

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENT

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Written and proposed by:

I. INTRODUCTION

By way of introduction, I graduated from Sydney University in 1997 after studying a Bachelor of Education (Honours). I write this submission to you to stress the need for reform in our Education System. As a passionate teacher, who sees the value in always giving back to her students, I believe that the ‘next-generation’ of teachers should be better supported and better equipped to deal with the challenges prevalent in the education sphere. We require change to deal with the current climate of our education system and encourage students to join the profession. This submission will be divided into 6 chapters and highlight the following issues and needs for reformation:

- Introduction and preamble (II);
- Poor working conditions (III);
- Reducing administrative workload through establishing a centralised quality management system (IV);
- Establishing a centralised ‘My Education’ Portal and establishing a data system where teachers can share resources and students can access their learning history (V);
- Reconsidering pay and considering equity pay and teacher workload (VI);
- Reform and introduction of a new management restructure and greater wellbeing emphasis and support (VII).

II. PREAMBLE AND BACKGROUND

In 1993 I gained a teacher education scholarship, after graduating from Sydney Girls High School in 1992. At the time this was a \$60,000 grant over 4 years, provided I worked at a Western Sydney based school for 3 years. I accepted this program and went on to graduate with honours in a Bachelor of Education – Secondary majoring in Technology and Applied Studies from Sydney University. On completion of my degree, I was appointed to Liverpool Girls High School in 1998 as a Computer Studies teacher. During that time, I worked full time for the first 4 years and after that part time for 18 years. During my years at Liverpool, I enjoyed many challenges. Including relieving Head Teacher of Technology and Applied Studies, Vocational Education and Training, and Head Teacher of Administration. I became the Transition Adviser

in 2012 while in that role I ran programs with outside agencies including Lendlease, ABCN, EPPP, Links to Learning, Subject selection programs, T-VET, Traineeships and SBATs. I also looked after international students and was also the VET co-ordinator. I was also seconded to work on the region office in Glenfield under the VET directorate on an asked to contribute/design a quality management system for VET teachers, where I co-created this management system. I loved my job and the opportunities it bought for students at Liverpool Girls. I balanced this role whilst teaching CAFS and Work Studies. Eventually I was fortunate enough to work under a principal who saw the benefits of Transition advising and created a non-teaching role for me for 4 days per week.

In 2022 I received a service transfer, after 17 years. My new school meant that I was back in the classroom on a teaching full time load. Teaching senior Textiles and Design, something I had trained in 23 years ago and never taught. I am now on a new learning curve, with lots of experience in transition but no longer in the KLA (Key Learning Area) I had trained in. I was told if I didn't accept the appointment, I would find myself "unemployed with the department". I couldn't understand how 10 years of training in careers and transition with going to go to waste. Further to this the appointment of a new principal this year at LGHS and a teacher shortage was going to result in me headed back into the classroom full time, as a combination of a TAS Teacher and Transition Adviser. I knew the workload would be massive and both the principal and deputy principals told me that would be my fate. Furthermore, the student complexities at the school and the revolving door that TAS faculty had become meant that I would perhaps be the only full-time staff member of the faculty. Over the course of 23 years at Liverpool I saw over 25 teachers walk in and out of that faculty.

III. ISSUE 1: WORKING CONDITIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

So why the long story? Having not worked full time as a teacher in 18 years and now going back, I realise the number of layers or duplication that teaching has, not to mention the massive workload, bullying and complaints. Why would you want to be a teacher? Passion: but we all know this eventually dries up even in specialised subject areas. Eight months into my new school and I am already bored seeing little career challenges let alone progression – there is high micromanagement, and after 20 years I must ask for stationary resources and am given a very stringent limit. This is the opposite to my previous school. If you leave work early for 1 hour because you feel unwell you are expected to fill in a leave form, even if there are no classes you are required to cover. Yet there is an expectation to attend 6 extra parent

teacher nights for 4 hours each, with no compensation in return, and I am left to wonder at times what award if any I am working under?

IV. ISSUE 2: REFORM THROUGH INTRODUCTION OF A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

So, what do we need to change? Our current system still looks very similar to when I started in the classroom many years ago, just with more and more administrative work. We need a quality management system, like Sentral but with additional features including programs, lesson plans and content. A space that holds data and allows for sharing amongst all school teachers in departments. All of these can link back to NESAs and the department, this will ensure that the administrative burden placed on teachers is gone and more time can be placed on developing our next generation of students.

V. ISSUE 3: NEED FOR EQUITY PAY AND RECOGNITION OF VARIED WORKLOAD

Moreover, there is a need for equity pay. Some of my colleagues in Science, Maths and English has multiple massive classes. Workloads greater than other teachers. Why are principals paid on the number of students that they manage yet teachers are not? Some teachers have a full teaching load where they only teach 30 students or small sized senior classes? Other teachers teach over 200 students, this involves more marking and preparation and writing reports. Teachers should be paid according to the amount of work they do.

VI. ISSUE 4: CENTRALISED 'MY EDUCATION' PORTAL

We need a 'My Education' portal, which individually tracks a student from school enrolment in kindergarten until completion in year 12. This records student progress, it records levels of reading, maths, subjects studied, and outcomes achieved, extra curriculum activities, sporting achievements. Teachers record lessons attended and outcomes/ competencies achieved. This is a quality management system which is linked to NESAs and the department. It contains teacher programs, lesson plans, its consistent from one school to the next, with obvious tweaks. So, if a student moves from one school to another than the transition is easy. Content which is covered is similar and outcomes achieved are recorded. This system also generates a report on each student, which parents can access anytime. This essentially will free up teacher's time to better support students and work with students. Content on this portal will be generated by current school-based teachers, not those from back office who have spent several years away from students. Much of the content we currently see is not engaging or achievable in the time

constraints placed on teachers. We need communities working together to create these tasks. We basically need a one stop shop.

VII. ISSUE 5: INTRODUCTION OF MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

With the introduction of the above we should see a complete restructure in teaching. Middle managements such as Head Teachers should be abolished and replaced with both Lead Teachers in welfare and compliance. Discipline should go to year advisers and compliance should fall under a team of lead deputies or additional appointment of lead teachers in more challenging school where welfare issues can be exhausting.

VIII. CONCLUSION

I thank you for taking the time to read this. Whilst I understand the pressures and differences of opinion in the Education system. Ultimately, we require change to deal with the current climate of our education system. This submission provides a background of my experience in the industry for over 20 years. It also highlights the most prevalent issues I have come across and heard teachers go through over the last years, they are identified as follows:

- Poor working conditions
- Reducing administrative workload through establishing a centralised quality management system
- Establishing a centralised 'My Education' Portal and establishing a data system where teachers can share resources and students can access their learning history
- Reconsidering pay and considering equity pay and teacher workload
- Reform and introduction of a new management restructure and greater wellbeing emphasis and support

All these issues highlight the current and prevalent issues teachers face today. Reform is required for the teaching profession to encourage the next generation of teachers to pursue a role in Education and follow their passions in a well-supported industry.

Thank you once again.

Kindest regards,

