



School Libraries Make a Difference

The Great School Libraries Campaign

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Three main drivers

- **Reading**

Giving every child a reading start and keeping them reading through their teenage years.

- **Digital literacy**

Making sure students are confident and safe users of the latest technology, media and applications.

- **Critical thinking and research**

Ensuring students understand how to access information and critically assess its rigour, quality and relevance.
Helping students improve their school performance and preparing them for further education.

Impact of teacher librarians

- Research confirms that for a school library to perform at its peak, qualified library staff must be employed.
- 2013 report: Queensland schools with a qualified teacher librarian, 50% had NAPLAN scores higher than the NAPLAN national mean scores for reading and writing. At schools without a qualified teacher librarian, NAPLAN scores were consistently below the national mean score.
- ACER 2016 report “... *greater number of teacher in library roles in high socio-economic [SES] schools than lower SES schools.*”

Access for every student

We can teach students the reading, digital literacy, critical thinking and research skills they need to succeed in this increasingly online world by ensuring every student in Australia has access to a well-resourced school library and the expertise of a teacher librarian.

The criteria

How Great School Libraries were identified ...

1. Is there a qualified teacher librarian managing the school library?
2. Is the library open whenever school is open?
3. Can students learn information skills in the school library?
4. Can students borrow the resources they need, when they need them?
5. Can you borrow popular fiction without a long waiting period?
6. Is there enough space for a whole class to fit into the library?
7. Is there high speed access to the internet?
8. Are students encouraged to use online resources?
9. Are there special activities, for example Book Week, the Premier's Reading Challenge?
10. Do students, parents and teachers think the library is awesome?

1. Qualified teacher librarians

- *“Mrs X was my favourite teacher at high school. Honestly think I wouldn't have made it to uni without her encouragement and teaching.”*
- *“.... is phenomenal. The reason this library is so successful is due to her efforts. She has made the space a warm and inviting learning hub for both teachers and students.”*

2. Opening hours

- *“We often have kids and parents dropping in before or after school. The library is open every lunch time for reading, games and computer. We also have a chess club once a week.”*
- *“It is used by the chess club, Minecraft club and early bird reading buddies, and volunteers tutor students with homework.”*

3. Information skills

- *“The library staff run information skills lessons throughout their library program, including targeted programs for Year 11 students. They also have run great Professional Learning for staff.”*
- *“Our students are able to learn how to reference, how to use databases and how to find books. Essentially, they are taught the skills that they will need to become life-long learners and prepare for university. Additionally, the library has created an online resource to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity to find valuable sources.”*

4. Books and electronic resources

- *“Our students can reserve and renew resources online 24/7 and have access to traditional as well as ebooks.”*
- *“So convenient! If I need a book on a particular topic, I just go and borrow it any time.”*
- *“Our librarians have their finger on the pulse and they really have a great list of popular books for the girls to borrow. And they are always open to suggestions for new items.”*

5. Borrowing resources

- *“We have a wide range of popular fiction so even if a particular title is unavailable, books in the same series or similar can be borrowed.”*
- *“The library has a large collection of current fiction as well as an extensive manga collection.”*
- *“For any popular books that are to be released soon or for books that are trending, the library purchases more than one copy.”*

6. Space

- *“We can accommodate five classes, with additional tutorial rooms, casual areas, outside decking and a state of the art video conferencing facility.”*
- *“It's just been refurbished and is colourful, vibrant, interesting, and encourages collaboration and experiences, not silent isolated working.”*
- *“There are many different working areas in our Library, from study nooks, to booths which are great for discussion as well as tutorial rooms and open areas with couches and beanbags for reading periods.”*

7. High speed internet

- *“This is an area that the school would like to improve as the library relies on technology and wifi can be an issue in ensuring lessons run smoothly. This is simply down to money!”*
- *“But at peak times it can slow down. Hopefully the new server will address some of the issue. A full fibre connection is needed and hopefully will be funded by a future government to assist student access to information.”*

8. Online resources

- *“My daughter was proud to tell me all about how she was learning to code (Year 3/4) using Scratch.”*
- *“Students access a wide range of online resources including websites, databases, Edmodo blog and Survey Monkey (to self reflect on students' learning).”*
- *“100% Yes! The teacher librarian takes classes through school terms and guides students on how to access and use our schools database.”*

9. Special activities

- *“The Staff encourage activities and displays from all areas within the school. Music Week had musicians in the library at lunchtime playing, maths teachers are encouraged to display work, and so on.”*

10. Awesomeness

- *“When parents are brought through the school for orientation, they are always blown away by our library space.”*
- *“Students, parents and staff are impressed with the terrific and changeable displays and vitality.”*
- *“Best staff in the library ever. So helpful. They are extremely professional.”*

Summary

- 599 nominations for 226 schools across Australia
- Good mix of:
 - the three education sectors - Government, Catholic and Independent
 - settings - K-12, primary and secondary
 - Locations – state and territory, metropolitan and rural
- most nominations from teachers, students and library staff
- >10% nominations from parents

Honours List

- Is your school library on the Honours List?

Visit fair.alia.org.au/greatschoolibraries

or

view *Australian Teacher* magazine, April edition

Thanks

- FAIR platform
- School Library Coalition
 - Australian School Library Association [ASLA], Queensland School Library Association, School Library Association of NSW, School Library Association of South Australia, School Library Association of Victoria, Western Australian School Library Association and ALIA Schools
- ALIA Executive Director Sue McKerracher
- Staff of ALIA House [Heather Wellard]
- ALIA Board Director Aileen Weir