

Submission
No 168

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I decided to retrain as a teacher after many years of terrible job insecurity in higher education. I knew that as a teacher, while my pay would be lower and my workload harder, I would have guaranteed work anywhere in Australia and also be able to transfer quite easily anywhere in the world.

After contemplating the barrage of requirements to retrain as a teacher, I elected to become an Early Childhood Teacher. This only required one year equivalent of postgraduate study, as opposed to a two. My academic record means I could be by a Primary teacher or a Secondary teacher. I am also qualified to teach at TAFE and university.

My postgraduate course was mostly excellent, with all the necessary theory covered in accessible lectures and additional reading. Assessments were generally broad essays at the AQF 9 level, as befitting a postgraduate course. There was one ridiculous subject on leadership that required me to make a video and design a poster, two tasks that I would immediately outsource and project manage should I be required to do those in the real world. They were singularly unrelated to teaching, and contained no value at the postgraduate level.

The pathway into employment was easy too. Once I had completed some practical training through my course, I was eligible to work as a Certificate III equivalent childcare worker. As I progressed through my studies, I became recognised as more highly qualified until I graduated and then was considered a Teacher. This was a good way to be able to work in the sector, while applying learning to the job environment. By the time I graduated, I was an experienced childcare worker with in-depth knowledge of my profession.

Everything was fine until it came time to complete my teaching proficiency requirements through NESAs. As I was working at a large provider, they were given dispensation by NESAs to run their own system to support teachers to obtain proficiency. It was a complete mess, with nobody understanding the requirements, conflicting ideas about what was required, and an excessive reliance on a hierarchical system that allowed no recourse for teachers to work towards proficiency differently. Indeed, the first time I applied, I failed. See above my references to my extensive academic history. If someone as highly qualified as myself can't pass a proficiency application, then perhaps the requirements are too onerous.

I spent many hours outside of my 40 contracted hours of work working on my resubmission to NESAs. My hours of work are higher than the National Employment Standard definition of full-time. I am female, a parent of a school-age child and a carer of a person with a disability. Given that women's workforce participation is already lower than men's, women carry the bulk of the mental load of caring for children, and carers of people with disabilities are often unable to work at all, I would suggest that there are a number of barriers to entering teaching in action here.

1. Training courses for teachers need to be flexible and appropriate to work requirements
2. Pathways into working while studying could be opened-up
3. NESAs accreditation requirements and procedures need to be streamlined to ensure already busy teachers are not overburdened
4. All of the family friendly policies and procedures we know about supporting women's workforce participation need to be implemented in the teaching profession