



Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

Submission presented by:

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Teacher Librarian

Also:

Chairperson

NSW Department of Education and Training's

Penrith, Mt Druitt, Blacktown and Windsor Teacher Librarian Professional Learning Group

Terms of Reference:

Point 2: the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy

School libraries and teacher librarians are essential to the current and future education of all Australian students; both in Primary and Secondary schools. Every Australian student has the right to the provision of a well resourced library and a fully qualified teacher librarian. It is the responsibility of the Australian and State Governments to ensure these opportunities are provided!

As stated by the Australian School Library Association (ASLA), the school library is, "*a vital teaching and learning environment in the school community*".

The school library's dynamic and rewarding teaching and learning programs support and are fully integrated with the classroom programs and other broader school

programs. Through such units of work as Guided Inquiry research units and author / illustrator literature studies, students' are empowered to become independent lifelong learners. Students are able to develop and refine critical skills such as information and digital literacies. These skills enable students to locate, select, analyse, synthesise and present information, using a wide range of information sources and formats (including books, Internet sites, Web 2.0), a well as a choice of presentation styles. Students develop the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with today's ever-changing and challenging world.

The Teacher Librarian works collaboratively with other teaching staff (including classroom teachers, ESL and Support Unit teachers) to co-operatively plan, resource, teach and evaluate stimulating, higher order thinking research tasks for students. There are enormous benefits of this collaborative approach for all involved - students teaching staff and the school community!

The teacher librarian is both Teacher and Librarian; taking a most important teaching role in the education of students as well as an administration / managerial role in maintaining the library collection (which meets the educational, cultural and recreational needs and interests of students, staff and other community members). The teacher librarian has the role of curriculum leader, information specialist and information services manager.

In conclusion, it is crucial for the future education of our Australian students that school libraries and qualified teacher librarians are fully funded and supported!

Reference:

Australian School Library Association (ASLA) Statement on school libraries in Australia

<http://www.asla.org.au/policy/school.libraries.Australia.htm>