSION

It is of great concern to me as a teacher/librarian in a N.S.W school , that in an age of advancing knowledge specialisation, there now exists the deplorable situation whereby school students are losing or have lost the very person who is skilled in teaching HOW to find information . To enlarge on this - as the twentieth and the twenty-first century has seen and is seeing an explosion of knowledge and enormous advances in technology , it is essential for students to develop skills in using information as part of the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning. Students who are aware of information sources and services , who have the confidence to approach them, and the flexibility of thinking to use them have the basis for a better quality of life than those who are unable to pursue their information needs - this is the domain of the teacher/librarian in schools. It is a role that cannot be fulfilled by a technician - it requires a teacher of the highest skill!

POINT THREE OF THE SUBMISSION:

Training courses for teacher/librarians are often piece-meal. Thought needs to be given to increasing funding to train Teacher/ librarians. The course that I undertook in 1985 was as an additional year after a Bachelor of Arts. Since then courses like that have disappeared. Training is often ,now, conducted

over a period of weeks or as an external course at an Institute of Higher Learning such as a university. It is not enough. Teachers could be given incentives to train or re-train as Teacher/librarians.

POINT FOUR OF THE SUBMISSION

Public libraries are important. They , however, CANNOT replace the school library because they are organisations concerned with providing a service NOT teaching a student HOW to use them That is why the school library MUST be serviced by a teacher/librarian and not a technician.

POINT FIVE OF THE SUBMISSION

School libraries are the vanguard for digital technologies . These technologies are highly attractive learning devices. Money needs to be spent to "capture" the students and educate ALL in their use. This means an electronic whiteboard in every school library and the Teacher/librarian trained in their use.

Finally, I would like to invite you to my library in Lane Cove. I am doing my very best to provide the best service I can with limited resources. I can only dream of what I could do if the library was properly resourced in the way I have indicated.

Thankyou

Ruth