

The 2018 Softlink Australia, New Zealand, and Asia-Pacific School Library Survey Report



Findings from Softlink's 2018 Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific School Library Survey into school library budgets, staffing, library services, and trends.



Conducted by
Softlink

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Introduction

The Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific 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.

2018 is the ninth year of the School Library Survey for Australian schools and the fourth for New Zealand schools.

In 2018, we extended the survey to include the Asia Pacific region and had responses from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Currency rates have not been adjusted. Dollars are represented as equal within their respective budget locations.

This report provides an analysis of the survey findings including library budgets, staffing levels, school library objectives, emerging trends, and eResource collections.

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“Thank you for providing the opportunity for TLs to participate in this survey. It will be a big help as we move forward as it provides us with feedback.”

All text quotes included in this report are drawn from two open-ended questions in the survey - *What is the one thing you would you change about your school library or your role?* and *Do you have any other comments you would like to add?*

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1.0 Purpose of the survey

School libraries are thriving centres of learning both in the physical library space and in the virtual classroom, and Teacher Librarians enrich school teaching and learning programs through their specialist role.

In 2010, the Australian Federal Government requested submissions to the 'Inquiry into school libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian schools'. Softlink undertook a survey of Australian school libraries to provide data which enabled a unique and informed response to the Inquiry.

Since then, in an effort to highlight the issues and opportunities school libraries are experiencing, Softlink has continued to survey Australian schools annually and extended this to include New Zealand and UK schools in 2015. Continuing the annual survey builds a critical reference point for understanding changes, impacts, and trends over time.

1.1 About Softlink

Established in 1983, Softlink is an Australian company with global influence including school library and education department customers across 60 countries.

Softlink works with school libraries and educators to provide solutions which engage students and support school library staff. Our flagship school library system, Oliver v5 is continually developed to meet the changing needs of libraries, educators, and students and our new information curating tool, LearnPath provides an easy to use platform to guide students, support the development of research skills and promote the value of school libraries and resources.

Softlink products offer deep digital integration with eBooks and streamlined integration with virtual learning environments and school administration systems.

We have had a long partnership with the library and information industry and understand the challenges and opportunities the 21st Century learning and teaching environment presents for school libraries.

"Our library is a welcoming place where students enjoy visiting. They particularly like to have someone to recommend books for them, to explain the stories before they borrow."

2.0 Survey findings summary

Key findings from the 2018 Survey include:

- 62% of respondents feel their library is not adequately resourced including staffing and budget.
- 55% of respondents indicated that their library budget has not changed from the previous year, 19% indicated it had increased and 26% indicated it had decreased.
- 64% of respondents indicated no change to their staffing levels from the previous year, 10% indicated it had increased, and 26% indicated a decrease.
- 65% of Australian respondents, 13% of New Zealand respondents, and 40% of Asia Pacific respondents indicated that they had a least 1 qualified Teacher Librarian employed in their library.
- 15% of Australian respondents, 54% of New Zealand respondents, and 80% of Asia Pacific respondents indicated that they had a least 1 qualified Librarian employed in their library.
- 62% of respondents indicated that they now include a percentage of eBooks in their collection.
- 49% of respondents indicated that they now include a percentage of eResources - subscription databases in their collection.



3.0 Allocation of school budgets

Respondents were asked to provide an indication of budget from a selection of annual budget ranges (excluding staff salaries).

Responses to this question have been analysed by school type, education provider, and school size.

3.1 School library budgets by school type

The most common budget range for Primary and Intermediate schools was \$2,501 - \$5,000, for Secondary schools \$10,001 - \$20,000, and K-12 schools \$20,001 - \$50,000.

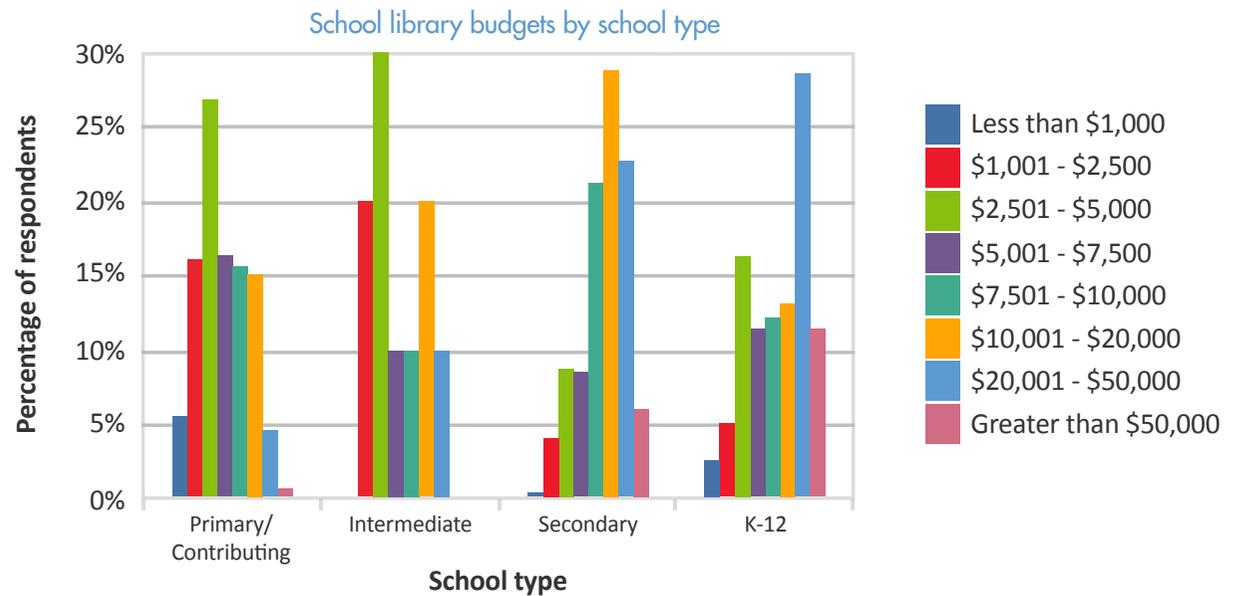


Figure 1 : School library budgets by school type 2018

"I would like to have sufficient budget to provide innovative recreational and learning spaces."

3.2 School library budgets by education provider

The most common budget range for Catholic school respondents was \$20,001 - \$50,000.

For Government school respondents, the most common ranges were \$2,501 - \$5,000 and \$10,001 - \$20,000.

Independent/Private schools were most likely to fall in the \$20,001 - \$50,000 range.

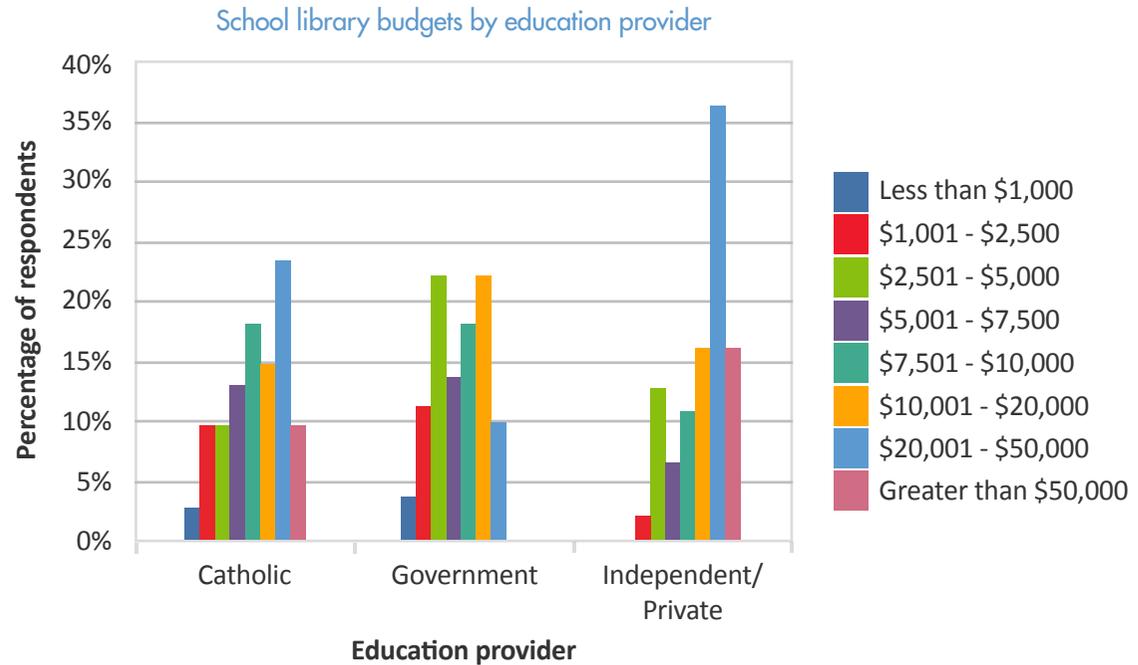


Figure 2 : School library budgets by education provider 2018

3.3 School library budgets by size

Additional analysis was completed that shows school library budgets by school size. This is provided in figure 3 below.

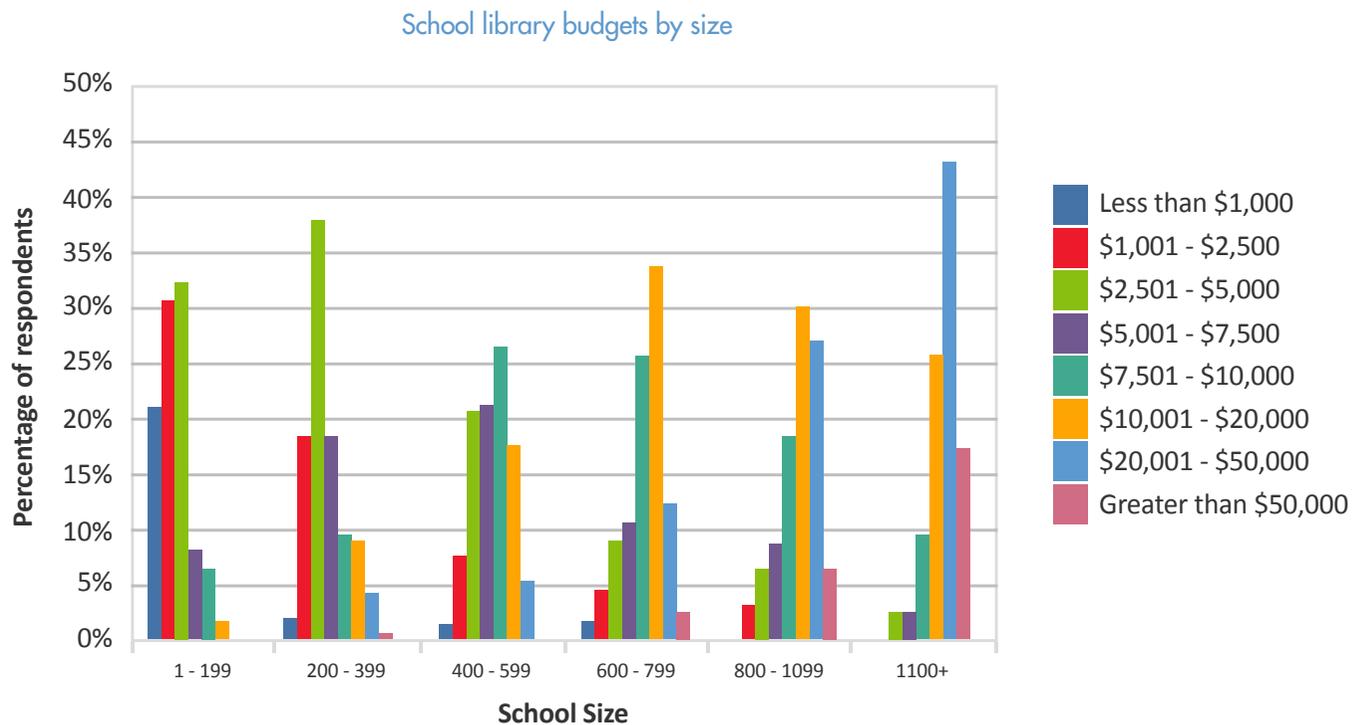


Figure 3 : School library budgets by size 2018

“Our library is warm and welcoming and a hub for those wanting to escape the noise and rush of the playground at lunchtime. I am proud of the space and the way it is used.”

3.4 School library budgets by location

School library budgets were also analysed by location. This is provided in figure 4 below.

For a breakdown of school library budgets by size and location, please see our participant summaries, available [here](#).

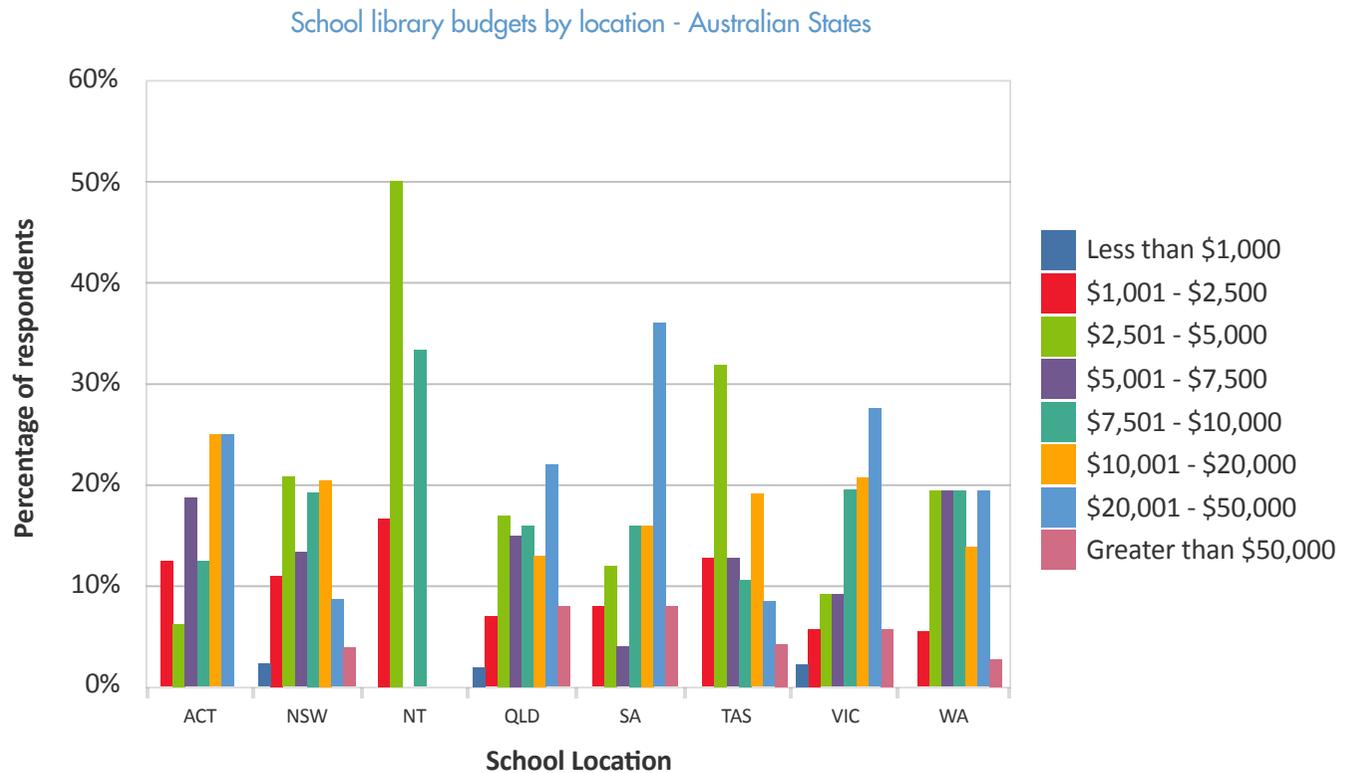


Figure 4: School library budgets by location - Australian States 2018

School library budgets by location - New Zealand Regions

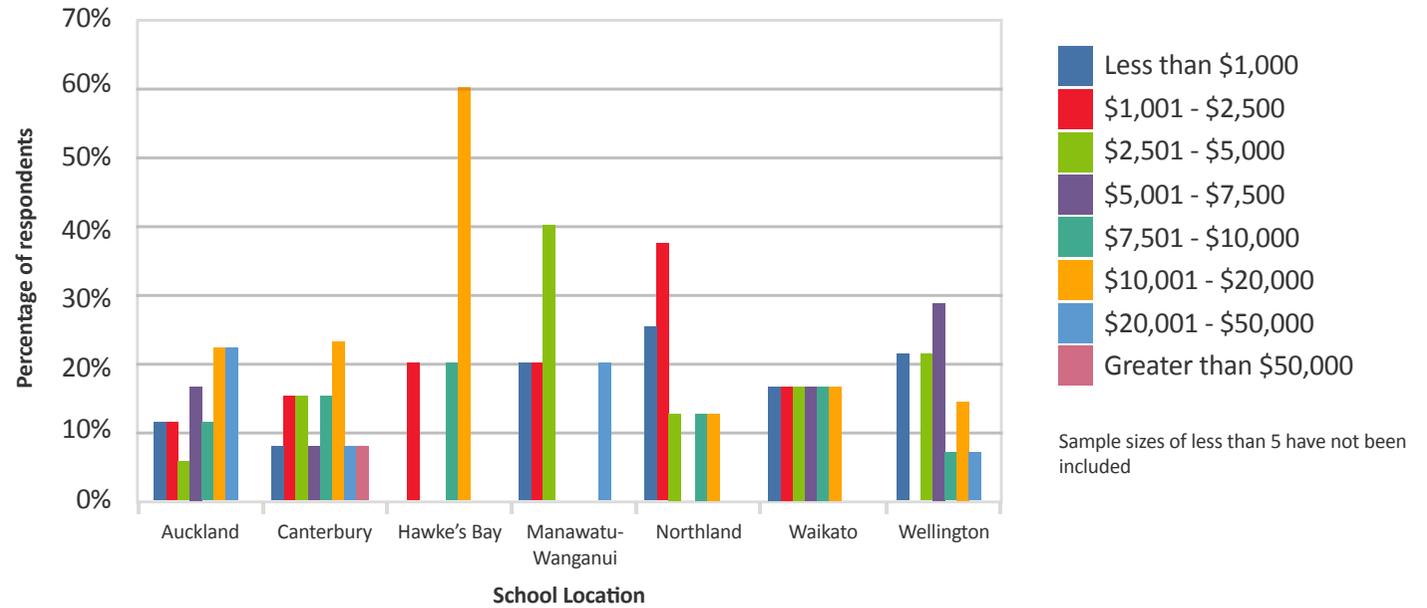
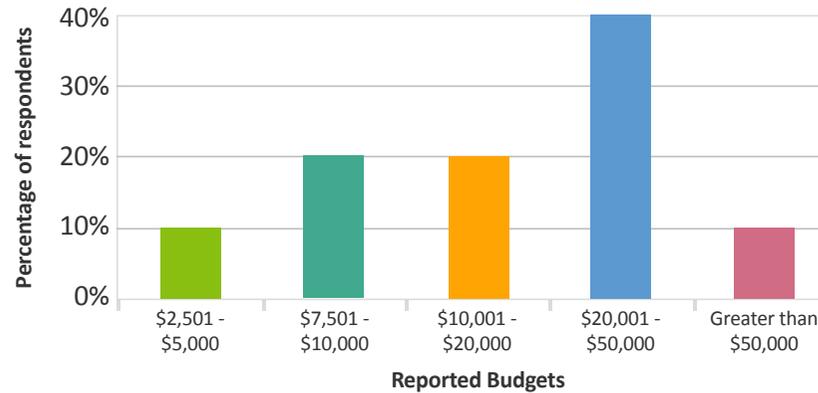


Figure 5: School library budgets by location - New Zealand Regions

School library budgets - Asia Pacific



Participating Countries

- Hong Kong
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Papua New Guinea
- Taiwan
- Thailand

Figure 6: School library budgets by location - Asia Pacific

4.0 Changes in school library budgets

Respondents were asked to provide an indication of how their annual budget had changed from the previous year.

Responses to this question have been analysed by school type and education provider.

Additional analysis is also provided to compare overall reported budget changes in 2017 and 2018.

4.1 Changes in school library budgets by school type

Figure 7 shows the reported changes in school library budgets by school type.

Changes in school library budgets by school type

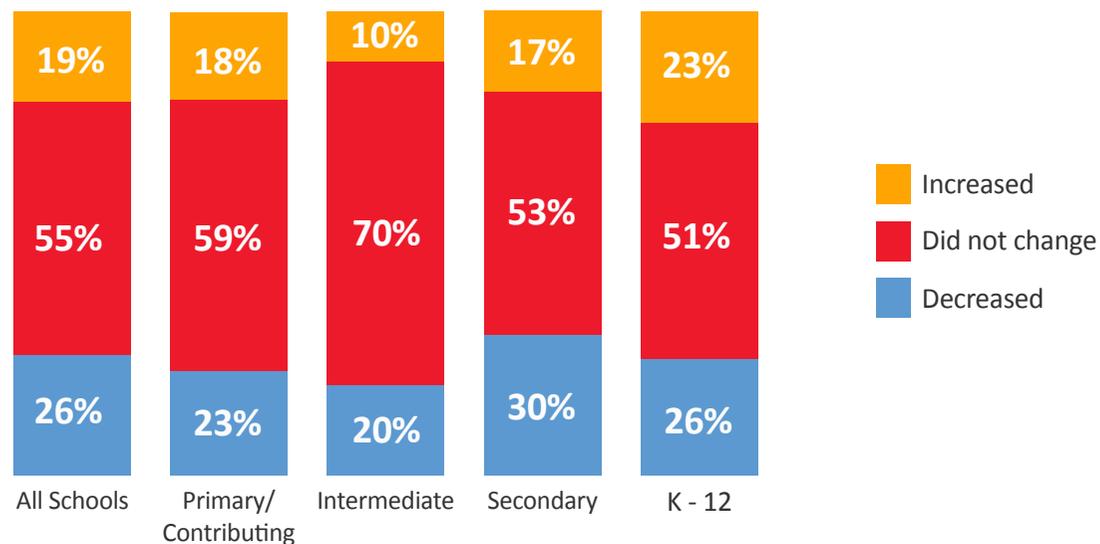


Figure 7: Changes in school library budgets by school type 2018

“With the introduction of the new stage 6 syllabuses, information literacy is truly embedded in the curriculum. I would love to have the resources, time allocation and budget to meet these emerging needs. I also run reading programs and would love the budget to support this.”

4.2 Changes in school library budgets by education provider

Figure 8 shows the reported changes to school library budgets by education provider.

Changes in school library budgets by education provider

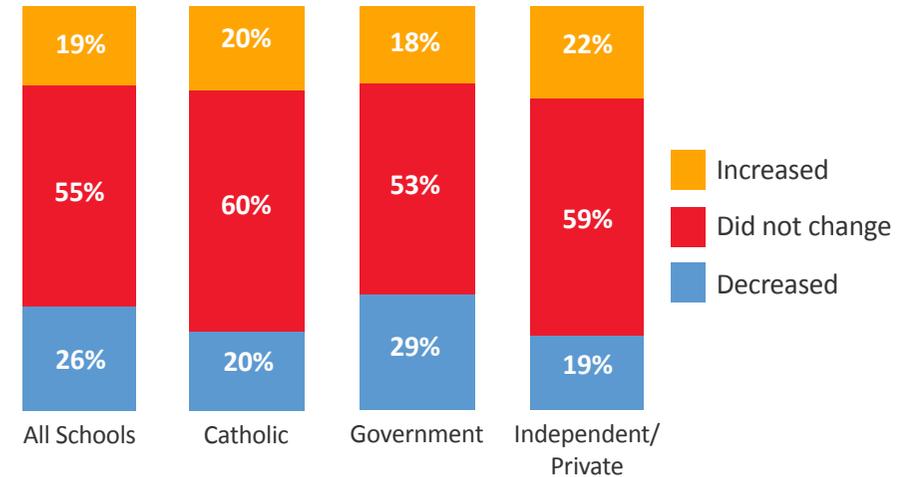


Figure 8: Changes in 2018 school library budgets by education provider

4.3 School library budget comparison 2017 - 2018

Figure 9 compares annual budget changes between the 2017 and 2018 survey responses.

When comparing library budget changes between 2017 and 2018, fewer schools reported budget increases, while the more schools reported a decrease.

School library budget comparison 2017 - 2018

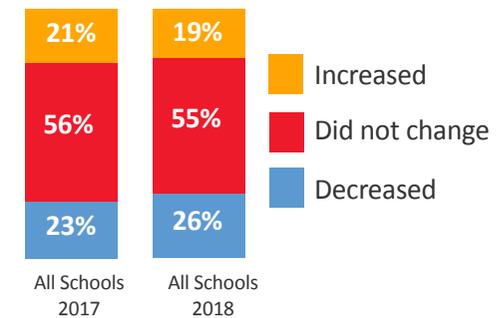


Figure 9: School library budget comparison 2017 and 2018

4.4 Comparison school library budgets by education provider Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific

Figure 10 shows the comparison of reported school library budget changes by location.

Asia Pacific schools reported the most budget increases while Australian schools reported the most budget decreases.

Comparison School library budget changes by location

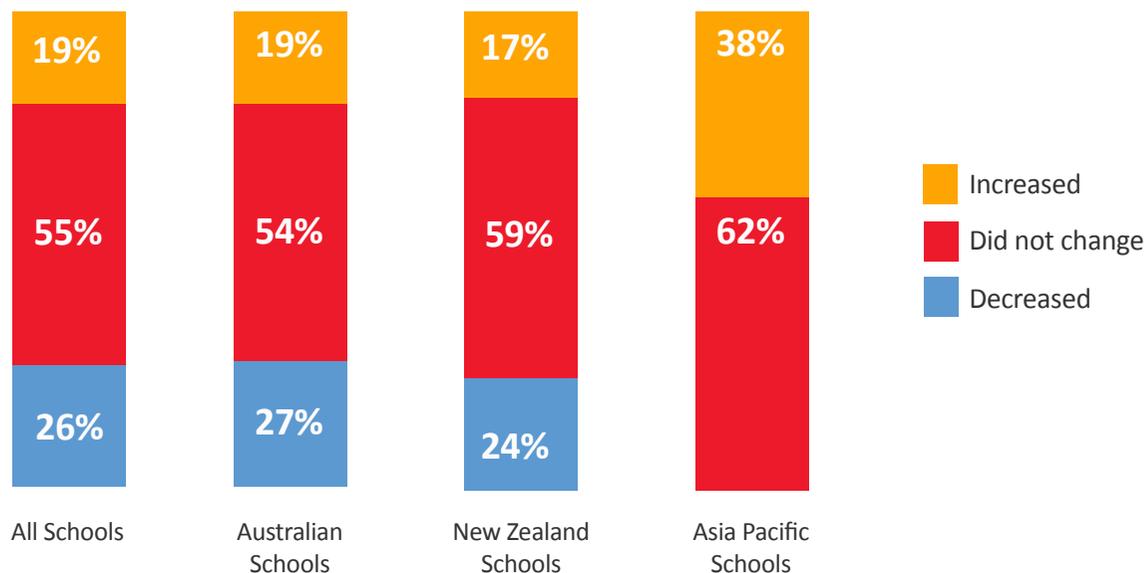


Figure 10: Comparison of school library budgets by location

“Due to the busy nature of schools it is up to us to go out and promote library services to the school body whether at staff meetings, via group emails, addressing the student body, making full use of screen displays around the school.”

5.0 School library staffing

Respondents were asked to provide information about staffing, including Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing levels and library role type.

Responses to these questions have been analysed by school type, education provider, school size, and role type.

5.1 Staffing by school type

K-12 schools reported the highest number of FTE staff with an average of 2.6 per school.

Primary/Contributing and Intermediate schools reported the lowest number of FTE staff with an average of 1.1 per school.

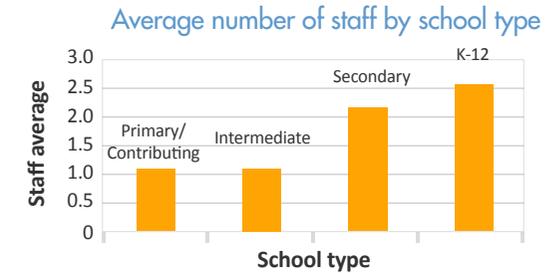


Figure 11: Average number of staff by school type

5.2 Staffing by education provider and size

When applying school size and education provider type, Independent/Private school libraries in the 1100+ category reported the highest FTE staff average of 4.4 per school.

Catholic schools in the 1 - 199 category reported the lowest FTE staff average of 0.6 per school.

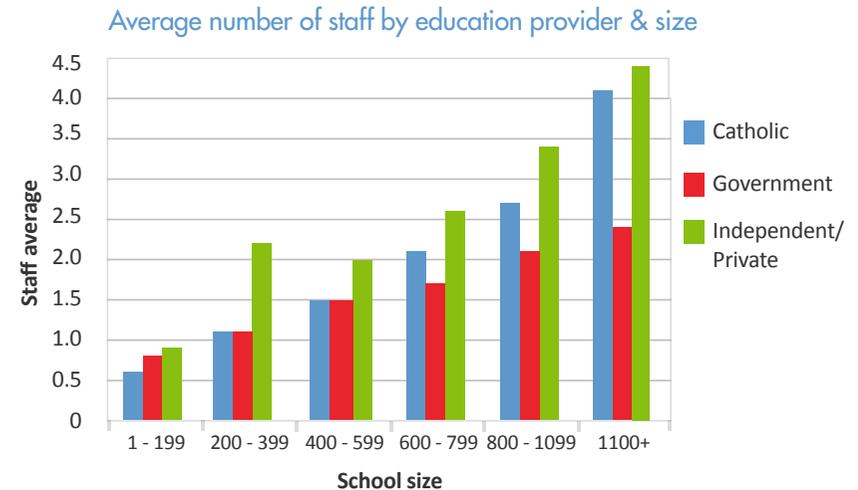


Figure 12: Average number of staff by education provider & size



5.3 FTE staff by role and school type

Figure 13 shows the breakdown of school library staffing by role and school type.

The percentage indicates the number of respondents in each category with at least one of these role types.

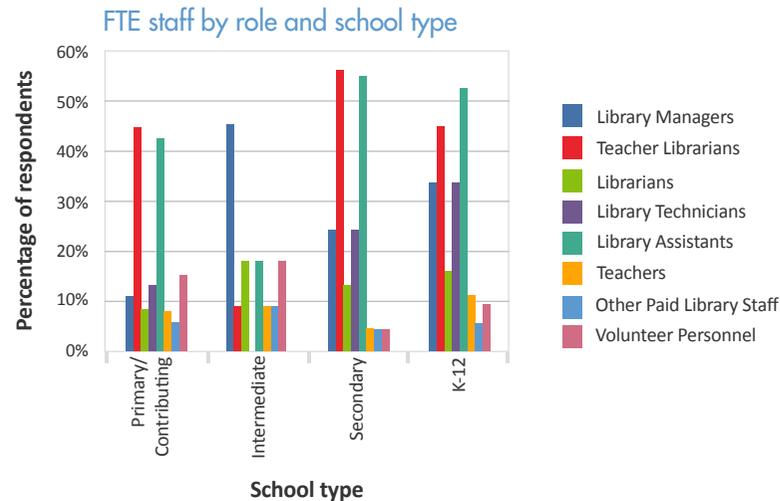


Figure 13: FTE staff by role and school type

5.4 FTE staff by role and education provider

Figure 14 shows the breakdown of school library staffing by role and education provider.

The percentage indicates the number of respondents in each category with at least one of these role types.

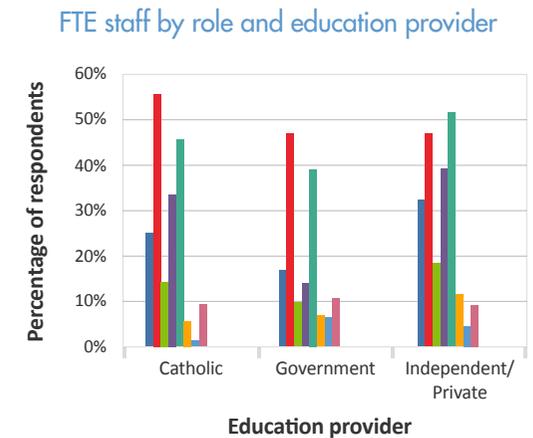


Figure 14: FTE staff by role and education provider

5.5 School library staffing - Qualified Teacher Librarians and Librarians

Figure 15 shows the percentage of schools with at least 1 Qualified Teacher Librarian or Qualified Librarian in Australia, New Zealand and Asia Pacific.

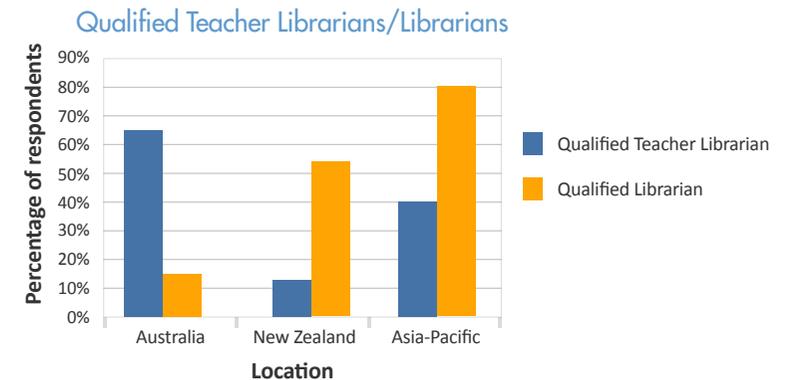


Figure 15: Qualified Teacher Librarians/Librarians

"I would like additional staffing to provide more student interaction and support and develop online resources."

6.0 Changes in school library staffing

Respondents were asked to provide an indication of how their staffing had changed from the previous year. Responses to this question are presented below.

6.1 Changes in school library staffing by location

Figure 16 shows reported changes to school library staffing separated in Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific Schools.

School library staffing changes Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific 2018

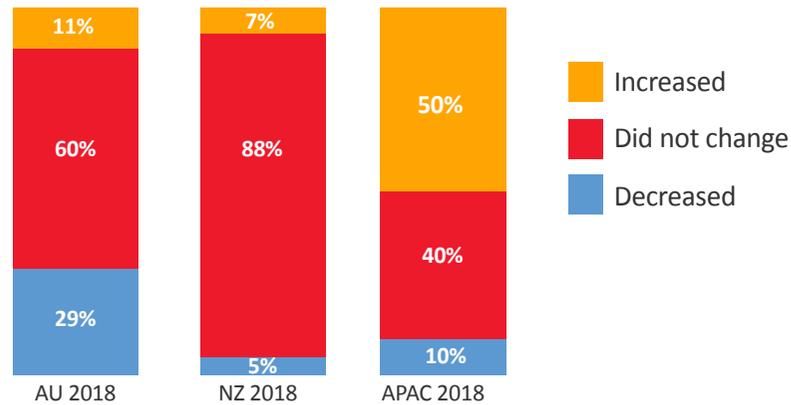


Figure 16: Comparison of 2018 school library staffing changes Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific

6.3 Do you think your library is adequately resourced?

Respondents were asked if they felt their school library was adequately resourced including staffing and budget.

62% of respondents said no, 38% said yes.

6.2 Changes in school library staffing - all schools

Figure 17 shows reported changes to school library staffing between 2017 and 2018.

School library staffing changes comparison 2017 - 2018

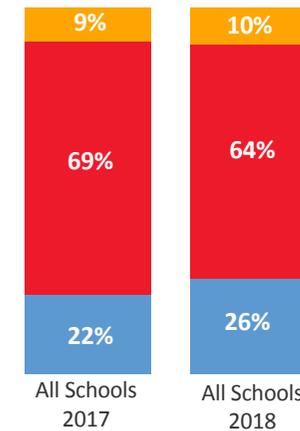


Figure 17: Comparison of 2017 and 2018 school library staffing changes

Do you think your library is adequately resourced?

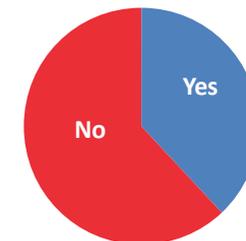


Figure 18: Do you think your library is adequately resourced?

7.0 School library services

Respondents were asked to select 5 services/objectives that are the main services their library provides. They were also asked to select 5 services they would like to provide more of.

The top 3 services respondents currently provide included:

1. Promoting and supporting reading for pleasure (86%)
2. Developing and managing the schools resource collection (75%),
3. Providing an engaging and welcoming space for learning and leisure (71%)

The top 3 services respondents would like to provide more of included:

1. Providing student engagement and learning programs, for example study groups, code clubs (48%)
2. Developing or teaching research skills programs (47%)
3. Curating relevant information and resources to support topic-based learning and curriculum (46%)

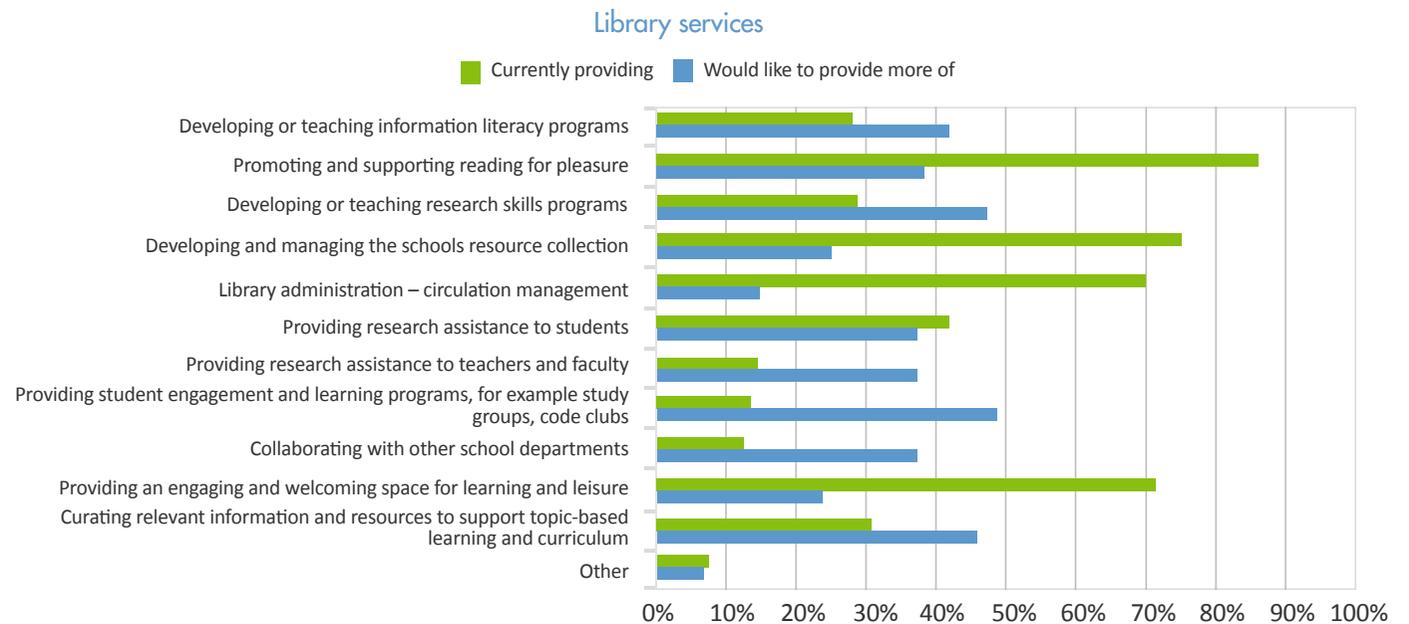


Figure 19: Library services 2018

“We are lucky that our school library is recognised as the hub of the school, and is generally well-supported by Principal, team and staff.”

8.0 Emerging trends

Respondents were asked to rate the following technologies or trends in relation to how they will impact school libraries in the future.

The top 3 emerging trends for Australian and New Zealand schools included:

1. Increased technology integration (68%)
2. Digitisation of resources (61%)
3. State/Federal government funding and policies (55%)

Impact of emerging trends on school libraries

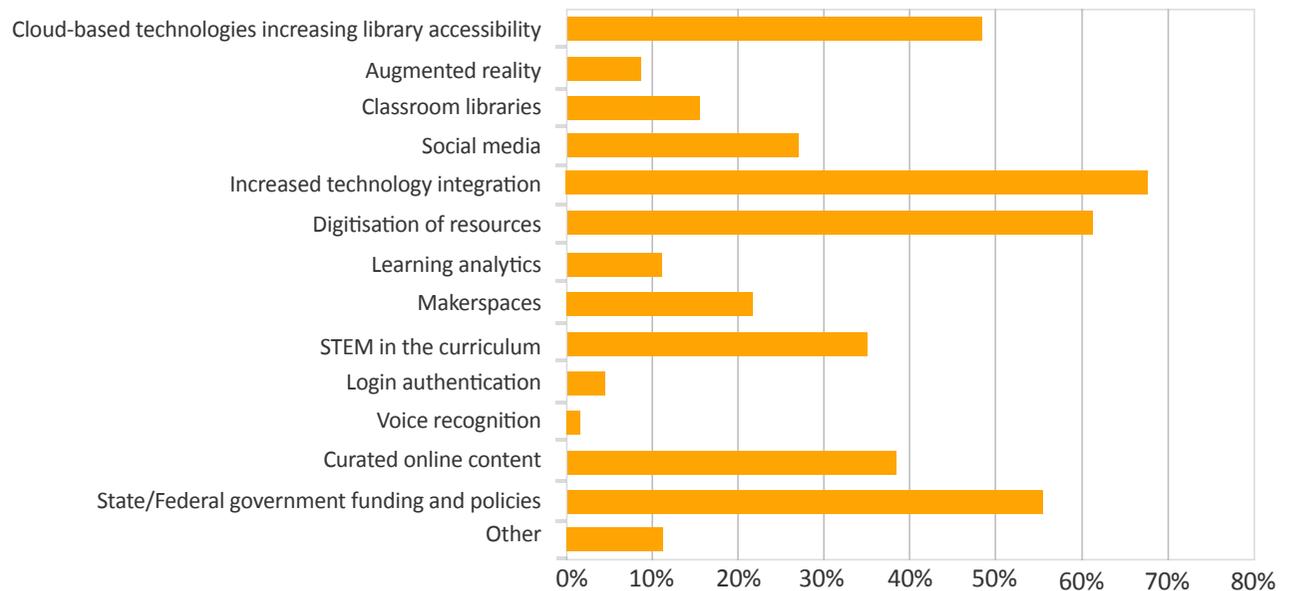


Figure 20: Impact of emerging trends on school libraries 2018

Open fields provided opportunity for respondents to include other emerging trends not listed. Responses included differentiated learning, Australian publishing of fiction and non-fiction, lack of qualified staff, libraries becoming a student hub, student disengagement with print resources, and a crowded curriculum.

9.0 eResources

Respondents were asked what percentage of their collection was made up of eBooks and other multimedia and what percentage of their collection was made up Subscription databases. Figures 21 and 20 show this percentage for all school types, figures 23 and 24 (on the following page) show the distribution by school type.

Percentage of collection made up of eBooks and other multimedia

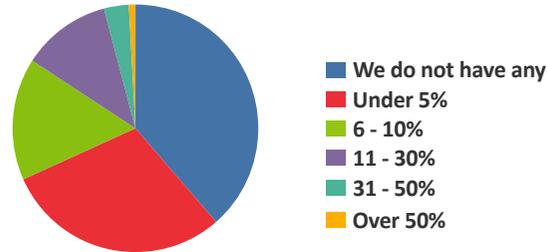


Figure 21. Percentage of collection made up of eBooks and other multimedia 2018

Percentage of collection made up of subscription databases

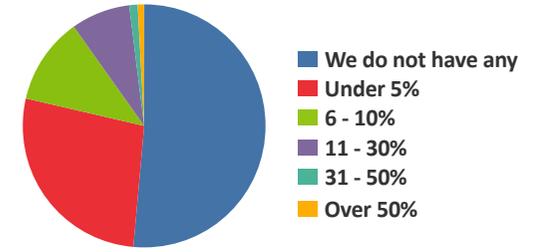


Figure 22. Percentage of collection made up of Subscription databases 2018

Percentage of collection made up of eBooks and other multimedia by school type

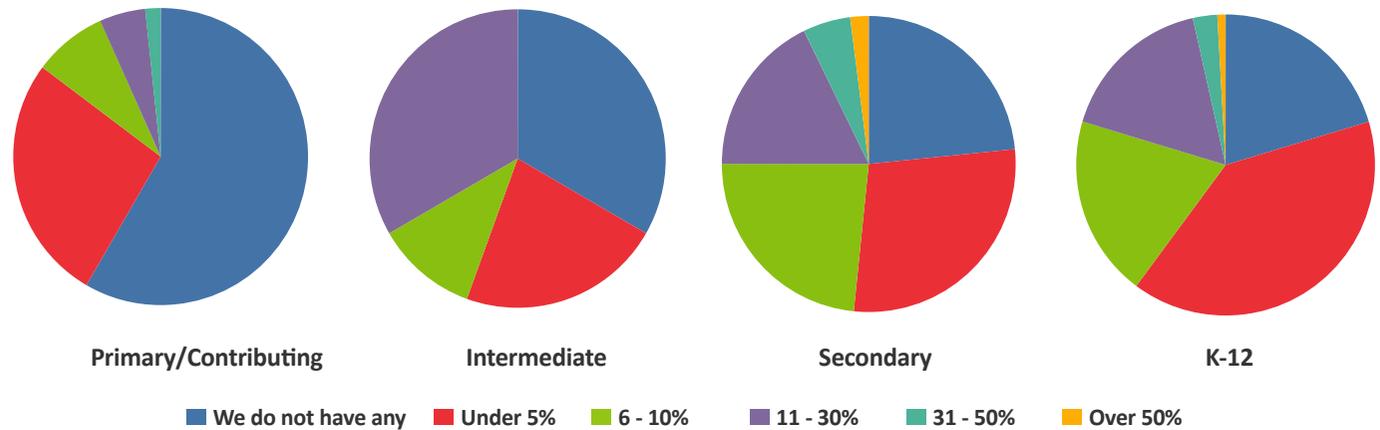


Figure 23: Percentage of collection made up of eBooks and other multimedia by school type

"I love my job and I am very fortunate in that I have a very supportive Principal who lets me 'fly'."

Percentage of collection made up of Subscription databases by school type

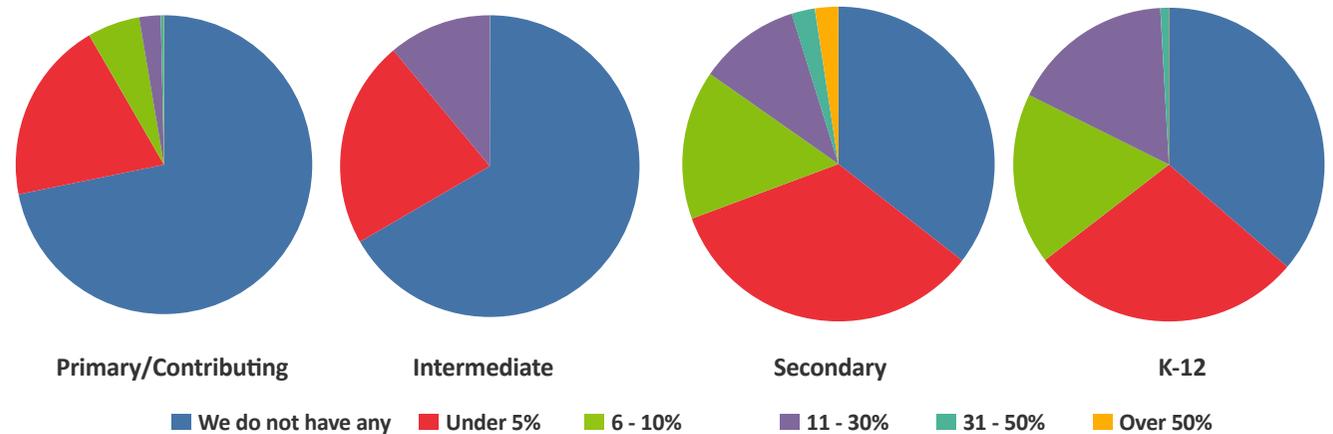


Figure 24: Percentage of collection made up of Subscription databases by school type

10.0 Feedback themes

Respondents were asked two open-ended questions about the library and their role. They were also asked to share ideas for promoting the library, the services it provides or the role and skills of the school library staff. We had a number of respondents share these ideas, which you can read in our whitepaper [“School libraries share ideas for promoting the library”](#) available on our website.

Recurring themes include:

The role of the Teacher Librarian

Respondents indicated that they would like better use to be made of the skills they have as a teacher librarian, to be involved in teaching research and digital literacy, and to have more time dedicated specifically to the role of the teacher librarian (and less time as a relief teacher).

Other respondents indicated that they would like to have a qualified teacher librarian in their school library, an extra qualified teacher librarian, or to increase the hours of the qualified teacher librarian to full time.

Curating resources

Respondents indicated that they would like more time and opportunities to collaborate with staff for quality curation of resources to maximise curriculum support.

Respondents also indicated they they would like to be more involved in curriculum planning to enable them to be more effective in providing and curating resources.

The role of the library

Respondents indicated that they would like the library to be seen as a resource that can support learning and to have more opportunities for strategic engagement with students. They indicated that they would like more opportunities to work directly with students to teach information literacy and research skills.

They also indicated that they would like the library to become more of a “central hub” in the school and for the library to be available to students before and after school, and during lunch breaks.

The library space

Respondents indicated that they would like a bigger physical space for the library to accommodate more students and to enable the creation of a more flexible learning space that meets the changing role and demands of the modern library.

Respondents indicated that within their “hub of the school” they would like to provide quiet study and reading spaces, media and information technology spaces, collaborative workspaces, and makerspaces.

Flexible furniture, for example moveable shelving, to accommodate this featured high in the comments.

It's all about the students!

Respondents indicated a number of things they would like to see improved in the school library or their role. What was demonstrated clearly in the comments is that these requests were student benefit focused.

School library staff indicated that they would like more time, funding, staff, space etc to support student learning, to encourage/inspire reading for pleasure, to be available for individual support, to encourage engagement in lifelong learning, to teach digital literacy skills and help students make sense of the sea of information, and to provide a welcoming and engaging space for both learning and leisure.

“I would like to have the time, budget and space to make big, glamorous displays.”

11.0 The survey scope

The 2018 Softlink Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific School Library Survey was promoted and conducted online. Invitations were open to all school libraries in Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific and consisted of 25 questions that covered the following topics:

- School library resourcing
- School library services
- Emerging trends
- School library collection
- School library trends
- Viewpoints on opportunities, challenges and promoting the library

12.0 Respondents

This year the survey received 905 responses. Table 1 below shows the breakdown of survey respondents by education provider and school type.

Type of School	Education Provider			TOTAL
	Catholic	Government	Independent/Private	
Primary/Contributing	61	323	23	407
Intermediate	0	11	0	11
Secondary	66	240	19	325
K-12	18	50	94	162
TOTAL	145	624	136	905

Table 1: 2018 Survey respondents by school type and education provider

13.0 Conclusion

The 2018 Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific School Library Survey provides insight into the school library industry and a basis for comparison with past and future surveys.

In 2018, 62% of respondents indicated that they do not believe their library is adequately resourced. This represents no change from 2017 survey responses.

In 2017, 21% of respondents indicated their school library budget had increased that year. In 2018 only 19% indicated an increase in budget with 26% reporting a budget decrease. The budget decrease is 3% higher than the 2017 response rate when 23% indicated a decrease in budget.

There was a rise in the number of reported staffing increases between 2017 (9%) and 2018 (10%), however reported staffing decreases also rose from 21% (in 2017) to 26% (in 2018) with less overall stating their staffing remained the same.

A number of respondents also indicated that they do not have enough qualified staff in their library, and open-ended comments indicated that they would like to have a qualified teacher librarian in their school library, an extra qualified teacher librarian, or to increase the hours of the qualified teacher librarian to full time to better support learning outcomes - especially in the areas of digital literacy and research.

While the survey identifies a number of challenges that school library staff face, they continue to show great enthusiasm for the role and ingenuity in using the resources that they have available. These ideas have been collated in the feature, [School libraries share ideas for promoting the library](#), available on our website.

Thank you

A special thank you to everyone who participated in and shared the 2018 Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific School Library Survey.

Thank you to all of the School Library Associations and Softlink Partners listed on [this blog post](#) for assisting in the promotion of the Survey.

We also encourage you to help promote the value of school libraries to the community through campaigns such as Students Need School Libraries. To find out more, watch and share our video www.softlinkint.com/resource-details/video-great-school-libraries/ or visit www.studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au.

"I would like to thank Softlink for doing this survey and producing the report at the conclusion of it. We are yet to see what changes are ahead of us as library staff, but it is advantageous to have the research to present to leadership - to support our position and advocate for the importance of school libraries."