



Australian Library and
Information Association



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ALIA and ACSL call for targeted school library funding

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian Coalition for School Libraries (ACSL) join the call for targeted resourcing for school libraries nationally, after research by Dymocks Children's Charities found that large numbers of Queensland state schools had a \$0 book budget and no librarians.

Research reported on last week found that, out of 47 state schools surveyed, 12 had no budget allocated for new books and 31 had either one or no librarian on staff. This demonstrates what we have known for some time – that the provision of school library services to Australian teachers and students is currently inequitable and disparate.

“Through our work with schools across Australia, we’re seeing firsthand the impact of underfunded libraries, from limited or no budgets for new books to reduced access to qualified librarians” said Melanie Smith, General Manager of Dymocks Children's Charities. “For children, particularly in disadvantaged communities, that directly affects their ability to engage with reading and succeed at school.”

Qualified teacher librarians have a significant impact on students' literacy and engagement with reading, yet their vital role is increasingly overlooked by school leaders struggling with tight budgets. Research shows that when students have access to a school library, reading enjoyment increases, along with reading amount and frequency, self-reported reading ability, and positive attitudes towards reading.

“While standardised testing has its place, the best way to increase literacy is to get children reading for pleasure. Research shows that children who choose to read have better educational outcomes. And school libraries, staffed by qualified teacher librarians, are the key to this.” said Cathie Warburton, ALIA CEO.




In a time of teacher and resource shortage, a school library with a teacher librarian is one of the best investments a school can make, providing teachers with additional support to reduce workload, boosting reading and digital literacy, and improving student educational and wellbeing outcomes across the board. This is why ALIA and ACSL are calling for Federal, State and Territory governments to commit to ensuring all students have access to a well-resourced school library run by appropriately qualified staff.

As the [ALIA ACSL Statement on School Library Funding and Resource Provision](#) makes clear: investment in school library staffing, collections, programs and facilities is essential to delivering a quality education and supporting student learning and wellbeing.

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About the Australian Coalition for School Libraries:

The Australian Coalition for School Libraries (ACSL) is the national voice for school libraries in Australia. Created in 2023 it provides united and professional voice on issues affecting school libraries and support for school library staff across Australia. The Members of ACSL are the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Queensland School Library Association (QSLA); School Library Association of New South Wales (SLANSW); School Library Association of South Australia (SLASA); School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV); Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA); and the Australian School Library Association (ASLA)

