

Submission
No 208

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 29 July 2022

Partially
Confidential

Portfolio Committee No. 3
Inquiry into teacher shortages in New South Wales

Education inquiry into and report on teacher shortages in New South Wales, and in particular I am making a submission and responding to the terms of reference:

- (a) current teacher shortages in NSW schools,
- (h) the impact of workplace mandates,
- (p) the impact of casualisation, temporary contracts and job insecurity
- (r) any other related matter

- (a) current teacher shortages in NSW schools
- (h) the impact of workplace mandates

The problem is that there is no science to justify the mandates and the detrimental impacts they have on hundreds of teachers that made a decision based on free choice and refused to be coerced, wanting only to maintain body autonomy. The loss of hundreds of teaching staff is in reality at this present time is due to the mandates. As educators in the system we have known and experienced the teacher shortages in schools. The impact of the workplace mandates have exacerbated the already pre existing teacher shortages. The solution and recommendations is simple, rehire and reinstate all the Educators that were terminated or resigned in all education systems.

- (p) the impact of casualisation, temporary contracts and job insecurities

I am a University qualified primary school teacher of 5 years. I have worked in both the Public and Catholic Education system in NSW and most recently a specialist digital arts teacher educator for the Catholic system for three years. I worked really hard and provided quality teaching and learning experiences for all my students as a casual and on contract in various schools. In the recent years I finally advanced in my teaching career and secured a rare part time permanent position.

Little did I know that after finally securing a permanent part time role as a specialist teacher educator, my position had been striped from me due to the COVID 19 responses and teacher mandates. Since my position was striped from me I knew that this position would be hard to achieve again and I have since struggled to overcome that loss. Additionally, I know that many schools that had me appointed had missed out on the specialised programs that I had provided. My directors were frustrated as they had to deal with my timetabling and had canceled the program with various schools.

Prior to these events I worked during COVID at its peak whilst living in hotspot areas and highly restricted and extremely locked down region of Western Sydney. I was allowed to go to work out of my area due to being an essential worker at one point. And since the mandates were put into place I am no longer able to work as a teacher. Since the mandates I am now unemployed and struggling to find work even though I have two degrees and am highly qualified. This is the reality for myself and many other highly qualified, highly experienced teachers, all due to the impact of workplace mandates.

I am now at an extreme loss of income and am struggling to provide for my three children. This has no doubt caused professional damage and mental distress as I know I will never regain the position I worked so hard for and to my own merit I gained. This mandate is completely causing a lag in my career advancement.

- (r) any other related matter

Another matter I would like to bring forward prior to being terminated by Christine Howe acting director for the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, I had asked HR on two occasions if they can provide me with an individual risk assessment. HR did not respond to any of my requests and I was not provided with a risk assessment, I was simply terminated. I know many other teachers had requested the same and had received no response. Additionally prior to my termination I submitted solutions to HR for returning back to school for all teachers. When the premiere first mentioned that everyone will be returning back to schools. Those suggestions were to Rapid Antigen Test (RAT tests) all teachers and school staff before entering school gates and we can stop the spread from there as we know COVID 19 certainly does not discriminate! I had no response again. I made it clear that all teachers and staff should have a RAT and not to discriminate.

Now in regards to risk assessments that the education minister has stated they will be conducting now that the mandates have lifted, I am asking how is the department going to conduct individual risk assessments? I heard from one of my colleagues who has an exemption that they recently conducted an individual risk assessment on her in the month of June 2022. The DET and the principal had told her she had to stay away from all staff in the staff room and sit next to an open window on her own to have her lunch. As well as in the classroom, to wear a mask and open all windows. Is this not discrimination?

My recommendations for future improvements in the education system would be never to impose mandates on an already crippled teacher shortage again. Teacher workplace conditions need significant improvements all round to avoid teacher burnout. For example less administrative burdens, Workloads need to be addressed and lessened so teachers can provide quality teaching and learning experiences for students. One suggestion would be for permanent teachers work 5 day week where one day is allocated for the planning, professional development, recording and reporting, compliance, that way teachers are not using their own time every weekend.

I will leave the submission with this statement.

Because of the mandates directed by the government and followed through by the Education Minister and mistreatment in the workplace, with no science or valid justifications, As a highly qualified and experienced teacher It is likely that I will not return to this profession.

Please note evidence/copies provided upon request.

Respectfully