



Dear Sir/Madame,

Thank you for calling for submissions on this very important issue. This is an issue which I am very passionate about, unfortunately I have had little time to compile this submission; however, I have the following to say.

I have worked in high school libraries for over 8 years, as a library assistant; a large portion of this time was spent in a private secondary college in a large regional centre, lesser time in a Catholic systemic secondary college. I have worked for a management who did not employ qualified teacher librarians and at another school who has a dynamic (second generation) teacher librarian so I feel I have observed the best and worst of both approaches.

The students who left the college without having received the benefit of a qualified teacher librarian, without having experienced an integrated information literacy program across the curriculum and without ever having been guided or given personal instruction with information and digital literacy skills and without having had a college library which resonated with the joy of reading and without a current, well organised library service managed by a dedicated practitioner, will probably never go on to properly use a university or TAFE library, will probably never support or be an advocate for library services and never understand the value of their public library and why should they?

On the other hand the students from the college with a well organised library run by a qualified librarian and an experienced teacher will benefit and appreciate what can be gained from having a library which has measurable goals and objectives and is committed to delivering a quality service totally in sync with a supportive parent organisation, dedicated to meeting the educational needs of its students.

The information society has made a huge impact on library work, particularly technology. Students when given the opportunity to participate with technology take it up rapidly e.g. Digital Education Revolution also the One Computer Per Child program. Information technology challenges the role of teachers to not only teach the curriculum in the classroom but also to integrate it with technology. Class teachers have their hands full with classroom management and teaching programs with technology, they do not have the time to teach one-to-one information literacy skills nor deliver it at point of need e.g. lunch time, after school. Teacher librarians have been fulfilling this role for many years. Qualified teacher librarians can embed across the curriculum, with management support, information and digital literacy programs with effective measurable goals and outcomes which give students what they need in a context which is relevant to their learning experiences, yet still deliver a one-on-one instruction during lunch to a needy student.

Teacher librarians need to receive regular professional development to keep their information technology skills up to date. Students in schools are highly skilled in social medias but lack the maturity to understand how dangerous they can be, qualified teacher librarians are skilled and can play a real role within the school community to share their knowledge and teach the necessary skills and ethics for managing public profiles and social medias to students, teachers and parents.

Qualified teacher librarians are experienced practitioners of Readers advisory services, a very important role in schools in the 21st century when so many other activities compete for children's attention. Reading is a safe, pleasurable and relatively inexpensive pastime which opens new worlds and experiences to children and offers them opportunities to read about and connect with others like themselves. It is a creative industry within Australia which employs many and needs our support to survive in this global economy and to encourage publishing companies to keep publishing our stories and reflecting our cultural identity. Qualified teacher librarians are skilled and knowledgeable in selecting a quality range of books for their students to support their recreational reading and personal development and therefore supporting this important Australian industry.

Qualified teacher librarians may seem like an expensive luxury and in this age one may ask what special skills do they have above and beyond the classroom teacher. You only need to step inside the best schools to find out.

For the first time, the Federal Government has invested in schools and libraries in particular, like at no other time before. Why would you build a wonderful building, resourced with powerful technologies and yet not staff it with qualified, skilled practitioners whose professional values are underpinned by the commitment to the sharing of knowledge.

Qualified teacher librarians are now an aging profession it is time to reinvigorate the profession by giving it the recognition it deserves and by acknowledging it as being a critical delivery point of skills for the future workforce to support Australia's emerging digital economy.

All Australian schools should have a qualified teacher librarian at the helm of every school library and all schools should have a mandatory curriculum program of information and digital literacy skills with measurable outcomes, delivered by a qualified teacher librarian. This will give all school graduates, and the future Australian workforce, a comparable base line on which to build from, something which is not available at present.

Carrol Rogers