

Submission  
No 218

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

As a teacher with fourteen years experience I have concerns about the current teacher shortages and believe that they will be ongoing unless there is a sustained and objective conversation about existing working conditions. The language in the media fuelled in part by political rhetoric particularly at a federal level over the last fifteen years has I believe contributed to the decline in retention of teachers and the recruitment of new ones. This coupled with the working conditions and wages no longer make it a desirable or respected profession from my perspective.

We are told that our workloads will be lessened and that there will be less administrative tasks but I have personally found this to be the exact opposite. I have had executive and upper management say they understand that there are high workloads but can we 'just' do this. These tasks then keep being added to accompanied by a 'just' and are justified as being necessary for the children but are usually directly linked to personal career advancement. I have had a director directly quote that they know they are meant to be reducing workloads and then created a personal project that has significantly increased the workload of all the schools involved. It was initially touted as 'voluntary' but they personally contacted each school and made it known that their participation was expected. The only schools who didn't participate were those with principals who were confident of their tenure. I should note there were only two who didn't out of twenty, despite every school saying that they felt the additional workload was difficult to manage.

I have concerns about the recruitment processes currently in place. I have been involved in multiple panels over the years and have witnessed very few that actually represent the views of the panel. Panels in my experience through both being on them and at the receiving end of them are rarely objective and are usually overridden by the desires of the panel convenor and most employ someone known. It feels like a system of who you know, not what you can do.

I have not found there to be a high administrative burden for principals as a large proportion of work is delegated to middle executive (assistant principals) who in my experience work much longer hours. I have not had experience with the transfer system but understand that at face value it should be effective but am unsure if it incentivises rural placements and retention of teachers. I have been extremely fortunate in gaining a permanent position but have found it difficult to move schools as each time they have employed someone internally. I work with a number of teachers who are on temporary contracts and experience great stress each year as they are unsure if they will be reemployed. My concern with temporary contracts is that they have to work harder to retain their job each year, have no job security and are susceptible to the personal vagaries of principals. I also know personally of changes in principals resulting in massive staff turnover, often with casual/temporary teachers who have been there several years and replaced with temp teachers known to the principal. Local schools, local decisions requires a serious re-examination.

I am currently on extended leave as I am disillusioned with the system and have serious concerns about not only the language used to denigrate the profession but also the huge disparity between public and private education. I believe that it is the universal right of every child to receive the same high quality of education and access to resources regardless of their socio-economic status. The current state of education is not a level playing field. I have two family members who work in private education at two different schools and they have significantly better working conditions, hours of work and available resources. Any conversation about teacher shortages should closely examine the significant disparity between private and public education. I work in public education in a high FOEI area and advocate passionately for the improvement of education for the students I work with and have no desire to work in an affluent private school but can definitely see how much better off I would be financially and personally.