

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Every government school should have a well-resourced library staffed by trained library professionals because libraries play a critical role in improving educational outcomes, wellbeing, and equity particularly in low socioeconomic communities.

For many students, the school library is the only place where they can freely access books, technology, quiet study spaces, and trusted information. In low socioeconomic areas, families may not have books at home, reliable internet access, or the financial ability to purchase educational resources. A school library helps bridge this gap by ensuring every child has equal access to literacy and learning opportunities regardless of their background.

Trained library staff are essential because a library is far more than a room full of books. Qualified teacher librarians and library professionals support students to develop literacy, research, critical thinking, and digital citizenship skills. They help students learn how to find accurate information, navigate online environments safely, and build a lifelong love of reading. These skills are increasingly important in a world where misinformation and digital overload are common.

School libraries also support student wellbeing and inclusion. Libraries provide safe, calm, and welcoming spaces where students can feel connected and supported. For some children, especially those experiencing disadvantage, the library may be one of the few stable and positive environments within the school. Trained staff are often able to identify students who need additional support and create inclusive programs that encourage participation, confidence, and belonging.

Research consistently shows a strong link between school libraries, qualified library staff, and improved student achievement. Students in schools with professionally staffed libraries tend to perform better in reading and literacy outcomes. Libraries also support classroom teachers by providing curriculum resources, collaborative teaching opportunities, and literacy promotion programs that benefit the whole school community.

Importantly, removing libraries or replacing trained staff with unqualified supervision disproportionately affects disadvantaged students. Families with financial means can often compensate through private tutoring, home libraries, and external educational opportunities. Students in low socioeconomic areas cannot always access these supports, making school libraries even more vital.

Investing in school libraries is an investment in educational equity. Every child deserves access to books, information, technology, and skilled professionals who can help them succeed. Ensuring every government school has a staffed library is not a luxury, it is an essential part of providing fair and high-quality public education.