

Submission
No 241

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Inquiry into teacher shortages in New South Wales

I am a “mature” Master of Teaching (Secondary) student and have several colleagues who are teachers. I can only speak for myself, will make mistakes, and don’t see every angle - but hopefully have some insight, and believe we should be all be part of improvement.

1 e) Teaching workforce conditions

If an industry can’t get enough people to work in it – it follows that it needs better conditions or pay. Actual teachers leaving a profession is a useful measure, albeit not quick feedback. In contrast if an industry can easily get enough staff, then it shows things are at least okay.

The current workload for teachers is too high to be sustainable.

Inconsistent expectations:

There are big inconsistencies in the hours required of different teachers. Preparation and pack up is longer for practical subjects. Sometimes the Units of work + Programming (etc) are provided, other times teachers have to make them. In some cases, teachers share lessons and resources with other teachers. Teaching a mandatory subject is easier because the school is more likely to have shared programming and assessments, plus teachers are likely to have fewer different subjects to prepare for.

- The department needs to recognise these differences for teachers
- Provide an aide for setting up and packing up in practical subjects.
- Provide FULL programming for all teachers (scope & sequence, units of work).

New teachers need fully resourced teaching programs to use or modify

Many new teachers are expected to create their own programming, sometimes from scratch. This is a particular problem for electives, which have few (or no) other teachers teaching them.

New teachers should not have to create lessons for multiple subjects without support. It requires significant extra hours.

Improve teacher conditions by either providing a range of COMPLETE programming for them to choose from, for every subject, or by allocating extra time for teachers to create programming. This means if they have to write lessons for 3 separate classes from scratch you will recognise their work. They won’t have any time left for other face-to-face contact time and will still be working over 40h/week – but will be fairer than the current system we have.

Teachers’ aides

Reduce workload by providing many more teacher’s aides.

Foreign teachers:

I believe that employing people from overseas will be just one of many bandaids. New teachers also are generally badly supported, leading to the high turnover, and there’s no reason to think this would be different. These new teachers will leave the profession if teachers continue to be treated as they have been.

Teacher's sheriff

Teachers need extensive support for discipline.

Principals and Deputies in many schools are pushing all discipline back on teachers – increasing the teacher workload and causing an increased potential conflict of interest between the requirements of discipline and teaching.

DPs need to take this responsibility back. Support teachers.

If DPs are not capable, then create a role focussed on discipline – handling detention, writing up reports, following up etc.

1 k) The status of the teaching professions.

Teachers have far reduced support and understanding from parents. There's no understanding of the extra work done after 3pm and during the school holidays.

Explicitly specifying the expected workload of teachers may make it clearer the expectations already placed on teachers. Make potential new teachers aware. Make the community aware.

1 f) Initial Teacher Education

Practical teaching experience is beneficial

We (student teachers) become far better prepared through experience in schools.

Make us teacher's aides. We can learn from being in classes, working with teachers.

Increase our time assisting classes. Decrease our theory proportionally. If useful, add higher level subjects after we've become Provisional Teachers or after we have 5 years' experience.

We can increase our involvement as our courses continue.

This must HELP existing teachers though, not add an extra burden to them.

*This should also not be a back door to a **longer** training course. We want more student teachers not fewer!*

Multiple schools

We (student teachers) should probably be an aide at a variety of schools, if possible, to experience a range of teachers and issues.

First Teaching Areas are badly determined

NESA should use Australian standards where possible to determine university subject suitability for teaching areas. NESA does use simple indicators (like PHYS for Physics) but uses keywords like "Science" to accept subjects that aren't good fits. Use ASCED codes (Australian Standard Classification for Education) as part of recognising acceptable undergraduate subjects (Universities use these codes to identify subjects for federal funding).

Recognise experience AFTER the Undergraduate degree

Teacher training is built for students to come straight from undergraduate degrees, which is often not valid. NESA has no way of acknowledging that

- a) Undergraduate subjects from 10 years ago have reduced value
- b) Relevant work experience has significant value
- c) Adult training courses also have some value (courses taken while working).
- d) Post Graduate courses like PhDs should fulfil requirements for first teaching areas.

Similarly, the DoE also has no way of recognising that a 2nd year teacher with 15 years of industry experience may have strengths that a 2nd year teacher with no industry experience does not.

Feedback system

The government should setup a feedback system for continual improvement to our entire educational system. Allow teachers to bring attention to mistakes or areas of improvement. Ask casual teachers working across schools to provide routine feedback on schools they work in (same for teachers' aides).

Any bureaucratic system is hard to change. We need someone with some limited power to cut through a few problematic issues – particularly the easier issues that are just awkward to submit fixes to.

Summary:

- Please recognise the different types of pressure on different teachers
- Foreign teachers will only be a bandaid.
- Provide teachers' aides to teachers
- Improve teacher training by using student-teachers as teachers' aides.
- Provide full programming for every subject to every school and teacher.
- Reduce discipline requirements on teachers by using DPs or a new role
- For new teachers, fix the recognition of experience after undergraduate degrees
- Use Australian standards where possible, like ASCED codes for NESA subject recognition
- Create a feedback system to attempt to fix smaller more recognisable issues.

Final Note: Providing full programming is good for students, schools AND teachers

Many new teachers comment on not having lessons and units provided. And yet many experienced teachers don't want these to be provided by the DoE.

Full programming is incredibly difficult to do well, particularly without much time allocated to it by the department. Some teachers justifiably put little time into it, some a lot if they can, but it increases risk of burnout and takes their attention from other areas. And still the units they create will not be as good as a centrally provided ratified set of units that has significant investment of resources to do it properly.

If the Department believes writing good entire programs is easy – please supply them.

If the Department believes writing good entire program is too hard – you really can't ask teachers to do them, so please supply them.

It won't be for everyone. Experienced teachers have been forced to write and improve their units over decades – and they have a good setup customised to themselves and high quality. Mandatory subjects have more teachers and a longer history, many schools often have complete programs/units. And in electives the teachers have different specialisations that limit the usefulness of department-supplied programming to a degree – they will have to customise.

What I'd like to see is 5 entirely independent programming options for schools to choose from, each catering to different teacher backgrounds & specialisations. If schools have a choice between several department-supplied units, or their own (if they have them), or can customise and combine resources to suit their own students and teacher requirements, then this improves outcomes for students, teachers and schools.

This can improve our programming standards state-wide, particularly for under resourced schools. This may be one of the easiest ways to improve conditions for new and recent teachers.

Perhaps to start this – make every school submit all their current programming for open access to all NSW teachers. Let us rate quality to help each other identify the best, and let teachers submit their improvements to lessons

Thank you for allowing me to add my voice to your enquiry.