



## Inquiry into School libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools

As a retired school teacher and teacher librarian, based in Tasmania, I would like to submit to this inquiry on two of the criteria.

### School Libraries

In my thirty year time as first a teacher and then a teacher librarian I have experienced a total lack of consistency in the provision of school libraries.

- Physical facilities have ranged from a few shelves in the corridor to purpose built facilities.
- Planning has been ad hoc dependent on funding being granted.
- Improvements have generally depended on the commitment of the principal to providing what he/she considers best practice.
- Place of the school library in the management of the school curriculum and in the learning program of the students is dependent on the ability of the teacher librarian to advocate effectively.
- The budget for stocking the library is too often a matter of chance and the whim of the school principal.

### Role of Teacher Librarian

- Staffing of school libraries is dependent on total staff and too often a decision is made to dispense with a teacher librarian in favour of another teacher for the school.
- Teacher librarians should be separate from the school staffing ratio.
- Only a trained teacher is able to supervise students and therefore appointing a library technician or a librarian means that students must have a teacher in the library. This is inefficient.
- Only a teacher librarian is trained to understand the intricacies of the curriculum and work in harmony with teachers to assist students to achieve the recommended outcomes.
- One function at which many teacher librarians excel is their ability to select resources which cater to the needs of all students recognising where difficulties are occurring and matching resources to abilities.

- Teacher librarians are trained in fostering a love of stories and introducing exciting new choices to students and teachers alike.
- In this new digital age teacher librarians are trained to use technology in an integrated way seeing as part of a whole process of education not as a subject in isolation.
- Education is needed in educational training institutes to make all educators aware of the potential of working with teacher librarians to maximise the potential of students and the resources available.

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