

The 2016 Softlink Australian and New Zealand School Library Survey



Participant Summary

Background and Objective

The Australian and New Zealand School Library Survey, conducted by Softlink on behalf of the school library sector, examines key trends and issues impacting school libraries. Points for analysis include annual school library budgets and staffing levels, as well as the use of digital devices and digital resources in school libraries.

The results help to advocate the role of school libraries and Teacher Librarians to education decision makers, as well as through industry associations and networks.

2016 is the seventh year of the School Library Survey for Australian schools and the second for New Zealand schools.

Further analysis of statistics and trends specific to New Zealand and Australia will be explored in the full 2016 Australian and New Zealand School Library Survey Report, which will be available in early 2016.

Currency rates have not been adjusted. Australian and New Zealand dollars are represented as equal within their respective budget locations.

Summary of 2016 Key Findings

The 2016 survey found:

- Reported school library budget changes are similar to last year, with increases and decreases changing by only 1%. 53% of schools reported no change in budget from 2015 to 2016, which is the same result as in 2014/2015 results.
- Overall, 52% of respondents indicated that they felt that their school library was adequately funded, while 48% of respondents felt that the opposite was true. This statistic reflects the same split as the 2015 survey.
- The majority of school libraries had no change to their staffing levels.
- There was an increase in the number of schools that indicated they provide access to the school library from both outside and inside the school.
- Schools continue to grow their eBook collection with 33% of respondents reporting that they have purchased eBooks in the last year and 50% of respondents reporting that they intend to purchase eBooks within the next 12 months.



School Library Budgets

Changes in School Library Budgets by School Type

This year 79% of school library budgets either remained unchanged or decreased. The highest number of respondents (53%) indicated that their budgets remained the same, while 26% stated their budget had decreased. Overall, 21% of all respondents indicated that their budgets had increased. The results in Figure 1 show the changes in school library budgets by school type.

Changes in School Library Budgets by School Type

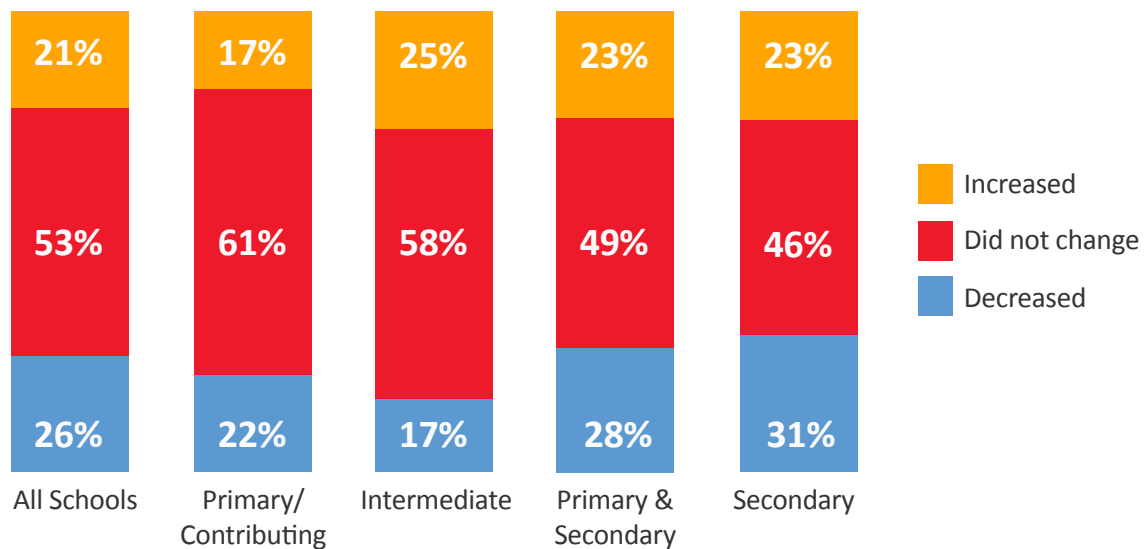


Figure 1: Changes in School Library Budgets by School Type 2016

School Library Budget Comparison 2015/2016

The results in Figure 2 (right) indicate that, overall, school library budgets have continued to stabilise in 2015/2016.

When comparing 2015 and 2016 results, the number of reported budget increases dropped by 1%, the number of reported budgets that did not change stayed the same at 53%, and the number of budgets that decreased rose by 1%. In 2014, the number of schools reporting budget decreases was 29%.

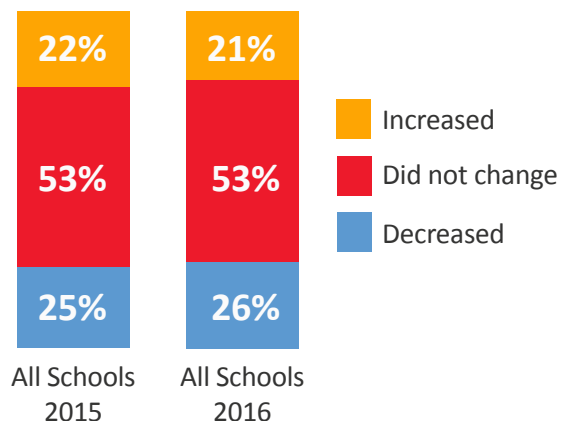


Figure 2: School Library Budgets Comparison 2015 and 2016



Changes in School Library Budgets by Education Provider

Figure 3 highlights the results of changes to School Library Budgets by Education Provider.

Catholic school libraries reported a lower percentage of budget decreases in 2016, while Government and Independent schools reported the same percentage of budget decreases. Catholic and Independent schools reported a higher percentage of budget increases between 2015 and 2016. Additionally a higher percentage of Government school libraries indicated that their library budget did not change in 2016.

Changes in School Library Budgets by Education Provider

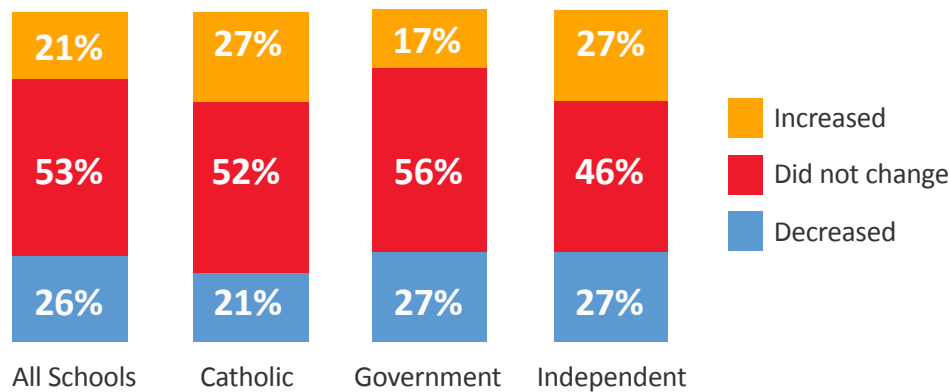


Figure 3: Changes in 2016 School Library Budgets by Education Provider

Additional analysis shows Government Secondary schools reported the highest level of decreases in funding at 33%, while Catholic K-12 reported the highest level of increases (38%).

In 2016, Catholic Primary schools and Secondary schools reported the lowest percentage of budget decreases and increases, 15% and 8% respectively, with a majority of Catholic Primary schools (78%) reporting no budget change.

In all three sectors, Secondary schools reported the highest level of budget decreases with Catholic schools at 25%, Government schools at 33% and Independent schools at 30%.

Changes in School Library Budgets by Education Provider 2015/2016 Comparison

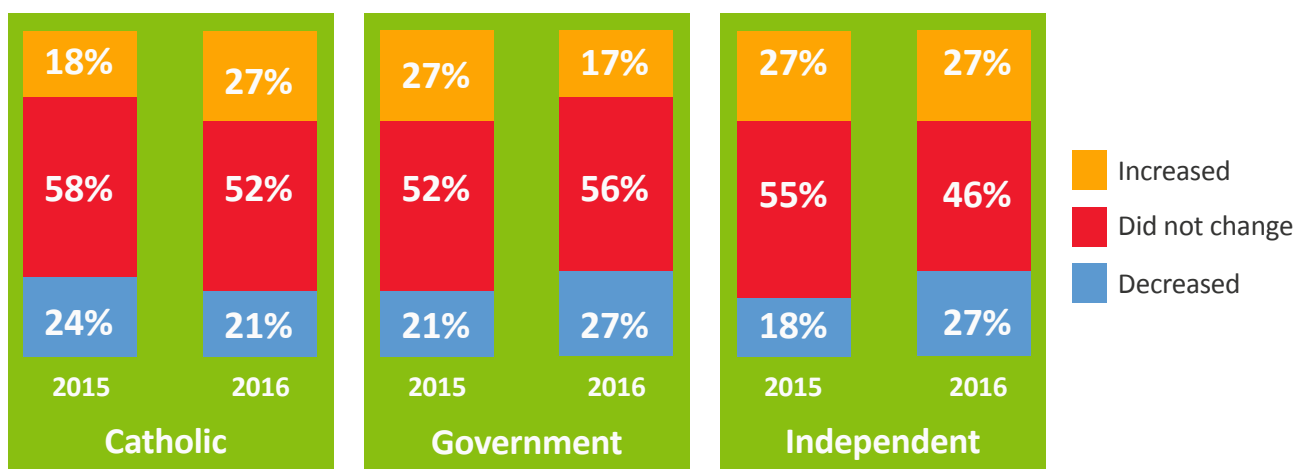


Figure 4: Comparison of 2015 and 2016 School Library Budgets by Education Provider



School Library Staffing

21% of schools reported a decrease in library staffing in 2016; 7% of school libraries experienced an increase in staffing levels. The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing at the majority of school libraries remains unchanged with 72% of all schools surveyed stating that there had been no change in staffing during the past 12 months. This is a similar result to 2015 when reported staffing increases and decreases were 10% and 20% respectively.

Independent schools reported the highest percentage of staff decreases at 23%; Government schools reported the highest percentage of increases at 8%.

K-12 school libraries had the highest number of FTE staff with an average of 3.1 per school. The average for Secondary school libraries was 2.4. FTE staff for Primary school libraries was 1.3.

School Library Staffing Comparison

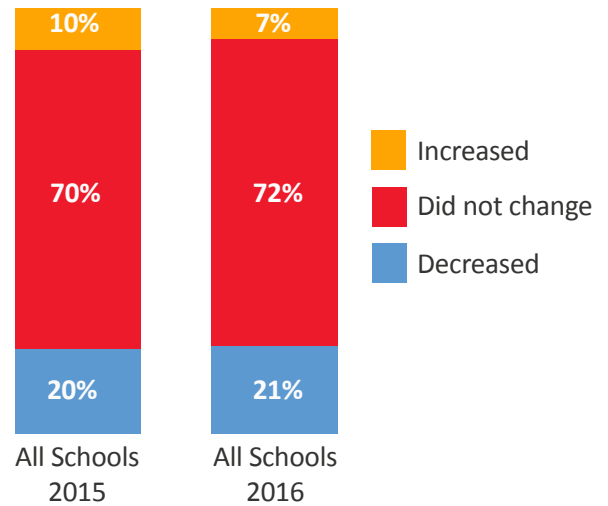


Figure 5: Comparison of 2015 and 2016 School Library Staffing

eBooks and Your School Library

Do you intend to purchase eBooks for your school in the next 12 months?



Figure 6: eBook intentions

The survey found that a third of respondent schools have purchased eBooks in the past year (33%). This is a similar response to 2015 (35%).

20% of respondent schools indicated in 2016 that eBooks or eResources now make up 5% or more of their collection. Again this year, it is noted that there is a strong intention by school libraries to continue to extend their collections and services with digital titles, with 50% of respondent teacher librarians indicating they will “definitely” or “most probably” purchase eBooks within the next 12 months.



Accessibility and Your School's Library

The survey investigates the broader trend towards personal mobile device access.

This year, 53% of respondents said half or more of their student population have access to a personal mobile device (iPod, iPad, smart phone or other tablet), with 23% of schools having a 1:1 program, 23% of schools a BYOT/BYOD strategy, and 17% a mix of the two. This represents a decrease from the 2015 response (64%).

Regarding the use of personal devices and accessing the library resources, this year's findings include:

- 53% of schools allow personal digital device use at school. This includes 39% of schools that "encourage use in and outside of the classroom" while another 14% stated they "allow students to use their devices outside of the classroom".
- 81% of schools provide access to resources from outside the library. 66% now provide access from both outside and within the school (up from 58% in 2015), while 22% provide access outside the library from within the school only. This indicates an increasing trend to provide access to the library from both within and outside the school.
- 85% of librarians believe it is important to provide access to the school library (catalogue, electronic resources, e-books etc.) from outside the school and outside school hours.

Feedback Themes

Recurring response themes to the question, "What exciting trends are emerging that could impact the library in the near future?" included:

- **Access** – 24/7 service with general mobile and web access provides more flexible options for accessing library resources.
- **Space for creativity and innovation** – libraries are expanding their focus to become central hubs for creativity and innovation, including 3D printing and Makerspaces. Libraries are positioning themselves as a centres for learning, innovation, social activity and events.
- **eResources** – use of eBooks is increasing, greater availability of eTextbooks and open platforms for sharing eResources.
- **Online learning spaces/communities and online collaboration tools** – the library increasingly serves as a central point for managing web-based learning. Gamification is emerging as a literacy learning tool.
- **BYOT and BYOD** – continue to influence the way school libraries operate.
- **Collaboration** – library and teaching staff work together to develop and deliver high quality, curriculum-based teaching and learning programs.
- **Libraries networking and sharing resources.**

As in 2015, comments referenced funding, physical library space and staffing resources as the main challenges facing libraries. However, many respondents are finding innovative ways to overcome these challenges, and identify the evolution of their school library as essential rather than optional. Softlink will publish further findings from comment-based questions in 2016.



About Your Detailed Analysis Report

We have compiled several Detailed Analysis Reports based on school size, which provide a snapshot of staffing numbers and budget ranges for different sized schools, so you can easily compare these details against schools that have enrolment numbers similar to your own.

To view these reports, [click here](#), then select the appropriate school size. We hope that this information may assist you to advocate the value of your school library and its contribution to your school.

There are two components presented in the detailed analysis:

1. The Total Financial Budget (TFB) – This is an analysis of the responses to the question asking about the budget for the financial year including 31 March 2016. The data is presented as a median result to remove the distortion of average data from highly funded school libraries.
2. The Total Staffing Numbers (TSN) – This is an analysis of the responses to the question asking about the staff numbers employed within the school library. The data is presented as a mean average of the total staff. This is measured in full time equivalents.

These two components are presented in a total format with quartile markers for your reference. There is also median and average analysis by school type, education provider and location. This will allow you to benchmark your school library's TFB and TSN against other like schools.

We would love to hear from you about the value of these reports. Please contact us via communications@softlinkint.com to provide your feedback.

How does Softlink help?

We thank you for taking the time to respond to the Softlink 2016 Australian and New Zealand School Library Survey. Your willingness to participate and share information about your school library means that once again we can provide this valuable, annual analysis of school libraries. The survey results provide a critical reference point for changes, impacts and trends across Australian New Zealand school libraries.

Softlink will continue to work with industry associations to help advocate the role of school libraries and Teacher Librarians to education ministers, departments and decision makers, as well as through industry networks.

Softlink is proud to continue to sponsor and grow this initiative.

