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School Library Association of Victoria submission to the Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

The School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV) is a professional teaching association with 800 individual and institutional memberships representing some 5,000 school library personnel in government, independent and catholic schools in Victoria.

Mission Statement
The School Library Association of Victoria offers dynamic, inspiring opportunities for teacher-librarians and library teams to build their essential role in engaging and developing lifelong learners.

Collegiality: Connecting members through a statewide network and community

Leadership: Enhancing awareness of global educational research, innovation and best practice in school libraries

Advocacy: Articulating the role of the school library as a partner in the learning and teaching process

The School Library Association of Victoria provides a collegiate network established by and for its members. Discussion and collaboration within the organisation best identifies the needs of its members. The association infrastructure is then well-placed to initiate professional development activities, a publications program, regional network support, technological support for discussion and reflection and impetus for action research, dissemination of findings and evidence-based practice.

The focus of the activities of the School Library Association of Victoria is to provide strategies and resources that support the various ways that teacher-librarians and school libraries interact with and implement an innovative curriculum framework within an ICT-rich learning environment.

This submission is therefore informed by the experience of the association's management group and members in relation to the curriculum and leadership role of teacher-librarians and the school library in its role in enhancing student literacy and transforming learning and teaching with particular reference to emerging technologies.

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Summary of main points

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

- Appropriately staffed and resourced school libraries are vital for the successful implementation and delivery of current national and state curriculum frameworks which articulate interdisciplinary or cross-curricula skills and an ICT-rich learning environment.

- Budget cutbacks and devolution of funding has resulted in inadequate school library staffing particularly in primary schools in Victoria and therefore the recent school library and ICT infrastructure investment will not achieve the objectives of the Building the Education Revolution and the Digital Education Revolution unless this staffing situation is remedied.

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

- All Australian citizens are entitled to develop the skills that allow them to enjoy participative and responsible citizenship. These skills can be defined as reading literacy, information literacy and digital literacy,

- International research indicates that reading proficiency increases with the amount of time spent reading voluntarily. This research also supports the positive correlation between the role of the teacher-librarian, reading and literacy scores and academic achievement,

- Engagement with reading is the most influential factor in increasing reading proficiency. Teacher-librarians have the skills to engage students as readers – skills that are not replicated by others in the school environment. Teacher-librarians develop diverse reading collections of print and other resources, they have knowledge of digital and multimedia resources, an understanding of the reading abilities and visual literacy needs of students and the means of connecting students with reading material appropriate to their interests,

- Research indicates that a strong library program that integrates ICT and literacy skills and that is adequately staffed, resources and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the adults in the community,

- Active, participative citizenship in the 21st century requires digital literacy. Digital literacy also requires an understanding of cybersaftey issues, of copyright and intellectual property issues. Digital literacy is as much about safety as it is about finding and using information. The teacher-librarian brings management and bibliographic skills to this task as well as the expertise and overview required to ensure that teachers and students have an understanding of the implications of publishing to the web. The teacher-librarian can play a very valuable role in coordinating the development of protective behaviours that social networking and web publishing require.

The factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians

- Very limited opportunities exist within Australia at the undergraduate level for school leavers and others to enroll in a course that complies with the dual qualification requirements of teacher-librarianship.

- Reports of budget and staffing cutbacks in school libraries, particularly in primary schools in Victoria, have also discouraged the take-up of courses in teacher-librarianship. The result is a skills shortage in the area.

- Action is required at the state and national level to respond to this skills shortage, particularly in the light of the Australia Curriculum and similar curriculum initiatives.

- Teacher-librarians and school library team members also require access to professional learning opportunities which provide them with the skills and knowledge for the changing education and information landscape.

- Identification and support of interested teachers who may wish to undertake a library qualification is often the most effective means of recruitment to the profession,

- Current research indicates that strong collaborative partnerships between teacher-librarians and school administration team results in more effective library programs and learning outcomes,

- The School Library Association of Victoria works with cross-sectoral industry groups to promote library and information industry career opportunities.

The role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school libraries

- The School Library Association of Victoria enjoys strong connections and strategic working partnerships with Victorian cultural institutions, the public library sector, industry training groups, professional teaching associations and tertiary institutions. These collaborative activities and professional networks ensure that cultural growth and knowledge is maintained and shared at the local and state level and facilitates the role of the school library as the conduit of this cultural heritage to their teaching colleagues and to the broader school community.

- School libraries are cultural community spaces. School libraries, and particularly those which offer a welcoming and ICT-rich space such as those built as a result of the Building Educational Revolution and Digital Education Revolution, are regularly used as parent and community meeting spaces and offer community use of facilities. School libraries and teacher-librarians are therefore very well positioned to ensure that the school and the broader community are connected, that collaborative

partnerships are fostered, and that school and community programs and values are shared. Teacher-librarians therefore are pivotal to the cultural development, knowledge-building and community of learning not only within their own schools but can act as a conduit and facilitator for community involvement and partnerships.

- Community access to emerging technologies within school libraries also opens up enormous opportunities for collaboration and the development of communities of learning. Small, remote school communities can connect to learning communities across the globe, they can meet virtually with research experts to gain information and even to share the new knowledge that they have created as a result of their independent research at their own school library – truly a student voice to an authentic audience.

- By working with their local public library staff and with tertiary institution staff, teacher-librarians provide the conduit to broaden and deepen the student experience and to prepare students for the challenges that tertiary study offers.

Impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians

- The use of electronic databases, digitised formats and interactive media has fostered a major shift to more collaborative and interactive learning. This collaborative approach is reflected in the expectations of the Australian Curriculum and similar innovative curriculum frameworks,

- Teacher-librarians are in the perfect position to act upon the potential of these new formats, to use the new technologies to make collaboration easy, to move seamlessly from individual learning projects to cross-curricular projects, to provide a positive model and an ideal learning space to exploit the potential of the new web 2.0 technologies for individual learning and for social, group or networked learning,

- Schools are continually faced with decisions relating to e-texts and e-books, hand held mobile technology, new collaborative software, applications and digital resource repositories. Teacher-librarians manage and advise the school administration, teachers and students in relation to these resources in the same way as they managed and advised in relation to print-based resources. They have the transferable skills to ensure that these emerging technologies make the greatest impact on learning across the school,

- It is important to acknowledge that free search engines such as Google do not provide access to all the resources that students require for their learning or the development of the skills they require for their future learning – adequate funding for the provision of database and online resources is vital,

- The teacher-librarian and the library team work with the school administration to raise awareness within the school community of the importance of safe and protective behaviour in an online environment. They contribute to the implementation of appropriate strategies that create and maintain a safe and supportive online learning environment. Teacher-librarians develop skills that support digital literacy, personal responsibility and ethical behaviour in students, as well as the ability to appropriately access, manage and evaluate information and online interactions,

- School libraries support not only the consumption of media but the production of media and now require the facilities to incorporate multimedia production such as film, podcasting, video streaming and related activities.

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

Summary of main points
- Appropriately staffed and resourced school libraries are vital for the successful implementation and delivery of current national and state curriculum frameworks which articulate interdisciplinary or cross-curricula skills and an ICT-rich learning environment.

- Budget cutbacks and devolution of funding has resulted in inadequate school library staffing, particularly in primary schools in Victoria, and therefore the recent school library and ICT infrastructure investment will not achieve the objectives of the *Building the Education Revolution* and the *Digital Education Revolution* unless this staffing situation is remedied.

Recent curriculum innovations such as the **Victorian Essential Learning Standards** (VELS) have articulated the skills, knowledge and behaviours that students require to develop as expert, independent learners. Identified within the VELS as the *Interdisciplinary Learning Strand*, it articulates the student learning outcomes of thinking skills, information skills, communication skills and ICT skills. It is it is these transferable skills that underpin learning. Teacher-librarians therefore offer programs, collaborative support to teachers and targeted instructional interventions to develop these skills in students.

> *The interdisciplinary learning strand identifies a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours which cross disciplinary boundaries and are essential to ensuring students are prepared as active learners and problem-solvers for success at school and beyond. This strand focuses on ways of thinking, communicating, conceiving and realising ideas and information.*
> The VELS, Interdisciplinary Learning Strand, Level 6, p93

This recent curriculum innovation has certainly underscored the vital role that school libraries and teacher-librarians play in curriculum planning and implementation.

Within this curriculum framework, even more than ever, it is necessary that school libraries are appropriately staffed and resourced in order to support and enhance the curriculum. An appropriately staffed and resourced school library:

- provides, integrates and utilises an ICT-rich environment to support learning and teaching,

- provides interdisciplinary and information literacy skills instruction,

- provides technological literacy skills instruction in the usage of emerging technologies,
works in collaboration with teachers to structure the learning experience based on the principles of inquiry-based learning,

- builds knowledge and understanding through engagement with information sources.

Similarly, it is very positive to see the articulation and embedding of general capabilities within the **Australian Curriculum** documents. An example of this occurs in History where the concept of 'historical inquiry' is explored. The draft document indicates, "thinking skills are particularly inherent in the historical inquiry process. The demands of historical inquiry include the ability to ask questions; interrogate, select and cross reference sources; draw inferences and form interpretations using sources from the past." Similarly, in relation to ICT, the draft documents state,

> *"Information and communication technologies (ICT) are evident in historical skills associated with locating, processing and communicating historical information. This includes the use of search tools for accessing a growing range of digitized online materials, spreadsheets and databases for analysing evidence and historical trends, and video conference for collaboration and debating ideas. ICT tools such as wikis and blogs, have the potential to enhance students' analytical thinking capabilities in their study of history."*

> Australian Curriculum, History, Draft Consultation version 1.0,
> ACARA Australian Curriculum Consultation Portal

The clear need for appropriately staffed and resourced school libraries in order to achieve the outcomes of the above-mentioned curriculum frameworks is in marked contrast to the results of budget and staffing cuts to school libraries that have occurred in Victorian schools. Within the government and Catholic school sectors, over the last two decades, overall budget cuts to education, the move to global local budgets, and an imperative to achieve smaller class sizes in primary schools in particular, has resulted in schools being forced to make decisions to forgo specialist teaching staff such as teacher-librarians.

Two recent surveys carried out in Victorian primary and secondary schools confirm this. Using the standards developed by the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) as a benchmark, Welch and Braybrook (2002) found that 20 per cent of schools in Victoria are staffed at a level equal to or above the recommended level and 80 per cent are below this standard, and that 70 per cent of schools in the survey operate below the recommended number of hours needed to staff school libraries.

Reynolds and Carroll (2001) found that since 1983 the number of primary school libraries being staffed by qualified teacher-librarians has dropped dramatically from 55 to 13 per cent. They also found that 12 per cent of the school libraries in their survey are being managed by someone with no formal qualifications of any kind, although some of these schools had at least one qualified teacher-librarian on their staff. The Reynolds and Carroll survey also reveals that many respondents are undertaking other responsibilities in addition to their library role, such as arts coordinator, assistant principal, classroom teacher, integration teacher, information technology coordinator, LOTE teacher and literacy coordinator.

The investment in school library infrastructure through the "Building the Education Revolution" and the "Digital Education Revolution" funding has been most welcome and has focused attention again

on the student learning expectations articulated in the above-mentioned curriculum frameworks. These infrastructure investments, however, will only achieve their revolutionary potential when complemented by qualified personnel.

Recommendations

- That support be given to the development of benchmarks and standards for the staffing of school libraries appropriate to the objectives of the Australian Curriculum and similar innovative curriculum frameworks documents,

- That, in the light of the Building the Education Revolution and the Digital Education Revolution, financial support be provided to ensure that all school libraries are staffed to these standards and benchmarks.

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

Summary of main points

- All Australian citizens are entitled to develop the skills that allow them to enjoy participative and responsible citizenship. These skills can be defined as reading literacy, information literacy and digital literacy,

- International research indicates that reading proficiency increases with the amount of time spent reading voluntarily. This research also supports the positive correlation between the role of the teacher-librarian, reading and literacy scores and academic achievement,

- Engagement with reading is the most influential factor in increasing reading proficiency. Teacher-librarians have the skills to engage students as readers – skills that are not replicated by others in the school environment. Teacher-librarians develop diverse reading collections of print and other resources, they have knowledge of digital and multimedia resources, an understanding of the reading abilities and visual literacy needs of students and the means of connecting students with reading material appropriate to their interests,
- Research indicates that a strong library program that integrates ICT and literacy skills and that is adequately staffed, resources and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the adults in the community,

- Active, participative citizenship in the 21st century requires digital literacy. Digital literacy also requires an understanding of cybersaftey issues, of copyright and intellectual property issues. Digital literacy is as much about safety as it is about finding and using information. The teacher-librarian brings management and bibliographic skills to this task as well as the expertise and overview required to ensure that teachers and students have an understanding of the implications of publishing to the web. The teacher-librarian can play a very valuable role in coordinating the development of protective behaviours that social networking and web publishing require.

All Australians are entitled to develop the skills that allow them to enjoy participative and responsible citizenship. Literacy has long been recognised as necessary for such active participation.

This is reiterated in the English Domain of the VELS:

> *Understanding texts and recognising how language works within them is necessary for success at school and beyond for an active, informed and fulfilling life in modern Australian society and the global community. By understanding and working with texts, students acquire the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that enable them to read, view and listen critically and to think, speak and write clearly and confidently.*
>
> The VELS - English Domain, Reading, p. 5

International research across many countries that has been replicated again and again, suggests that reading proficiency increases with the amount of time spent reading voluntarily and this international research supports the positive correlation between the role of the teacher-librarian and reading and literacy scores and academic achievement:

> *The positive correlation among teacher-librarians, libraries and reading – ability to read, motivation to read, quantity read, results on reading assessments – has been true across grade levels, socio-economic class, urban/rural areas and across several decades.* (Haycock)

This research also indicates that it is not just the technical element of reading or the decoding of symbols that is required – but it is engagement with reading that makes all the difference. In recent OECD studies, Australian students scored reasonably well in reading proficiency but poorly on reading engagement. The teacher-librarian facilitates reading engagement in a range of ways.

> *Teacher-librarians typically place the right book in the right hands at the right time and encourage a lifelong love of reading.* (Haycock)

Australia children's reading experts, Dr. Susan La Marca and Dr. Pam Macintyre in their publication, *Knowing readers: Unlocking the pleasures of reading*, state,

> *"The richest and most effective reading environments come when teachers and teacher-librarians work in cohort to demonstrate the varied pleasures of being a reader, from vigorous debate and discussion to time for quiet extended personal reading - to be 'caught' by a book. In both subtle and overt ways, teachers and teacher-librarians are enabling adults for the students in their classes. The challenge is for the subtle and the overt, the informal and the formal, the in-class and out-of-class interactions to be consistently expressing the private and shared pleasures of being a member of the community of readers."*

This statement is further supported by the research and writing of renowned educator and academic, Stephen Krashen who finds that there is a great deal of evidence showing that children with more access to books read more. Again, Australian author, James Moloney writes, "the teacher-librarian has the specialized knowledge of reading material which classroom teachers may lack and can offer the guidance that teachers often do not."

Teacher-librarians create reading communities by engaging members of the school with literacy opportunities of all kinds. Through the provision of extensive and diverse collections and teaching and promotional programs they develop literate communities. Literate communities are achieved through:

• access to current, quality, high interest, and extensive collections of books and other print materials in their libraries and classrooms;

- contact with adults who read regularly and widely and who serve as positive reading role models;

- qualified teacher-librarians and classroom teachers who demonstrate their enthusiasm for reading by reading aloud and booktalking;

- time during the school day dedicated to reading for pleasure, information, and exploration;

- opportunities specifically designed to engage young people in reading;

- schools that create an environment where independent reading is valued, promoted, and encouraged;

- opportunities that involve care givers, parents and other family members in reading.

Research indicates that school libraries can have a positive impact on student achievement – whether such achievement is measured in terms of reading scores, literacy or learning more generally – in the following key ways:

- a strong library program that is adequately staffed, resourced and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the adults in the community;

- a strong computer network connecting the library's resources to the classroom and laboratories has an impact on student achievement;

- the quality of the collection has an impact on student learning;

- test scores are higher when there is higher usage of the school library;

- collaborative relationships between classroom teachers and school librarians have a significant impact on learning, particularly in relation to the planning of instructional units, resource collection development, and the provision of professional development for teachers;

- a print-rich environment leads to more reading, and free voluntary reading is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary growth, spelling and grammatical ability, and writing style;

- integrating information literacy into the curriculum can improve students' mastery of both content and information seeking skills; and that

- libraries can make a positive difference to students' self-esteem, confidence, independence and sense of responsibility in regard to their own learning.

Michelle Lonsdale, *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: A review of the research*, ACER, Victoria, 2003

In a recent master class presented on behalf of SLAV by Dr Carol Gordon, *The role of reading in guided inquiry: Building engagement and understanding.* Dr Gordon explored the evidence that reading skills are critical to learning and to taking students' thinking from understanding to the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy – applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating.

Gordon sees the role of the teacher-librarian in the 21st century as taking a greater and more proactive role in the development of reading for understanding, which focuses on reading comprehension of informational text, usually in the context of inquiry learning. Such practice supports all students as they encounter digital reading environments that pose particular reading challenges.

In these digital environments, reading is unmediated and students are no longer confined to the material selected by the teacher-librarian. The implication of this freedom to access and read almost anything is that even the best of readers will encounter reading materials that they find difficult to understand. We can add to this the expectations articulated in curriculum framework documents such as the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and the Australian Curriculum which shift the emphasis of information literacy from searching and retrieving information to using information to build knowledge.

Teacher-librarians must therefore intervene with reading development strategies that support students at all levels on their information-to-knowledge journey.

The teacher-librarian's role (table from Carol Gordon's address)

20th century focus	*21st century focus*
Recreational reading	**Reading for learning**
Sources are in library collections	Digital sources are unmediated
Extrinsic reading motivation	Reading engagement
Passive reading activities	Active management of reading
Broadening reading interests	Focus reading interests
Reading in content areas	Reading for understanding strategies

Teacher-librarians offer a range of reading strategies and skills including:- activating prior knowledge, visualisation, determining importance, questioning, inferring and predicting, monitoring comprehension, making connections and synthesizing and reflecting – all of which can be used with students and by students as they work through the inquiry process. Teacher-librarians deliver whole school programs for the development of these skills, work with teachers to ensure that scaffolds to support these skills are built into learning activity design, and provide 'zone of intervention' instruction in these skills to individual students, groups of students and whole classes as required.

It is clear that we need to acknowledge that is literacy means reading not only print-based material, but reading across a whole range of media – multiliteracy is often the term used.

The teacher-librarian brings skills and expertise to this reality that are not replicated by others in the school environment. They are able to develop a diverse reading collection of print and other resources, knowledge of digital and multimedia resources, an understanding of the reading abilities and visual literacy needs of students and the means of connecting students with reading material appropriate to their interests.

Emerging technologies
> *"In the past, we had to work out if the technology could do what we wanted. Today, the technology can do anything, we just need to decide . . . what it is we want to do."*
>
> Stephen Heppell, http://heppell.net/

In her recent presentation at the SLAV conference on 22 March, *Celebrate change: Let's make the whole school a library* (http://celebratechange.globalteacher.org.au/) , Sandy Phillips, Manager of FUSE, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, reminded us of the way the internet has changed and the implications of that for our teaching and management practices in school libraries. In the old web, content which was produced by those with web publishing skills and delivered to users. The content was largely modeled on books and included text and images, and the biggest issues that we were dealing with were sifting through the vast array of information available and protecting students from inappropriate content.

Now, with the new generation of the web, anyone can create and publish instantly, the content is multimedia rich with myriad videos and images and everyone has a voice. Above all, you can carry the web in your pocket and access and take it anywhere. This raises a whole new set of issues – some positive, some negative – but all require an understanding and a response from those of us who work in and manage school libraries. Active, participative citizenship in the 21st century therefore, looks different than it used to!

Active, participative citizenship in the 21st century requires digital literacy.

> *Digital literacy is the ability to confidently and critically use digital information sources and communications tools and networks for learning, communication, collaboration and creation. Digital literacy combines the information skills of locating, managing, synthesising, evaluating, sharing and creating information with the technical skills of effective use of hardware and software applications, networks and other digital communications tools. Digital literacy skills are necessary for safe and effective participation in our knowledge-based society and economy.*
>
> School Library Association of Victoria, 2010

Digital literacy also requires an understanding of cybersafety issues, of copyright and intellectual property issues. Digital literacy or digital citizenship is as much about safety as it is about finding and using information. Again, the teacher-librarian brings management and bibliographic skills to this task as well as the expertise and overview required to ensure that teachers and students have an under-

standing of the implications of publishing to the web. The teacher-librarian can play a very valuable role in coordinating the development of protective behaviours that social networking and web publishing require.

Teacher-librarians provide policies, resources and learning activities that use the technology and give students the skills to effectively and safely use the social networking tools available both at schools and throughout their lives. Learning in the school library is characterized by students actively engaged with diverse and often conflicting sources of information and ideas to discover new ones, to build new understandings and to develop personal viewpoints and perspectives (Dr Ross Todd, 2007). Teacher-librarians identify and provide access to this range of information sources and work with students to develop the skills to critically evaluate and interpret them. At the same time, they teach students how to acknowledge the sources of their information and the skills to safely use the social networking tools available so that they can publish their own ideas and researched work.

Joyce Valenza describes the future role of teacher-librarians in using open and social technologies for their learning and teaching in the following way:

> "To be most effective, workers of the future will need to creatively blend several relatively traditional skills with emerging information and communication tools. And *they will need to practice those skills in an information landscape that is genre-shifting, media-rich, participatory, socially connected, and brilliantly chaotic.* To be most effective, students will need understandings of traditional information structures as well as understandings of the shifts in the way knowledge is built and organized. Through my librarian visioning glasses, I see two threads – information fluency and Web 2.0 – beautifully woven into rich 21st century cloth as teachers and librarians who value thinking skills, inquiry, ethical behavior, and innovative student work hone their craft on a funky and vibrant 21st century learning loom, with learners as collaborators. Together we'll examine new formats for student research projects, projects that foster information fluency and exploit the potential of Web 2.0, the interactive and media-rich 'read/write Web'.

Recommendations
That all Australian schools be funded to employ qualified teacher-librarians as they offer the following skills required for active, participative citizenship:

• collection and management of diverse range of print and other materials,

• knowledge of digital and multimedia resources to support innovative curriculum initiatives,

• an understanding of the reading abilities and learning needs of students,

• an understanding of copyright and cybersafety issues , and

• the teaching strategies to ensure that students become independent, lifelong learning.

The factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians

Summary of main points:

- Very limited opportunities exist within Australia at the undergraduate level for school leavers and others to enroll in a course that complies with the dual qualification requirements of teacher-librarianship.

- Reports of budget and staffing cutbacks in school libraries, particularly in primary schools in Victoria, have also discouraged the take-up of courses in teacher-librarianship. The result is a skills shortage in the area.

- Action is required at the state and national level to respond to this skills shortage, particularly in the light of the Australia Curriculum and similar curriculum initiatives.

- Teacher-librarians and school library team members also require access to professional learning opportunities which provide them with the skills and knowledge for the changing education and information landscape.

- Identification and support of interested teachers who may wish to undertake a library qualification is often the most effective means of recruitment to the profession,

- Current research indicates that strong collaborative partnerships between teacher-librarians and school administration team results in more effective library programs and learning outcomes,

- The School Library Association of Victoria works with cross-sectoral industry groups to promote library and information industry career opportunities.

Very limited opportunities exist within Australia at the undergraduate level for school leavers and others to enroll in a course that complies with the dual qualification requirements of teacher-librarianship.

In Victoria, such combined courses were discontinued in the mid 1990's and this action has given the message to those interested in a career in the library and information industry, that teacher-librarianship is not an option.

The association works closely with its fellow teacher professional association, the Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) to alert secondary school students to the interstate and online opportunities for study in this area. The association is also represented on the ALIA Promote Library and Information Services Working Group which works on a cross-sectoral basis to inform potential students (either school leavers or career changers) of the tertiary courses and career and employment opportunities available. To this end, an annual Library and Information Careers Evening to provide

interstate and Victorian tertiary institutions with a forum to meet potential students is held. This cross-sectoral group is also working towards gaining financial funding for the offering school-based apprenticeships in the area of Certificate III in Library and Information Services. Such a program would certainly provide interested students with both competency-based training and a greater understanding of the career opportunities in the library and information industry.

Reports of budget and staffing cutbacks in school libraries, particularly in primary schools in Victoria, have also discouraged the take-up of courses in teacher-librarianship. The result is a skills shortage in the area, where schools regularly contact the association requesting assistance in the recruitment of replacement or ongoing staffing for their school libraries. Action is required at the state and national level to respond to this skills shortage, particularly in the light of the current curriculum initiatives. Encouragement of tertiary institutions to reinstate teacher-librarianship courses would be an excellent beginning.

Further initiatives could take the form of identification and support of interested teachers who may wish to undertake a library qualification – as this is often the most effective means of recruitment to the profession. The undertaking of such study by teachers requires a time and intellectual commitment and, at this stage in Victoria, neither time nor financial support is available for teachers to take this on.

Teacher-librarians and school library team members also require access to professional learning opportunities which provide them with the skills and knowledge for the changing education and information landscape. The School Library Association of Victoria offers a targeted professional learning program for its members and their colleagues. Face-to-face conferences and online programs encouraging school library staff to develop 21st century pedagogical understandings and skills for the exploitation of emerging technologies are available. See: www.slav.schools.net.au

The costs associated with providing these programs rises in line with their diversity and technological requirements. As many schools have limited budgets, many library staff are unable to attend or participate in professional learning which is vital to the effectiveness of their school library programs and management.

The association records its own professional learning participation data and regularly evaluates its programs. The data clearly suggests that many schools, particularly in the primary sector, are unable to attend regular professional learning activities. In order to overcome this problem to some degree, the association has established an ongoing professional learning blog, Bright Ideas (see http://slav.globalteacher.org.au/) which offers daily posts in relation to the use of emerging and web 2.0 technologies which have application to school libraries and ICT-rich learning environments.

The association also offers professional development for teachers and school administrators to a limited degree (due to limited resources), however, consultation and discussion with members would

indicate that these opportunities are beneficial and the program should be extended. Current research also indicates that strong collaborative partnerships between teacher-librarians and school administration team results in more effective library programs and learning outcomes. (Hay)

Recommendations

- That tertiary institutions be supported to reinstate teacher-librarianship courses.

- That financial and time support be offered to interested teachers and librarians to gain further qualifications necessary for teacher-librarianship,

- That financial support be provided for the cross sectoral career promotion groups or that a publicity campaign promoting the industry be funded,

- That funding be provided to industry training groups for the provision of school based traineeships in Certificate III in Library and Information Services,

- That professional development be provided for school leadership teams regarding the key role of the teacher-librarians in improving student learning outcomes,

- That teacher-librarians be supported in professional development opportunities which provide them with the skills and knowledge for the changing education and information landscape,

- That teacher education courses include discussion of the key role of the teacher-librarian in improving student learning outcomes.

The role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school libraries

Summary of main points

• The School Library Association of Victoria enjoys strong connections and strategic working partnerships with Victorian cultural institutions, the public library sector, industry training groups, professional teaching associations and tertiary institutions. These collaborative activities and professional networks ensure that cultural growth and knowledge is maintained and shared at the local and state level and facilitates the role of the school library as the conduit of this cultural heritage to their teaching colleagues and to the broader school community.

• School libraries are cultural community spaces. School libraries, and particularly those which offer a welcoming and ICT-rich space such as those built as a result of the Building Educational Revolution and Digital Education Revolution, are regularly used as parent and community meeting spaces and offer community use of facilities. School libraries and teacher-librarians are therefore very well positioned to ensure that the school and the broader community are connected, that collaborative partnerships are fostered, and that school and community programs and values are shared. Teacher-librarians therefore are pivotal to the cultural development, knowledge-building and community of learning not only within their own schools but can act as a conduit and facilitator for community involvement and partnerships.

• Community access to emerging technologies within school libraries also opens up enormous opportunities for collaboration and the development of communities of learning. Small, remote school communities can connect to learning communities across the globe, they can meet virtually with research experts to gain information and even to share the new knowledge that they have created as a result of their independent research at their own school library – truly a student voice to an authentic audience.

• By working with their local public library staff and with tertiary institution staff, teacher-librarians provide the conduit to broaden and deepen the student experience and to prepare students for the challenges that tertiary study offers.

The School Library Association of Victoria enjoys strong connections and strategic working partnerships with a number of Victorian cultural institutions including the State Library of Victoria, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Melbourne Museum. SLAV is currently developing a 12-week, web 2.0-based program in conjunction with the State Library of Victoria which focuses on the establishment of online personal learning networks whilst highlighting the culturally-rich, digital collection that the State Library offers to the community (http://slav.globalteacher.org.au/2010/03/18/your-personal-learning-network/). SLAV is also partnering with the National Gallery of Victoria to stage a conference which brings together the treasures of the gallery and the school library personnel who can act as a conduit for the gallery's education programs and their own school communities. The association also works in partnership

with bodies representing the public library sector, industry training groups and tertiary institutions. As a professional teaching association, SLAV collaborates and offers joint activities and dissemination of information with other teaching association and the Council of Professional Teaching Associations of Victoria (CPTAV).

SLAV also supports a strong network of regional branch groups throughout the state who similarly work closely and share resources, ideas and knowledge with public libraries, community education groups and cultural institutions within their area. These collaborative activities and professional networks ensure that cultural growth and knowledge is maintained and shared at the local and state level and facilitates the role of the school library as the conduit of this cultural heritage to their teaching colleagues and to the broader school community.

> *School libraries are cultural community spaces. Teacher-librarians play a pivotal role not only within their own school community but across their community generally. This has been identified through the research of international education commentators.* (Haycock)

School libraries, and particularly those which offer a welcoming and ICT-rich space such as those built as a result of the Building Educational Revolution and Digital Education Revolution, are regularly used as parent and community meeting spaces and offer community use of facilities. School libraries and teacher-librarians are therefore very well positioned to ensure that the school and the broader community are connected, that collaborative partnerships are fostered, and that school and community programs and values are shared. Teacher-librarians therefore are pivotal to the cultural development, knowledge-building and community of learning not only within their own schools but can act as a conduit and facilitator for community involvement and partnerships.

School library spaces should be seen as more than traditional library spaces.

> *"The school library's role in the 21st century: a place for collaboration, performance, creativity, interactivity and exploration."* (Schibsted)

The opportunity to bring the community into a school is afforded by such a space which can be used as a gallery, performance space, a space where the student voice can be encouraged, and a centre where parents and community members can interact with, and gain an understanding of, the technologies that the students find so engaging - a place where lifelong learning is modeled and continued.

These emerging technologies also open up enormous opportunities for collaboration and the development of communities of learning. Small, remote school communities can connect to learning communities across the globe, they can meet virtually with research experts to gain information and even to share the new knowledge that they have created as a result of their independent research at their own school library – truly a student voice to an authentic audience.

These opportunities are unlimited but they can best be facilitated by a teacher-librarian who has the understanding and skills to use the resources and technologies to create and maintain this community of learning.

Teacher-librarians and school libraries also provide common ground with tertiary institutions and the world of work. The concept of the school library as a place where individualised learning takes place, where students are encouraged to pursue their own interests and imagination beyond the classroom, and a place which connects them to the expansive learning opportunities that digital information, databases and the read/write web offer is one with which tertiary institutions and employers identify. Teacher-librarians develop students to become lifelong learners and provide them with the skills to continue learning independently after they leave school. By working with their local public library staff and with tertiary institution staff, teacher-librarians again provide the conduit to broaden and deepen the student experience and to prepare students for the challenges that tertiary study offers.

> "... students from some equity groups were significantly more likely than other students to enter university with highly limited information literacy skills, and this lack of information literacy acts as both a deterrent to accessing available information and a limitation to ICT use."
>
> (Barraket and Scott)

From a variety of perspectives through their community and institutional partnerships, school libraries and teacher-librarians are the relationship builders, curators of community knowledge and culture, and facilitators of lifelong learning.

Recommendations
- That the valuable contribution of school libraries and teacher-librarians to the school and broader community be recognized, supported and maintained:
    From a variety of perspectives through their community and institutional partnerships, school libraries and teacher-librarians are the relationship builders, curators of community knowledge and culture, and facilitators of lifelong learning.

Impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians

Summary of main points

• The use of electronic databases, digitised formats and interactive media has fostered a major shift to more collaborative and interactive learning. This collaborative approach is reflected in the expectations of the Australian Curriculum and similar innovative curriculum frameworks,

• Teacher-librarians are in the perfect position to act upon the potential of these new formats, to use the new technologies to make collaboration easy, to move seamlessly from individual learning projects to cross-curricular projects, to provide a positive model and an ideal learning space to exploit the potential of the new web 2.0 technologies for individual learning and for social, group or networked learning,

• Schools are continually faced with decisions relating to e-texts and e-books, hand held mobile technology, new collaborative software, applications and digital resource repositories. Teacher-librarians manage and advise the school administration, teachers and students in relation to these resources in the same way as they managed and advised in relation to print-based resources. They have the transferable skills to ensure that these emerging technologies make the greatest impact on learning across the school,

• It is important to acknowledge that free search engines such as Google do not provide access to all the resources that students require for their learning or the development of the skills that they require for their future learning – adequate funding for the provision of database and online resources is vital,

• The teacher-librarian and the library team work with the school administration to raise awareness within the school community of the importance of safe and protective behaviour in an online environment. They contribute to the implementation of appropriate strategies that create and maintain a safe and supportive online learning environment. Teacher-librarians develop skills that support digital literacy, personal responsibility and ethical behaviour in students, as well as the ability to appropriately access, manage and evaluate information and online interactions,

• School libraries support not only the consumption of media but the production of media and now require the facilities to incorporate multimedia production such as film, podcasting, video streaming and related activities.

The use of electronic databases, digitised formats, and interactive media has also fostered a major shift from the dominance of independent study to more collaborative and interactive learning. This collaborative approach to learning is also reflected in the expectations of current curriculum frameworks

where we encourage students to use ICT as a major element of their learning environment, working with others in a collaborative way, creating new knowledge and sharing it with each other and with a real audience. Teacher-librarians are familiar with and encourage appropriate use of collaborative and social networking softwares. Web 2.0 applications are also collaborative in nature and provide opportunities to build relationships that foster sharing and creation of ideas and knowledge. Our students find Web 2.0 to be an engaging medium – it's the information and communication medium within which they operate – and teachers and teacher-librarians have become engaged as well.

Digital technologies have made (and continue to make) a major impact upon the working environment of school libraries and school library personnel.

In an article entitled, *Learning: Peering backward and looking forward in the digital era*, by Margaret Weigel, Carrie James and Howard Gardner, http://bit.ly/YuoDV, (International Journal of Learning and Media, Winter 2009, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) discussion of the potential on new digital media leads to a very pertinent conclusion.

> "The new digital media provide new ways of engaging with each other, with information, and with the world . . .. Ultimately, we believe that digital media could be leveraged in ways that bring us to a tipping point when learning becomes more decidedly individualized, constructivist, situated and social. Again, the paradoxical confluence of opportunities for individualized *and* intensely social learning experiences is a noteworthy facet of digital media. It is far from clear who understands, takes seriously, and – importantly – is poised to act upon these potentials."

Teacher-librarians are in the perfect position to act upon these potentials, to use the new technologies to make collaboration easy, to move seamlessly from individual learning projects to cross-curricular projects, to provide a positive model and an ideal learning space to exploit the potential of the new web 2.0 technologies for individual learning and for social, group or networked learning.

Schools are continually faced with decisions relating to e-texts and e-books, hand held mobile technology, new collaborative software, applications and digital resource repositories. Teacher-librarians again are in the perfect position to manage and advise the school administration, teachers and students in relation to these resources in the same way as they managed and advised in relation to print-based resources. Sophisticated databases and search engines are the bread and butter of school library staff and it is with these transferable skills, that school libraries have the means to unlock the potential of emerging technologies and to make the greatest impact on the provision of and access to this range of online learning tools across the school.

As tertiary institutions move rapidly to overwhelmingly online collection development, the responsibility for preparing students for independent learning within this environment grows exponentially. It is imperative that teacher-librarians be given the funding and responsibility to develop programs that

support student skills that prepare them for an online learning environment beyond school. It is important to acknowledge here that free search engines such as Google do not provide access to all the resources that students require for their learning or the development of the skills that they require for their future learning – adequate funding for the provision of database and online resources is vital.

The curriculum overview that teacher-librarians have always had still informs this collection, management and advisory role so that the technology can be seamlessly integrated into the learning and teaching activities of the school rather than being seen as novelty or experimental activities.

The learning and teaching potential of social networking technologies also, of course, requires guidance and vigilance by the school community. The teacher-librarian and the library team work with the school administration to raise awareness within the school community of the importance of safe and protective behaviour in an online environment. They contribute to the implementation of appropriate strategies that create and maintain a safe and supportive online learning environment. Teacher-librarians develop skills that support digital literacy, personal responsibility and ethical behaviour in students, as well as the ability to appropriately access, manage and evaluate information and online interactions.

A recent report by the Youth and Media Policy Working Group Initiative at Harvard's Berkman Centre commented that media literacy skills now overlap with safety skills – that in addition to effective search skills, students need to know how to learn to protect themselves online and how to share their work through wikis, videos and other interactive media – and they need a dedicated guide. The report went on to cite examples of students attending the university after the benefit of learning critical 21st century skills from their school librarians (their dedicated guide) who had turned their school libraries into 'learning commons' where students seamlessly use state-of-the-art web tools to consume and produce content. These students preformed better in test and project results.

Such a learning commons approach includes not only to consumption of media but the production of media and school libraries now require the facilities to incorporate multimedia production such as film, podcasting, video streaming and related activities.

Mark Moran, web publisher suggests that parents ask these questions: "Can my child use collaborative technology such as wikis? When a search engine returns 105 million results, can my child find the five that will really answer her question? With the web evolving by the minute, can classroom teachers alone help students figure this out? As the information landscape becomes ever more complex, will my child's school ensure that it has a professional guide to it?"

Recommendations

- That school libraries and teacher-librarian be supported to use their skills to unlock the potential of emerging technologies to ensure improved student learning across the school.

- That school libraries be provided with the appropriate funding the provision of adequate online

resources and the software and hardware for the necessary provision of facilities to incorporate multimedia production such as film, podcasting, video streaming and related activities,

- That consortia be established to share costs and access related to these facilities.

Conclusion

The introduction of the Australian Curriculum and similar innovative curriculum initiatives offer exciting possibilities for learning through school libraries.

This combined with the recognition that a range of literacies are vital for active, participative citizenship, means that the role and responsibilities of the school library and the teacher-librarian are underscored.

Australia is in a very positive position to ensure that the objectives of the Australian Curriculum, the Building the Education Revolution and the Digital Education Revolution are achieved by supporting appropriately staffed and resourced school libraries.

Teacher-librarians and school library teams look forward to expanding their current role in ensuring that all Australian students enjoy the lifelong learning benefits that 21st century digital citizenship will provide.

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