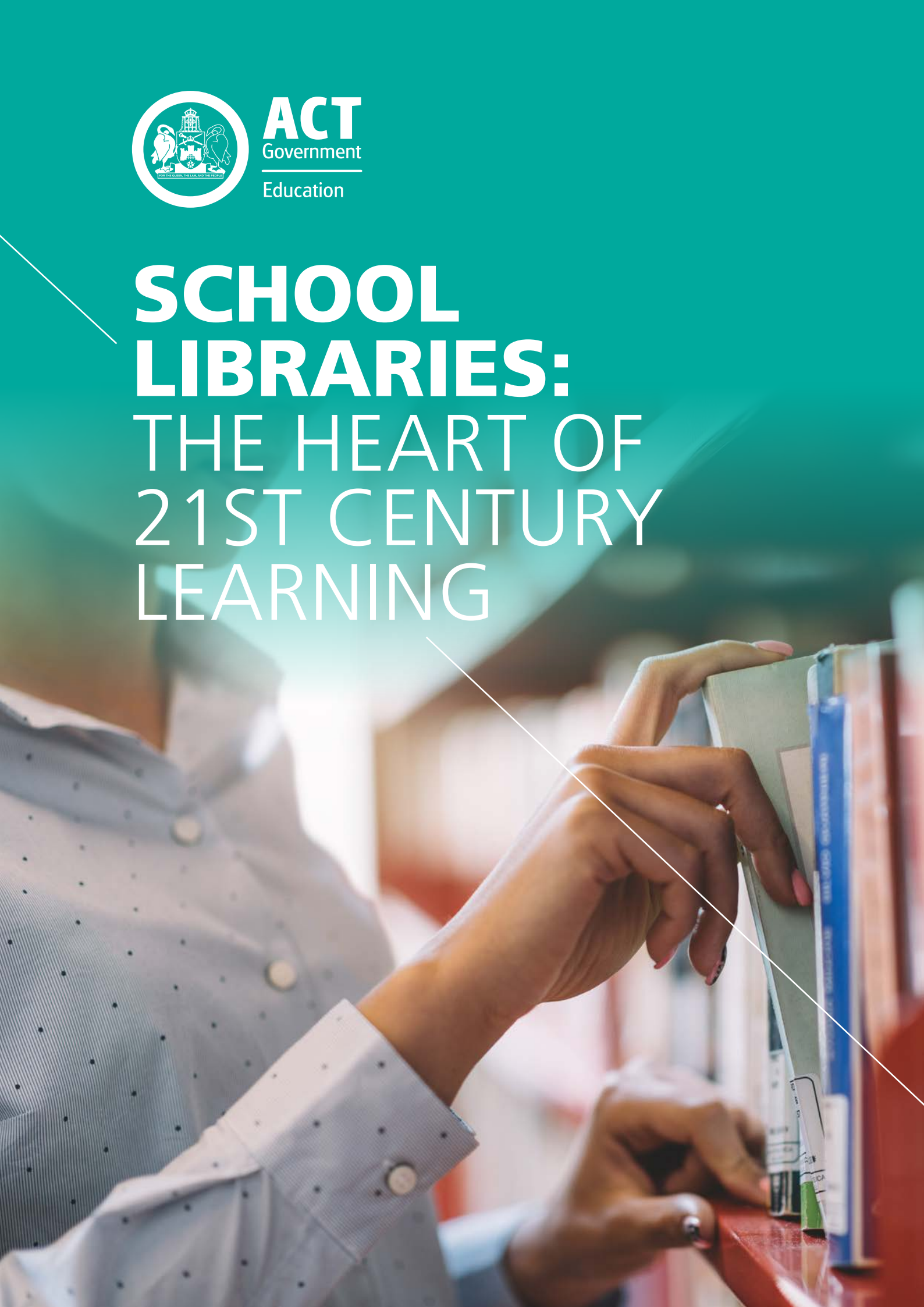
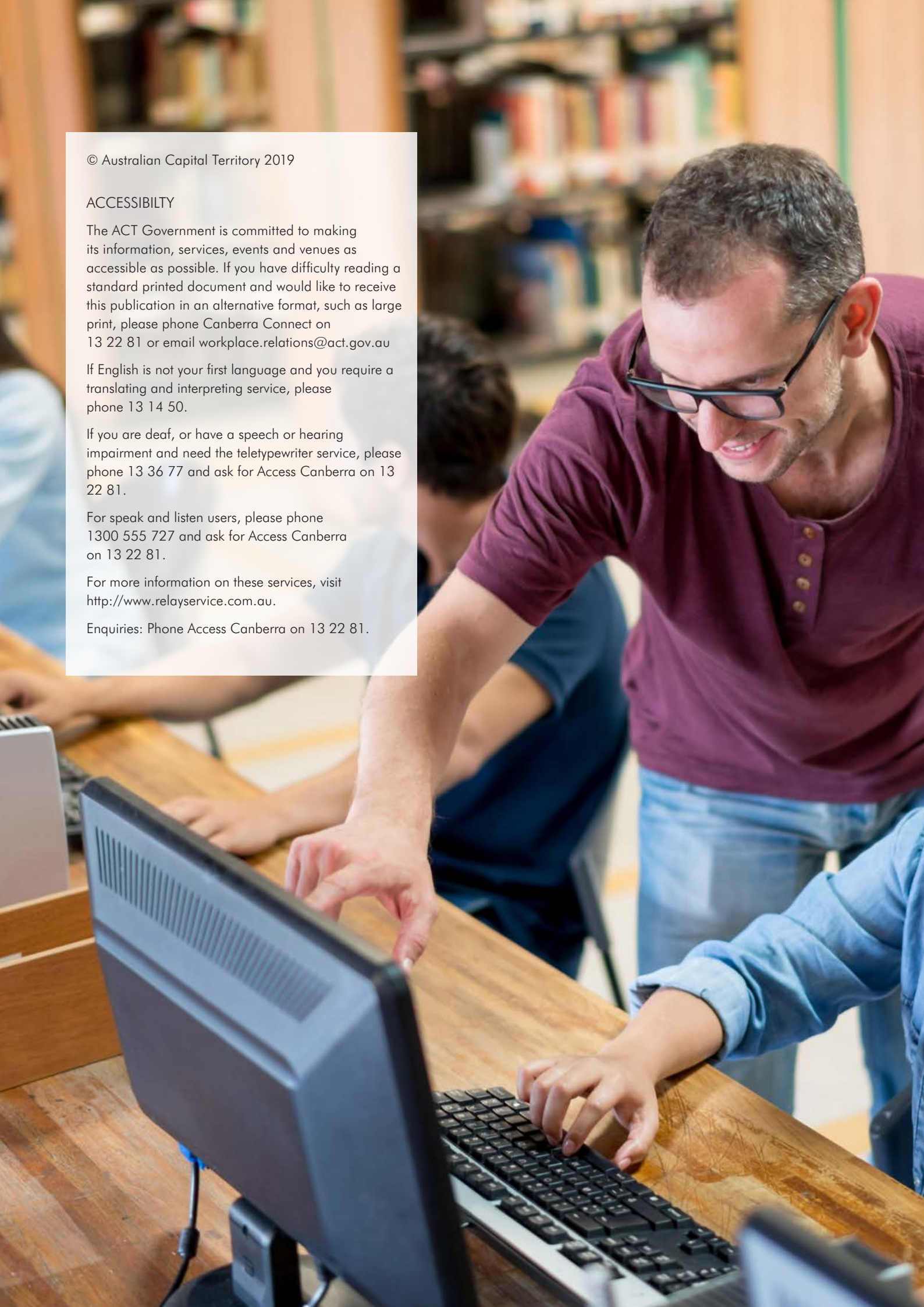
ACT Government
Education

SCHOOL LIBRARIES: THE HEART OF 21ST CENTURY LEARNING





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A message from the Director-General

The ACT Education Directorate is committed to delivering educational services that will empower students to learn for life, through equity, diversity, collaboration and partnerships.

The Directorate recognises the importance of school libraries in enriching the learning environment of all of our students and the wider school community to deliver our goals as outlined in the Directorate's *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*.

Thriving school libraries, facilitated by teacher librarians and library staff, support the delivery of the academic and social curriculum at a student, classroom and school level. Physical and virtual library spaces are inclusive and welcoming, encouraging students and teachers to connect with one another for both learning or recreation.

Teacher librarians, with assistance and support from library staff, provide specialist expertise in literature, information literacy and digital literacy, as well as maintaining a current and relevant library collection.

The School Libraries: *The Heart of 21st Century Learning* provides principals and school communities with a best practice guide in:

- setting up a school library that is a vibrant and welcoming space,
- developing a culture of collaboration in learning between the teacher librarian and teachers in the school that benefit positive student outcomes,
- encouraging students to consume and create knowledge that is robust, with honesty and integrity at heart,
- fostering the "third space" concept of the library as a safe and respectful environment that supports students to thrive in the classroom,
- providing both print and electronic resourcing to all staff, students and the wider school community,
- ensuring cultural diversity in the resources curated and circulated across the school, and
- building information and digital literacy skills.

I encourage our schools to refer to the School Libraries: *The Heart of 21st Century Learning* as a best practice guide in ensuring our school libraries and teacher librarians continue to support our students to be discerning users and creators of knowledge.

Meg Brighton
Director-General

School Libraries: the Heart of 21st Century Learning

Thriving school libraries led by qualified teacher librarians develop 21st century citizens who can locate, evaluate and use information effectively. International and domestic data abounds which confirms that a qualified teacher librarian improves student learning outcomes (including higher NAPLAN scores) regardless of students' socioeconomic status (see reference list). When teaching and learning is transformed by the digital revolution, teacher librarians enhance digital and information literacy, resource the curriculum and help students become critical, creative and collaborative thinkers.

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When looking toward the future, expect to see...

- co-teaching of teacher librarians with classroom teachers (not just parallel teaching or supportive assistance)
- the library program impacting self-directed learning, differentiation, and project-based learning
- the library as the centre of knowledge creation and knowledge consumption
- libraries transform into learning commons
- a virtual learning commons accessible to everyone, at any place and on any device
- the impact of quality information on teaching, learning and student created products
- regular collaboration between technology directors and school librarians
- social media as a platform for students to access information and use library learning commons
- the impact of makerspaces on various aspects of the library learning commons

(Adapted from Scholastic Library Publishing (2015), School Libraries Work!)

Teacher librarians have played a leading role in the worldwide movement to integrate makerspaces with teaching and learning in schools.

Makerspaces foster collaboration, creativity, problem solving and exploration through a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) focus.

Find out more about Makerspaces: http://tinyurl.com/hd7gaqa

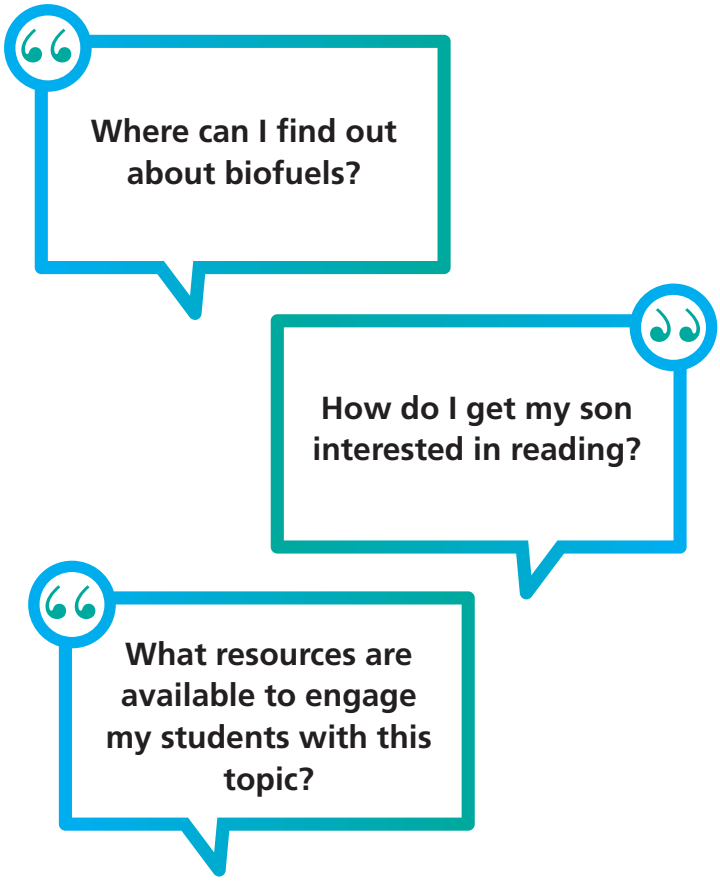
The Expert, The Collection and The School Community

The Expert

Teacher librarians combine a command of 21st century pedagogies and curricula with expertise in information science: the analysis, collection, classification, manipulation, storage, retrieval, movement, dissemination, and protection of information. Working with a teacher librarian strengthens the skills of classroom teachers and students.

Finding information is not a problem in today's world. The problem is finding USEFUL and TRUSTWORTHY information QUICKLY. The teacher librarian leads the school-wide effort to organise and utilise information to make it valuable and accessible to staff and students.

Working with all staff and all students, teacher librarians have a holistic, 'bird's eye' view of your school and the particular resource needs of your students, staff and families.



Teachers, students and parents come to the teacher librarian when they have a problem they cannot solve themselves. Teacher librarians are trained to solve the hard problems. They make resources accessible to your school community through the library catalogue and other digital curation tools.

Supporting quality teaching and learning

Working with a teacher librarian strengthens the skills of classroom teachers and students.

Teacher librarians have a holistic, 'bird's eye' view of your school and the particular resource needs of your students, staff and families.

Effective teacher librarians make quality teaching a reality across an entire school. The services they provide and the resources they access impact on every teacher and every student. International and Australian research has long shown that student learning outcomes and test scores increase with a qualified teacher librarian on staff (see reference list). Teacher librarians also help collect, collate and share assessment data across multiple curriculum areas and the General Capabilities to assist with teaching and learning.

The services teacher librarians provide and the resources they access impact on every teacher and every student.

Teacher librarians collaborate across schools, sectors and systems. They use social media and email listservs to connect with and build professional relationships with experts in Australia and around the world in a range of curriculum areas.

Qualifications matter

If, as a school leader, you are having difficulty recruiting a qualified teacher librarian, this is an opportunity to build capacity in your staff. Shoulder tap the teacher who thinks about the 'big picture', who has an interest in emerging technologies and what they mean for student learning, and who builds professional relationships with everybody. As soon as they start their Masters degree, your teachers and students will reap the rewards!

TEACHER LIBRARIAN QUALIFICATIONS INCLUDE:

- **Graduate Diploma of Applied Science** (Library and Information Management)
- **Graduate Diploma of Education** (Teacher Librarianship)
- **Master of Applied Science** (Library and Information Management)
- **Master of Applied Science** (Teacher Librarianship)
- **Master of Education** (Teacher Librarianship)
- **Master of Information Services** (Teacher Librarian)

The Collection

Contemporary teaching and learning resources

Teacher librarians use professional selection criteria to make resourcing choices that keep your library collection current and relevant to the curriculum and your school context. Teacher librarians are professional curators - they select only the most useful resources for teaching and learning. This saves time for your teachers and your students. No more basic Google searches to 'recreate the wheel' every semester.

Teacher librarians use the latest technologies to connect their school community (teachers, school support staff, students and their families) to quality resources. They establish and maintain links to local, national and global education networks, ensuring your school maintains a position at the cutting edge of worldwide resourcing and technological trends.

Teacher librarians use professional networks to ensure your school maintains a position at the cutting edge of worldwide resourcing and technological trends.

Targeting information to your student community

Every school community is unique. Teacher librarians carefully select physical and digital resources to personalise your school's collection for your community. They engage in a constant process of evaluation and critique of resources to ensure items that detract from a quality collection are weeded out. Teacher librarians know your collection inside out and can quickly match a library user with the best resource for a specific need.

Teacher librarians carefully select and organise physical and digital resources to personalise your school's collection for your community.

Students feel validated when their life experiences are shown in literature. The teacher librarian identifies and finds resources to support and represent the diverse groups within the school community.

Mastering the digital environment

A tsunami of information is available online. However, much of this content is:

- not free
- not for children
- not to be believed without considered evaluation.

Teacher librarians help students and teachers navigate an information-abundant world to efficiently locate reliable, authoritative and meaningful resources. As experts in information and communication technologies, they help students define, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create, and communicate ethically and intelligently. These are skills that can seem easy, but in fact can be quite difficult and should be explicitly taught.

Teacher librarians help students and teachers to efficiently locate reliable, authoritative and meaningful resources in an information-abundant world.

The School Community

Differentiation in Practice

Schools with a teacher librarian are quickly connected with targeted, multimodal, differentiated resources for the diverse learning interests and needs of your students, including those with:

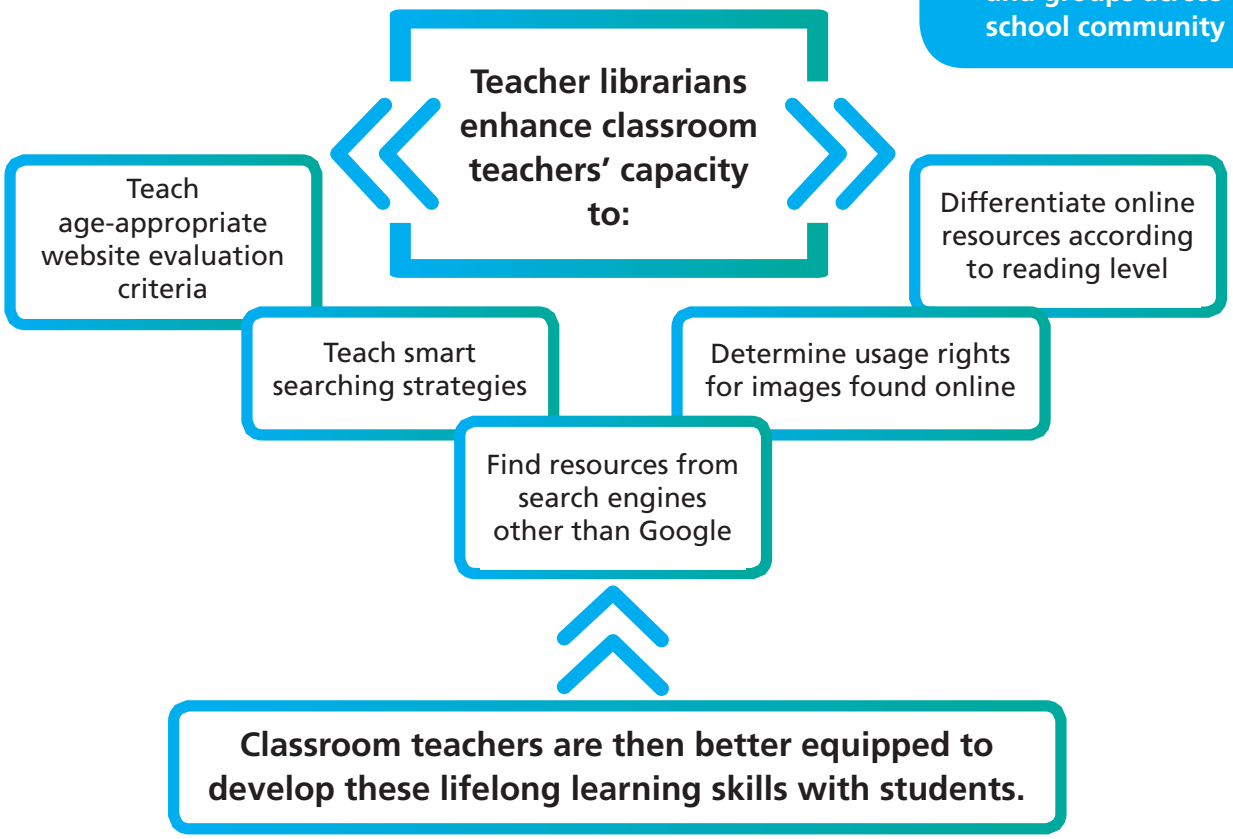
- English as an additional language or dialect
- different cultural backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- giftedness
- learning difficulties
- disabilities

The support and counsel of teacher librarians greatly enhances classroom teachers' capacity to skillfully embed the Australian Curriculum inquiry skills and General Capabilities into their lessons. Teacher librarians are the information specialists who support teachers by collaborating to design tasks and team teach lessons targeting the skills 'just in time' when they are most relevant to students.

Teacher librarians' broad overview of the curriculum enables them to provide targeted differentiation and resourcing support to staff, students and parents

TEACHER LIBRARIANS PERSONALISE THEIR SERVICES TO THE NEEDS OF:

- **the new and the experienced teacher**
- **the keen and the reluctant reader**
- **the skilled and the overwhelmed learner**
- **individuals, teams, and groups across the school community**



Using metadata to make your collection appealing and accessible

Metadata is information about the information you possess. Teacher librarians know that personalised, effective metadata saves time and energy. When the library catalogue has quality metadata, teachers and students find what they need with one or two clicks. When the metadata is poor, those same teachers and students leave the library feeling frustrated and disappointed because they cannot find what they need (even when it is actually there!)

Teacher librarians create personalised, effective metadata to save time and energy.

Making School Libraries Work Takes Commitment

Support from School Leaders is Critical to Success

The effectiveness of school library programs depends a great deal on the administrative support they receive. Recent research shows a strong relationship between student outcomes and the degree to which the principal values and supports the library media program (see reference list). Support for the role of school libraries and qualified school library staff can take many shapes, some with low or no cost that can be started immediately and others that might require longer-term strategic planning and funding.

School leaders and teacher librarians should negotiate sufficient time for resource management to occur during the working week.

Resource management time

Resource management time is crucial for the teacher librarian to manage, facilitate and develop the library's resources.

Resource management includes the following activities:

- Locating, selecting and ordering resources to support teaching and learning
- Employment of strategies to maximize access to print and electronic resources
- Original cataloguing (creating personalised, high-quality metadata)
- Collection analysis and weeding to ensure the library collection meets the needs of the school community
- Development and administration of resource budgets and reporting to school administration
- Development, documentation and review of library resource centre policies to reflect school and system priorities
- Day-to-day administration of the collection (when no library technician, assistant, or volunteer support is available). This includes loans, returns, losses, shelving, SCIS cataloguing, book covering, resource repairs

Face-to-face teaching time

Teacher librarian face-to-face teaching includes time for student contact and consultation in the library P5.1.2 (c) of the ACTPS Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022, p.106. The following types of activities constitute teaching: lessons in the library; release programs; teaching groups in co-operation with other teachers (eg. co-operative planning and teaching); working with students and teachers undertaking individual research or otherwise using library resources. If the library is open before or after school with the teacher librarian on duty, this counts towards the teacher librarian's face-to-face teaching hours.

Lunch breaks

Teacher librarians are entitled to a lunch break in the same manner as other teachers: 'The minimum break over a school day is 30 minutes, which is separate from normal release time' P1.6 of the ACTPS Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022, p.105. To ensure teacher librarians access appropriate breaks, duty in the library during lunchtimes should be shared between all staff on the playground duty roster (and not default to the teacher librarian).

Duty in the library during lunchtimes should be shared between all staff on the playground duty roster.

Relief Teaching

Effective teacher librarians positively impact the learning outcomes of all students. Removing teacher librarians from their teaching and administrative duties for the purpose of relief teaching diminishes their ability to perform their role and deliver the associated benefits to students and colleagues.

The role of library technicians and assistants

Teacher librarians can only operate at their highest level if they are supported by library support staff. A well-run library requires work to be done at a variety of levels, and only when the ongoing operational levels are taken care of can the teacher librarian provide the full suite of library services.

Schools that invest in well-staffed school libraries reap the benefits of quality services and resourcing, ensuring their staff and students are best equipped for the digital age.

21st Century Learning

Students must become savvy information interpreters and creators as well as critical, creative and collaborative thinkers if they are to meet the demands of a 21st century life. The research base strongly supports the role that teacher librarians play in improving student learning outcomes and in building the capacity of staff to teach essential 21st century skills.

Research base for the impact of teacher librarians and school libraries

General Information

Australian School Library Association [ASLA]. (2012) *What is a Teacher Librarian?* Retrieved from https://www.asla.org.au/what-is-a-teacher-librarian

- The Australian School Library Association website is worth exploring for general information and research.

ASLA. (2012). ***ASLA Policies***. Retrieved from http://www.asla.org.au/asla-policies

- ***Guided inquiry and the curriculum***, ***Information literacy***, ***Joint statement on school libraries and teacher librarians***, ***School library funding, Standards*** and ***Teacher librarian qualifications*** are particularly worth a look.

ALIA website: Australian Library and Information Association. (n.d.). *Careers in libraries and information science*. https://alia.org.au/employment-and-careers/careers-libraries-and-information-science

- A useful explanation of the various roles and qualifications for different library workers.

School Library Association of South Australia. (2008). ***The role of the teacher librarian***. Retrieved from http://www.slasa.asn.au/Advocacy/rolestatement.html

- This is a brief, helpful breakdown of the different elements of being a teacher librarian.

'At a Glance' Information

American Association of School Librarians [AASL]. (2013). ***100 Things Kids Will Miss If They Don't Have a School Librarian in Their School*** http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/advocacy/100_Things_Poster.pdf

- This poster covers both academic and socio-emotional benefits of having access to a teacher librarian. It was developed through a variety of sources including research conducted by the Partnerships Advancing Library Media (PALM) Center at Florida State University.

Library Research Service. (2013). ***School Libraries and Student Achievement***. Retrieved from http://www.teacherlibrarian.com/2013/04/17/april-2013-poster-school-libraries-student-achievement/

- An infographic summarising research findings over the previous 20 years and identifying the school library characteristics associated with better test scores.

Research - Teacher librarians in the 21st **century**

Godfree, H. & Neilson, O. (2018). **School Libraries Matter! The missing piece in the education puzzle.** In *Access, 32*(1), pp. 28-41. Retrieved from https://studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Holly-Godfree-and-Olivia-Neilson-ACCESS-March-2018-editors-note.pdf

- This article provides a discussion of Australia's declining performance in national and international testing whilst the nation has simultaneously experienced a reduction in staffing levels of qualified teacher librarians. It examines the skills Australian students will need for the future and highlights how school library staff and services support these skills. The results of an ongoing study into library staffing levels in Australian Capital Territory (ACT) schools are shared and discussed.

Pennsylvania School Library Project [Pennsylvania School Librarians Association, Health Sciences Library Consortium and Education Law Center of Pennsylvania]. (2012). ***Creating 21st-century learners: A report on Pennsylvania's public school libraries.*** Retrieved from http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/2788/580001/Creating21stCenturyLearners_LibraryDataReport.10.17.12.pdf

- This research looked at the impact that a full time, qualified teacher librarian has upon reading test scores and found that the significant positive impact is independent of socio-economic status, race/ethnicity and/or disability status. It also examines other factors such as collection size, access to digital resources and funding with regard to student achievement.

Hay, L. & Todd, R. (2010). ***A School Libraries Futures Project: School Libraries 21C***. Retrieved from http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/schoollibraries/assets/pdf/21c_report.pdf

- Commissioned by the School Libraries and Information Literacy Unit, Curriculum K-12 Directorate and NSW Department of Education and Training summarises an online discussion gathering information about the future of school libraries.

Australian research – Teacher librarians and student learning outcomes

Softlink. (2019). 2018 The Softlink Australia, New Zealand, and Asia-Pacific School Library Survey Report. Retrieved from https://www.softlinkint.com/downloads/2018_Softlink_Australian_and_New_Zealand_School_Library_Survey_Report.pdf

- Now in its seventh year, this Australian survey (from last year) connects well-resourced libraries with higher student learning outcomes and higher NAPLAN scores. This aligns with the wealth of international data that supports this connection.

Hughes et al. (2013). School libraries, teacher-librarians and literacy at Gold Coast schools: Research findings. Synergy, 11(2). Retrieved from https://eprints.qut.edu.au/63170/1/Synergy-FINAL-2013.pdf

- This article summarises a research study conducted in Australian schools on the Gold Coast and explores the contribution that school libraries and teacher librarians make to literacy development.

House Standing Committee on Education and Employment. (2011). ***Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools***. Retrieved from http://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/house_of_representatives_committees?url=ee/schoollibraries/report.htm

- This report summarises the recent federal inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians.

Merga, M. K. (2019). How do librarians in schools support struggling readers?. English in Education, 53(2), 145–160. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/04250494.2018.1558030

International research – Teacher librarians and student learning outcomes

Lance, K. C. & Hofschire, L. (2012). ***Change in school librarian staffing liked with change in CSAP reading performance, 2005 to 2011***. Retrieved from http://www.lrs.org/documents/closer_look/CO4_2012_Closer_Look_Report.pdf

- This report from Colorado, USA, examines changes in standardised test scores of students over time as they are influenced by changes in levels of school library staffing (including the qualifications of the staff).

Pennsylvania State Board of Education. (2011). ***Pennsylvania school library study: Findings and recommendations.*** Retrieved from http://paschoollibraryproject.org/schlibresearch

- This study confirms that qualified teacher librarians are associated with higher reading and writing test scores and also that this positive impact is independent of demographic and economic differences among students.

Francis, B. H., Lance, K. C., & Lietzau, Z. (2010). ***School librarians continue to help students achieve standards: The third Colorado study (2010)***. Retrieved from http://www.lrs.org/documents/closer_look/CO3_2010_Closer_Look_Report.pdf

- This study of the impact of school libraries and librarians on student test performance provides evidence of the value of highly qualified librarians, especially at the primary school level. The study also documents not only the impact of school libraries and teacher librarians on how high or low students' test scores are, it also examines their impact on low-performing as well as high-performing students in standardised tests - relevant to those concerned about closing the achievement gap between 'have' and 'have not' students.

Scholastic Library Publishing. (2015). ***School Libraries Work! A Compendium of Research Supporting the Effectiveness of School Libraries***, 2016 edition. Retrieved from http://www.scholastic.com.au/assets/pdfs/school-libraries-work.pdf

- This American publication summarises research findings of about ten years of school library-related research.

Todd, R. J. & Kuhlthau, C. C. (2005). ***Student learning through Ohio school libraries, Part 1: How effective school libraries help students.*** Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265043672_Student_Learning_Through_Ohio_School_Libraries_Part_1_How_Effective_School_Libraries_Help_Students

- This paper gives a summary of research into 39 school libraries in Ohio with students from years 3 to 12.

Todd, R. J. and Kuhlthau, C. C. (2005). ***Student Learning through Ohio School Libraries, Part 2: Faculty Perceptions of Effective School Libraries.*** Retrieved from https://www.mindmeister.com/generic_files/get_file/356322?filetype=attachment_file

- This paper focuses on the perceptions of school principals and teaching faculty in relation to the school library and the helps it provides to students. Set against a brief review of current literature, it examines data provided by 879 faculty in 39 elementary, middle and high schools of Ohio as part of the Student Learning through Ohio School Library research study.

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