

Submission
No 234

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
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A big factor concerning teacher shortages in the NSW Department of Education relates to the bullying of teachers. Bullying ends careers, impacts mental health and ruins lives. Importantly, it deprives the system of good teachers remaining in the field they love.

It seems almost incomprehensible there are so many teachers suffering after being bullied in a toxic workplace. After all, the department clearly states they have a "zero tolerance" for bullying. This is patently untrue.

There is a systemic culture of covering up bullying within the department, reaching all the way up to the senior executive.

There was a long-term pattern of abuse and bullying in the Health & Safety Directorate, perpetrated by the executive director. It was denied for over twelve years by members of the senior executive, despite the fact that they were aware of over fifty employees who had been adversely affected by the bullying. Just three of the many complaints received, listed the names of the more than fifty victims of this behaviour (The complaints & responses are attached). The same deputy secretary responded to each of these complaints but failed to stop the behaviour.

The complaints became so frequent by 2018/9 the same deputy secretary was forced to hold an independent investigation into the executive director's behaviour. (Attached) The department reportedly paid \$100 000 for the investigation. Despite the investigation being held after receiving complaints about bullying, the document itself reported that bullying had been cunningly placed outside the scope of the investigation.

The senior executive continues to deny the existence of bullying, asserting every case is unsubstantiated. Again this is untrue. They ignore the two Workers Compensation Commission rulings (Attached) that found a toxic workplace and evidence of bullying by the executive director, in the Health & Safety Directorate. The bullying is only found to be "unsubstantiated" when they investigate themselves.

Even when a leaked, internal investigation from 2018 (Attached) of one of the complaints found evidence of bullying and a lack of adherence to the code of conduct, the senior executive continued to deny the existence of bullying.

The bullying in this instance was perpetrated on teachers and public servants who worked in the department's corporate branch. If this toxic behaviour is condoned and continually covered-up at such a high level, the impact bullying is having on teachers across the state must be catastrophic. After all, the fish rots from the head.