5

Partnering and supporting school libraries and teacher librarians

Introduction

5.1   The inquiry was presented with numerous examples that highlight opportunities for productive partnerships available to school libraries.

5.2   The Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) pointed to a range of institutions and organisations that currently support school libraries Australia–wide.

5.3   These include:

- Federal/State/territory governments and agencies;
- National Library of Australia – Electronic Resources Australia and state libraries;
- Public libraries; and
- Parent associations.[1]

5.4   The submissions from ASLA and ALIA, and many others, indicated that there is ongoing collaboration and cooperation between school libraries and different levels of government and local communities. However, there is also scope for further innovative partnerships, especially in areas where there is otherwise limited support or training available to teacher librarians. This chapter will refer to support mechanisms provided for by

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1   ASLA, *Submission 327*, p. 3 and ALIA, *Submission 332*, pp. 18-20.

government departments and agencies, other support available from the community, and existing partnerships such as joint-use libraries.

Government departments and agencies

5.5   As mentioned repeatedly throughout this report, state and territory government and non-government education authorities have responsibility for managing schools and allocating staff, including school libraries and teacher librarians. As established in chapter two, the Commonwealth Government has a leadership role to play in respect of national vision, partnerships and direction. As such, the Commonwealth Government has made a number of significant investments to support school libraries and teacher librarians with Council of Australian Government reforms and roll-outs of initiatives like the Building the Education Revolution (BER) and Digital Education Revolution (DER) (see chapter two for details).

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

5.6   ALIA acknowledged the Commonwealth Government's role in involving and coordinating school library and teacher librarian stakeholders with relevant issues; and especially the Department of Education, employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) for its:

- Support[ing] school libraries and literacy through its National Literacy and Numeracy Week;
- Support[ing] school libraries in their literacy activities through Smarter Schools; and
- Support[ing] school libraries and teacher librarians through this inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians, and through their recognition of the important role of school libraries and teacher librarians in supporting educational outcomes.[2]

5.7   Other Commonwealth government departments and agencies that support school libraries, as acknowledged by ALIA, include: the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy; the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA); and Education Services Australia (ESA).[3]

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2   ALIA, *Submission 332*, pp. 19-20.
3   ALIA, *Submission 332*, p. 19.

ACMA and Department of Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy

5.8   The role of ACMA and Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy was previously referred to in chapter two, specifically with respect to cybersafety programs.[4]

Education Services Australia

5.9   As indicated in chapter two, Education Services Australia, created through the merger of Curriculum Corporation and Education.au, is a national not-for-profit ministerial company owned by all Australian education ministers. The company was established to advance key nationally-agreed education initiatives, programs and projects like the National Curriculum and the Digital Education Revolution.[5]

5.10   ESA described its range of services to school libraries including, principally, the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS)[6] and the Education Network Australia (EdNA), which provides quality online resources and collaborative networks for the school sector:[7]

> SCIS provides schools with access to a database of consistent catalogue records created according to agreed national standards, in order to reduce the cost and duplication of effort of cataloguing resources in schools. SCIS reduces the cost and effort required by library staff, freeing staff to teach students.[8]

> EdNA service provides a host of applications and tools, networking and web 2.0 technologies designed for the Australian education and training community, for educational and research purposes. For over 10 years EdNA has supported school libraries through a collection of evaluated online curriculum and professional resources, a federated search across key national and

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4   ALIA, *Submission 332*, p. 19.

5   ALIA, *Submission 332*, p. 18. See the Education Services Australia website for details: Education Services Australia, 'About Us,' 2011, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.esa.edu.au/>.

6   See the Schools Catalogue Information Service website: Schools Catalogue Information Service, 'What is SCIS,' undated, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www2.curriculum.edu.au/scis/home.html>.

7   See the Education Network Australia website: Education Services Australia, 'Home,' 7 February 2011, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go>.

8   Education Services Australia, *Submission 119*, p. 2.

international education repositories and through the promotion of the benefits of technology for education and training in Australia.[9]

5.11   ESA publishes the current standards document for Australian school libraries, *Learning for the Future: Developing Information Services in Australian Schools*.[10] The document is predominantly concerned with the implementation and role of ICT in school learning environments.[11]

5.12   ESA manages the national resource collection and infrastructure of digital curriculum resources (currently aligned with the curriculums of the states and territories and to be aligned with the national curriculum). On behalf of Australia's school libraries, ESA forms strong links with libraries and cultural organisations at a national level to procure and disseminate digital resources.[12]

5.13   ESA also develops and maintains the Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT), which provides a controlled vocabulary of terms tailored to Australian schools, encompassing all curriculum areas. The ScOT vocabulary may be integrated into the search mechanisms of school library and management systems, enabling related resources to be identified within broader collections of content. [13]

5.14   ESA described all its services as:

> Collaboratively networked services developed with states and territories and the school community of users, of which school libraries form the major basis.[14]

5.15   This is a point worth underscoring in this section as much as the chapter as a whole. Namely, that the Commonwealth Government and several other partners are endeavouring to engage and work inclusively with school libraries and teacher librarians. ASLA acknowledged the Commonwealth's efforts in this regard. ASLA noted that teacher librarians have been involved in contributing to the EdNA service since its inception;[15] the development of the new Australian Institute for Teaching

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9   Education Services Australia, *Submission 119*, p. 2.

10   Education Services Australia, *Submission 119*, p. 2.

11   See ALSA, 'Learning for the future: developing information services in schools (Second edition),' October 2010, accessed 9 February 2011 at <http://www.asla.org.au/pubs/lftf.htm>.

12   Education Services Australia, *Submission 119*, p. 2.

13   Education Services Australia, *Submission 119*, p. 2. See also Schools Online Thesaurus website: Education Services Australia, 'What is ScOT,' undated, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au/what_is_scot.html>.

14   Education Services Australia, *Submission 119,* p. 2.

15   ASLA, *Submission 327*, p. 13.

and School Leadership (AITSL) National Professional Standards for Teachers; and a range of different consultation forums.[16]

5.16   ASLA recommended that the Commonwealth Government continue to fund school-based services (for example, SCIS and EdNA) provided by ESA.[17]

5.17   The Committee acknowledges the value of this partnership and its collaborative nature.

State and territory governments

5.18   State and territory governments are responsible for managing schools and allocating staff, including school libraries and teacher librarians.

5.19   States and territories have different policies and practices in relation to school libraries and teacher librarians but all share a common interest – along with the Commonwealth Government - in trying to foster productive and supportive relationships:

> [The NSW Department wishes to] ensure the place and role of school libraries and teacher librarians into the future and [provide] guidance for consistent, equitable implementation at the school level.[18]
>
> [With the BER investment] many [Queensland] schools have rethought and reimagined their library spaces to be the hub of learning in their schools.[19]
>
> The new libraries, resource centres and upgraded existing libraries [associated with the BER scheme] will increase the Northern Territory's capacity to make planned and sustainable investments in:
>
> - Teaching and learning resources and resource management;
> - Information literate students;
> - Qualified library staff;
> - Community partnerships;
> - Information access and delivery; and
> - Library program administration.[20]

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16   ASLA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 24 June 2010, p. 1.

17   ASLA, *Submission 327*, p. 17.

18   NSW Department of Education, *Submission 112*, p, 4.

19   Queensland Department of Education, *Submission 382,* p. 1.

20   NT Government, *Submission 376*, p. 1.

5.20   Many submitters endorsed the Commonwealth's investments in BER, DER and Smarter Schools but acknowledged their respective challenges in ensuring that the new facilities have commensurate staffing – an issue discussed in chapter two.

5.21   As mentioned in chapters three and four, NSW is the only state that applies a staffing formula that ensures that all government schools in NSW have access to a teacher librarian.

5.22   State and territory education authorities referred to a range of ways in which they seek to support their school libraries and teacher librarians.

5.23   The WA Department of Education advised that its Staffing Directorate exists to provide support to schools to get the staff that they need:

> If schools were having difficulty accessing a teacher librarian we would know and be doing everything we could to make sure that those schools could access a suitably qualified person to fill that position.[21]

5.24   The ACT Department of Education expanded on the support it has provided in respect of scholarships for teaching staff interested in gaining information literacy qualifications and professional development activities for library support staff, to develop participants' understandings of library databases, use of the internet and audiovisual equipment.[22]

5.25   The SA Government made reference to the Premier's Literacy Program, which most schools in South Australia participate in. In most schools this program is run through the school library.[23] The Committee understands that similar programs operate in some other jurisdictions.

5.26   A number of state and territory governments and departments, including the NT Government,[24] SA Government,[25] and the Tasmanian Department of Education,[26] made reference to the potential and success of joint-use libraries, also referred to as school community libraries, where states and local governments jointly operate library facilities to benefit the school and wider community.

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21   Mr Thompson, Department of Education & Training, WA, *Committee Hansard*, Perth, 13 July 2010, p. 65.
22   ACT Department of Education, *Submission 383*, p. 3.
23   SA Government, *Submission 352*, p. 3.
24   NT Government, *Submission 376*, p. 3.
25   SA Government, *Submission 352*, p. 4.
26   Tasmanian Department of Education, *Committee Hansard*, Hobart, 30 April 2010, p. 58.

The National Library and state libraries

5.27   As mentioned in chapter two, the National Library of Australia administers the Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) project, which manages purchasing arrangements as a consortium in order to make it more affordable for libraries to subscribe to electronic resources.

5.28   Some schools currently subscribe to the service and others do not for a host of reasons, mostly pertaining to funding issues. The Committee has commented on this matter and made a recommendation on providing equitable access to online databases.

5.29   The National Library and state libraries can play a supportive role in education and research and the provision of online resources. The Parents and Citizens Association of Corinda State High School referred to the support it received from the State Library of Queensland and National Library in respect of its research needs and access to electronic databases.[27]

5.30   ALIA referred to partnerships with state libraries such as the 'Inside a Dog' project. This is centred on a website promoting young adult literature through highlighting Australian and international works and presenting a program of creative reading activities for schools. The project operates through the Centre for Youth Literature at the State Library of Victoria[28] and receives corporate sponsorship from Clayton Utz.

5.31   The State Library of Western Australia described the success of its Better Beginnings family literacy program. The program is delivered through public libraries to support parents as their child's first teacher. To date it has supported some 70 000 families to provide quality early learning literacy experiences for children aged 0-3 years to ensure that they start school ready to learn.[29]

5.32   The Better Beginnings program is an example of the potential for libraries to have a greater impact on the development and early education of children prior to their commencement at school. The program may ease the transition into the school learning environment.

5.33   Some of the fun activities that bring together young children and books and families at the libraries include:

  ■ Baby rhyme and story sessions hosted by libraries;

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27   Parents and Citizens Association of Corinda State High School, *Submission 130,* p. 3.

28   ALIA, *Submission 332*, p. 19.

29   State Library of Western Australia, *Submission 60*, p.1, and Better Beginnings website: State Library of Western Australia, 'Better Beginnings,' 2007, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.better-beginnings.com.au/>.

- A range of books, rhymes and songs to share with your baby; and
- Story-time boxes with books, puppets, instruments and more to use in playgroups.[30]

5.34   An evaluation study by Edith Cowan University found that the program has had a significant positive impact on early reading practices, attitudes and beliefs:

> Eighty five percent of mothers surveyed reported that they read to their child after being involved in the program (only 14% of these mothers reported reading to their child beforehand) and 62% reported that their confidence in sharing books with their child had increased.[31]

5.35   The State Library of WA is now partnering with the Western Australian Department of Education on a 12 month pilot that extends Better Beginnings to provide support for children aged four and five years when they begin school. Like 'Inside a Dog,' Better Beginnings attracts corporate sponsorship. [32] The program is funded by Rio Tinto, under the WA Community Investment's Future Fund.

5.36   The State Library of Tasmania provides a library management software system (Talis) and associated training to support Department of Education school libraries. [33]

5.37   One successful and expanding project of the State Library of Queensland is the network of Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKC):

> Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) are owned, managed and staffed by local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Councils. The State Library of Queensland funds and facilitates the establishment of these Centres, and provides ongoing support through staff training and delivery of programs to promote literacy, build life skills and keep culture strong.[34]

5.38   The Queensland Department of Education and Training elaborated further:

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30   State Library of Western Australia, 'Better Beginnings,' 2007, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.better-beginnings.com.au/>.

31   State Library of Western Australia, *Submission 60*, p.1.

32   State Library of Western Australia, *Submission 60*, p.1.

33   ASLA - Tasmania, *Submission 121*, p. 10.

34   Longtime learning - Queensland Indigenous Knowledge Centres, accessed 23 February 2011 at
<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/133308/Longtime_Learning.pdf>.

> In addition to the traditional library role of lending students books, IKC operates a homework club, assists in the collection and sharing of local Indigenous history amongst students and the community, provides an environment for community based activities to operate and undertakes educational and functional computer and cinematic classes.

> Digital media developed at IKC, often involving members of the community, are recognised as an important way of storing local cultural knowledge, teaching values and sharing opinions.

> The enhancement of libraries and a greater involvement of the community in the development of the teacher-librarian role would be seen as a future partnership arrangement which could encourage a greater involvement of students in their own literacy and ICT development.[35]

5.39   There are 20 IKCs in Queensland, predominantly in the Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait regions. The centres function as a library for school students and a hub for the collection and sharing of Indigenous history. In Cherbourg, for example, the Winifred Fisher Knowledge Centre:

> ...provides a direct link with the local community and specifically focuses on assisting students to develop and value literacy skills and to feel pride in their history through the use of multimedia access.[36]

5.40   Literacy results have been improved and other benefits have become apparent:

> School classes are using the IKC on a regular basis. Students borrow books out and return them the following week, and the level of respect for people and property in the IKC is growing. This is a very good outcome in addition to the improvements in reading.[37]

5.41   The Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Cherbourg also has a homework club for students. The facility has generated an enthusiasm for learning:

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35   Queensland Department of Education and Training, *Submission 382*, p. 4.
36   Queensland Department of Education and Training, *Submission 382*, p. 4.
37   The Winifred Fisher Indigenous Knowledge Centre, accessed 23 February 2011 at http://www.cherbourss.eq.edu.au/IKC/programs.htm.

> Children are arriving at school by 8 am ready and wanting to read.
> The IKC is open for them to read Accelerated Reader books and
> then do the accompanying comprehension quiz on a computer.[38]

Support personnel within government and non-government agencies and offices

5.42   Ms Mitchell from Education Services Australia said that there is a need for a greater ongoing advocacy presence within all Australian departments of education. This would support school libraries and teacher librarians:

> Representation is one issue. We have certainly heard there is not anyone with that responsibility in a lot of our departments.[39]

5.43   Ms Johnston of the Joint Use Libraries Association agreed, saying that 'there needs to be a policy and project officer with responsibility for school libraries in each state and territory.'[40] She cited the NSW Department of Education and Training as a model:

> In NSW there is that central support, and we would like to see that re-established so that everybody has access to that.[41]

5.44   The South Brisbane network, 'Teacher librarians connecting,' endorsed the need for this type of support, recommending:

> Reinstating the ongoing development of school libraries with support from a central advisory body (as in the past e.g LARS).[42]

5.45   Another Queensland submitter, Mr Bahnisch, suggested revisiting the notion of regional library advisers. This would involve identifying and using high performing teacher librarians as mentors for other librarians in a given area.[43]

5.46   ASLA emphasised that it was highly desirable for support personnel within education authorities to work with teacher librarians to develop the library and information services, and teaching and learning programs of the school library to achieve higher educational outcomes for students:

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38   The Winifred Fisher Indigenous Knowledge Centre, accessed 23 February 2011 at http://www.cherbourss.eq.edu.au/IKC/programs.htm.

39   ESA, *Committee Hansard,* Adelaide, 12 July 2010, p. 31.

40   Joint Use Libraries Association, *Committee Hansard,* Adelaide, 12 July 2010, p. 11.

41   Joint Use Libraries Association, *Committee Hansard*, Adelaide, 12 July 2010, p. 11.

42   Teacher librarians connecting, South Brisbane, *Submission 189*, p. 2.

43   Mr Bahnisch, *Submission 385*, p. 19.

> 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 remotes school settings in particular are able to participate and benefit by being part of a collaborative community.[44]

5.47   The Children's Book Council of Australia noted that better representation is required in departments of education and also non-government education bodies, including Catholic education offices and independent school boards.[45]

5.48   Mrs Wake, from the Association of Independent Schools in Western Australia (AISWA), also lamented the lack of existing support and advocacy services for independent school librarians:

> AISWA, to my knowledge, has never had a library support system. The Catholic Education Office [in WA] had a library consultant 15 years ago. She became ill. [No one replaced her].[46]

5.49   ASLA similarly suggested that DEEWR establish a unit with the Department to focus on school libraries and teacher librarians, and coordinating policies and benchmarks for 21st century learning skills.[47]

5.50   At present there is no designated area within the DEEWR that deals specifically with issues for school libraries and teacher librarians. The current organisational structure deals with broader issues, for example, teacher quality and teaching issues, curriculum issues, and ICT issues.[48]

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44   ASLA, *Submission 327*, p. 12.
45   CBCA, *Committee Hansard*, Adelaide, 12 July 2010, CBCA, p. 32.
46   Mrs Wake, AISWA, *Committee Hansard*, Perth, 13 July 2010, p. 46.
47   ASLA, *Submission 327*, p. 16.
48   Dr Evan Arthur, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 11 February 2011, p. 29.

Recommendation 10
The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government, through the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood and Youth Affairs, discuss ways to enhance partnerships with state and territory and local levels of government to support school libraries and teacher librarians.

Other support for teacher librarians

Parent associations

5.51   Parent bodies can provide invaluable support to a school library through a variety of means, including raising funds to purchase books, other educational resources, ICT equipment and furniture for the school library. Parents also volunteer their time to provide assistance to school library staff:

> I have parents who regularly volunteer their services to help maintain our library and make it the centre of the school, as it should be.[49]

5.52   While wider school community support certainly varies across Australian schools, a number of submissions attested to the tremendous support provided to school libraries by parent associations at their schools.[50]

5.53   Teacher librarians at Ogilvie High School referred to their library upgrade that was completed with money provided by the parent association.[51]

5.54   The Giralang Primary School Parents and Citizens Committee (P&C) outlined the various ways that parents played a vital role in supporting their small school library:

> Parents at Giralang Primary School take a hands-on role in the activities of the library by donating their time to assist the librarian. It is estimated that parents volunteer 2-3 hours per week in the library. In addition, voluntary contributions made to the school can be nominated by individual parents to be allocated

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49   Mrs M. Cooper, *Submission 79*, p. 7.

50   For instance, ALIA, *Submission 332*, p. 20, Giralang Primary School (ACT) Parents and Citizens Committee, *Submission 276*, p. 3, Ms I. Williams and Ms J. Budge, *Submission 219*, p. 2.

51   Ms. I. Williams and Ms J. Budge, *Submission 219*, p. 2.

> towards the library trust fund. Parents also donate used books to improve library resources.
>
> The P&C Committee have also provided funding for items such as bean bags to make the library a safe and welcoming place for students.[52]

5.55   Ms Margaret Cooper, librarian and President of the Illawarra School Libraries Association, pointed to the importance of teacher librarians cultivating a good relationship with the parents association. She said that teacher librarians must be proactive and suggested they attend meetings of the P&C in order to elicit support. She described how this strategy had paid dividends in her experience:

> I have worked hard to develop this profile...advertising the role of the library...the P & C community at our school recognise that the library is a whole school resource and that it is a facility used and enjoyed by all the children.[53]

5.56   ALIA and The Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools suggested that one issue teacher librarians and parents could work closely together on is cybersafety.[54]

Partnerships with public libraries

5.57   The relationship between school libraries and public libraries can significantly contribute to educational outcomes for Australian students.[55] It was noted that about one third of public library users are preschoolers, students and home-schooled children.[56] Submitters recognised the potential for stronger engagement and a greater alignment between school libraries and public library services.[57] Mrs Kim White, who has experience in both a public library and as a teacher librarian in a school, stated:

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52   Giralang Primary School (ACT) Parents and Citizens Committee, *Submission 276*, p. 3.

53   Mrs M. Cooper, *Submission 79*, pp. 6-7.

54   Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools Inc., *Submission 268*, p. 2. And ALIA, *Submission 332*, p. 21.

55   Public Libraries NSW—Country, *Submission 31*, p. 1.

56   Friends of Libraries Australia, *Submission 319*, p. 1.

57   See, for example, Australian Council of State School Organisations, *Submission 326*; Friends of Libraries Australia, *Submission 319*; Public Libraries Network Victoria, *Submission 132*; Joint Use Libraries Association South Australia, *Submission 217*; Western Australian Local Government Association; *Submission 336*; State Library of Western Australia; *Submission 60*;

> I envisage that partnerships with local government public libraries
> will be an integral part of the future of school libraries.[58]

5.58   How partnerships are formed with school libraries and teacher librarians
to create beneficial outcomes for communities varies greatly between
metropolitan and rural and remote areas.[59]

5.59   The ad hoc nature of existing partnerships between school libraries and
public libraries was noted by a contributor to the Australian Council of
State School Organisations' submission:

> ...while there are some very good examples of cooperation
> unfortunately in too many cases it is nothing more, if the students
> are lucky, than a visit each year to the public library.[60]

5.60   Friend of Libraries Australia (FOLA) noted barriers identified by public
libraries to greater cooperation with schools. These include:

- schools not responsive/cooperative/interested;
- failure by schools/teachers to advise potential demands by
students;
- primary schools with no libraries/qualified teacher librarians;
- poor information skills of students;
- teachers unaware of the roles and resources of modern public
libraries;
- poor discrimination by students/parents in internet use; and
- poor reading ability of students, especially boys.[61]

5.61   FOLA suggested that these issues reflect poor focus or investment by state
and territory education authorities and schools in their libraries and
teacher librarians.[62]

5.62   The Public Libraries Network Victoria suggested that there is scope for
closer partnerships between school and public libraries:

> ... the linking of library management systems so that school
> students could access public library collections through their

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Public Libraries NSW-Country, *Submission 31*; Public Libraries Metropolitan Association,
Submission 110; and Ms A. Rout, *Submission 313*.

58   Mrs K. White, *Submission no. 46*, p. 2.
59   Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 332*, p. 30.
60   Australian Council of State School Organisations, *Submission 326*, pp. 5-6.
61   Friends of Libraries Australia, *Submission 319*, p. 6.
62   Friends of Libraries Australia, *Submission 319*, p. 6.

> school library would greatly improve access to resources for school students, particularly in regional Victoria. [63]

5.63   The Committee heard about a number of cases and potential opportunities to share resources between school libraries and public libraries. For example, the Frankston Library Service and Frankston Secondary College are in the process of establishing a joint library card. Public Libraries Network Victoria suggests that this idea could be applied across Victoria.[64]

5.64   If there were closer relationships between schools and council libraries, teacher librarians could hand over class borrowing sessions to council staff. This would enable teacher librarians to concentrate on their teaching role in information literacy.[65]

5.65   The students and staff of Corinda State High School in Queensland benefit from support and partnerships with a range of local, state and federal bodies:

> 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.[66]

Case Study: Productive Partnerships—Learning for Life, Mackay, Qld

5.66   One instructive example of cooperation between a school library and a public library is the internationally recognised *Productive Partnerships – Learning For Life* program, which involves a partnership between Mackay West State School Library and Mackay Regional Council Libraries.

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63   Public Libraries Network Victoria, *Submission 132*, p. 2.
64   Public Libraries Network Victoria, *Submission 132*, p. 2.
65   Ms A. Rout, *Submission 313*, p. 7.
66   Parents' and Citizens' Association of Corinda State High School, *Submission 130*, pp. 2-3.

5.67   The philosophy behind the partnership is public libraries and school libraries have common interests, including the core business of literacy and information skills, and share core clients. Mrs Margaret Spillman, teacher librarian at Mackay West State School, stated:

> I cannot provide the resources for my families and for all my students. I have a school of 800 students on a very limited budget. At some point in time I have to say to them, 'Go to the public library.' The public library takes up the slack.

5.68   Mrs Spillman also pointed out that it has been estimated that one-third of a public library's clientele are students.[67]

5.69   Chapter four discussed the importance of the school principal's advocacy for the role of the teacher librarian, and the relationship between principal and teacher librarian is equally important in facilitating effective partnerships involving school libraries. Mrs Spillman stated:

> I am lucky in that I have a supportive principal. When you have supportive principals, the world is your oyster. You can just run things. They will let you run with programs. I am not saying that it was easy, because you still have to work with staff who may not see the value, but, if you have a principal who is on board, who is open to new ideas and who gives you room to run, you end up with something like Productive Partnerships, which has been going since 2002.[68]

5.70   The goals of the Productive Partnerships program are:

- To promote to our school community, services offered by Council Library Services via school newsletter;
- To promote greater awareness in our school community of the valuable role of the public library as a co- educator, especially in the core business area of Literacy;
- To provide a learning network which runs parallel with formal school education;
- To promote greater awareness and understanding of each others role/job description;
- To provide a networked learning community and embed the use of technology;
- To increase numbers of students who are active borrowers from Council Library Services; and

67   Mrs M. Spillman (Mackay West State School), *Committee Hansard*, 6 July 2010, p. 20.

68   Mrs M. Spillman (Mackay West State School), *Committee Hansard of Evidence*, 6 July 2010, p. 30.

> - To emphasise similarities of public/school library's operating systems.[69]

5.71   The program consists of five main elements:

- The **Library Monitor program** recognises student library leadership in the school and aims to provide support for Library Administration; increase ICT skills; provide alternative forms of leadership; develop personal skills; and form a strategic alliance with Mackay Regional Council Libraries.

- The **Work Experience** element of the program began as an Education Queensland professional development initiative. It involves reciprocal library visits for participating staff from Mackay West State School and Mackay Regional Council Libraries. Students, not just from Mackay West, but all who use Mackay libraries are beneficiaries from changes that result from work shadowing.

- **Grade One students at the Library (GOAL)** aims to increase Council Library Membership in the formative early years of Grades 1 and 2 and to improve literacy levels through increased borrowing.

- Mackay West's **website**[70] is used to promote, publicise, inform and educate within the school community and beyond. It has links to Mackay Regional Council Libraries and provides a model for other school/public libraries to follow.

- **Database workshops** involve information services public library staff visiting the school to conduct workshops. This element has continued and expanded to include other schools in the region. [71]

5.72   One of the key factors to a partnership's success is that it is cost neutral, although there is a significant time investment. Ms Kate Balderson, representing Mackay Regional Council Libraries, acknowledged that the time commitment is a factor in working with teacher librarians from other schools in the region.[72]

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69 Mackay West State School website, undated, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.mackwestss.eq.edu.au/>.

70 Mackay West State School website, undated, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.mackwestss.eq.edu.au/>.

71 Mackay West State School, Productive Partnerships – Learning for Life, *Submission 370*.

72 Mrs K. Balderson (Mackay Regional Council Libraries), *Committee Hansard of Evidence*, 6 July 2010, p. 21.

Joint-use libraries

5.73   Joint-use libraries are another kind of formalised cooperation between public libraries and school libraries. These were established in Australia in the 1970s. A joint-use library has been defined as:

> A library in which two or more distinct library services providers, usually a school and a public library, serve their client groups in the same building, based on an agreement that specifies the relationship between the providers.[73]

5.74   Mrs Margaret Honan, Chair of the Joint Use Libraries Association sketched a picture of a joint-use library:

> If you can imagine a school library, you come in and you have desks that the students work at. Where you have your stacks of books there is less space and extra stacks. You have chairs back to back around the computers that the students work at. We are fortunate that we can have our huge non-fiction and our adult fiction sections towards one end of the library and the students at the other...it is just your normal school library, but when you walk into it you are sometimes more likely to run into an 85-year-old woman and a three-year-old child than a school student.[74]

5.75   Mrs Deirdre Moloney, a member of the Joint Use Libraries Association and a representative of the Joint Use Libraries Association Executive of Public Libraries, added:

> We are lucky: we have a very good 'friends of the library' organisation, so if you walked into my library you would find that, due to their funding, we have lovely leather lounges and a coffee machine. It is a very welcoming space, and we are lucky enough to have enough room to do that. In the back area we have what is very much a young children's area.[75]

5.76   While joint-use libraries may be established in a variety of locations, and with various partners, they predominantly provide a combined school-

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73   A. Bundy, *Joint use libraries: the ultimate form of cooperation*, p. 1. Published in G. McCabe; J.R. Kennedy; Library, University of South Australia, *Planning the modern public library building*, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, Connecticut, USA 2003.

74   Mrs Margaret Honan, *Committee Hansard*, 12 July 2010, p. 12.

75   Mrs Deirdre Moloney, *Committee Hansard*, 12 July 2010, p. 13.

public library service to rural areas. Other combinations involve institutes of technical and further education, and universities.[76]

5.77   ALIA's position on joint-use libraries is that it supports their establishment on the condition that they 'equal or better the level of service which would be given in separate facilities.' According to ALIA, successful joint-use library development requires:

- The unequivocal commitment of all interested parties;
- Full consultation involving all the parties concerned prior to any decision on establishment;
- Professional advice at an early stage of consideration of a joint-use library - the Australian Library and Information Association can supply names of appropriate consultants;
- Careful consideration of the site of the institution, and of the position and visibility of the library so that convenient access for all potential users is guaranteed;
- Access by all users during the institution's operating hours, with adequate provision for use outside those hours and during vacations;
- Signing of a formal agreement by each of the parties covering all areas relating to the development, funding and continued maintenance of the library;
- The size of the library and its staffing to meet the needs of the whole community served;
- Formal agreement on the process to be followed for a new building or extensions if, after a period of operation, the size of the library proves to be inadequate;
- A Board of Management, representative of all parties and advisory to the library manager;
- An integrated staffing structure with a single library manager. Where a joint-use library is to serve as the library for an educational institution and the public, the appointment of staff with education and public library expertise is desirable; and,
- A regular, preferably externally facilitated, evaluation of the library.[77]

5.78   There are a range of potential benefits that joint-use facilities can offer to schools and communities. Dr Alan Bundy identified these:

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76   ALIA, 'Statement on joint-use libraries,' 2002, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/joint-use.html>.

77   ALIA, 'Statement on joint-use libraries,' 2002, accessed 18 February 2011 at <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/joint-use.html>.

- provide a greater quantity and quality of collections, electronic resources, services and facilities than would be possible with separate services and smaller budgets;

- provide access to greater numbers of staff;

- allow for extended opening hours and provide access to greater numbers of staff;

- provide access to more than one system for support services eg professional development;

- promote greater community interaction by providing a community focal point;

- increase the community's awareness and understanding of current education practice;

- promote lifelong learning through the educational role of the joint-use library;

- encourage the development of a positive attitude in students towards school; and

- may provide a social justice outcome for smaller communities which could not support separate services.[78]

5.79   FOLA suggested there were up to 600 smaller rural communities in Australia with the potential to establish joint-use libraries, though this would be subject to:

> …political will and directive; strong and unequivocal state/territory education department support; and the availability of committed teacher librarians to lead them.[79]

5.80   The highest concentration of joint-use libraries in Australia is in South Australia, following a political mandate to provide rural communities with access to public libraries in the 1970s.[80] There are 44 school community libraries in the state, hosted by 29 local government authorities.[81] The Joint Use Libraries Association of South Australia stated that these libraries had 'proven a remarkable success' in providing a public library service to the state's rural areas.[82] This success is due to the cooperation between the state education department, local government and the Libraries Board of South Australia.

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78   A. Bundy, *Joint use libraries: the ultimate form of cooperation*, p. 9. Published in G. McCabe; J.R. Kennedy; Library, University of South Australia (2002), *Planning the modern public library building*, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, Connecticut, USA 2003.

79   Friends of Libraries Australia, *Submission 319*, p. 5.

80   A. Bundy, *Joint use libraries: the ultimate form of cooperation*, p. 6. Published in G. McCabe; J.R. Kennedy; Library, University of South Australia (2002), *Planning the modern public library building*, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, Connecticut, USA 2003.

81   Joint Use Libraries Association SA, *Submission 217*, p. 2.

82   Joint Use Libraries Association SA, *Submission 217*, p. 2.

5.81   The establishment of joint use libraries is increasing in other jurisdictions as state and territory education departments express interest in developing partnerships between schools and other community agencies.[83] The State Library of WA acknowledged its support for shared library services that meet the needs of local communities – evidenced by a report jointly commissioned in 2007 by the State Library and the WA Department of Education to assist schools and local governments in planning future projects.[84]

5.82   There are currently 16 joint-use public libraries in Western Australia, jointly funded by local government and schools or other education providers. There are also 30 co-located library/telecentres in regional and remote communities in the state providing a range of online and print resources.[85]

5.83   There are several joint-use school-community libraries in Victoria, with scope to increase the number:

> The Victorian State Government has a policy of encouraging the development of joint use school-community libraries. Caroline Springs is a recent example which has been very successful. In this case the school pays the Melton Shire Council to provide its library service through the public library. The new Altona North Library is adjacent to the Bayside College Altona North campus and is planned to have a close relationship with the school.[86]

5.84   In NSW, another example of a joint-use library is the Minto Community Library:

> It is both a branch of the Campbelltown City Library and the school library for Sarah Redfern High School, Sarah Redfern Primary School and Passfield Park Special School. This dual role gives Minto a unique character and the diversity of its resources benefit both student and public library patrons.[87]

5.85   Tasmania has seven schools that have community libraries providing library access for both school and local community. These are located in rural and remote communities.[88]

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83   Australian Council of State School Organisations, *Submission 326*, pp. 5-6.

84   State Library of Western Australia, *Submission 60*, p. 4.

85   State Library of Western Australia, *Submission 60*, p. 3.

86   Public Libraries Victoria Network Inc., *Submission 132*, p. 3.

87   Ms Cathy Hill, *Submission 193*, p. 7.

88   ASLA - Tasmania, *Submission 121*, p.10.

5.86   The Tasmanian Department of Education noted that joint use libraries in the state had not worked especially well:

> The schools need to use the facility from 9 to 3, on 30-plus weeks a year, and that is often competing with the general public who come at the same time. That often leads to issues. Certainly within our department there are many who have wished it to be a magic bullet for collapsing two infrastructures into one. It has not actually yielded that.[89]

5.87   Dr Jennie Bales, President of ASLA Tasmania, acknowledged some of the challenges from a school perspective in being part of a joint-use library:

> You need to be fairly accommodating. We only have one circulation desk and Friday afternoons when it is still school time and the community library is open I really need to hand that desk over to the community librarian, who is actually a library technician, and we work very hard to make that an easy process. Our school adapts and changes timetables et cetera so that the school library is not being heavily used by students at that time so that there is space for the community…and we have had strangers walking in off the street. I do not know this, but I would imagine that the other community libraries are in a similar situation to ours, where their opening hours are pretty much after school and there is only a small transition.[90]

5.88   Other submitters advised that care needs to be taken when establishing joint-use facilities, particularly with respect to governance arrangements, to ensure that those arrangements best meet the interests of the community.[91] The Joint Use Library Association stated:

> The South Australian model of joint use libraries has been very successful and if it is repeated in other states, for their regional areas, the lessons learnt in South Australia will need to be tempered with our hard earned experience along with the reality of the dual role of Teacher/Librarians.[92]

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89   Ms S. Gaskell (Tasmanian Department of Education), *Committee Hansard of Evidence*, 30 April 2010, p. 58.

90   Dr J. Bales, *Committee Hansard of Evidence*, 30 April 2010, p. 4.

91   See, for example, Public Libraries Victoria Network, *Submission 132*, p. 1. Australian Council of State School Organisations, *Submission 326*, pp. 5-6.

92   Joint Use Libraries Association SA, *Submission 217*, p. 5.

5.89   The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) called for further guidance regarding best practice for joint-use libraries across Australia.[93]

Case Study: Taminmin Community Library, Humpty Doo, NT

5.90   Taminmin Community Library is a joint-use library administered by the Northern Territory Library and the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training.

5.91   The Library is situated in the Taminmin College grounds and provides a library service for people in remote areas of the Top End as well as serving the staff and students of Taminmin College. The college consists of three sub-schools: the senior school of approximately 600 students; the middle school of approximately 600 students; and the Vocational Education and Training section. The college draws students from a radius of 7 500 kilometres.

5.92   Taminmin College teacher librarian, Ms Liz Short, noted that the library was built over 20 years ago to service a school population of approximately 400 and a rural population of approx 8 000. Today, the school's population is over 1 200 and the rural population in the vicinity of 20 000.[94]

5.93   During the week 8-12 March 2010, the average number of students in the library per day was 555 and the number of public patrons per day averaged 172, all within an area of 315 square metres housing over 30 000 print items and associated fixtures and fittings.[95]

5.94   Ms Short commented that she was fortunate to have gained experience in a joint-use library where she has observed how different levels of government and members of the local community can cooperate for the benefit of the whole community. She stated:

> [Joint- use] libraries enable a better use of resources. A simple example is that I can source early reading books for our less literate students and conversely parents from the wider community can source online databases provided by the school. The Library is open for longer hours than a normal school library and this gives students much more access to the facility and resources. Students learn to communicate and work alongside

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93   Western Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 336*, p. 13.

94   Ms L. Short, *Submission 86*, p. 2.

95   Ms L. Short, *Submission 86*, p. 2.

older and younger members of their local community and in doing so become aware of the wider world.[96]

5.95   The Committee thinks that the Commonwealth Government in partnership with ASLA should produce a document that highlights the successes and lessons learnt from partnerships between school libraries and other libraries, and joint use libraries that are in existence. Such a document could prove useful to government and non-government education authorities alike as they consider ways to enhance their library services.

5.96   The Committee notes the number of innovative partnerships and programs presented to it throughout the course of the inquiry, including the Better Beginnings initiative in Western Australia, which was evaluated by Edith Cowan University and found to have had such a significant impact on increasing the literacy of participants.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government partner with ASLA and ALIA to produce a document that showcases some of the successful partnerships and programs between school libraries and other libraries, and joint-use libraries. The document should be made available to government and non-government education authorities and school principals.

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96   Ms L. Short, *Submission 86*, p. 5.