

**Submission
No 141**

INQUIRY INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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On Friday 6th May 2022, Ms Honeysett, Mudgee High School's Agricultural teacher began her maternity leave. There was no teacher appointed to cover her classes when she went on maternity leave. A teacher should be able to have their entitled leave. It should be covered. The Department of Education had months of notice to ensure there was a teacher to cover Ms Honeysett's classes. None, to this date have been appointed.

My son, Nick sits his HSC in October. Ms Honeysett is his Agricultural teacher. He was left for 3 weeks to sit at the back of another class and work independently on work packages prepared by Ms Honeysett. The beginning of the 4th week material from DSODE (Dubbo School of Distance Education) arrived and he is now completing his subject through them. Term 2 of Year 12, students are expected to adjust to another form of learning. There has been no consideration for the stress on the students and the additional time it has taken them to acquit themselves with this style of learning. No longer do they have an expert teacher in the classroom, engaging them in deep discussions about concepts and providing them with instant feedback about their work. This was not the deal they signed up for when they made their subject choices in Year 10. These students deserve better!

I have spoken with staff at Mudgee High School who feel that NESAs would possibly not consider this situation as extenuating circumstances and not grant a concession for this Year 12 class. I find it difficult to understand that a failure on the behalf of the DoE to provide a teacher can not be an extenuating circumstance. Nick hopes to gain entry to Newcastle University in 2023. Their performance in this subject matters to these students.

I have written two emails to our Local Member, Mr Dugald Saunders. The response from Mr Saunders was unfortunately disappointing. The NSW State government seems to believe sticking students in distance education is a solution. Distance education is a service for remote students who can not physically access a school because of remoteness. Mudgee, the town voted as one of the top tourist destinations in Australia is not remote. The Year 12 Mudgee High School Ag class has now placed additional stress on distance education with the DSODE Ag class now at capacity. Mudgee real estate is tight with rent at \$600/week for a house. How can the DoE expect teachers to move here when there is no longer any Teacher Housing available in Mudgee. Teacher Housing has been sold up right across rural NSW so teachers don't have anywhere to live once they get an appointment to a rural school.

I feel totally defeated in the quest to find a teacher, let alone an Ag teacher for my son's class. I have received polite bland responses from Mr Saunders. While all these politicians 'sit it out' the education of thousands of students are affected.

I have reinforced to my children, 'If you want to go to university, you have to work for it. No one's going to hand it to you on a plate.' I find it mind boggling that in 2022 my greatest fear for my 18 year old is getting a basic education.

If there is no concern or urgency to get a teacher for Year 12 students, what is going on within the DoE?