

Teacher Librarians and the national scene

There are two exciting national initiatives for teacher librarians and school libraries.

Teaching Australia and National Professional Standards

Managed by Teaching Australia, the *Teaching Australia Network* has been active in shaping the directions for education since its formation in 2001. As a national body for the teaching profession its role is to:

- Support and advance the quality of teaching and leadership,
- Strengthen and advance the standing of the profession, and
- Develop as the national body for the teaching profession (Teaching Australia).

As official members of *Teaching Australia Network*, ALIA Schools and Policy Advisory Group – (PAG), a joint ALIA and Australian School Library Association (ASLA) group – representatives were invited to attend the first annual Network Policy Forum 22–23 June 2008, and a national symposium on the 15th October 2008.

At the Teaching Australia Network Forum 34 associations comprised of professional associations of teachers, principals, and other educators were invited by Teaching Australia to join a national network that aims to build on shared understandings and provide guidance for the proposed Standards Council to influence the next stage of consultation of the national professional standards for teachers and principals.

In terms of the goals of ALIA Schools, the Network Forum was extremely pertinent. The Forum provided ALIA representatives with networking and lobbying possibilities, information on current thinking within the teaching profession, and opportunities to discuss with other associations the challenges facing all networks since the introduction of web 2.0 technologies.

Both Teaching Australia and the Business Council of Australia (BCA) hosted a *National Symposium on Teaching Standards* on using standards to recognise advanced teaching and school leadership. The symposium brought together key stakeholders in quality teaching, including employers, unions, regulatory bodies, parent groups, and the profession. Guest speakers included the Hon Julia Gillard, Minister for Education, Dr Joseph Aguerrebere, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the USA, Patrick Coleman from the BCA, and Lawrence Ingveson from the Australian Council of Education (ACER).

Action for ALIA: future goals for ALIA Schools and the PAG

The opportunity now exists for ALIA to communicate with these employing and policy-making bodies to advance the important role of teacher librarians and school libraries.

- ALIA/ASLA have produced standards for teacher librarians that have already been recommended be audited against the national standards.
- ALIA should engage the BCA in ongoing discussion regarding the well-established difference that teacher librarians and fully resourced school libraries make to the learning and teaching programs of schools.
- ALIA/ASLA should work with the BCA to promote how school libraries and teacher librarians advance the agenda of the business community as outlined in the BCA report.
- The NBPTS includes national standards for the Library Media Specialist. A cross mapping of these standards and other international standards against *Standards of Professional Excellence for Teacher Librarians* would be beneficial.

National Curriculum Board and the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum Board (the Board) met for the first time in Canberra on 23 April 2008. Its work of developing and implementing a national curriculum is conducted under the auspice of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

The initial task of the Board is to develop a national curriculum for all year levels (K–12) in English, mathematics, the sciences, and history by the end of 2010. The Board is also to develop continua of learning for literacy and numeracy. In a second phase, it will work on geography and languages other than English.

Signalling its intention to involve experienced educators from across Australia in the curriculum development process, the Board invited stakeholders, including teachers, representatives of national professional teaching associations, academics, parents, and more, to a forum in Melbourne on 27 June 2008. Initial advice regarding the scope of the curriculum was also presented at a series of national forums.

In November 2008, this process culminated in the release of framing papers which propose broad directions for what teachers should teach and young people should learn in the national

curriculum. Following this release, broad consultations were held in the states and territories.

ALIA was represented at the forums and consultations held in the states by ALIA Schools members. It is anticipated that further consultation and ongoing involvement will be invited as the framing papers are refined and finalised.

The role of teacher librarians has been acknowledged during the consultation process leading to the development of the national curriculum – this role will continue to be important during the implementation phase. Teacher librarians will have the opportunity to work collaboratively at the national level on a common curriculum; this will be an unprecedented opportunity for members of the profession to demonstrate their expertise.

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For more information about Teaching Australia and its charter can located at: <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/go/home>

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