



Australian Library and
Information Association



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALIA and ACSL troubled by Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle plan to cut teacher librarian roles

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian Coalition for School Libraries (ACSL) are extremely concerned by the announcement from Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle that they plan to cut teacher librarian positions in 58 schools across the Diocese.

A letter circulated to schools this week states that staff restructures in 2027 will see teacher librarians redeployed to other curriculum areas. School libraries will most likely be managed by library assistants or student support officers.

“Decisions like these show a lack of understanding of the deep expertise that teacher librarians bring to their roles, and the value they provide to schools,” said Jessica Coates, ALIA’s Director of Policy, Education, Research & Training.

“With dual education and library qualifications, teacher librarians are uniquely placed to ensure the library has the best resources to align with the curriculum, provide expert support to faculty and, most importantly, meet the needs of students across the school.”

“With artificial intelligence and misinformation increasingly part of daily life, the foundational critical thinking and research skills that teacher librarians bring to schools are needed more than ever. International research shows that if you want to get young people reading, a school library staffed by qualified teacher librarians is the best investment a school can make.”

“Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle need to consult further and to provide greater detail and transparency about how this decision will impact staff and students.”

School library representatives across the country are troubled by this decision.

As Martha Itzcovitz, President of the Australian School Library Association (ASLA), points out:

“While library assistants and student support officers make an invaluable contribution to the day-to-day operation of school libraries, they cannot be expected to replace the specialist educational expertise of qualified teacher librarians. A thriving school library requires both skilled support staff and qualified professional leadership.”

“Removing teacher librarians does not simply change who works in a school library - it changes what that library can provide to its students and teachers.”

Karen Seeneevassen, President of the School Library Association of NSW (SLANSW), is also concerned about impacts on the whole school:

“This decision diminishes the value of the school library for the entire school community. Removing qualified teacher librarians will impact programs and services, while also putting immense pressure on non-teaching staff to keep an under-resourced school library operational. There is a high risk that these school libraries will cease to function to the immeasurable detriment of students and learning outcomes.”

ALIA and ACSL call upon Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle to urgently reconsider this decision, to ensure student reading, media and digital literacy, and critical thinking will continue to be supported in their schools in 2027 and beyond.

UPDATE – 4 September 2026:

Following publication of this statement, Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle (CSMN) contacted ALIA to clarify that the “proposed changes outlined do not apply to teacher librarian positions across all 58 schools in the Diocese”, as originally stated below. CSMN has also informed us that they are undertaking a consultation on the proposed changes. We appreciate the clarification from CSMN and the opportunity for further engagement as the consultation process continues. Our concerns about the potential impact of the proposed changes on qualified teacher librarian roles and the services school libraries provide to students and staff remain.

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