

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

When I started primary school teaching 23 years ago, I did it because I wanted to make a difference to the lives of children. I thrived on children succeeding in their learning and wellbeing. When I became an assistant principal, I did it because I wanted to make a difference in the leadership of schools and help other colleagues thrive. When I reflect upon the past 23 years, I realise that I have made a difference in the lives of teachers, parents and most importantly, our students, and that truly mattered to me.

Over the years the teaching of fundamental skills became less and less. The increase of content in the curriculum has become so much that it was unachievable to meet the requirements of a weekly timetable of 'recommended' learning time. We were advised to try to add some maths whilst completing fitness activities to help meet requirements! The administration workload is almost triple to what it was, and the stress of my colleagues has sometimes brought me to tears. Not to mention the scrutiny and abuse I have often received from parents which has added many layers of stress to my role.

Despite everything, I continued to collaboratively lead our school and teach my class. When the first wave of Covid-19 went through our communities, I faced up to work everyday. I comforted terrified staff, reassured students that we would see them soon and began the enormous task of online learning with little resources or assistance. When the email announcement came through on the morning of Friday 27 August 2021, requiring all DoE staff to be fully vaccinated, I was distraught.

The COVID-19 vaccines were not something that I wanted to have. I had made up my mind on this way before the mandates came into force. I received no reassurance from the DoE that the vaccines were safe, effective and necessary. I was forced to take leave from my position as of Monday 25th October, when I was informed by my principal that I was no longer allowed onsite. Taking this leave affected me enormously. I was unable to support the students in my class on their return to school nor my colleagues. This whole situation also put pressure on my relationship with my husband and family. It has been what I can only describe as a very difficult time in my life.

Whilst I respected the DoE's decision at the time and did what was right for me, I now find it very unnecessary for the mandates to still be in place. There is absolutely no scientific evidence for this to continue. I have some LSL left and when this has been exhausted I will take unpaid leave which will put further pressures on my family.

I love my job and I want to get back to it. Please drop the mandates and give the teachers in our schools the respect and support that they deserve before we lose more teachers, and the wellbeing and education of our future generation is impacted even further.