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Submission to:

*Inquiry into school libraries and teacher
librarians in Australian school.*

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Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian school.

I would like to address two of the focus points of the inquiry.

- (1) the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improve education and community outcomes, especially literacy; and
- (2) the impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians.

In addressing point (1), I will outline how the school library and librarians in our school already contribute to improvement in education and community outcomes and point out that these contributions will be continue to be effective in the future. Naturally, the modifications are continually being made according to the needs of the school and the community.

The Library Aims

- To support the school curriculum at every level
 - To develop students research and literature appreciation skills.
 - To provide all students with a stimulating learning environment with access to up to date resources in a variety of formats that meet the students academic, social and creative needs.
 - To provide teachers with a variety of teaching resources to support their classroom programs.
 - All students will develop a knowledge and love of a variety of literature genres.
 - The Teacher-Librarian will offer classroom teachers support through resources and collaborative programs
 - To provide extra-curricula activities for students at lunchtime.
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- The teacher librarian will provide a balanced, up to date collection through a comprehensive development collection plan.
 - There will be ready access to resources through a well-maintained library automation system.
 - The library will provide a place for notices for current competitions, exhibitions and activities in which the children can participate.
 - The library will provide a stimulating environment through displays of resources and students' work.
 - The library will promote the social and recreational development of pupils by equipping it with a variety of games such as chessboards etc.

The Library Teaching Program covers 3 areas – Literature appreciation, Information Literacy and Computer Skills.

The aims of the Literature program are to assist the children in:

- discovering delight in books
- interpreting the literature they read
- develop their literary awareness
- developing an appreciation of literature

The aims of the Information Literacy program are to develop the children's knowledge of:

- the library orientation
- the organisation of resources in the library and
- to develop the children's process skills by:
 - defining what information they are trying to find
 - locating and retrieving the information needed
 - selecting the information critically and analytically
 - organising relevant findings
 - presenting the findings clearly and accurately and
 - evaluating how well they achieved their information purpose
- to ensure that research skills are taught functionally
- to develop cooperative planning between the class teacher and the teacher/librarian.

The aims of the computer skills program in the library are to:

- nurture in pupils a positive attitude toward information technology and computing and to encourage their active involvement in it.
- ensure equal access for all students to computers and appropriate software
- provide the children with access to increased appropriate sources of knowledge by utilising the Internet.
- provide another means by which the children can enhance those skills being developed across the curriculum and to allow the children to learn with computers while learning about computers.
- provide opportunities for children to become familiar with the Library Enquiry catalogue, which will in turn encourage independent learning

The Role of the Teacher-Librarian

The Teacher-Librarian has two main roles – Administration and Teaching. It is vital that school library staff is involved in both aspects of the role in order to ensure efficient and effective use of the numerous resources available. Ideally teacher-librarians should already have considerable classroom experience before attempting the role of teacher-librarian. The needs of students and classroom teachers are met more effectively when the teacher-librarian has had first hand experience in the classroom.

Resource selection for a school library must be done by personnel who have taught the curriculum and are in a position to make appropriate decisions about how useful a particular resource might be. The following is taken from the school policy - selection criteria

Potential Use

- Does the material fit the school's curriculum?
- Does it answer an expressed or anticipated future need?

Subject

- Is it pertinent to the Key Learning Areas?
- Is it suitable for the age group or year level?
- Does it have impact and aesthetic value?

Treatment

- Does the resource feature undesirable aspects such as stereotypes, bias, unsatisfactory treatment of minority groups?
- Will students be able to identify required information in the resource?

Scope

- How adequate is the coverage?
- Is it broad or limited?
- Are supplementary materials needed?
- How does it compare with already existing materials?

Reliability

- Are the facts accurate and up to date?
- Are the authors/editors/publishers recognised as having specialised knowledge?
- If it is a new edition, how much of the former edition has been revised?

Format

- Is the format classified as reading material rather than activity based?
- Does the packaging/cover appeal?
- Does it provide enough information for students to make an informed decision about the resource?
- Does the resource have special features, such as an index, glossary, chapter summaries, which make the contents readily accessible?
- Will this item contribute to the range of media available to students on the topic?

Price

- Does the resource represent good value for money?
- How does it compare with other resource in the area?

Point (2)

The impact of digital technologies.

Teacher –Librarians generally have welcomed the impact of digital technologies. They are the teachers who use it most and promote its use to fellow staff members. While promoting the use of technology, the teacher-librarian also maintains a balanced approach to learning. Digital technology is another very useful way of allowing students to become independent learners.

Teacher –librarians will continue to encourage both teachers and students to use a variety of resources and to find the items that are most appropriate to their needs. Because of the impact of digital technologies the teacher-librarian has a much greater role in the future than in the past. There is an even greater need for an expert to assist with the locating, selecting and organising of information.