

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I am a high school science teacher who has been teaching since 2006. Before this I worked as an Environmental Scientist for 7 years working in irrigated agriculture, water policy and forestry. This environmental work has given me lots practical examples to share in the science classroom and I think is a great benefit for my students. My students achieve good HSC marks (including lots of Band 6 results) and enjoy being in my classes. I enjoy my job as a teacher but because of the excessive work load would not recommend my own children become a science teacher. The teachers I speak to think we receive a reasonable wage but it is the workload that is causing teachers to be burnt out.

In my 17 years of teaching I have constantly experienced an increase in work load. In my first years of teaching I can remember some terms being easier than other but now it is just flat out from the first day of the year to the last. There is no one major thing that has caused this but lots of small incremental changes. Some of those changes include technology such as email. We now have to respond to emails from students, parents and colleagues but there has been no additional time given to do this task. We now have to put work online for students to complete. This is great for students but takes a lot of time to set up. We also have to document changes we make to our teaching to cater for the needs of individual students.

The biggest increase to work load is when we get a new syllabus to teach. As a science teacher we have had all our syllabuses change since 2018. If you implement a new syllabus properly then it creates an enormous amount of extra work. For my HSC subjects I have put in about 500 hours to prepare each course. Now that I am teaching these courses for the third time the work I have put in is paying off. However, if I were a new teacher then it would be incredibly hard task to achieve and leave many burnt out.

Even though we have been given all these additional tasks to complete we are not given any additional time (maybe a few hours to prepare for a new syllabus). We still have the same number of classes to teach, the same number of playground duties and the same number of meetings to attend. I usually work 50-60 hours a week and half of my holidays. In other jobs I have been able to negotiate the workload but this is not possible in teaching as they are all fixed tasks. Each day you have 4 1 hour classes to teach, plus a duty and maybe a meeting. These are all fixed and must be done there is no way to push back on the work load. The only thing that I can do to reduce my work load is to provide student with less feedback via marking. I now mark students work less as this is the only place I can find to cut time. I am at the point of considering if I can maintain this anymore. Its not the pay or the actual job but the amount of work. Having worked as an Environmental Scientist I think I will have a reasonable chance of obtaining another job. Many teachers I speak to have the same thoughts and opinions. If things don't improve then I will need to pursue another career. I would like to work less than 50 hours a week. To do this I would need to have one less class which is a 15-20% reduction in teaching load.

The other thing to consider is that not all teaching requires the same amount of preparation. I have only taught Science, PDHPE and TAS but I have found Science to be far more time consuming to teach well. If you teach a subject where there is a lot of prac work then this can lead to less preparation time. You explain the task and set the students to work then each following lesson you then move around helping students rather than having to prepare lots of explicit teaching. The amount of content and the complex nature of science means it is harder to teach well and needs to be explicitly taught. To do this well takes a lot more preparation time. The expectation of parents for core subjects is also higher so this also adds to teaches workload.

My recommendation is that if you want to retain and attract more teaches then I believe that teachers need to have less face to face classes so that they can prepare quality lessons and spend more time marking students work. If this doesn't happen then the best teachers will seek a better

work life balance and will leave and get jobs elsewhere. We are already struggling to find teachers and it is only going to get worse if the workload is not reduced.