



# Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) are pleased to endorse and promote this statement of standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians. This statement describes the professional knowledge, skills and commitment demonstrated by teacher librarians working at a level of excellence. It represents the goals to which all Australian teacher librarians should aspire, and provides inspiration for quality teaching and ongoing professional practice.

## Background

The document, *Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians*, is built upon the professional values and standards of the two professions to which teacher librarians owe their allegiance. It is informed strongly by the standards movement in other Australian professional associations for educators, and is closely-related to activity in the library and information sector, in particular the *ALIA core knowledge, skills and attributes* and the *ALIA core values* statements at <http://alia.org.au/policies/>.

## Why a standards document?

The major aim of the Standards project is to achieve national consensus on

standards of excellence for teacher librarians in Australian schools in order to improve teacher librarians' professional practice and enhance student learning outcomes. Involvement in ongoing national consultation concerning generic standards for teachers convinced ASLA and ALIA of the importance of a standards document that identifies the distinctive knowledge, skills and commitment of excellent teacher librarians. For a relatively recent profession — the first tertiary-qualified teacher librarians graduated in the 1960s — a standards document also represents an opportunity to reinforce a uniform expectation of the work of the teacher librarian in our schools.

## What is a teacher librarian?

Teacher librarians support and implement the vision of their school communities through advocating and building effective library and information services and programs that contribute to the development of lifelong learners. A teacher librarian holds recognised teaching qualifications and qualifications in librarianship, defined as eligibility for Associate (i.e. professional) membership for the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Within the broad fields of education and librarianship, teacher librarians are uniquely-qualified. This is valuable because curriculum knowledge and pedagogy are combined with library and information management knowledge and skills.<sup>1</sup>

## Who will use the standards?

These standards describe experienced practitioners who hold the dual qualifications that define the unique

qualities of the specialist teacher librarian. All references to 'teacher librarian' in these standards refer to excellent, highly-accomplished teacher librarians. While this document may provide a useful framework for pre-service and in-service tertiary education, it is primarily intended for use by teacher librarians as a framework for ongoing professional learning.

## How are the standards structured?

Within the broad framework of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional commitment there are twelve standards which attempt to encapsulate the complex work of the teacher librarian. No hierarchical arrangement of statements is intended, rather it is recognised that experienced practitioners draw from a professional palette combining knowledge, skills and attributes appropriate to their context. Structural consistency with existing professional standards documents has been a priority, and brevity was a deliberate preference for this statement as an expanded narrative discussion of the work of a teacher librarian is available in *Learning for the future*.<sup>2</sup>

## Who has developed the standards?

The joint ALIA/ASLA Policy Advisory Group has been responsible for developing these national professional standards in conjunction with teacher librarians, administrators, policy-makers and academics from both the education and librarianship sectors.

## Further information

Further information is available from ASLA ([asla@asla.org.au](mailto:asla@asla.org.au)) or ALIA ([enquiry@alia.org.au](mailto:enquiry@alia.org.au)).

## 1 Professional knowledge

*Excellent teacher librarians...*

- 1.1 understand the principles of lifelong learning**
- 1.2 know about learning and teaching across curriculum areas and developmental levels**
- 1.3 have a rich understanding of the school community and curriculum**
- 1.4 have a specialist knowledge of information, resources, technology and library management**

### 1.1 Knowledge of the principles of lifelong learning

*Excellent teacher librarians:*

- are well-informed about information literacy theory and practice
- thoroughly understand how all learners develop and apply lifelong learning skills and strategies
- have a sound understanding of how children and young adults become independent readers
- comprehensively understand the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in lifelong learning

### 1.2 Knowledge of learning and teaching

*Excellent teacher librarians:*

- have a detailed knowledge of current educational pedagogy
- are thoroughly familiar with the information literacy and information needs, skills and interests of learners
- fully understand the need to cater for the social, cultural and developmental backgrounds of learners in program implementation and curriculum resourcing

### 1.3 Knowledge of curriculum

*Excellent teacher librarians:*

- have a comprehensive understanding of literacy, literature for children and young adults, curriculum and specific programs in their schools
- have a detailed knowledge of how to promote and foster reading
- have a sound understanding of current assessment theory and processes

### 1.4 Knowledge of library and information management

*Excellent teacher librarians:*

- understand that professionally managed and resourced school libraries are crucial to the achievements of the school community
- have a rich professional knowledge of national standards for library and information management <sup>3</sup>
- have a comprehensive understanding of national standards for information retrieval <sup>4</sup>

## 2.1 Learning environment

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- create and nurture an information-rich learning environment which supports the needs of the school community
- provide access to information resources through efficient, effective and professionally-managed systems
- foster an environment where learners are encouraged and empowered to read, view, listen and respond for understanding and enjoyment
- appreciate the dynamic nature of ICTs and their role in education

## 2.2 Learning and teaching

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- collaborate with teachers to plan and implement information literacy and literature programs that result in positive student learning outcomes
- ensure that their programs are responsive to the needs of learners in the school community
- support learning and teaching by providing equitable access to professionally-selected resources
- assist individual learners to develop independence in their learning
- teach the appropriate and relevant use of ICTs and information resources

## 2.3 Library and information services management

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- ensure that the library's policies and procedures implement the school's mission
- provide exemplary reference and information services to the school community
- strategically plan and budget for improvement in library and information services and programs
- apply information management practices and systems that are consistent with national standards<sup>4</sup>

## 2.4 Evaluation

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- monitor teaching practice to ensure improved learning and teaching
- evaluate student learning to provide evidence of progress in information literacy and reading
- measure library resources, facilities, programs and services against current policies, standards documents and benchmarks
- use evidence to inform programs and services

## 2 Professional practice

### Excellent teacher librarians...

- 2.1 engage and challenge learners within a supportive, information-rich learning environment
- 2.2 collaboratively plan and resource curriculum programs which incorporate transferable information literacy and literature outcomes
- 2.3 provide exemplary library and information services consistent with national standards
- 2.4 evaluate student learning and library programs and services to inform professional practice

## 3 Professional commitment

### Excellent teacher librarians...

- 3.1 model and promote lifelong learning
- 3.2 commit to the principles of education and librarianship
- 3.3 demonstrate leadership within school and professional communities
- 3.4 actively participate in education and library professional networks

#### Related documents

*Learning for the future: developing information services in schools* 2nd ed, Australian Library and Information Association/Australian School Library Association

*National framework for professional standards for teaching*, MCEETYA

*National professional standards for highly-accomplished teachers of science*, Australian Science Teachers Association

*Standards for excellence in teaching mathematics in Australian schools*, Mathematical Teachers Association

*Standards for initial programs for school library media specialist preparation*, ALA/AASL

*Statement on teacher-librarians in Australia*, Australian Library and Information Association/Australian Schools Library Association

*STELLA — Standards for teachers of English language and literacy in Australia*, Association for the Teachers of English

## 3.1 Lifelong learning

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- empower others in the school community to become lifelong learners
- undertake research which informs evidence-based innovation in school library programs
- engage in debate on educational issues within the school community
- create and foster library-related professional development opportunities for staff

## 3.2 Commitment

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- are dedicated to excellence in professional service
- emphasise a learning and teaching focus in school library programs and services
- promote the profession of teacher librarianship in their schools and the wider community
- foster a reading culture through the active promotion of literature
- participate in continuing professional development

## 3.3 Leadership

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- actively engage in school leadership and participate in key committees
- promote and nurture a 'whole school focus' on information literacy policy and implementation
- build and foster collaborative teams within school and professional communities
- provide effective and transformational leadership to school library and information services staff

## 3.4 Community responsibilities

### Excellent teacher librarians:

- model the sharing of knowledge
- actively participate as members of professional communities
- demonstrate collegiality and mentor colleagues
- promote library and information services to the school and the wider community

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> ALIA/ASLA statement on teacher librarians in Australia (2002) [http://www.asla.org.au/policy/p\\_llaust.htm](http://www.asla.org.au/policy/p_llaust.htm)

<sup>2</sup> *Learning for the future* 2nd ed (2001) Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South

<sup>3</sup> Current edition of *Learning for the future: developing information services in schools*, Curriculum Corporation

<sup>4</sup> Current edition of *SCIS standards for cataloguing and data entry*, or *NLA KINETICA* cataloguing standards