

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

## Teacher Shortages

There were existing staff shortages prior to vaccination mandates. There always have been. However, the enforcement of mandates has only exacerbated the situation and greatly so. I was employed by the DET as a primary teacher from 2016 until 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and had been teaching for 10 years prior to this. During my time working for the DET, I initially worked as a casual teacher, became a regular casual for one school then I worked part time plus I did casual days. Term 1 was usually quiet then things picked up quickly during term 2. By Term 3, it is typically increasingly hard to get a casual teacher and I was often asked by more than one teacher to cover a class. In 2021, I worked full time until mandates were enforced.

Although I can't comment as a teacher who is currently employed by the DET, I know from former colleagues that it has been harder than normal to get casual teachers due to staff being unwell from Covid and due to ongoing mandates which are preventing staff from working. Classes are being split more than normal and from earlier than usual in the school year. I have friends with children in high school who say that their children are sent to the library to keep themselves busy when there are no staff to cover absences. At my local school, a teacher was brought out of retirement to fill a gap and they did not last the term. They packed their bags up on a Friday afternoon and left. I also know of fourth year students being placed into classrooms. Placing inexperienced university students and bringing back retired teachers is only aiming to fill a gap rather than ensuring quality education.

The DET continue to plough on with mandates despite the lifting of the PHO. Yet this is clearly worsening staff shortages and having a negative impact on education. Students have been impacted enough already by lockdowns and remote learning, especially vulnerable students.

The DET has depleted its bank of quality teachers and is simply taking anyone- whether they are fit for the job or not. Casual teachers have stepped into classroom positions where possible yet this also leaves a huge gap in the casual workforce hence the shortages.

Sarah Mitchell is putting her own ego above student welfare, never mind the welfare of the estimated fourteen thousand staff who she saw sacked. Previously, the DET always used the excuse of the PHO to justify mandates. What is holding up the mandates now? Only the ego of the Minister for Education. Fast tracking inexperienced university students and bringing back retired teachers is a shoddy, band-aid solution to teacher shortages. The one thing that could make a substantial difference to NSW public education is allowing the thousands of unvaccinated staff to return to the classroom, without further restrictions.