

15th April 2010

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
On Education and Training
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools.

The Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends submit the following submission outlining concerns that have been brought to our attention.

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

As a result of the Building Education Revolution many schools have put resources into the construction of new libraries.

A building only becomes a library when equipped with the resources, including a Librarian, to distinguish it from just another classroom.

The maximum benefit of these new libraries will not be realised unless they are staffed by qualified teacher librarians. In Tasmania, of the 57 government schools receiving a new or refurbished library, only 7 have a teacher librarian.

Resources for school libraries should align with the recommendations of the Australian School Library Association and the Australian Library and Information Association.

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

Increased use of digital access to information increases the need of teacher librarians available to assist students navigate and expedite access to relevant information.

Because of the increased use of digital media in schools, teachers more than ever, need to be suitably trained with regular professional learning opportunities to keep them informed of changes and new technologies.

In recent years, the number of Teacher Librarians in Tasmanian schools has been declining and I understand that this is a trend occurring Australia wide.

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

All levels of government, businesses and the broader community can help schools maintain relevance in their libraries through financial support and sponsorship.

TASSP&F Policy states that where a joint school and community library exists, priority should be given to the quality of service to students of the school and to ensuring unrestricted access to the library and its materials to those students.

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

The cost of maintaining relevance of digital technologies can have a considerable impact on school budgets.

Rather than digital technologies minimising the need for librarians, the opposite is considered to be the case. With digital technologies we need librarians to guide students in the right direction.

Students, particularly younger students, need to be supervised when using digital technologies to ensure that they are not accessing inappropriate material and teachers, more than ever, need to be suitably trained.

Yours sincerely

**President
Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends Inc**