

## ACER Review of the Years 9-12 education sector in Tasmania Submission by ALIA/ASLA Tasmania members

Review submission 30 September 2016 <https://www.acer.edu.au/tasmania-912-review/>

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### Background

Tasmanian members of the two peak national professional associations supporting teacher librarians, librarians and library technicians in schools and colleges – the [Australian Library and Information Association \(ALIA\)](#) and [Australian School Library Association \(ASLA\)](#) and the ALIA/ASLA joint policy and standards committee – the School Library Advisory Committee (SLAC) welcome the opportunity to provide a public submission. The submission was compiled jointly by the Hobart and Launceston based executive members of the associations and their joint committee.

### Submission

#### **Current curriculum provision, attainment data, and pathway information for students in Years 9 to 12 in all Tasmanian schools, including vocational education and training, and the alignment and effectiveness of assessment and moderation practices from Years 9 to 12**

Schools intending to deliver courses accredited by the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC) are required to register with TASC. Where they deliver Level 3 and/or Level 4 courses with an external assessment component that involves a folio, independent study or other project work, they must also confirm at the time of registration that they have processes, for, and on behalf of their teachers for ensuring the authenticity and academic integrity of work submitted by their students for assessment.

Across all sectors, the teacher librarians and librarians in the 8 secondary colleges and 10 non-government schools/colleges meet regularly to standardize curriculum resource support and moderate on their school or college's service delivery levels against the [TASC standard and policy](#). In addition, they standardize as much as possible on the explicitly referenced library teaching and assessment of the academic integrity focus areas. Those areas include referencing, citation styles, ICT dispositions and general capabilities, understanding what constitutes plagiarism and detection tools (e.g. Turnitin).

Although much systemic work has gone into the development and sharing of units of work online, now supported by the DoE Curriculum website services - <http://11and12.education.tas.gov.au/> and the VLE <https://casas.tas.edu.au/vle/> three human resourcing factors remain an issue for the successful adoption and transitioning to these standards for Years 11-12 in Tasmanian high schools:

- the diminished specialist librarian time and allocated library teaching time available in managing this library-based program;
- the attrition of qualified professional library staffing [librarians or teacher librarians] in the government high schools; and
- the subsequent inability to provide the professional learning and 'just-in-time' PD for teachers on their 'duty of care' and responsibilities for their TASC registration, to lead their

school's formal adoption of an academic integrity standards policy as well as their in-house procedures for teaching staff with the teachers' recognition of the risk management for successful TCE completions.

The impact of these three factors upon educational achievement is well known. Teacher librarians and librarians in Year 11-12 colleges are documenting and sharing significant evidence in many ways (anecdotally and formally in student assessment narratives, etc.,) of the increasing numbers of students enrolled in pre-tertiary and vocational subjects who are *not* reaching adequate standards for requirements with study and research upon entry to those subjects, such as:

- many students entering Year 11 are not confident in using traditional ICT productivity software [eg Office 365/email/word-processing/presentation styles, image manipulation or spread-sheeting data]; and
- many students do not have the knowledge and skills in using online libraries and their gateways to networked database subscription services that are critical requirements for research at this level.

Increasingly, students report that they did not have exposure to formal library programs or pathways planning in Years 9-10 to provide that scope or sequencing or transitioning of the teaching of information skills and the acquisition of digital literacy. The recently released report findings of the [Australian Digital Inclusion Index](#) for Tasmania in 2016 underpin and map a decline in digital literacy and a digital demographic divide in the wider Tasmanian community (ADII, 2016, p. 24-25).

#### **The effectiveness within the local and national context of current curriculum provision.**

A substantial body of research since 1990 shows a positive relationship between school libraries and student achievement (Lonsdale, 2003; Senate Inquiry, 2010). The achievement is measured often in terms of NAPLAN results, reading scores, literacy, but also learning outcomes more generally:

- the quality and currency of the resource collection to meet the new and demanding requirements of the Australian Curriculum (F-10) has an impact upon student learning;
- where NAPLAN test scores are higher, there is also higher usage of a school library collection, learning space and services;
- an adequately staffed, resourced and funded library can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socio-economic impacts or educational levels of the adults in the community;
- experience in using a computer network connecting the library's resources and relational databases to the classroom and laboratories that has a positive impact on students' ICT capabilities;
- collaborative relationships between classroom or subject teachers and school librarians have a significant and positive impact on learning, particularly in relation to the planning of instructional units, resource collection development, and the provision of professional development for teachers;
- a print-rich environment leads to more reading, and free voluntary reading remains the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary growth, spelling and grammatical ability, and writing style;
- integrating information literacy into the curriculum can improve students' mastery of both content and information seeking skills; and that
- libraries as safe-haven learning and maker-spaces make a positive difference to students' self-esteem, confidence, independence and sense of responsibility in regard to their own learning.

School achievement data available in the public domain has been mapped often by the two peak associations and partner organizations to show correlations between the staffing and provision of school libraries with NAPLAN outcomes. Albeit, this is an expected result in any normative research where increased levels of school resourcing can be correlated positively with increased levels of student achievement. Nevertheless, two examples can illustrate this evidence and mapping. The first typical example is research carried out by Queensland University of Technology and the School Library Association of Queensland, published by SLAQ in 2013:

‘At schools without a qualified teacher-librarian, school NAPLAN scores were consistently below the national mean score for NAPLAN reading and writing, and one principal relates declining growth in average NAPLAN reading scores to the lack of a qualified teacher-librarian.’ [[http://www.curriculum.edu.au/leader/school\\_libraries\\_and\\_tls,36453.html?issueID=12777](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/leader/school_libraries_and_tls,36453.html?issueID=12777)]

The second is Softlink’s industry standard research (2015, p. 6) which continues to indicate a relationship between well-funded and staffed school libraries and student achievement. Since 2010, the annual Australian School Library Survey results have revealed a positive correlation between higher NAPLAN literacy scores and two key library resourcing indicators – budgets and staffing levels. On page 12, this finding is glaringly illustrated in *Softlink’s report* with Figure 10 mapping the NAPLAN Reading Literacy levels published on the *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* and *My School* website and the average annual library budget allocation to these schools.

For independent and Catholic schools and colleges, the secondary library is a symbol of the institution’s commitment to managing information for knowledge and learning with blended support teams of professional library, archives and IT helpdesk staff. They are sources of achievement of the social capital to the school community, a tangible indicator of the parent-giving, levies and they contribute to competitive edge with like-schools or colleges. Conversely, despite press and media releases of the government high schools’ newsworthy programs being photographed in or against the library shelves, the high school library is often not staffed or closed to students for much of the school day. It regarded as a non-compulsory cost burden in a period of diminished recurrent budgets for repairs or classrooms resources, even despite the recognized role it plays in supporting functional literacy, effective study and essential research skills.

There is a divide deepening between FTE library staffing in government schools for Years 7-10 and the colleges for Years 11- 12 and those library staffing ratios in independent and Catholic schools for K-12 or Years 7 to 12. Ironically, many government primary schools benefited from new school library facilities as part of the *Building the Education Revolution* (BER Libraries) program, but did not have the staff and collections to make them work effectively or the buildings have actually been given a different or newer mixed purpose with the competing needs of the school. There have been no building upgrades or refurbishment of high school libraries in Tasmania for over 10 years. To cater for a new national curriculum or the introduction of student-owned devices. Yet the e-commerce models for the digital publishing and textbook printing industry have settled, as well as world of information management and device use, the school and college library is being **revalued** for its engaging, closely supervised day-long and learning space capacity to curate information for students and increase their well-being in their school day.

The cost of providing just the curriculum information resources to teach a Year 11-12 subject or vocational pathway continue to increase. Despite the expectation that online resources would suffice, resource costs remain intangible and unaccounted in budget estimates by school leaders and central officers. Yet, course requirements and new course writing generate an expectation that both traditional and online resourcing models are required. These costs include:

- the textbooks average at \$80 - \$100+ to include the digital version as well,
- software titles or product keys for each subject average \$5 - \$10 per student capita when campus or school site licensing is needed; and
- student versions of specialist software costs considerably more, such as Adobe Creative Cloud.

The retention of the benefits and differentiation capacities for individualized learning needs means that blended learning models are expected for new Year 11-12 providers. Online courses cannot meet all needs, even with assistive technology and software. Teacher librarians in Years 11 – 12 colleges would estimate amounts around \$3,000 to fully equip one class of English, Humanities, Business, Science or Mathematics subject with class sets of the set textbooks, software and the general library reference collection of journals, books and ebooks.

### **Workforce characteristics, including qualifications and specializations (where available), particularly in Years 11 and 12**

Most Tasmanian high schools report that their library is staffed by a library technician only, and mostly part-time. There are only five (5) high schools staffed with a teacher librarian, and in most of those cases, the teacher librarian has a substantial out-of-area teaching load and/or will retire in the coming years. As the library technicians retire, they are being replaced by teacher aide or library aides who do not meet minimum technician training standards. Only 2 of the 8 LINC community/joint-use libraries are managed by library technicians. The rest are managed by library aides. The district high school libraries are mostly run by aides, only 6 of the 17 run by library technicians with no teacher librarians or librarians on the library staff.

The library technician training managed by TasTAFE no longer operates in the north or the south of the state. There are no postgraduate training programs, whether post graduate certificates diplomas, or masters in education or information management for teachers or librarians in Tasmania, but there are 4 distance education programs available from interstate universities.

The DoE HR Department reports in communication and correspondence to school leaders and library staff that ‘teacher librarians are being phased out’ yet the DoE is no longer able to provide support, either for professional learning-on-the-job or as an RTO for Library Technician courses to enable future workforce planning. Departmental policy and restricted staffing budgets do not meet national standards of one (1) FTE professional librarian or teacher librarian for every 500 FTE students. In addition, there is a failure to recruit teacher librarians and librarians from a national workforce unlike non-government schools. This lack of workforce supply is now impacting in the Year 11 -12 government colleges’ library staffing.

New workforce gap analyses of the national situation with teacher librarians do demonstrate staffing declines, but one recent study affirms that there is no data on tertiary-qualified librarians in the school library workforce (ACER, 2016). Increasingly, the national ALIA professional body will take leadership in addressing the needs of employers to identify the gaps and provide programs to support those working in the field of school librarianship with no qualifications, as it commenced recently following the forums on the future of the profession (ALIA, 2014). Free online certification programs such as updated online courses in copyright, social media marketing and cybersafety are typical of their offerings to professional and para-professional members.

## What do dual tertiary qualified teacher librarians, post graduate trained librarians or information specialists and library technicians do in schools?

It is interesting to note that qualified, specialist, generalist and professional library staff provide in-house, cost effective and cross curriculum professional development for both general and specialist teaching and support staff in areas of:

- Providing authenticated portals and gateways for 'economies of scale' to the federated information indexes such as subscription databases and networked information services
- Embracing ICT in the ACARA General Capabilities and provide PD for teaching staff
- Manage the macro- and cross-curricular resources required to implement the Australian Curriculum, selecting, sourcing and distributing those resources on behalf of subject teachers
- Design, develop and implement project based, student-directed and inquiry learning/information literacy programs
- Provide international and mother-tongue literature programs to recognize and celebrate cultural diversity
- Deliver or manage digital citizenship, information security and eSafety programs
- Unpack educational copyright compliance, information governance, intellectual property and academic integrity for school leaders and teachers
- Implement eBook, audiobook, and video streaming solutions for school libraries
- Still maintain time-honoured and parent-valued traditional reading literacy roles, literature and recreational materials for young adults.

### Teaching standards and professional development of specialist and professional library staff.

As a joint statement, the major aim of the published *Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians* (ALIA/ASLA, 2005) was to achieve national consensus on what constituted excellent teacher librarian practice, to inform the profession and enhance student learning outcomes. Qualified teacher librarians hold recognised dual qualifications in both teaching and librarianship. Beyond teaching expertise, the standards outlined the professional knowledge, practice and commitment expected of teacher librarians working at a level of excellence are closely allied to the strong traditions, the mainstream standards and the newly certified practitioner (CP status) in the library and information sector, particularly the ALIA core knowledge, skills and attributes of the *ALIA core values statements*. ALIA remains an important resource for all 5500 members, not just the teacher librarians who believe in a strong network of library and information services for all Australians. Post-graduate qualified teacher librarians and librarians meet eligibility standards for associate membership and can commence their certified professional membership (CP status) of the general ALIA PD Scheme.

Teacher librarians' involvement in the work on the standards continued through a consultation and validation process until the development of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and the work of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) became a unifying process. The ALIA Schools Committee formed in May 2013 and a new process began to develop the document *Teacher Librarian Practice for the Australian Professional Standards* (ALIA, 2014) to assist school leaders, principals, teacher librarians and school communities. Exemplars exist of practice for teacher librarians, details about teacher librarian practice to those involved with performance appraisal and a set of standards for principals focusing on the role of the teacher

librarian within the school, representing the APST career stages of *Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers*. For each stage there are three further parts: identifying the stage of the standard, the practice of that standard and then possible evidence that would be need to be collected. The document is on the ALIA Schools and ASLA websites, for example, at <https://www.alia.org.au/groups/alia-schools>.

From 2005 onwards, as websites, online forums, and keynote presentations in national and state conference proceedings demonstrate, both peak national library organisations provide national consensus and leadership on implementing the *Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians* (ALIA/ASLA, 2005). Advocacy, policy advisory and project teams from both the national ASLA and ALIA boards and national councils worked together to contribute to AITSL policy steering groups, and also developed practical applications of excellent teacher librarian knowledge and practice. Teacher librarians can map their evidences against the AITSL documentary evidence supplement, designed as a companion to the *Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*. Positive attitudes and funded implementations were supported in 2013-2015 through ALIA Schools and ASLA online forums dedicated to unpacking the document, *Teacher Librarian Practice for the Australian Professional Standards* (ALIA, 2014). Films prepared by ALIA Schools specifically help teacher librarians as they identify where their practice lies in the career stages in secondary schools. They may be found at the site <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/illustrations-of-practice/find-by-career-stage>

## Resource funding

Extract from a ***Joint statement on school libraries and teacher librarians [AEU, ALIA, ASLA]***  
<http://www.asla.org.au/policy/Joint-statement.aspx>

Devolution of decision making and recurrent financial management to the local level means that funding for school libraries relies on the resource allocation priorities established at the local level, which might or might not place a high priority on the need for a well-staffed library service. This has led to marked differences between schools where library funding and staffing is at the discretion of the individual school and there are competing budgetary demands within schools.

Without an appropriate funding formula and guidelines for school libraries, the existing inequitable funding arrangements will continue. This will increase the marginalisation of some libraries through underfunding and neglect, while others are prioritised within their schools and are able to provide quality print and multimedia resources as well as access to emerging technologies, electronic databases, the internet and other online resources. This is a basic requirement for any school library and should be the norm rather than the exception....

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ASLA President *Last updated: 9/5/2016 9:12:15 AM*

## Recommendations

1. The successful adoption and transitioning of TASC teaching standards and policy for improved TCE attainments of Years 11-12 in Tasmanian high schools will require consistently improved staffing and resourcing of high school libraries for the Years 9-10.
2. The Department of Education needs to provide an appropriate funding formula and guidelines for schools to ensure school libraries have qualified staffing, quality resourcing and current facilities that are available to meet the requirements for Years 9 through to 12.
3. The Department of Education needs to build an integrated curriculum scope and sequence for Years 9-10 transitioning to Years 11-12 supported by the Tasmanian government's digital literacy strategies to arrest the digital inclusion index decline.
4. The curriculum resourcing costs for equity of access to Year 11 - 12 subject materials or vocational pathways and resourcing need to be monitored and reflected in the standardized per capita budgeting for high school libraries.
5. The Department of Education review workforce planning and recruitment strategies for qualified school library professionals. In this way, the DoE can reduce the deepening divide between government and non-government school libraries and the standards moderation or equitable allocation of curriculum resource provision.

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