



Hon Donna Faragher JP MLC
Member for East Metropolitan Region

21 July 2021

Hon Peter Foster MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Mr Foster

Re: Petition No. 017- Staffing of School Libraries

I am writing to you in relation to a petition I tabled on 11 November 2020 regarding teacher librarians in schools which contained 776 signatures.

For the Committee's reference, I tabled an identical petition on 17 June 2021 which contained a further 20 signatures to ensure the WA School Library Association (the Association), the peak body representing school librarians in Western Australia, is provided with an opportunity to have the petition considered by the 41st Parliament.

Representatives from the Association have met with me to discuss their ongoing concerns surrounding the apparent decline in qualified teacher librarians in Western Australian government schools. The Association is a strong advocate for teacher librarians and the role they play in supporting academic performance and student wellbeing. This is undertaken through the provision of tailored knowledge and resources in line with the Australian Curriculum to help students and teachers improve their skills in a range of areas including literacy, digital literacy, critical thinking and research.

Notwithstanding the important role undertaken by teacher librarians, the Association is particularly concerned with the gradual decline in the number of qualified teacher librarians employed in government schools. It is recognised this trend is not limited to Western Australia and is one that is also prevalent in other states throughout the country. The Association has, however, informed me that other states and territories, in particular New South Wales where teacher librarians are mandated, have introduced or are considering measures that better promote the importance of teacher librarians in schools to address this trend.

.../2

You will note the petitioners are seeking equitable access to well-resourced libraries with a qualified teacher librarian and a library technician or library officer given their positive impact on enhancing student literacy and academic standards.

Thank you again for providing me the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee in relation to this important matter. If you require any further elaboration on the Association's perspectives or concerns, I am sure they would be very pleased to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Donna Faragher', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

HON DONNA FARAGHER JP MLC

Member for East Metropolitan Region

Shadow Minister for Community Services; Early Childhood Education;

Seniors and Ageing; Youth