

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

Submission to inquiry into teaching service in NSW

Teaching is not an attractive job for a number of reasons.

1 Discipline or, rather, the lack of it is ruining the working space of teachers and what should be the learning space of students. Australian classrooms are among the most disrupted in the OECD (69/76 measured via PISA in 2018) and the most disrupted of the English-speaking countries. Local and systemic “leaders” very often tread the easy, self-serving, lazy, and dishonest path flaccidly insisting that egregious behaviour is somehow reflective of an inadequacy in a teacher. Local leaders are, for whatever reason, incapable of articulating and communicating to systemic leaders, those mere departmental types, remarkably few of whom have any practical experience, that their behaviour “policies” are manifest failures. The imminent rollout of the inclusive, engaged, respectful “policy” – much touted in semi-articulate spamming during recent weeks – is the most corrosive assault yet on reasonable expectations. We shall see a further collapse of fundamental standards of behaviour and, therefore, academic achievement. The cynic in me sees a very determined residualisation of public education. Those educrats seem determined to make state schools as unattractive as possible.

Teachers made to feel inadequate to what is, in reality, a very straightforward task abandon that task. They leave. They leave to retail, they leave to further study, they leave to independent schools. They return to jobs they left. They leave for parts unknown. In the long-gone days when the gazette was published in hard-copy, we took particular interest in the lists of those who’d died and those who’d “abandoned employment”.

2 Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is a significant issue. I note, with no surprise at all, that submissions made by both the ACU and the NSW Council of Deans of Education insist on the value of their master’s programs (the deans also recycle, for the umpteenth time, the Finland-fantasy!). This is self-serving delusion. Secondary teaching is not rocket science. It’s a process built upon subject-specific knowledge and the ability to communicate that knowledge. Having supervised many prac-students over the years, I insist that a candidate’s suitability is very quickly clear. Two years is a waste of a year. Why is this an issue? University fees are now of such magnitude that kids are shying away from tertiary study. For the first time in my thirty years, kids are this year telling me that they can’t afford tertiary education. This parlous state renders those hollow but very lucrative master’s programs even more absurd despite the deans insisting that such a program is attractive, especially to career changers. Why would anyone want to pay fees for two years when a single year will adequately prepare a candidate?

ITE reform is required. For candidates who present with a degree in an academic subject, that reform should ensure that they spend as much time as possible in schools. One year is sufficient.

3 The pay is inadequate. Performance-pay is touted by those who know nowt of teaching.