

Submission
No 236

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 July 2022

Partially
Confidential

This submission is made with reference to:

(b) future teacher supply and demand

(f) any other related matter.

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While the terms of reference for this inquiry appear to be focused on teacher shortages in schools, it is also relevant to consider the teacher shortages in early childhood education and care. This is because there is a degree of interactivity between teacher shortages in primary schools and teacher shortages in early childhood education and care services.

Some teaching degrees (such as the Bachelor of Education (Birth to 12) or a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary)) qualify graduates to work in both prior-to-school settings and school settings. This means that the pool of teaching graduates from these degrees is shared between primary schools and early childhood education and care. This affords teachers mobility between the sectors and allows teachers to choose roles that offer favourable pay and conditions. However, it also means that schools and early childhood education and care services are actively competing to attract and retain staff from the same cohorts of teachers.

The interconnectedness between teachers in schools and early childhood can be seen in the following example. The NSW Department of Education is promoting provisions in the Regulations that allow early childhood education and care services to employ primary school teachers to alleviate staffing shortages in early childhood education and care in the short-term:

“If you are a centre-based service educating and caring for 25 or more children preschool age or under and an ECT is absent because of short-term illness or leave, you may replace this ECT with an educator who holds an approved diploma level qualification, or a teacher who holds a qualification in primary teaching (regulation 272(6)).”

(Email correspondence sent to services - 6 July 2022 - Staff shortages or absence: support measures to meet your regulatory requirements <https://mailchi.mp/9155a117057f/staff-shortages-absence-6-july-373326>)

In addition, despite ongoing NSW teacher shortages, the Victorian Government is offering up to \$50,000 for qualified teachers to relocate to Victoria (see for example, <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/professionals/profdev/Early-Childhood-Teacher-Incentives-Guidelines.pdf>, <https://www.vic.gov.au/targeted-initiative-attract-more-teachers>). NSW teachers are actively being targeted for this program as advertisements for this initiative have been repeated frequently on free-to-air television.

Presumably with a finite number of qualified teachers, the competition for teachers between sectors and states will only serve to exacerbate teacher shortages.

It is not enough to allocate funding to teaching degrees if graduates are choosing to never work as teachers. It is not enough to increase teacher pay if the conditions that teachers are experiencing are so dire that no amount of money is adequate compensation.

In order to address the issue of teacher shortages, it is important to undertake current research to find out why pre-service teachers are choosing teaching as a profession, why teachers stay working

as teachers and why they are leaving. Teachers could be invited to participate through educational facilities or potentially could be contacted through the NSW Education Standards Authority who have a register of all accredited teachers in NSW. The research could then be used to design targeted strategies to address the shortages.

Any measures intended to address teacher shortages in the schools sector should also consider the impact they may have on the early childhood sector so that the well-documented staffing shortages within the early childhood sector are not worsened.