

ue

Committee for the Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools.

We need at least one trained teacher librarian per school in Australia because teacher librarians:

- Work with students and teachers to help them become more information literate. In today's world, the need for digital citizenship to address cyberbullying, copyright and netiquette, the teacher librarian is ideally placed to teach these skills to both students and teachers.
- Teacher librarians collaborate with teachers to plan, implement and evaluate student learning.
- Teacher librarians initiate whole school programs such as Book Week and the Readers Cup.
- Teacher librarians select resources (both physical – books and appropriate internet sites) that apply to the curriculum. Sites that are educationally relevant and responsible are vital and as a trained teacher, the teacher librarian has insight into the needs of students and teachers.
- Teacher librarians support teachers. Knowing the demands of teaching, teacher librarians can provide moral support as well as suggest resources for teaching that teachers may not have seen or thought of using.
- Teacher librarians keep up-to-date with technology and pedagogy via their Personal Learning Networks, such as the strong global educational community on Twitter.
- Teacher librarians often help lead schools in terms of curriculum, building and other resources.
- Teacher librarians often provide professional learning to other teachers, such as implementing a cybersafe curriculum and using social media for learning.

- Teacher librarians are innovators. They try out new resources and ideas.
- Teacher librarians help raise literacy standards by supporting literacy programs, purchasing and recommending appropriate reading materials for each and every student.
- Teacher librarians help develop and maintain students' love of reading by providing activities, books and attractive places to read. Book recommendations can be done personally or via a library book blog (or both).
- Teacher librarians have a global network and as such can link teachers and students with others across the globe for collaborative projects.
- Teacher librarians are lifelong learners. They know that they will never be finished learning from others, changing and finding opportunities to improve all aspects of schooling.
- Teacher librarians model good skills for students;
  - such as collaboratively working with other teachers within the school and across the globe
  - such as demonstrating how to acknowledge sources and compile bibliographies
  - such as showing respect to others by teaching appropriate netiquette.
- Teacher librarians have always performed a vital role in learning and teaching, more so now that the role of social media and Web 2.0 is embedded in learning and teaching. (Some of these ideas have been based on [What Should an Administrator Expect a School Library Media Specialist to Be?](#))
- According to ACARA, essential capabilities like ICT literacy (or Information Literacy) will be embedded across all areas of the school curriculum, placing the teacher librarian as the most useful person to oversee this.

Many school libraries have been built as a part of the Building the Education Revolution. Now we need trained teacher librarians to staff them to enable all of the above points to occur.

One of the reasons why there has been a drop in the number of teacher librarians is that the availability of university courses for such professionals has dropped from 19 to 3. The course at the University of Melbourne where I studied teacher librarianship as part of the Bachelor of Education course closed in the 1990s and has meant that a course in teacher librarianship must be done as a post graduate degree. The integrated course meant that an excellent overview of the responsibilities of the teacher librarian was embedded into the course, rather than 'tacked on' as per post graduate courses.

We need more courses at undergraduate level for teacher librarians as a matter of urgency.

Around the year 2000, Victorian schools were made to drop their class sizes, with no extra government funding. So funds were taken from other areas of the school, and specialists, such as teacher librarians were cut from the school's program. Specialists must be protected and funded specifically.

Thank you.

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