



COMPLETED SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE 16 APRIL 2010  
FROM A TEACHER LIBRARIAN IN NSW DET PRIMARY K-6 SCHOOL  
NAME: CARMEL DELDUCA

General Comment: I am prepared to address the committee in person to explain my comments if they find this necessary to clarify any issue.

1. The impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities.

This announcement led to a collective sigh of relief as at last something was going to be done to improve the plight of teacher librarians in primary schools.

The position of TL has been downgraded used and abused in many primary schools since I first did my training in a full time fully funded course at Kuringai CAE .

That DET funded course saw us as already experienced teachers chosen released from our schools then trained alongside all other librarians, private corporate and local government etc .We also did separate specialist Educational courses to suit the school environment while the other students did specialists courses to suit their area of interest. The course content I studied is shown in the two still valid documents : " NSW DET SCHOOLS LIBRARY POLICY" (found on line at NSW DET Library services (update of "LIBRARIES IN NSW GOVT SCHOOLS POLICY STATEMENT 1987") and " INFORMATION SKILLS IN THE SCHOOL"

There is also a separate Handbook for running the library management processes

\*We were trained to be specialist support teachers across all curriculum areas.

(including specific Information Skills as shown in NSW DET K-6 English Curriculum)

\*We were trained to plan/teach/support alongside the classroom teacher who retained responsibility for the class programme.

\*We were trained to be responsible/maintain/stock take all learning resources in the school .The Brains Trust if you like.

\*We were trained to liase with the community ,parent groups/local libraries local businesses and to be event organisers across K-6 "Book WeeK" ANZAC Day,Harmony Day,

World Environment Day,visiting authors ,illustrators ,Book Fairs ,Fundraisers etc

\*We were trained to expect a minimum of 20%-30% administration time ...to maintain ,renew, refresh, stocktake, monitor the resource collection/borrower usage etc .

\*We were trained to expect to receive our 2hrs RFF or equivalent to prepare /plan for our co-operative teaching role with the class teachers.

\*We were trained to expect to be employed with proper working conditions to carry out our dual roles.(a purpose built library office space, toilet breaks,meal breaks,adequate budget,a safe and hygienic work environment,equity on the duty roster,adequate time for stocktaking etc.

Unfortunately the training was far from the reality of the school working environment for many of us then and is even worse now !

A government announcement such as this Inquiry is akin to a SORRY DAY announcement for many primary school teacher librarians !

My experiences in schools since my training have been at times horrific. At some schools I have been sent to I have encountered on arrival. old broken malfunctioning computers that lose many hours of work , filthy dust filled black mould laden shelves ,inconsistent resource organisation due to many varied styles of untrained attempts at processing etc.

NO library office to work from,no chair to sit on ,no desk to work from No budget in place no equity in duty rosters,almost non existent cross ventilation ,unflued gas heaters etc. en

The principals in many schools are incompetent and simply not able to understand or properly implement a "proper" library programme.Some even mismanage by using the Teacher Librarians as the RFF teacher for the school.Then spending the RFF funds to give the exec teachers time off A misuse of taxpayers dollars.

They have no idea of what a Teacher Librarian has been trained for and how this is to support and compliment the students learning environment.

At my most recent school the principal had not programmed any administration time for me to administer the library. When I showed her the DET circular re the 20%.

She virtually spat at me "What 20% ?" When I explained she then in the same manner told me this : "If I want to give you 3% I will give you 3% If I want to give you 7% then you will get 7% The experience has been a nightmare as I have also had no proper library office .I have a shared desk (with the school counsellor and my one day library assistant in a shared corridor.

She then announced that I was to complete a separate word doc for each of the 450 student that included "individual student comments" .Reports for the 450 students! This was unable to be done at home as only accessible through Staff Share at work..... with little notice no extra time no extra access to the "shared" computer....another nightmare!

Due to the failure of Leadership at the top the following occurs:

Classroom teachers have not been trained to work either with TLs or the Library as per the policy documents.

Many classroom teachers have no idea of how to work "with" TLs .eg I was told recently when I approached an up and coming new school leader with some planning suggestions I thought he might consider for our "joint" lessons,he said."YOU ARE THE LIBRARIAN !YOU DO IT! IT IS YOUR JOB NOT MINE!" Many use the library as a dumping ground leaving the class with the TL and saying... just off to the toilet,just off to make a phone call, just have to see someone etc. I think if the TL said this to the class teacher there would be adverse comment.

The TL has to deal separately with each teacher ,each support teacher ,each class, and each student as well as each parent

The training of student teachers of today has almost no integration with the library policy documents. Many of them have no idea how to use a computer to look up information

/book locations etc.

## 2.FUTURE POTENTIAL OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

THE STUDENTS LOVE THE SCHOOL LIBRARY, and so do the parents !!Potentially. ..and in reality when it is allowed to work as it should. They find it friendly unstressful accommodating to individuals and a non threatening a place where they can explore their own learning interests either alone or in groups on the computer or through books. A great opportunity to embrace literary when clean properly organised and adequately resourced through an an adequate budget entitlement .

They love it when the librarian links them to the community in which they live through learning experiences. It is the place that provides a consistent conduit between home, the whole school community K-6 , their own classroom and the wider outside community. They appreciate the consistency of the same face... the school TL .They usually do not know their local govt librarian due to shift work hours and their lack of teaching expertise and curriculum knowledge.

Pre school and high School age children are more readily worked with by local govt libraries .

Less so primary school students in the true learning /teaching sense as they are not as likely to be taken to the library by their parents or to go their independently due to working parents and stranger danger concerns .

## 3.FACTORS INFLUENCING RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The need for more funding is a factor.Governments have to provide more money in this area.

Re the development one way would be to retrain all the Principals .There is little relevant leadership in schools re school libraries. Principals and executive teachers are mostly unaware of the 2 present DET library policy teaching documents or the Handbook.

Also to include training re TLs role and the role school libraries to student teachers while still at university .

All present Classroom teachers need to be in-serviced /have Professional Development on the 2 present DET library policy documents

## 4.THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN PARTNERING WITH AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Federal Govt..Provide extra funding for purpose built school library office area /library.. And use the school library to promote relevant govt promotions

Local Govt ...

Concentrate on the student age groups that are taken by parents to the local libraries

eg. pre school .And on the student age groups that can go there independently ; High school YRS 7-12 .Provide resources to K-6 schools

State Government :

\*Provide funding through the education budget and provide a fully trained TL to each K-6 school

\*Provide a proper purpose built library office./library

\*Revise ,renew, update the Library Policy and Information Skills documents and provide printed copies to all DET staff and then inservice all teachers on the content and purpose of these documents.

\* Change the name to Literacy Centres if you like. Provide professional dev to existing school exec and all teachers re libraries on how they would use these to meet best literacy practice.

\*Do Not use Teacher Librarians for the Release From Face to Face RFF. Disruptive demoralising and demeaning and stressfull for TLs in K-6 schools as there is evidence that this teaching is unlike classroom teaching which includes passive teaching time. RFF teaching does not and this causes stress.

\*Do not use Teacher Librarians for Executive Release....Exec get paid enough to work more effectively and as best practice teachers they should be on their class role modelling for other teachers .

Local communities partnering

This is easy , but give us an actual library office/space budget /resource centre first and time to administer it .

This potentially is a huge area...but don't put the cart before the horse. Give TLs the freedom to get on with area. If we are looking for community support we have to show them we have something in place and a plan we can work towards with a shared vision. I feel they will be generous.

## 5.THE IMPACT AND POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE AND SUPPORT THE ROLES OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND TEACHER LIBRARIANS.

I feel that all has already been said on this area in recent years.

The problem would arise if there were too many computers that were not being used appropriately educationally.

If students are allowed free rein they are more likely to become ADDICTED to computer use. Libraries could come to resemble Clubs (where people mindlessly are sitting addicted to poker machines...studies show children can become addicted to computers.

This may lead to behaviour and health (physical /eyesight etc) problems.

We all know that computer access is the way it is these days and we accept and embrace this. But it needs safe educational management

The students though can become easily frustrated if they are not taught by a teacher librarian what/where/how/why to access information sought by them. If they lose interest because they are not receiving enough individual teaching support then they may just want to play games and yes this too can be educational but they need strategies to learn to study and how to develop search skills disciplines.

IN CONCLUSION:

Their real issue for school libraries is not " WHAT to teach" but "HOW to teach".

A lot of this "HOW" relates to the students having a proper purpose built LIBRARY LITERACY CENTRE K-6 and being taught a class programme by their class teacher supported by a fully trained specialist TEACHER LIBRARIAN.

The TL ROLE needs to be understood by all the stakeholders. The TL needs to be PROPERLY RESOURCED ( a proper library office space inclusive) to carry out their many functions .The TL role needs FLEXIBLE TIMETABLING to be mandatory. This will allow community involvement , parent involvement, literacy and govt educational promotions etc to be showcased as appropriate.TLs not to do RFF and the 20% minimum admin enforced.

The ignorance of the role of the TL and indeed the school library is such that as I said to some one recently I may as well have arrived at the school to teach Mandarin ..The Principal had no idea of my job as I had been trained per the two polcy documents and neither did many of the teaching body many of whom could not even understand how to locate (using computer search and Dewey numbers) a book in the library.

The students and parents however are fabulous .They have appreciated the improvements I have made since arriving there almost 3 years ago all love the library(that has been closed since Dec 2009 awaiting our BER 14 )I am asked every day as to when it will re open ?

My journey through school libraries has at times been horrific ...due I would say to inadequate and ill informed leadership.

But the potential is great !

Thankyou for Caring !

Carmel Delduca