

**Submission  
No 183**

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

**Name:** Mr Phillip Dye

**Date Received:** 22 July 2022

---

Submission to

# Parliament of NSW

## *Inquiry into Teacher Shortages*

From

Phillip Dye

Teacher, neuroscience educator and presenter of the **Marking the Role** teachers' podcast



**Presenter:** Phil Dye

**Web:**  
[markingtherole.com.au](http://markingtherole.com.au)

### **Introduction**

Thank you for accepting this submission.

My interest in this topic stems from my 30+ years as a teacher in NSW, my previous role as a science educator at UNSW dealing directly with classroom teachers and my current role as a neuroscience educator in NSW schools both to students and teachers.

Above all, the main fuel for this submission comes from my position as the presenter of the **Marking the Role podcast for teachers**. 75% of the listeners are from NSW. In this role, I have a deep insight into what teachers really think.

I receive messages every day from teachers who express their inner world - not just the world they show to students, principals and parents.

I can make the results of our research available to the inquiry if needed.

### **Terms of reference covered**

I will **not** address all terms of reference – only the ones I have direct knowledge about.

## Terms of Reference **C and I**: Teaching Workforce Conditions | The Status of the Profession

There is no doubt the teacher shortage exists. Teachers tell me each day – and in the podcast, that classes without a teacher are split among other classes or left in the library.

On a recent neuroscience incursion to a high school in the Illawarra, I witnessed the library full of students with only one teacher. Other students were in the playground – sitting and talking – obviously without a teacher.

The podcast team did research for **Season 1, Episode 2** of the podcast entitled '*The Great Teacher Exodus*'. This is what the research showed in order of importance. Note that salary is number 3, not number 1.

### The top 5 reasons teachers leave and the conditions that must change

- **1. Teachers were leaving due to the avalanche of administrative work.** This work had tripled over the past 10 years due to:
  - Demands from the **NCCD** (National Consistent Collection of Data on students with a disability). Each student in a class on the NCCD list needs individual programming and reporting. Some teachers reported that 50% of their class was on the list.
  - The number of students in a class on the NCCD list and therefore needing special attention. This reduced the time a teacher could spend on other students.
  - The demands of **NESA** (NSW Education Standards Authority) around compliance-based PD, the career pathways and general reporting. In all of the communication we've received, NESA has the most negative comments from teachers.
  - The administrative reporting needed for any incident surrounding student behaviour. Teachers were now **not reporting** behaviour incidents due to the reporting time needed.
  
- **2. Teachers were leaving due to the disrespect shown by parents, the community and students.** Some teachers were the subject of abuse on a daily basis. They were unwilling to report behaviour incidents as they felt unsupported by the leadership and the paper-work was just too much. This abuse was highlighted in **Episode 4 of Season 1**.

- **3. Teachers were leaving due to the salary not in keeping with job demands.**
    - 36% of teachers saw a salary increase of between 6-10% as realistic
    - Only 21% wanted a salary increase above 10%
    - Reducing the admin load far outweighed salary as something that would make teachers stay in the profession
  - **4. Teachers were leaving as there was so much admin they had to work a full day on weekends.** 36% of teachers said they would stay in the profession if they had one non-teaching day per week just for admin.
  - **5. 31% of teachers said they would stay if there was less intrusion by government organisations like the NCCD, NESAs etc.** This relates back to point 1 and these points could be taken together.
- 

## Term of Reference **F**: Initial Teacher Education

For Season 2, Episode 1 entitled *Teacher Training, does it cut it?* I interviewed The Dean of Humanities and Education from the University of Wollongong, a senior lecturer from Macquarie Uni and many new teachers. We also researched teachers about their teacher training. The following points are important:

- **Student numbers** going into primary education are steady, yet student numbers going into secondary education are down. Anecdotally, secondary teaches are more likely to encounter abusive behaviour. Primary teaching is safer.
  - **Year 12 careers advisors** are saying that hardly any year 12 students want to go into teaching.
  - **Secondary students** see the conditions their teachers are under and shy away from teaching. This does not bode well for future teacher supply.
  - **71% of new teachers said their course did not equip them for the classroom.** 89% said their course was too theory based.
-

## Term of Reference **H**: The impact of workplace mandates

Departmental mandates are a leading cause of teacher dissatisfaction. The mandates that Marking the Role has covered during the podcast, and the teachers' reactions are below.

- **The proposed Behaviour Policy.** An entire episode was given to this (**Season 1: Episode 5**) as NSW teachers are scared that their safety will suffer if it is introduced. It has been written by a team who have never taught in a classroom and this is widely known. **The lack of teaching experience by those mandating policy is a major cause of teacher anger and has created distrust of the DET.**
- **The proposed Restrictive Practices Policy** is also seen as decreasing staff safety and developed without teacher consultation.
- **The entire Inclusive, Engaging and Respectful Schools Policy,** which includes some of the above, is seen as ideologically driven and functionally impossible. Teachers are not trained to deal with the diversity of disability and behaviour problems faced in today's mainstream classroom.

**Season 1, Episode 7** was dedicated to this and while teachers can't publicly speak out about it, the anonymity provided by the podcast gives good insight.

---

## Term of Reference **P**: The impact of casualisation, temporary contracts and job insecurity.

This has been an ongoing source of angst in the messages I receive. The anxiety relates to:

- That casual/temp teachers don't have the job security needed to socially settle eg: enrol their children in a local school, become involved in the community.
- That casual/temp teachers can't get a home loan unless their principal lies in a declaration
- That YOUNG casual/temp teachers feel their teacher training has been worthless. This was also expressed by those completing a Master's as even having a Master's does not guarantee permanence.

## **In summary**

While there were podcast discussions around most of the points of reference of the inquiry, I have opted to address only the major ones mentioned by teachers either in the podcast or in the research.

I would have no problem addressing the inquiry and suggest the committee membership listen to the podcast episodes for background to this submission.

Phillip Dye  
22/7/2022