

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 2 July 2022

Partially
Confidential

I am a teacher, employed by the NSW Department of Education for 26 years. On November 1, 2021 I started long service leave and this year have been on leave without pay, due to return at the start of 2023.

Without the mandate I would not have taken leave as I was ready and willing to work.

Whilst on leave, I was investigated for 3 counts of misconduct due to not completing the VACS attestation on the staff portal.

On April 11, this year I was dismissed from the NSW Department of Education, as the allegations of misconduct were upheld.

I am one of many thousands of NSW teachers who are not allowed to work in a school due to lack of vaccination, despite being physically well.

Over the past 16 years in my role as Performing Arts Leader, I developed a comprehensive music and arts program including music education for every student, choirs, school band, dance clubs and whole school performances as well as providing opportunities for students in eisteddfods, festivals, schools spectacular and more.

Two weeks ago, I attended a festival held in my city, the first in Regional NSW, put on by the Arts Unit. I had been asked to work in the festival, but due to my vaccination status, was not allowed. The devastating thing for me was that my former students were not involved. They missed out on an amazing opportunity to work with and perform with schools from the entire far north coast and half the mid north coast region. My former students have not had music classes AT ALL this year. There is no school choir, no band, no dance club, because I'm not there and they are so short staffed.

This entire time, I have been 100% physically well. I posed no risk to anyone, yet was treated like a criminal, after 26 years of exemplary service. The emotional and mental toll, as well as financial toll, it has taken on me is beyond words.

The Department MUST provide answers and stop hiding behind low pay being the reason the state is experiencing a teacher shortage.

The Department MUST provide a formal apology to those investigated and terminated.

The Department MUST provide financial compensation to those of us forced not to work, both in lost wages and for the mental toll it has taken on us and our families.