



Media Release

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### **Support for school libraries needed to improve student literacy**

There are calls for urgent investment in Australia's school libraries as new analysis shows that students who reported never, or almost never, borrowing books from libraries scored lower on reading comprehension than their peers.

"That 7% of Year Four students attend schools that don't allow books to be borrowed points to significant challenges for school library provision in Australian schools." says ALIA CEO Cathie Warburton

"Popping a library book in your bag to read at home once a week should not depend on where you live in Australia. The Australian Coalition for School Libraries is calling on Federal, State and Territory governments to commit to all students having access to a well-resourced school library run by appropriately qualified staff."

The findings come from a [new analysis](#) of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research ([ACER](#)). [PIRLS](#) is an international assessment of reading literacy in Year 4 students.

"Reading for enjoyment plays an essential role in developing literacy. Being able to read is necessary; but wanting to read is also important for lifelong literacy" says Dr Di Laycock, Chair of the Australian Coalition of School Libraries.

"Without urgent action to ensure that all students have access to a well-resourced school library, teachers, parents and the whole community face an uphill battle to encourage a reading culture amongst Australian students." says Rebecca Murray, President of the WA School Library Association

"There's nothing better than seeing children enjoying borrowing books from the school library and enjoying reading" says Di Ruffles, School Library Association of Victoria

"There are simple and positive steps that governments – federal, state and territory – can take tomorrow to support the equitable provision of library services in schools."

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**Report:** Hillman, K. (2024, April 02). Snapshots issue 17: Australian students' access to and use of libraries. *Snapshots*. 17(17) <https://research.acer.edu.au/snapshots/vol17/iss17/1>

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**About the Australian Coalition for School Libraries:**

The Australian Coalition for School Libraries (ACSL) is the national voice for school libraries in Australia. Created in 2023 it provides united and professional voice on issues affecting school libraries and support for school library staff across Australia.

The Members of ACSL are the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Queensland School Library Association (QSLA); School Library Association of New South Wales (SLANSW); School Library Association of South Australia (SLASA); School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV); Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA); and the Australian School Library Association (ASLA)

