CONNECTiONS

Supporting learning: a digital collection tale

Kathy Talbot working with a member of staff

Working in a vibrant Resource Centre at the heart of a year 7–12 Catholic school, I am always met with a steady hum of activity and conversation from staff and students. It's not only a place of inquiry, it's also where chess boards and Uno games feature, and students share gossip and work together. While this is the place to meet, share stories and find the next great read, the Resource Centre staff work tirelessly behind the scenes to support teaching and learning in a multitude of ways. In recent years this has expanded to include digital curation.

Resourcing in schools

The ongoing digital collection journey began to gain more traction as the pandemic hit our shores. Ideal circumstance? Definitely no! Timely? Yes! Approximately five years ago, the teacher librarians (TLs) embraced an added feature in our library management system (LMS) that allowed us to integrate physical and digital resources on one page. This created a one-stop-shop of databases and websites resources, combined with our catalogued items, for specialised instruction and assessment.

Before the pandemic, we had been experimenting with a more formal digital curation tool for teaching and learning. By gathering the resources in one place, targeting specific units of work and assessment tasks, we increased our support for teachers. Working with our Middle School Year 7 and 8 Humanities allowed the TLs to experiment with the process of digital curation. Collaborative conversations highlighted the needs of the curriculum and the students for the unit, *Ozti the Iceman*. This led to curating a digital collection to provide timely and relevant resources for the unit, including the assessment task. The Resource Centre provides access to various databases and, with our LMS as our platform, we could provide quality resources together for our users, in one location.

Running a fortnightly lesson was the perfect opportunity to introduce the *Ozti* digital library. I combined a lesson on the CRAP (Current, Reliable, Authority, Purpose) Test to show how the digital collection designed for the current assignment exemplified quality resources. This was also a chance to build skills in research, identifying other quality sources, and connecting to the content. This made connecting with the curriculum easier for the students. When using these resources in class and for inquiry, students can identify familiar information and build skills and knowledge.

Our digital curation journey

After our first successful experiment in developing a targeted one-stop-shop digital collection using the LMS, we received eight more requests from the Middle School. This platform for sharing quality and timely resources for both teaching and learning was our light-bulb moment. The benefits of an online resource page were so obvious that we needed to find a way to persuade other

SCiS Schools Catalogue Information Service

Submissions and advertising
Please send enquiries to
connections@esa.edu.au.

Disclaimer
Views and opinions expressed in *Connections* do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, SCIS or Education Services Australia, or imply endorsement by them.

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

FSC
MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C007821
www.fsc.org

Climate Active
Carbon Neutral ORGANISATION

CONNECT WITH SCIS

www.scisdata.com

Professional learning

Term 1 In-person Workshops

MELBOURNE: An introduction to SCIS Data

Tuesday 28 February 9 am (AEDT). Level 22, 180 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
In this 3-hour workshop, we'll introduce you to our records and show you how they create a richer search experience for your school community. We'll walk you through our website and your SCIS user account, giving you tips and tricks that will help you leverage its tools to make your resource management workflow simpler and more efficient.

MELBOURNE: Making the most of SCIS

Tuesday 28 February 1 pm (AEDT). Level 22, 180 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
Our 3-hour, in-person workshop is an excellent chance for you to learn of how to enhance your search and download experience, use SCIS as a curation tool, develop digital collections, and much more.

Term 1 Webinars

Welcome to SCIS – FREE WEBINAR

Tuesday 14 February 2 pm (AEDT).
Start your year by getting to know a little about the cataloguing service that saves you time in your library. Join SCIS Catalogue Content Manager Renate Beilharz for this free session as she introduces you to SCIS services and how we can assist you across the school year.

How SCIS can do more for you

Tuesday 14 March 2 pm (AEDT).
SCIS provides data for resources that go into your school's library catalogue, but SCIS delivers more for librarians than just data. This one-hour webinar will demonstrate additional features of SCIS Data that will help you make the most of your subscription.

Develop your library collection with SCIS

Tuesday 28 March 2 pm (AEDT).
Ever struggled choosing new resources for your library? Never fear, SCIS is here! This new webinar will show you how to make selecting new resources easier using the SCIS discovery tool.

15-Minute Video tutorials

Need shorter, more concise professional learning? Our on-demand tutorials are designed to fit around your busy schedule and only cost $10 each! View the full range of tutorials on our website by scanning the QR code.
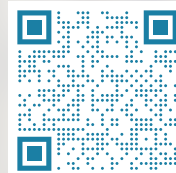
FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER NOW
scisdata.com/professional-learning | help@scisdata.com

SCIS Schools Catalogue Information Service

Kathy Talbot in her school library

departments to share in its success. This took some time to develop. Meanwhile, the pandemic gave me the opportunity to build my own skills.

The need for online access was an opportunity to have professional conversations that married the classroom teachers' deep understanding of content with the TL's extensive knowledge of resources and general capabilities. Over time, some students found the digital collections easier to use than Google and began asking for them in their classes upon their return from remote learning. This was an excellent example of the 'proof was in the pudding' – our subject-specific digital libraries were selling themselves.

It wasn't until this year that I realised the need to track the requests. This has been an important step to quantify the breadth of success reaching more departments. Using a spreadsheet, I can easily see who makes the request, which department they work in, the type of assignment, when the request came in and when it became live for access. I include the link to the digital library for future reference.

Starting from a humble eight collections, five years ago, our digital resourcing has expanded to approximately 58 collections this year and includes collaborating with another eight departments. Upon reflection, the potential of implementing digital collections through our LMS was evident and to now successfully embed them into our repertoire for supporting teaching and learning is exciting.

The benefits of a digital collection

The excitement of curating a specialised digital collection comes from the benefits it has, not only professionally, but also for teaching and learning. (I cannot deny the pleasure gained in seeking quality resources for each collection.) There are many specific benefits that are a result of embedding digital resources through the LMS.

- They lighten the load for the classroom teacher, which results in happy staff who have easily accessible, relevant quality resources to support their specialised curriculum. Staff feel supported, with a guide on the side to help build knowledge, research skills and encourage academic integrity.

- As staff collaborate, classroom teachers and TLs mentor each other with their respective expertise. This ensures the digital collection is on point and available to students at the right time. Students have a broader connection to the curriculum through quality resources and literature with these collections. All of which builds professional trust and value in the role of the TL.

- Professionally, through the collaboration, development and support provided through the digital collection, the TL is meeting several Australian School Library Association (ASLA) standards. The development of the digital collection provides the opportunity to achieve multiple Highly Accomplished standards (ASLA, 2014). Making the digital collection

available through the LMS, a TL is able to differentiate for various learning abilities, based on the knowledge gained from collaborating with the classroom teacher. This careful and considered selection meets many varied standards to achieve professional success.

Developing the collection

These are some things I have learnt in my time working with digital curation.

- Planning plays a vital part in the success of a digital collection. Identifying and collaborating with the library champions who visit the library often makes the process easier, and benefits the digital collection.

- During this collaborative process, asking questions builds the big picture of need, develops an understanding of the abilities of the students, and results in a deeper knowledge of the curriculum. Answers to these questions provide specific understanding to assist in differentiation, specificity or identifying familiar sources. This allows the TL to provide a more considered and specialised collection to embed into teaching and learning.

- Collaboration extends after the digital collection is used, through reflection and feedback. Shared knowledge, before and after, builds capacity and improves practice.

Ultimately, digital collections are fun to curate. It keeps the TL in touch with current and relevant information which builds your repertoire for what is available. Curation depends on our knowledge of the curriculum, with collaboration and acquiring a variety of specialised sources. Once staff and students have access to your digital collection, you immediately promote your skills, which enhances your capacity and value within the school environment. Developing successful digital collections makes for happy teachers through connection and capacity.

References

Australian School Library Association (ASLA). 2014. Evidence guide for teacher librarians on highly accomplished career stage. In www.asla.org.au

McFarlane, K. (2022). Images.

Kathy Talbot
Teacher Librarian
St Francis Xavier College,
Florey, Canberra

SCIS is more

Welcome to the Term 1, 2023 issue of *Connections*.

SCIS is back on the road in 2023, having restarted running our popular in-person workshops late last year. In November 2022, we undertook our first interstate trip since the pandemic began, running two wonderful workshops in Perth. It was a great chance for us to connect with library staff outside our own city and help them learn how to make the most of SCIS. It was also a chance to share insights and learning gleaned from the pandemic in a collaborative forum.

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting Perth and extend a special thanks to Bindy Hammond, the librarian at Bob Hawke College, for hosting our workshops in her amazing school, which was constructed in 2018 on the grounds of the old Subiaco Oval. While in Perth, we were lucky to visit Melissa Pettit and Dorothy Millar, who work in the School Library Support program at the Department of Education. It was truly inspiring to see the amazing work they've put in to creating a comprehensive set of school library support resources for government schools across Western Australia.

We'll continue our in-person workshops in Melbourne on February 28th before heading to Queensland to host further workshops prior to the ASLA conference in April.

Speaking of the ASLA conference, we're thrilled to be attending this year's conference, and also to be sponsoring the ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian Award. The award recognises an Australia teacher librarian who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession of school librarianship. The recipient will receive a $1,000 professional learning grant. Nominations are now open and will close on the February 24th. We encourage anyone who knows an outstanding teacher librarian to consider nominating them for this fantastic award.

We're also delighted to announce our New Resources Monthly mailing list in 2023. We know that library staff are always looking for compelling new resources to add to their collections, and SCIS catalogues thousands of new resources every year. To help keep you up to date with the newest and most interesting resources we've catalogued,

SCIS Marketing and Communications Specialist Daniel Czech with Bob Hawke Senior Secondary College librarian Bindy Hammond

Use this QR code to sign up for our 'New Resources Monthly' mailing list.

SCIS is now offering the opportunity to sign up to receive email updates about new resources. Those who sign up to the mailing list will receive a monthly email containing a curated selection of the latest books, websites and apps we've added to our database. We're incredibly excited to be introducing this new mailing list in 2023. You can sign up via the QR code in this article.

Finally, we'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to one of our long-term staff, Dr Ben Chadwick, who moved on to an exciting new career opportunity in Term 4 last year. Ben has worked with SCIS since 2011, beginning as a Metadata Analyst and finishing as the Director of Research and Information. His contribution to SCIS forms the backbone of the quality service to schools we provide

today, and we're incredibly grateful to him for to all his work over the last decade.

We sincerely hope you enjoy this first issue of *Connections* for 2023. We're looking forward to working with all the wonderful school staff who use our services both nationally and internationally over the next year and can't wait to dive in and get cataloguing for you!

Anthony Shaw
SCIS Product Manager

Anthony Shaw has had more than 25 years' experience within the book industry across a wide range of roles; working in bookselling, buying, publishing and supporting libraries. In his most recent role before joining SCIS he was working with collectionHQ as Sales and Account Manager, helping public libraries deliver better collections for their communities across Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. He lives in Melbourne with his wife, 10-year-old daughter and slightly crazy 2-year-old border collie Rudy.

WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

ANZAC CORRESPONDENT
https://apps.apple.com/au/app/anzac-correspondent/id1469171280
Students may direct their own learning with this free augmented reality app from the Queensland Museum Network. By using a smartphone or tablet, students can select photos and stories from Australians across the battlefields of the First World War. They can then assemble these into their own downloadable newspaper articles.
SCIS: 5426791

CRIME STOPPERS: CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP RESOURCES
https://education.crimestoppers.com.au
This comprehensive Civics and Citizenship resource has been developed for teachers of students in years 7 to 10. The focus units are aligned to the Australian Curriculum, relate to Australia's democracy and legal system, and include theme packs to download.
SCIS: 5426795

FROGID
https://apps.apple.com/au/app/frogid/id1176329797
The Australian Museum, in partnership with IBM and several other natural history museums, has developed a citizen science frog identification app. Participants can upload frog details to the Australian Museum frog experts for species verification.
SCIS: 5426811

KNOW YOUR DRONE
https://www.casa.gov.au/knowyourdrone/
Flying drones has become an increasingly popular pastime for primary and secondary students. The resources available from the CASA website are aligned to the Australian Curriculum and aim to enhance student understanding of drone safety and regulations.
SCIS: 5409406

NASA SCIENCE: HUMANS IN SPACE
https://apps.apple.com/au/app/nasa-science-humans-in-space/id1469118438
This free app delves into the properties of microgravity in space. The object is to berth a transfer vehicle to the International Space Station while experiencing the effects of microgravity. Also available on Google Play.
SCIS: 5426822

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY
https://www.portrait.gov.au/
The National Portrait Gallery in Canberra runs educational programs for students who visit the gallery or undertake a virtual tour. The virtual tours are conducted by an educator over Zoom. Learning resources are designed for classroom use and are available via Google Arts & Culture.
SCIS: 1037747

NSW STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES: FOR SCHOOLS
https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/for-schools/
Divided into primary and secondary sections, this important resource offers AC curriculum-aligned material focused on water and flood risks. The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley is used as an example. An additional section details the process of flood-prone schools developing emergency management plans.
SCIS: 5426876

PENGUIN SCIENCE
https://penguinscience.com
This absorbing website investigates Antarctica's Adélie penguins and their response to climate and ecosystem change. Features include current and past research programs, daily pictures of the colony, classroom activities and resources including videos, and interviews with scientists in the field.
SCIS: 5426896

PICK YOUR PLATE!
https://apps.apple.com/au/app/pick-your-plate/id1471647935
Healthy meals from around the world are the focus of this interesting free app devised by the Smithsonian Institution. Students must balance nutritional goals against a budget. Aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
SCIS: 5426909

RESILIENCE TO NATURE'S CHALLENGES
https://resiliencechallenge.nz
This NZ website focuses on the interplay of social science, physical science, engineering research and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) to lessen the impact of future natural hazards. Topics include coastal flooding, early warning systems, wildfire challenges, infrastructure management, and seismic landslides.
SCIS: 5426955

THE WESFARMERS COLLECTION OF AUSTRALIAN ART
https://www.wesfarmersart.com.au
The Wesfarmers Collection contains more than 1,000 works of art by Australian and New Zealander artists dating from the 1800s through to the present day. Works include painting, sculpture, photography and digital media. Teachers and students can search the collection by keywords, artist or medium.
SCIS: 5426959

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 and content of these sites are subject to change.

ELR INTERVIEW WITH ALICE PUNG

SCIS speaks to Alice Pung about libraries, writing and the importance of the Educational Lending Right (ELR) survey.

Alice Pung is one of Australia's most-loved writers; her books appear in libraries around Australia. Alice's first novel, the prize-winning *Laurinda*, was recently adapted for the stage and presented by the Melbourne Theatre Company.

Alice spoke to *Connections* about libraries, *Laurinda,* her most recent novel *One Hundred Days,* and the annual Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey.

1. Were libraries an important part of your school years? Do you have any favourite memories?

Libraries were really important to us. We grew up in the western suburbs of Melbourne as part of an immigrant and refugee community, so you can imagine we didn't grow up with shelves of books. Libraries were the place we accessed books and it was the place our parents didn't care how long we spent there. We could have spent five hours at Highpoint Shopping Centre, but they didn't care if we said we went to the library. It was really a social place for a lot of South-East Asian children as well, and I actually wrote some chapters of my first book, *Unpolished Gem*, in both the Footscray and the Springvale libraries.

The covers of 'Laurinda' and 'One Hundred Days', by Alice Pung.

2. When you're writing, are you inclined to dwell on the notion that your books will be analysed and interpreted by students, academics, book lovers and critics? Do you feel an obligation to include themes, characters and literary devices that will provide content for essays and book reviews?

Yes and no. If you're doing that, you don't want your writing to become dry, or academic, or just a text. I do try to make writing as vibrant and as interesting as possible while maintaining the clarity and the narrative drive. I don't underestimate what students are capable of because I know that when I was at school, I was doing Charles Dickens when I was 15 years old and students are doing Shakespeare. So, you can put in some literary references for students to find as long as you're not pretentious about it and as long as it happens organically, because they can spot from a mile away when you're trying to teach something in a book, which is a terrible thing.

3. In *Laurinda* and *One Hundred Days* you capture the ways in which secondary school students speak to one another perfectly. Is this a benefit of having children of your own? Do you eavesdrop on students on the tram? What's your secret?

My children are only still quite young. The oldest is seven and the youngest is two, so I know how little children talk. I live at a place called Janet Clarke Hall, which is a college at the University of Melbourne. I've lived here for about 18 years; I'm surrounded by teenagers every day, so I do understand how they speak and the language they use so that's probably why some of the dialogue sounds like a real teenager instead of an adult trying to sound like a teenager.

4. Some of your books have been published as audiobooks, which are becoming increasingly popular in schools. Are you able to choose or approve who reads your books for audio recordings? Do you have any editorial input into the recordings?

I don't have any editorial input into the recordings, mainly because I'm not an actor or actress, but I did get to choose for my last two books. Aileen [Huynh] did *Laurinda*. I was sent a sample of three voice clips from actresses to choose from. And, also, with *One Hundred Days*, I actually picked out of the blue … it was just such a wonderful voice for the book, and she happened to be Sun Park, who used to be in a huge children's band called Hi-5.

5. When you're writing, do you have a particular audience in mind, knowing that your books will be read by people of all ages and backgrounds? For example, were you thinking specifically of secondary school students and teachers when writing *Laurinda*?

Often, I do. So when I did *One Hundred Days* my ideal reader would have been a 16-year-old girl who might have been going through similar circumstances; she might have quite controlling parents. What I was gifted with *Laurinda* is that as an author you visit hundreds of schools and many schoolteachers would come up to me and tell me their horror stories and I would say, 'You shouldn't tell me that because I'm writing a book set in a high school', and they would say, 'Yes, that's all the more reason to tell you that because you're writing a fictional book …'

6. Are these horror stories about bullying in schools?

Yes, and bullying of teachers by students. Entire classes can make a teacher cry or even wet their pants. Just terrible, humiliating things that wouldn't otherwise happen if you had students individually … they don't have the malice to do that but when they're in a group it's a different matter.

7. Every year, school library staff are invited to participate in the Educational Lending Right School Library Survey, or ELR. The survey is part of a process that determines how much compensation authors and publishers receive for revenue lost because their books are available for free in school libraries. How important are ELR payments to Australian authors?

I'm so glad you asked that question because a number of years ago I was actually on the Public Lending Right Commitee, so I would fly to Canberra and go to these meetings, and I learnt so much. They're so important. Many of my author friends say they get more from Educational and Public Lending Rights than they do from royalties, so they are really important for an author's income. Especially the lost income, because, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of kids go to the library to borrow their books because their parents can't afford to buy them. So, it also gives kids access; the more you support authors the more access you give to young people to have your books, especially those who otherwise can't afford them.

Article by Education Services Australia

New and revised subject headings

The following changes to the SCIS Subject Headings List were approved by the SCIS Standards Committee November 2021 – October 2022.

New headings

Academic writing
- Scope note: Use for works on nonfiction as part of academic work.
- UF Scholarly writing
- BT Writing (Authorship)
- RT Essay
- RT Report writing
- RT Theses

Assassins
- Scope note: Use for works on someone who undertakes to murder from political or religious fanaticism or for a reward.
- UF Contract killers
- RT Assassination
- BT Murderers

Autism spectrum disorders
- BT Neurodiversity
- UF ASD
- UF Asperger's syndrome
- UF Autism
- UF Childhood disintegrative disorder
- UF Pervasive developmental disorders
- UF Rett's disorder
- UF Rett syndrome
- UF Autistic persons

Business writing
- Scope note: Use for works of, or about, writing that is used for communication in a professional setting.
- BT Writing (Authorship)
- NT Business letters
- RT Report writing

Consent
- Scope note: Use for works on the expressed agreement between persons or lack thereof to engage in an activity.
- UF Sexual consent
- BT Human relations
- RT Criminal law
- RT Dating (Social)
- RT Sexual behaviour
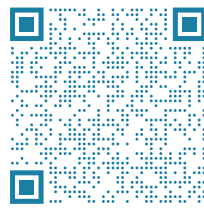
Scan to find out more about SCIS subject headings.

Digital literacy
- Scope note: Use for works on the ability to access, understand and safely use the capabilities and applications of a range of technologies to find information, solve problems or complete tasks. For works on the ability to use and understand computers use Computer literacy.
- UF Literacy, Digital
- BT Education
- BT Information science
- NT Computer literacy
- RT Information literacy
- RT Information skills
- RT Information technology

Entrepreneurship
- Scope note: Use for works on the process of creating new businesses and/or individuals who have engaged in this process.
- UF Entrepreneurs
- UF Start-ups
- UF Startups
- BT Business

Farmers
- BT Farms
- RT Agricultural workers
- RT Farm life

Murderers
- UF Killers
- RT Murder
- NT Assassins
- BT Criminals

Neurodiversity
- Scope note: Use for works on the range of differences in human brain function across a population, causing variations in learning, mood, attention, sociability and other mental functions.

- NT Autism spectrum disorders
- NT Dyslexia
- RT Learning disabilities
- BT Psychology

Vaping
- UF E-cigarettes
- UF Electronic cigarettes
- BT Substance abuse

New 'see' references
- *Asperger's syndrome* see Autism spectrum disorders
- *Autism* see Autism spectrum disorders
- *E-cigarettes* see Vaping
- *Electronic cigarettes* see Vaping
- *Entrepreneurs* see Entrepreneurship
- *Pervasive developmental disorders* see Autism spectrum disorders
- *Sexual consent* see Consent
- *Start-ups* see Entrepreneurship
- *Startups* see Entrepreneurship

Revised subject headings

Computer literacy
- Scope note: Use for works on the ability to use and understand computers. For works on the ability to access, understand and safely use the capabilities and applications of a range of technologies to find information, solve problems or complete tasks, use Digital literacy.

The new SCIS subject headings will be included in the SCIS Authority update in March.

Renate Beilharz
SCIS Catalogue Content Manager

Renate has worked for SCIS since 2018. A qualified teacher librarian, Renate worked in secondary school libraries for 20 years before teaching library and information services at Box Hill TAFE. She is passionate about ensuring that schools receive the quality data needed to empower information discovery for students.

ASLA Conference and Awards 2023

The Australian School Library Association (ASLA) is very excited to announce its Biennial Conference and Awards for school library staff. ASLA is the national authority and peak forum in the field of teacher librarianship and school library resource services. The 2023 conference will be held in April on the Gold Coast, with the theme *School Libraries: Navigating the Future*. This year, there will be three award categories open for nominations: the ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian Award, the ASLA Early Career Teacher Librarian Award, and the ASLA Library Advocate Award.

Registration is now available at an all-inclusive price. Our pre-conference day will include tours of local school libraries and bookshops, as well as a selection of masterclasses. The main conference will include sessions on topics such as literacy, dynamic spaces, and key skills for future learning, and will feature two keynote speakers, Lee Crockett and Dr Margaret Merga. Lee Crockett is an inspriring and engaging world-renowned speaker from Future Focused Learning. Dr Margaret

Merga, ASLA's Patron and Library researcher and author of *School Libraries Supporting Literacy and Wellbeing*, will be speaking on what school libraries can do to have the most impact on our students, our school and our world. Importantly, the conference will provide a chance to make new connections with mentors and colleagues.

This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the first presentation of the prestigious ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian Award, and we are proud to acknowledge that the award will be sponsored by SCIS. The Teacher Librarian Award recognises and honours an Australian teacher librarian who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession of school librarianship. The recipient of the award will receive a $1,000 Professional Learning Grant generously donated by SCIS, and free ASLA professional development for two years, including Conference Registration for 2023. The winner will also receive a certificate and trophy, plus will be mentioned and be invited to publish in SCIS's *Connections* magazine and ASLA's *ACCESS* journal.

To make a nomination for the ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian Award, please follow the instructions on the ASLA website here. Nominees must be members of ASLA (although the nominator does not need to be), qualified teacher librarians, and residents of Australia. Although applications don't officially close until Friday 24 February 2023, we would greatly appreciate nominations via email as soon as possible. If you'd like to be considered or would like to nominate a colleague, please email your nominations to: aslaawards@alsa.org.au. Previous nominees are also welcome to be re-nominated.
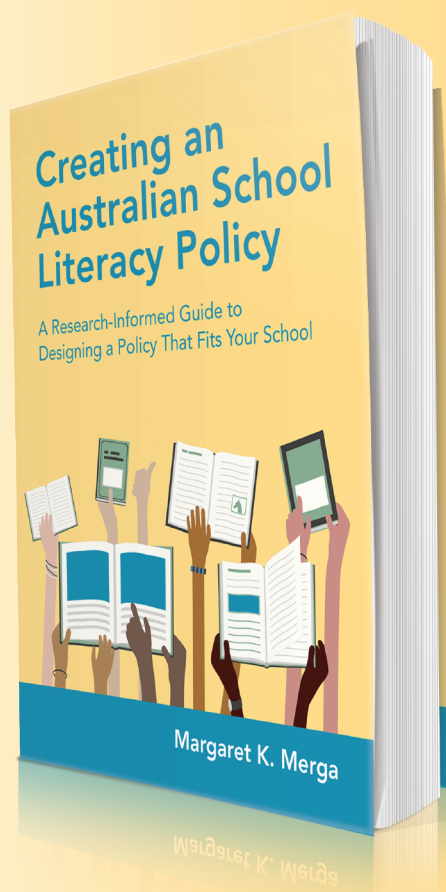
Please remember nominations are also open for our other two awards: the Early Career Teacher Librarian Award, and the Library Advocate Award. Application details can be accessed here.

Weblinks:
https://asla.org.au/awards
https://asla.org.au/teacher-librarian-award
aslaawards@alsa.org.au

Dr Margaret Merga's much anticipated book provides a guide to writing a whole school literacy policy

Creating an Australian School Literacy Policy is designed for educators and school leaders across K-12, providing a unique research-informed and practical approach in an easy-to-use guide for the writing of a whole school literacy policy.

This book can further empower school library professionals to be literacy leaders within their schools.

Learn more and order at hbe.com.au
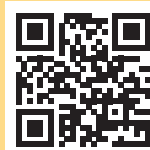
MAKING AN IMPACT:
A GUIDE FOR NEW SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

With an increasing number of staff with little or no library training working in school libraries, Caroline Roche and some colleagues were inspired to write an A–Z guide to help untrained staff run their libraries with confidence.

This book was borne out of a desire to help and inspire school librarians new to the job, and share the collective knowledge of the UK School Librarians Group (SLG) Committee, which is a subgroup of CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals), our professional organisation. The book is written at entry level, starting from the very first day you walk into your new role as a school librarian and wonder what your next step should be.

What was the perceived need for this book?

About two years ago, the SLG Committee noted the number of posts from newly appointed librarians asking the most basic of questions. The situation, in the UK at least, was exacerbated by the fact that sometimes people were being appointed with absolutely no knowledge of libraries at all. They had been thrown into the 'deep end'. Sometimes this was because the school's Senior Leadership did not understand the full extent of a school librarian's job, and sometimes (often) a desire to get somebody as cheaply as possible. This misunderstanding of the role – that it is more than simply stamping books – we feel does a disservice to the person appointed, the school and the students.

It has never been more vital that schools have libraries, and yet libraries are often the first to go when school budgets are being cut. Librarians' salaries in the UK can also be extremely low, with many librarians earning less than a cashier in a supermarket. Is it any wonder that the more highly skilled people look for jobs outside of school libraries? Yet the job of a school librarian is crucial in creating a literate public, with all the societal and economic benefits that brings (OECD, 2009).

What topics are covered in the book?

The book opens with what a new librarian will see and experience in their first days in the role. The first chapters detail not only the positioning of the library and librarian within the school, but also the physical environment. As Barbara Band notes in her chapter, 'the library environment is not just a matter of its physical components, the shelves, resources and staff, nor of its location and space within the school. It also encompasses the ethos and atmosphere that is created by the synergy of its parts …' This book aims to show how you can achieve that synergy.

Dealing with behavioural issues is one of the most frequently asked questions on the message boards we belong to. The chapter covering this is highly practical and will help the new librarian gain this skill. Sarah Pavey offers short vignettes to help librarians understand the challenging behaviour that may occur in the library, and how to deal with and prevent situations from escalating.

Caroline Roche in her school library.

Other chapters cover topics that can be read as and when they become relevant to the new school librarian, once they have a grasp on behaviour in the library and have started to turn the library environment into the model they, and their Senior Leadership team, have chosen. For some schools, this can be a vibrant, buzzy atmosphere, while for other schools, the importance might be on having a quiet and studious place to study. Most schools – such as my own – are a mixture of both. My school library is studious and quiet during lesson times, but at break and lunchtimes it is buzzing, with students collaborating, borrowing books, reading and working. Achieving that balance is a skill that needs to be mastered, and we show you how.

With years of experience in bringing authors into schools, Annie Everall expertly guides the new librarian through staging a successful author visit, running book clubs, shadowing book awards, and promoting reading. She shows us how to create a reading-rich environment, and how to work with other professionals both within and outside the school to promote whole-school literacy. Her experience in this area is second to none in the UK, we believe.

Information and Digital Literacy is another key area for the school librarian. Teaching information literacy is a skill which shows our versatility and relevance to the whole school, from understanding that everything you read or see may not be the whole truth, to how to research projects skilfully and efficiently, and how to prepare for further studies. Many school librarians also teach academic referencing as part of their role, and Pavey guides us through this.

Primary school libraries have their own chapter, as primary libraries can be quite different to those in secondary schools. Often, they do not have a full-time member of staff but are run on a part-time basis by teaching assistants or a classroom teacher with library responsibilities. These challenges are thoroughly explored, showing how you can run an excellent primary library with only a few hours a week if that is all the time you have. Indeed, the author of this chapter, Lucy Chambers, has done exactly that.

Why should you qualify?

Finally, the book ends with a chapter about becoming a qualified school librarian. In the UK, this means becoming a member of CILIP, and being Chartered. Overseas qualifications are recognised by CILIP, and more information can be found on their webpage. Chartership is something that you can do 'on the job', and it proves that you are working to a professional standard. If you have worked your way through the book for the first couple of years in the role, then you are a Chartership candidate. I am passionate about this because it is the route I took. I had (and still have) no professional library qualifications. I have a degree in English, and a Master in Education, but neither are library-based. I had six years' experience at a public library when I was put in charge of my first school library, and I learned on the job. Once I found out that I could apply for Chartership, I did. Although the qualification did not bring me promotion, or a pay rise, it was a stepping-stone to my current role in a prestigious fee-paying school. Schools like mine will usually only appoint qualified librarians. If I can do this, so can anybody else, which is what I show readers in this chapter.

We hope you enjoy this book and that many new school librarians read it, grasp the principles, and go on to become qualified librarians. Sharing our knowledge is our passion, and we want to see more qualified and professional librarians leading in our schools. This is the way forward for our profession and it is worth our efforts. We can only do that by passing on our knowledge and skills to the next generation, and in this book, this is what we aim to do. We hope you read it, put it into practice, and pass it on.

References

OECD. (2009). *Pisa 2009 results: What students know and can do.* https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264091450-en

Roche, C., Band, B., Cavender, N., Chambers, L., Pavey, S., Everall, A., & Krajewski, E. (2022). *Creating a School Library with Impact: A Beginner's Guide.* UK: Facet Publishing.

Caroline Roche, MA, FCLIP
Chair CILIPSLG and co-chair
Great School Libraries Campaign

SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: CERDON COLLEGE

Nancy Sylaprany takes us inside her school library at Cerdon College, Merrylands, NSW.

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

My job title is Teacher Librarian and I work with a small team of library support staff to provide the library's services to our school community at Cerdon College. Our school is a Catholic girls' high school (years 7–12) located in West Merrylands in south-western Sydney, with a diverse multicultural student population of about 1,100 students. The College was founded by the Marist Sisters in 1960 and is part of Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese. Our library is known as the Sr Ann Marie Learning Centre (named after Sr Ann Marie, a past Marist Principal of the College).

My role entails creating a welcoming and safe library environment for students and staff that is conducive for learning, recreation and extra-curricular activities. All English classes in years 7–10 have one lesson per fortnight in the library for wide reading, where I support students in discovering books and authors to read, and expanding their reading interests. I also work more intensively with six English classes in relation to students with identified literacy needs, and I work with classes across Key Learning Area (KLAs) with inquiry and research tasks. This may involve developing library guides or pathfinders to support students in their research efforts, as well as in-class instruction to model information literacy and digital literacy skills.

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

The most rewarding aspect of working in a school library is the opportunity to help students along their personal journey of intellectual discovery, curiosity and pursuit – whether that's connecting them to a good book to read, guiding a student to great resources for a task, having a conversation about an interest they have in a particular area, or instructing them in skills to become discerning users of information.

In school libraries, we are in a unique position to be able to develop relationships with students over a number of years. Students know that the library can be a trusted place to seek support and advice (or a trusty stapler, when required!). Informal

Children playing chess in the library.

A display of horror and mystery books.

conversations with students can lead to connections or discoveries for both students and myself, whether that's in relation to something they are currently working on, or their interests (which can help inform collection-development decisions).

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

The library serves two important roles: it's a place for learning and intellectual pursuit, and it's a supportive community space for all. We constantly reflect on how we are achieving this and evaluate what we can do to improve. Sometimes the library is an important space for students just to 'be', to feel welcome and act as that 'third space', as well as being integrated in the learning culture of school life.

Last year, a Year 12 student commented that she would spend 10 minutes on a Friday afternoon at the end of her study period

reading a book on the sofas in our wide reading area. Amid the pressure of her Year 12 studies, she noted how she found this routine so peaceful and beneficial. Through this routine, the student was able to release some of the anxiety and pressure she had been feeling with her studies.

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

During the pandemic, there were periods of time when the library was not open to students or operated at a reduced capacity to manage student numbers in a COVID-safe way. Keeping the library COVID safe (particularly during the initial return of schools after lockdown and during exam periods) was necessary, but it has impacted the number of students who visit the library.

I think students became more accustomed to accessing digital resources and ebooks online during various

lockdowns. When the library was not accessible, we delivered books to students' homerooms and reminded them about how to request books. Some days we set up a 'pop-up' library in the playground area, where students could browse books and borrow outside the library. Information literacy sessions were held in classes or via Zoom, and resources taken to classes for lessons as well as digital pathfinders created to support student learning. However, not all students engaged well online, so subsequent face-to-face class time and individual instruction has been important to address information literacy skills gaps.

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

Wide reading lessons are an opportunity to broaden students' reading experiences and introduce them to new authors, genres and formats. In collaboration with our English department, I have recommended contemporary YA titles for differentiated novel study programs for Years 7, 8, and 9 that create a mini 'book club' experience for students. Our library's Book Club for students has been running for six years, with meetings held twice a term and supported by our Books & Reading blog page. What I like about Book Club is the ripple effect it can have across the wider school community through the additional conversations it generates.

I encourage students to place book requests for books they are interested in reading, which are not in the collection. I try to fulfil as many requests as possible if it has broader student appeal and meets the requirements of our collection development policy. Each year I invite students to participate in the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge. It's not compulsory, but I find that many students enjoy this personal reading challenge and the opportunity to discover new books and authors by taking part. I also promote our Diocese's end-of-year reading challenge, the Executive Director's Summer Reading Challenge, an annual challenge aimed at encouraging students to keep reading over the longer summer break.

How do you promote an interest in STEM/STEAM areas in your school? Are there any challenges in doing so?

The library supports STEM/STEAM initiatives by providing spaces for activities in the library or in the Makerspace (located in STEM spaces at the back of the library). One year, in collaboration with our Enrichment Coordinator, we held a special LEGO-building event, where students created their own design based on a favourite character or book. It was a lot of fun for both the students involved and those watching, and it was inspiring to see students' 'novel' ideas emerge.

Occasionally, STEM lessons will spill over into the main library area, as students test-fly mini drones as they develop their drone-navigation skills or fly paper planes they have created as part of a task. The library also supports STEM/STEAM initiatives through resourcing. Over recent years, the STEM collection has been updated to include books on coding, drones, new technologies, engineering, and building structures (such as bridges).

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

The library is open to students before school, after school, at recess and lunch time. Senior students can access the library for study periods, and we have a few different spaces that can be booked for classes. We are fortunate to have a small classroom space that is used as well for clubs and study support. The clubs and activities help to connect the library within our school community and build relationships with students and staff.

To encourage use of the library, I regularly communicate via the library's Google Classroom and in general school announcements. For events or special news, our Year 11 Library Monitors will visit classes during homeroom to make announcements. Year 7 students and new students complete a library orientation program, and wide reading lessons provide an opportunity to speak with students about new programs or remind them about what's available.

The logo for the Sr Ann Marie Learning Centre was created by one of our Art teachers a few years ago. I use it on our reading blog page and in internal communications. I like that it creates the feeling of entering the library (just as if you were walking into the physical library) and that you can see the word 'welcome' as you look into it. This sums up the feeling for our library – all are welcome to this space (physical and online)!

What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

I appreciate the services offered by SCIS, including ensuring the integrity of the catalogue records we copy into our library management system. Quality catalogue records are vital to ensure discoverability of resources by students and staff in our OPAC. The work of SCIS cataloguers saves school libraries time and contributes to the smooth functioning of our school library.

SCIS *Connections* helps to keep me professionally up to date. I find that *Connections* covers topics of immediate relevance or in emerging areas of interest specific to school libraries (from research into reading, literacy, information literacy, collection development, and new technologies). I enjoy and appreciate the contributions by library professionals, academics and other educators to articles and other types of content. I find that *Connections* both affirms the work we do in our school library, as well as providing helpful, practical ideas to consider how we can improve and evolve our library services.

What would you like to see SCIS do more of?

Please continue to recommend relevant websites and other non-fiction resources related to curriculum areas, as well as developments in best practice. It has been helpful to recently read about DET's Information Fluency Framework, and I would be interested in reading about how school libraries are applying this in secondary school contexts. I am interested in reading about other schools' efforts to keep students reading quality YA literature.

Nancy Sylaprany
Teacher Librarian
Cerdon College, Merrylands

Nancy Sylaprany works as the Teacher Librarian at Cerdon College, Merrylands. Before working in education, Nancy worked in a corporate role in marketing and communications. Nancy's long-term interest in libraries led her to post-graduate studies in Library & Information Management, followed by a Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary). In 2019, she completed her Master in Education (Teacher Librarianship) at Charles Sturt University.

EVIDENCE OF CHANGE: THE JUST READ PROJECT

The third in our series of follow-ups of Queenwood school for Girls' silent reading program. This article charts progress of the program after 2 years.

Queenwood is an independent, non-denominational Kindergarten to Year 12 girls school.

In 2020 we introduced the Just Read program, aiming to build a reading culture within our school and improve the literacy skills of our students. The Just Read project reflects best practice, its design stemming from peer-reviewed educational research. We received an AIS school-based research grant to measure its effectiveness.

Two previous SCIS *Connections* articles ('The Time to Read' and 'Embracing Change') explored the steps we took to change the reading culture at Queenwood. This article will present the data collected as evidence of this change.

We measured quantitative data in three ways: Library circulation, PAT Vocabulary Test and PAT Reading Comprehension Test.

Library data

Queenwood's Junior and Senior school libraries represent just one source of fiction for our students. They also access books from home, bookshops, municipal libraries, classroom libraries and from their peers. Despite this, within six months of Junior School commencing Just Read, library borrowing rates increased by 300%. Given that Queenwood Junior School already had regular library lessons and a DEAR program in place, these statistics are telling. There was a 30% increase in library borrowing data in the Senior School for the first two months of the year, when comparing pre-Just Read data with the first year of the program. The bookmarks were also more likely to be at the end of the books, indicating completion.

A growth in reading has also been observed outside the designated 20 minutes of Silent Sustained Reading (SSR). This is evident through an increase in student library use, access to Reader Advisory services and the number of book requests, often through peer recommendations. Some students are enjoying reading fiction for the first time, while others have rekindled a love of reading. We have observed a steady increase in the number of incidental conversations between peers about books and reading. We are well on our way to embedding a strong reading culture at Queenwood.

PAT tests

ACER PAT tests were used in years 4–10 prior to Just Read commencing and again a year after implementation to measure effects on vocabulary development and reading comprehension. These allowed us to compare gains to an Australian-normed sample.

PAT Vocabulary

Research shows that reading frequently brings a variety of literacy benefits including comprehension, speed and vocabulary (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding; 1988). Research by Merga (2019) shows that significant advantages result from a rich vocabulary, including academic outcomes.

As shown in Figure 1, vocabulary testing identified improvements for students in all year levels, except Year 8. Some individual student improvements were as high as 23%.

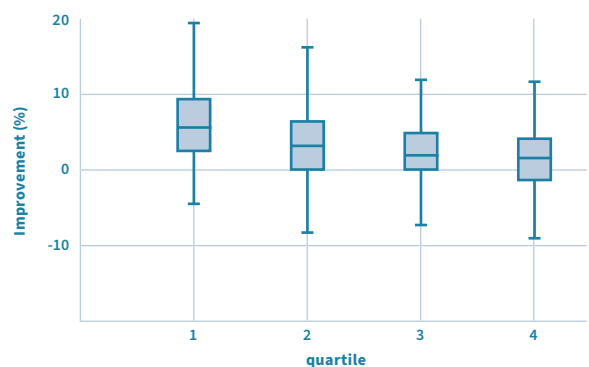**Improvements in Vocabulary across all years, N=506**

Figure 1: Box plot showing improvements in vocabulary across the ability quartiles years 5–12. Circles are outliers. Box plots show the middle quartiles. Alt text version of chart on SCIS website.

As expected, the greatest improvement in vocabulary was found for the lowest quartile of students. Improvement was smallest for the top quartile of students, possibly due to the ceiling effect of the PAT tests.

Figure 2 (see next page) shows the greatest improvements in vocabulary in the younger years, as this is when vocabulary growth increases most rapidly. The smallest improvements occurred in the oldest students.

PAT Reading Comprehension

Research shows that the amount of time students spend independently reading is the best predictor of reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding; 1988). Comparing pre- and post-Just Read data, individual improvements in reading comprehension were as great as 22%, with average improvements occurring in some years (Year 5, 7, 9 and 11) but not others. Of the 503 students tested, there was no evidence of differing improvements across the various quartiles.

Factors that impact reading comprehension include background knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, active reading and critical thinking (Auld 2022). This makes reading comprehension data much more difficult to interpret as shown by Figure 3.

Student motivation

Student reading habits were measured qualitatively using an anonymous online survey. Results pre- and post-Just Read measured changes in motivation to read.

When asked whether they liked reading in their free time at home, the vast majority of students answered definitely or probably yes. Before Just Read, 10% of students answered definitely not and this decreased to 7% after the program.
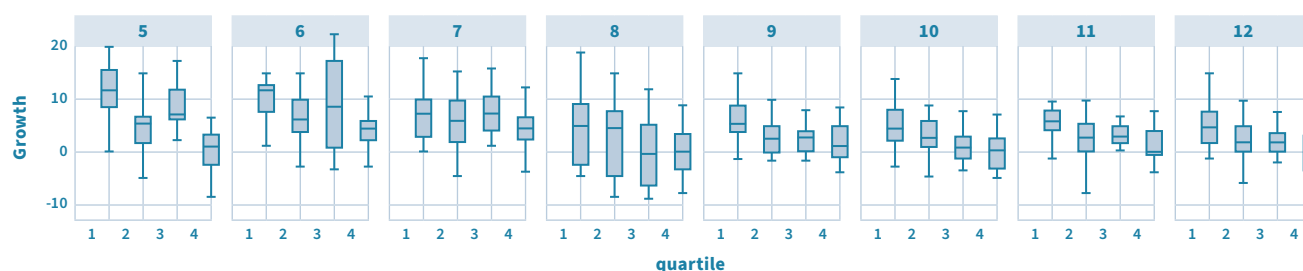
Improvements in Vocabulary for each quantile-year

Figure 2: Box plot showing improvements in vocabulary across ability quartiles, for each age group, from years 5–12, 2020. Circles are outliers. Box plots show the middle quartiles. Alt text version of chart available on SCIS website.
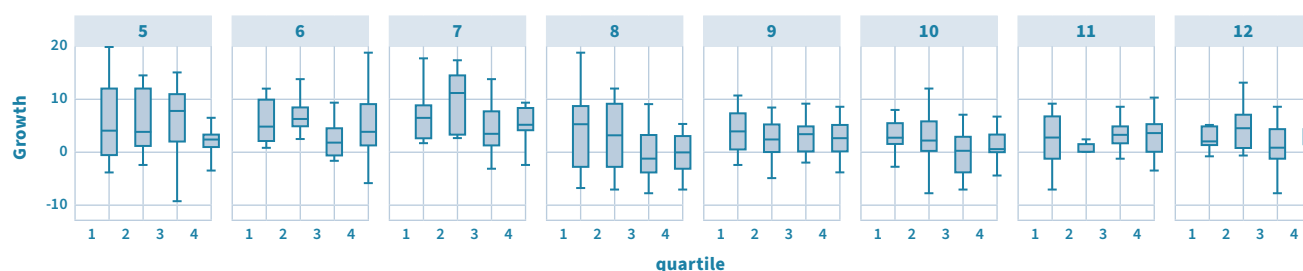
Improvements in reading for each quantile-year

Figure 3: Box plot showing improvements in reading comprehension across ability quartiles Year 5 to Year 12, 2020. Circles are outliers. Box plots show the middle quartiles. Alt text version of chart available on SCIS website.

For those students who indicated that they do not like reading at home, the most common reason given was 'I would rather do other things with my free time'. Those who indicated that 'reading books is boring' reduced by 2.6% after the intervention. We predict that this proportion would be further reduced had we surveyed the students after the second year of Just Read. Students also identified being unable to find an interesting book and also not having any good books available as reasons why they did not like reading at home.

Rank prior to Just Read	Rank after Just Read
It's relaxing (16.0%)	1. It's relaxing (17.6%)
I like imagining things (12.3%)	2. It puts me in a better mood (12.4%)
I like reading books (11.8%)	3. I like reading books (11.6%)
It puts me in a better mood (10.5%)	4. I like imagining things (11.1%)
It's better than working (9.7%)	5. It's better than working (9.3%)

Figure 5: Comparison of reasons for student reading silently at school. Alt text version of chart available on SCIS website.
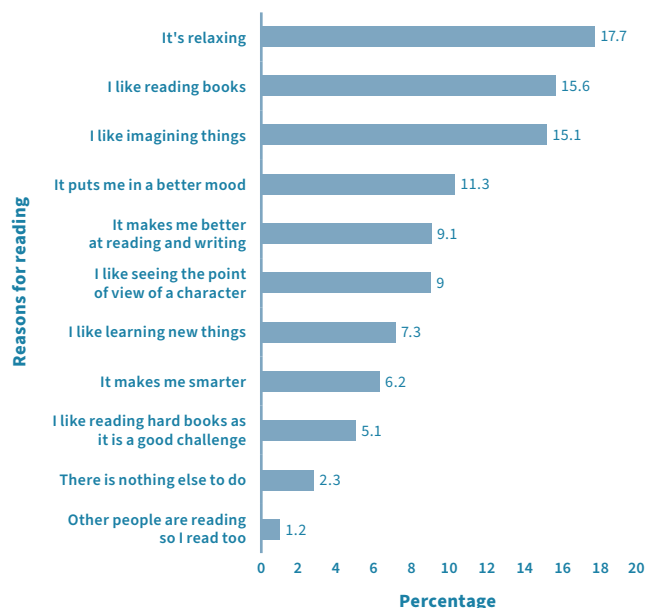
Reading at home

Figure 4: Reasons for reading at home in students a year after Just Read started. Alt text version of chart available on SCIS website.

These modest improvements do show that the initial phase of Just Read has led to increases in literacy skills and reading for enjoyment. An unexpected additional benefit has been the increase in wellbeing for students and staff through daily SSR. Just Read has been the stimulus for the development of a culture of reading at Queenwood and is highly valued by the students, staff and parents. Our project has stimulated professional discussion and interest from a number of schools, both nationally and internationally. We are very proud to have led this cultural change in our school.

Acknowledgements

References
See online version of article for reference list

Gabrielle Mace
Head of Library and Information Services, Rennie and Medway Libraries.
Head of QLiteracy Committee, Queenwood School for Girls

Merrilyn Lean
Science Teacher.
QLiteracy Committee Member, Queenwood School for Girls

LEADING WHOLE SCHOOL LITERACY FROM THE LIBRARY

Dr Margaret Merga writes about her new book, which covers the importance of the library in leading a whole school literacy policy (WSLP).

Literacy is a general capability to be taught across all learning areas in Australian schools. Students use literacy skills to learn and demonstrate their learning across the curriculum, and they need to learn both cross-disciplinary and discipline-specific literacy skills to achieve their academic potential (Merga, in press).

A whole school literacy policy (WSLP) should guide collective understandings of literacy within a school, articulating clear literacy learning goals and detailing how they will be attained. Libraries and their staff should feature in these policies as key literacy resources. Unfortunately, in my recent investigations of Australian WSLPs, I found that school libraries are often not mentioned at all (Merga, 2022). We need school libraries to feature strongly in WSLPs so that their contributions are recognised and funded, and not seen as peripheral or disposable.

But how can we get school libraries into the WSLP? We need school library professionals on or leading the WSLP planning team.

An opportunity

School library professionals can be an excellent choice to lead a WSLP from their libraries, building relationships and facilitating knowledge exchange across the school (Merga, in press).

There is a real opportunity for them to move into this space because there is a lack of guidance for schools on how to write a WSLP, which is probably one of the reasons that many Australian WSLP are not fit for purpose. If we make the school library professional the most knowledgeable person on this topic, we have a real chance to change the way they are seen in schools within and beyond the library.

To this end, I decided to write a book that shows how to create or revise a WSLP and promote it in the school library community so that school library professionals have the materials they need to lead these kinds of initiatives, doubling down on the importance of their library as a vital literacy resource.

How can schools benefit from your leadership?

As I explore in detail in my upcoming book, *Creating an Australian School Literacy Policy* (Merga, in press), schools can benefit from school library professionals taking a leadership role in creating their WSLP for a number of reasons, five of which I touch on here.

1. **Qualified.** While many teachers and leaders in school communities might not realise that Australian teacher librarians are qualified educators (Merga, 2019a), they are dual-qualified library staff with expertise in *both* education and library and information sciences.

2. **Knowledgeable.** Teacher librarians are effective literacy advocates (Merga, 2019b) and they have skills in meeting the needs of diverse literacy learners (Merga, 2019a). There is a growing body of research linking qualified school library staff and positive effects for student literacy performance (as reviewed in Lance & Kachel, 2018).

3. **Cross-curricular.** Teacher librarians are outside the silos around specific learning areas and year groups, and they are adept at communicating and building relationships across the school. This can help them to get all educators and support staff within the school on board with whole-school initiatives such as a WSLP.

4. **Collaborative.** While some classroom teachers may prefer to work independently, the role of an Australian teacher librarian is typically collaborative, and these professionals actively try to increase the scope of their collaborations throughout the school (Merga, 2019a). More than 90% of job descriptions for teacher librarians seek a collaborative and team-oriented staff member (Merga, 2020).

5. **Leaders.** Teacher librarians are instructional leaders (Branch & Oberg, 2001), with leadership expectations often articulated within their role (Merga, 2020). As such, they are up to the challenge of leading a WSLP from the library.

For more information and a detailed explanation of how to plan or revise a school literacy policy and implement it, please read my new book *Creating an Australian School Literacy Policy*, published in Australia by Hawker Brownlow Education.

References

Branch, J. L. & Oberg, D. (2001). The teacher-librarian in the 21st century: The teacher-librarian as instructional leader. *School Libraries in Canada*, *21*(2), 9–11.

Lance, K. C. & Kachel, D. E. (2018). Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *99*(7), 15–20.

Merga, M. K. (2019a). Collaborating with teacher librarians to support adolescents' literacy and literature learning. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *63*(1), 65–72.

Merga, M. K. (in press). *Creating an Australian school literacy policy*. Hawker Brownlow Education. https://www.hbe.com.au/hb6449.html

Merga, M. K. (2019b). Do librarians feel that their profession is valued in contemporary schools? *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association*, *68*(1), 18–37.

Merga, M. K. (2020). School librarians as literacy educators within a complex role. *Journal of Library Administration*, *60*(8), 889–908.

Merga, M. K. (2022). The role of the library within school-level literacy policies and plans in Australia and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, *54*(3), 469–481.

Dr Margaret Merga
Author and Consultant
Merga Consulting