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## TLs, literacy, and the curriculum

Teacher librarians hold recognised teaching qualifications and qualifications in librarianship, defined as eligibility for Associate membership of ALIA. This makes teacher librarians uniquely qualified within the fields of education and librarianship. Their role is also unique as they combine knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy with information management knowledge and skills.

TLs make a contribution to the development of literacy through:

- nurturing an information-rich learning environment to support the needs of the users,
- building a collection of resources, print and electronic, to support and enhance the curriculum,
- designing sequential programs in collaboration with subject teachers, so that students can acquire information literacy and literature skills in the context of the curriculum. The appropriate and relevant use of ICTs and information resources is incorporated in these programs.
- evaluating student learning programs and library services to inform and shape practice.

Thus the curriculum is central to the teacher librarian's role in literacy promotion and development.

Within Australian schools, national and state authorities mandate the curriculum. In response to a perceived need, the Education Ministers from the states issue joint statements about the educational agenda for the nation, often in the form of a declaration. The *Hobart Declaration on Schooling* was made in 1989. This was superseded in 1999 by the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*.

The most recent statement was made on December 5, 2008 when the Australian Education Ministers launched *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Melbourne Declaration)*. The *Melbourne Declaration* sets two goals for education in Australia over the next decade.

**Goal 1:** Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

**Goal 2:** All young Australians become

- successful learners,
- confident and creative individuals,
- active and informed citizens.

Each of the two goals is elaborated more fully in the *Melbourne Declaration* and the full text can be accessed at [http://www.mceetya/melbourne\\_declaration,25979.html](http://www.mceetya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html)

For the purposes of this discussion, a few relevant points from the *Melbourne Declaration* have been chosen for further exploration.

### Regarding Goal 1

Promote a culture of excellence in all schools, by supporting them to provide challenging and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable all students to explore and build on their gifts and talents.



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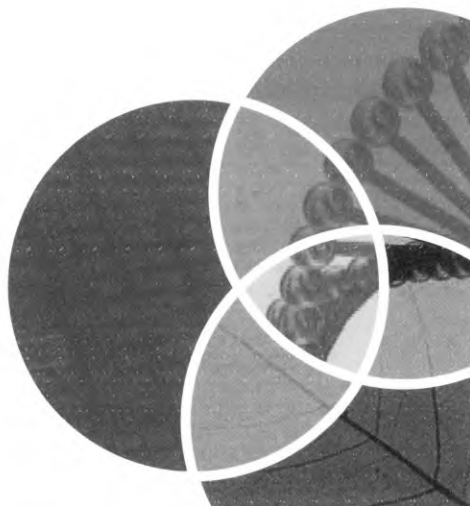
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# TEACHER LIBRARIANS

## Regarding Goal 2

Successful learners:

- develop their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning;
- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy and are creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas.

Experienced TLs are familiar with the sentiments of these goals. In 2002 ALIA in partnership with the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) published the joint statement: *Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians (Standards)*. It outlines the professional knowledge, practice, and commitment expected of TLs working at a level of excellence. In a similar manner the joint policy statements of ALIA and ASLA highlight the professional commitment of TLs to providing equitable access to excellent information services. These statements can be accessed from the ALIA and ASLA websites.

These *Standards* and policy statements also make clear the importance of student skill acquisition to the concept of equitable access. Equitable access has two dimensions: physical access and intellectual access. The latter is the focus of programs developed by TLs country-wide. Students must have the opportunity to gain a range of sophisticated information literacy skills otherwise they will be unable to make full use the services offered. The acquisition of these skills will ensure students have the ability to be lifelong learners in an ever changing technological landscape.

The following excerpt from the *Statement on information literacy* of ALIA and ASLA, Adopted: November 1994 – Amended: February 2009, clearly demonstrates the important role of the TL to the stated national literacy strategies and goals.

### Principle

*The ability to process and use information effectively is a basic survival skill for those who wish to be successful learners in the 21st century. Learners, who are able to find, analyse, evaluate, and ethically use information for a given purpose in a variety of formats are considered information literate.*

## Statement

*Information literate learners are able to access, process, organise, create, and present information in a range of ways that make meaning for them and allow the construction of personal knowledge. Information skills must be embedded across the school curriculum and explicitly taught in the context of teaching and learning programs. Effective teacher librarians are expert in collaboratively developing and implementing such an approach.*

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## TLs consider the future at UQ

TLs from more than 80 secondary schools visited The University of Queensland on 7 August to look at engaging students with digital technologies and online information. At the 2009 UQL Cyberschool seminar *Schools, scholars and libraries, a decade of databases: where to from here*, TLs discussed students' information needs and applying new technologies in teaching and learning.

The program featured topics ranging from information literacy to social networking. In closing, Tanya Ziebell (The University of Queensland Library) summed up the day which began by posing the question 'where to from here' and finished with more challenges around how we use new media to connect, collaborate, engage, and learn.

Seminar sponsors included Britannica Online, Oxford University Press, Speakers Ink, Macquarie online, Gale Cengage, ProQuest, WebLinks, RMIT Publishing and Library Webs. Delegates had the chance to meet with representatives from AustLit, Britannica Online, Library Webs, Oxford University Press, and ProQuest and to discuss online resources and their potential use in schools.

UQL Cyberschool is an outreach program of The University of Queensland Library which aims to facilitate access for secondary school communities to affordable, scholarly online resources. UQL Cyberschool was awarded the 2009 Library Board of Queensland



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