ASLA
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Submission from the
Australian School Library Association Inc.

to the House of Representatives
Inquiry into School Libraries and
Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools

The Australian School Library Association Inc. (ASLA) is a national authority, a peak forum in the field of teacher librarianship and school library resource services.

Its aim is to maximise opportunities for students to obtain independent lifelong learning and decision making skills through ASLA's commitment to:

- High professional standards
- Awareness of advances and changes in technology and the competence and ability to teach and use it
- Effective, cooperative use of school resource services by the whole school community
- Qualified teacher librarians with an image of excellence
- Optimum use of the dual skills of teaching and librarianship

This submission was prepared on behalf of the Australian School Library Association by Karen Bonanno and June Wall.

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Introduction

A qualified teacher librarian is defined as a person who holds recognised teaching qualifications and qualifications in librarianship. [*Learning for the future: developing information services in schools* 2001, 2nd edition, Australian School Library Association and Australian Library and Information Association, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South, Vic., p. 60.] For the context of this submission, a teacher librarian is an individual who is qualified as a teacher, has classroom teaching experience and has undertaken further studies in teacher librarianship.

This blend of education and teacher librarianship allows for a valuable contribution to curriculum and pedagogical practice within the context of the school library and its information services to the school community. Teacher librarians support and implement the vision of their school communities through advocating and building effective library and information services and programs that contribute to the development of lifelong learners.

Submission summary

Recent policies and investments that impact on school libraries and their activities include
- the *Building the Education Revolution* (BER),
- the development of the *Australian National Curriculum,*
- the *Digital Education Revolution* (DER),
- the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*,
- the *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN), and
- school-based management systems.

Teacher librarians, through effective school library programs and adequately resourced school libraries, support curriculum requirements and student learning needs, contribute to improved educational and community outcomes through
- mapping and developing a digital literacy skills continuum linked to the national curriculum,
- a school library that is a hub learning environment of the school,
- teaching and learning activities and programs to develop literacy skills,
- collaborative planning to integrate digital literacy skills in classroom learning activities, authentic assessment and research tasks, and
- an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning to encourage creativity, innovation and higher order thinking.

The factors that influence recruitment and development of teacher librarians include
- the supply of qualified teacher librarians,
- school-based decisions to appoint personnel to the school library,
- economic rationalism versus investment for staffing a school library,
- limiting perceptions of the role of the teacher librarian,
- the number of tertiary institutions offering teacher librarianship courses,
- the lack of support by employing authorities, and
- the lack of acknowledgement by teacher registration institutions.

Productive partnerships with and support of school libraries have been established with

- State / Territory Governments,
- National Library of Australia – Electronic Resources Australia,
- Education Services Australia,
- Public and academic libraries,
- Parent associations,
- Professional teaching associations,
- Research agencies, and
- Tertiary universities offering teacher librarianship courses.

Outcomes have resulted in 'international renown' of the teacher librarianship profession worldwide. The ongoing sustainability of these relationships is dependent on the Australian Government committing to overseeing the inquiry outcomes and through the allocation of personnel within the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations to be responsible for school libraries in Australian schools.

The integration of digital technologies can enhance the delivery of library and information services to students and teachers in a swift and efficient way and make resources and services more accessible through being digitally available at the point of need and learning wherever the user may be. Teacher librarians can become more readily available to support the teaching and learning process for students' and teachers' learning in the use of digital tools and the development of digital literacy capabilities across the curriculum. Teacher librarians become a gateway guide for students to develop digital fluency in navigating, retrieving, using and applying the information to develop deeper knowledge and understanding of their world.

Due to the evolving nature of information and the rapid development of digital technologies it is essential for teacher librarians to be supported in ongoing professional development.

Terms of reference response

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

According to the ***Building the Education Revolution***: *National Coordinator's Implementation Report February – September 2009*, 3,089 library projects were identified (Australian Government 2009, p. 31). In comparison with other facility types, the library projects is the highest number, which gives an indication of the importance schools place on having a quality school library facility. The number of schools in Australia recorded for the *Schools, Australia 2009* Census was 9,529. Seventy percent were primary only. Based on the 2009 Schools Census this equates to 46.3% of primary schools receiving funding for the building or refurbishing of a school library under the *P21* element of the *Building the Education Revolution*. This high percentage impacts on the staffing and resourcing of primary school libraries, in particular, under this Australian Government project.

For example, a new primary school library was opened at the beginning of this school year. The facility was custom built to suit the physical footprint of space available in the grounds of the school. This school library is only staffed by a fully qualified teacher librarian for

three days of the week. The library and information service activities delivered by this school library are not totally effective for the school community to fully benefit from such an investment. Considering the magnitude of the school library projects this will not be an isolated case. The worst case scenario will be the school that has a new school library and no qualified staff. This is most evident in the Northern Territory, where 62 new or refurbished school libraries have been approved for funding (Northern Territory Government 2009). Of these 62 new or refurbished school libraries only three will have fully qualified staff.

[Australian Government 2009, *Building the Education Revolution: National Coordinator's Implementation Report February – September 2009*, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra, ACT., viewed 12 April 2010,
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/BuildingTheEducationRevolution/Pages/default.aspx

Northern Territory Government Department of Education and Training 2009, *Building the Education Revolution: Approved funding – Primary schools for the 21st Century*, last updated 12 January 2010, Northern Territory Government of Australia, viewed 12 April 2010,
http://www.det.nt.gov.au/ber/approved-funding]

The development of an **Australian National Curriculum** will require resources to support the content that teachers are required to teach to meet the learning needs of the school community. This will impact on the role of the teacher librarian to provide support to teachers to assist them in the implementation of the curriculum through collaborative development of classroom programs to incorporate information rich resource materials. In addition, the inclusion of *general capabilities* within each curriculum area will require input from the teacher librarian, specifically literacy, information and communications technology (ICT), thinking skills, creativity, self-management and ethical behaviour. For example, literacy is broader than reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Literacy expands to include components of information literacy, digital literacy, media literacy and ICT literacy. Teacher librarians integrate and teach these literacy components in curriculum programs to assist students to develop higher level thinking and creativity capabilities in a progressive and sequential way throughout their schooling years.

"Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society" (UNESCO 2004, p.13.)

[UNESCO 2004, *The plurality of literacy and its implications for policies and programmes*, UNESCO Education Sector position paper, UNESCO, Paris, viewed 12 April 2010, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001362/136246e.pdf]

The **Digital Education Revolution** (DER) funding to schools to increase student-to-computer ratio in years 9 to 12 across Australia has, in the majority of cases, been enacted by a one-to-one computer rollout commencing in years 9 or 10. The practice is most schools are

choosing laptop/notebook/netbook computers and as a consequence all schools are in the process of or have become wireless environments for network and Internet access. The implementation of a 1:1 program for teaching and learning is effecting the school library through

- provision of learning spaces for class use,
- staffing allocation to support students using their laptops,
- managing class set or loan laptop use through circulation and maintenance of loan laptops,
- library staff knowledge and expertise in specific operating systems and software to assist the student in the preparation and presentation of their work across platforms, and,
- where there is no IT technical support in the school, by default, the school library and its staff have become the central location for the management and maintenance or storehouse of laptops.

All of the above issues impact on the professional learning needs and amount of time that school libraries have for staffing. These issues are above the usual tasks or role of a teacher librarian and yet no additional time has been provided. In an average 6 period day in a high school, 1.5 hours can be used in the circulation of laptops. This means that teaching and learning services are diminished by an equivalent 1.5 hours.

As students have increasing access to technology resources such as laptops, they have increasing expectations and need for online resources. Teacher librarians provide online resources for student use, but have limited funding for user-pay services such as online databases. Online subscriptions, or user pay services, contain a great deal of quality information that is only available in this format. With limited budgets, school libraries are unable to access these information types and therefore restrict access to learning opportunities for students.

> [Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009, *National Secondary Schools Computer Fund*, viewed 13 April 2010, http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/DigitalEducationRevolution/ComputerFund/Pages/NationalSecondarySchoolComputerFundOverview.aspx]

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008) focus on the **delivery of high quality schooling** impacts on the staffing of a school library and the development of school library collections that address the expectation of quality education for every young Australian. Teacher quality does have an impact on the educational outcomes of students. The development of national teaching standards impacts on the role of the teacher librarian who also needs to address the professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement domains of the National Professional Teaching Standards Framework. "Teacher quality has been identified through the Council of Australian Government (COAG) reforms as a major lever in improving education outcomes....This reform is a compulsory element of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality" (The Hon Julia Gillard, 2009).

> [*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* 2008, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs,

Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South, VIC., viewed 12 April 2010, http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html

Hon. Julia Gillard 2009, *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Letter of Expectation: 2009-2010*, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT., viewed 12 April 2010, http://www.aitsl.edu.au/ta/go]

The ***Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*** (2008) goal for "all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens" (p.8) has a strong focus on the **development of learning skills of literacy, critical thinking, ICT use, creativity, innovation and collaboration**. This set of 21st Century learning skills actively engages the role of the teacher librarian in the integration of these skills into the curriculum programs so that students develop *trans-literate* skills across all media areas.

The **National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy** (NAPLAN) indicates that literacy needs to be taught more explicitly and supported by relevant literacy resources to assist in the sequential development of reading, writing, viewing, listening and speaking skills of young people. These literacy skills are taught within school library programs and subsequently library databases and customised literacy databases have been used to track student literacy. Teacher librarians need to be involved in the whole-school literacy program planning and implementation of programs.

School-based management systems have allowed for the devolution of management of schools to principals who are then responsible for making decisions on matters related to the operation of the school. Principals should base their decisions on centrally determined goals, policies, curriculum, standards and guidelines. Even so, this has resulted in a diminishing budget allocation to the school library for suitable resources and staff.   As reported in the *Australian School Libraries Research Project Report 1: A snapshot of Australian school libraries*, which surveyed over 680 individuals, "86 (12.518%) of the schools reported an annual library budget of less than $1000. A further 113 (16.448%) schools reported an annual budget of less than $5000. In all, nearly a third of the survey participants (28.996%) received less than $5000 for their school libraries. Across the whole survey group 45.123% of schools received less than $10,000 as their annual budget. Few libraries reported budgets over $50,000 (8.296%), and these tended to be the large independent schools (Combes 2008, p. 14). Staffing level results indicated "over 50% of schools in this survey had either no professional staff or less than one FTE {full-time equivalent} working in their school library" (Combes 2008, p. 17).

[Combes, B 2008, Australian School Libraries Research Project: A snapshot of Australian school libraries, Report 1. *Australian School Library Research Project*, ASLA, ALIA & ECU., viewed 12 April 2010, http://www.chs.ecu.edu.au/portals/ASLRP/publications.php]

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

Students of the Google Generation have not developed **digital literacy skills** in alignment with their access to and use of information and communication technology (ICT). They are surface web browsers and do not have the skills for advanced web searching, evaluating the relevance of information nor the skills to use this information appropriately.

> [Hay, L & Foley, C 2009 'School libraries building capacity for student learning in 21C', in *SCAN*, vol. 28, no. 2, May 2009, Department of Education & Training, NSW, pp. 17-26.]

Digital literacy is a key skill for every curriculum area and is increasingly becoming more critical in a 1:1 laptop environment. The *Horizon Reports* for 2009 and 2010 state that a critical challenge that learners face is their lack of digital literacy skills. Digital literacy incorporates information literacy, ICT literacy, critical literacy as well as the soft skills of collaboration, project management and time management. The 2009 Horizon Report also emphasised the need to enable students to be innovative and creative in their learning and expression. Digital literacy is a core component of this innovation and creativity. Teachers are not teaching digital literacy due to lack of training and professional development in either pre or in-service professional learning. "This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that digital literacy is less about tools and more about thinking, and this skills and standards based on tools and platforms have proven to be somewhat ephemeral" (Johnson et al 2010). **Teacher librarians plan, develop and deliver explicit teaching in digital literacy as it is not about tools but learning and thinking.**

> [Johnson, L., Levine, A., Smith, R., Smythe, T., & Stone, S. 2009, *The Horizon Report: 2009 Australia – New Zealand edition*, Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.
>
> Johnson, L., Smith, R., Levine, A., and Haywood, K 2010, *2010 Horizon Report: K-12 Edition*, Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium, p. 5.]

Teacher librarians can contribute significantly to the academic achievement of young Australian students through the teaching and learning programs delivered through the school library that focus specifically on **literacy skill development (and beyond) to include being literate across multiple media areas within the context of an ever-changing technological oriented world.**

A school library program facilitated or taught by a teacher librarian incorporating digital literacy skills has been shown to be a positive influence on the learning outcomes of students (Kuhlthau 2004 and Lonsdale 2003).

> [Kuhlthau, C. C. 2004 *Seeking meaning: a process approach to library and information services*, 2nd ed Libraries Unlimited, Westport Connecticut
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> Lonsdale, M 2003 *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: a review of the research*, Report for the Australian School Library Association, Australian Council

for Educational Research, Camberwell, Vic., viewed 12 April 2010, http://www.asla.org.au/research/Australia-review.htm]

School libraries and teacher librarians have the **current and future potential to map the digital tools and skills required for learning to the Australian National Curriculum**. The Australian National Curriculum in 2011 and beyond will need to use emerging digital tools to personalise learning environments so that teachers can meet the individualised learning needs of young Australians. **Teacher librarians have the skill set to implement a digital literacy continuum linked to the national curriculum**. Digital literacy has been recognised in the most recent *Horizon Report* as a core skill set for students in their learning in the 21st century (Johnson et al 2010). A national digital literacy focus within the Australian National Curriculum will enable progressive development of individual skills to a higher level of thinking, creativity and innovation. In this context, explicit instruction by the teacher librarian in digital literacy and trans-literacy need to commence in the first year of school.

[Johnson, L., Smith, R., Levine, A., and Haywood, K. 2010, *2010 Horizon Report: K-12 Edition*, Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.]

School libraries have the potential to be "flexible, dynamic, high tech 21C learning centres" (Hay and Todd 2010) that are the **hub of the learning environment of a school**. The realisation of this potential is based on the expertise and flexibility of the teacher librarian. "This hub provides the major location for accessing and using core information services, mediated by information professionals" (*Learning for the future* 2001, p. 40).

A high school principal stated, "21st century school libraries remain the backbone of schools. They are changing – reflecting our world and our values. There will always be the need for resources – books, media, electronic… A critical feature of this will always be the ways in which information processes are taught and dispersed throughout student, teacher and parent world. Crafty teacher librarians who are at the cutting interface of technology will be needed to meet the very much individualised learning needs of clients…..I see a thriving centre of learning and something that is integral to the way the whole school functions" (Hay and Todd 2010, p.32).

[Hay, L & Todd, R 2010 'School libraries 21C: the conversation begins', in *SCAN*, vol. 29, no.1, February 2010, Department of Education & Training, NSW, pp. 30-42.

Learning for the future: developing information services in schools 2001, 2nd edition, Australian School Library Association and Australian Library and Information Association, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South, Vic.]

School libraries and teacher librarians can support schools in their literacy learning with **special reference to NAPLAN tests and corresponding teaching and learning activities to develop these skills**. Teacher librarians can assist in the whole school focus of literacy development by undertaking research into the trends and patterns of the school specific data and assist teachers in the implementation of specific teaching and learning activities (Gillespie 2010). Teacher librarians therefore also need to resource the curriculum appropriately for the student population and literacy levels.

[Gillespie, A 2010 'Inquiry and links to NAPLAN' email correspondence 4 April 2010.]

School libraries and teacher librarians are at the forefront of **ensuring that all students have access to a wide range of reading material and teach / encourage students to love reading**. Reading is the core skill for learning. Research has shown that school libraries and teacher librarians are related to better reading achievement (Krashen 2008). The 2010 Prime Minister's Literary Awards now includes recognition of the value of children's and young adult books and their place in the development of literate young Australians. http://www.arts.gov.au/books/pmliteraryawards10

[Krashen, S 2008 'The case for libraries and librarians', viewed 10 April 2010, http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/case_for_libraries/index.html]

The Lonsdale Report (2003) outlines that research in reading literacy proves that **a well stocked school library and a teacher librarian make a difference to reading achievement of students.** "In Australia, Masters and Forster (1997) map[ped] literacy achievements among Year 3 and 5 students in Australian schools in reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. The study identifies several school and teacher variables that were significantly associated with literacy achievement, other things being equal, including extensive use of the school library by each teacher's class. This factor was associated with a difference of as many as twenty-seven points in students' literacy achievements when compared with non-use of the library"(Masters & Forster, p. 207).

[Masters, G and Forster, M 1997, *Mapping Literacy Achievement: Results of the 1996 National School English Literacy Survey*, ACER, Melbourne.

Lonsdale, M 2003 *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: a review of the research*, Report for the Australian School Library Association, Australian Council for Educational Research, Camberwell, Vic., viewed 12 April 2010, http://www.asla.org.au/research/reading_literacy.htm]

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is currently **scoping the National Year of Reading 2012.** This initiative, inspired by the UK's National Year of Reading in 2008, has the potential to **join together the many reading and literacy initiatives which already take place in schools, libraries and community venues**. The Australian School Library Association will be partnering with ALIA to contribute good practice ideas and activities in reading across all media types for the school sector. The success of this initiative will be dependent on having qualified teacher librarians in schools to deliver and promote the innovative programs.

The National Year of Reading 2012 initiative will improve literacy and reading standards, support literacy and learning in schools, help to address the drop-out rate of readers in secondary schools, and integrate new media and technologies into the reading genres of young people.

[Centre for Youth Literature 2009, *Keeping young Australians reading*, State Library of Victoria, viewed 15 April 2010,

http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies_reports/keeping-reading.html]

Research undertaken by Combes (2007) on information-seeking behaviour of post-secondary students indicated a confidence in using the Internet for study and finding information, but a significant drop in skills when it came to their ability to evaluate, organise and use the information they had found. The students acquired their Internet skills by personal experimentation and rarely consulted with a teacher or a teacher librarian whilst at school. By the time the students entered tertiary studies they had already developed a culture of information seeking behaviour that was lacking in high level digital literacy capabilities. Educators cannot assume that because students have a familiarity with the technology that they possess sophisticated digital literacy skills. The future potential of **teacher librarians to contribute to better educational outcomes for students is for digital literacy to be integrated across all curriculum areas. Teacher librarians can be accessed to explicitly teach these crucial skills in the context of the content of the curriculum through collaboratively developed classroom learning activities, authentic assessment and research tasks within a well resourced school library environment.** An inquiry-based approach within a rich information resourced environment will help facilitate the design of learning experiences that develop higher level thinking skills and encourage creativity and innovation.

> [Combes, B 2007, 'Techno savvy or just techno oriented? How do the Net Generation search for information?', *Hearts on fire: sharing the passion, ASLA XX Biennial Conference proceedings 2007, 2-5 October, Adelaide Convention Centre*, ASLA, ACT., pp. 1-12.]

3. The factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians.

A teacher librarian is an individual who is qualified as a teacher with classroom experience and who has undertaken further studies in teacher librarianship. This blend of education and librarianship allows for a valuable contribution to curriculum and pedagogical practice within the context of the school library and its information services to the school community. It is this context that is considered as preferable when discussing the factors that influence recruitment and development of school librarians.

Factors that influence recruitment of teacher librarians

The **supply of teacher librarians** in a school district or region is a major factor. Where a teacher librarian is available this individual should be appointed as they have the appropriate qualifications to match the duties attached to the role. When a skills shortage exists it is often a teacher who is appointed to the school library by expressing interest in the role that then allows them to work across curriculum areas with teaching colleagues and a range of student age groupings. Their personal professional interest in expanding their teaching and learning skills through undertaking a different role within the school community is attractive and provides variety and flexibility to their teaching career. Teachers who commence duties in the school library should be encouraged to undertake further study in teacher librarianship as an

incentive to retain the position within the school and to support their ongoing professional teacher registration requirements.

In most cases, it is the decision **of the principal to appoint personnel** to the role of teacher librarian. Principals need to be clear about the role and the skills needed to undertake the position and to be vigilant in providing support and professional learning opportunities for the individual. **Decisions for staffing allocations need to be based on the educational investment for the benefit of the students and staff rather than economic rationalism.** Considering how a teacher librarian can contribute to the teaching and learning process in the development of curriculum programs across the school to incorporate the services, programs and resources of the school library should be central to the decision-making process.

Factors that influence development of teacher librarians

The **perception of the role of the teacher librarian** by colleagues and decision-makers is sometimes not aligned with the actual duties that someone in this position performs in a constantly evolving information and digital environment. This can result in a lack of recognition within the school community of the extent of a qualified teacher librarian's knowledge, skills and capabilities. The **misperception can minimise access to opportunities for professional learning across curriculum areas and promotional positions**. There are limited incentives for a teacher to undertake further study to become a fully qualified teacher librarian.

The **number of tertiary institutions offering teacher librarianship courses have diminished over the past two decades**. The option to enrol in a course by distance learning due to the geographical location of the individual may not be attractive to a teacher who has not experienced this form of learning. The course fees may also be prohibitive to the individual teacher and require them to continue working at the same time as they are studying by distance education. **Lack of support by the employing authority and lack of acknowledgement by the teacher registration / institution of the level of additional qualification undertaken can dampen initial enthusiasm to undertake further study.**

Professional teaching associations, such as the Australian School Library Association (ASLA), are capable of planning and delivering continuing professional learning opportunities that match the learning needs of the profession. Having developed national teaching standards for the profession, *Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians,* which were designed primarily for use by teacher librarians as a framework for ongoing professional learning, **ASLA is in a position to support the professional development of teacher librarians.**

> [ALIA and ASLA 2004, *Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians*, viewed 12 April 2010, http://www.asla.org.au/policy/standards.htm]

Often it is the self-motivated teacher who undertakes further study as a way of addressing their personal learning pathway who is the most appropriate candidate to enter the profession of teacher librarianship.

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

"Australia's future depends on a high quality and dynamic school education system to provide students with foundation skills, values, knowledge and understanding necessary for lifelong learning, employment and full participation in society. The education system is of the highest standard and enjoys international renown" (Australian Government, DEEWR 2010).

The Australian teacher librarianship profession contributes significantly to the development of lifelong learning skills of students, as evidenced in other terms of reference, and 'enjoys international renown' through active participation and building productive partnerships.

The Australian teacher librarianship profession is under the international microscope as the National Literacy Trust, UK (2010) undertakes a School Library Commission with the aim to set a national agenda to ensure school libraries in the United Kingdom are delivering exception services to help young people reach their potential. The School Library Association, United Kingdom (2010) has stated, "The optimum model is a teacher-librarian with qualifications in both teaching and librarianship (as evidenced in USA and Australia; this model is being adopted in other developing European Countries too)".

For the Australian education sector to continue to deliver a high standard education system and to enjoy international renown, it is in the interest of the Australian Government to commit to the coordination and the implementation of the outcomes of this current inquiry and partner with the Australian School Library Association as the national body representing teacher librarians.

[Australian Government – Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2010 *Schooling* – Overview, Commonwealth of Australia, viewed 15April 2010, http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/Pages/overview.aspx

National Literacy Trust 2010, *The School Library Commission*, viewed 15 April 2010, http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/policy/nlt_policy/school_library_commission/

School Library Association, United Kingdom 2010, *Submission to the School Library* Commission, SLA UK, Wanborough, Swindon, viewed 15 April 2010, http://www.sla.org.uk/sla-school-library-commission-submission.php]

Having **support personnel at the State/Territory Government and State/Territory non-government agency** level to work with teacher librarians to develop the library and information services and the teaching and learning programs of the school library to assist students to achieve higher quality educational opportunities for young Australians is highly desirable. These personnel could encompass the information and communication technologies (ICTs) and school library areas. In most cases, the teacher librarian is the only qualified personnel working in the school library. Having access to these support services means the school library is kept up to date as the teacher librarian is informed of changes in teaching and learning principles, learning space design, pedagogical practice, effective school library management, and new and emerging technologies. Those located in regional or

remote school settings in particular are able to participate and benefit by being a part of the collaborative community of the Australian teacher librarianship profession.

The **National Library of Australia administers the Electronic Resources Australia** (ERA) project, which is a consortium working towards laying the foundations for a simplified national licensing arrangement for e-resources. As this is a subscription based service the costs are often prohibitive for school libraries unless a competitive subscription can be negotiated with vendors through critical mass subscriptions from schools. Appropriately identified school library online packages need to be negotiated within a national consortium agreement on behalf of Australian schools. For example, with the DER one-to-one computer rollout the timing is right to provide students, at this level of schooling, with access to quality online resources.

> [National Library of Australia *Electronic Resources Australia*, viewed 15 April 2010, http://era.nla.gov.au/]

Education Services Australia (ESA), the March 2010 merger of Curriculum Corporation and education.au, provides education services to school libraries. In particular, the **School Cataloguing Information Service (SCIS) which provides schools with access to a database of catalogue records created according to national cataloguing standards.** This vital service helps to reduce the cost of duplication and time for the cataloguing of resources in schools. Personnel from the Education Departments in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia (as well as agencies in New Zealand) contribute to the database. [Curriculum Corporation *Schools Cataloguing Information Service*, viewed 15 April 2010, http://www2.curriculum.edu.au/scis/home.html] **The Education Network Australia (EdNA) service provides quality online resources and collaborative networks for the school library sector.** Teacher librarians have been involved in contributing to this free online service since its inception and continue to be involved in the work of this unit. [education.au *edna.edu.au Australia's free online network for educators*, Commonwealth of Australia, viewed 15 April 2010, http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go]

Where schools experience a shortfall in library and information services and access to qualified staff it is often a **public library and/or an academic library that supports the information requirements of school students**. Even where a school has a school library, a limited budget may not allow for the school library to provide students with access to online databases. The school library and public library can develop a partnership to provide access to these types of resources for students where possible. In 2005, Mackay West State School and Mackay City Council Library Service (Queensland) were recognised by the International Association of School Librarianship for the strategic alliance between the school and the public library service for the program, *Productive Partnerships: Learning for Life*.

> [International Association of School Librarianship *IASL International Awards programme: IASL/Softlink International Excellence Award – Award recipients 2005*, viewed 15 April 2010, http://www.iasl-online.org/awards/softlink4.html
> Note: The inaugural award in 2004 followed by 2005 and 2006 were Australian recipients for successful school library programs and teacher librarianship.]

Teacher librarians have developed and delivered successful parent programs through the school library to help parents support their children through their schooling years.

In 1993, the School Library Association of Queensland was recognised by the International Association of School Librarianship for *Project Parent: Control or Chaos*, a program that provided original and practical guidance for parents to collaborate in the education of their children through the school library. The award recognised the program as a model for replication by other schools worldwide. National funding assistance to the Australian School Library Association would allow for the development of a national parent program to help parents support their children in the specific area of information digital literacy and cyber safety.

> [International Association of School Librarianship *IASL International Awards programme: IASL/SIRS International Commendation Award*, viewed 15 April 2010, http://www.iasl-online.org/awards/iasl_sirs.html
> Note: The award was offered from 1990 through to 2004. Australian teacher librarians and Australian school library associations were the recipients for 11 of the 15 years this award was offered and received an honourable mention for one other year.]

Relationships with other professional associations and education agencies have resulted in joint profession learning opportunities, policy development, research and publications. For example, joint national conferences, joint Policy Advisory Group with the Australian Library and Information Association for the development of national standards for teacher librarians and policy statements (http://www.asla.org.au/policy/), Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Australian Library and Information Association and Edith Cowan University for joint research, and Curriculum Corporation and ACER Press for publications.

Teacher librarians, and those interested in teacher librarianship, help **inform higher education course content through involvement in course advisory committees and focus groups to ensure the content is relevant to current teaching practice and aligns with the role of the teacher librarian in the school community.** Through this partnership there is the opportunity to engage in and share the outcomes of research that informs teaching and learning practice through the school library.

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

The integration of digital technologies can enhance the **delivery of library and information services** to students and teachers in a swift and efficient way and make **resources and services more accessible through being digitally available at the point of need and learning** wherever the user may be. Teacher librarians can become more readily available to support the teaching and learning process for students' and teachers' learning in the use of digital tools and the development of digital literacy capabilities across the curriculum.

Digital technologies **minimise the library management duties** to release the teacher librarian to work collaboratively in teaching and learning areas. Teacher librarians can ensure students and staff have easy access to authoritative and accurate information to support the curriculum. **Teacher librarians become a gateway guide for students to develop digital**

fluency in navigating, retrieving, using and applying the information to develop deeper knowledge and understanding of their world.

A misleading myth is that the Internet can be seen as a panacea for educational resourcing. While the Internet can provide a vast array of information, much of it leads students into
- misinformation,
- a false sense of knowingness, and
- an inability to select the right tool for the appropriate purpose.

Teacher librarians have a direct role in teaching digital literacy skills so that students know how to distinguish fact from fiction and are able to select tools and resources appropriately.

The advent of digital technologies, and especially the DER rollout, has **increased the need for an understanding of social responsibility, ethical behaviour and being safe on the Internet.** School libraries are a safe learning space and should play a strong role in cyber safety through a digital literacy program that incorporates responsibility, behaviour and safety. This also aligns with the general capabilities in the draft Australian National Curriculum.

Access to digital tools and resources places a **different emphasis on resource collection development** within a school library. The percentage of budget for hard copy and electronic media and resources will be dependent upon:
- the age of the children – for example, younger children need more exposure to physical items or concrete materials.
- the type of information – for example, reading materials (at this stage) for literacy and recreational reading still need to be physical books. The advent of the e-book is still not at a point where it will replace physical books.
- the learning styles of the students – for example, some learners need the physical item versus some learners need access anywhere anytime.

Schools will need to **review funding allocations** to support the development of a collection reflective of the teaching and learning program within the school.

> [Hay, L & Foley, C 2009 'School libraries building capacity for student learning in 21C', in *SCAN*, vol. 28, no. 2, May 2009, Department of Education & Training, NSW, pp. 17-26.]

Due to the rapid development of digital technologies it is essential for teacher librarians to continually acquire new skills to fulfil their roles. This **ongoing professional learning requirement** needs to be acknowledged and resourced by schools to ensure the teacher librarian continues to apply and use the most relevant digital tools, technologies and content for learning in a school community.

Conclusion

The Australian School Library Association Inc. recommends:

A. The Australian Government commit to the coordination of the outcomes of this Inquiry.

B. The Australian Government allocate personnel in the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to implement the outcomes of this Inquiry and establish a unit to be responsible for school libraries in Australian schools. The Australian School Library Association and the Australian Library and Information Association are willing to assist the Australian Government in the delivery of this recommendation.

C. The Australian Government recognise that the Australian School Library Association is a major stakeholder in the education profession representing school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools.

D. The Australian Government coordinate the collection of national statistics on personnel working in school libraries (number, qualifications, part-time / full-time), the funding allocation to school libraries and the scheduling of staff *duties based on full-time equivalent student enrolment. The Australian Government commit to regularly maintain this data.

> *Refer to Appendix B – Staffing in *Learning for the future: developing information services in Australian schools* 2001, 2nd edition, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South, Vic., pp. 59 – 69.

E. The Ministers of Education establish a formula for staffing of school libraries by qualified personnel, using the **recommended minimum information services centre staffing* as a guideline, and negotiate with State / Territory Governments to commit to meeting this staffing allocation for school libraries within a three-year implementation plan.
> *Table 6 in *Learning for the future: developing information services in Australian schools* 2001, 2nd edition, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South, Vic., p. 68.

F. The Ministers of Education establish a formula for funding the resource collection of school libraries Australia-wide based on a minimum per-capita amount and negotiate with Governments to commit to meeting a national funding agreement for school libraries on an annual basis.

G. The Ministers of Education develop an Australian-wide 21st Century student learning skills policy as a framework for national curriculum planning, implementation and delivery.

H. Governments acknowledge that professional development opportunities need to be inclusive of teacher librarians especially in relation to the implementation of

Australian Government initiatives, such as the Australian National Curriculum, NAPLAN, and DER, and help facilitate access to the ongoing professional development of teacher librarians.

I. The Australian Government to fund the development of a digital literacy learning continuum as a support document for the Australian National Curriculum in partnership with the Australian School Library Association.

J. The Australian Government to fund the development and delivery of a parent program on digital literacy and cyber safety to help parents support their child's learning in partnership with the Australian School Library Association.

K. The Australian Government supports ALIA's initiative of a National Year of Reading in 2012 and the contribution of teacher librarians to this initiative to improve educational and community outcomes by joining together the many reading and literacy initiatives already happening in Australia.

L. The Australian Government to fund an Australian-based longitudinal study into how a strong school library program that is adequately staffed, resourced and funded can lead to higher student academic achievement and literacy levels.

M. To address the skills shortage of teacher librarians, Governments commit to sponsoring the retraining of teachers in teacher librarianship. The *New South Wales Department of Education Teacher Librarian Retraining Program provides a model for Australia-wide adoption within each State / Territory Department of Education. Additional incentives, such as scholarships, to be considered to assist individual's to complete studies to full qualification status.

> *New South Wales Government, Department of Education and Training 2009, *Teacher Librarian Retraining Program Information*, viewed 15 April 2010, https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/employment/teachnsw/retrain/lib_info.htm

N. State / Territory Governments allocate personnel to provide support services for school libraries to develop high quality school library programs to scaffold the curriculum and learning needs of students in Australian schools.

O. The National Library of Australia, in collaboration with the Australian School Library Association, identify a number of key and relevant online databases suitable for schools. The Australian Government commit to funding the national site licensing for Australian schools.

P. The Australian Government continue to fund school-based services provided by Education Services Australia (ESA), e.g. SCIS and EdNA.

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