

Australian School Library Survey Report 2020



Based on responses to the 2020 Softlink School Library Survey
Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific

Background and objective

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.

This report provides survey findings for Australia, with a breakdown of findings for Catholic, Government, and Independent schools.

Points for analysis include annual school library budgets and staffing levels, as well as the use of digital resources in school libraries, school library services, trends, and other key factors important to school libraries.

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

Note: Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Publication date: 28 April 2021

Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose of the survey.....	3
1.2 About Softlink.....	3
2.0 Survey findings summary	4
3.0 School library budgets	5
3.1 Approximate library budget all schools.....	5
3.2 Budgets by school size.....	5
3.3 Budget changes	6
4.0 School library staffing	7
4.1 Staffing by school size.....	7
4.2 Staffing by school type	7
4.3 Staffing changes.....	8
5.0 Resourcing the library.....	8
5.1 Is your school library adequately resourced?	8
5.2 How school library staff would use additional resources/time.....	9
6.0 Catholic schools in Australia	10
6.1 Catholic school budgets – Australia.....	10
6.1.1 Catholic school budgets by school size.....	10
6.1.2 Catholic school budgets by school type	10
6.1.3 Catholic school budget changes: 2019 – 2020	11
6.2 Catholic school staffing – Australia	12
6.2.1 Catholic school staffing by school size and type	12
6.2.2 Catholic school staffing changes: 2019 – 2020.....	12
6.2.3 Catholic school qualifications	13
6.3 Catholic schools on adequate resourcing.....	14
6.4 Level of support and engagement in Catholic Schools.....	14
6.5 Online Resources in Catholic schools	15
7.0 Government schools in Australia	16
7.1 Government school budgets – Australia	16
7.1.1 Government school budgets by school size	16
7.1.2 Government school budgets by school type	16
7.1.3 Government school budget changes: 2019 – 2020.....	17

7.2 Government school staffing – Australia	18
7.2.1 Government school staffing by school size and type	18
7.2.2 Government school staffing changes: 2019 – 2020	18
7.2.3 Government school qualifications.....	19
7.3 Government schools on adequate resourcing	20
7.4 Level of support and engagement in Government schools	20
7.5 Online Resources in Government schools.....	21
8.0 Independent schools in Australia	22
8.1 Independent school budgets – Australia.....	22
8.1.1 Independent school budgets by school size.....	22
8.1.2 Independent school budgets by school type.....	22
8.2.3 Independent school budget changes: 2019 – 2020	23
8.2 Independent school staffing – Australia.....	24
8.2.1 Independent school staffing changes: 2019 – 2020.....	24
8.2.2 Independent school qualifications	24
8.3 Independent schools on adequate resourcing.....	25
8.4 Level of support and engagement.....	26
8.5 Online Resources in Independent schools	26
9.0 Feedback themes.....	28
9.1 Fundraising	28
9.2 What do you see impacting school libraries most in the future?	28
9.3 Besides COVID-19 what is the greatest challenge your library has faced this year?	29
9.4 What is the one thing you would change about your library or role?	30
10.0 Participant breakdown	31
Thank you	32
Additional resources.....	32

1.0 Introduction

1.1 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 and Asia Pacific schools in 2018. Continuing the annual survey builds a critical reference point for understanding changes, impacts, and trends over time.

1.2 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.

2.0 Survey findings summary

Key findings for Australia from the 2020 Survey include:

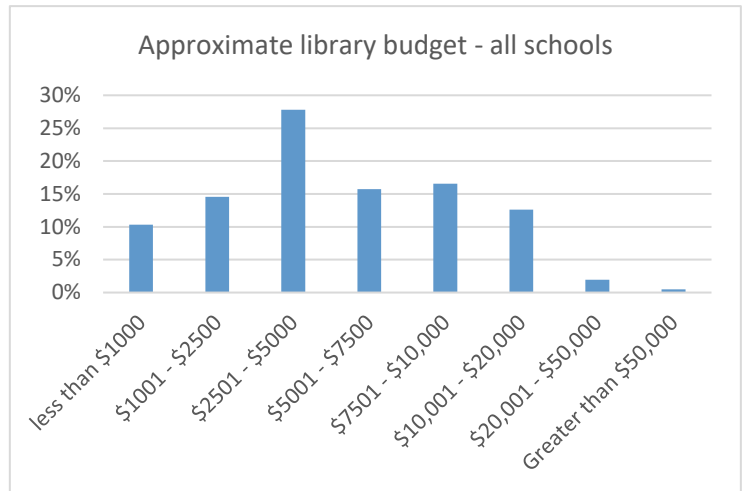
- 42% of respondents feel their library is adequately resourced including staffing and budget.
- 55% of respondents indicated that their library budget has not changed from the previous year, 16% indicated it had increased, and 29% indicated it had decreased.
- 65% of respondents indicated no change to their staffing levels from the previous year, 7% indicated it had increased, and 25% indicated a decrease.
- 62% of Catholic school respondents, 66% of Government school respondents, and 64% of Independent school respondents indicated that they had a least 1 qualified Teacher Librarian employed in their library.
- 20% of Catholic school respondents, 8% of Government school respondents, and 35% of Independent school respondents indicated that they had a least 1 qualified Librarian employed in their library.
- The top 3 things school library staff would focus on if they had more resources or time are:
 1. Promoting and supporting reading for pleasure (79%)
 2. Curating relevant information and resources to support topic-based learning and curriculum (61%)
 3. Developing or teaching information literacy programs or research skills programs (56%)
- 75% of Catholic school respondents, 35% of Government school respondents, and 66% of Independent school respondents indicated that they include a percentage of eBooks in their collection.
- 63% of Catholic school respondents, 37% of Government school respondents, and 64% of Independent school respondents indicated that they include a percentage of eResources - subscription databases in their collection.

3.0 School library budgets

3.1 Approximate library budget all schools

When looking at reported budgets for all Australian schools, the highest percentage of respondents (28%) reported a budget in the \$2501-\$5000 range.

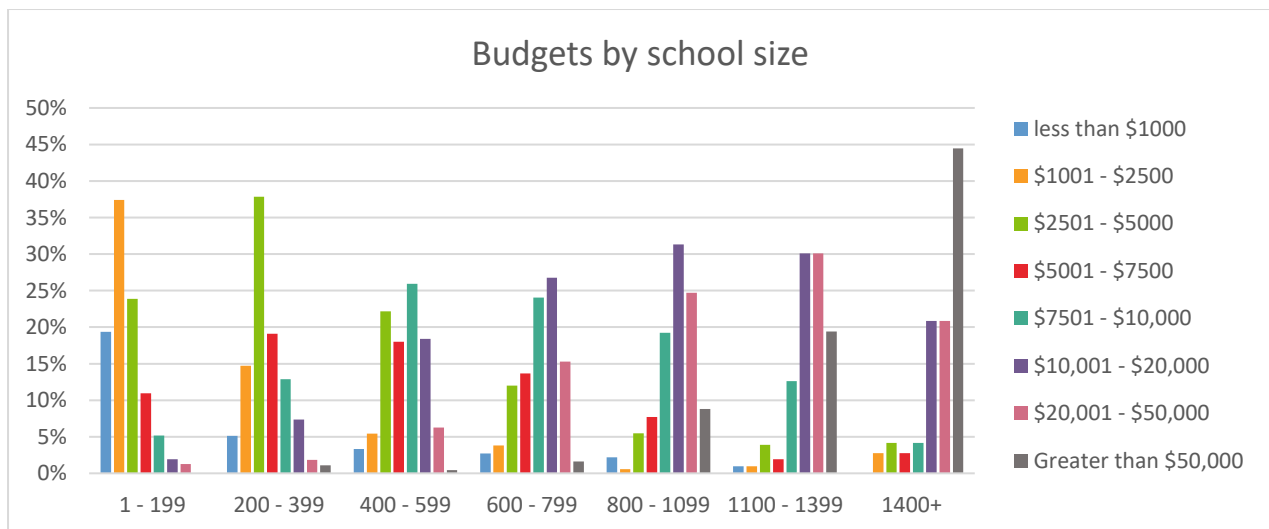
Further breakdown of school budgets by school size, education provider, and school type have been provided on the following pages.



Note: Reported "Unknown" budgets have not been included

3.2 Budgets by school size

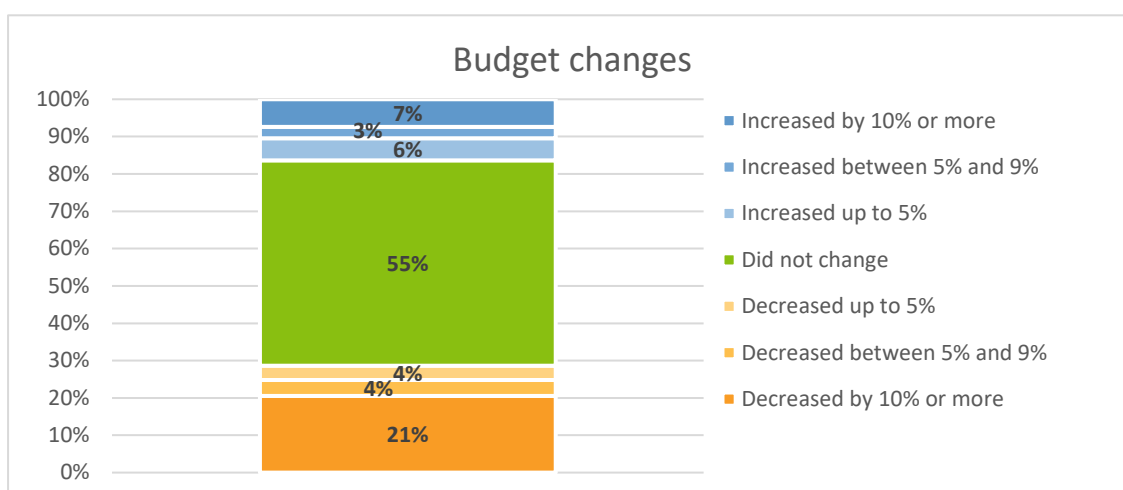
When looking at library budgets by school size, Australian respondents reported the following budget ranges:



Budgets	1 - 199	200 - 399	400 - 599	600 - 799	800 - 1099	1100 - 1399	1400+
less than \$1000	19%	5%	3%	3%	2%	1%	0%
\$1001 - \$2500	37%	15%	5%	4%	1%	1%	3%
\$2501 - \$5000	24%	38%	22%	12%	5%	4%	4%
\$5001 - \$7500	11%	19%	18%	14%	8%	2%	3%
\$7501 - \$10,000	5%	13%	26%	24%	19%	13%	4%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	2%	7%	18%	27%	31%	30%	21%
\$20,001 - \$50,000	1%	2%	6%	15%	25%	30%	21%
Greater than \$50,000	0%	1%	0%	2%	9%	19%	44%

3.3 Budget changes

In 2020, 55% of respondents from Australia reported that their budget had not changed from 2019. 29% of respondents reported a budget decrease; 16% reported a budget increase.



Reasons provided for budget decreases include:

- impacts of COVID-19 (school-wide budget cuts, need to purchase cleaning supplies, fee relief for parents, budget required for classrooms having to provide access to online learning, reduced income from international students, decrease in fundraising and parent voluntary contributions),
- drop in enrolments,
- cutting costs to fund building projects,
- change in school leadership,
- library software costs taken over by the IT department and allocated to their budget,
- previous year's budget was higher due to refurbishment,
- non-fiction purchasing reduced because students are more likely use the internet for research.

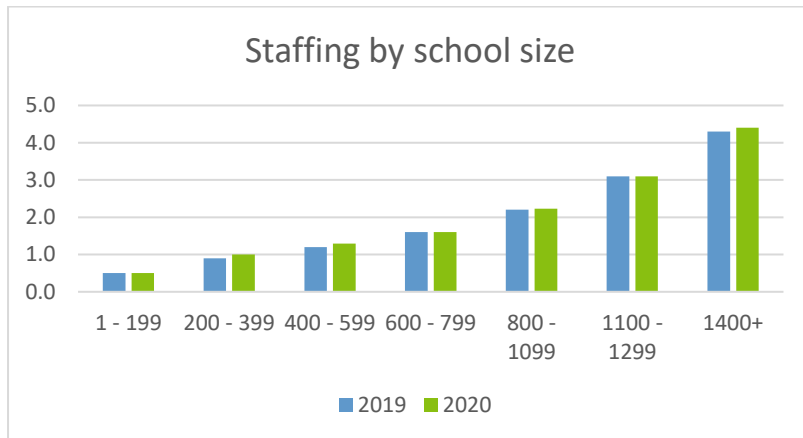
Reasons provided for increases included:

- impacts of COVID-19 (purchasing online resources and upgrading library software to provide online access to the library),
- increased student numbers,
- second library built,
- to purchase resources (for events i.e. Indigenous Literacy Day, and to support the curriculum)
- strong advocacy for the library,
- change in school leadership,
- furniture upgrades,
- large P&C donation,
- higher student engagement with the library/reading.

4.0 School library staffing

4.1 Staffing by school size

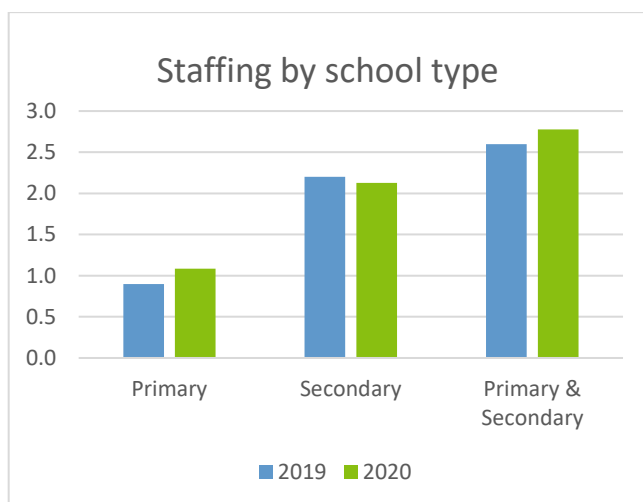
When looking at Australian school library staffing by school size, the reported staffing average comparison for 2019 and 2020 is as follows:



School Size	2019	2020
1 - 199	0.5	0.5
200 - 399	0.9	1.0
400 - 599	1.2	1.3
600 - 799	1.6	1.6
800 - 1099	2.2	2.2
1100 - 1399	3.1	3.1
1400+	4.3	4.4

4.2 Staffing by school type

When looking at Australian school library staffing by school type, the reported staffing average comparison for 2019 and 2020 is as follows:



School Type	2019	2020
Primary/Contributing	0.9	1.1
Secondary	2.2	2.1
Primary & Secondary	2.6	2.8

4.3 Staffing changes

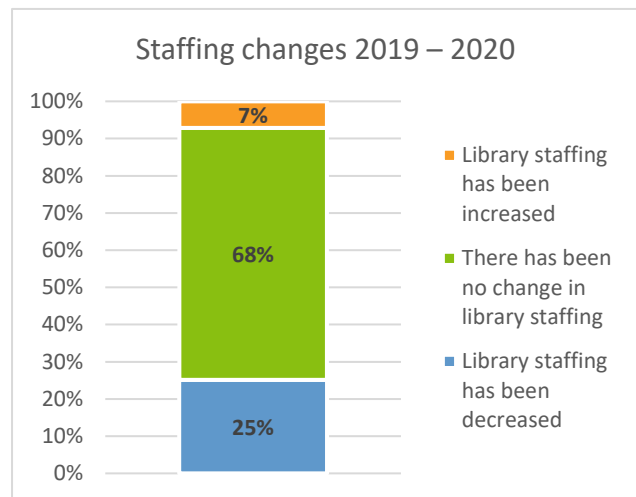
In 2020, 68% of respondents from Australia reported that there had been no change in staffing from 2019. 25% of respondents reported staffing decreases; 7% reported staffing increases.

Reasons provided for staffing decreases include:

- new school leadership,
- funding concerns related to COVID-19,
- merger of library and IT department,
- staff leaving and not being replaced,
- drop in enrolments,
- school-wide budget cuts,
- COVID-19 furlough or transfer to another department,
- teacher-aides reallocated to support classroom reading,
- and a reduction in library lessons.

Reasons provided for staffing increases include:

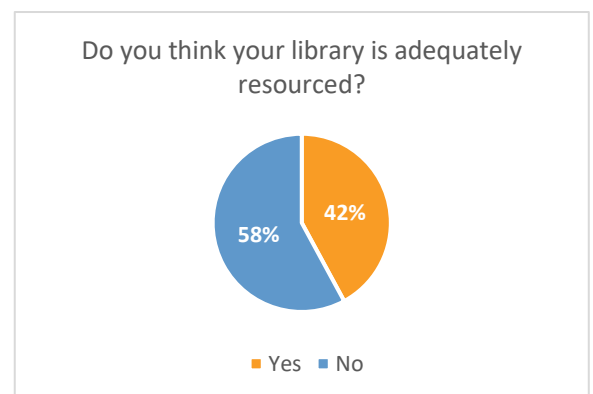
- school growth,
- COVID-19 cleaning requirements,
- library hours extended,
- library assistant hired,
- additional support for online learning,
- and increased workload.



5.0 Resourcing the library

5.1 Is your school library adequately resourced?

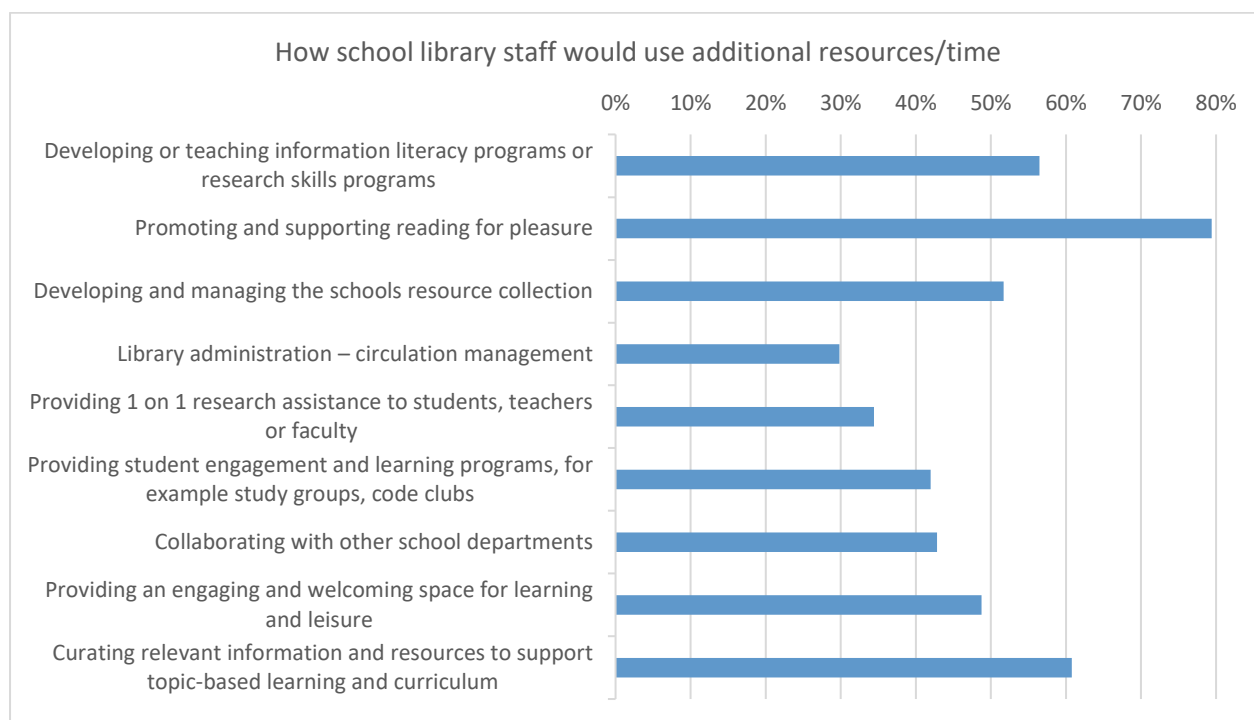
Participants were asked if they thought their library was adequately resourced (including budget and staffing). 42% of Australian respondents said “yes”; 58% said “no”.



5.2 How school library staff would use additional resources/time

Participants were asked if they had more resources and/or time, what they would like to do, or do more of in their library. The top 3 responses were:

1. Promoting and supporting reading for pleasure (79%)
2. Curating relevant information and resources to support topic-based learning and curriculum (61%)
3. Developing or teaching information literacy programs or research skills programs (56%)



Other responses include:

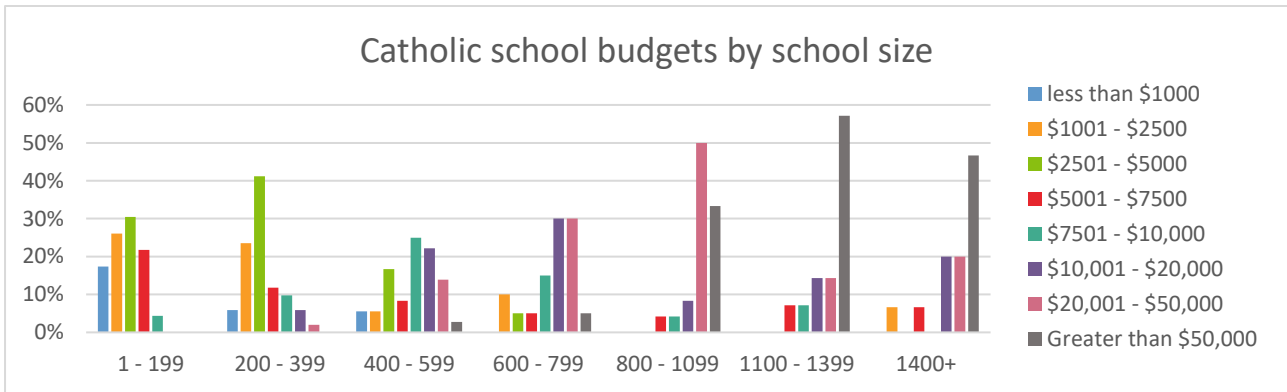
- updating technology,
- supporting student well-being,
- refurbishing/reorganising the library space,
- expanding the online library space,
- converting the school archives to electronic format,
- setting up classes on LearnPath,
- running cultural awareness events,
- developing a makerspace and/or virtual reality space,
- participating in more professional development,
- and working with families to increase reading at home.

6.0 Catholic schools in Australia

6.1 Catholic school budgets – Australia

6.1.1 Catholic school budgets by school size

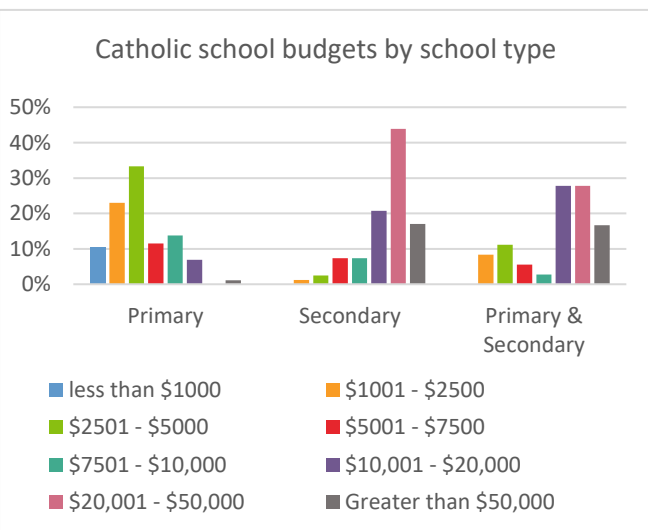
When looking at library budgets by school size, Catholic school respondents reported the following budget ranges:



Budget ranges	1 - 199	200 - 399	400 - 599	600 - 799	800 - 1099	1100 - 1399	1400+
Less than \$1000	17%	6%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$1001 - \$2500	26%	24%	6%	10%	0%	0%	7%
\$2501 - \$5000	30%	41%	17%	5%	0%	0%	0%
\$5001 - \$7500	22%	12%	8%	5%	4%	7%	7%
\$7501 - \$10,000	4%	10%	25%	15%	4%	7%	0%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	0%	6%	22%	30%	8%	14%	20%
\$20,001 - \$50,000	0%	2%	14%	30%	50%	14%	20%
Greater than \$50,000	0%	0%	3%	5%	33%	57%	47%

6.1.2 Catholic school budgets by school type

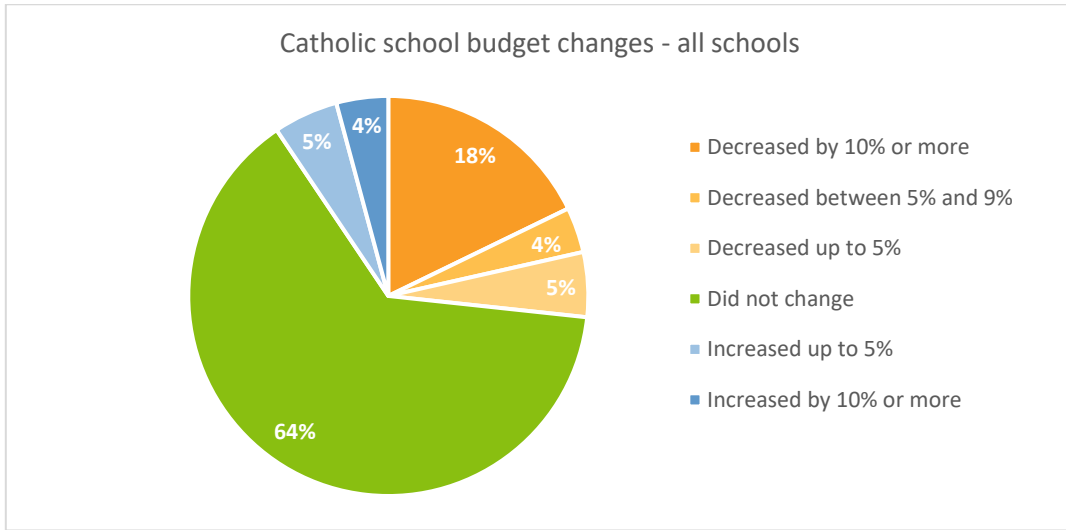
When looking at library budgets by school type, Catholic school respondents reported the following budget ranges:



Budget ranges	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
less than \$1000	10%	0%	0%
\$1001 - \$2500	23%	1%	8%
\$2501 - \$5000	33%	2%	11%
\$5001 - \$7500	11%	7%	6%
\$7501 - \$10,000	14%	7%	3%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	7%	21%	28%
\$20,001 - \$50,000	0%	44%	28%
Greater than \$50,000	1%	17%	17%

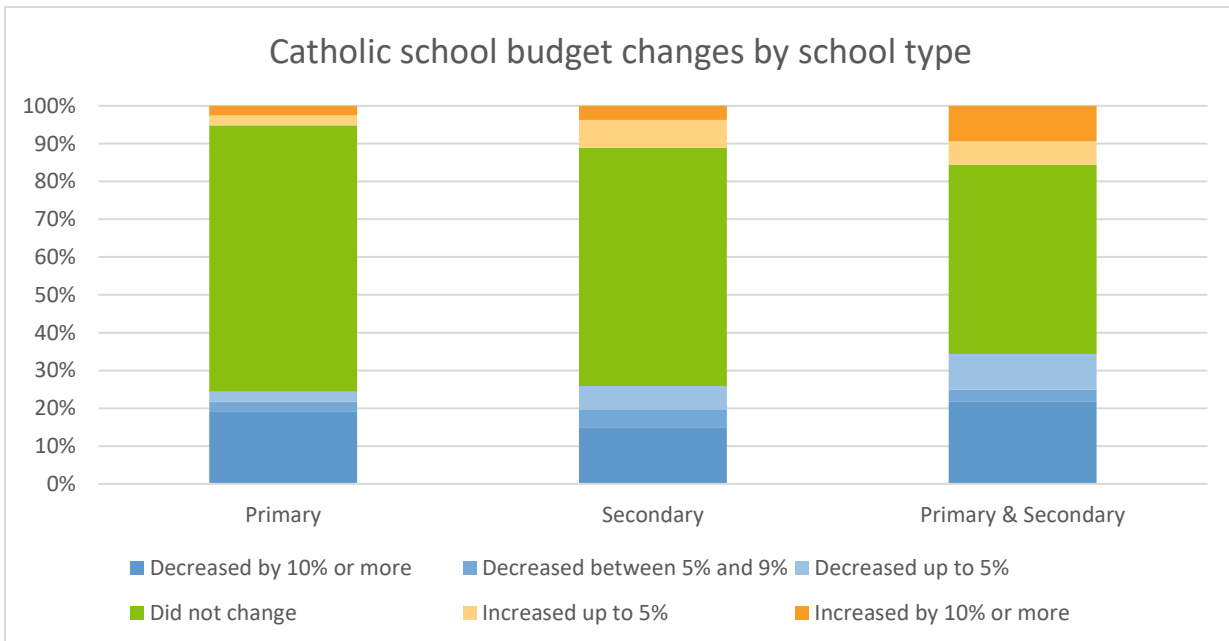
6.1.3 Catholic school budget changes: 2019 – 2020

In 2020, 64% of Catholic school respondents from Australia reported that their budget had not changed from 2019. 27% of respondents reported a budget decrease; 9% reported a budget increase.



When looking at library budget changes by school type, Catholic school respondents reported the following:

School Type	Increased	Did not change	Decreased
Primary	6%	71%	24%
Secondary	11%	63%	26%
Primary & Secondary	16%	50%	34%

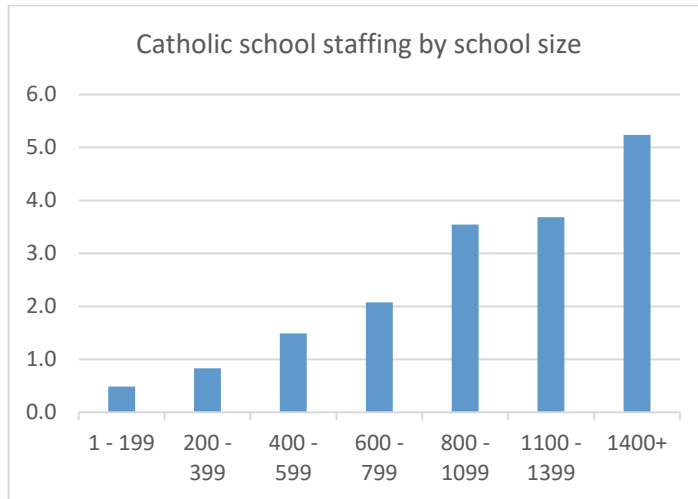


6.2 Catholic school staffing – Australia

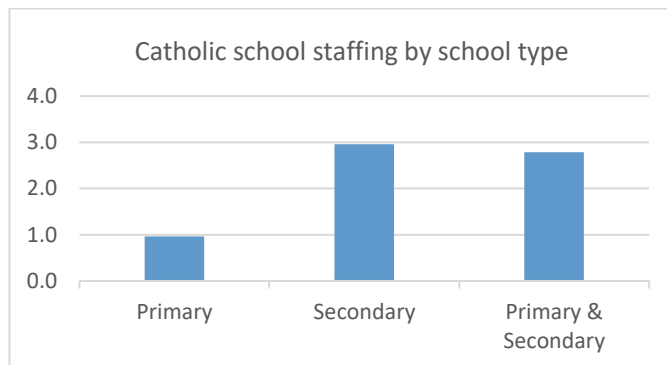
6.2.1 Catholic school staffing by school size and type

When looking at Catholic school library staffing by school size and type, respondents reported the following average full-time equivalents (FTE):

School Size	Staff
1 - 199	0.5 FTE
200 - 399	0.8 FTE
400 - 599	1.5 FTE
600 - 799	2.1 FTE
800 - 1099	3.5 FTE
1100 -1299	3.7 FTE
1400+	5.2 FTE

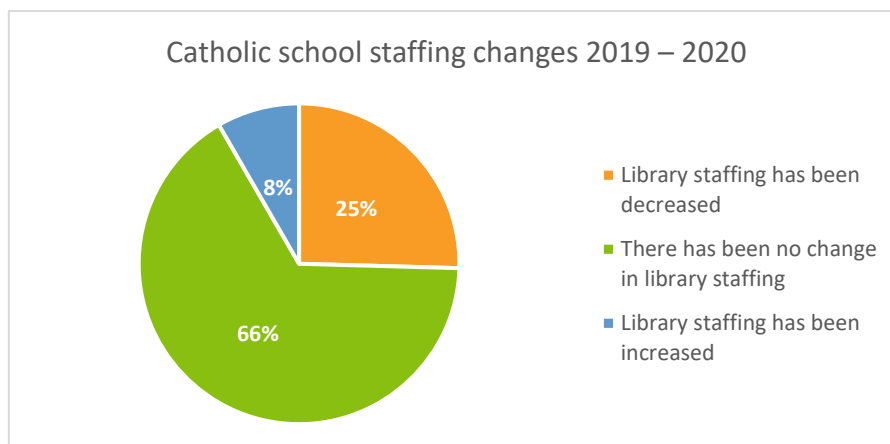


School Size	Staff
Primary	1.0 FTE
Secondary	3.0 FTE
Primary & Secondary	2.8 FTE



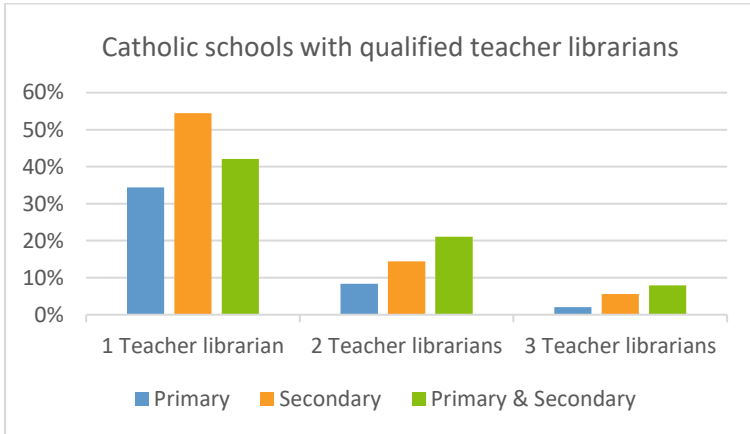
6.2.2 Catholic school staffing changes: 2019 – 2020

In 2020, 66% of Catholic school respondents from Australia reported that staffing had not changed from 2019. 25% of respondents reported a staffing decrease; 8% reported a staffing increase.

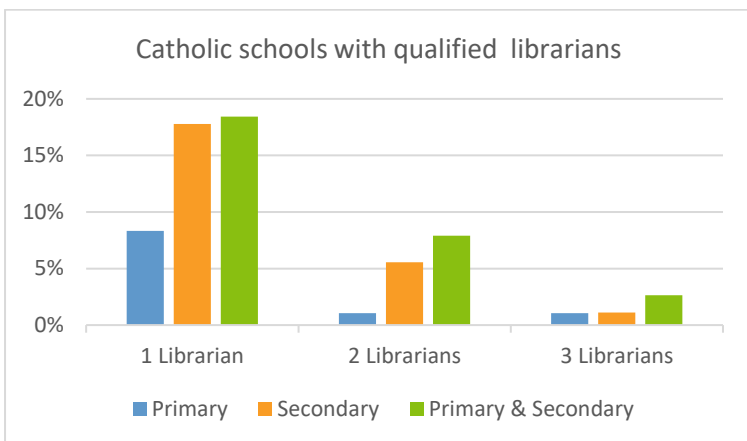


6.2.3 Catholic school qualifications

Participants were asked the number of qualified teacher librarians and number of qualified librarians working in their library. The charts below show the percentage of respondents that reported having 1, 2 or 3 teacher librarians and librarians in working in the library by school type.

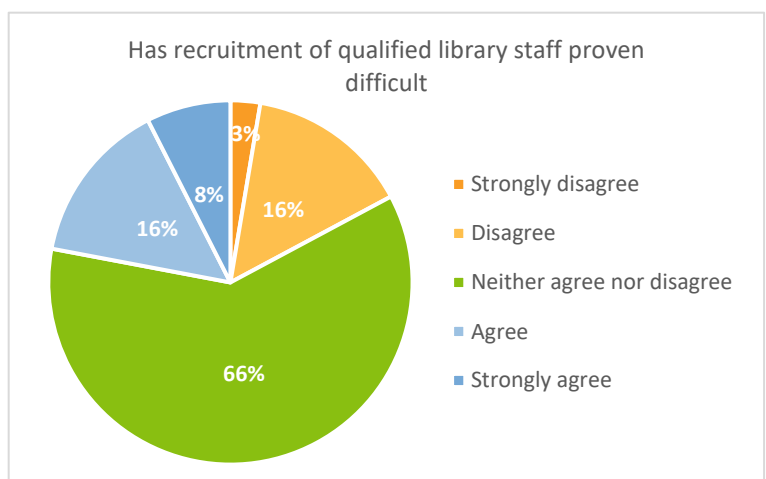


	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
1	34%	54%	42%
2	8%	14%	21%
3	2%	6%	8%

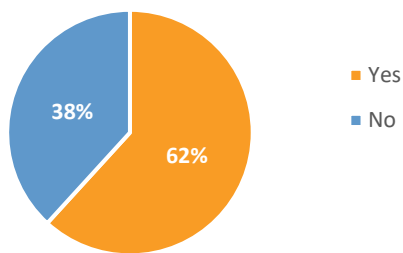


	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
1	8%	18%	18%
2	1%	6%	8%
3	1%	1%	3%

24% of respondents reported that it has been difficult to recruit qualified library staff; 19% reported that it has not been difficult.



Opportunities for professional development

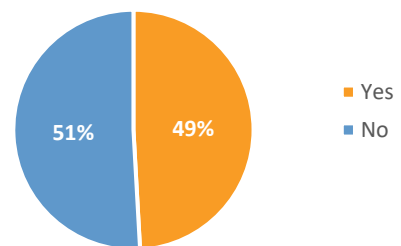


62% of respondents reported that they feel they have sufficient opportunity for professional development; 38% reported that they did not.

6.3 Catholic schools on adequate resourcing

When asked if they felt their school library was adequately resourced, including staffing and budget, 49% of Catholic school respondents said “yes”.

Do you think your library is adequately resourced?

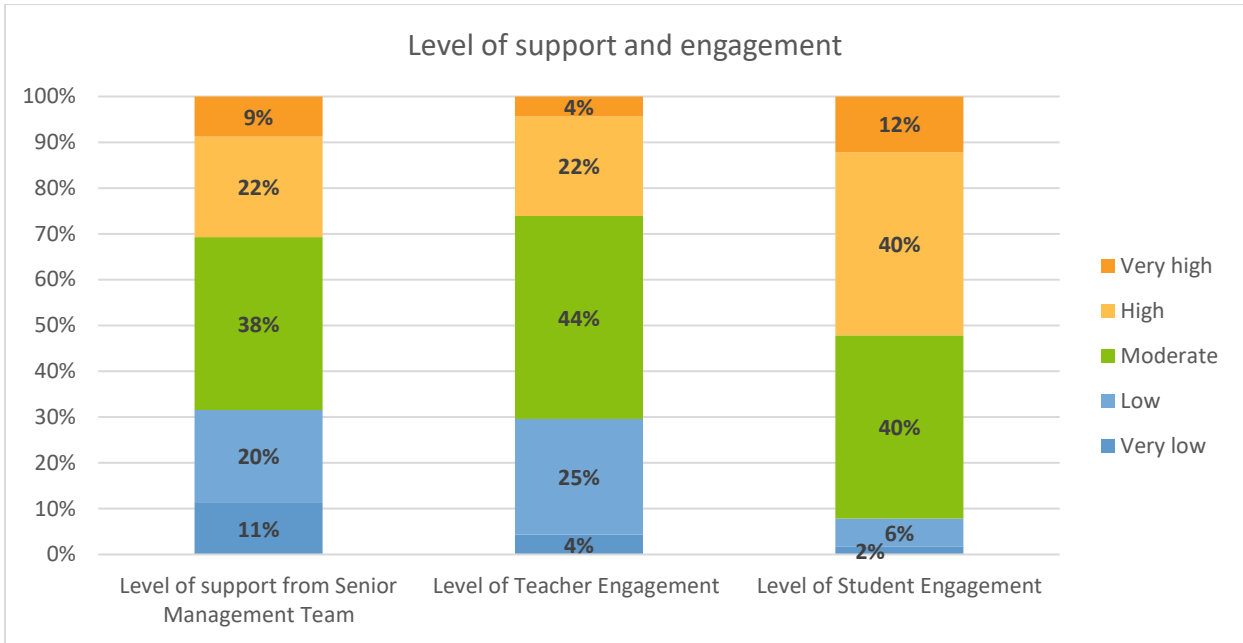


6.4 Level of support and engagement in Catholic schools

Participants were asked about the level of support they receive from the Senior Management Team and the level of teacher and student engagement with the library.

The percentages of Australia respondents from Catholic schools, for categories ranging from “very low” to “very high”, are as follows:

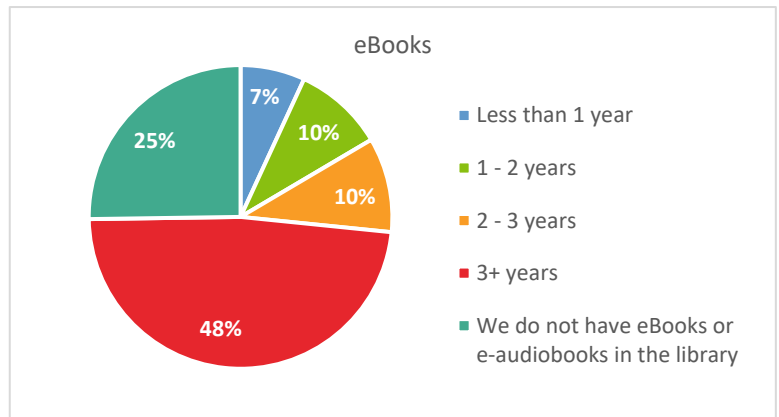
	Level of support from Senior Management Team	Level of Teacher Engagement	Level of Student Engagement
Very high	9%	4%	12%
High	22%	22%	40%
Moderate	38%	44%	40%
Low	20%	25%	6%
Very low	11%	4%	2%



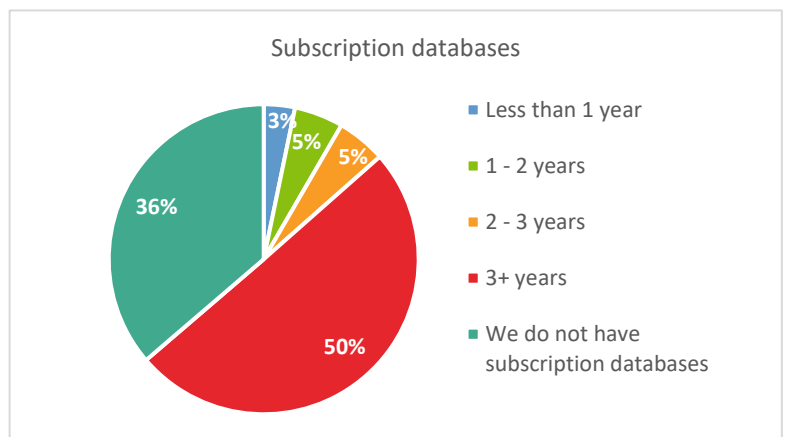
6.5 Online Resources in Catholic schools

Participants were asked how long they have had eBooks and subscription databases in the library. Catholic schools in Australia reported the following:

	Percentage
Less than 1 year	7%
1 – 2 years	10%
2 – 3 years	10%
3+ years	48%
We do not have eBooks or e-audiobooks in the library	25%



	Percentage
Less than 1 year	3%
1 – 2 years	5%
2 – 3 years	5%
3+ years	50%
We do not have subscription databases in the library	36%

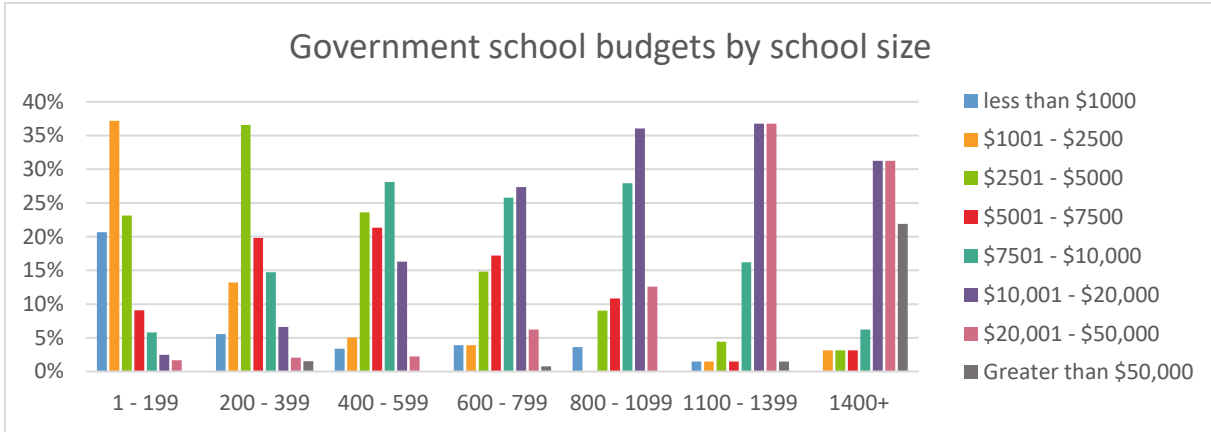


7.0 Government schools in Australia

7.1 Government school budgets – Australia

7.1.1 Government school budgets by school size

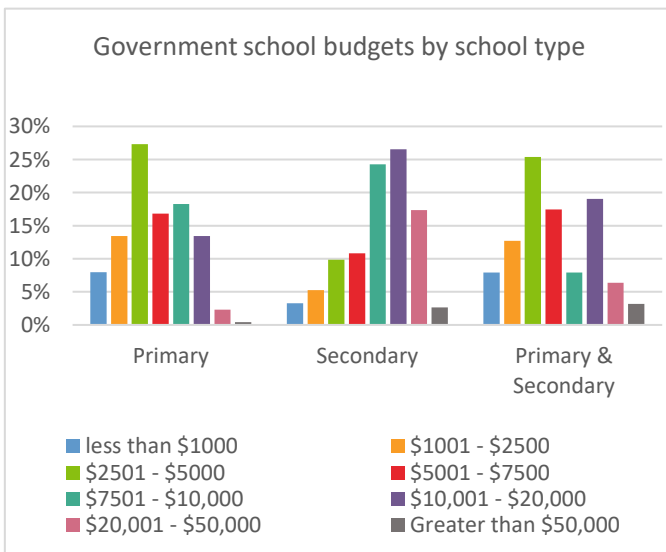
When looking at library budgets by school size, Government school respondents reported the following budget ranges:



	1 - 199	200 - 399	400 - 599	600 - 799	800 - 1099	1100 - 1399	1400+
less than \$1000	21%	6%	3%	4%	4%	1%	0%
\$1001 - \$2500	37%	13%	5%	4%	0%	1%	3%
\$2501 - \$5000	23%	37%	24%	15%	9%	4%	3%
\$5001 - \$7500	9%	20%	21%	17%	11%	1%	3%
\$7501 - \$10,000	6%	15%	28%	26%	28%	16%	6%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	2%	7%	16%	27%	36%	37%	31%
\$20,001 - \$50,000	2%	2%	2%	6%	13%	37%	31%
Greater than \$50,000	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	22%

7.1.2 Government school budgets by school type

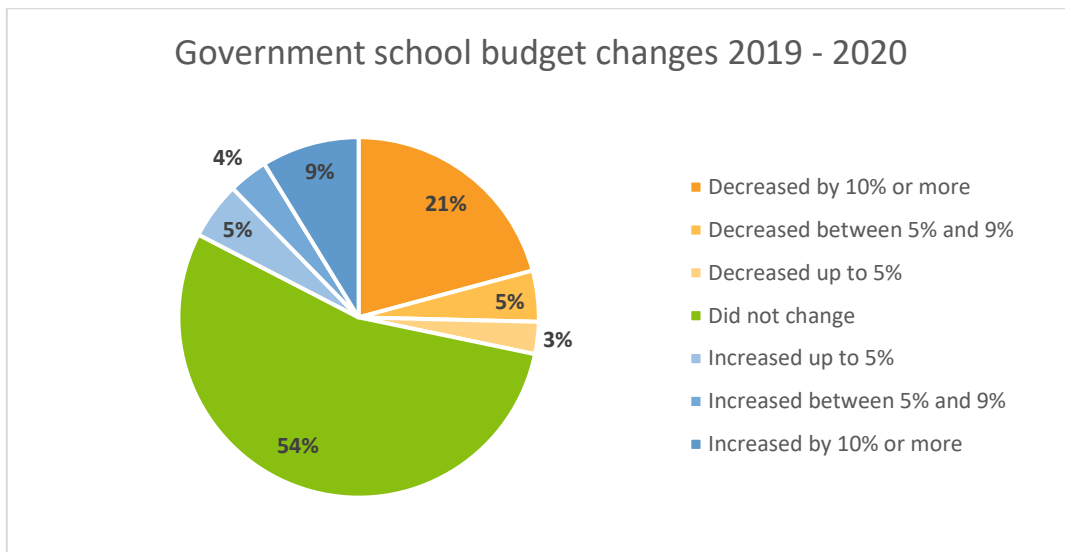
When looking at library budgets by school type, Government school respondents reported the following budget ranges:



	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
less than \$1000	8%	3%	8%
\$1001 - \$2500	13%	5%	13%
\$2501 - \$5000	27%	10%	25%
\$5001 - \$7500	17%	11%	17%
\$7501 - \$10,000	18%	24%	8%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	13%	27%	19%
\$20,001 - \$50,000	2%	17%	6%
Greater than \$50,000	0%	3%	3%

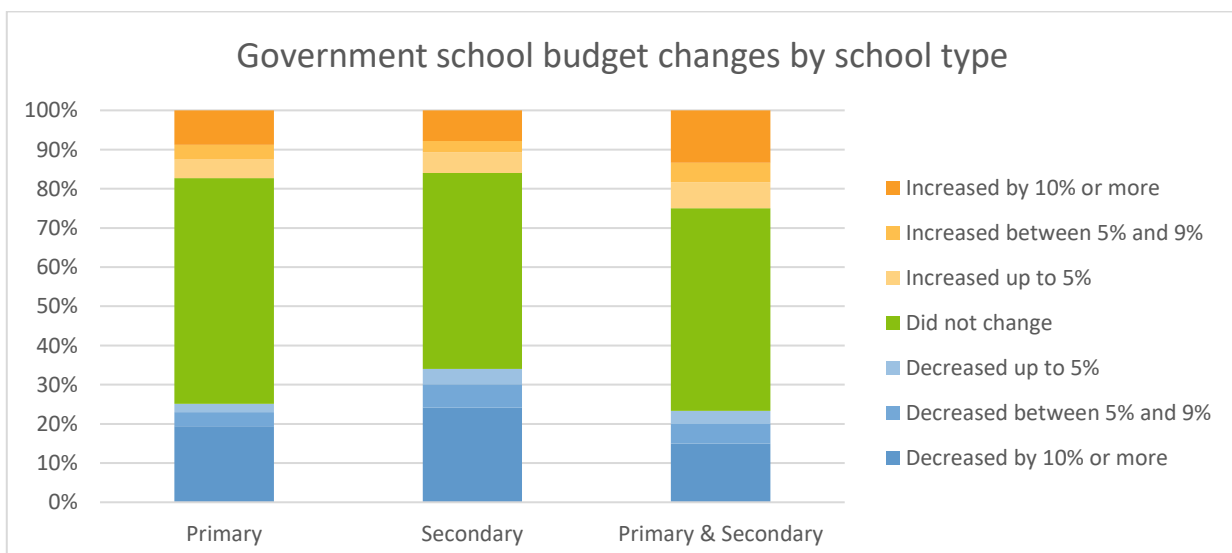
7.1.3 Government school budget changes: 2019 – 2020

In 2020, 54% of Government school respondents from Australia reported that their budget had not changed from 2019. 29% of respondents reported a budget decrease; 18% reported a budget increase.



When looking at library budget changes by school type, Government school respondents reported the following:

School Type	Increased	Did not change	Decreased
Primary	17%	58%	25%
Secondary	16%	50%	34%
Primary & Secondary	25%	52%	23%

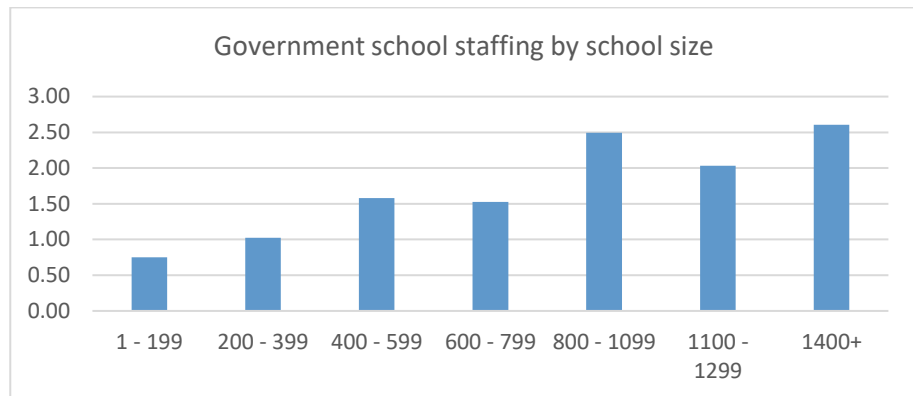


7.2 Government school staffing – Australia

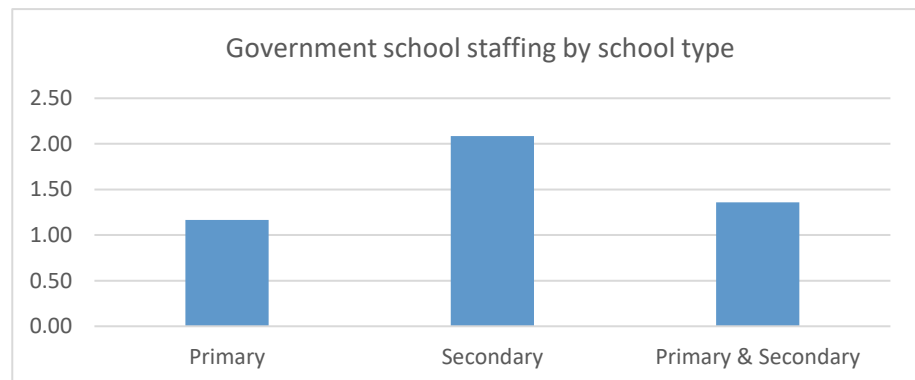
7.2.1 Government school staffing by school size and type

When looking at Government school library staffing by school size and type, respondents reported the following average full-time equivalents (FTE):

School Size	Staff
1 - 199	0.8 FTE
200 - 399	1.0 FTE
400 - 599	1.6 FTE
600 - 799	1.5 FTE
800 - 1099	2.5 FTE
1100 - 1299	2.3 FTE
1400+	2.6 FTE

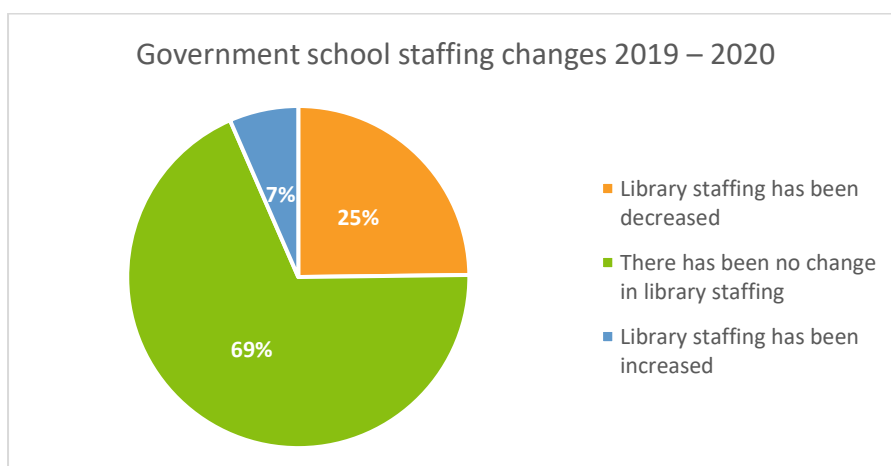


School Size	Staff
Primary	1.1 FTE
Secondary	2.1 FTE
Primary & Secondary	1.4 FTE



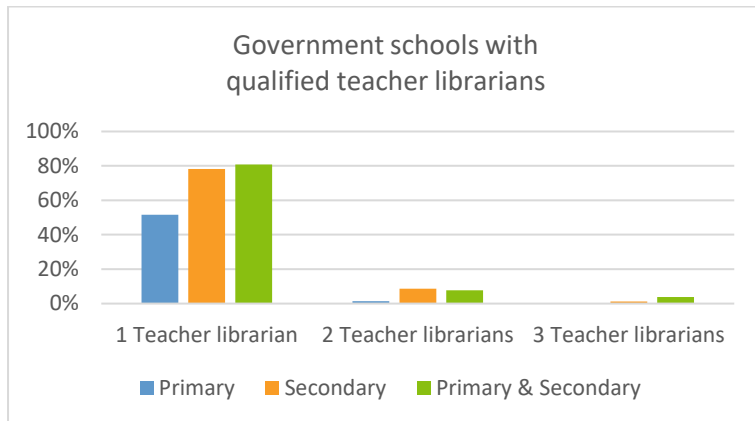
7.2.2 Government school staffing changes: 2019 – 2020

In 2020, 69% of Government school respondents from Australia reported that staffing had not changed from 2019. 25% of respondents reported a staffing decrease; 7% reported a staffing increase.

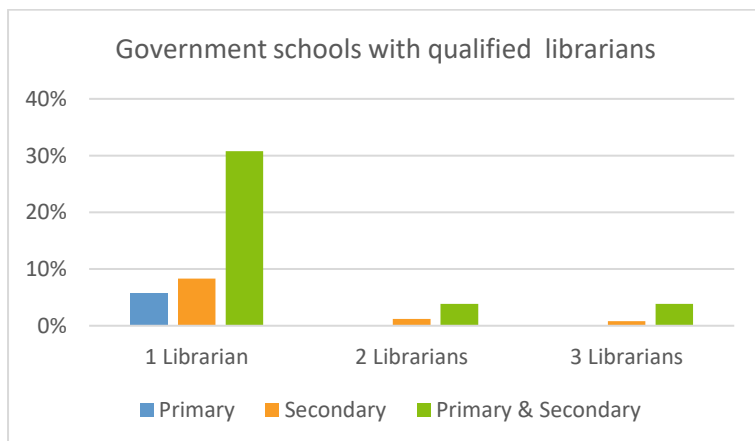


7.2.3 Government school qualifications

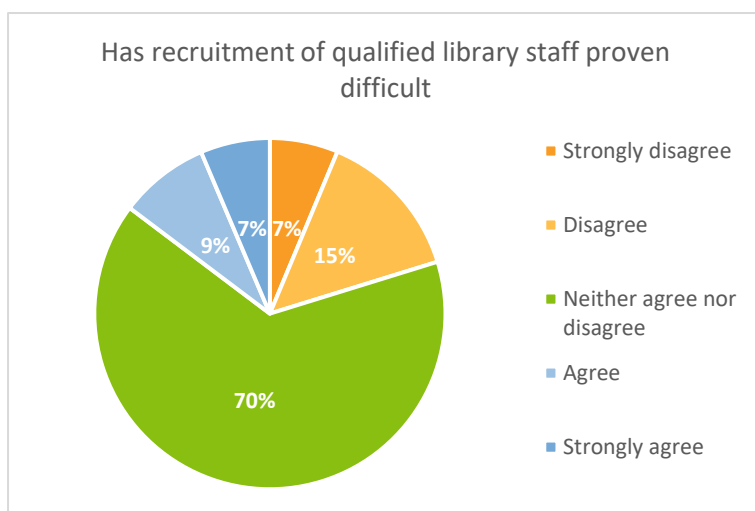
Participants were asked the number of qualified teacher librarians and number of qualified librarians working in their library. The charts below show the percentage of respondents that reported having 1, 2 or 3 teacher librarians and librarians in working in the library by school type.



	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
1	52%	78%	81%
2	1%	9%	8%
3	0%	1%	4%

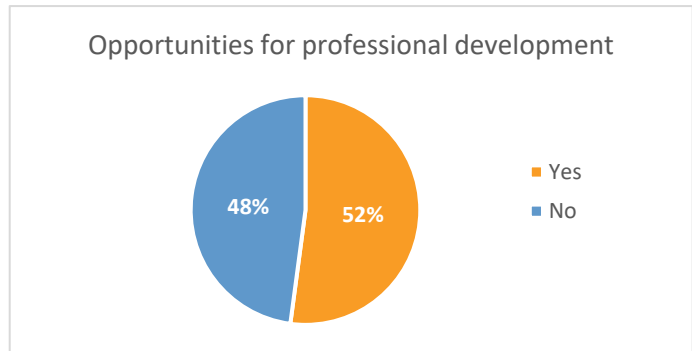


	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
1	6%	8%	31%
2	0%	1%	4%
3	0%	1%	4%



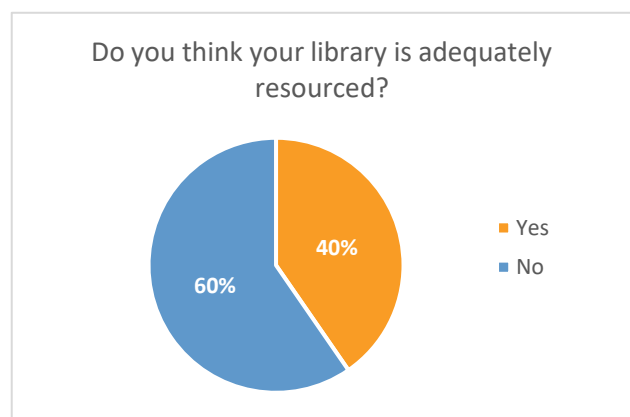
16% of respondents reported that it has been difficult to recruit qualified library staff; 22% reported that it has not been difficult.

52% of respondents reported that they feel they have sufficient opportunity for professional development; 48% reported that they did not.



7.3 Government schools on adequate resourcing

When asked if they felt their school library was adequately resourced, including staffing and budget, 40% of Government school respondents said “yes”.

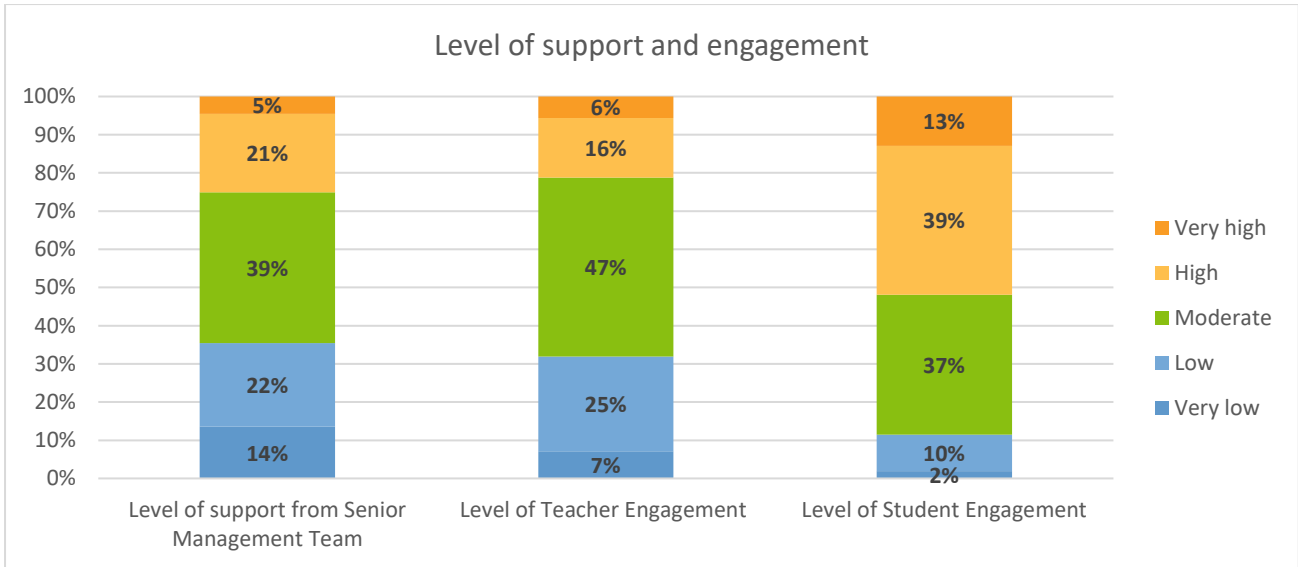


7.4 Level of support and engagement in Government schools

Participants were asked about the level of support they receive from the Senior Management Team and the level of teacher and student engagement with the library.

The percentages of Australia respondents from Government schools, for categories ranging from “very low” to “very high”, are as follows:

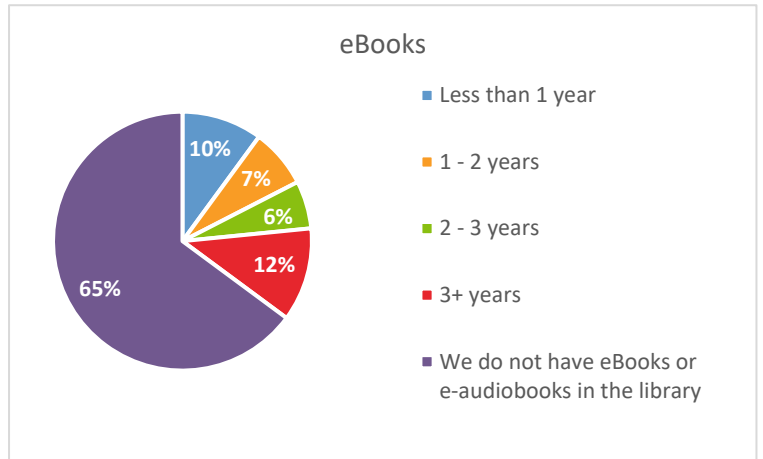
	Level of Support from the Senior Management Team	Level of Teacher Engagement with the Library	Level of Student Engagement with the Library
Very high	5%	6%	13%
High	21%	16%	39%
Moderate	39%	47%	37%
Low	22%	25%	10%
Very low	14%	7%	2%



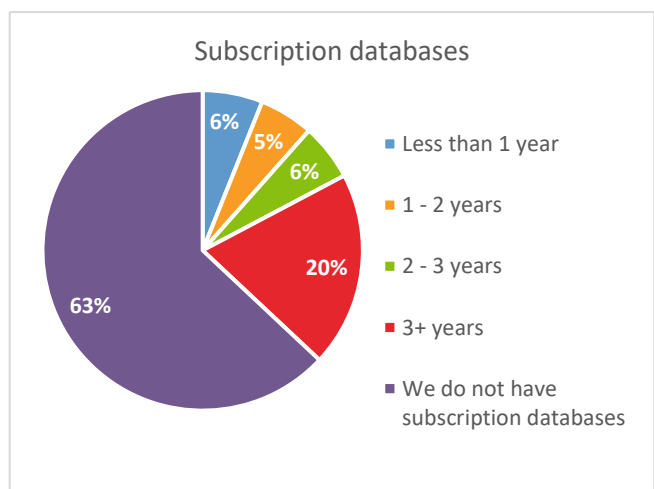
7.5 Online resources in Government schools

Participants were asked how long they have had eBooks and subscription databases in the library. Government schools in Australia reported the following:

	Percentage
Less than 1 year	10%
1 – 2 years	7%
2 – 3 years	6%
3+ years	12%
We do not have eBooks or e-audiobooks in the library	65%



	Percentage
Less than 1 year	6%
1 – 2 years	5%
2 – 3 years	6%
3+ years	20%
We do not have subscription databases in the library	63%

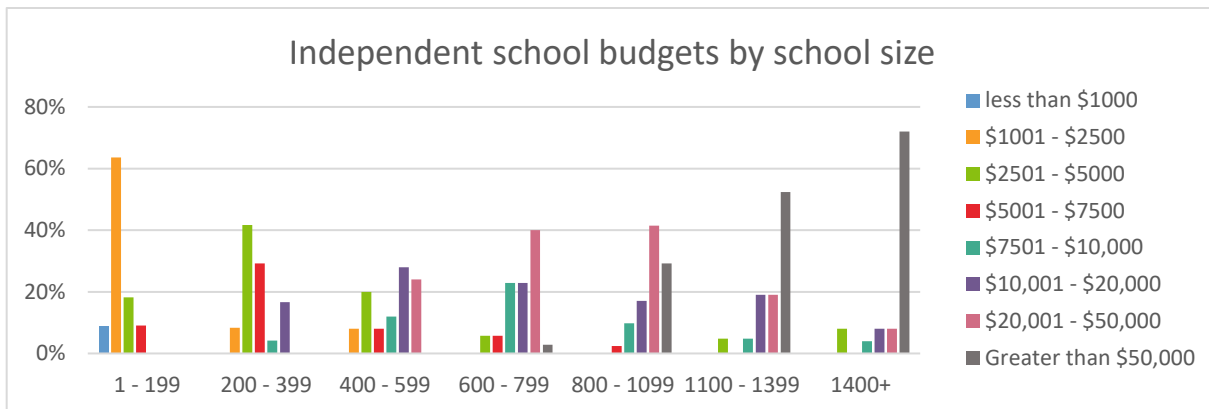


8.0 Independent schools in Australia

8.1 Independent school budgets – Australia

8.1.1 Independent school budgets by school size

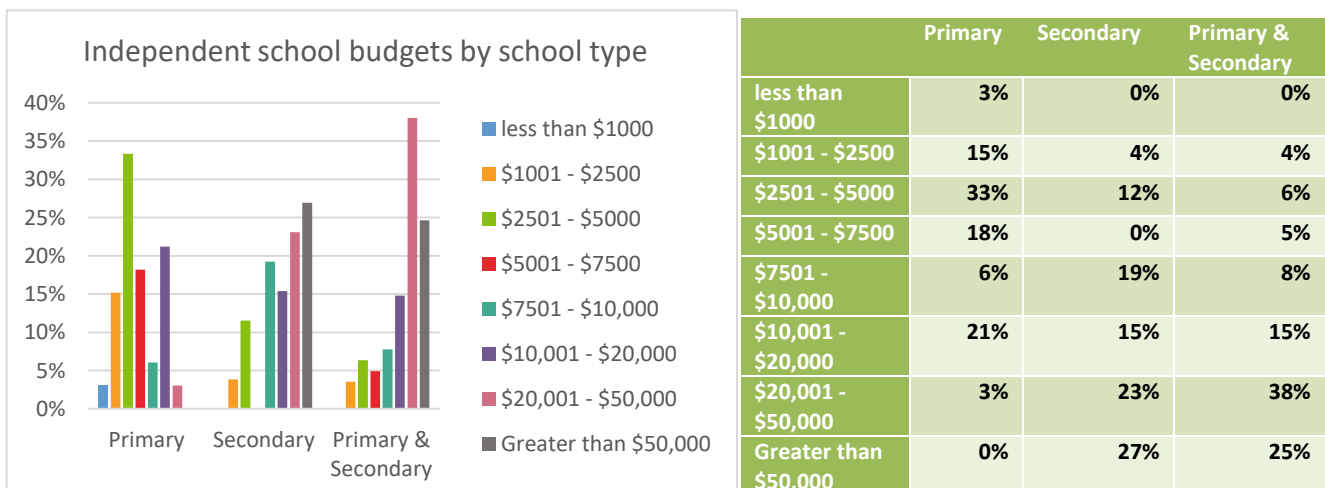
When looking at library budgets by school size, Independent school respondents reported the following budget ranges:



	1 - 199	200 - 399	400 - 599	600 - 799	800 - 1099	1100 - 1399	1400+
less than \$1000	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$1001 - \$2500	64%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$2501 - \$5000	18%	42%	20%	6%	0%	5%	8%
\$5001 - \$7500	9%	29%	8%	6%	2%	0%	0%
\$7501 - \$10,000	0%	4%	12%	23%	10%	5%	4%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	0%	17%	28%	23%	17%	19%	8%
\$20,001 - \$50,000	0%	0%	24%	40%	41%	19%	8%
Greater than \$50,000	0%	0%	0%	3%	29%	52%	72%

8.1.2 Independent school budgets by school type

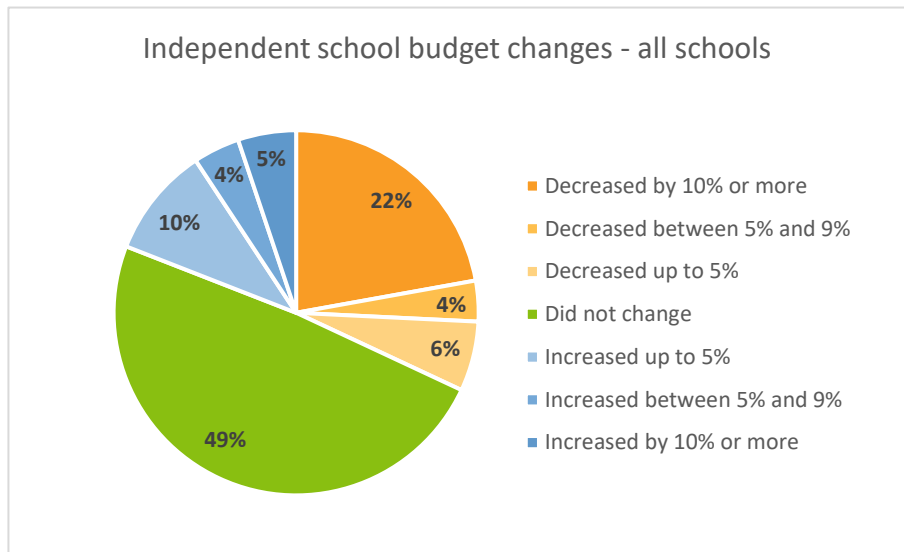
When looking at library budgets by school type, Independent school respondents reported the following budget ranges:



	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
less than \$1000	3%	0%	0%
\$1001 - \$2500	15%	4%	4%
\$2501 - \$5000	33%	12%	6%
\$5001 - \$7500	18%	0%	5%
\$7501 - \$10,000	6%	19%	8%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	21%	15%	15%
\$20,001 - \$50,000	3%	23%	38%
Greater than \$50,000	0%	27%	25%

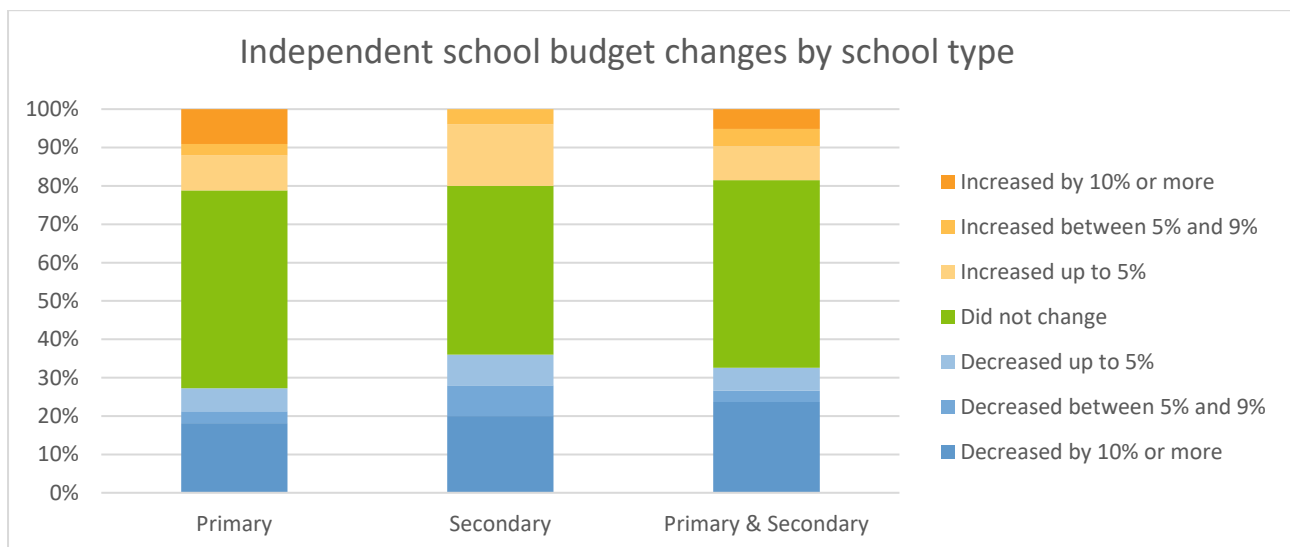
8.1.3 Independent school budget changes: 2019 – 2020

In 2020, 49% of Independent school respondents from Australia reported that their budget had not changed from 2019. 32% of respondents reported a budget decrease; 19% reported a budget increase.



When looking at library budget changes by school type, Independent school respondents reported the following:

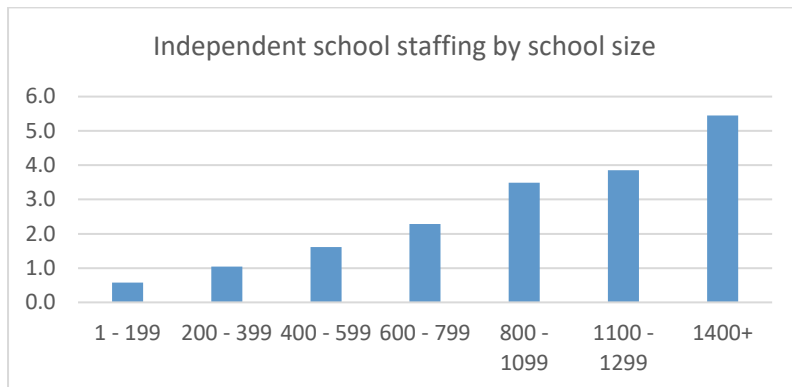
	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
Decreased by 10% or more	18%	20%	24%
Decreased between 5% and 9%	3%	8%	3%
Decreased up to 5%	6%	8%	6%
Did not change	52%	44%	49%
Increased up to 5%	9%	16%	9%
Increased between 5% and 9%	3%	4%	4%
Increased by 10% or more	9%	0%	5%



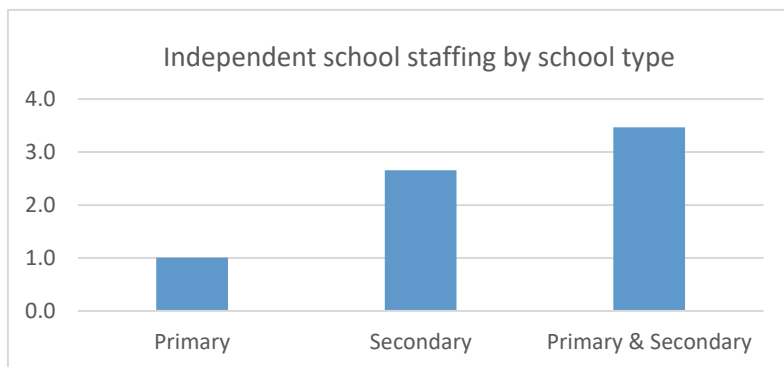
8.2 Independent school staffing – Australia

8.2.1 Independent school staffing changes: 2019 – 2020

When looking at Independent school library staffing by school size and type, respondents reported the following average full-time equivalents (FTE):



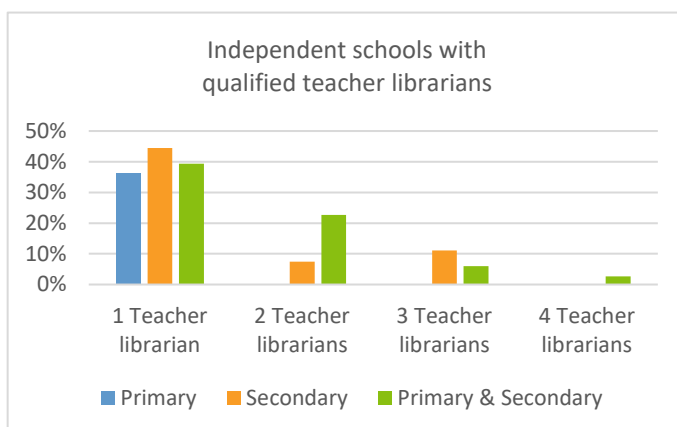
School Size	Staff
1 - 199	0.6 FTE
200 - 399	1.0 FTE
400 - 599	1.6 FTE
600 - 799	2.3 FTE
800 - 1099	3.5 FTE
1100 - 1299	3.9 FTE
1400+	5.4 FTE



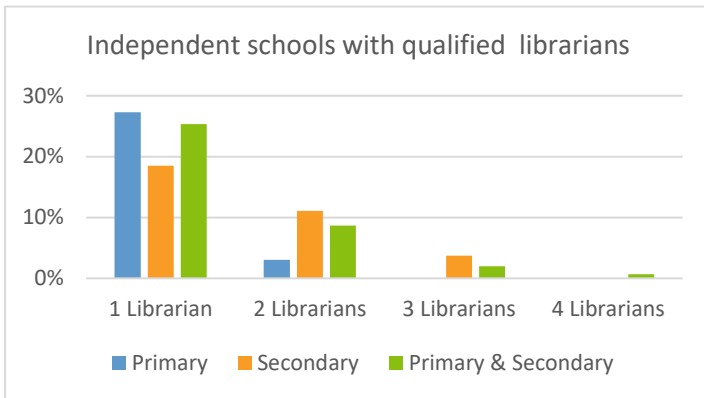
School Type	Staff
Primary	1.0 FTE
Secondary	2.7 FTE
Primary & Secondary	3.5 FTE

8.2.2 Independent school qualifications

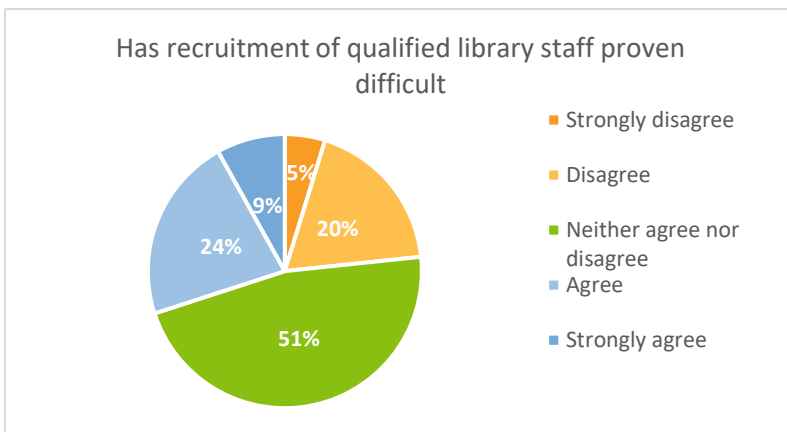
Participants were asked the number of qualified teacher librarians and number of qualified librarians working in their library. The charts below show the percentage of respondents that reported having 1, 2 or 3 teacher librarians and librarians in working in the library by school type.



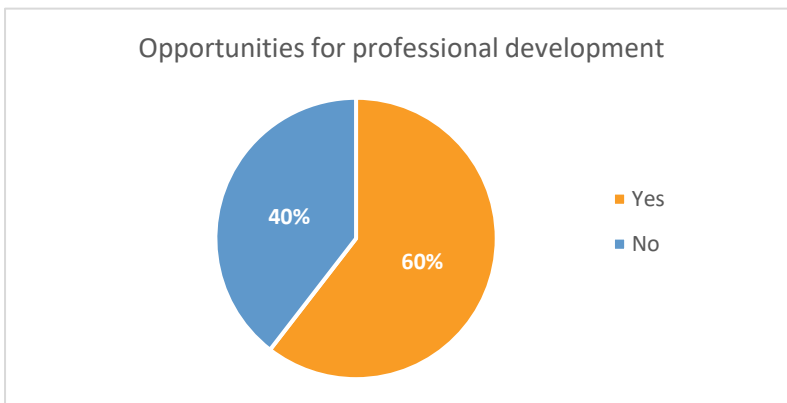
	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
1	36%	44%	39%
2	0%	7%	23%
3	0%	11%	6%
4	0%	0%	3%



	Primary	Secondary	Primary & Secondary
1	27%	19%	25%
2	3%	11%	9%
3	0%	4%	2%
4	0%	0%	1%



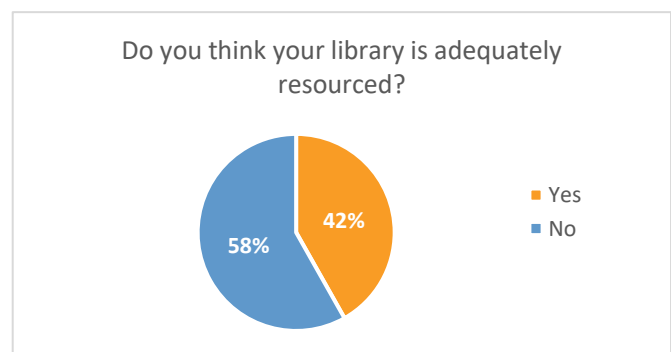
33% of respondents reported that it has been difficult to recruit qualified library staff; 25% reported that it has not been difficult.



60% of respondents reported that they feel they have sufficient opportunity for professional development; 40% reported that they did not.

8.3 Independent schools on adequate resourcing

When asked if they felt their school library was adequately resourced, including staffing and budget, 42% of Independent school respondents said “yes”.

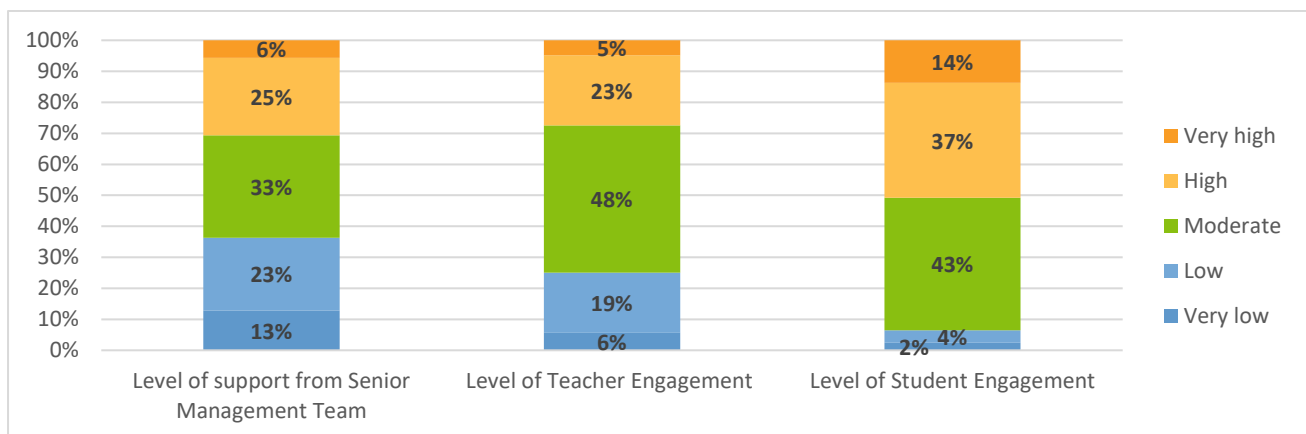


8.4 Level of support and engagement

Participants were asked about the level of support they receive from the Senior Management Team and the level of teacher and student engagement with the library.

The percentages of Australian respondents from Independent schools, for categories ranging from “very low” to “very high”, are as follows:

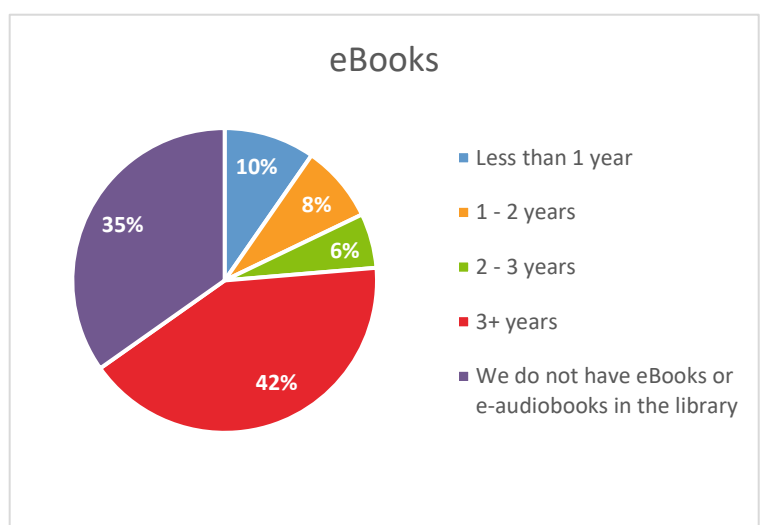
	Level of Support from the Senior Management Team	Level of Teacher Engagement with the Library	Level of Student Engagement with the Library
Very high	6%	5%	14%
High	25%	23%	37%
Moderate	33%	48%	43%
Low	23%	19%	4%
Very low	13%	6%	2%



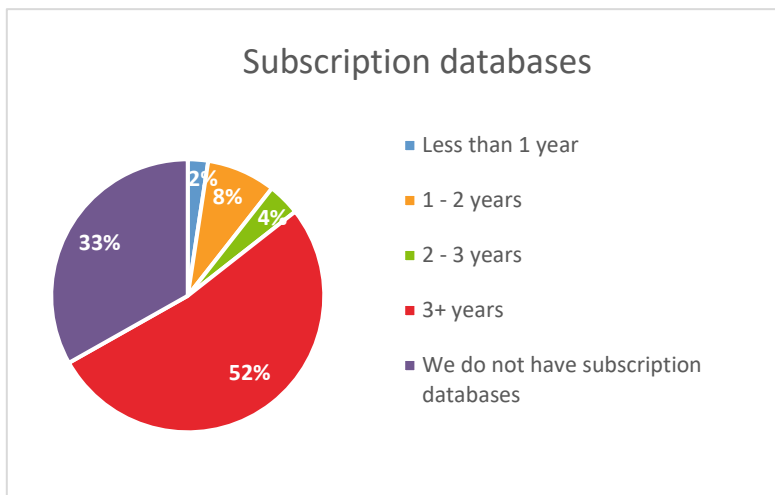
8.5 Online Resources in Independent schools

Participants were asked how long they have had eBooks and subscriptions databases in the library. Independent schools in Australia reported the following:

	Percentage
Less than 1 year	10%
1 - 2 years	8%
2 – 3 years	6%
3+ years	42%
We do not have eBooks or e-audiobooks in the library	35%



	Percentage
Less than 1 year	7%
2 – 3 years	14%
3+ years	43%
We do not have subscription databases in the library	36%



9.0 Feedback themes

The survey asked open-ended questions giving participants an opportunity to comment and share their ideas and reflections on working in a school library. Responses to these questions are shared in more depth in feature documents; the main themes from the comments have been shared below.

9.1 Fundraising

Participants were asked about the impact COVID-19 had on school library fundraising.

Some schools reported that there was no impact on fundraising or that the school doesn't participate in fundraising.

Other respondents reported they rely heavily on fundraising, especially to top up their collection. Impacted fundraising included things like bookfairs, scholastic purchases, Grandparent's Day, parent donations, school fetes, second-hand book sales, and student balls. For these schools, this meant a loss of up to \$10,000. For most schools, moving Scholastic Book Club online saw a large drop in sales (between 25% and 75%). Some respondents reported that they are still waiting to see the impact.

Several respondents shared that the drop in fundraising was not to do with lockdowns and social distancing, rather it was decision made due to the awareness of the pressure on families, particularly those who lost jobs or had their hours reduced.

When asked about new non-contact fundraising initiatives, participants shared the following:

- Online book club orders,
- Read-a-thon,
- Donut drive,
- Adopt-a-book (families buy and donate a book to the library with family name or student name inside the front cover),
- Mother's/Father's Day stalls that students could attend,
- Free dress days,
- Virtual art show,
- Student calendars,
- Write a book in a day,
- Online raffles,
- Approaching major bookstores for a grant,
- Selling weeded books to students.

9.2 What do you see impacting school libraries most in the future?

- An increase in online learning and resources,
- The perception the senior leadership have of the importance of libraries and qualified staff – negative or positive,
- The need to teach digital literacy skills,
- New curriculum requirements,
- New technology and integration with new technologies,
- An increase in curating digital content,
- Classroom libraries and the reliance on digital resources isolating students from the library space,

- The COVID-19 situation highlighting how things can be done differently. Library professionals have acquired skills in the delivery of online/remote content and this upskilling has created opportunities to shape the future of school libraries,
- A lack of time in a crowded curriculum for effective library lessons,
- The improvement of databases and online services to the point where many non-fiction titles will be superfluous,
- Reduced funding due to COVID-19 and the knock-on effects or general funding cuts,
- A lack of understanding of the role of the teacher librarian,
- Libraries disappearing from high schools,
- A lack of reading at home or lack of encouragement to read from parents,
- An increase in qualified library staff being replaced by administration staff or teacher aides,
- Flexible/collaborative learning,
- A shortfall of trained teacher librarians,
- The library becoming a learning and research hub in the school,
- Advocacy campaigns leading to an increase in teacher librarians being employed in schools,
- Pedagogy changes leading to a change in the way the library supports the educational needs of the school community,
- A lack of tertiary courses available in teacher librarianship,
- Government or department level policies.

9.3 Besides COVID-19 what is the greatest challenge your library has faced this year?

- Understaffing or unqualified/disinterested staff,
- Competing demands for the library space
 - Visiting speakers
 - Assemblies
 - Exams
 - Parent-teacher evenings
 - Senior study
 - Non-library related lessons
 - STEM lab
 - Learning support
 - Distance education
- Reduced space due to building works within the school or because the space was required by another faculty,
- Damage to stock,
- Engaging students in reading for pleasure,
- Budget cuts,
- Overdues/lost books,
- Lack of time to run the library or develop library programs/services,
- Outdated software/technology,
- Engaging teachers to visit the library on a regular basis,
- Lack of communication between management and library staff,

- Increases/decreases in enrolments,
- A drop in volunteers,
- Resourcing the senior curriculum in Queensland,
- Reengaging students with the library when they returned to school,
- Finding ways to collaborate with teachers to ensure students are taught information literacy skills,
- Outdated library management system,
- Inadequate resources for students with learning disabilities,
- Supporting students/keeping their spirits up while society changes dramatically around them, Traumatized students (bushfires, floods, COVID-19),
- The change in format to the Premier's Reading Challenge,
- A dated collection with no budget to purchase new resources,
- Labelling all books with Lexile levels for the Literacy Pro Program,
- Resourcing new ATAR assignments,
- Lack of parent engagement with reading or parents that do not value reading,
- Change in school management team,
- A lack of eBooks,
- Advocating for the role or what the library can offer,
- Damage caused by storms,
- Competing with video games,
- High staff turnover.

9.4 What is the one thing you would change about your library or role?

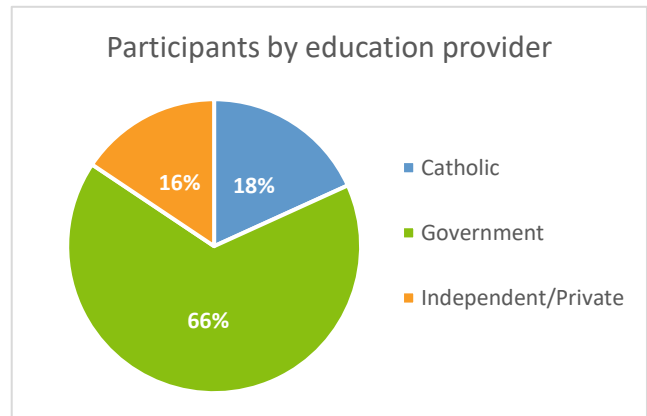
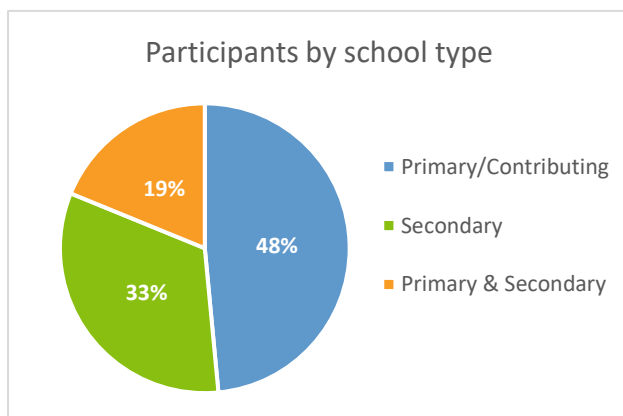
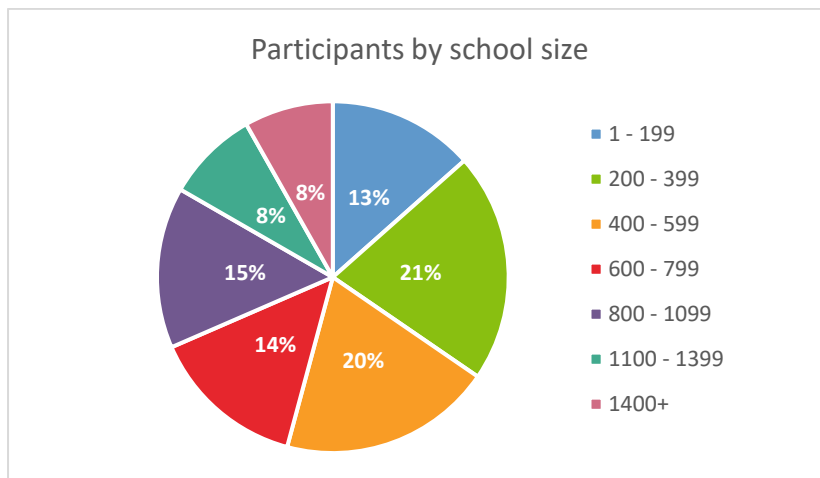
- Adequate, qualified staff or additional support staff,
- More collaboration/team teaching with classroom teachers,
- Library refurbishment, to create a more engaging space, to include newer/more modern furniture,
- To update the collection to better resource the Australian Curriculum,
- More space,
- To teach research skills, library skills, information literacy,
- Better technology,
- To have the library open for more hours (before/after school and lunchtimes),
- To work under an enthusiastic, progressive teacher librarian,
- More digital resources,
- To employ a library technician,
- To keep the library as a library space,
- To be included in future planning for the library and curriculum development,
- To see the role of libraries and library staff acknowledged in the continued success of learning outcomes,
- To be located in the centre of the school,
- Time to curate resources to support the curriculum,
- To teach and foster a love of reading and budget to update the fiction collection,
- To update the library management system,
- Opportunity and time for professional development.

10.0 Participant breakdown

The 2020 Softlink School Library Survey for the Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific regions was released August 28 and closed September 30. Invitations to participate were extended to all schools (including schools that are not Softlink customers) in the region via email, Twitter, LinkedIn, OZTL_Net, and promoted by a number of our partners, associates, and school library groups.

2020 saw the highest ever response rate to date, with 2103 participants from 9 countries. 1696 Australian schools participated which, according to data obtained from the [My School website](#) in August 2020, represents 18% of Australian Schools.

The breakdown of schools by size, education provider, and school type can be seen in the charts below.



Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the Softlink 2020 Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific School Library Survey.

Your willingness to participate and share information about your school library means that we can continue to provide this valuable, annual analysis of school libraries.

The survey results provide a critical reference point for changes, impacts, and trends across school libraries in Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific 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.

Additional resources

The Softlink School Library Surveys are used to produce a range reports and feature documents to help inform and support school library staff and the greater school community. A selection of these has been included below, to view more visit softlinkint.com/resources/reports-and-whitepapers/

[What's Trending #SchoolLibraries 2019-2020](#)

What are the current trending topics in school libraries? In this global feature, we share responses to the 2019 Softlink School Library Surveys and the 2020 Softlink COVID-19 Survey.

[School libraries share: library love](#)

This feature shares comments from the 2014 – 2020 surveys demonstrating the love and passion school library staff have and what they love most about coming to work. It also shares comments that demonstrate the love the school has for the library.

[School Libraries Share Ideas for Promoting the Library](#)

Published in 2019, this feature is based on responses to the question *“What practices are in place or what ideas do you have to promote the library, the services it provides, or the role and skills of the school library staff in your school?”* in the 2018 School Library Surveys.

[From the Principal's desk – reflections on the school library](#)

This feature shares collated comments from the 2014 – 2020 School Library Surveys and represent the voice of school Principals in Australia in Australia as they reflect on the value of their library and library staff, as well as changes they would make to the library.

We are always looking for ways to improve and refine the School Library Survey and associated reports and whitepapers. If you would like to offer feedback, please email communications@softlinkint.com