

Make a global connection: Why not join the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL)?

By Dr Kay Oddone

Snapshot

Dr Kay Oddone, the Regional Director of Oceania for the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), reminds us of the work of this important international organisation outlining its many benefits to us both personally and professionally

Building professional networks helps school library professionals enhance their expertise while also supporting their colleagues. When school library professionals unite, their advocacy and promotion of library goals become more powerful. The [International Association of School Librarianship \(IASL\)](#) is at the forefront of this mission, bringing together over 900 members from 49 countries. This global organization creates a unique forum for those dedicated to promoting effective school library programs, ensuring they remain pivotal in the educational process.



As part of a network that spans continents, cultures, and educational systems, IASL offers members the opportunity to connect with school library professionals from around the world. Membership opens doors to rich, diverse experiences and perspectives that can transform your approach to school librarianship. Whether you are an experienced librarian or just starting out, IASL provides a platform to exchange ideas, learn from others, and build lasting professional relationships.

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One of the standout features of IASL is its [Special Interest Groups \(SIGs\)](#). These groups focus on various aspects of school librarianship, such as Advocacy, Children's and Young Adult Literature, International Development, Information Literacy, Information and Communication Technologies and School Library Research. Engaging with a SIG allows you to dive deep into your area of interest, contribute to important conversations, and help drive advancements that benefit school library professionals and their school communities.

Annual conferences hosted by IASL are another highlight. These events, whether in-person or virtual, are vibrant gatherings where you can meet colleagues from across the globe, exchange insights, and stay abreast of the

latest developments in school librarianship. The upcoming virtual conference, *Stronger Together: School Libraries in Community*, scheduled for October 26-29, 2024, promises to be an enriching experience. It is an opportunity to gain a global perspective on school libraries and to learn about innovative practices from different countries.

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IASL is also deeply committed to supporting research that advances our profession. A prime example is the project led by Dr. Margaret Merga and Saiyidi Mat Roni. This research will survey school library professionals across various international contexts, aiming to capture the unique challenges and opportunities in our field. The research will inform advocacy efforts and best practices, providing a solid foundation for future studies and grants. Funded by The University of Notre Dame Australia and supported by IASL, this project exemplifies the kind of cross-disciplinary collaboration that can drive meaningful change.

Being part of IASL is about more than just professional development; it is about being part of a global movement that champions the vital role of school libraries. The organization's advocacy efforts are crucial in promoting the significance of school libraries in education and supporting best practices worldwide. By joining IASL, you are contributing to a cause that ensures children and young adults everywhere have access to high-quality school library services.

Membership in IASL brings numerous rewards, including access to exclusive content, participation in global discussions, and opportunities to contribute to groundbreaking research. But perhaps the most valuable aspect is the sense of community and shared purpose. In a time when collaboration and connection are more important than ever, IASL offers a supportive, dynamic, and forward-thinking environment where you can thrive professionally and make a real difference in the world.

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If you are passionate about the future of school libraries and their role in fostering literacy, critical thinking, and lifelong learning, consider joining IASL. It is an investment in your professional growth and in the future of education. Together, we can ensure that school libraries continue to be vibrant, essential components of the educational landscape, benefitting students around the globe.

***Kay Oddone** is a lecturer and the course director for the Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship). She has more than 25 years of experience as an educator, having taught at all levels, ranging from Prep to Post-Graduate with experience as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, teacher librarian and education consultant. Her research interests focus on information and digital literacies, cultivated through networked and connected learning, personal learning networks as well as school libraries and teacher librarianship. Kay is currently the IASL Regional Director for Oceania.*