



The Chair  
Enquiry into School Libraries

Parliament House

Canberra 2600

Dear Sir or madam

I am both a library users and former English teacher in high schools

1. As the convenor of the NSW State Library Constant Users Committee I would like to draw to your attention the low funding of the State Libraries for acquisitions. NSW seems to get about \$6 million which is about one quarter of one University, The University of Sydney, yet this is for the whole state not just one university. Victoria seems to have even less at \$2 million (the situation there is murky since exact figures cant be obtained: the Victorian State Library Users Group has not been able to find out despite 3 years enquiries and letters from me when resident in Victoria to the State Librarian and the Minister went unanswered)..

There needs to be an urgent input of money into the State Libraries for acquisitions of books which backup school libraries., The internet has also eaten into the acquisition budgets of these libraries. Librarians also need more staff eg more catalogers. The State library of NSW appears not to have a chief cataloger.

They are very underfunded for acquisitions. I suggest a federal funding input. We are also in the situation of lifetime learning.

2. School students need to be told that they can get interlibrary loans from State libraries. I wonder if they are aware of this.

3. I draw your attention to Thomas Mann, *The Oxford Guide to Library research* (New York 2005). All library users need to use this work and school students especially from when they have adult reading ages. This work covers the internet despite its title.

4. State libraries need to collect for school students eg children's books for loan and works for students who are doing assignments (eg "cribs" on major authors eg Jane Austen, Shakespeare).

5. In order to increase book holdings no State library should ever refuse any children's book being discarded by a school library (all of which are I understand supposed to be offered to the relevant State library).

6. The Federal government should ensure that digitization of newspapers continues. This is vital for small communities where there may be only one paper of record. I understand that is to be axed..

7. It cannot be too strongly stressed that the books I not yet dead and never will be. Libraries are about books primarily. I am in favour of the internet and digitization as much as anyone but not at the expense of the physical book. I point out here that Australia is till an isolated country in this respect and books holdings are very poor with major written languages being poorly held (eg Chinese and Japanese for starters but very poor for Turkish and Arabic)

8. The National Library's union catalogue Trove I find very difficult to use. There is a more direct version called Libraries Australia. This should be made available free to individual users.

All school students should be made aware of Worldcat which contains 1.2 million items and is comparable to a Google search

I look forward to your report and wish you well in compiling it.

Your sincerely

Paul Knobel