



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Our Ref : MC08-000281

Ms Georgia Phillips
gphillip@bigpond.net.au

Dear Ms Phillips

Thank you for your email of 10 December 2007 to the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, concerning student literacy and libraries. The Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The Government acknowledges the importance of literacy skills, and is committed to improving this fundamental lifelong skill. In order to lift school standards and improve literacy outcomes, the Australian Government has committed to the development of individual learning plans for all students to ensure they are progressing in the acquisition of reading, writing and numeracy skills. A National Curriculum Board is being established to develop rigorous, consistent and quality curriculum for all Australian students from prep/kindergarten to Year 12.

Publication of performance information for schools will also form an integral part of the Government's plan to improve literacy. There is no better or more transparent way to make the case for additional support for those schools which are falling behind than by making the performance of all schools public. This also means that more can be done to actually improve schools performance by allowing additional resources to be directed to area where they are needed most.

School libraries are important resources that create rich learning environments for students, and provide support for students and staff. You may be interested to know that the Australian Government has funded over 951 projects related to library upgrades and / or library resources in State government schools under the *Investing in Our Schools Programme*, which ran from 2005–2007 and exceeded \$31 million in funding.

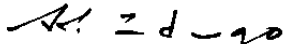
While the Australian Government takes a leading role in setting strategic directions for school education in Australia, the responsibility for developing and implementing curriculum, teaching strategies and resources rests with State and Territory education authorities and individual schools.

You may wish to contact State and Territory education authorities regarding statistics on school library funding and staffing. A list of contacts is available at:
www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/organisations_contacts.

The Government will be working collaboratively with State and Territory governments and the Catholic and Independent school sectors to ensure that all young Australians are equipped with the literacy and numeracy skills necessary to thrive and compete in a globalised world.

Thank you for writing to the Minister.

Yours sincerely



Tony Zanderigo
Branch Manager
Benchmarks and Reporting Branch

11 February 2008