

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am concerned that NSW Public Education is in crisis. I devoted my professional career to working in NSW Public Schools and for at least 20 years of my career many of the problems now confronting the system - teacher shortages and high rates of teacher resignations - were foreseen and never addressed.

It is time for serious action and it begins with the need to properly resource our schools. This includes ensuring that there is adequate, trained staff available to cater for the diverse needs of all students. No teacher would disagree that teaching practices need to be adjusted to cater to individual learning styles or that students with special needs (physical, emotional, behavioural, academic) must have their needs addressed but I know how hard these necessities can be as a classroom teacher - exhausting, in fact. And no matter how hard you work, how much time you take to plan and how many personalised learning plans you develop and implement, there is always that feeling (perpetuated by Government) that you should/could do more. Not only is this exhausting but it greatly affects teacher morale and makes the idea of having a work/life balance a mirage.

For decades I believed that being a primary classroom teacher was a fantastic career. I loved getting to know my students, building positive relationships with them and working to help them achieve their personal best. However, towards the later stages of the career I loved I found that there were more and more demands and an overwhelming concentration on documentation and jumping through bureaucratic hoops. I am the first to accept the need for accountability but fear that these shifts in focus have actually taken away some of the joys of the classroom and, ultimately may have negative impacts on student outcomes as at the end of the day teachers are human and are unable to give infinitely.... Teachers need and want to give their best to all their students but need the time/space to do so.

It is time for the public and governments to understand what a vital role teachers play in a well functioning and fair society. We need to value our teachers and trust that they have the welfare and positive outcomes of their students at the forefront of their practice. Look at ways to reduce the amount of administration required of teachers so that they can focus on what they do best - nurturing young minds and developing lifelong learners. Cultivate a culture of respect for the hard work teachers do and pay them a wage that better reflects their skills. It is only by doing so that more will continue to teach and that others will strive to join the profession.