

**Submission
No 55**

INQUIRY INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Patrick Spedding

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I am currently studying for a Master of Teaching (Secondary Mathematics), through the NSW Government Mid-Career Transition to Teaching program. I have an Honours degree in Mathematics and a Diploma in Industrial Studies, and I have over 30 years experience in the technology industry, using my mathematics and statistics knowledge in the fields of Data Analytics, Data Science and Data Visualisation. I hold a Master of Business Administration, and multiple post-graduate qualifications in business from Harvard, MIT and Michigan Business School. I am a Chartered Fellow of the Australian Institute of Managers and Leaders, and a qualified Board director through the Australian Institute of Company Directors. I was motivated to apply for the Mid-Career Transition to Teaching scholarship due to the chronic shortage of STEM teachers in the NSW school system. I have also observed, in prior leadership roles hiring STEM graduates, the lack of high calibre talent in the Sydney region, often requiring me to hire overseas or sponsor overseas graduates to relocate to Sydney. We are currently in the Digital Century, the 4th Industrial Revolution, and the lack of STEM teachers and students is destroying the future of this country, in my opinion. What I have observed during my studies and placements is that the teaching profession appears to be undervalued, underpaid and overburdened by bureaucracy. I have worked with many federal, state and local government agencies over the past 30 years, and I have not come across any other government sector willing to work such long hours, for such little pay, as teachers. Teaching is a profession, and as such teachers are much higher qualified than most government employees, yet they are some of the worst paid. When I graduate, I anticipate that I will need to supplement the mediocre teaching salary with ongoing high tech consulting work, to make up the short-fall in income. However, I do not believe this is the main reason for the teacher shortages. I believe that it is the petty bureaucracy driven by excessive 'standardised testing' plus the overbearing micromanagement of disconnected syllabus and curriculum policy frameworks, that inhibits teachers' ability to actually focus on their primary role, which is teaching. I also believe that the lack of esteem and respect that the teaching professional is held, within government, the media and the public, is a key contributor. I believe that education should be a federal responsibility, with national rather than (inconsistent) state based policies and procedures.