



Secretary
Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher-Librarians,
House of Representatives,
PO Box 6021, Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600.

This submission is made in my role as President of the Parents' and Citizens' Association of Corinda State High School.

▪ **Inquiry Point 1: The impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities;**

We have recently received funding to refurbish our library and transform its interior into a more open, fresh, modern design. The students and teachers have appreciated this change and the library is very busy during class time and break time with students researching, discussing, following a personal interest, using computers, or studying in the pleasant surroundings.

We applaud the use of BER money to build school libraries as we believe that a library is an essential requirement in a school.

However, we do believe that it is very important to staff the libraries adequately so that these wonderful facilities can be used effectively in teaching and learning. We are finding it challenging to ensure that our library has adequate professional and paraprofessional staffing. We believe that library staffing should be a specialist allocation and not included in the classroom teaching numbers or the general teacher aide hours.

▪ **Inquiry Point 2: The future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy;**

We believe that the role of the Teacher-Librarian is a very important one in the school and we wish to retain that role into the future.

The teacher-librarian is a teaching partner with our teachers and s/he

- develops curriculum and units of work with teachers, ensuring that the best practice in curriculum development and unit planning is followed and that a variety of learning and teaching strategies are used. The teacher-librarian has a special interest in ensuring that the best sources of information are used in each unit and that students are aware of the best way of using each source and the problems that might be associated with their use.
- Ensures that a range of resources appropriate to the needs of our students are available for the units of work. Different reading levels, different learning styles, different emphasis for different subjects are considered and catered for.
- Models different types of lessons particularly those with a literacy focus

- Runs our literature programme which encourages students to enjoy reading for pleasure, to improve their reading skills and to widen their general knowledge.
- Encourages interest in reading, books, targeted internet use, web 2.0 tools and generally opens students' minds to the wonders of the world around them.

Much has been made of the need for students to become lifelong learners. Another of the main roles of the Teacher-Librarian is to model the importance of life long learning and to nurture students while they are developing their literacy and research skills for the future.

This role complements the work with teachers on designing units of work with appropriate digital and/or print resources to engage, challenge and impel students into learning.

Recent studies overseas and in Australia have shown that school libraries staffed by professional teacher-librarians contribute to improved academic achievement in the school (For example: <http://www.chs.ecu.edu.au/portals/ASLRP/links-schoollib.php>)

- **Inquiry Point 3: The factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians;**

We are concerned that Teacher-Librarians are becoming harder to replace and that the training opportunities for Teacher-Librarians are reduced. It is important that this school begins to plan for the future when our present teacher-librarians may retire. We would love to offer fresh enthusiastic teachers who are trainee Teacher-Librarians an opportunity to observe and train in our school library. We have done this in the past and have watched with pleasure as these teachers have blossomed into successful teacher-librarians. However, we are concerned that few training courses for Teacher-librarians are offered. We are concerned that there is a question mark over how we will be able to continue the important services run by our teacher-librarians in the future. Increasing reliance on digital resources means that the Teacher-librarians' special skills of showing students how to find the best information source for a particular need, of how to access sources, how to use new and powerful technologies to find information, to transform information and to present information is needed more and more. However, teacher-librarians also remind students that the most important technology is the human brain, the well constructed questions, the careful analysis and powerful synthesis that the student brings to the research

- **Inquiry Point 4: The role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians**

Our school library is supported by many community and government organisations and in turn our library supports these groups as well.

We co-operate with the Brisbane City Council libraries and we are very thankful for the wide range of databases, the mytutor service and the print resources that they provide for our students. Similarly the State Library of Queensland and the National Library

support us in our research needs and in access to electronic resources.

We are also a partnership school with the University of Queensland and Griffith University and this allows teachers to access the libraries of these organisations.

Our students benefit from these partnerships and we would want them to continue.

However, the biggest impact for our students would be for the State and Federal governments to broker an arrangement to staff all State schools and State High Schools with professional teacher-librarians who are not counted in the classroom teaching numbers. In this way we could ensure that both our library and our classrooms were adequately staffed.

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

Digital technologies have already made exciting changes to our library. A simple example would be that the digital library catalogue is now available on every computer in the school. Students and staff can quickly find recommended resources (print and non print) on any topic. Databases have allowed us to offer quality online information for students to access at school or at home. Sometimes digital material is the most useful material available on a topic (for example for current statistics) but other times a book with appropriately designed text, with a controlled vocabulary, with appropriate illustrations may be more appropriate. Digital resources have changed the way information can be presented. At our school, the Teacher-Librarians, the HOD ICT and the ICT co-ordinator (who has 3 hours dedicated to that role) support teachers in the use of ICTs in teaching and learning. Each of these people has a slightly different focus and together they help teachers and students to use ICTs to promote educational outcomes.

Digital technologies will impact on the library. They open up many exciting possibilities. Our students, our teachers and our teacher-librarians will use them when appropriate to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. In addition, technologies may help us organise the physical space in a better way. However, the technologies cannot replace the people who model, nurture, encourage, challenge, suggest, organise and guide our teachers and students who are the focus of our teaching and learning activities in this school.