CONNECTiONS

Working together to ensure student access to high-quality school library services

Tell me if this sounds familiar:

A local group of school library staff are meeting to share ideas. One teacher librarian, let's call her Janice, is describing how she's been building a culture of reading with her Year 6 students — trying to reverse the trend we see of teenagers turning away from reading. She's got evidence to show the success of her efforts: borrowing rates are increasing, students love coming to the library, classroom teachers are happy. You're listening and thinking, 'Wow! These are great ideas. Janice is at the top of her game. I'm going to try some of these things at my school.'

Later in the session, talk turns to school library advocacy: the lack of positions being advertised, qualified staff retiring and not being replaced. What can we do? The next thing you know, Janice is crying, sharing

how she just found out that morning that she's been pulled out of the library next year and put back into the classroom. Wait a minute … What?!

Janice is not some anti-social, disorganised 'shusher'; she is a high-functioning leader, delivering best-practice services and getting results for her school community. She's exactly the right type of person — a qualified professional — that students and teachers need to have in a high-impact, far-reaching library role.

How do we explain this? We know it's a tangled knot of issues leading to this calamity for this school and this person: technological disruption, 'invisible' services, budgetary pressures, crowded curriculum — the list goes on and on. Sure, some of these things are beyond

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ESA acknowledges the Kulin Nation, Traditional Custodians of the land on which our offices are located, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands across Australia, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures and heritage.

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our control, but the problem is that we know that high-quality school library services are essential for our students. They create a real-life 'room of requirement' (thisamericanlife.org/664/the-room-of-requirement) for individuals and the entire school through these four pillars:

- Reading: the foundation for lifelong learning — the portal to countless ways of thinking and being
- Research: it's more important now than ever before to be able to do this well
- Relationships: the key to counteract mental health problems, build resilience in times of need, and thrive in life
- Resources: curated collections save people time.

School library services have always been part of the safety net and the trampoline to both support and bounce our students and teachers to higher achievements. Right now, in a time of fear, change, doubt, and division around the world, we can argue that strong school libraries are a balm and a bolster to proactively help young people and

educators to best meet the challenges we face. And, yet, high-performing, specialist experts like Janice are being pulled out of their roles.

So, now what? Head in the sand? Rant and rave? Fetal position in the corner? For those who have worked through these stages of grief, I offer you the Students Need School Libraries campaign (studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au), launched in October 2018, and a list of small, medium and large actions that you can do — actions, in fact, that we need to do if we want to fight for what is right.

The biggest achievement of our campaign's first year was that we permeated the Australian school library community. Some stats at the end of that year: our newsletter has 600+ subscribers; our website has had 45,800+ hits; our films have had 10,000+ views; our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts have had a combined 5,400+ followers. These are wonderful achievements, but they are only the very beginning.
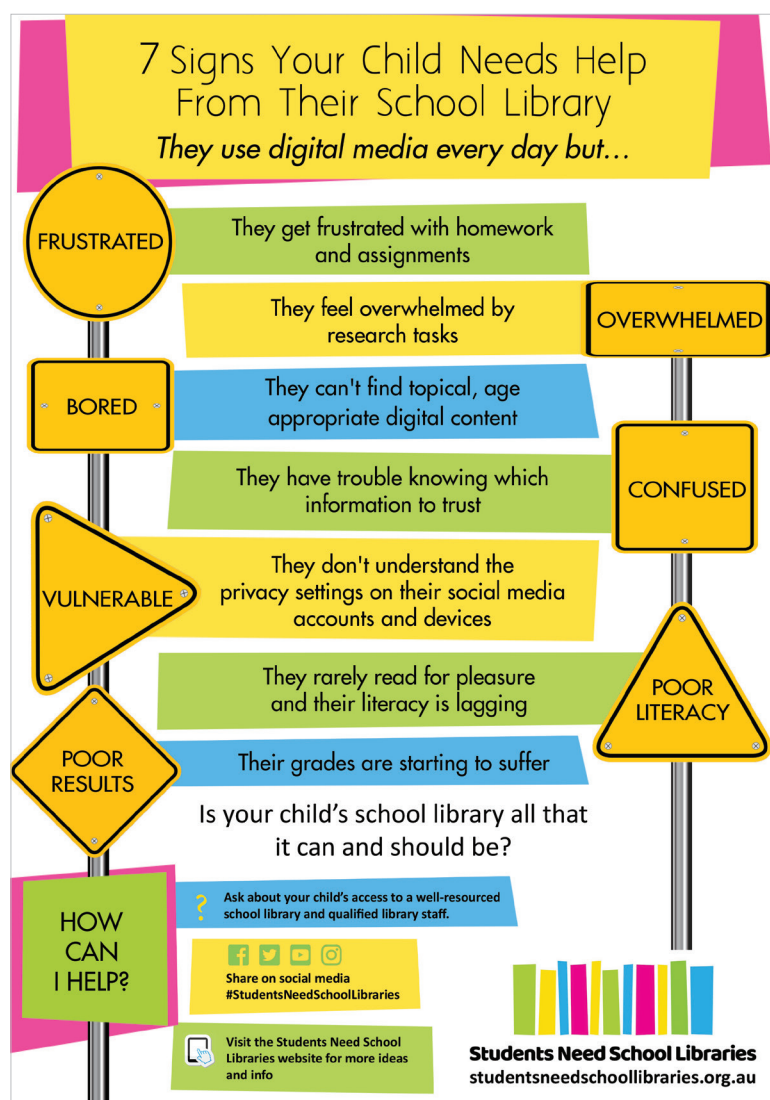
7 Signs Your Child Needs Help From Their School Library flyer.

School library people already knew there was a problem with school library staffing being in a long decline. We already know what that void in a school library means for students and teachers. However, most people in the world still have no idea that this is a problem or why it matters. Hence, the strategic focus for the Students Need School Libraries campaign in 2020 is to break out of the school library 'bubble'.

Here comes the hard part: We're asking you to do things. We can only achieve our goals with widespread, local groundswells of support. This is your sphere of influence. These are the things we can control. The decision about school library staffing lies ultimately with principals and politicians. The way to influence that decision is to get parents advocating for their children's school libraries.

Feeling shy? Too busy? Uncomfortable? Perfectly understandable ... Do it anyway. We are here to help. Let's work together. Tap into your professional confidence. Everything is hard until it is easy. What you (yes, you!) can do:

- Connect with our campaign on social media or via the newsletter. Stay in the loop as we evolve.
- Do your job well and document events. We are collecting short stories to build a mosaic illustrating how school library staff and services are important in distance learning.
  - ▸ Make a few notes (before we all move on and forget the detail) about that time when the COVID-19 situation began to impact us: What specific problems did you help your school community solve? What impact did those efforts have on students and staff?

After physical distancing restrictions are eased, you can:

- Share our resources in 10+ places — businesses, organisations, workplace kitchen areas, anywhere non–school library people will see it. Visit studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au/ resources.
- Talk to people (actually, this can happen any time!): connect the dots about how school libraries provide solutions to important problems:
  - ▸ When someone you are with talks about 'fake news', you talk about how school library staff teach website evaluation.
  - ▸ When a friend talks about their child's teacher, you ask about the school library services at that school and talk

about how collaborating with teachers is core business for the library and how what helps teachers also helps students.
- ▸ When someone confides that their child is getting bullied, you talk about how the physical space of a school library, the rich perspectives offered by literature and the unique role of school library staff are essential components of the multi-pronged approach for schools to successfully address tricky social issues.
- ▸ When you read an article about Australia's falling scores on literacy, or some other testing, you write in to that media outlet talking about how strong school libraries, run by qualified staff, are known to improve these outcomes and that all students need that — not just the lucky few.

> " **The strategic focus for the Students Need School Libraries campaign in 2020 is to break out of the school library 'bubble'.** "

- Give a presentation about what school libraries can and should be like to:
  - ▸ parent groups at a school with no qualified school library staff
  - ▸ your local council
  - ▸ your education minister.
- Actively work with your union on issues related to school library staffing and working conditions. This is a vital tactic. Education unions know that what benefits educators also benefits students. Unions are democratic organisations — numbers are what matter. A cause like ours is actually easy to get numbers behind because it makes so much sense.
  - ▸ Set a goal; for example, promote the 7 Signs Your Child Needs Help From Their School Library flyer

(studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au/ resources/toolkits/snsl-flyer) with all members.
  - ▸ Write a motion. Speak persuasively, asking people to vote for it.
  - ▸ Rinse and repeat.
- Write a short letter (doesn't have to be fancy) to:
  - ▸ the editor of a newspaper
  - ▸ a person in the public eye who might like to support our campaign.
- Be an active agent: We're practitioners just like you, and we welcome your ideas.

Make no mistake. We can achieve the vision. But, of course, the opposite is also true. We might not get strong school libraries for all students. We might continue down the path of inequity, cuts, rising stress levels, increasing workload for classroom teachers and declining results for students. Success will come down to a collective effort — tens of thousands of small/medium/ large actions (and some stars aligning in our favour). I am one among many giving it my very best shot. If you're not already an active campaigner, I hope you will join us. Your students need you.

Image credits

Images supplied by Holly Godfree. Cover image supplied by SCIS.

Holly Godfree
Campaign Coordinator, Students Need School Libraries

Visit studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au or find them on Facebook and Instagram @studentsneedschoollibraries, or Twitter @NeedSchoolLibs.

Since 2005, Holly has morphed from a classroom teacher, 'winging it' in a school library, into a qualified teacher librarian. In her role as coordinator for the Students Need School Libraries campaign, she strives to ensure that every student has access to a dynamic, well-resourced school library run by qualified library staff. Her experiences — including 20 years of teaching, ten years of school library advocacy work, and parenting two children who have attended schools with under-resourced libraries — inform and drive her work. In 2019, Holly was named the ASLA Teacher Librarian of the Year.

SCIS is more

At the time of writing, the COVID-19 (coronavirus) situation is unfolding and events are shifting day by day. The school library community is facing many challenges, but despite this we hear daily examples of school library staff sharing suggestions, information and encouragement to their colleagues, and striving to deliver value to teachers, students and families. In so many cases they are stepping up to provide a vital link from the home to the school, a digital 'common ground' across the school community, and access to digital resources enabling continuity in learning, literacy, research and the world of the imagination. This is the silver lining we have seen during these trying times, and SCIS is very proud to be part of this passionate and vital school library community.

Many things are changing for SCIS, too. During the pandemic we are operating on a two-fold principle of caring for the health and wellbeing of our staff, and maintaining consistent service delivery to our subscribers.

SCIS staff began working from home in mid-March. Our work adapts well to this situation, and with access to the same tools, technologies and processes we have seen a relatively normal continuity of business. That's not to say the transition hasn't invoked a steep learning curve. Working from home brings with it a change in the nature of work. There are positive aspects — in some ways it allows more cognitive space, and opportunities to slow down and take new perspectives.

As you may know, SCIS provides a service to catalogue your recent items that do not have a SCIS record. We are unable to accept deliveries of books from schools until further notice[1], but we are encouraging you to place an online cataloguing request (my. scisdata.com/CreateCatalogueRequest). We have recently revamped the service to make it quicker and easier to submit these requests. Our usual disclaimer for this service still applies: we cannot guarantee we can create records for all items if we do not have a copy in our hands. You can make it easier for our cataloguers by providing
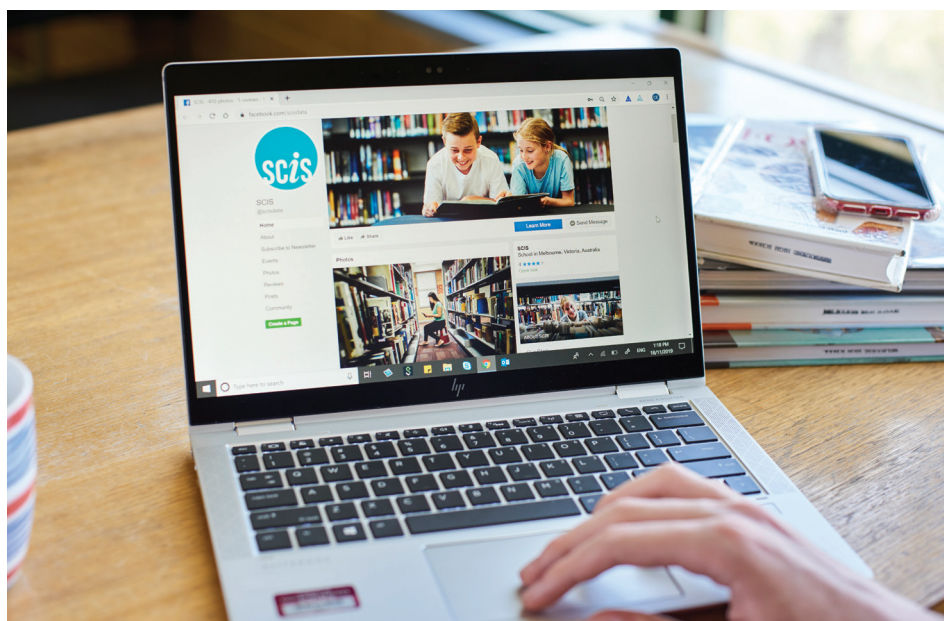
as much detail as possible and, especially, take pictures of the item to attach to your request.

SCIS has had to cancel its face-to-face professional learning sessions for the foreseeable future, but we're planning further webinars to take their place. Keep an eye on our professional learning page scisdata.com/professional-learning.

We had also been looking forward to sponsoring and attending some big events this year, including SLANZA (innovators. eventsair.com/slanza-2020) and the ASLA Literacy Summits (asla.org.au/research-summits) and we are relieved to hear both of these have been postponed, not cancelled.

This may be a good time to undertake tasks like cataloguing and miscellaneous clean-up jobs in the catalogue. Why not take the opportunity to 'stock up' on free online content for your catalogue. SCIS regularly creates records for education-related websites and apps. Find these on our catalogue (my.scisdata.com/discover) by clicking on one of the 'Featured categories', or by selecting a digital 'Media type' in Advanced search. Moving forward, you can update your collection on a regular basis by visiting our Digital content page (my.scisdata.com/digitalContent) and searching by date to find those resources added since you last visited. Some of you

might not have downloaded records from our website before — more than likely you access SCIS via the cataloguing module of your library system. But downloading from our site is just as easy. Save the file of MARC records to your hard drive, then go back in to your library system to upload them. Depending on your system, you may need to unzip the file of records first. Find out about our digital content from this video: vimeo. com/275765622.

Our customer service team is well set up at home and is there to ensure your access to SCIS remains seamless. You can continue to contact them via phone, email or the 'Ask us a question' link on the scisdata.com/contact-scis website. Please sign in to SCIS Data to check your contact details are up to date. This will help us to continue to provide quality service by ensuring you receive all notifications and enabling our customer service team to contact you if required.

We want to thank you for your support and understanding. We are thinking about you and are here to support you in this difficult time.

Dr Ben Chadwick
Acting SCIS Manager
on behalf of the SCIS team
6 April 2020

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[1] At the time of writing our cataloguing partners at the NSW Department of Education are still accepting deliveries in line with current health and social distancing advice.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Sustainable Libraries Group coordinator, Katalin Mindum, explores leading a greener school library.

With the current focus on climate change and the impact we are having on the environment, many of us are wondering how we can make a real difference. Libraries are quite naturally places that people turn to for ideas as well as answers. They tend to be positive, proactive and full of amazing, community-focused people who are perfectly placed to lead the way in finding practical solutions to sustainability challenges, both within their schools and in their broader communities.

There seem to be three basic areas in which school libraries could be engaging to help achieve the necessary culture change to enable their immediate and broader communities to work towards more positive environmental outcomes. Firstly, we need to 'walk the talk' and take personal responsibility for the impact of what we do within our own libraries. Secondly, we need to ensure that we support our schools and teachers and empower them to embed environmental sustainability into both the curriculum and their teaching practice. Finally, we can take the initiative to provide opportunities for providing information and education opportunities for our broader communities, either independently or in partnership with other institutions or organisations.

So how can we 'walk the talk'? What do we need to do in order to embrace the challenge both personally and as a group? How do we change the culture of our schools and libraries? Let's take a single very simple, everyday example. By now we should all be using reusable cups for our morning cafe coffee and refillable water bottles, as a matter of course. But how do we take this to the next level and ensure that our library and other school functions also avoid disposable crockery and cutlery, bottled water and over packaged foods? Having attended several conferences and seminars recently I've noticed some very heartening progress in this direction, but there is still much room for improvement.

Planning responsible catering doesn't need to be a logistical nightmare and its worth making the effort. Not only is it achievable, but it also sets a precedent for positive culture change towards a more responsible attitude towards sustainability in a practical setting. Whether it is celebrating a colleague's birthday in the staff room, or planning a school trivia night, it just needs leadership and a willingness to make it happen. You don't need to do it alone. There are organisations that hire out everything from crockery to table linen, at less cost than it would be to buy the plastic equivalent, and some places don't even require you to return the items washed. It's well worth investigating.

Within the Australian Curriculum, sustainability is now a cross-curriculum priority. Embedding sustainability concepts and content can be a challenge, but one which the school libraries can assist with. Both the Australian Government Department of

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Education, Skills and Employment, and the various state education departments have information and program in place to inform and assist with the process. There are also other organisations and bodies with fabulous free online resources.

The websites Eco-Schools Australia (eco-schools.org.au) and 1 Million Women (1millionwomen.com.au/blog/sustainability-schools-ideas-get-you-started) include ideas and resources that can assist teachers to embed sustainable practices and ideas into their general teaching practice as well as providing ideas for developing education programs for our communities.

Whole-school approaches to sustainability: An international review of whole-school sustainability programs (aries.mq.edu.au/projects/whole_school/files/international_review.pdf) is quite a lengthy document that provides an interesting overview of developments and practices in sustainability programs internationally.

There are some great ideas on the Sustainable Schools NSW (sustainableschoolsnsw.org.au) website, which includes a lot of very useful information and lists national and local environmental event dates, funding opportunities, and templates for project planning and grant applications.

Libraries are trusted to provide current and accurate information, and their staff are knowledgeable and well respected within their communities. Many have been developing responses to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and working on programs to embed the various SDGs into their outreach and education programs. Depending on the circumstances and existing partnerships that schools have with local public libraries or other organisations, there may be great opportunities to open their doors to the broader community and run programs that include guest speakers and information sessions on aspects of sustainable living, such as organic gardening, recycling, cooking without waste, repair and recycling cafes. There are also opportunities to engage both staff and students in brain-storming ideas around sustainability, recycling, reusing and upcycling, and establishing things like recycling stations for batteries and e-waste, and book swaps.

It seems that the possibilities for programs within your library, your school and your community, are endless and much can be achieved, often without needing a huge amount of money or resources. We just need library people with a passion and a vision for change to step up to the challenge and lead their schools to a better and more environmentally conscious future.

Katalin Mindum
Information Services Librarian, Holmesglen Institute (VIC)
Coordinator ALIA Sustainable Libraries Group

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: VISIBILITY AND REPRESENTATION IN AUSTRALIAN LGBTQIA+ YA FICTION

Teacher librarian Nell Day explores how the idea of books as windows and mirrors provides a rationale for diversifying collections across many axes of marginalisation.

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange … When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of a larger human experience — Sims Bishop, 1990.

The metaphor of literature as being both a mirror to readers' own experiences and identities and offering a window through which to access the experience of others, is a powerful one to guide librarians in purposefully curating diverse and inclusive collections. While this idea was originally conceived by African American scholar Rudine Sims Bishop in relation to racial and cultural diversity, it provides a rationale for diversifying collections across a number of axes of marginalisation including those related to gender and sexuality.

At the 2018 November SLAV Conference I hosted a fascinating panel discussion among Australian authors Alison Evans (alisonwritesthings.com), Jordi Kerr (jordikerr.com) and Jessica Walton (jessicawalton.com.au).

We reflected on the authors' own experiences of libraries as queer-identified young people, and discussed LGBTQIA+ writing in current Australian young adult (YA) fiction.

Alison Evans recalled their education in the Catholic system and the extreme difficulty of accessing books with queer stories or characters. Their experience with libraries as a young queer person was 'pretty awful because there was no queer stuff that I could find'.

For Jessica Walton the school library was a safe space when she experienced bullying after having cancer and becoming an amputee, but she could only find one book about childhood illness (*Peeling the onion* by Wendy Orr) and commented that 'disability representation was really bad and queer representation was non-existent'. Walton first read a book with queer main characters (*Fingersmith* by Sarah Waters) in her twenties, saying 'I remember just crying … feeling really angry and bitter that this was the first time I'd read something like that'.

Jordi Kerr recalled 'not finding any queer representation [in the children's section]: I have no idea where it was'. Kerr commented that today the situation is 'better, but there is so much space still for things to improve'. They cited Jenny Pausacker's comprehensive audit of queer Australian YA in the 30 year period to 2015 (bit.ly/2SITQpe), noting that during that period there was only one YA novel published in Australia featuring an intersex character (Alyssa Brugman's *Alex as well*). It seems that there are particular groups under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella who still suffer from a lack of visibility in literature.

Kerr underlined the importance of Own Voices literature.

The hashtag #ownvoices was coined by author Corinne Duyvis to describe books in which 'the protagonist and the author share a marginalised identity'. Kerr explained:

'… When the We Need Diverse Books movement started … those who already had access to publishers … were suddenly producing stories about diverse characters, and it wasn't necessarily reaching the communities who were needing to share their voices … It's not that other people can't or shouldn't write diverse characters … but if you are writing a story where the protagonist is from a minority community … you are sharing something of that community's experience, and you don't have that lived experience. So if you get it wrong, you don't pay the price of that. And that's one of the things that really bugs me. Own Voices is a … way of saying that we need diverse books by diverse people.'

Evans agreed that 'Own Voices is a way of re-balancing the industry.' Walton highlighted the *Disability in KidLit* website (disabilityinkidlit.com) where 'disabled people review middle grade and YA books written for kids with disabled representation. The … [reviewer] shares the disability of the character in the book and it's an incredible resource'.

Walton discussed the importance of intersectionality in YA collections. The concept of intersectionality, explores the ways people may be subject to marginalisation or discrimination on multiple fronts that overlap and intersect with each other. Walton explained: 'as a disabled queer person, I often reflect on how I don't necessarily feel at home in either queer spaces or disability spaces … You might go to a queer event and realise that it's not fully accessible. Or maybe I can get in there … but there are other queer disabled people … who are non-ambulant, who would not be able to get into that space. Or if I'm in a disability space there might be someone talking about gender and sexuality and not mentioning LGBTI people at all … looking at the specific experiences of people who belong to multiple marginalised communities is really important … Having diverse characters … [helps] … kids understand the world around them and the problems that are around them and to be able to maybe work towards solving those problems'.

The We Need Diverse Books movement has been a huge force in promoting YA literature featuring diverse characters and characters with intersecting marginalised identities. As the movement started in the USA, the translation to the Australian context has not always been straightforward. In particular, teacher librarians who seek to improve the visibility and representation of people of colour in their fiction collections may find only a small number of works that speak to the Australian experience. This also holds true to an extent for LGBTQIA+ representation.

Evans reflected: 'American content feels very alien to Australian teens: it wasn't my experience and I couldn't relate to that stuff.' They reflected that this disconnect with YA realism was instrumental in developing their love of genre fiction: '… it's not pretending to be our world. It's not contemporary so it's allowed to be different and you kind of approach it in a different way.' Kerr added, '… the gender affirmation pathways in the US, and the legalities around it, are very different to the ones here. So if people are accessing information around that in [YA] literature from overseas, it's not going to be accurate information for their own experiences …'

Walton spoke about seeking to create a diverse book collection for her own children. 'I think about my own kids: they've got a disabled mum … two mums, … a donor, … a transgender grandmother, and yet … there are so many people who are not in the picture books that most kids are reading. And I know from personal experience that when you don't see yourself in books, it's damaging … It's not just about what people are saying … it's about what they're not saying and who they're not including. You start to understand that you're not in those books … With my own kids I tried to build a diverse library of picture books and … there's not that much out there. But as I was reading each of the picture books that I found, it was a healing thing, and that was the same as reading the first queer book in my twenties. First acknowledging the grief of not having had that myself, and then going "Oh, this is really healing" to [see everyone in] picture books and then middle grade and then YA and to … go YES, we belong in there and screw anyone who thinks we don't'.

Kerr added: 'I just wanted to add how self-affirming that representation is, and how literally lifesaving it can be when someone in a position of power says "this story is worth telling". … One of my favourite quotes is from Adrienne Rich who said "When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you … when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing.'

By purposefully seeking out diverse and inclusive collections, teacher librarians have the power to enable some of our most vulnerable young people to see their identities affirmed in the mirror of fiction. Evans summarised: 'What we're doing is trying to make a softer world.'

The panel agreed that there is still plenty of room for improvement in LGBTQIA+ representation and visibility in contemporary Australian YA literature. Kerr commented: 'I want to see more trans characters, especially non-binary. *Ida* [Alison

Evans's novel], which was published in 2017, is the first YA book published by a mainstream Australian publisher that features a non-binary character. And yet the latest research on young trans people in Australia shows that 48%, so nearly half, of young trans people identify as non-binary. So where the heck are they seeing themselves?'

Walton spoke about the need to re-examine attitudes to intersectionality in YA writing: 'There's been this assumption in publishing for a long time that people don't want to read something outside of their own experiences, and so when you have a character who's disabled and queer and has chronic pain someone might go "Oh, that's ridiculous, that's a checklist, that's too weird, no one's going to want to read that". But I think that young people are proving again and again that they do want to read about people who are different from them … if you never publish those books then no-one's reading them and you don't get a sense of whether people like those books and whether they'll sell …'

Evans reinforced the importance of diversifying publishing across many axes:

'There are a lot of white people in the room: how are we making room for people of colour? When we talk about "What do boys read? What do girls read?" what about non-binary people? There are at least two non-binary people in this room and we read a lot because we're huge nerds.'

These three writers are not only forging their own paths in the Australian literary landscape, but also have a profound depth of understanding of the importance of visibility and representation in young people's literature. Their passion and authenticity left me with a renewed understanding of how teacher librarians have the power to facilitate transformative literary experiences for the young people in our care through providing access to diverse and inclusive collections, and were a powerful reminder of the words of literacy educator Chad Everett who writes of diverse books 'in addition to texts being stories to be enjoyed, they are powerful tools of social justice'.

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Nell Day
Teacher Librarian, The University High School.

This article first appeared in Synergy, online journal of the School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV).

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WHAT IS A FUTURE READY LIBRARIAN?

Mark Ray discusses the Future Ready Librarians initiative and how it is helping librarians build understanding, professional capacity and visibility as leaders in schools.

Librarians of the past or future?

In my 2016 TEDx Talk, *Changing the conversation about librarians* (youtube.com/watch?v=IniFUB7worY), I suggested that we are good at associating librarians with our past, but may not be as clear about their role in the future. Later that same year, Future Ready Librarians (futureready.org/thenetwork/strands/future-ready-librarians) launched in the United States as part of the larger Future Ready Schools (futureready.org) initiative that focuses on promoting innovation in schools and educational systems.

Over the last four years, the Future Ready Librarians initiative has changed the conversation about the role of school librarians and the ways in which they lead, teach, and support student learning. To date, the initiative has both clarified strategic roles for school librarians and also engaged and empowered the librarian community to build understanding, professional capacity and visibility as leaders in schools.

Most importantly, the Future Ready Librarians Framework (futureready.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FRS_Librarians_Framework_download-2020.pdf) translates well. Rather than competing with other standards or professional guidelines, it offers simple and concrete ways for librarians to align their practice to help solve the same challenges faced by school and district leaders. And while Future Ready Schools began in the Obama White House, the challenges of meeting the needs of future learners is, and always has been, universal.

> " While Future Ready Schools began in the Obama White House, the challenges of meeting the needs of future learners is, and always has been, universal. "

Strategic focus

As a teacher librarian for 20 years and then as a district leader overseeing libraries for another seven years, I have always believed in aligning library practices and programs with 'what keeps administrators up at night'. When librarians understand and can respond to the strategic needs of schools and systems, it creates win-win opportunities that benefit both students and teachers.

In 2012, I was asked to join a Follett initiative called Project Connect (www2.follettlearning.com/projectconnect/index.cfm), which was focused on the future of school libraries. It started by asking superintendents, district leaders, and library leaders from across the US this: 'Is there a place for school libraries and librarians in a 21st-century school?'

Considering that many school districts across the US both then and now are reducing or eliminating school library programs, the answer was nowhere far from certain. But consensus was quickly found. *Yes, there is a role for librarians and libraries. And that future looks different than the past.*

Future Ready Schools White House launch

Future Ready Schools was launched at the White House in 2014. With a focus on the future, President Obama challenged a room full of national school leaders to take the Future Ready Pledge, a commitment to lead innovation in their educational systems. A partnership between the US Department of Education and the non-profit Alliance for Excellent Education created the Future Ready Schools Framework, which is based on research-derived 'gears' that help define what and how to promote change to meet the needs of future learners.

Future Ready Librarians Framework

Future Ready Librarians was formed in 2016 and has become a runaway success. The development of the Future Ready Librarians Framework identified specific ways in which librarians could support — as well as teach and lead — strategic work in schools. Based on the same gears and language used by district leaders, the framework offers specific examples of ways in which librarians can align their practice with school and district priorities.

Why the Future Ready Librarians Framework works

Below are two reasons that the Future Ready Librarians Framework has resonated — alignment and simplicity.

- First, because the framework is based on the same research and strategic focus used by superintendents, it puts librarians literally on the same page as school and district leaders.
- Second, the framework is simple. It is equally accessible to librarians and leaders, offering examples of ways in which librarians can support the future ready goals of schools.

A thriving Future Ready Librarian engages, connects

After Future Ready Librarians launched in the summer of 2016, it has thrived both in the librarian community and beyond. For many librarians, it has offered an opportunity to reimagine and rebrand their practice in new ways.

Speaking from experience, being a librarian in a school can be professionally lonely and isolating. While librarians are part of the learning community of their schools, they often must look beyond their schools for communities of practice, professional learning, and support.

To meet that need, Future Ready Librarians has created new opportunities to connect and learn with like-minded professionals: Future Ready institutes, online communities on Facebook and Twitter, webinars, professional development

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ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE

USE OF SPACE & TIME

DATA & PRIVACY

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

BUDGET & RESOURCES

The Future Ready Librarians Framework PDF

Through their professional practice, programs, and spaces, school librarians lead, teach, and support their school or district's Future Ready Schools® (FRS) goals. Derived from the FRS framework, the principles described in this document highlight how school librarians support schools in transitioning to student-centered learning and identify special ways librarians can become future ready. By aligning with strategic initiatives like FRS, librarians connect their practices, programs, and spaces to educational innovation in schools.

Leveraging actions from the Future Ready Librarians framework puts school librarians on the leading edge of the digital transformation of learning.

A PROJECT OF THE **ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION**

Generously supported by **Follett**

FUTURE READY SCHOOLS PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

FutureReady.org

(including an online International Society for Technology in Education partnered course for emerging leaders), and micro-credentialing for librarians who promote student creativity.

> " When librarians understand and can respond to the strategic needs of schools and systems, it creates win-win opportunities that benefit both students and teachers. "

Other tools are to come: a self-reflection tool and a step-by-step collaboration guide. Look for launch updates at futureready.org/librarians.

In the few short years since its launch, our shared future appears hotter, smokier, wetter, less civil, less factual and more challenging in almost every way. And yet I'm an optimist. Why? Because as a librarian and educator, I have seen schools and systems recognise the need to plan for a different future than existed in the past. And Future Ready Librarians are part of those solutions.

Image credits
Image supplied by Mark Ray

Mark Ray
Free Range Educator
Future Ready Librarians Lead

Mark Ray can be reached at amalgamatedfutures.com, where you can find out more about his past and present work and current curiosities.

SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT:
TOOWOOMBA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

SCIS speaks to Lorraine Petersen, Textbook Hire Library Coordinator at Toowoomba State High School, about what is happening in her school library.

What is your job title, and what does your role entail?

I'm the Textbook Hire Library Coordinator at Toowoomba State High School. I am studying a Diploma of Library and Information Services, and work as a teacher aide four mornings a week in the Textbook Hire division of our library. My work there focuses on the provision and maintenance of prescribed learning resources for our school's 850–900 students.

Our school's main library area is maintained by a couple of teacher aides who spend their non-class time seeing to the acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, and shelving of our school's 13,000 fiction and non-fiction library books, and the circulation of hire laptops. There are six learning areas of computer desks in our library, which are usually fully booked out every lesson for regular classes.

In the Textbook Hire section, I work on the acquisition, cataloguing, shelving, circulation, cleaning, and repairing of our school's student textbooks. There are multiple class sets of every textbook and prescribed novels that our students require for their studies and, at any given time, approximately 4,000 of these are out on loan across the year levels.

The Textbook Hire section also includes racks of school blazers, a set of CPR dummies, and a selection of sports team uniform bags, which are all catalogued and barcoded for hiring as needed.

My role also entails making student ID cards and managing the school lockers — not traditional library roles, but my library work has given me some transferrable skills (managing data imports, etc), which are extremely useful for these tasks!

What is the most rewarding aspect of working in a school library, and why?

It's very rewarding to see students mature over the six years we have them. I'm involved in helping them to develop their responsibility and appreciation for

Lorraine Petersen processing textbooks at Toowoomba State High School.

freely available learning resources. Some students, such as the new Year 7's every year, are initially a little overwhelmed by the task of managing their hire textbook needs. They may struggle to organise returning books and hiring new ones as required during the year. I spend extra time helping these students to keep track of their resources in a variety of ways, and every year they begin to take more pride in their use of the system! Tasks such as having the correct textbooks on loan and returning the correct books in good condition when they're due contribute to developing valuable life skills. Every time a student enters Textbook Hire waving a book and cheerfully informing me that they are returning this one on time and in good condition, I consider my work a success!

What do you see as the most important part of the library's role in the school community?

I am passionately proud of how our resource centre freely provides our students with many items that they would need to purchase if they attended other schools. Students can study any subject, join debating teams or sports teams and represent our school at community events wearing blazers or sport uniforms hired from the library without having to count the cost of involvement. This is in addition to the traditional library roles of providing access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books to all staff and students, and providing spaces to learn, study, and gather together. Another highly important service our library gives to our school community

is access to technology — for many of our students, the school library is their only source of desktop computing and printing facilities.

Are there any current issues facing your library? How are you working to overcome these?

Traditionally, the biggest challenge that Textbook Hire libraries face is maintaining sufficient numbers of identical textbooks in the collection, in spite of frequent book damage and loss. This issue has been compounded in recent years by big changes to the Australian curriculum and rapidly updated editions. For example, maths books often used to stay the same for many years, enabling extra copies to be added as required. Now, they are likely to have a new edition published every 18 months to two years, meaning replacement texts may have differences in the text or page numbers. The digital component of newer textbooks often updates every year, which will then be out of sync with our original print copies of that title. I work to stay informed of these changes via my relationships with publishers' representatives, and can sometimes bargain for an extension of superseded digital editions or to purchase the last of the old print stock.

How do you promote reading and literacy in your school's library? Are there any challenges in doing so?

In the library area, we work in a support role to supply and maintain the relevant resources that teachers use for literacy learning. The main library provides pre-packed boxes of assorted reading books of different levels for classroom use. One challenge we have begun to face is providing resources for our growing refugee population, with a need to source English as an Additional Language reading books. Finding titles that are suitable for non–English speakers to read, which are also 'cool' enough for teenagers to enjoy, can be a challenge, and for Textbook Hire, I need to be able to buy these in bulk. One new title that I am proud to be introducing this year is a large set of quality picture dictionaries that will be excellent for learning vocabulary, and which don't come across as too 'babyish'!

How do you engage with students through digital spaces?

A number of improvements for our library's digital provisions are planned for 2020. The browser-based LMS that we started using just over a year ago has the capacity to be a fully customisable research portal, with the ability to include access to many digital resources such as fact sheets and study links. I hope to develop this area of our LMS in 2020. In the Textbook Hire area, I have trialled a few different ways to provide digital textbooks for our students over the years, and this year we will be fully utilising a digital book platform that works best for our requirements. This platform will help me to supply digital textbook access to every student and staff member, in addition to print textbooks, thus accommodating various teaching and learning styles.

How do you encourage students to make use of the library?

The most popular library resources accessed by students in their own time are the internet and graphic novels. Library staff put a lot of effort into ensuring the availability of computers and consistent internet for everyone, and the meticulous maintenance of the large graphic novel section encourages many students who wouldn't otherwise read novels to hire books.

What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

We previously accessed SCIS Data through manual requests and imports from the old SCIS website into our old, server-based LMS's. At that time, the main library and the Textbook Hire library had different systems. Updating our old bibliographic records via the integrated SCIS function inside our browser-based system that both libraries now share has been instrumental in helping us to combine our records into one cohesive catalogue. We have more work to do in this area, but we rely heavily on the fast accuracy of SCIS cataloguing to help us.

What would you like to see SCIS do more of?

I am still discovering all of the things that SCIS already does! I am very glad to have access to SCIS Data to assist me in my job and my further library studies.

Lorraine Petersen
Textbook Hire Library Coordinator, Toowoomba State High School

THE POSITIVE POTENTIAL OF EBOOKS
WITHIN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Trish du Temple of Wheelers Books explores how a digital library can support students navigating various life challenges.

'What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.'
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

How can we help students flourish in a world filled with increasing pressures and uncertainty? Academic expectations, social relationships, technology overload and identity formation are just the start. There may also be anxiety and self-esteem issues at play or learning challenges such as dyslexia.

Research has shown that overwhelming stress or trauma negatively impacts a student's ability to think, feel, learn, and grow. Schools are acknowledging this, with many exploring initiatives around mindfulness and resilience to help students navigate these challenges, with good results.

School counsellors and other learning support staff play a critical role, but many are reported to be feeling under-resourced and under pressure, struggling to service the increasing number of students seeking help, and at risk of burnout themselves.

I believe school libraries can help. They have an opportunity to provide resources to improve students' mental wellbeing, strengthen resilience and better equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to live their best life.

They can also help by providing ebooks and audiobooks. Indeed, there are at least seven ways that they can be leveraged to improve the mental health and wellbeing of your school community:

1. Students can immediately and privately access a huge range of ebooks and audiobooks for support on personally challenging topics such as cyberbullying, social anxiety, gender identity and depression. Ebooks offer a discreet way to choose titles without fear of judgement or being ostracised. Carefully crafted fiction books about the issues students face are also a valuable resource that can be both educational and empowering. If a student reads about topics like what they are confronting, they can feel less alone and more open to getting help.
2. Ebooks enable students to access practical, evidence-based programs and workbooks — like the MBSR (mindfulness) Programme for Teens, or more specific workbooks addressing teen self-harming behaviours, thoughts, and feelings. Such

workbooks are not typically available within a print library but, within apps like the ebook library lending platform, ePlatform. Within this platform, students can add highlights and record their own notes. They can even email their notes to themselves to track their progress or discuss them with their school counsellor.

While research on these practices and programs with youth is still in the relatively early stages, studies are increasingly showing the potential benefits of mindfulness for students' psychological wellbeing, self-esteem, social skills, physical health, academic performance, and more.

3. Digital wellness resources can also be valuable to school counsellors, teachers, and support staff. The work they do is downright hard. The more that can be done to support their work and their own wellbeing, the more likely students can thrive.
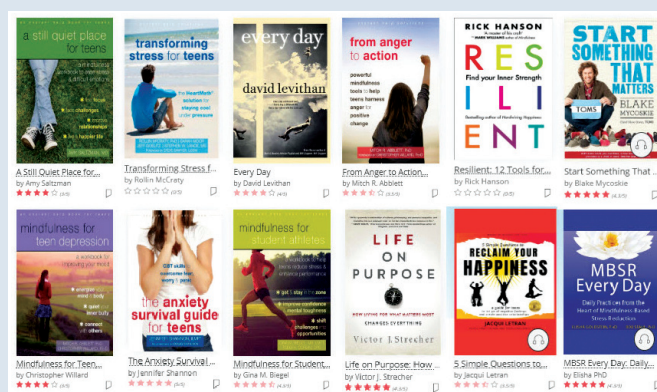

Wheelers Books' ePlatform offers a digital wellness collection that gives students, counsellors, teachers, and support staff access to over 350 expertly selected ebook and audiobook titles.

4. Audio books/resources enable all students (even those less able readers) to be guided through wellbeing practices. They can tune in anywhere, from the park to the privacy of their bedroom. Such resources can also be used within school libraries to facilitate student group wellness sessions. Shared experiences and open conversations in a safe environment that normalise mental health concerns and foster connections are highly valuable.

5. Digital reading platforms also empower students with reading challenges like dyslexia as they offer special customisable settings to help them to read.

    With ePlatform, students can discover for themselves which font type (including Open Dyslexic), font size, spacing between letters, words and lines, and background colour enables them to read most easily, and then default to that customised setting. Instead of knocking their self-esteem (which limiting their access to 'special' books can do), students feel empowered.
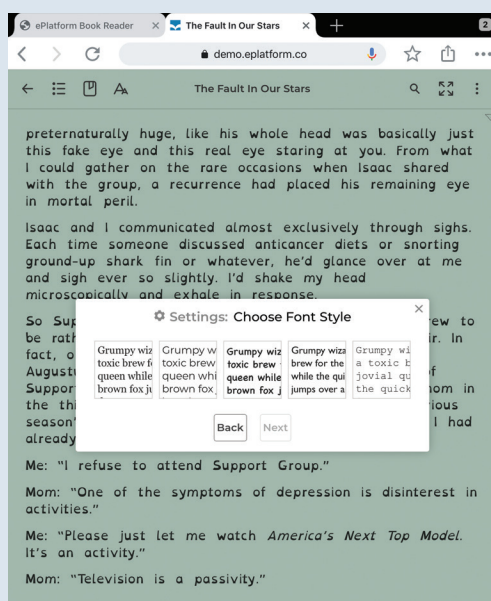
Open Dyslexic font is just one of the choices ePlatform offers.
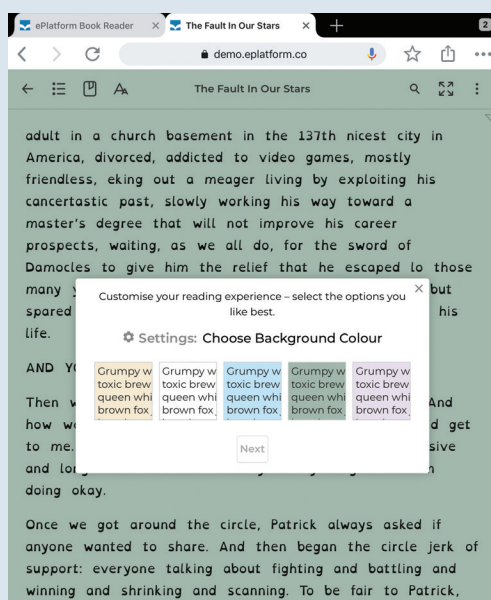
ePlatform offers different background colours that can facilitate easier reading for students with dyslexia.

6. Ebook platforms also have innovative features that can improve literacy outcomes and students' confidence. Students can add highlighting and notes, define words and

access synonyms, Google links, and even a translator. Less able readers may also be more inclined to try reading as they can access easier titles without being perceived by their peers as less capable.

7. Ebook platforms report to librarians on who is reading what, which can be valuable in guiding students to additional resources even when the content is sensitive.

    Schools are uniquely positioned to play a key role in children's and teen's wellbeing. High school, in particular, is recognised as a critical time to intervene as behaviours related to mental health that are established during these years are often taken into adulthood.

    School should be a launching pad to a meaningful life and there's clearly value in educating and empowering youth with coping mechanisms to better navigate life's challenges.

Image credits
Images supplied by Trish du Temple

Trish du Temple
Director, Wheelers Books

Trish is a certified Trauma-informed Yoga (RCYT®, RYT®), Mindfulness and Meditation for Children + Teens Instructor, and a Project Wayfinder facilitator. She works with schools and other non-profits helping to empower youth to expand their vision of their future and navigate happier, more compassionate and purposeful lives. Founder of the Greenlight Foundation (greenlightfoundation. co.nz), Trish is also a director of Wheelers Books (wheelers.co.nz; www.wheelersbooks.com.au; www.eplatform.co) and leads their wellbeing initiatives.

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Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey 2019–20

Many thanks to everyone who participated in last year's ELR School Library Survey. The 2019–20 survey was one of the most efficient, and reached the highest percentage of Australian schools yet.

The survey is conducted by Education Services Australia (ESA) on behalf of the Australian Government's Office for the Arts. The purpose of the survey is to determine an estimate of the number of copies of books available in Australian school libraries. The Department then combines the school scores with university and TAFE estimates to determine how much money will be paid to eligible authors and publishers to provide recompense for revenue lost because their books are available for free in school libraries.

Among the most commonly available titles in this year's survey were:

- *Weirdo* by Anh Do
- *Who sank the boat?* by Pamela Allen
- *Possum magic* by Mem Fox
- *The 39-storey treehouse* by Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton
- *The secret garden* by Frances Burnett. Other popular authors included:
- Aaron Blabey
- Alison Lester
- Emily Rodda
- Jeannie Baker
- Morris Gleitzman.

Four per cent of titles surveyed had only one copy found in participating schools. Somewhat surprisingly, this included well-known titles such as:

- *The children's Bach* by Helen Garner
- *Romulus, my father* by Raimond Gaita
- *The sound of one hand clapping* by Richard Flanagan
- *Whipbird* by Robert Drewe.

In addition to those schools who were sent individual invitations to participate, we surveyed government schools in Tasmania and NSW by centrally extracting data through digital library vendors.

Primary, secondary and F–12 schools from all states and territories were selected to participate, as were schools from the government, Catholic and independent sectors.

As was the case in previous years, participants were invited to complete a post-ELR survey that provides valuable feedback about the ELR process.

Ninety-six per cent of people who completed the participant survey reported that ELR was not time-consuming; most completed it in less than five minutes. Thirty-five per cent of survey respondents had participated in ELR in previous years, and 17 per cent noted that they had learnt about ELR in previous editions of *Connections.*

Thirty-two per cent of survey respondents identified themselves as teacher librarians, 26 per cent were library officers, and 19 per cent were library technicians. Only ten per cent of respondents identified themselves as librarians. Other people who completed the survey included IT staff, teacher aides, Directors of Library Information Services, Heads of Library, a Resource Centre School Services Officer, and a Library and Learning Manager.

Seventeen per cent of participants required help to run the ELR survey. Most contacted ESA via email or telephone. Some contacted their library services provider.

Typical comments received from participants included:

- Instructions were concise and accurate so time taken to do survey was no problem.
- It was super-quick and took very little effort.
- Doing the actual survey was quick but what took time was trying to find where it had saved on my computer. It might be easier if it saves automatically to the desktop or it automatically gets sent to the ELR people.
- It was a matter of minutes, not very long at all.
- It took less than five minutes. Too easy.

ESA is very grateful for the enthusiastic cooperation of school library staff who took part in ELR 2019–20. ESA offers a $150 voucher to one respondent whose name is drawn at random from a list of all those who completed the post-ELR survey. This year's successful participant is Kym Andrews, Teacher Librarian at Mansfield State High School in Brisbane. Congratulations Kym!

Daniel Hughes
ELR Project Manager
Education Services Australia

WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

BUSHFIRE EDUCATION

bushfireeducation.vic.edu.au

An abundance of pertinent bushfire teaching and learning resources are provided on this website from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Four aspects of bushfire education are covered: learning about bushfires, preparing for bushfires, responding to bushfires, and recovering from bushfires. Material is grouped according to the appropriate stages for students.

SCIS no: 1956746

BUSHFIRES

education.abc.net.au/home#!/ topic/494522/bushfires

Emanating from ABC Education, the thorough subject matter featured on this website supports the teaching of the topic 'bushfires'. Content is aligned with the Australian Curriculum in geography, science and English. It is suitable for students in years 4–10.

SCIS no: 1956750

CLIMATEWATCH

climatewatch.org.au

ClimateWatch was developed by the Earthwatch Institute, the Bureau of Meteorology and the University of Melbourne to research the effects that changes in rainfall and temperature are having on Australia's plants and animals. Schools are invited to take part in the research by undertaking field recording. Lessons linked to the Australian Curriculum are also available.

SCIS no: 1962906

DISASTER RESILIENCE EDUCATION TASMANIA

disasterresiliencetas.com.au

Education Tasmania has developed a five-unit disaster resilience resource suitable for years 5–8, which encompasses the learning areas of humanities and social sciences, geography, science and health. Comprehensive teacher lesson guides, student lessons and resources are offered.

SCIS no: 1962919

FUTURE EARTH

futureearth.org

Supported by a range of global institutions (including the Australian Academy of Science) and scientists, Future Earth's mission is to 'accelerate transformations to global sustainability through research and innovation'. Details of initiatives, knowledge networks, research projects and news are featured.

SCIS no: 1963005

GET PREPARED APP

redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/ preparing-for-emergencies/get-prepared-app

How prepared for disasters such as bushfires, floods, cyclones, energy outages or even public disturbances are you, your staff or your students? This app offers users information on how to devise appropriate plans that may need to be actioned in an emergency situation.

SCIS no: 1963325

NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

scienceweek.net.au

An Australian Government initiative to promote science and technology to all ages, National Science Week occurs on 15–23 August. Information is available for teachers to register their schools, prepare background material, access blogs and locate events to attend.

SCIS no: 1963015

OLIVER JEFFERS' WORLD

oliverjeffersworld.com

This official website of renowned author and illustrator Oliver Jeffers offers his admirers an insight into his creative processes, personal details, a bibliography, free activities to download and print out, and specifics of artwork available for sale.

SCIS no: 1963067

UN CLIMATE CHANGE APP

apps.apple.com/au/app/un-climate-change/id568085923#?platform=ipad

The UN Climate Change secretariat has published this free app to provide an updated, authoritative record of the secretariat's conferences and meetings, news and social media, speeches and statements, documents, meetings, and the decisions that the UN has adopted.

SCIS no: 1963335

WWF AUSTRALIA

wwf.org.au

The Australian branch of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has published an overview of their independent stance on the environment and how this is adapted in the Australian setting. Positive change factors are related to species, marine ecosystems, sustainable food production, and climate change.

SCIS no: 1963268

YOUNG OCEAN EXPLORERS

youngoceanexplorers.com

This engaging website features a wealth of material pertaining to the oceans and aquatic life surrounding New Zealand (and by default parts of Australia). The site aims to inspire students to appreciate and care for their marine environment.

SCIS no: 1962837

Nigel Paull
Teacher Librarian
North Coast, NSW

The websites and apps selected for review are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of these sites are subject to change.

Professional learning

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scisdata.com/professional-learning   help@scisdata.com

SCIS Schools Catalogue Information Service