

**INQUIRY INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I have worked as a teacher in public education for 30 years. In that time the workload has increased, with the additional burden of administrative tasks associated with:

- * planning for and delivering on extracurricular activities requires extensive risk assessments and navigating red tape, which is made more difficult by staff shortages.
- * administration of student assessment tasks which are governed by regulations for notifying students of tasks, having students sign off on notifications and submissions, maintaining these records and copies of tasks as evidence of practice and following up with students who do not submit tasks; with official school letters, phone calls and parent/ carer interviews. This burden increased when external assessments were removed and internal school assessments need to be carefully moderated to ensure task integrity. When this took place no reduction in teacher loads was made to compensate for this change.
- * the teacher accreditation process has also added to the workload of supervising teachers who mentor new teachers and are required to undertake lesson observations and allocate time to mentoring conversations and produce written reports to submit as evidence for accreditation. If a teacher is experiencing problems with their practice, the support process is intensified but the supervisor's workload is not alleviated to account for the additional burden.
- * the developments in technology have resulted in increasing behaviour management problems and escalations in bullying incidents. The time allocated to dealing with behaviour management has more than trebled and schools have become responsible for dealing with student social issues which have resulted from the increase in the use of technology. On a daily basis teachers are required to support students, and follow up with appropriate systems of management, for students who are unable to function at a level where they can participate in lessons, whilst trying to continue on with business as usual and teach the functioning students in the class.
- * preparing lessons for absent colleagues or 'infilled vacancies' to maintain the continuity of learning for students. Meanwhile these lessons are, more often than not, being delivered as 'extras' by other, out of faculty, colleagues in the school. The staff shortages do not just impact on the students, they are adding to the workload of every other teacher in the school.

The staff shortages have been apparent in my school for the past 5 years, and I am referring to a large, comprehensive rural high school in Tamworth; and not a small remote school. In that time teachers have exceeded their allocated 'extras' on many occasions, and that is without the inclusion of agreed extras which are done to enable colleagues to take students on extra curricular activities. I have supervised a faculty for 13 years and in that time I had teachers who were not trained in the required field of specialty for 11 of those 13 years. I have seen students go through school who have only had a trained mathematics teacher for only a year in their high school studies, each other year they had a non trained teacher in mathematics.

The school improvement plans, in particular the targets towards improving literacy and numeracy, have resulted in an increase in workload for teachers who have literacy and numeracy expertise. They are burdened with the tasks of developing school wide plans and activities, and upskilling colleagues, to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of students. There has been no department support, in manpower, provided to secondary schools to undertake the enormous task of increasing literacy and numeracy outcomes, but the increased workload is extensive and ongoing.

The non curricular requirements of schools have continued to increase and school are required to manage these by using RAM funding to hire student support officers, or release teachers from face to face teaching (if they have the staff numbers to allow this) to ensure that this occurs. This includes cyber bullying workshops, specialist boys and girls programs, safe choice programs, senior study programs, immunisation clinics (yes, a teacher needs to be present at all times for this too); the list is exhaustive. There would not be a single day in a secondary school where staff are not taken away from their regular teaching duties to ensure that all of these requirements are fulfilled, let alone taking into account the absence of staff and staff shortages.