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Submission to House Standing Committee on Education and Training inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

16 April 2010

1. Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) is a non-profit company that manages access to, and use of, copyright content. CAL's members include more than 15,000 Australian writers, illustrators, photographers and publishers. CAL is the government-authorised collecting society for collection and distribution of copyright payments for the use of text, images and notated music under Part VB of the Copyright Act (educational use) and Part VII Division 2 (for government use).
2. Government funding in infrastructure to house or deliver content – whether bricks and mortar or networked facilities – has not been accompanied by commensurate levels of funding for the acquisition of the content itself. That content is necessary for the infrastructure to serve its purpose.
3. The delivery of a world-class national curriculum is dependent upon world-class resources. While the availability of such resources is one part of the equation, their usefulness is entirely dependant upon teachers and students having the knowledge and skills to locate and evaluate them. This is the expertise that teacher librarians bring – an expertise that will only become more important as more resources become available online.
4. CAL is aware of the studies – referred to in other submissions to the inquiry – that show the many benefits of well-resourced school libraries and experienced teacher librarians. These include higher levels of reading, which in turn produce higher levels of literacy.
5. In many cases, the benefits of a school library extend beyond the school to the surrounding community, particularly where resources and facilities are shared with public or community libraries.
6. CAL supports calls for increased government support for school libraries and teacher librarians, including by:
 - funding for a teacher librarian in every school;
 - adequate funding of school libraries to acquire print, digital and other resources necessary to support the delivery of a world-class national curriculum;



- incentives and opportunities for people to qualify and work as teacher librarians, including through the availability of suitable training and career paths; and
- acknowledging and supporting the essential role of teacher librarians in delivering the government's education policies, including by communicating what the role involves to teachers, students, parents and others.

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