

You may not be aware that across Australia, many school libraries are being stripped of their resources and qualified library staff. At the same time, some other schools are investing heavily in their library staffing and resourcing.

Most parents have no idea that this is happening. They assume that there is a qualified teacher librarian supporting their child's reading and research skills.

In the face of Australia's falling ranking in educational outcomes among OECD countries and rapidly changing expectations for the future workforce, a coalition of Australian school library associations has formed to advocate nationally for the reinvigoration of school libraries. We believe that all children need excellent school library services delivered by qualified staff to get the digital and information literacy skills required to succeed in the 21st century.

Please join our (fast-growing) list of supporters working to provide opportunities and protect the well-being of our children:

- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Australian School Library Association (ASLA), and five other school library associations
- Tristan Bancks, Terry Denton, Hazel Edwards, Mem Fox, Jackie French, Morris Gleitzman, Andy Griffiths, Leigh Hobbs, Gabrielle Lord, Michael Salmon, Craig Smith (and many more authors and illustrators).
- Kevin Hennah, Syba Signs (and others from the school library community)
- Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators
- Professor John Hattie, Professor Michael Gaffney We plan to launch a national campaign on 21 May 2018 called School Libraries Matter! The campaign will target parents with the goal of informing them about school libraries and sparking them into action to advocate at their child's school. We are focussing our message strongly on the detriment to research skills and digital literacy caused by resources being stripped from school libraries because these are of high concern to parents, and they are part of teacher librarians' specialist skills. Things like:
 - Searching effectively online
 - Taking and making notes
 - Evaluating websites
 - Thinking critically about information

- Managing your digital identity
 - Operating safely and with well-informed restraint with social media
- Qualified library staff also assist with:
- Encouraging reading for pleasure
 - Assisting with reading for information
 - Ensuring equitable access to resources (physical and digital)
 - Collaborating with teachers to improve their information and digital literacy skills (thereby positively impacting all their students)
 - Creating a library collection that is personalised for each school community's needs
 - Establishing the library space as a social learning hub for the whole school community

How you can help:

- Use your social media platforms to promote the launch (and continuation) of our campaign.
- Offer to hang posters and/or include PowerPoint slides in places where parents might see them.
- Pass on this letter to other individuals and/or local, state, national and international organisations who may be interested in supporting this worthy cause.
- Write a short statement in support of the important impact school libraries have on the lives of children and young people. We will publicise these statements.
- Allow us to add your name to the list of individuals and organisations who support our campaign.
- Share ideas with us for creative ways to reach out to parents.
- Join our advocacy group. We have 140+ people from around Australia. We communicate by email listserv and use Google Drive for shared documents. There are lots of small groups working on different projects. You can choose to

join one of these groups or just simply be on the list to keep in the loop. Please fill out [this form \(https://goo.gl/m3tYEG\)](https://goo.gl/m3tYEG) to be added to this group.

Take a look at pp. 14-15 of this document for links to research supporting our claims:

https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/916301/School-Libraries-21st-Century.pdf

Please let me know how you would like to be involved. We would be absolutely delighted to have your support in this campaign!

In hopeful anticipation and with kind regards from,

Holly Godfree www.schoollibrariesmatter.org.au (Website currently being built)

Member of the School Library Coalition

- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
- Australian School Library Association (ASLA)
- School Library Association of New South Wales (SLANSW)
- School Library Association of South Australia (SLASA)
- School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV)
- Queensland School Library Association (QSLA)
- Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA) Teacher Librarian and AEUACT member

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

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