



Submission into the Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools

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

Policies for the improvement of library infrastructure and buildings will enhance the physical learning environment for students but does not address the importance of professional staff.

- Who, through their knowledge and understanding, can promote reading and literature
- Who purchase, organise, promote and develop all the resources
- Who provide access to the full range of resources that can cater for different reading levels, curriculum areas and learning styles;
- Who develop curriculum with teachers which integrates a range of resources such as online, print and audio; and
- Who can provide access to quality virtual resources for curriculum programs

**2. The future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy**

Note: professional staff in school libraries must be Teacher Librarians. Teacher Librarians have a teaching qualification plus experience in the classroom, as well as a postgraduate qualification that is an entry level into the profession of Information Science (Librarianship). As trained teachers, TLs are able to:

- communicate and design curriculum programs with teachers which incorporate a range of resource formats; and
- fulfil the duty of care requirements as stated in the Education Act.
- Promote reading and literacy in a different environment to the classroom – where students are able to choose for themselves from a wide range of resources. Research has shown that students like to make their own choices about reading.

As Information Specialists, TLs:

- provide access to quality digital resources which support curriculum and students learning outcomes;
- design programs which train students in the effective, efficient and appropriate use of digital resources.
- Are always available to assist student research

Research which irrefutably supports the value TLs bring to academic programs and student learning include the importance of school libraries - research

(<http://www.chs.ecu.edu.au/portals/ASLRP/links-schoollib.php>  
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### **3. The factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians**

- Currently there is a shortage of qualified Teacher Librarians in schools across Australia.
- This is an aging population with grave issues associated with succession planning and sustainability.
- Only three institutions currently prepare TLs in recognised Graduate Diploma and Masters Level courses – Charles Stuart University, Edith Cowan University and Queensland University of Technology.
- Hence many schools have libraries which are run by library technicians, and library officers or parents who are not qualified to provide the educational components.
- With ever increasing needs to access information in order to participate in society, all students should be entitled to the best possible education in research methods – the Teacher Librarian is the best qualified to do this.

More information: The Australian School Libraries Project  
(<http://www.chs.ecu.edu.au/portals/ASLRP/publications.php>  
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**I work as a permanent part-time Teacher Librarian at Scotch College, Perth, WA. We have one fulltime T/L and two part-time T/Ls, so there are always two qualified staff on duty. We also have a library technician and a library officer. I arrived in Perth, qualified in NZ as a teacher. I was fortunate to see an advertisement in The Australian for a Graduate Diploma in Teacher Librarianship offered at ECU. I enrolled in the course and was able to complete it part time, over four years, both internal and external. This flexibility made it possible for me to achieve this qualification.**

### **4. The role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians.**

A contact person who works across the curriculum and has a detailed knowledge of information services and resources is required for the effective communication and establishment of links between various levels of government and other institutions when supporting school communities. Teacher Librarians:

- operate within a highly pro-active professional community and respond to and create links with the public library sector (urban and rural), the Telecentre network (rural and remote), and provide information services for the school community, including teachers, administration and parents and citizens;
- such links allow for the maximum use of public information utilities and equity of access for all students and their parents;
- provide programs which assist students in the transition from primary to secondary school and secondary to tertiary studies; and
- assist in the development of literacy programs for ESL students and their parents.

### **5. The impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians**

Digital technologies as evidenced by the Federal Government's computers for all students program, does not include training for teachers or students. In schools, it is often the Teacher Librarian who provides:

- specialist knowledge, support and professional development training for staff in how to use and embed digital technologies into curriculum;
- the management of technologies for equitable access;
- the infrastructure and policy development required for acceptable and appropriate use of a wide range of digital resources and technologies, including cyberbullying, privacy, identity theft and security of information;
- the educational rationale for the effective inclusion of digital technologies in the curriculum;
- equal access to a range of digital resources and delivery formats which support the development of high quality literacy programs in schools.

**My Recommendation:**

**All school libraries, from primary through to secondary, should be staffed by appropriately trained professionals. Teacher Librarians are trained to manage and teach in school libraries. The library should be the focus of learning and curriculum development in the school.**