

10 ways that libraries power high performance schools



AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

There are more than 9,000 government, Catholic and independent schools in Australia. Almost all schools have a library of some description, but they vary enormously in terms of staffing, facilities and resources.

MODERN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

In many schools, the library is a flagship example of a modern 24/7 learning environment. With the expert help of information professionals, it provides a welcoming, flexible space that encourages individual, class and group learning. It reaches directly in to classrooms and students' homes through resource rich websites, authoritative databases, social media and online guides.



DIGITAL HUBS

School libraries play an important role in ICT, ensuring that all students have access to shared devices and resources, and in some cases acting as home to the tech support team. Many school libraries support students' project-based learning through training in coding, robotics, the use of apps and social media. Some have maker spaces, where students can experiment with the latest technologies.



RESEARCH SKILLS

Library professionals help students develop the research and critical thinking skills they will need for tertiary education and beyond. Anyone can Google; not everyone can use specialist databases, find the most relevant information, identify credible sources and correctly cite their references.

READING FOR PLEASURE

Reading is an essential life skill. Libraries help students develop literacy skills. They encourage students to read for pleasure, expanding their horizons, building empathy, enabling them to see the world through others' experiences and to find answers to the issues they may face as children and young adults.



CURRICULUM SUPPORT

Beyond simple textbooks, library professionals not only support but also teach or team teach in the library and classroom. They ensure students have access to the wide range of contemporary physical and digital resources they need to complete their course work and to gain a broader understanding of the topic, enriching their classroom learning.



CYBERSAFETY

Library staff help keep young people safe online, through advice, educational programs and access to support networks. Staff are also there for parents, who are concerned about the risks of cyberbullying and other inappropriate use of social media.



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Libraries are safe, neutral spaces, where everyone is welcome. Through the library, schools support students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They do this by providing appropriate books, and other materials, and by running inclusive events that promote harmony and understanding.



PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

Libraries enable all students to access the information they need. Library layouts, resources, equipment and policies are designed to support students with disability.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Libraries are a central point for coordinating and hosting important cultural and education events in schools, including author workshops and literature festivals. These can be reading related – National Simultaneous Storytime and Children's Book Week – or relate to broader subject areas such as Science Week, NAIDOC Week, and Hour of Code.



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Libraries can act as exhibition spaces for students' artworks and design or digital technology projects, as meeting and event areas, as informal study areas. Some even have a café. Through professional expertise, the clever use of space, print collections, networked resources, programs and events, libraries create a focal point for community within the school.

