

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the inquiry regarding the teacher shortage in NSW. I have been a teacher since 1999. I have taught casually, on a temporary basis and been a permanent classroom teacher and then a Principal.

I have been unable to work due to the mandates since the 8th of November last year. I had my first vaccination but did not feel comfortable having a second. I also did not feel comfortable with the removal of individual rights to say no to an experimental, irreversible medical treatment in order to keep a job. I know many other teachers who have walked away from casual teaching or their permanent job for the same reason. Taking early retirement, long service leave or just moving on to different opportunities.

I am not anti-science as some would want to believe. I have read study after study, looked at statistics and made an informed decision for myself. I believe this is what should be encouraged in all things. Curiosity and critical thinking should be driving our decisions as individuals and a nation. Unfortunately, media, hidden agendas and political correctness seem to be winning out over real science, real information and real debate. The Education Department should be at the forefront of encouraging critical thinking, evaluating scientific ideas and protecting the inalienable rights of individuals and yet they forced many staff who understood the importance of this, out of the classroom and out of schools for nearly 10 months and for many, forever.

Over the last 20 years, teaching has become more about surviving the day than actually teaching children. Community and family dysfunction has spilled more and more into school and classroom settings. Life skills, once taught by a stay at home parent are now being taught in schools as both parents are working. There are more and more "latch key kids", children's social, emotional and physical wellbeing is being negatively affected by screen time, constant connection to peers and entertainment via phones and computers.

Behaviour problems due to children's declining health, emotional dysregulation, unfiltered parental beliefs about teachers and the schooling system, lack of logical consequences, trauma and school and community culture are making teaching in some communities nearly impossible.

Work load and emotional stress is killing teachers slowly. 'Accountability' is the new catch phrase, this has led to the need to record the same piece of information in 3-5 different ways. The threat of litigation has turned simple activities, interactions and policies into minefields, no-one is able to do anything without a risk assessment to prove that you considered every possible negative outcome down to the finest detail.

Teachers and executive are taking work home in order to get it all done. Holidays are not holidays, they are used by most to catch up on the term's work prior and prepare for the coming term. Most teachers barely have enough energy left after teaching all day to complete the paperwork, phone calls, programming, collecting resources, classroom displays and meetings required. From experience, teaching face to face 6 for hrs is significantly more tiring than 8 hrs work as a; roustabout in a shearing shed, shop assistant, cleaner, gardener or working online. The skills needed to be successful in teaching are extremely broad and need expansion every day. The professional development and professional learning requirements of teachers, on top of their workload, is second to none. In no other industry that I know of, is the employee required to spend 30-40 hours per year completing PL outside of their work hours. Teachers are not paid extra or given time in lieu to; wait an hour after school for that parent that forgot it was their turn to pickup the kids, attend whole-day excursions starting at 7am and ending at 6pm, stay up all night on overnight excursions, prepare and run term disco's at night, attend and run P&C meetings, attend AECG meetings, organise and run fundraisers, fetes, BBQs and open days on weekends or write student reports, twice per year that take a minimum of 3 hours each to complete.

Teacher income, isn't really even the problem. The problem is the expectation that teachers will do so much work and put up with so much abuse with a smile. Teachers work 55 hours per week

on average. Teachers cop the brunt of parent dissatisfaction, student behaviour, negative community judgment and inhuman expectations from everyone.

Why do we still have any teachers left at all?

1. They care about your kids and their communities.
2. They want the world to be better (at their own expense).
3. The income is pretty good, until the workload kills you.

I don't know what the solutions are. Maybe some of the following ideas could be useful;

Have a teacher and a 'teacher in training' on every class. (get students out of university and into the classroom)

Support one parent to stay at home while children are still at school, encourage these stay at home parents to volunteer at schools.

Make free parenting courses accessible and encouraged.

Employ full time counsellors, pediatric, behaviour, occupational and speech therapists in schools- particularly for k-2.

Go back to simple day book programs based on universal scope and sequences across schools.

Stop changing and adding to curriculum, language, acronyms, policy and online applications.

Employ teacher specialists who visit schools and classrooms to teach high level music, Science and STEM/ICT

Stop using school results, school funding, school business as a political football, undermining the public's respect for teachers and teacher's belief in the system.

I am committed to a future where curiosity and critical thinking are endemic to society, where individuals have time and inclination for lifelong learning outside of their work.

This starts in schools, with teachers.