



NORTHERN TERRITORY ASSOCIATION FOR THE

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SUBMISSIONS TO LIBRARY ENQUIRY

We are very concerned that recent decisions in the Northern Territory have left decisions as to whether too even have a library in a new school falls to the Principal of the school. This leaves open the possibility of a very one dimensional view of how a school will function. Particularly in primary school printed books are crucial to literacy. Due to many circumstances, not the least of which could be economical, a lot of children are not subjected to a variety of books in the home. If 'libraries' are attached to classrooms this can give the impression that books are only for the purpose of learning and not for enjoyment.

A library, either public or school, is not just a repository for books. Librarians and their libraries are a vital part of society. At school they are a meeting place for social interaction where children can shares books and stories as well as games. The emergence of electronic media does not diminish the need for a physical library in fact it adds a completely new facet to learning and relaxation. This is embraced by the younger generation everywhere but when they can also have the oversight of expert researchers in the form of their teacher librarian this can only further their potential.

Librarians are trained to identify appropriate books for individual children and purposes. They can help children increase their literacy through engendering a love of books via a particular topic. Their knowledge of specific genres and grammar are extremely important in helping children put the pieces of the literacy together. This does not stop after primary school. There are many children of both high and low literacy that benefit from a great relationship with a librarian.

The loss of our dedicated teacher librarian had a devastating effect on our school community and students. By counting the librarian as establishment staff, and not a specialist teacher, it is often the first position the Principals look to replace. This is a very short sighted course of action. The librarian is crucial to helping all teachers promote their own learning as well as that of their students. The librarian should be above establishment teacher numbers. Where there is only a small number of children the position should be shared rather than disintegrated.

Susie Erratt

President

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