

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 3 – EDUCATION

TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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At Room 814-815, Parliament House, Sydney, on Thursday 4 August 2022

The Committee met at 10:30.

PRESENT

The Hon. Mark Latham (Chair)
Ms Abigail Boyd
The Hon. Catherine Cusack
The Hon. Anthony D'Adam
The Hon. Wes Fang (Deputy Chair)
The Hon. Courtney Houssos

PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

The Hon. Scott Farlow

* Please note:

[inaudible] is used when audio words cannot be deciphered.

[audio malfunction] is used when words are lost due to a technical malfunction.

[disorder] is used when members or witnesses speak over one another.

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The CHAIR: I declare the meeting open for our first public hearing of the inquiry into teacher shortages in New South Wales. Welcome to Committee members, witnesses and anyone from the public watching online. Before I commence, it is the custom of this Parliament to acknowledge the traditional inhabitants of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I do that with all due respect, as well as acknowledge other important contributors to the history of this site: those who constructed the Parliament House building, very often working in a dangerous industry, and the parliamentary staff who over many decades have supported MPs and made our work and representative role possible. We acknowledge and thank them all. Today we will be hearing from a number of witnesses, including representatives of the NSW Teachers Federation and the Independent Education Union of Australia. The Committee will also hear from a number of academics from a range of universities including Monash, Newcastle, New South Wales, Sydney and the Australian Catholic University.

While we have many witnesses with us in person, some will be appearing via videoconference today. I thank everyone for making the time to give evidence to this important inquiry. Before we commence, I make some brief comments about the procedures. The hearing is being broadcast live on the Parliament's website. A transcript will be placed on the website when it becomes available. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, media representatives are reminded to take responsibility for what they publish about the proceedings. While privilege applies to witnesses giving evidence today, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of their evidence at the hearing, so they need to be careful in that regard.

Committee hearings are not intended to provide a forum for people to make adverse reflections about others under the protection of parliamentary privilege. In that regard, it is important that witnesses focus on the issues raised by the inquiry and avoid naming individuals unnecessarily. All witnesses have a right to procedural fairness, according to the resolution of our House in 2018. Witnesses should also be aware that if they can't answer a question, they are able to take it on notice. Written answers on notice are to be provided within 21 days. If witnesses wish to hand up documents, they should do so through the Committee staff, and for those witnesses appearing via Webex, by emailing them to our secretariat.

In terms of the audibility of the hearing today, I remind both Committee members and witnesses to speak into the microphones. For witnesses appearing remotely, please ensure your microphones are muted when you are not speaking. As we have a number of witnesses in person and via videoconference, it may be helpful to identify who questions are directed to and who is speaking. For those with hearing difficulties who are present in the room today, please note that the room is fitted with induction loops compatible with hearing aid systems that have telecoil receivers. Finally, could everyone turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing.

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Mr ANGELO GAVRIELATOS, President, NSW Teachers Federation, affirmed and examined

Mr HENRY RAJENDRA, Deputy President, NSW Teachers Federation, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome our first witnesses from the NSW Teachers Federation. I thank you for your submission, which is very comprehensive and outstanding in the sense of making good use of the *Notice Paper* and the other forms of the upper House. In reading it, I certainly found it to be an encyclopaedia of data and information. It was very useful. On top of that, if you wish you can make a short statement to open proceedings.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Thank you very much, Chair. I certainly wish to do so. I start off by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Today I represent the teaching profession, a teaching profession that is in crisis—a crisis that is being brought upon us because of 10 years of failed policies. The crisis that we experience today is the culmination of those 10 years of failed policies. There is no greater responsibility for any government than to ensure a qualified teacher in front of every classroom, every day, for every child. If that is the measure that we are to apply, for the fulfilment of that responsibility by this Government, the Government has failed the students of New South Wales. Thousands of students every day, as we speak, are missing out on their learning. They are being denied their right to learning; they are being denied their future.

But equally importantly, or probably more importantly—probably more sobering; probably more frightening—is the fact that the crisis in which we find ourselves today is worsening. It will get much worse in the absence of the Government acting on the evidence that it has had before it for years into the cause of this crisis and therefore, by definition, the solutions required. We have a crisis. We have a government that is in absolute denial. It has now moved beyond denial to attempt to conceal, to mislead the Parliament and, more importantly, the parents of New South Wales with respect to the severity of the crisis. Failing to respond to questions on notice due most recently last Thursday—93 questions to get data on the teacher shortage and its impact. Data that was sought and collected—indeed, in manipulated form—from schools in order to suppress the severity of the shortages and thereafter failed to provide it to the Parliament in response to questions on notice. That is scandalous.

We entered the teaching profession because of our fundamental belief in the transformative power of education and what it means for each kid, their family and their community. We will not sit by—we cannot sit by—and allow this to continue. We will continue to act in accordance with our professional responsibility in order to achieve the policy reset necessary to get us back on track before it is much too late. Last week in an opinion piece, the Minister, who in 2020 told us that the shortages were impacting on her sleep—she was losing sleep over the shortages. In February 2021 it was a beat-up, but last week there was an admission that the State would require a further 3,800 teachers by 2027. The analysis shows that by the end of the decade we will probably need an additional minimum 15,000 teachers. The denial has to stop, the spin has to stop, the tinkering has to stop and the gimmickry has to stop in the interests of the students in our care who are being failed, as is the teaching service.

The teacher shortage is not only impacting on thousands of kids every day, but it is taking its toll on the teaching service, as was evidenced in the findings of your own survey that you commissioned, which showed that 60 per cent of teachers are thinking of leaving in the next five years. That is consistent with many surveys. We have a crisis because the policy settings are not attracting the teachers we need and the policy settings are not retaining the teachers we need. The easiest fix to address the teacher shortage is to change the conditions of work employment of current teachers so that we can at least retain the teachers we've got while we are trying to attract the teachers we need. Thank you.

The CHAIR: We will start questioning with the Labor Opposition.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thank you very much, Mr Gavrielatos and Mr Rajendra, for your time this morning and for your extensive submission. The parliamentary inquiry has obviously undertaken this survey. It has found pretty remarkable results about the impact on teachers and what their plans are to leave the profession, and also the things that are causing them to do it. Is that consistent with what you are hearing from your members, that it is workload and pay, but primarily workload?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: The survey that you commissioned found three reasons, and two of them intersect. The two reasons overwhelmingly borne out in your survey, borne out in our extensive surveys, borne out in surveys undertaken by academics and researchers across this country and borne out by Federal Government commissioned surveys all point to the same thing: It is the conditions of work and it is the uncompetitive pay. There is something called "labour market economics" when it comes to attracting and there is something called "satisfactory conditions to retain". What frustrates us—and I apologise to the Chair and the Committee if I sound a bit agitated but the reason for it is that the Government has known all of this for three years or more. They have known. We are talking about kids, teachers and the profession. They have known. They know the cause of this.

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One of their internal briefings that we were able to secure courtesy of the SO 52 process, which delivered thousands of pages last year, says that "the expectations placed on teachers and the rewards are not enough of an incentive to attract them". How many more times do we have to say the same thing? An independent commission investigated the changed nature of teachers' and principals' work, chaired by the former Premier of Western Australia, the Hon. Geoff Gallop. Joining him was the retired Deputy President of the Industrial Relations Commission, the Hon. Justice Dr Trish Kavanagh—who knows a thing or two, having sat on benches conducting investigations, or work value cases, as they used to be known before 2012—and industry expert Mr Lee. They found in one of their many inquiries that we are heading into the eye of a perfect storm. We have an aging teaching service and increasing exit rates. The medium time that teachers are staying in the classroom and the profession is decreasing because of exit rates. There is a dramatic increase in student populations. Those are government figures.

On top of that, there is a dramatic decline in initial teacher education commencement rates. That is a decline which, according to the Government's own figures, is now somewhere in the order of 30 per cent, and completion rates are in the order of 50 per cent. Over the last number of years—it is in our submission—those completion rates have further declined in New South Wales. The reason for all of that in every submission and in every inquiry is the conditions of work and the pay, and what we get is brochures and tinkering. All of those strategies often reference teacher supply strategy. Even if they deliver some, the timing and numbers associated with those programs are not even a drop in the water. The Minister's own words were that we will need 3,800 additional. I hope I answered your question.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I think you more than answered my question. I have one more before I pass to my colleague because we only have limited time this morning, unfortunately. The Government does have a program, though. It is called the Quality Time program and it is designed to reduce the workload on teachers. In their mid-year update they have just said that they are on track to deliver the target of 20 per cent by the end of 2022. Do you have any reflections on the Quality Time program and whether that is actually working to reduce the administrative burden on teachers?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: In late last year—thanks for the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: He wrote it.

The CHAIR: I will bring you to order, Wes. I have been sitting here and that is your third or fourth smart alec contribution to the hearing. I will not hesitate to kick you out if you continue to be juvenile and stupid in your contributions. This is a serious issue with serious witnesses and it is not here for someone running a vaudeville show to my left. I call you to order for the first time.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Sorry, Mr Gavrielatos. I asked about the Quality Time program and your reflections on that.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Yes. This is where the spin comes into play. I understand that the Government is now saying that they are on track. One document obtained through a GIPAA says, "On track to meet the quality time targets for reduction in low-value activities." The research shows that in addition to teaching, teachers and principals have a second job called administration. It is one that they signed up for and one that they do not want to do. It has been growing and growing and becoming more and more cumbersome, but we are on track. So much so that in November last year—again, through a GIPAA—teacher savings to date since term 4 in 2020 are zero. We need fundamental change.

Teachers' preparation and planning time is two hours a week in primary schools. That is the planning time afforded to teachers—two hours a week. That has not changed since the 1980s for primary school teachers and the 1950s for secondary school teachers. I can put it to you, not that I think I need to, that the complexity of the contemporary classroom is such that the expectation that we have personalised learning plans for every kid is unsustainable. These are throwaway lines. But the expectations are unsustainable within those terms and conditions that have not changed for 40 years for primary school teachers and 70 years for secondary school teachers—that preparation time.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Thank you for a very comprehensive submission. It really was quite forensic in looking over the parliamentary record of the Government and its answers to various questions. In your opening statement you made a pretty extraordinary suggestion that the Minister was misleading Parliament. You suggested that the department had actually gathered the data already, and the question was put on notice around the issue of collapsed classes. Your evidence today is that the department had actually gathered that data and so they were in a position to answer the question honestly and directly. Is that correct?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: That is correct. There were 93, I believe, questions on notice in the Legislative Council on or about 7 July. Those were to be returned and tabled last Thursday. The Government,

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through its department, sought to collect that data, having contacted all the schools named in those questions on notice. The schools were contacted in the first week of term 3 and, indeed, after having been initially contacted, schools were contacted again. This is where the Government and its department sought to manipulate the data and suppress it by offering an Orwellian definition of "minimal supervision". Under the definition offered, if there were three classes minimally supervised in a playground or in a school hall or in the library, they would count as one. That is a suppression and a deliberate manipulation of the data. As a layperson who is not familiar with parliamentary processes, that would mislead Parliament; it would not be accurate. With all due respect, it misleads parents.

The data was actually collected and that manipulated data was thereafter not tabled in Parliament. Instead, the answer was that "the data requested is not centrally held by the department." Well, it is, because you extracted it from schools and you are holding it. This is extraordinary. Thousands and thousands of kids every day are in libraries; high school kids and year 12 kids are in libraries. The shortage is real. The vacancies as of 10 June are 1,657. That's a 67 per cent increase on vacancies compared to the same time last year.

Your own internal briefings—SO52s—show that by 2025 the supply gap, also known as shortages, is going to be 2,425. We are going to need, two years later, an extra 3,800. This is monumental policy failure that has brought us to this. You know, it's astounding. It's astounding. This stuff is personal for us because it's about our kids, our neighbours' kids, your kids. So you've got an inquiry into the teacher shortage, and the question goes to that. I looked over the submission from the department—113 pages, a submission to an inquiry into teacher shortage. The word "shortage" is mentioned twice in 113 pages, in the body of a submission to an inquiry on teacher shortage. Twice in the body—it's in footnotes as well.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Angelo. To help the Committee, please try to keep your answers a little bit shorter.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I'm sorry.

The CHAIR: I know. It's good to be passionate, of course, but we have a lot of material to get through.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: My apologies.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Thank you to both of you for your attendance and your submission. I hear the frustration in your voice and I can completely understand. The Government is claiming, broadly, that this is some sort of a politicisation or a campaign by the unions just to get more pay, et cetera. I am a parent. I know that when I speak to other parents, when I speak to teachers, there is not one person telling me that they think that teachers are getting a fair go. Why do you think it is that there is this disconnect between the experience on the one hand of teachers, parents and children and what the Government is telling us? Why are they going to such trouble to spin the situation? What do you think is really going on?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Wrong priorities.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: What do you mean by that?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: As I said, there is no greater responsibility for a government than to ensure a qualified teacher in front of every single classroom, every single day. The priorities are wrong. To deliver on that promise for students, the responsibility, you need a healthy supply of teachers. Government policies have brought us to this unprecedented shortage—an unprecedented shortage that is getting worse. You know, for all the attempts by the Government and this department to conceal the severity of this, the game is over for them because those thousands of kids are going home every afternoon to their parents, telling them how many lessons they missed out on and that their class was split and the class was disrupted because they had to put another five or 10 kids in the classroom. Of course, we then get, because of those wrong priorities—you go into overdrive in terms of denial, spin, gimmickry, marketing, including even new definitions. Apparently, minimal supervision or merged classes do not mean students miss out on learning. It's in some of the questions on notice.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: How much worse is it for children and schools in more regional or remote areas?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Let's be clear, teacher shortages impact first and most acutely in disadvantaged regional, rural, remote New South Wales. But the depth of this shortage, which is something that we've not seen and witnessed before, and something that's been around a long time, is such that the shortages are being felt from Balgowlah to Broken Hill. Schools in what we would classify as not so difficult to staff—they have vacancies and they're splitting classes every single day.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: In the negotiations I understand we had recently with the Minister in relation to the suspensions and expulsions policy, was there any consideration given by the Minister and the department about a strategy to increase the number of teachers in order to provide teachers with the resources they need to more appropriately supervise children with disability?

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ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I'll answer it through the frame of the terms of reference of this inquiry. The teacher shortage is impacting kids in terms of their learning, in terms of their wellbeing and is resulting in the emergence of even more challenging behaviours because of the loss of routine, for want of a better word, and certainty in terms of the operations of schools. So it impacts.

The CHAIR: Could I drill into this question of administrative workload? The best school I visited, among many dozens in New South Wales, is Marsden Road Public School in Liverpool, where, coincidentally, my mother was a school cleaner for many decades. So I sort of knew the buildings quite well, but I was delighted to see the discipline that's applied there and also the results. They run a two-week boot camp at the beginning of the year to make sure the students know exactly what's required of them to maximise learning time and minimise the time teachers are telling them what to do. You know, "Sit up straight, pay attention, get your stuff out." It's a school where there is an emphasis on discipline and a very orderly learning environment. In earlier evidence to our first inquiry in this term of Parliament, the principal, Manisha Gazula, said she doesn't have an administrative burden that's excessive, mainly for the reason she doesn't have a long line of students outside her office door getting ready to be suspended or disciplined in some other way.

Contrast that with the worst school I visited two weeks ago, Walgett Community College—150 enrolled; 100 missing that day. I assume a big, big burden in truancy reports and trying to find out where two-thirds of the student population were that day. Violence—you know of that. The class we sat in on, the teacher there features in a video where he is more like a boxing referee. The police call-outs. You know the issues at Walgett because you're members of—and some numbers have said they would refuse to teach there, given the level of violence. So I would imagine the principal at Walgett has got a huge administrative burden dealing with all of that. Doesn't that go to how we run our schools, and how the leadership produces an orderly learning environment to help the students learn—but, by extension, also minimise the amount of paperwork that the school leadership undertakes?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I think what it speaks to is a set of unique circumstances as they prevail in schools. Schools are very common from place to place, but they're also very different from place to place. When there are challenging circumstances, what is required in those instances is a proactive department in order to be able to investigate, drill down and start to provide supports in order to be able to remedy a situation. Regrettably, some situations can't be remedied overnight. But with a lot of support, and appropriate support, with specialists in the area that's in need of support, you can turn schools around. This goes back to 2012 when the specialist arm of the department—the non-school-based teaching service—was gutted. So you had specialists in student welfare, specialists in curriculum, specialists in all fields. That's gone.

The CHAIR: What about discipline? Are those schools so different? Marsden Road has a heavy population of refugee families that have come there—north Liverpool is hardly St Ives. It is low socio-economic. Parents who value education send their kids—I'd imagine their attendance rate is a lot higher than one-third. So discipline makes a hell of a difference, doesn't it, for the administrative burden in running a school?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: There is no doubt that student behaviour—discipline-related matters—can impact because of the form-filling requirements, et cetera. But, again, that's where you need to provide the support to individual schools, through those specialists, that regrettably don't exist in the numbers required to turn some things around. There are out-of-school factors. This is not to deny our responsibility, which we take seriously, for in-school factors. But there are out-of-school factors. We could talk more about that in terms of the need for greater and meaningful interagency support in certain locations to address some of those things, many of which are located or born out of incidents or circumstances outside the school gate. But we would be more than happy to continue to talk about this in the context of providing the supports and the wraparound services, the interagency stuff, to make a difference in every community.

The CHAIR: Also, in your detailed submission, you don't say a lot about the mandates. Has the federation looked at, in terms of industrial relations, the absolutely unacceptable, barbaric way in which these teachers were stood down and sacked? Because I've received a lot of representations about it. You've downplayed the numbers here. I've presented a document here showing that there are at least 9,000 active casual staff in our government schools affected by these mandates. The stories of mistreatment by the PES and Daryl Currie are horrendous. Why didn't the federation ever support these teachers and give them industrial relations support? My understanding is that, of that number of them—the many thousands—60 per cent of them are not coming back to teaching because of the mistreatment and the demoralisation.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Just on that, our position during the context of the pandemic—and it remains so—was and remains to follow the health advice. With the public health order in place, it was very clear the actions that were required. We were certainly advising all of our members to follow the health advice, noting the public health order. Where there were members who for medical reasons were not able to be vaccinated and medically—what's the term? It just escapes me.

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The CHAIR: Have you studied these case studies in terms of industrial relations practice? They're barbaric. How could you let any teacher be treated this way?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: The advice at the time was that, with respect to a public health order—

The CHAIR: We know that but, in terms of your role as an industrial relations organisation, wouldn't you represent these people to give them a bit of help?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: We certainly gave them advice as to what to do, but we were not going to go down a path in terms of the legal process that was futile.

The CHAIR: Have you refunded any of their union membership? They want their money back because they think they contributed to you over many years and got no service.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Fees are prospective in terms of services provided. They're not offered retrospectively.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I think that question is a bit far out of the—

The CHAIR: It's about teachers who aren't coming back to the teaching profession. I've got to say, the union is one of the reasons. So they're part of the shortages.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: You're asking about refunds on union fees.

The Hon. WES FANG: I just wanted to touch on the issues that you've said around the teacher shortage and the Government's policies. Now, the Government has put a number of policies forward—things like mid-career transition, fast-stream programs et cetera—but they've all basically been blocked by the federation. Why does the federation seek to block a lot of these Government initiatives to get more teachers into the classrooms? Is it a protection racket? Why don't you guys like to actually accept that the Government is trying to get more teachers into school for our kids?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order: That question contains argument.

The CHAIR: Most questions here do.

The Hon. WES FANG: I think they do.

The CHAIR: Angelo's a big boy; I'm sure he can answer.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: They're quite prejudicial.

The Hon. WES FANG: Why are you protecting him? Why are you running a protection racket?

The CHAIR: Order! I've made a ruling. The witness will answer the question.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I don't think I need any protection at all. Really? Is that the type of question we're going to ask?

The Hon. WES FANG: I am.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Is that as good as it gets?

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm asking.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Last year—let's just be clear about this. Last year, what did we have from the Minister? Accusing the NSW Teachers Federation as running some sort of obstructionist protection racket—you think so? You show me one piece of evidence that gives any credence to your question.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're blocking the initiatives that the Government is trying to—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Excuse me, Mr Fang, we are doing nothing of the sort. What we're providing is a critique.

The Hon. WES FANG: Oh, a critique.

The CHAIR: Let the witness answer.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Let's talk about it. One of the standout programs of the Government is the \$125 million Teacher Supply Strategy, which in nine months delivered zero teachers to schools. What you're promoting—zero when we need thousands. Sorry, I lied. They did deliver one person. He resigned after four weeks. So let's be serious about this and look at the research, the analysis and the needs. The tiny numbers that you might attract through such programs pale into insignificance with respect to the thousands and thousands and

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thousands we need. The research shows that fast-track programs are delivering people ill-prepared into the classroom and are costly and inefficient because the attrition rate amongst that classification of people is high. So, please, if you want to have a go, at least look at the research and the analysis and what the take-up rates have been of these programs—minuscule. Your Minister said we needed extra over and above what's been graduated to keep up with what we got—3,800. And in their brochure on the Teacher Supply Strategy the numbers that they quote are nowhere near that. So if you want to run lines at us—

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not running lines.

The CHAIR: We'll take that as the answer.

HENRY RAJENDRA: Can I just add to answer that question? We would argue we've tried to assist the department. Back at the end of 2019 the Minister instructed the then deputy secretary of the department to meet with us to work out strategies. Then there were serious shortages in areas of special education, maths and the sciences and we sat down and we offered some suggestions from within the budget of the education department—strategies that we shared with the ministry, which they saw quite favourably. The department saw it quite favourably through that particular meeting, but nothing has come of that and certainly things have continued to worsen for our schools.

Further, in terms of scholarships, we're aware as part of strategies that you've pointed to in terms of what the department offers—are scholarships necessary? They boast that they're offering in 2022 just over 600 scholarships. Can I just point out, courtesy of a report of a committee of inquiry from this Parliament back in 1971—we had an education system half the size that we've got now in terms of student population and the number of teachers. The scholarships that were handed out—teacher scholarships just in that one year in 1971 were 6½ thousand. Now, we put to the Government and the department that you've got to lift your effort. There have been examples in the past where you can deliver. Get on with it now.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that, but Mr Gavrielatos has said that he has studied the Government's submission. Now, the Teacher Supply Strategy in the Government's submission is articulated to have supplied 161 teachers just this year and we haven't even finished the year yet. Now, it's a start, but again—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Are they in schools, those 161?

The Hon. WES FANG: We are delivering—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: They're not.

The Hon. WES FANG: —through the Teacher Supply Strategy as a start.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order—

The CHAIR: Yes, it needs to be a question. I think we've covered this.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm going to move now to the way that the teaching profession is being promoted by the federation. Now, most organisations talk up the workforce and the environment that they work in, trying to encourage more people to join. It seems to me that the strategy that is employed by the NSW Teachers Federation is one that—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order—

The CHAIR: Yes, we need a question.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm getting to the question.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Don't say that we're talking down the profession with the notes that the Government is sending around to people.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're talking down the profession. Given the way that you speak about the profession, is it any wonder the Government is working as hard as we are to actually attract people? You've got people marching in the streets here but in Victoria, where the conditions are virtually the same, they're not protesting. Why? Because there's an election next year.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is that a statement or a question?

The Hon. WES FANG: It's a question. Why do you talk down the profession?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Really? With all due respect, I will not have such an assertion made of the NSW Teachers Federation—talking down the profession.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, you are.

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The CHAIR: We'll take that as—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I will not have that assertion made. The NSW Teachers Federation proudly promotes the teaching profession every single day. Every single day. We're the ones that appreciate and understand that the teaching profession is the noblest of all professions. We're the ones that understand and accept the responsibility that is bestowed upon us: to look after the kids in our care, to provide the public service to every single kid in our care and the communities we serve. If you want to talk about talking down the profession, study the teacher bashing that has been coming out of this place for decades.

The Hon. WES FANG: By who?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is that a question?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: The tone of your question was teacher bashing.

The Hon. WES FANG: Oh, please.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I just wanted to ask some questions around the policy infrastructure. Thank you very much for the data you've given us in regards to initial teacher education. In terms of your interactions on policy development with the department, is there some kind of a committee or forum that's not an industrial relations forum but, rather, a policy forum that's looking at this whole issue of teacher education, teacher numbers and modelling forward into the future?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I don't believe that—there are many opportunities, and we often meet with the department. Our frustration is that over the years propositions are just readily dismissed or we just have lip-service. That's unfortunate for all involved. We know a thing or two—or three—about schools, school operations, the teaching service and the profession. We've got decades of experience—more experience than all the top echelon of the department put together—in education policy, including policy that relates to workforce policy and the like. I believe it would benefit—

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I totally accept your experience and your contribution as a really key stakeholder. I'm just trying to understand the policy machinery—if it's there, in fact—for monitoring enrolments in universities, for example, in teacher courses—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I'm sorry I misunderstood your question. The workforce planning is totally inadequate. The workforce planning is so inadequate it has brought us to this situation.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Can you just explain what the planning is in—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: You'd have to ask the department to give you that answer—

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: How would you like to see it improved, then? Maybe that is—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I'd like to see what has happened in the past. I can take you back to 2002-03, where there was very detailed workforce planning—

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: There was.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Granular workforce planning that was able to make projections not only in global teacher numbers but in terms of subject areas and the like. Thereafter, armed with that workforce analysis, the discussion could occur with the universities and others in order to ensure the pipeline of teachers is there. That level of workforce planning has been missing.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: If you don't mind me asking this, but I'm just really trying to—because it has obviously changed a lot since my day, because this was published annually, all of this information. What happened to that?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Bureaucracies were gutted, to start off with.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Did it go with the Ministry of Education? Is that what happened?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: When the bureaucracies were gutted, the capacity within those bureaucracies to undertake that work diminished. What we now have are departments, in our case, that outsource one thing after another. You're outsourcing the outsource of the outsource. It's a conga line: PricewaterhouseCoopers, Boston Consulting, Deloitte, McKinsey. Everything is being outsourced. The capacity of the department is not what it used to be to undertake that analysis.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Just to be clear, the Institute of Teachers is not doing that sort of work either?

CORRECTED

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: The Institute of Teachers no longer exists. That was merged or subsumed within NESAs.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: NESAs. They're not doing that—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I can't answer that question for you.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: No worries. Thank you for your answers.

The CHAIR: We're running out of time. We're notionally in the free allocation of questions but there is not much time for it. We'll take a couple from the Opposition and that will probably see us out.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I've just got one question. Teaching was traditionally a pretty permanent job. You'd have a secure job. You could plan your life. You could buy a house. You could take some maternity or some paternity leave if you needed. Is that the case now?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Again, courtesy of this Government we have seen an explosion in insecure work in the form of temporary engagements. There's been a 70 per cent increase in temporary engagements during the life of this Government over 10 years, such that the teaching service is now 70 per cent permanent and 30 per cent temporary. Of early career teachers, 67 per cent are engaged on a temporary basis. The Government's own internal briefings from its department show that insecure employment and temporary employment does not help with respect to retention and contributes to the teacher shortage by an increased exodus, or an increased likelihood of temporary teachers leaving public schooling or the profession as a whole. The temporary engagements are not helping us at all.

Last week, again, the Minister said in an article she wants her department to chase and recruit all university students graduating. As I said, it's your department; why aren't they doing that? Apart from that, we've been telling you to do this for years. Go out and offer permanent employment, subject to completion of studies, because you know you're going to need them. Permanent employment, not temporary engagements, which are to the detriment not only of the individual, in terms of insecure employment and their capacity to grow their career and life, but are also not in the interest of students because you lose educational continuity—or there is an increasing likelihood of losing educational continuity—because of insecure work and temporary engagements.

The Hon. WES FANG: The casual FTEs have fallen 20 per cent since—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Because they don't exist!

The Hon. WES FANG: They've fallen since 2011.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Because they don't exist, because there's a shortage.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, that's not—the number of FTEs has fallen.

The CHAIR: Okay, we'll take that as a comment.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I just ask, on that issue, is there a link between work intensification and that feeling of insecurity that many workers experience because they can't get secure—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: There is. If you haven't had the opportunity to do so, I would highly recommend that you look at the findings and recommendations of the Gallop inquiry, which has a whole section on insecure work and how that is increasing stress and frustration of those early career teachers and contributing to the exodus of them.

The CHAIR: Any other last questions?

The Hon. WES FANG: The only question that I had was around—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: We're out of time.

The Hon. WES FANG: Oh, are we out of time? You're cutting me off. The Opposition is cutting me off.

The CHAIR: The Government can have one final question.

The Hon. WES FANG: Gentlemen, the COVID pandemic that we've been facing has obviously created some issues in teaching supply for the Government. Is it just the case that you're using what is a pandemic as a case to try and promote a wage increase for your members?

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: That's truly offensive.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is it?

CORRECTED

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: It's truly offensive.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay, because you haven't factored in—

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: And the notes that you're being fed—

The Hon. WES FANG: You haven't factored in COVID at all.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: —the notes that you're being fed are offensive.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are they?

The CHAIR: Order! We'll hear the answer.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: I'll explain something to you.

The Hon. WES FANG: But you haven't listened.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: The teacher shortage predates COVID. COVID has made a bad situation worse. We have never politicised the COVID situation and the pandemic. I met with the former Premier Gladys Berejiklian in March 2020 and I made it clear to her that this is not an industrial dispute. It's a pandemic for which there is no blueprint, a pandemic through which we need to work together and follow the science. We never—

The Hon. WES FANG: But you haven't been working with us, have you?

The CHAIR: Order! Come on.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: You haven't been there, mate! How would you know that? How would you know the discussions that I had with Premier Berejiklian? How would you know the discussions that I had with Premier Perrottet? How would you know the discussions that I've had with the Minister on COVID, the pandemic, where our teachers—

The Hon. WES FANG: I'll ask you to calm down.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: While you were working from home, our teachers—

The Hon. WES FANG: Calm down!

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: No, no—

The Hon. WES FANG: I was out in the regions!

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Good for you. While you were working from home, our teachers were in classrooms.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Point of order—

The CHAIR: Order! The Hon. Wes Fang, if you want witnesses to be calm, you shouldn't be interjecting and provoking an argument. The witness has made his points. We are out of time. I thank the two witnesses, Angelo and Henry, for your contribution.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: Thank you very much.

The CHAIR: We look forward to using the information in your report, and the information gathered here, in our final report.

ANGELO GAVRIELATOS: We're happy to assist the Committee if there are any further questions.

The CHAIR: We'll probably have some supplementary questions. Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

CORRECTED

Mr MARK NORTHAM, Secretary, Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: It's available to you to make a short opening statement if you wanted to. Thanks for your submission, which we've read, but you can supplement that with a few words at the beginning.

MARK NORTHAM: Yes, and I'm very conscious of the experience with the Teachers Fed. The biggest difference with us, of course, is that we have 11 Catholic employers and a multiplicity of other employers, so a slightly different complexion. But that aside, schools thrive on certainty and predictability, and appropriate staffing provides those key elements that make schools really great places to work in. What's happening in schools today—and I'm sure the Committee is aware of it—is that those schools are being destabilised. It's certainly not only Department of Education schools. Later on I can take questions and allude to the extent and breadth of the problems around New South Wales and in our case the ACT, but I won't drift into the ACT. But we cover about 32,000 members—principals, teachers, support staff, early learning centres, English-language services—right across New South Wales.

This union has been warning about impending staff shortages for a number of years—the aging teacher workforce; particularly the mid-career teacher attrition rates, with the effort of going in and training a teacher for four years, putting them in the classroom for six or seven years and then they're falling out; and decreasing enrolments into initial teacher education courses. In terms of our largest employers—11 separate Catholic employers across New South Wales—on their own estimates, they're somewhere in excess of between 3,000 and 3½ thousand teachers short by the end of this decade if the current state of affairs doesn't alter. So it's a significant problem in the Catholic systemic sector.

Just to give you a bit of a feel for it, last year we surveyed all Catholic systemic schools right across it, and the number of problems was huge. But I think one of the key problems—and we ran a case in Fair Work about this in recent times—is it's undisputed that teachers' work has increased in complexity in recent decades. I won't revisit RFF being the same two hours since the mid-eighties and secondary schools being run on essentially the same model since the late 1950s. We took the case to the Fair Work Commission. We took it for those teachers working in early childhood, but the full bench concluded that there'd been a substantial change in the nature of work of teachers and the level of their skills and responsibilities since 1996. Given that, I think that's why we're in the situation where we are now. But the union really appreciates the work of this Committee, and we're hoping that the union can be more closely involved in seeking solutions.

You've read these and heard these so I'm not going to labour them, but we've got lots of teachers out there standing between classrooms, supervising more classes at once. There seems to be a pattern emerging again of supervision being something that can embrace up to three classes. At Kogarah Marist earlier this week, there were 180 year 8 or year 9 students—I can't remember which year—with two teachers. We've got schools reporting significant problems. When you've got 180 students with two teachers, that's not education. At best, it might be safe supervision. The splitting of primary classes—someone arrives at your door with another six or eight students to push in because there's nowhere else to put them. Putting the students in the school hall or the playground, you can imagine the impact that has on school leadership, because someone has to be with those students. Conducting senior classes, HSC classes, while simultaneously supervising a junior class in the same room or in close proximity—fairly disturbing. Rostering year groups to work from home one day a week or more on some sort of rotational basis just so that you can run the school. And a new phenomenon out there—creating lessons to be designed somehow to be delivered to large groups of students.

All that certainty and predictability that makes good schools work well is falling away. But, just to give you a bit of a feel for it, in the Catholic systemic schools, 23 per cent of primary schools had shortages of permanent and temporary vacancies just not being filled and 44 per cent of the secondary schools. But, if you could bear with me while I just walk around the 11 Catholic dioceses, these are the current figures on their website. They might be a tad imperfect, but they give you a really good flavour of what's happening out there. Armidale diocese have got five vacancies; Bathurst, 18; Broken Bay, 16; Canberra-Goulburn, so a big one, 41; Lismore—I checked this one when I was in Tweed Heads last night talking to teachers up there—36; Maitland-Newcastle, 28; Parramatta, a huge diocese, 52; Sydney, the biggest Catholic diocese in Australia, 98; Wagga, 17; Wilcannia-Forbes, six; and Wollongong, somewhere in the low 20s. It is a widespread problem, it's a real problem and, more importantly than that, it's not a union beat-up.

COVID has certainly wrapped its tentacles around the way that schools operate and brought additional hardships, but this problem was emerging, as you know, well before COVID hit. The interesting thing is, if you're looking for an English teacher on the North Shore at North Sydney, it's hardly a remote part of New South Wales.

CORRECTED

The problems are right across. In previous times, when I started teaching, staffing problems generally existed on the western side of the Great Dividing Range, and now they're everywhere.

As mentioned in the last session with the Teachers Fed, it's very difficult to get comprehensive data regarding the teacher workforce. It's not easy. It seems to work from teachers responding to surveys if they feel they're so inclined—the Australian Teacher Workforce Data, for example. But only 7,000-odd teachers responded to it. I think the question was raised earlier; it is concerning that the workforce data is not as accurate as what it should be. But what it does tell us, the AITSL data, is 12 per cent of teachers in New South Wales are over 60 years of age, 37 per cent are over 50 and 32 per cent of teachers indicated they intend to leave the profession. More significantly, 28 per cent of teachers indicated they would leave within one to four years.

Just a couple more points, then I'll conclude my opening statement. The IEU contends that the current staffing situation is one of retention—they're getting there, but they're not staying—largely exacerbated by unmanageable workload and poor salary outcomes over long periods of time. Just finishing off on these viewpoints, then happy to take questions: Increased administrative burdens; an increase in students with learning difficulties or challenging behaviours; a never-ending churn of education initiatives, often without any or adequate consultation and coming in on top of existing initiatives; the constant churn around curriculums; aggressive parental contact and demands; and principals and teachers facing increasing pressure to assist students in family wellbeing as the first and often only support, as other agencies are swamped. Those are some opening comments, and I'm happy to take questions. I would welcome the opportunity later just to do a bit of a run around New South Wales just to give you a bit of a feel of what shortages are like in individual schools this week.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Mr Northam, thanks very much for your opening statement, for your submission and for your ongoing engagement with this Committee. We've always found your work and the work of the IEU very informative for us, so thank you so much. I want to ask you just one question before I pass to my colleague, because we've only got limited time this morning. The Government, you may have seen on the weekend, made an announcement saying that they were going to launch an advertising campaign to try to essentially poach or encourage teachers to teach in the public system instead of in the independent or the Catholic system. But, really, what you're telling us is this teacher shortage isn't just in the public system; it's happening right across the board. This is something that the whole sector is—

MARK NORTHAM: Yes, it's not unique to public State schools in any way. I can take you to St John the Baptist school in Woy Woy. They've got the traditional problem; it's very difficult to find casuals. They had 29 days in term 1 where they had classes where they had no teacher, and they had to split the classes up and leadership had to take over. You can head to Dubbo; St Johns in Dubbo has exactly the same problem. You go up to Maclean; Maclean used to be a prime spot to go and start off or land in a teaching career. Vacancies there are unfulfilled. St Matthews in Mudgee—again, no casuals, the science department understaffed and using people teaching out of their subject area. It's very difficult to run a school in that case. Lithgow has a limited pool of casual teachers, the assistant principal often having to supervise multiple classes in the school hall. It goes on and on, so it's certainly not restricted. I think there's a bit of a cargo cult mentality evolving that there is some sort of vehicle, perhaps a large train, travelling around New South Wales and it's full of teachers. If you could get it to stop at your school in your town everything would be resolved. But the train's empty. There's nobody on board the train. You might be able to stop it, but there are no passengers.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: If we don't get to the shortages that you wanted to talk about today, could I invite you to provide them on notice? That would be really helpful for the Committee.

MARK NORTHAM: Yes, sure.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Thank you, Mr Northam, for your appearance and the submission—again, an excellent submission from the IEU. I want to ask about workforce planning in the Catholic system. To what extent is there effective workforce planning? I suppose my follow-up question would be is there a need for, I suppose, a statewide multisystem approach to workforce planning, and how might that be?

MARK NORTHAM: Look, I think that has to be part of the solution because the number of people who are going into university and commencing teacher courses has declined quite dramatically. The supply is not there to start with and it takes at least four years to make a teacher so therein lies the problem. But, look, I would think that the Department of Education would be the obvious one. The three sectors—independent, Catholic and the department—often work closely together on various initiatives and I think that would be a step in the right direction—that they can actually tap into what is actually required and how we're going to get there.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Rather than the sort of Hunger Games approach between the sectors, as alluded to in my colleague's question, we need something where there's a higher degree of cooperation and more strategic thinking, more forward thinking.

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MARK NORTHAM: Absolutely. That strategic thinking would assist matters, but I think there's also a greater capacity for movement between teachers between the systems. It's quite remarkable at the moment the level of movement between the systems.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What is interesting in your submission is the observation around the constant churn of State and national curriculums. Are you able to explain practically for the benefit of the Committee why that drives workload? How does that affect the teacher supply?

MARK NORTHAM: I appreciate your question. Look, in essence, and without oversimplifying matters, there are a lot of cooks in the kitchen with education. You've got AITSL, ACARA, NESA in New South Wales and TQI in the ACT and the like. There is a multiplicity so you get a national curriculum. New South Wales has had a practice of adopting and adapting a curriculum and implementing it, and next year there is significant change coming in K-1 and K-2 in New South Wales. When you change a curriculum and you have to implement it and it has got changes in it, therefore you need planning time to adequately disassemble, reassemble and prepare lessons and teach in a different manner because of the scope and sequence of what you're teaching is altered. It is a workload that magnifies workload and that change is upon us again in New South Wales.

If you've only got two hours as a primary schoolteacher, it's very difficult to do it, although we've got some employers who are now providing additional release time—we've got the Broken Bay diocese. If you look at their advertisements—public knowledge—they're providing additional money. They've broken ranks in terms of payment and they've also broken ranks in terms of providing an additional one hour's release for all teachers, primary and secondary. There is movement within a complex environment. I think it's recognition that if you want to attract and retain teachers, those core conditions have to change and the employers are leading the way in that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Okay. I want to also ask about the issue around casualisation and insecure employment because obviously we've got a lot more transparency or perhaps a better line of sight into what's happening in terms of the department around casualisation. In terms of the independent and Catholic sector, there is less available public data about that. I wonder if you can perhaps elaborate. Is there an issue around casualisation and insecure employment in those other sectors?

MARK NORTHAM: Yes. Look, it exists as, again, it does across all sectors. Just to give you a bit of a feel for it with the Fair Work Commission with long-term casuals in systems, we think at the most in Lismore diocese, which extends from Laurieton in the south to Tweed Heads and out across to Dorrigo, we'll probably get three of our members who will gain permanency if we're lucky out of that Fair Work sort of scenario. The short answer is that it is happening, but in Tweed Heads—I was in Tweed Heads yesterday and last evening talking to teachers up there—there is a bit of a positive outcome from the teacher shortage. They're looking across to the Queensland schools where there's been a pay increase offer, which the union up there is advocating for its members to accept, of 4 per cent, 4 per cent, 3 per cent with the CPI adjustment lever built into it.

Those teachers are being locked in by their New South Wales schools as we speak because there's a fair bit of interplay in that area between Queensland teachers coming south and New South Wales teachers going north. You know, they're simply driving across the border there. Change is afoot but the casualisation is an ongoing issue. We would have a view, and we've certainly got some employers who are working with this in this situation, of making permanent appointments to a cluster or a grouping of schools. Because schools, really, can predict their absences pretty well year to year and what they need, so onsite casuals who are made permanent would be one solution that would readily come to mind and employing permanent teachers to a grouping of schools, or to a diocese, with the view that, if they're good enough to teach in one school, they're good enough to teach in any school in that diocese. So that would greatly assist matters.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: We've seen a decline in enrolments in initial teacher education courses. Do you have any views about some of the factors that may be driving that and some of the measures that might be able to be taken?

MARK NORTHAM: Thanks for your question because it goes to the core of what we're doing. I haven't taught since 2001 but good students used to approach teachers and say, "Do you think in my case I'd make a good English/history teacher?"—or whatever subject area it might be. Those conversations—I haven't got any data around to support it with—are not occurring now. Somehow we've got to turn the perception of teachers around in the community and have those really valuable conversations in the classroom or after class or in the yard, wherever they might be, encouraging those good students who you believe would make great teachers to go into training. They're simply not entering it and I think there is some work there to be done to make it more attractive.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Are there course cost issues associated with that? Could that be remedied by—

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MARK NORTHAM: Whilst it's not a State lever—it's a Federal lever—I think it would be fantastic. For maths and science, it's about \$70,000 for HECS fees. A bachelor of arts is around \$100,000 or \$110,000. There is a lever there that could be pulled to simply make it easier for students to consider teaching and not be as financially burdened. That would be something that could work as well.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Are there any measures in terms of in-school approaches that might make the process of initial teacher education smoother?

MARK NORTHAM: Look, there are and one of them, I think, is a critical one. Towards the end of our submission we did make reference to it. But one of the things is, if you've got a need to have lots of students come to schools as prac students or interns—whatever their described as—you need those people to be supported, cared for, and given the wisdom of the people that are already in the school—and they're happy to do it. Currently, there is very little time release supplied to teachers who take on prac students. To put it more simply, you're doing that before school, lunchtime and after school.

Now it would probably stagger this Committee to know that the sum of money—it's Federal Government money, so it's not money that is provided by students in any way shape or form—is \$34 a day. There is another figure that goes beyond the \$34 a day, which I can barely utter, but if you coordinate a group of prac students in your schools—which is a pretty significant task and role in a school—it's \$1.73 additional to the \$34 a day. Now, that is not a way to attract or get trainee teachers into classes and into schools and glue them in. It's a fundamental problem that has to be addressed.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Thank you, Mr Northam, for your submission and for your attendance. We've heard from Government members today that perhaps some of the attention on teacher shortages in New South Wales is due to there being an election next year, yadda yadda. I know there was some of this in your submission, but can you reflect on how much worse it is in New South Wales versus the other jurisdictions, in the full knowledge that most jurisdictions are doing it tough because of the past 10 years of Federal Government policy? What are the main differences in New South Wales?

MARK NORTHAM: Obviously, we've got the largest need for as many—we need more of them. Obviously our union covers the ACT; they've got exactly the same problems. Wanniasa is hardly an isolated part of Australia. When you take it there, you've got the largest State with the largest needs. I don't think it's anything remotely related to the State election in March next year. I can't see how an unfurling or an unrolling of staffing of all schools, no matter what name is written out the front of the school, could possibly be linked. I just can't see it in my head how you could link the two. As I mentioned earlier, the Queensland salary outcome really highlights the fact that other States—my understanding is that Queensland had a 2.5 per cent cap. They varied the cap to allow for the 4.43 plus the CPI adjustment mechanism to make it attractive to teachers to move to their State. They will, in consequence, be the most highly paid.

It really is a problem for New South Wales. I'm not suggesting there are going to be busloads of teachers exiting the State or anything like that. But, certainly in that top portion from Lismore up, people would be giving some serious consideration to it. I think it's based on needs. I think the universities aren't pulling the students in in sufficient numbers. I think the processes that drive it in schools with the support for students and prac teachers—interns—is sadly lacking. Whilst we have agreements with most Catholic systems about supporting beginning teachers, the problem we've got right now is that they need blocks of time to learn how to teach and that time is simply not available because there are no casuals to do it. Independent schools—it is a very complex and varied experience. I would argue that you should mandate release time to beginning teachers, put it in their schedule—in their workload, their timetable—and let them learn and stay, and not fall off the edge after six to seven years, which is happening now.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: In terms of the levels of experience of different teachers within the profession, are we looking at there being shortfalls in particular levels of expertise? Ideally, I presume you would want a profession that has a degree of different experience levels within it. Even if we were, for example, to remove or drastically reduce the university costs for people studying teaching, is that going to be sufficient to get a whole bunch of new people in or do we also need to focus on retaining the more experienced teachers that we have?

MARK NORTHAM: We argue in our paper that that retention is a critical factor because whilst you can bring people in—the Committee is probably aware that today interns in their final year in New South Wales are being paid by independent schools, Catholic schools and department schools. That's a first. It never happened, obviously. They would have to finish their university course before they would do it. For example, technology teachers—think wood, plastic, metals, that sort of area—they're in short supply. The Armidale diocese has enormous trouble getting them. The Newcastle Catholic diocese had 10 vacancies last year. They're drifting back into the trades and into other areas that they may have come out of. You do need to retain those people so you've got a good, solid group of experienced teachers in there and then bring others in. But when you're bringing them

CORRECTED

in, you've got to be very careful. The point we make towards the end of our submission is the way we think to do it as well, is to really look after these students who are in schools right now. Because if they're not supported, not cared for and not nourished, they will soon fall off the edge as well.

The CHAIR: Mark, could I take you to your submission at the bottom of page 5, quoting these research findings from Dr Nicole Mockler from Sydney university?

MARK NORTHAM: Yes.

The CHAIR: The first point that's made is, "We are fixated on teacher quality with respect to education." There is an inference that maybe that's not such a good thing. Shouldn't we be fixated on teacher quality, given that the research always shows that the quality of the teacher has the biggest impact on education outcomes?

MARK NORTHAM: John Hattie, as you know, has maintained that view for an extended period of time, and we're supportive of that teacher quality. Nicole Mockler has done a meta study. I can't remember; I think it might have been 62,500 learned articles.

The CHAIR: Some 65,000 media comments over 25 years.

MARK NORTHAM: It was a staggering number. That analysis depicted that, teachers—anyone could do it if you really wanted to do it. Secondly, that was reinforcing in the community that teaching was comparatively easy—great conditions and great money but they're always complaining. We're not veering away from the teacher quality debate. The point we were making was that the teacher quality argument—if you're always looking in on the profession and you're always questioning the professionalism and coming from a deficit viewpoint, then it's feeding into that view that teaching, as a career, is down here and it shouldn't be. It is a great job. Our members at the moment, I think their professionalism is to the fore. By saying that, I mean that schools have got a tremendous capacity to keep operational in really tough times and they take an enormous amount of professional pride in making that school work for the day.

The CHAIR: The third dot point is about teacher bashing. Isn't teaching like any other profession, where there are some outstanding people, great teachers and great schools? I mentioned one earlier on. I visited two others last week, at Fairvale and Cabramatta. But there are some people who very clearly shouldn't be teachers; they're just not up to it. You can see from their classroom practice, their capacity and their ability that, like any other profession, there's a cohort who should do something else. Isn't it in the interests of the education system to have very high expectations about the quality of teachers, from the top to the bottom?

MARK NORTHAM: I would hope, as you would, that in any profession you would have procedures and policies that deal with situations where you believe—whether it's a doctor, a nurse, a lawyer, a dentist, teachers et cetera—that there are processes there to hold people to account. I visit schools regularly as well. They are great places to visit and there are great things going on inside those schools. But to suggest that our members are somehow deficient I think also feeds into that teacher bashing mentality, that it's okay to put the stick around this profession. I don't know that we see the stick being put around as many professions as you do around teachers.

The CHAIR: You mention health and legal here. Judicial officers cop a fair spray in the public arena. A lot of health professionals have copped it in the COVID vaccination period. Why should teaching be sacred?

MARK NORTHAM: I'm not sure that it is sacred. There's a myth that teachers aren't moved on after fair and reasonable processes; of course that happens. But I think you're feeding into the argument that's part of the problem that we're trying to solve by simply suggesting that we're weighed down heavily by underperforming teachers. I just don't see evidence of that.

The CHAIR: Some. In the government sector they sack probably 20 or 30 teachers per annum, mainly for drug use and having sex with students.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: One went to jail.

The CHAIR: The cases of people being sacked for underperformance are very, very rare. In your sector, how many teachers are moved on each year for underperformance?

MARK NORTHAM: It would be very difficult to get a number on that, but I can assure you that it does happen on a regular basis.

The CHAIR: What sort of number?

MARK NORTHAM: If I was looking at a number, and I am loath to do it because you're looking across a multiplicity of employers and I don't want to give the impression—

The CHAIR: Your members.

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MARK NORTHAM: Yes, of our members it would be more than the number that you put forward for the Department of Education.

The CHAIR: Less than 1 per cent a year. Probably less than half a per cent?

MARK NORTHAM: Yes.

The CHAIR: A very small number. Doesn't this feed the perception that it is a sheltered, protected profession, where there's no real performance measurement and accountability for underperformance? I think teachers should be paid massively more. At the school I mentioned earlier on, the leader there is fantastic. Anyone who can get refugee kids off to university deserves quadruple the money, in my eyes. But, at the other end of the scale, don't we have to be more realistic about moving on underperforming teachers?

MARK NORTHAM: Let's look at the current situation. I believe that the processes that are in place now in the schools and sectors that I deal with are more than adequate to deal with what you believe might be an underperforming teacher, or teachers, who hit a weak point in their career and might need support, encouragement and assistance to come back et cetera. A lot of that good work can be done because what you don't want to be doing is increasing the number of teachers that are heading out the door. I think the current situation is weighing heavily on a lot of teachers.

The CHAIR: On notice, could you give us a more definite number about the number of your members—

MARK NORTHAM: Yes, I'm happy to provide a more definite number to the Committee.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Can I return to the issue raised earlier about workforce planning and what would be a good policy framework for that to be undertaken in New South Wales? Until this inquiry, I wasn't aware that what we had in place earlier has been apparently dismantled. I wondered if you had thoughts on how that could be undertaken effectively, particularly engaging universities in getting more data in relation to how many enrolments we have for teaching students.

MARK NORTHAM: I understand NESA does some work in this space because NESA, as you would be aware, have control of education courses at universities. In other words, their approved education courses in New South Wales have to go through NESA. I would imagine that NESA would be a very good clearing house. All of the sectors are engaged in and involved with NESA; the universities are involved. That would be New South Wales-specific, but what you've got creeping in, in quite significant numbers, is people teaching at a lot of other universities around Australia and then coming to New South Wales. That would distort my concept of a solution in that space, but I would think that NESA would be well positioned to do it.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: We talked a little bit about our transformational changes in school communities in the last two decades, but universities have changed a lot too, haven't they, particularly fee-paying arrangements in international students. Are our universities sufficiently fulfilling their duty to education as lead education organisations? I'm specifically talking about affordable, good-quality teacher education that appeals to young people to participate in that sort of learning.

MARK NORTHAM: I will pick through your questions. I've already mentioned that I think one of the levers that could be pulled by the Federal Government would be the HECS lever. I think that there is a capacity to get universities to be more closely aligned with schools. It's a long-held view. By that, I mean that experienced teachers should be able to move in and out of universities in teaching roles at appropriate levels with greater ease and salary agreements in place so it doesn't become complex and turgid, and there are arguments over what you are being paid and whatever.

I think universities are reasonably responsive at the moment. We've just done a practicum arrangement with all the major universities in New South Wales. Even though I've mentioned it's a very low quantum of money, I think there is an enormous space for shielding and protecting beginning teachers with a reduced load. I think we should view \$34 a day to educate a teacher as just being totally an unreasonable figure. That's the space that you've got to work in if you want to, one, get them into the universities and, second, get them into a school and get them glued into the education system, because people are no longer staying in what you might have used to think teachers did for an entire career. It's in and out. That teacher churn—that lack of stability and that lack of certainty and predictability—is impacting on schools.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Do you think that women having a much greater opportunity these days in terms of career choices and the resources to do that has had an impact on the number of students available for teaching?

MARK NORTHAM: I think it has. Our union has got about a 75 per cent, 76 per cent female membership, so it's a female-dominated profession. There are a lot of people, obviously, in part-time roles.

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Another positive out of the current shortage of teachers is that many schools have had a view that you couldn't do a job share arrangement, particularly in infants and primary schools, moving up. I can assure you that that view is rapidly changing in the current climate. All of a sudden, job shares are seen to be a reasonable way forward in many schools.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: If you don't mind me following that up quickly, I am astounded by the figures from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, which is showing that 60 per cent of teachers under the age of 30 who are in casual arrangements are doing that because they were unable to obtain full-time employment or secure employment. That seems bizarre in the context of the problem that this Committee is trying to—

MARK NORTHAM: It is a staggering figure, and that's another big picture and one that has to be remedied. These are people that find it hard to go—obviously you're not going to get a home loan. You might get a car loan, but your capacity to participate in society once you're appointed to only a temporary position, everything just falls away from that status.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Just to clarify, the answers that were given range from personal circumstances and professional circumstances to other reasons. The 60 per cent I'm referring to are simply saying, "I was unable to secure a contract or permanent position," and the problem appears more pronounced in government schools than non-government schools. I'm just trying to understand what on earth that is about in 2021 when we've already got a massive shortage of teachers in the system.

MARK NORTHAM: My knowledge of how the State schools employ is reasonably limited, and my comments are probably more applicable to the Catholic systemic sector.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Sure. Why can't these kids get—I mean, it's across all age groups but it's worse for under-30s, and the reason I'm surprised is wouldn't you reckon they are the ones that you'd want to get.

MARK NORTHAM: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Sorry, I have a few questions. You represent New South Wales and ACT independent teachers. You said that the shortage in ACT is similar to that in New South Wales. Is that fair to say?

MARK NORTHAM: In a broad sense, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you able to perhaps comment on the shortage between, say, New South Wales and somewhere like Victoria?

MARK NORTHAM: I'm not. I'm not across all that, only what I read in the press, that in recent times they were offering seven hundred and something dollars a day for casual teachers to move to remote areas of Victoria, and it attracted, again, a minuscule number of people to do it. I wouldn't have the expertise to comment on Victoria.

The Hon. WES FANG: In your opening statement, you talked about the election not being a factor in the fact that we've got people marching in the streets. Certainly, the numbers that we have is that there are similar issues in the New South Wales system as there are in Victoria, yet we only seem to be getting these industrial relations concerns being publicly voiced in New South Wales, and that's because there is an election next year as opposed to Victoria. Can you see that linkage?

MARK NORTHAM: I am really struggling with the linkage. Our unions had two stoppages—you're probably aware of that—six weeks apart. That, in a historical sense, is unheard of. It's not since 1993 that we've marched with the NSW Teachers Federation, and the key difference this time from 1993—and it really is a critical difference—is that those marches were right across New South Wales and the ACT. They extended from Albury, Wagga, Tamworth, Armidale, Port Macquarie, all the way up the coast to Ballina and Tweed Heads. They were everywhere. So the sentiments that you're describing, I think you're trying to restrict to what might have happened in Macquarie Street, but our union has never put as many people on the street as it has this year, ever.

The Hon. WES FANG: I would then assume that you would have the same industrial relations issues in the ACT and your teachers are—

MARK NORTHAM: Well, no. There are different salary—

The Hon. WES FANG: But you have the same shortages.

MARK NORTHAM: That's true, but there are salary outcomes in the ACT. ACT State schoolteachers are paid more.

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The Hon. WES FANG: To that point, then, doesn't that go to prove the Government's point that it's not just all about money? We know that the Teachers Federation has predominantly been focused on—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Are you giving a speech? Is there a question there?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes. I'm putting perspective—

The CHAIR: It's the last question, and then we will take our break.

The Hon. WES FANG: Opposition members have been given a lot of latitude to ask their questions. I just ask that the Government be provided the opportunity to put perspective before we ask the questions and not have these constant interjections.

The CHAIR: I agree. Fire away.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's not just about money, which seems to be the focus of the Teachers Federation; it's actually multifactorial. If there are issues that exist in the ACT that are similar to here in relation to the shortages, why aren't your members there marching in the streets like they are in New South Wales? Why aren't your compatriot organisations across other States, where there are similar shortages yet again, marching in the streets?

MARK NORTHAM: I will take the ACT one first. Our members did rally and march in the ACT, and again it was historical—the Teachers Fed members from around the ACT joined that rally in Canberra. That's unheard of as well. I'm really struggling with the linkage with an election. Obviously things might come to a peak when you're winding up to an election, but to suggest there's some sort of correlation in our members' heads—our members are on the streets because they've got insufficient pay and they've got conditions that need resetting, and it's as simple as that. They need additional release time to make schools work. Schools are working now on goodwill, our members are on their knees, schools are on their knees, and enough is enough.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much, Mr Northam, for your presentation, submission and your time today. It's very much appreciated. The Committee will now break for 15 minutes.

(The witness withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

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Dr FIONA LONGMUIR, Lecturer, Educational Leadership, School of Education, Culture and Society, Faculty of Education, Monash University, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Longmuir, for your time, effort and attendance. It's available to you to make a short opening statement, if you choose.

FIONA LONGMUIR: Sure. I am representing a group of researchers who have, since 2019, been working on projects to understand the perceptions that teachers have of their work in their educational settings. Our first teachers' perceptions of their work survey was conducted in 2019, so prior to the COVID disruptions. We had over 2,400 teachers from around Australia respond, including 658 from New South Wales. This research has been published and the findings are widely available. We have just completed data collection from a second round of this survey and we have had over 5,500 responses from teachers, including over 1,100 from New South Wales. This research has not yet been published, but we have been able to share some provisional insights in our submission to the inquiry.

Given the work we have done on this research, we have kept our direction for our submission narrow to the terms of reference items (b) future teacher supply and demand, (e) teaching workforce conditions and (i) the status of the teaching profession. Our review of our findings leads us to believe that excessive workloads and the resulting burnout are the most significant contributing factors to staff shortages across Australian schools. Our research has shown that the working conditions in many schools are driving passionate and highly effective teachers to leave their careers at great cost to students, communities and governments. Given this, we feel that the current and future crisis in the teaching workforce is unlikely to be solved unless the primary focus of response is on retention strategies. Any focus on attracting new entrants to the teaching profession will not be sufficient until it is a sustainable and attractive career.

The prevailing discourses perpetuated by policy, politicians and the media usually suggest that challenges in schools can be served by increasing teacher quality, implying to those working hard in schools now that their quality is insufficient. However, these policy settings are in fact exacerbating workloads and reducing respect for teachers. Further, the policy conditions do not adequately acknowledge or support the complexity and emotional intensity that is associated with teaching work. Based on the voices of the over 8,000 teachers who have responded through our surveys, we argue that attention must be on retaining the many excellent and passionate teachers in schools now and who, in significant numbers, are considering leaving the profession. From the solutions shared with us by our participants, strategies to mitigate workloads and to enhance trust and respect for teachers need to be prioritised. Thanks.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Thank you for your submission. It's an extraordinary figure that you've cited in your submission—18.3 per cent of New South Wales teachers indicating that they plan to stay in their career until retirement. Can you perhaps elaborate on what those teachers are saying about why they're so disillusioned that the career that they've chosen is not the one that they want to stick with?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Yes. Thank you. I just want to preface my comments by saying that we did fast-track some of the analysis so that we could provide some information for you about New South Wales teacher results that we had from our survey, so we haven't done the in-depth analysis that we plan to do for our report that will be released in October. But what we have seen from our 2019 survey and from our early work on this data is that the reasons that are being given are pretty consistent, but the numbers whom are being affected by those reasons has increased since 2019. So we know that the highest response to why people are choosing to leave is excessive workload, followed by the wellbeing, safety and health issues that teachers are experiencing, followed by feelings of lack of appreciation and respect for their work.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is there qualitative data that you're collecting in terms of delving a little bit deeper into the drivers of the workload? My first question is: Is there qualitative data around the drivers of the workload growth?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Yes. The question where we asked people to indicate whether they intended to stay was followed by a question asking for their reasons for why they were thinking of leaving, if they had suggested that. That's the same structure as we had in our 2019 survey. We haven't done a thorough analysis of the 2022 responses. We know from our initial look at them that it's a similar pattern to what we found in 2019 and it was those reasons that I just explained—excessive workload; challenges with burnout, wellbeing, mental health, and the stress; work/life balance; and time for family. To go into some details and give you some examples, things like teachers feeling shame, exhaustion and stress from not being able to give time to their own children because they were so time-strapped and emotionally wrung-out from the time that they're giving to other people's children. Is that helpful?

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It is very helpful. In terms of the final report, are you working towards some recommendations around what can be done? Are you able to give us insight into where your thinking is in relation to the policy response that might address the concerns that are being raised by teachers through this survey?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Yes. We are really dedicated to sharing the voices that come out of the survey. We have asked for suggestions around solutions; we have asked for suggestions around ways to mitigate workload issues. As you can imagine, a lot of those suggestions reflect pretty directly on the issues that are raised as concerns—you know, reducing workload, mentions of things like reductions in class sizes. Actually, one of the biggest responses was the reduction in administration workload and work expectations around what we know has been an increasing demand in administrative tasks that teachers are required to perform. Often they are tasks that are around compliance and surveillance of their work—having to document and really pretty strictly cover exactly what they are doing every minute of every day and every teaching decision more and more.

The planning that goes with that and the work that goes into covering the curriculum in its depth and complexity—obviously covering it is something that teachers are very happy to do, but having to prove over and over again that they are covering it and documenting it in a depth that is becoming required. There is a whole heap of administration that I think has increased around general admin things—you know, risk management and all of those kinds of important things that are falling into teachers' workload baskets more and more often.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thanks very much for your time and for your research, which certainly matches with the survey that our parliamentary inquiry conducted.

FIONA LONGMUIR: Yes, I saw that.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: It is obviously very vigorous, the process that you have gone through, in order to collate your data, but it does go to exactly the same issues—administration, workload and that they are planning to leave in great numbers because of that. I really liked what you were saying in your opening statement, that unless we address those retention issues, we can try and attract as many teachers as we like, but we need to be retaining those teachers. I was interested on that point that you ended on with my colleague about some of the risk mitigation things that teachers might use. It was put to me recently that a teacher, because they were on playground duty and there were various different incidents in the playground, the paperwork associated with that then took them over an hour into their teaching time, which then took them away from what we want them to be doing, which is focus on teaching. Do your survey results reflect that kind of feedback?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Yes. Again, prefacing that 2022 hasn't been fully analysed, but we do have mention of things like those important but time-consuming extra burdens that are coming through and taking time away from teaching, for sure. Yes, it is something broader. As you say, there is so much alignment in lots of different surveys that are coming forward, including the one we saw last night that your inquiry has done—very similar findings. We do know that those burdens are more and more. The compliance that goes with working in schools, which, again, all of these things—child safety is incredibly important, but the additions just keep going to teachers and taking their time.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: That's exactly right. And when we want them to be focused on administrative tasks like developing personalised learning programs, that would be a useful administrative task, whereas perhaps something like incidents in the playground or other things like that—maybe we could be differentiating those kinds of administrative tasks and providing different support. Would you agree?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Yes. It is something that has been raised obviously as a policy possibility in providing extra administration support, and it is certainly something that comes through in the voices of our teachers—that extra support for some of the tasks that don't necessarily need to be handled by teachers. Certainly some extra resources to help them with those would be good. I think the other part of that increasing administration, though, is considering how much we need to surveil the work that our teachers do and how much we are able to trust them. Where is that important line? I think there is quite a bit of evidence to say that it has gone a bit too far, that we are not trusting them to use their expertise and their training and their passion to work with kids and make the best decisions, but rather we are constantly requiring them to justify every decision and every pedagogy they use or which teaching strategy they choose and for which students and so forth. That level of demand has increased a lot and takes time to comply with.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is it fair to say that they are linked, the phenomena of public perceptions of the teaching profession and the lack of trust that flows from that in the public discourse? The consequence of that is that there is an agenda that is pursued in a public policy way to satisfy this public concern that teacher quality isn't up to scratch or that teachers actually need to be able to account for what they are doing and be accountable to the public. Those discourses are interrelated, aren't they?

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FIONA LONGMUIR: Absolutely, yes. It is certainly something that our respondents are feeling the effects of. There is a lot of research into the increasing accountabilities and public data collection that has happened in schools and how that has exacerbated the loss of trust in the teaching profession for sure.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Thank you, Dr Longmuir, for your research and for coming here to talk to us about it today. I was particularly struck by the finding in your submission that the proportion of New South Wales teachers who would recommend teaching as a career has fallen from 44 per cent in 2019, which is obviously well below half of all teachers, to 24.5 per cent in 2022. That is a massive drop in people saying that they would recommend their job to others. How much of that is a product of things not getting better and people getting a bit exhausted over time with poor pay and conditions and large workloads, and how much of it was brought about by dissatisfaction with the Government response during COVID?

FIONA LONGMUIR: I can't answer that definitively. We haven't fully analysed that data. I am sorry that I can't bring that full analysis to you, but certainly I think there's definitely a link that we can infer from the fact that the work has got harder and more challenging, and the responses don't necessarily seem to be happening quick enough to stop people leaving. If people are talking about leaving in the numbers that we have indicated in our survey, then of course it's not going to be something that they are going to recommend to their children or their friends' children or anyone else. Yes, obviously there is a connection between the deepening crisis that we can see and the likelihood of people recommending it as a career.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Have you had the opportunity yet to compare that finding in particular against the national finding? Is it significantly worse than other States and Territories? Do we know that?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Only in a pretty light-touch look. We know from our 2019-20 work that the New South Wales responses were pretty similar to the national responses. Again, we know from our light look at 2022 that it looks like pretty similar numbers. Yes, certainly national issues are at play across the country.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Were any differences picked up so far between the public school system and the independent schools?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Not that we've looked at, I'm afraid, no.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Would you be able to provide to the Committee at some point a supplementary submission? I think it would be incredibly useful to see that more detailed breakdown, acknowledging that we are very grateful for you having done what you have done in time for this hearing. What sort of time frame do you think you would need before being able to provide that more detailed analysis?

FIONA LONGMUIR: We will provide the report that we were intending to in October. Whether we go to the depth of looking at independent versus public—we did have a very heavily weighted public response. I could find the figures, but significant proportions of teachers—I think 70 per cent or 80 per cent, from memory—were from public schools versus other systems. But, yes, we could probably get that for you, at least the figures.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: That would be very useful. Finally, you make the finding that we really need to focus on retention rather than attraction. What were the specific survey results that led you to that conclusion?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Obviously our survey respondents were all practising teachers in schools, early childhood settings and so forth. Their concerns are around what is happening to them. The inference we make from that is that any efforts to put any type of early career teacher—whether they are changing careers or they are fast-tracked or they are supported in whatever ways—into environments that are untenable and unsustainable is going to keep the flow going rather than stopping it where it needs to stop, which is with teachers leaving. Someone recently talked about it as filling up a leaking bucket with scarce water supplies. You need to plug the holes in the bucket otherwise it is never going to work. The potential workload equations that come from putting less qualified educators into schools—we know that early career teachers and training teachers need a lot of support to develop. It is a profession that takes time and effort to develop people into high-quality teachers for our children and young people. Someone has to do that work with them in schools. It needs to be really well thought about, I think, in order to be an effective solution.

The CHAIR: Do you think the initial teacher education is doing a very good job to school would-be teachers on what to expect? It sounds like, especially for graduate teachers going out into schools for the first time, there is an element of culture shock as to what they find in the schools. Do you think we need to do more in ITE to build a realistic expectation of what is going to happen?

FIONA LONGMUIR: I think the ITE programs across the country are pretty exceptional, really, globally speaking. I have to preface again that I am not a specialist in initial teacher education at all, but my general knowledge suggests that our ITE programs are great. We get our teachers into schools as quickly as possible. Our universities and higher education providers are constantly working to try to find the best

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arrangements to get potential teachers into schools so that they have that exposure and experience as much as possible. That is a partnership arrangement that needs to keep being a focus. It is absolutely in the interests of everyone to have teachers as well prepared as possible. Everyone is making every effort to do that, I think.

The CHAIR: What about the changing nature of schools? Schools are not a static fixed institution; they are performing functions now that were not even contemplated 30 or 40 years ago, such as the wellbeing pastoral care-type agenda. Is the evolution of what a school has become a factor that surprises teachers?

FIONA LONGMUIR: I am not sure it surprises teachers. I think we all know that that aspect of education and teaching is becoming more and more a part of the job—that is for sure. But I think that it would be fair to say that the supports in place for those sides of the work are not as strong as the supports in place for academic achievement and, certainly, as the measures in place for academic achievement. Obviously there are pressures in things that are measured versus things that are not, and supports that are needed for really challenging changes, as you have outlined, Mr Latham, that take specific levels of expertise and complex combinations of skills to deal with a lot of the issues that are happening in schools. Often the resources are scarce to help with that work.

The CHAIR: But do you get teachers who say, "I went into this 20 years ago to help disadvantaged kids in disadvantaged communities get into university and a better life and a fairer society, but look at me now. I am doing shark versus dolphin thinking classes. I am doing animal yoga. I am doing all of this wellbeing stuff that has crept into schools with consultants who are not trained educators"? They just bowl on in unverified and unchecked and are playing a significant role, in some cases overshadowing the role of the trained educator.

FIONA LONGMUIR: I don't feel confident to respond to that, aside from that I think that it is a part of what teachers need to work on. They do their best to find the best solutions to the problems that they are dealing with, with the minimal resources that they have.

The CHAIR: In terms of your survey methodology, were they self-selected or randomly selected?

FIONA LONGMUIR: The teachers survey was shared broadly through lots of different channels. It was self-selection. People chose to participate in the survey.

The CHAIR: Do you think it skews the results somewhat that you are tapping into the most disgruntled cohort?

FIONA LONGMUIR: With any survey that is self-selection there are methodological aspects that need to be considered. Unfortunately, it does not enable us to really understand people's motivations for participating. But it is obviously something that is worth considering.

The CHAIR: Will there be a longitudinal follow-up? I note that 31.1 per cent of teachers plan to leave within five years. You find that in politics people say, "I'm jack of this Parliament. I am going." But 10 years later they are still there. I will not name names.

The Hon. WES FANG: I can name a few.

The CHAIR: I am sure you can. Is there going to be a follow-up to see how strong these threats of departure were, as opposed to just letting off steam?

FIONA LONGMUIR: In terms of specifically asking those 31 per cent if they leave or not, we are not able to do that because it is an anonymous survey. We are not able to follow that up directly. There is work that others have done that looks at that kind of thing and following career progression.

The CHAIR: What does it show? Are these threats idle or real?

FIONA LONGMUIR: I'd have to look at it, sorry.

The CHAIR: Could you come back to us on notice about that? How many actually follow through on this plan to leave is a big issue, isn't it?

FIONA LONGMUIR: I can certainly have a quick look and see if I can send you some suggestions for research that has talked about that, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you very much for your insightful submission. It's really good to quantify a lot of the concepts by looking at the numbers that you have been able to get out of the research. I will just touch on the point that Mr Latham touched on beforehand that teachers may indicate that they may leave in the next five years. Are you able to break down those numbers and look at people who are looking to leave the profession or people who are looking to perhaps transition into other parts of the teaching profession that may not be face to face? That 31 per cent is quite a high number, but there are a number of aspects to where they may end up that

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will keep them broadly within the teaching area. Are you able to provide a breakdown of that? Also, are you able to look at previous studies that may have requested numbers from teaching cohorts that have looked at teachers that may have looked to leave and have seen the follow-through of that, where it may be one in five or one in 10 of those people actually ended up leaving in that time? Are you able to provide any insight into that?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Not off the top of my head, I'm afraid. We asked the question, "How long do you intend to remain in the profession?" Obviously we can't control the interpretation of that but I would assume that—our intention was to ask "Do you intend to remain a teacher?" That's the background to our question. In terms of other work, I couldn't say, sorry.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's all right. I was hoping that you might have been able to access some previous research that may have been done in the area.

FIONA LONGMUIR: We've got a body of work we've put together that's got some literature we've been looking at—and I'm happy to go back and check that, but I couldn't be sure that we'd be able to answer that exact question.

The Hon. WES FANG: Off the back of some of the survey work that you've done—I know that the Government has announced around an initial 200 extra admin staff. Are you able to provide some insights as to what those roles would be best focused on? Where do teachers find that the administration tasks are the most arduous for them? Are you able to perhaps form some types of recommendations out of your report in that area, given the data that you got?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Possibly. We'd have to look more closely. We didn't, obviously, ask a specific question around what types of administration are challenging you, but we did ask questions around what are the challenges, and responses were often around things like administration, paperwork and so forth. I'm not sure we would have the depth of detail in our responses that would make me comfortable to recommend specific types of administration work that are challenging, but I'm happy to review it and see if I think there is—yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you. I just thought I'd ask that because it's obviously a large number of extra admin staff that will be added in. Given the detailed research that you've done, it may have been able to assist in the deployment of that. I know Mr Latham asked you about the role of the initial teacher education in addressing some of the survey issues that were raised. We have got a lot of the education groups coming after the lunch break to speak to them. But has your research provided any insights as to how those education facilities might be able to attract—in two parts—(1) more people into the teaching profession but (2) more suitable people into the teaching profession so that we don't have a large number of dropouts during that ITE? Do you have any views around their role in how we are going to attract more people into studying teaching, but also completing those studies so that they actually get rolled out into the workforce?

FIONA LONGMUIR: No. I think people who have submitted who work more closely with ITE would be better placed to answer those questions. I know you've got Jenny Gore and others who have done extensive work in those kinds of areas. I think what our survey can offer to those issues is to say the conditions in schools affect ITE attraction and ITE completion, because it is a training and a profession that needs to be closely linked with schools. Until those places are attractive, supported, well-appreciated, higher status places for these mostly young people, but also people who are thinking to change careers—until it's a place where they're going to be supported in a long career, we're going to lose them, wherever they are in their decisions around taking on a career.

The Hon. WES FANG: I guess this is part of the issue with the intersection of the way that we look at tertiary education, but also then the employment of teachers. Because the tertiary education component is obviously Federally controlled, yet for State schools, they are employed through the State program. So there's obviously that intersection between the Federal and the State governments. Has your research been able to provide some insights at all as to how that intersection might be able to be streamlined in order to ensure that the universities are providing into the workforce the number of teachers that not only the State schools but the independents, et cetera, require? Because there does seem to be that disconnect—at least in my mind—that there is perhaps shortages because we're just not training enough teachers, and that comes out of the Federal-controlled universities. So we need that leverage. Are you able to provide some insights on that at all?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Not from our actual surveys, I'm afraid. I don't think I've seen a single mention, from our teachers who responded, about issues with university training or university connections or anything of the sort. I guess my only response would be that I know, from looking at other people's work, that the data suggests that people actually choosing to go into teaching as a course at university has dropped. What the policy settings are around ATAR scores, or whatever the expectations are, might actually have the reverse effect to what I'm sure was intended—that we're putting people off coming into teaching. That goes alongside the reasons—the other thing is that schools are well-known places; everyone has a connection with a school, knows a school or knows a

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teacher. The understanding of the work in schools is well shared, I think, and probably even more so, I suppose, after the couple of years of remote learning and those kinds of things. It's a public profession. So when the profession is struggling, the public knows about it, including those people who may or may not have been thinking about going into the profession.

The Hon. WES FANG: I noted you talked about the retention of teachers as opposed to the attraction of people into the profession. Obviously, that's been a strong focus of your research, given that you were surveying employed teachers, now. But we heard earlier that there are issues with shortages even in places like the Australian Capital Territory, which have different pay structures, so it perhaps isn't just about money. Have you been able to prioritise or give some insights as to what those priorities are for teachers that are looking for something to keep them retained in the system? Is it money, or is something more important to them that will keep them within the teaching profession?

FIONA LONGMUIR: Making their workload manageable—that's it. That's a clear message that we've got: The workload is untenable, the working conditions are difficult, it's having impacts on their health and wellbeing, their mental health, their family life, and it's exacerbated by being demoralised, essentially, by public policy and media messages that essentially bash teachers when there's crises in education. It's that simple, and that's the messages that are coming through from the surveys that we're doing, along with the survey that you guys did, and plenty of other evidence as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: I know I put this question to the Teachers Federation earlier, but is it, perhaps, the constant talking down of teaching? I obviously put that question to the Teachers Federation. But across the board, whether it be in politics, or any level of government, or the Teachers Fed, unions, et cetera—does that make it harder, then, to attract good teachers and retain teachers, do you think, or is that assisting in highlighting the issue? Because it's a real fine line, as you probably understand, to raise an issue but then not raise it to the point where people are dissuaded from staying or joining.

FIONA LONGMUIR: Yes. I agree, it is a fine line. But the conditions are what they are. We can't sugar-coat them for the sake of whatever it might be—because that's what's putting people off. That's what is making huge numbers of people want to leave. Even if we pretended that those conditions weren't the case—we're going to perhaps attract more people, but they're going to enter those conditions and then go through the same experiences, and we won't retain them. As I said in my opening statement, the economic, social, et cetera, investment in training teachers, and then losing them, surely is a much greater consideration for putting resources and effort than attracting them, I would suggest.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Fiona, for your time today. We thank you for your research and the submission and the evidence you provided. It is much appreciated.

(The witness withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

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Professor KIM BESWICK, Director of the Gonski Institute for Education; Head of the School of Education, and Professor of Mathematics Education, University of New South Wales, affirmed and examined

Professor MARY RYAN, Executive Dean, Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, sworn and examined

Professor SUSAN LEDGER, Head of School – Dean of Education, University of Newcastle, before the Committee via videoconference, sworn and examined

Professor JENNY GORE, Director, Teachers and Teaching Research Centre & Fellow, American Educational Research Association, University of Newcastle, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

Professor DEBRA HAYES, Professor Education & Equity, Head of School, Sydney School of Education & Social Work, University of Sydney, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: We've got approximately 55 minutes for this session. With five witnesses, it's a little bit awkward to ask everyone to make an opening statement because that could eat up half the time. I might just say to the five witnesses that if there's anything pressing that you need to add to your submission or the material you've provided us, it's available to you to make an opening statement, but it would be good if just one or two did that, if I can put it that way. Does anyone want to make an opening statement adding something?

MARY RYAN: I just want to explain that ACU is a public university and that we train over 1,500 graduates per year across Australia that go into government, Catholic and independent schools. We're unique in that we're a multi-jurisdictional university that operates across different policy settings. So I'd be really happy to talk about some of the successful initiatives ACU is involved in in other State jurisdictions that could work here in New South Wales.

SUSAN LEDGER: I'd like to introduce myself as one of the only regional universities here, I think. The University of Newcastle's School of Education has a long and very proud history of educating the next generation of teachers for our New South Wales public schools. We're recognised as leading the sector in educating one of the largest numbers of Indigenous teachers in the nation. We research on active living and learning and the adoption of simulation and emerging technologies to better prepare students for placements. Our programs are underpinned by the quality teaching model, which the NSW Department of Education has endorsed as a framework for quality pedagogy. I did have four key areas that I was going to talk about: raising the status of the profession; having a more holistic and differentiated approach to how we do things; recruiting and retaining teachers, particularly for the rural and regional areas; and professional experience and professional induction and the importance of those.

JENNY GORE: I wouldn't mind making an opening statement, if you're happy for me to do so, because mine's quite broad ranging, I think, but it also highlights a couple of key points. Addressing the teacher shortage requires long-term, multifaceted and research-informed approaches. There are three key points I want to make, all of which are about the big picture and about research evidence.

First, if we're going to try to solve the current teacher shortage through recruitment—it's an important strategy but at best partial and long term. Recruitment itself is fraught with challenges. We will only attract more people into teaching if teachers are more trained positively and their work is recognised as rewarding and stimulating. Continuing to push the idea that recruitment must be limited to the best and brightest will fail because it disrespects the current workforce and it's not based on the evidence that higher ATARs make for better teachers. Our research shows that teaching is the second most popular career among school students in years 3 to 12 in New South Wales, including many who are high achieving. We must nurture that interest.

Secondly, a focus on initial teacher ed can only be part of a solution. If corners are cut by halving ITE programs or putting underprepared teachers in classrooms, the shortage will only worsen. Initial teacher ed is often blamed for not preparing classroom-ready graduates. Our research shows the quality of teaching delivered by beginning teachers is equivalent to that of experienced teachers. Of course, we've got more to do in teacher ed but this evidence actually suggests that initial teacher eds are doing pretty well. Thirdly, if we're going to keep teachers in the workforce, we have to provide meaningful support. Pay and conditions have to be addressed. They need time to plan and collaborate. They need and deserve respect.

New graduates, fast-track graduates or international teachers will not thrive in a broken system where too many teachers are burnt out, exhausted, overwhelmed and demoralised. But if we want to slow the attrition from the profession—and we must—then investing in initiatives with key evidence of positive effects for teachers and students is critical. We have a cost-effective approach to improving teaching and student outcomes that also

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lifts teachers' confidence, morale and sense of belonging to the profession. This work on quality teaching and Quality Teaching Rounds was born right here in New South Wales. Capitalising on the work will help raise the status of teaching, enhance initial teacher education and support 65,000 teachers currently in the workforce. It could play a significant role in addressing teacher shortages and in improving educational outcomes in this State, now and in the future.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I might start initially with a question about practicum places and whether—are we able to actually source sufficient practicum places to be able to meet the demand that clearly is there for initial teacher education? We're clearly not training enough teachers. If we were to expand the intake of training teachers through ITE programs, will there be enough practicum places? Perhaps the panel might be able to offer some comments about the issues associated with placing people in practicum.

SUSAN LEDGER: As I've mentioned before, I chair the steering committee for the professional experience team as part of the Australian Council of Deans of Education. We've done a lot of work on this area with professional experience and access to schools. It's always difficult to get placements in schools, but there are enough out there if we attend to things as a whole of profession. And so we don't demarcate between in-service and pre-service—that we actually work together and have schools working a bit more together with universities and vice versa.

We've got strong partnerships in every State. We've got amazing programs in every State. It'd be nice to scale that up. A current issue at the moment is the fact that the Education Act for teachers doesn't include preparing future teachers. There are some big policy issues there and I refer you and the Committee to a report that the Australian Council of Deans of Education did, and the NADPE group within that led by Christine Ure, formerly from Deakin. I'd refer you to that because a lot of the answers are in that. I think I referred to it in our submission. Yes, there are enough schools to take our students, but we want to make sure they go to good schools.

MARY RYAN: I would like to add to those comments. At the moment we have a very ad hoc system for placing students. We have multiple staff who are on the phone ringing individual schools and teachers pretty much begging them to take students for their placements. I think we could do a lot more to have a more systematic approach to placements across New South Wales. At the moment it's voluntary. Schools and teachers don't have to take students for placements. For teachers who are very busy, sometimes it feels like an additional burden. I think we could definitely do something in that space to have a much more systematic program around placing our students and making it part of the professional obligation of teachers. We should be preparing teachers well to mentor those new teachers coming through.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I wanted to extend that line of questioning a bit further. There's been suggestions about moving towards an apprenticeship model where students are placed, effectively, in paid positions within schools. Given the issues around placements for practicum, what practical impediments are there to adopting that type of arrangement in terms of initial teacher education?

SUSAN LEDGER: Can I follow up on that one, given this is a field that's very close to my heart? That's a great model. The internship model has and always will be a great model. Many States use it for 12 months in their final year working along with somebody else. Western Australia has that model, and a few other States. The trouble at the moment is that once you put them in as a teacher, they're not provided with support to do it. They're unqualified—we put in an article in *The Conversation* recently about that—and that compounds their situation. We'll probably see more teachers leave because of the additional stress. If they went in as paraprofessionals and just supported and transitioned into the workforce, that's a different story. But paying them and having the full responsibility of teaching before they are ready is a very short-sighted approach to things.

MARY RYAN: I'd just like to provide a slightly different opinion about that. Getting these pre-service teachers into classrooms earlier helps them to understand the culture of schools. It helps them to understand how classroom management works. It helps them to engage with parents sooner. Of course we need the proper supports in place for those people going in early, but if they're going in—we call it an apprenticeship model but it's a little more than that because they're still supported by the university. They're still engaging in a master's degree. I think it is important for them to maintain that level of qualification so they're still engaged with the university and they're still understanding evidence but they're in the classroom working on a practical basis and being paid. It's not like trying to just find a placement; they're being paid as teachers. They're actually helping to take some of that burden off teachers. But they must be well supported if they're placed into classrooms.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Extending further on this, I suppose we're talking about initial teacher education and the kind of support that the university provides in that area. We've had a whole system of teacher accreditation evolve and continuing professional development. I ask the panel to perhaps make some comments about the role that the universities are currently playing in that ongoing professional development for teachers, and whether we need to look at that and perhaps expand the role that universities play in delivering that

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professional development. That professional development does seem very ad hoc in a lot of respects—how it's accredited and the kinds of courses that are offered. Is there a role for universities to play a bigger part in that ongoing professional development?

JENNY GORE: I might jump in and say that the professional development market has absolutely burgeoned over recent years, and in many instances it's about making money, not making a difference. I think that ensuring that professional development provision is grounded in the evidence—and the university's role in that—could be a really important part of ensuring that we get better support for teachers in an ongoing way.

KIM BESWICK: I'd just add that I think professional development for teachers is part of enhancing their working conditions: giving them access to professional development that's really high quality and that fits their own personal ambitions and career stage, and is even specific to their subject area, rather than just being a hoop that they have to jump through to tick off to say "accredited". I certainly think that universities can play a role in that and need to be responsive to those needs of schools as well.

MARY RYAN: I would also agree, and I would suggest that professional development needs to be sustained. Just a one-off workshop doesn't work. We know that that doesn't necessarily get transformed into practice. It needs to be relevant to their classroom context, it needs to be timely and it needs to be sustained so they're trying things, they're coming back and using the evidence and trying again. I would argue that, yes, universities absolutely have a role to play in that to guide teachers through that work.

SUSAN LEDGER: I think it also helps show that whole professional approach between the sectors, the universities and the schools. That's something that we all advocate for and have continued to advocate for a long time. The stronger we can get that partnership, the better to eliminate some of those things that you said, Jenny, about the burgeoning number of costs and things that are making profit.

JENNY GORE: I think the other part of it is it's certainly teachers beginning their careers in casual or short-term kinds of positions. They often don't get access to any professional development unless they pay for it themselves and go without teaching income on those days. I think the universities could play a really important role with some support to ensure that ongoing professional development for teachers who don't necessarily have a school that they're connected with.

SUSAN LEDGER: I think, Jenny, that's a really important point. It's often forgotten that among many of our teachers there are casual teachers. They're casualised, they come in and out and they are really in no-man's-land. The support isn't there. Having access to good professional development is essential. That's that whole-of-profession approach.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I've got one further question. In the public debate there seems to be a lot of emphasis about mid-career transition and trying to attract people with a particular skill set into teaching. I wanted to ask the panel what we can do to look at, I suppose, the flip side. There's two lots of skills that we're talking about: pedagogical skills and subject specialist skills. It seems like we want to go out into the wide world to find subject specialists because there's an assumption it's easier to give them pedagogical skills rather than looking at the existing teacher workforce and looking at the skills sets. Obviously they have existing pedagogical skills but don't have the subject expertise. What can we do to actually enhance that acquisition of the subject expertise for our existing teacher workforce?

KIM BESWICK: I think that's a really important point. We should be working on programs that go both ways. That is super important. In some subject areas I think picking up the discipline content knowledge is possibly more difficult than others, depending on the whole background of the person. For example, to study tertiary mathematics and pick that up if you haven't studied any mathematics for 10 years, and perhaps the last you did was year 12 or even before that, then that's a big ask. Obviously, someone who was going to transition from being a teacher of something else to being a mathematics teacher would need lots of support to gain that content knowledge in mathematics, and it's very important that they have it. That would be tricky.

The other thing, though, just sticking with the example of mathematics because I was a mathematics teacher myself—in New South Wales there are some additional barriers to people who've got strong mathematics already becoming a teacher. For example, NESA requires that you can only count one statistics course towards the number of maths courses that you have to have studied to be a teacher. Presumably, a statistician could come along—whose maths is probably not bad—and they would be required to study other mathematics subjects before they could enter the teaching profession, which seems a little inflexible and unreasonable. I think there's work we can do in some of that space about being a little bit more reasonable and freeing up some of those conditions on letting mid-career people with really strong backgrounds in various things into the profession.

SUSAN LEDGER: And as you said, it's not dropping standards. Your example there shows that they've got more of the experience that they need. Already you've heard in New South Wales we have an upskilling—

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I think that's the term they use here—program across our universities for upskilling maths, science and TAS teachers. I think the numbers of that are improving, but we could probably broaden that a bit more and have good quality teachers upskilling into discipline areas. Some might take a bit longer, though.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I just ask a quick follow-up on that? In terms of the upskilling process, one of the questions in my mind is this idea around whether the universities are capable of providing diploma-type courses in those areas. They don't seem to be available.

MARY RYAN: They certainly are available.

SUSAN LEDGER: They certainly are available.

KIM BESWICK: And they could be more available. What universities require is that they need to know there's a market out there, a viable cohort to teach it to. But we could certainly produce those kinds of courses; I've done so in other universities interstate.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Are there specific partnerships with education sectors?

KIM BESWICK: That's often the way it works, yes. If the department says we've got this many teachers we need to upskill as maths teachers or English teachers, or whatever it is, then the universities can quite readily design a program that would do that.

SUSAN LEDGER: Yes, and we currently are. New South Wales currently is, particularly in maths. We're doing a grad cert in mathematics, a Masters of Mathematics.

KIM BESWICK: That relies on people having a significant maths background already, though, so it's not sort of from scratch.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What kind of length of course is that?

KIM BESWICK: I'm not sure about the one that Sue's talking about, but I think one that does the job properly for someone who's got no mathematics would be at least a couple of years part-time, and it would need a lot of support. There's a great model in Ireland, actually, where they've done that. The government supported hundreds of teachers to upskill properly as maths teachers, so there is a model there. But it's not cheap and it's not fast.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is there an expectation that the teaching staff would do that in their own time, or do they get release time? Is that part of the negotiations?

KIM BESWICK: I think release time would be necessary. Yes, it would just be too much to do on top of a full-time job. But the intensives and summer schools and things could be part of the mix as well, to help.

JENNY GORE: I just want to jump in before we leave that topic, if I may, to comment on the assumption that people who are transferring from other careers can easily pick up pedagogical skills. It's a real misunderstanding of what it takes to learn to teach properly. I agree that you need to look at both of those sides of the equation. But pedagogy, increasingly, in this country is understood narrowly as a set of teaching skills, when pedagogy is much more about the values that we want to transmit, as I mentioned, and uphold and ensure in delivering the goals for Australian children and so on. I just want to put in a word for greater attention to pedagogy, not only for new teachers or people transferring into teaching but actually for the entire workforce. We can do more and we can show that we can improve pedagogy and get better outcomes for kids, including more equitable outcomes, which is something as an issue we're still working hard towards.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I might direct my first question to you, Professor Hayes. I'm interested in whether there have been other jurisdictions, whether in Australia or more likely overseas, that have experienced teacher shortages and managed to turn it around. Do we have any lessons to be learned from other overseas jurisdictions?

DEBRA HAYES: Thanks for that question. What we need to consider is that currently the shortage is not just in New South Wales or Australia, but globally. The most recent UNESCO report on this suggests that we need something like 70 million teachers across the globe, so it is a big concern everywhere. I think everyone's attempting to do the kinds of things we are doing, and I think one of the things we would all agree on as deans is that we really need to maintain the quality of our programs and ensure that teachers that we are graduating are able to thrive—not just survive, but actually thrive—in an incredibly challenging environment.

In England and in other places, there's been a strong influence from the original Teach For America approach. That's a very well-known approach, but one of our big concerns and something that's quite readily demonstrated through the graduates of that is they tend not to stay for terribly long. They do their bit; they tend to go into schools and make a contribution. But we're really looking at long-term teachers, not just people passing through and broadening their experience. There certainly are models, but they're not all terribly successful. I think

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one of the things that we've done really well here over recent years is our accreditation processes give us a lot of confidence in the quality of our graduates. The teaching performance assessment process that all graduates must complete before graduation adds to that confidence in the quality of our graduates. I think when addressing this problem, we really need to ensure that we don't choke off or reduce the quality of the programs that we have currently.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Did anyone else want to weigh in on that question?

SUSAN LEDGER: I thought Debra spoke well about that and the fact our accreditation and teacher performance assessment is strong. There are other countries, like Scotland, that have put in more of a workforce planning one between the sectors and the schools, so that they work a bit tighter together so they know how many numbers that they need for the following year and can actually get to support that number of teachers in the ITE system. That's the only other example that shows a little bit of difference.

MARY RYAN: I just wanted to make a comment about Teach For Australia, just because Teach For America was mentioned. Teach For Australia—the latest statistics we have from that is that over the past 10 years, 75 per cent of those associates have stayed in the system. The data from Teach For Australia is much better than the data from Teach For America. Those associates go into hard-to-staff and disadvantaged schools, and over 90 per cent of principals would employ those associates again.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Just picking up on my colleague's questioning around fast-tracking people with experience and skills in other areas into teaching, it's not quite a directly relevant example, but I remember in London after the financial crisis there were a lot of bankers, lawyers and people being fast-tracked into teaching. There were two problems identified with that. One was—and you've touched on this—the kind of one-size-fits-all approach that everybody could just do a six-month course and be brought up entirely as though they had done a full teaching degree. But there was also a bit of a reluctance from existing teachers to have people coming in on what seemed to be two different tiers of quality of teacher based on the teaching education they'd had. Can I have your comments on both of those, Professor Ryan?

MARY RYAN: I'll just talk about the quality because all of our teaching graduates, no matter which pathway they come in on in Australia now, complete the LANTITE, which is the literacy and numeracy test, and the teaching performance assessment, which is a classroom-ready assessment, before they graduate. So the quality is actually assessed across the board. It doesn't matter which program you come in on. It's the output, really, in terms of how ready they are to be in classrooms. I think we need to look at this in a flexible way. I think there are multiple pathways into teaching. I think we've already touched on the issues around recognised prior learning. We also need to recognise that teaching is not just something anyone can do.

I think we do need to have entry requirements that look at—you know, we have non-academic entry requirements as well into teaching. So it's what kind of person are you in terms of being able to help children learn? Do you have those values that we want to promote in education? Are you able to engage with children in the ways that we need you to engage with children in order for them to learn? I think we can definitely have flexible pathways in. We can recognise those different pathways because we have really good systems in place now in Australia around those graduates and making sure that people aren't going into the profession unless they are ready.

The CHAIR: Can I just ask, with mention of LANTITE, Professor Ryan, there's obviously an attrition rate. We do lose some would-be teachers. Is it about 6 per cent that don't get through? Is it of that order?

MARY RYAN: Yes.

The CHAIR: Would it be fairer to those people to do the test a bit earlier? They can go right through a teaching degree and get to the end it and be in the 6 per cent dropout because they didn't pass the LANTITE, even on their third attempt.

MARY RYAN: Yes, Chair, absolutely. I agree that they could do the LANTITE in their first year of their program. I think there has been a proposal for them to do the LANTITE as an entry requirement. That would require the test to be rewritten because the test is actually geared towards teaching contexts so the questions relate to teaching contexts. The test would need to be rewritten if it was an entry requirement, but I think a good time for them to do that test is in the first year of the program.

The CHAIR: As universities, do you feel like you've wasted a bit of time, energy and resources on people who fell at the last hurdle and didn't become teachers?

MARY RYAN: Absolutely.

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KIM BESWICK: I think many universities, including UNSW, do get them to do that test quite early. We certainly do, in their first year.

The CHAIR: That's not a higher education standard.

KIM BESWICK: They have to have it before they—

The CHAIR: It's formally right at the end, isn't it?

KIM BESWICK: They have to have it before they graduate, but we require them to have it as a prereq for one of their quite early courses.

The CHAIR: Right, I see what you do.

KIM BESWICK: Yes.

The CHAIR: Has that got any State jurisdiction, or is it purely a Federal Government decision, the administration of LANTITE?

MARY RYAN: Well, it's included in our accreditation requirements in New South Wales, so it is a Federal scheme, but it's part of—

SUSAN LEDGER: Every other State does the same.

The CHAIR: But it's State accredited.

MARY RYAN: It is State accredited, that's right.

SUSAN LEDGER: I think we're getting a bit more diagnostic as they come in, as you said, Chair, with the TSA, but the more we know we will know if they're a good fit for the profession and that's great for everybody. That's what we need to actually get better at and some of us are trying different approaches. We're using simulation to have a look at their dispositions that Mary talked about just then. There's a whole range of different strategies now that we're assessing students as they're coming in to see if they do fit the profession.

The CHAIR: Professor Ledger, I want to take you up on a comment on page 2 of your submission in the middle, which states:

Teachers are frequently subject to harsh criticisms and unfairly blamed for falling education standards.

This is a theme we've encountered in a lot of submissions and a lot of evidence today. Looking at falling education standards, certainly in the PISA results New South Wales has been in freefall. Our NAPLAN has been a bit disappointing to the point where we're even behind Queensland in some of the disciplines, which is very hard to believe if we go back to the Bjelke-Petersen era of underinvestment in their education system. But most tellingly in the PISA, I suppose, the best indication is that 15-year-olds today in maths are five terms behind 15-year-olds in New South Wales at the turn of the century. These are quite substantial falls in education outcomes. Geoff Masters said that we've got the fastest falling school academic results in the world. Who or what institution is to blame?

SUSAN LEDGER: Chair, I don't think it's a blame game. I think that's the problem that typically happens.

The CHAIR: What's the explanation, then?

SUSAN LEDGER: If you look at the PISA results, we ranked seventh in the creative approach to learning. No-one mentions that. We just look at maths and science. We have a maths and science shortage and our students aren't—because we have maths and science teacher shortages. When we talk about the whole profession, all these things help. The article by Nicole Mockler in *The Conversation*, where she said, "No wonder no-one wants to be a teacher" when she looked at the quantum of research in media, policy documents et cetera. She took the quantum of 65,000 news articles about how we talk about teachers. We've continually over the last decade denigrated teachers and I think that hasn't been healthy. We've had a lot of people move out of the profession because of that. We've got professions that can pick up our science, maths and TAS teachers that will pay them much more money than schoolteachers.

I think there's no one single answer. This is a combination of a long series of competing demands, I suppose, but just puts pressures on every part of the system. It's a system issue so there's no blame for one. I was part of the whole—in 2011 when we had the national quality teaching reform project where the nation set up AITSL professional standards for teachers and AITSL professional standards for IT programs. We have never had such tighter, stricter accreditation than we've had in the last decade and look at what's happened. There could be

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correlations, I'm not sure; I haven't done that study. But I think there's a range. I don't think we can say it's one thing. I'll hand over to all my other deans, thanks.

JENNY GORE: Just briefly, I think that it is a whole-of-profession issue and I think in saying that teachers can't be blamed for this, it's the conditions of teachers' work. It's perhaps the one-minded focus on regulation rather than support. It's about the status of the profession and the way that we are talked about in the media and in a lot of other forums. It's about policy decisions that actually run contrary to raising the status—the idea at the moment that's been touted of whether teaching degrees are going back to a one-year rather than a two-year postgraduate qualification, for instance. Why would we recommend that when we wouldn't do it in any other profession? No-one's suggesting that we halve the length of postgraduate medical degrees, for example—so on the one hand saying we're going to raise the status but on the other hand making moves that do the exact opposite. They're just some of the issues that I think that require a whole-of-system perspective. It's not a bureaucratic or business model that we need to be talking about. It's about a model that understands teaching, teacher education and teacher development over the entire life course and how that fits in with policy, distribution of funds and a whole lot of other things. I'll pause and let someone else jump in.

KIM BESWICK: I think I can add something a bit more specific to the maths results in PISA. It is to do with the teacher shortages and I think that teacher shortages became more acute much earlier in mathematics than most other subjects. It's now spread to pretty much everywhere, but we've been short of maths teachers for decades and it's just been getting worse. There are schools in rural and regional typically, or low SES—even metropolitan places now—where there is not a single properly trained mathematics teacher. So you've not only got out-of-field teachers, you've got out-of-field teachers working in contexts where they have nobody to advise or mentor them at all.

There's a study or research done by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute—I could send you the report—where they talk about the percentage of kids who can go through years 7 to 10 of high school and never have a qualified mathematics teacher in front of them. I think it's not at all surprising that our results have fallen. But the other contributor that I think also exacerbates that fact is there are schools where there's nobody qualified. There are other schools where they are better qualified and that goes to the unequal distribution of resources in our schooling system, which also accompanies lower performance, I believe. We're concentrating disadvantage in some schools. You may be aware of peer effects. Who you're learning with is almost as important as how you learn yourself. I think our education system has also become increasingly segregated along socio-economic lines, and that's had a depressing effect on our overall results as well.

DEBRA HAYES: Interestingly, despite the results that have just been mentioned about mathematics, it's actually not all bad. The proportion of students who are achieving the higher result band 6 in mathematics actually rose from 12 per cent in 2001 to 20 per cent in 2018. We need to also look at a range of indicators and to emphasise that when you just look at one indicator—particularly something like PISA, which is very, very low in terms of what it's telling us about student performance—we need to be very cautious and look at a much broader range of indicators as well.

The CHAIR: Professor Hayes, is that the advent of veggie maths? The students worked out that if you do veggie maths, you get a better ATAR.

DEBRA HAYES: No, not at all. We're talking about band 6 mathematics and the fact that there's a higher proportion of students achieving well in that band. These are bands that are set according to standards of performance. I think it's very reassuring to see that, given what Professor Beswick has just reported in terms of teacher quality. It speaks again to the remarkable ability of our teachers, working under incredibly difficult conditions, to still produce rather outstanding results when we look across the whole range of outcomes.

JENNY GORE: On that, I might quickly mention our research on the impact of COVID on student outcomes in New South Wales, showing that there has been no so-called loss of learning, at least with the year 3 and 4 sample that we were looking at. That is a real testament to the work of teachers over the last couple of years. It's unusual around the world to have seen no loss relative to pre-pandemic cohorts of students. It's very rigorous evidence.

The CHAIR: Professor Gore, why then has the New South Wales Government abandoned the process of its performance indicators measuring the attainment of targets within schools, postponing it to 2023, explicitly blaming COVID? You think there's no reason why it should abandon the measurement of targets because of COVID?

JENNY GORE: I'm not sure what measurement of targets you're referring to.

The CHAIR: Every school has got six or seven targets: top two bands in literacy and numeracy, NAPLAN, HSC results, school attendance, the wellbeing survey.

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order: I think this is a question appropriately directed at the department.

The CHAIR: I'm saying that Professor Gore has research saying that there's been no loss of learning capacity in the system in years 3 and 4 because of COVID, but the department is saying that COVID has been so tough on schools that they've postponed the performance targets until next year.

JENNY GORE: I think we have to again be very careful about the specifics here. We're talking about year 3 and 4 students. The system, obviously, is much bigger than that. Our data has come after some of those decisions to suspend targets were made. At the same time, we know that the impact of COVID on teacher wellbeing, teacher workloads and student wellbeing has been enormous. I think those decisions to suspend some of that pressure on schools is probably, in the big scheme of things, wise.

The CHAIR: They suspended them all; they're all gone. Two of them have been allowed to lapse and will never be seen again. Professor Ryan?

MARY RYAN: I was going to follow up on previous comments around PISA results to reiterate that socio-economic status is actually a big factor in those results. We know that those students who are in particular ICSEA bands, whose parents have a particular education level and so on, do more poorly in those results. So we do need to look at that as a broad picture.

The CHAIR: Isn't that why we're supposed to have quality public schools that lift you up and overcome disadvantage?

MARY RYAN: Yes, and we absolutely need the—

The CHAIR: It happens. I visited Fairvale and Cabramatta. They have remarkable stories of refugee kids three years later going to university.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: On that point, it doesn't actually account for the change over time. The socio-economics in the areas that have been disadvantaged have been disadvantaged for many decades. Why would that impact on the results? Effectively, the trendline is in the wrong direction.

SUSAN LEDGER: In Australia we have had persistent and entrenched locational disadvantage for a long time. Jo Reid did a great article on that in 2017. It's something that we have to be very careful of when we do policies, that they're not metrocentric and not specific to the middle class and that they actually allow us to break through that.

JENNY GORE: Bearing the weight of COVID for disadvantaged schools and communities is an easily understood reality, given the pressures in those communities and schools on unemployment, on access to child care—all sorts of conditions. One of the things that is in our research, which is not yet published but under review, is that we found that students in disadvantaged schools in years 3 and 4 in 2021, not 2020, actually did better than the pre-pandemic cohort. That says something, again, about the enormous work that teachers and school leaders have done, but it also says something about the additional investment that's been made in trying to ensure that students in those groups don't fall further behind. It shows what we can do when we begin to invest properly in addressing disadvantage.

KIM BESWICK: I was going to add—and I don't have the data in my head or with me—that I think we would have to look at the trend in the extent of segregation along SES lines over the period where the decline has happened as well. I suspect that our system has become more segregated rather than less. That aggregation of disadvantage in particular schools does have a downward effect, despite the teachers in those schools doing a fantastic job. There is evidence that you find the very best pedagogy in the most disadvantaged schools. But there's only so much you can do. Those peer effects have a downward effect. So the same child in a more heterogeneous group will do better than if he's just with a group of disadvantaged peers.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: On notice, would you be able to provide some further information on that?

KIM BESWICK: I can have a look for some of that, yes. I won't promise that I can find it.

The Hon. WES FANG: As much as I enjoy the philosophical debates—and I'd say it's probably been more in the philosophical realm—I will come back to the substance of the inquiry, which is the teacher shortage that has been articulated. Universities are really the first touchpoint for people looking to enter the teaching regime. Universities will offer a spot in a degree for teaching. For the first few years, at least, it's the universities that nurture and support those students as they go through their course. What role do you think the universities have in attracting more people, and high-quality people, to the teaching profession? That's the first part of my question. The second part is with completion rates falling, what can universities do once we get people into teaching degrees

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to support and encourage them to complete them so that we have more teachers coming out of the tertiary scheme to make themselves available to roll into the workforce?

SUSAN LEDGER: It feeds on the recent QITE review. I found it interesting that the third recommendation from the QITE review was to reduce the burden of teachers. Some of our students, when they go out on placements, see the burden of teachers in schools and many will opt not to continue. It is an issue. So this is why we keep talking about this whole of profession. I think recognising a pathway not just for school leavers but a target strategy for recruiting teachers from diverse backgrounds—as you mentioned, gender, because it's very biased towards one side; and rural and remote areas—will help guard against the worsening shortages in our diverse contexts. Building our own teacher workforce in the regions for the regions is something that we do at the University of Newcastle, but we still have major difficulties getting people over that range over the western—I think it's called "over the Hills". That's an area that we're certainly committed to. I mean, 20 per cent of our students will drop out in the first year, and that's actually not a bad thing. You don't want people, as Mark mentioned before, in the profession that shouldn't be in there or don't want to.

The Hon. WES FANG: I accept that view—in every course, I think there are people who, perhaps, start and aren't suited. To that point, don't the universities perhaps have a role—and this is the question primarily that I was asking—to actually try to attract people who are better suited initially so that we don't have that high dropout rate in the first year but also that we have an improved completion rate as we go through to the end of the degree as well? Professor Beswick, I know you wanted to jump in there.

KIM BESWICK: I think we touched on earlier in the conversation some of the flexibilities that the universities could offer, which I think we need to do—multiple pathways and so forth. But many of the drivers of the number of students who come to our doors wanting to be teachers are beyond our control, and they basically go to the status of the profession and the working conditions of teachers as they are known by people in society. For example, if you come from year 12 and you've got a very good ATAR and whatever and you think you wouldn't mind being a teacher, that's not the only option you have. You could also be a doctor or a lawyer or anything at all, pretty much, especially if you've got the maths and the STEM subjects that we particularly need. So you've got choices. When they think about how teachers are portrayed in the media and just the status of the profession, they look at the remuneration over time and the career paths, all of that, and they think, "Why would I be a teacher?" I think some of those things need to be addressed, because the best potential students have lots of options.

The Hon. WES FANG: While I understand that—I think that certainly those points have been raised throughout the day today; I've certainly raised some of my concerns, and it got a bit shouty towards the end of it—I think there is a role for perhaps the unions and other organisations about the way that they speak of their workforce and the profession that they represent, because it does impact on the ability to attract people. To the universities' role, coming back to that point, there is obviously a cohort of people who do want to be teachers and they enter a teaching degree, but then some will drop out because they are not suited and some will drop out for personal reasons or perhaps decide they want to do something else.

Given that we are trying to boost those numbers, do you see that there is a role for the universities to actually perhaps better wrap around the students but also to make sure that they have that support so that the reasons that they're dropping out aren't because that they aren't feeling as if they're not going to be supported? Can you see where the universities might be able to do, perhaps, things differently that are going to support those students into the teaching profession after degree?

KIM BESWICK: I think universities do a fair bit in that space already. Universities like to keep their students and minimise their attrition rates, so they certainly do what they can. That's not to say that there couldn't be more done in that space, but there is quite a lot done in that space already.

SUSAN LEDGER: We did suffer a loss last year with the job-ready graduate cut, with the funding to each of our programs. That has had a significant impact on us, losing at least just over a thousand—I would say \$1,100, roughly—per student, which equates to how much it costs us to pay teachers to take them on practicum. So there are compounding issues. We certainly are all here to keep our students confident and capable so they go out school ready as schools are—and should be—preparing their schools and providing support to make them graduate ready. That's a two-way approach: Schools have to be ready to support our graduates, and graduates have to be ready to fit into the schools.

JENNY GORE: I think one of the other related issues is just how full the teacher education curriculum is and how they need to meet so many different requirements can sometimes lead to a little bit of, maybe, lack of program coherence. One of the things we've tried here is giving our final-year students really concerted attention to work on the quality teaching model. But this is a way of synthesising what they've been learning, making sure there's that really strong link between theory and practice. What we found in the little study we did last year that

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we're replicating at the moment is that students felt much better prepared for teaching; they felt they had a much stronger understanding of quality teaching and they felt a lot less stress going into their internship.

So I think there are things that we can also do internally to just make sure that our students have that really strong sense of how everything that they've learned which is really important within their teacher ed degrees can be translated into not just their classroom practice but their professional practice, which will set them up for the thriving that Debra talked about earlier.

The Hon. WES FANG: I am going to ask this last question—I know we're almost out of time—I and I am going to phrase it delicately. I am putting this rider on the start of it because I know that it's very easy for people to potentially take offence to some of the things that I would say. I'm going to try and phrase it in a way that won't be interpreted as being offensive. When you talked about people going into prac roles and going out and seeing the workload that was on teachers, is there any research that has been done as to how that has affected the view that the students perhaps in the later part of their degree have of the profession? And is that partly a generational view? Was that impact the same for, say, graduates or people who were close to graduating in the seventies, eighties, nineties as to now? Is it that people are perhaps just a bit more precious at the moment and has it always been the same amount of workload that a graduating student would see? I'm just curious as to whether that might play a part.

SUSAN LEDGER: I think what teachers have to do now in terms of paper accreditation, you know, assessment, is significantly different to when I was—I can only speak about myself in a Western Australian context; significantly different.

KIM BESWICK: Definitely. I was a teacher for 13 years and the admin burden increased over that period of time and that was quite a long time ago, and I think since then it has just continued its upward trajectory. I have a suspicion that the admin burden in New South Wales may be, perhaps, on the higher side. Maybe Mary could speak to that, with her knowledge of other jurisdictions?

MARY RYAN: Yes, it definitely is. Also to that question, I think we could have closer relationships between schools and universities so that we have students out in schools earlier to start to understand that culture of schools. Get them out there as paraprofessionals into schools early, I think, so that they don't get a culture shock when they hit a school and think, "Wow, this is a huge workload"; they start to ease into that workload and understand. Because if they have more of an understanding, more confidence in those contexts, I think they won't feel as if it's such a culture shock when they hit that. But, absolutely, the admin loads are much more now than in the seventies, eighties and nineties.

SUSAN LEDGER: Yes. I also think, not only the admin load, the creativity and the love of other things other than just maths, science—you know, in those you were able to be quite creative and a lot of that seems to have been, is, missing as a consequence of this. But that's—

JENNY GORE: I think it's only right these problems are even greater with COVID, of course, and the conditions in schools. We've absolutely exacerbated workloads for teachers and the current shortages mean that when students go and watch what teachers are doing they are probably seeing teachers under a kind of pressure that's really quite unprecedented in the history of schooling—in Western schooling at least, in Australia. It's really very serious.

SUSAN LEDGER: Yes. There is some data on that that we can send, probably, through to you about that susceptibility to work-related stress.

JENNY GORE: And the massively reduced teacher morale over the last year. It's worse this first half of this year than what it has been over the last two years.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate the insights, I really do, because it's valuable to have your great experience presented to us. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you to the five professors. We're out of time. The hour went very quickly. We thank you very much for your participation and the information you've passed on to the Committee. We now need to adjourn into a private session to deal with some of the knick-knacks of politics, as you'd expect. Thanks again for being part of a really good session.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I just ask a question about the book, Professor Hayes? Is Ruth Lupton Australian based?

DEBRA HAYES: No, Ruth Lupton is based in the UK.

The CHAIR: Yes, it is published out of Britain by Bristol University Press.

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DEBRA HAYES: That's right, Policy Press, yes.

The CHAIR: Yes, the old electors of Bristol.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Thanks, everyone.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee adjourned at 15:02.