REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 3 – EDUCATION

TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

CORRECTED

At Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney, on Tuesday 16 August 2022

The Committee met at 10:00.

PRESENT

The Hon. Mark Latham (Chair)

Ms Abigail Boyd
The Hon. Scott Farlow
The Hon. Courtney Houssos

PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

The Hon. Anthony D'Adam

* 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.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: This is the second day of hearings of the Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education inquiry into teacher shortages in New South Wales. 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 acknowledging 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 many 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 hear from a number of witnesses including representatives from the Centre for Independent Studies, Alphacrucis University College and the Teachers' Work in Schools Research Team. We will also hear from the Science Teachers Association of NSW and the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia. Finally, we will hear from groups representing teachers and students in regional and remote areas; namely, the CUC, the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia and the Isolated Children's Parents' Association NSW. While we have many witnesses with us in person, some will be appearing via videoconference. I thank them all for making time to give evidence to this important inquiry and also the submissions that have been made, which are of a very high standard.

Before I commence, I would like to make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing. We are being broadcast live on the Parliament's website. A transcript of the hearing will be placed on the Committee's website when it becomes available from our very efficient friends at Hansard. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, media representatives are reminded to take responsibility for what they publish. While parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses giving evidence today, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of their evidence at the hearing. Therefore I urge witnesses to be careful about comments that you might make to the media or others after you complete your evidence.

Committee hearings are not intended as a forum for people to make adverse reflections about others. In that regard, it is important for the witnesses to focus on the issues raised by the inquiry's terms of reference and avoid naming individuals unnecessarily in a negative fashion. All witnesses have a right to procedural fairness according to the resolution of our Chamber in 2018. If witnesses are unable to answer a question today and want more time, they can do so by taking the question on notice. Written answers to questions on notice are to be provided within 21 days. If any witness wants to hand up documents, they can do so through the Committee staff or, if they are on Webex, by emailing the 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 microphone is muted. 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 the room is fitted with induction loops that are compatible with hearing aid systems that have telecoil receivers here in the freshly renovated Macquarie Room. I ask that everyone turn off their mobile phones for the duration of the hearing.

Mr GLENN FAHEY, Education Program Director, Centre for Independent Studies, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome our first witness. I thank him for his attendance today and also for his submission, which raises points that are somewhat different to other submissions. That is also healthy for the Committee to test and interrogate various forms of evidence, particularly on the question of the pipeline of teachers coming into the profession. Is it adequate or inadequate? Is the problem the pipeline or just the number of vacancies we have in the New South Wales education department? Thanks very much, Glenn, for all your work, which is thorough as usual. Glenn, would you like to make a short statement at the beginning of your testimony?

GLENN FAHEY: Yes. I would like to first thank the Committee and the Chair for the opportunity to be here today and to contribute to this important issue. The Centre for Independent Studies is an independent and non-partisan organisation in both the funding and research that we do. We do no commissioned research and we don't take any government support for any of the public policy work that we do. As an organisation, we have been engaged in issues related to evidence-based policy and practice in education for more than 20 years. Like others that have contributed to this inquiry, we're also very interested in the issue of teacher workforce supply and demand and potential solutions to policy challenges, which I hope is evident in the length and depth of analysis presented in our submission.

We approach the issue not as employers of teachers, not as trainers of teachers, nor as representatives of teachers, but as researchers interested in advancing evidence-based policy solutions and analysis that can inform an objective and dispassionate commitment towards the available evidence on this issue. I'd urge members of this Committee—and, indeed, policymakers more broadly—when approaching this issue to do so with the objective of having the greatest alignment to evidence and using their platform to attach a sense of proportion to this issue that is in some sectors dominated by a sense of hysteria.

In my concluding comments before commencing, I draw attention to the evidence provided by one witness appearing today that appears to cite some evidence that dismisses evidence provided by CIS in our submission, in part on the basis of what appears to be 2019 School Infrastructure NSW data, which cites, "A massive 21 per cent growth in student numbers by 2031." That appears to be data from 2019. Data from 2022, recently published by the Department of Planning and Environment, identifies population growth over the period 2021-2031 to be 3.31 per cent, not 21 per cent, and that's in the school-age population, broadly aged five to 19. With that, I'll yield to the Chair and to the Committee and hope that the evidence provided today is useful to your deliberations.

The CHAIR: Which submission was that in, please?

GLENN FAHEY: That's the Alphacrucis submission.

The CHAIR: Thank you. We'll start our questioning. Anthony D'Adam can kick-off.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Thank you, Mr Fahey, for your attendance today. I have to say I was a little taken aback by your submission. It runs contrary to pretty much all the other submissions that have been made to this inquiry. My first question to you is—it seems that the guts of your proposition is that you're affirming the Minister's earlier comments that the teacher shortage is a beat-up. Is that your evidence? Is that a fair summation of your evidence? Do you think that this is all just a beat-up, that teachers are just complaining, that they should just be ignored and that, actually, the evidence suggests that this is just not an issue that needs public attention?

GLENN FAHEY: I wouldn't use the phrase "beat-up", but I would suggest that the evidence that we've provided is broadly in line with the evidence provided by the Department of Education in its submission. I would note that by no means do we suggest that there are no challenges as far as teacher supply goes. There certainly are. Is the issue a matter of quantum alone? Perhaps not. I would also stress that some of the issues that perhaps are highlighted across many of the other submissions are related to issues like teacher attrition and issues like the ITE pipeline and so on that don't seem to be aligned with where the evidence in fact is.

To give an example, many submissions cite very high levels of attrition based upon reported teachers' intentions to leave the profession. Teachers' reported intentions to leave the profession don't appear to be closely aligned to actual data of attrition—that is, teachers in fact leaving the workforce. It doesn't mean that there are not workforce issues, workload issues and burden issues that significantly impact upon the work of teachers, but it is to say that the actual data pertaining to attrition represents attrition in the region of 4 per cent to 5 per cent more so than their reported intentions to leave the profession which, over various horizons, suggest in the vicinity of 40 per cent and 50 per cent.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Let me take you to that. Is it ABS data you're relying on in terms of the attrition question or people's retirement intentions? What's the source of the data that you're relying on?

GLENN FAHEY: There is at least three sources of data that we rely upon in reaching that conclusion. One is ABS data which asks respondents, "Do you expect to be in your current occupation in 12 months' time?" We use that as a broad indicator of potential attrition. We also use job mobility data, which is where you have matched employees from one year to the next and ask what your occupation was in the previous year, what your occupation is in the current year. We identify if those don't align and that may indicate attrition from teaching. Thirdly, we also rely upon the New South Wales department's separations data, which the department's also included in its submission.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: You would think that source of data is probably the closest to the source of truth, wouldn't you, the New South Wales Department of Education's own data?

GLENN FAHEY: That's probably the case. That data has been quite lagged. We've not had that publicly available until the submission. The most recent data point publicly available to that data set was to 2019, whereas the department's submission is more recent than that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: That data's flawed, isn't it, because it doesn't take into account temporary or casual employee separations. It's only counting people who are separating from permanent positions. Isn't that correct?

GLENN FAHEY: I believe that's correct. The department will be able to provide you a full detail of how they account for that data. But, as I say, the fact that it aligns very closely with the data collected from the ABS as well leads me to be pretty confident in the broad region of where those numbers are.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: You also cite statistics in relation to the exits from the profession. Correct me if I'm wrong. You haven't looked at the accreditation data that's collected by NESA? Is that correct? That's not in your submission, or it is?

GLENN FAHEY: There is some information collected from NESA. NESA collects attrition effectively on the basis of lapsed registrations, which is consistent with the practice also in the data collections in Queensland. We have used that data to analyse the particular question of early career exits—that is teachers that lapse registration or don't renew registration within the first five years—which cites a report from NESA. But we've not widely used the data collected by NESA on that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Are you familiar with the information that was brought to light in estimates earlier in the year, about the 2020-21 cessations, that almost 10,000 teachers ceased to have accreditation in New South Wales? Does that statistic contradict the general direction of your evidence about cessations, that it's not a crisis? Ten thousand seems to be a lot of teachers leaving the profession in one year.

GLENN FAHEY: I think NESA would have to comment specifically on how they've applied the assessment re accreditation. There are some other witnesses that might be able to provide further information about the relation of accreditation requirements over, particularly, a COVID period that may not necessarily mean that those not accredited indicate those that have left the workforce.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Just on a related point, Glenn, do you accept that there's been a particular problem in losing casual teachers in New South Wales? It seems that one of the paradoxes of the current period of teacher shortages and the evidence for that right around the State is that New South Wales once had a reserve army of casual teachers—15,000 to 20,000 of them—that could be called on at any time. In large part they seem to have disappeared, which does indicate people have left the profession, at least those who were casual. The evidence seems to point to three reasons: the impact of the vaccination mandates; the lockdown period, when there was no work for the casuals and, in today's labour market, they can find alternative work pretty easily; and then the number of casuals who seem to have picked up these COVID tutoring positions. We do have a problem, don't we, in terms of the loss of that reserve army of casuals, who in normal circumstances would come into the schools and be teaching where the permanents are sick or have got a shortage?

GLENN FAHEY: As indicated in the submission, the latest available data that I can see on that suggests that around 12 per cent of teachers are currently employed casual. AITSL's data suggests that's around 10 per cent, so I'm fairly confident it's about the ballpark, which is much lower than it has been in previous years. That's true. That's likely because casual teachers may be accepting full-time roles. It'd be up to the department to provide you that information. But it's also at least anecdotally true that many have instead opted to work within the COVID-19 tutoring scheme. The Audit Office probably is best placed to provide a bit more of a forensic take on that. I understand it, they looked at it as part of their analysis.

As far as the issue of casualisation goes, it wasn't long ago that we were told by policymakers and other stakeholders that a major problem was high rates of casualisation of the teacher workforce and that that was creating insecure employment, but if we see that the rate of permanent employment has increased, particularly in more recent years, I suspect that that's, in some respects, also a positive development too. Can I also—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: [Disorder] evidence from the ABS—

GLENN FAHEY: If I could just—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: —showing that employment has increased.

GLENN FAHEY: Just a final point on that is to state that there's also relatively high rates at which non-permanent teachers are also working regular hours and consistent hours. As far as from the data that I observed, I think there's been a reduction in insecure work as far as teaching goes in recent years as the labour market has tightened.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: This is purely reliant on ABS data, is it, in terms of this assertion around the decline in insecure employment in the teaching workforce?

GLENN FAHEY: ABS data primarily, but you could also consult AITSL's teacher workforce database that will also show you it is point in time, whereas ABS has a longitudinal set of data, at least at this point in time. The ABS data shows a reduction in irregular and casual work in teaching.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: But again, the information that's closer to the source, the department's own data, suggests that that's not true, that insecure forms of employment are actually increasing. We've got a much higher proportion of insecure employees than we did a decade ago. What do you say to that?

GLENN FAHEY: That may be the case. It would be for the department to comment on that. The contents of this inquiry really are limited, as far as I understand, to the contents and implications of the most recent years, around COVID-19 and its aftermath and its impact upon the teacher labour market. The status of the teacher labour market at the moment is one that you have lower rates of casualisation than you did prior to that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: How would you say the interaction between the two, the public sector and the private sectors of the education system, interrelate when it comes to a question of the labour market? They tend to operate quite independently, wouldn't you say?

GLENN FAHEY: I couldn't offer you too much detail upon that. By and large, we look at the data that's consolidated. The department, of course, has got a special interest in monitoring government schools, as do other employers around their own sectors. We look at consolidated numbers, so I couldn't provide you much further information pertaining to specific sectors.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Did you consult any teachers in the preparation of your submission?

GLENN FAHEY: I understand that the bulk of submissions in the 130 submissions to this inquiry are from teachers and those that have worked within schools. We've consulted a pretty vast array of evidence that is mostly quantitative and mostly also in the public domain. We view our contribution in this space, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, not as a representative of teachers, not as an employer of teachers, but as researchers engaged upon this issue and in consultation with the evidence that we can bring to the issue.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is that a no? You didn't consult any teachers in the preparation of your submission?

GLENN FAHEY: Teachers are well represented in the contents of submissions available to the Committee.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I ask you about collective teacher efficacy? Just one last question. Do you support the idea of collective teacher efficacy? Is it a concept that you think is valid?

GLENN FAHEY: I think I'll need you to define what specifically you are looking at as far as collective teacher efficacy.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's that process of educators working together in a professional capacity to support each other's work and bring in their collective expertise to the process of educating students. It's certainly an area that John Hattie has identified as a phenomenon that actually has a relatively high effect—when you get collective teacher efficacy, you get better results. Is that something you would reject?

GLENN FAHEY: I would suggest that there are many things that teachers as a collective group are extremely well placed to inform policy and practice discussion. That's especially around the work within schools.

As far as the analysis of labour market dynamics, that's something that probably would benefit from a contribution from a range of sources.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Do you think your proposition around performance pay would undermine that particular idea of collective teacher efficacy? That creating a more competitive environment in the workplace around teacher remuneration would have a deleterious effect on collective teacher efficacy? It is something that has been demonstrated to have a significant effect on student outcomes.

GLENN FAHEY: There are many sources that you could consult that identify that teachers are not sufficiently recognised for the content of their practice. That includes many surveys of teachers that comment that the appraisal process does not properly reward and recognise their professional accomplishments and development, which leads me to conclude that many teachers would benefit from a performance management system that would produce a closer nexus between remuneration and professional opportunities to the quality of practice within the workplace, especially when it comes to teaching practice.

Collective teacher efficacy would lead us to conclude that, by and large, teaching practice is well developed when teams of teachers work together in schools that have got a commitment towards improving practice as a group. So there is no reason, I would imagine, that there is the assertion it would be a competitive or reductionist or zero-sum approach toward improving student outcomes. I think it would be very unlikely. I can't imagine that that would be a likely outcome from better reward and recognition of—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Isn't that inherent in some form of performance-based pay?

The CHAIR: You have had a good go.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I will yield the floor to others.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr Fahey, for both your submission and for being here today. I am interested in terms of the data you cite. Unfortunately, your submission does not have page numbers. It is the OECD data with respect to approximate teacher attrition rates in government schools in the OECD. I have to say looking at that figure, and walk me through it in a sense, but it seems like New South Wales—not just New South Wales alone but Australian schools have a much lower attrition rate than what we would maybe think from the Northern Hemisphere, particularly a market where we might think is the Scandinavian model in Norway, for instance, that have large attrition rates. Is there any understanding as to why those rates are what they are?

GLENN FAHEY: The OECD collects its data quite infrequently, unfortunately, because it is a difficult dataset to consolidate. Of course, just like in Australia, it is very difficult to equate different attrition because it is often measured differently between different States, as it is between different countries. But the general conclusion that we can gain from the picture from OECD data is, frankly, that all Australian jurisdictions have got lower rates of teacher attrition than in many countries within the OECD, including those in northern Europe and probably England, which has got a reasonably similar school system to ours in some respects. It does have significantly higher attrition. It's almost impossible to compare labour markets broadly, as far as what might be explaining that. That's something that, as I say, I can't comment on what that data shows us. It's one that's worth exploring.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And the data you cite below from NESA shows, I would say, an upward trend in terms of younger teachers coming into the profession at the moment. Is that something that you would concede is occurring, that there is a higher attrition rate at least on trend at the moment in terms of teachers coming into the system?

GLENN FAHEY: Teachers entering the system are not necessarily younger teachers, just to be clear.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I should clarify that.

GLENN FAHEY: We are limited by—there are two sorts of sources of data that we can consult when it comes to New South Wales early career attrition. One of those is NESA's collection. NESA's collection does have a higher rate in the cohort of 2013 to 2018, but that's also some years old as well. I would encourage a more up-to-date set of data that could potentially supplement that. While, yes, 2013 to 2018 is higher than it was in say 2009 to 2014, but then the 2012 to 2017 cohort also was lower than the year before that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It jumps around a bit.

GLENN FAHEY: It's generally upward but it's not as consistently upward as you might expect. If we look at ABS data, we don't see significant increases over time. It would be difficult to conclude at this stage that there is a significant upward trend in early career attrition.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The data that you cite from the ABS, which I think you were discussing with Mr D'Adam as well, of course shows a trend increase in terms of the number of teachers and non-teaching

staff in New South Wales. There is a blip in 2019. Do you want to explain that to us at all in terms of what occurred there? Is that a change in the way it was assessed or the like or is there a reason driving that significant drop in 2019?

GLENN FAHEY: Yes, there is a change in 2019. The department will be able to provide further details on it, but it is understood to be a change in the payroll, the way the payroll is monitored and collected related to how full-time equivalent teachers were collected between those years. That explains where that dip occurs.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Excellent. Other information that you cite in terms of the hours worked per week due to illness and the like, which has of course seen a significant increase recently, which I imagine is partly due to the COVID isolation orders and the like. Is that something that you would agree with? I can't find where that graph is on your report, but I do remember seeing it.

GLENN FAHEY: The data there that is collected is based upon ABS data which asks in the week prior—so we can consider that to be a typical week—"Had you lost time due to illness in that week or for family illness?" The estimate from that is that that almost doubled in this year compared to last year, which is—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think from memory it was like 14 per cent or something.

GLENN FAHEY: Yes, it is about 15.4 per cent that we would estimate. That again is not a precise figure. It is based upon extrapolating off other information available to us through an analysis that was done by the ABS in the May release. What I would suggest, and the department in its submission also provides some data to indicate the amount of time lost, the specific data that we source is the proportion of teachers who lost time in a given week, which are not exactly the same but point in a similar direction.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I take it this goes back to one of the points that you made in your submission about the general labour market at the moment and momentary shortages in labour which are occurring in the labour market, not just in teaching but across the labour market due to things like isolation orders and that as well and, of course, increased illness which is within the community due to the pandemic and other illnesses coming back into circulation. I'm just wanting to pick up as well, in terms of your submission and one of the issues that you have highlighted, which we have seen in surveys and that from teachers as well, is in terms of the burden of paperwork that is occurring at the moment. Of course, the Premier has outlined that that's one of his key agenda items—being able to reduce teachers' paperwork. Is that something you think would be a significant factor in being able to change the outlook of teachers in terms of the profession at the moment?

GLENN FAHEY: All available survey data really points to administrative burdens being a major contributing factor toward burnout and other forms of workplace stress and also to hours. I can cite that compared to the OECD average, Australian teachers spend about nearly 1½ hours more per week than the OECD average on administrative work. If you combine the additional hours that Australian teachers spend compared to the OECD average on issues like administrative work and other score-based administrative tasks, you'd be looking at in the realm of three hours per week additional time that's spent compared to the OECD average.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You've outlined and picked up on a Productivity Commission recommendation on phasing out the two-year master's degree. What would you see that being supplemented by?

GLENN FAHEY: There are a range of potential options, and I suspect there will be other witnesses that will provide details about the specific models which they're offering. There are some ITE providers who are offering more flexible options currently, and I'll leave that for them to provide the details. But for many years Australia was well served by the graduate diploma, which was the benchmark or standard for postgraduate entry or supplementary education degree. There's no reason to believe, at least from the evidence that we've collected and analysed, which shows us that the educational qualification that Australian teachers have doesn't appear to be associated with differences in student achievement—it leaves me to conclude that longer and more qualifications don't appear to be associated with higher performing teachers per se, at least in terms of student achievement relationships. That is fairly consistent across other international surveys and studies that look at this issue. I would be left to conclude—also citing evidence from the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review from the Federal Government, which noted that the one-year master's did appear to be a contributing factor toward disincentivising potential entrants to teaching, which, in the current environment, I think would not be a strong outcome.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Mr Fahey, before we get into the substance of your submission, you're a program director at the Centre for Independent Studies. How long have you been there?

GLENN FAHEY: I've been with the CIS for about three years.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: What were you doing before that?

GLENN FAHEY: Prior to that I worked at the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. Prior to that I worked at the UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance. Prior to that I worked at the Australian Treasury.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: In terms of your background, have you had any teaching experience or done any sort of teaching education, or has it been purely on the academic side of things?

GLENN FAHEY: As I highlighted in my opening comments, I am a researcher that's engaged in this space. Contributing to the research base in any field is not contingent upon working—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Clearly not; I'm just curious. I apologise for not knowing this already: Did the Committee invite your organisation to make a submission?

GLENN FAHEY: The inquiry was open for public submissions.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Right. We didn't specifically invite? I'm just curious.

The CHAIR: The CIS, I think, has probably made a submission to all of our—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Yes. I'm just curious as to whether we actually—

The CHAIR: We take a variety of viewpoints and research backgrounds, and here we are this morning.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Yes, I'm just getting some background. Did you speak with Minister Mitchell, any member of her team or anybody in the department in the course of making your submission, or in relation to any aspect of your submission?

GLENN FAHEY: As a regular course of business we engage with political representatives and their staff as part of the work we do. Part of our work is to produce research and also to advocate for the evidence that we see in the course of that. Have we been engaged with political staff? Well, the Minister—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: No, in relation to the submission. Have you had contact with the Minister, the Minister's staff or anyone in the department in relation to any aspect of your submission?

GLENN FAHEY: As far as any aspect of the submission goes, the work contained within this submission includes work that's also published—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's a very specific question, Mr Fahey.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: It is a specific question, if you could just answer it?

GLENN FAHEY: The information contained within this submission includes work that was produced up until the last quarter of last year, which is quite a long window in which you're referring to. Over that period of time, have we engaged the Minister and her staff and advised them of the work that we've done and the findings of our research? Yes, we have. As I—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: With respect, you've just reframed my question. That wasn't my question. My question is: Have you had any communication with the Minister, the Minister's staff or the department in relation to any aspect of your submission? Not the evidence that you've compiled into here but the actual submission itself—the content, what it might contain, where the direction of it was going, anything at all, any aspect of it. I remind you that you're under oath.

GLENN FAHEY: As I said in my opening comments, the CIS is independent in the work that we do. We're nonpartisan. We don't—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Again, that's not answering my question. It's a very straightforward yes or no—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Let him finish.

GLENN FAHEY: In the course of producing and preparing this work we've consulted publicly available sources, including academic research and all publicly available data. We've not received any additional data or any—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Mr Fahey, you've been asked about the Minister's office—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Again, that's not the question. Sorry, Mr D'Adam.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I'm just trying to bring Mr Fahey back to the question that you've asked, Ms Boyd. You were asked about the Minister's office, the Minister's staff and the department. Did you consult them in the preparation of your submission? It's a simple question—yes or no?

GLENN FAHEY: In the course of doing business in this work and in the area that we've been engaged with, including me personally—I've personally been researching this issue for the bulk of the last nine months. During the course of that period, yes, we've consulted and provided our analysis to political representatives that are not limited, obviously, to this State but also federally because it's an issue that we've, as I say, engaged with—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Let me just interrupt you there because, again, you're not answering the question. I remind you that you're under oath. I also remind you that this Committee has broad powers, as does the upper House, to request documents to investigate matters. Have you had communications with the Minister, the Minister's staff or the Department of Education in relation to the contents of your submission, absent things that you've done beforehand with evidence or any of your ordinary in-the-course-of dealings. The question is whether, in relation to this submission, you have had communications with the Minister, the Minister's staff or the department.

GLENN FAHEY: We supplied a copy of the submission to the Minister's staff.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Did you provide a draft of that?

GLENN FAHEY: We provided a version of that that was received before the Committee. Its contents are almost identical to the version that you have in front of you.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Why did you do that?

GLENN FAHEY: We did that because of the nature of the inquiry deadline that we submitted—we were a late submission because we took some time to edit our submission to ensure it was fit for publication.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: The Minister has no control, though, over what the Committee does or doesn't do, so why would you provide it to the Minister's staff?

GLENN FAHEY: It's a regular course of business. If we were submitting to an inquiry in any forum, we would provide the information that's going toward the Committee to the Minister as part of our open dialogue with them.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Why would you not submit the final version to them, then? What was the purpose of submitting a draft?

GLENN FAHEY: There's no purpose in which it was in any way different, only to provide advice to—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Were you expecting a response in relation to the content of the submission?

GLENN FAHEY: No, we don't ask for or solicit any feedback on the information that we provide. As I made clear in my opening comments, we don't do work that's commissioned or is engaged in a partisan way.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Was that the only contact you had with the Minister, the Minister's staff or the department in relation to the submission?

GLENN FAHEY: Again, "in relation to the submission" is a very broad statement. The submission contains a series of evidence that is around 50 pages worth and is work that has been engaged with over a long period of time.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Excluding that work; actually the contents of the recommendations in your report—

The CHAIR: Ms Boyd, you will have to make it the last question because two other Committee members have got questions.

GLENN FAHEY: Can I ask if there's a specific section which you'd like to draw attention to?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: For example, the recommendations. I share Mr D'Adam's view that there are some remarkable findings in here. In some places, there is conflicting advice. There's stuff where you've not really backed up the reason for saying things; for example, where you say on page—oh, there are no page numbers. I think it's page 3, though. You say:

> … there is little reason to believe that attrition prevention measures … will materially improve the state of teacher supply.

But then you go on later to talk about how demand for ITE is also related to pay and conditions and status. To my mind, it's a surprising submission. I'm just curious as to whether there was interaction between you and the department or you and the Minister in relation to providing this sort of submission. It concerns me that you've sent a draft to the Minister or the Minister's staff in the context of an inquiry which is supposed to have independence from the Government. This is the reason for the questions. I'm curious and I'm also worried, because

I believe that you are dodging now. If you could please tell me on which aspects of the submission you did have consultation or communications with the Minister, the Minister's staff or the department?

GLENN FAHEY: The Minister at no time has been consulted with it, if I can make that clear. You've asked about the findings within the contents of the submission, and I am obviously here in a capacity in which to provide answers in relation to that. You asked about why there was a conclusion that attrition prevention may not be a significant factor as far as sustaining the teacher workforce supply. The reason for that, as I indicated in earlier comments, is that attrition appears to be in the vicinity of 4 to 5 per cent in the teacher workforce—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Sorry, just to stop you, because I did have the benefit of Mr D'Adam's question on that. My question again is: On which aspects of this did you have communications with the Minister's staff? You said, "Not the Minister," but what about the Minister's staff in relation to the preparation of your submission?

GLENN FAHEY: They have received a copy of it. We have not engaged or consulted on specific elements within it.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: So there was no communication where you mentioned it before that?

The CHAIR: We'll have to move on to Courtney Houssos. You've had probably 15 questions there, and it's all on the record. Courtney?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I think my colleagues have canvassed the Centre for Independent Studies' views quite extensively. Thanks very much. I don't have any for this witness.

The CHAIR: Okay. I'll come on, and then we'll go around again. The submission is very comprehensive. It's a real encyclopedia of data. From my point of view, whether you got that from the Minister, the ABS or any other source, it is useful to the Committee in that regard. I personally don't regard Sarah Mitchell as a CIS type of person, I must say.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I was surprised myself.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's there on their website.

The CHAIR: But I do have a question about one of your central conclusions and how valid it is. You're saying, effectively, that there's no pipeline problem with new entrants coming into the teacher profession, and there's no problem with the status of teaching as such. At page 2 you say:

> There is little evidence that overall teacher workforce numbers are in long-term crisis.

But in the submission from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership—specifically their Australian teacher workforce data, which is regarded as the standard guide to these matters—they say there has been a 13 per cent drop in postgraduate commencements and a 22 per cent drop in undergraduate commencements. Doesn't that point to a problem that's not reflected in your conclusion?

GLENN FAHEY: The ITE pipeline is a source of part of that challenge, for sure. As far as where we measure a decline from or an increase from, it all depends upon which point is chosen. The reference point that's sometimes used is 2017, which was quite a high year for commencements. Obviously it's a complicated picture because you have commencements. You've got completions. You've got some students that take, on average, a little longer to complete now than they did before. There are a range of issues that are intersecting all at the same time when it comes to the ITE pipeline.

One of the issues that you have in recent years has also been that, in some of the years, there has been a smaller graduating cohort of year 12 students, which is a potential pool for ITE, as with all post-school study. You can see that, in the years ahead, there is quite a strong outlook as far as projected year 12 completers, which is likely to feed into quite healthy numbers in ITE. I would suggest that the major concern when it comes to ITE is a relatively low completion rate. It is in the vicinity of 15 per cent lower than it is for other qualifications. That's a source that significantly impacts upon the pipeline.

The CHAIR: You also have a statement here that a suitable salary level for mid-career changers coming into teaching would be $115,000. How was that arrived at?

GLENN FAHEY: That estimate is derived from looking at workers from the potential target industry in the typical age bracket which you might expect mid-career teacher entrants to come from. If we make a comparison to what the average salary is typically in that industry, that's what you'd find. I'd also suggest that some of the evidence provided to the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review would suggest that one of the deterrents and disincentives for potential teachers to enter teaching from a mid-career perspective is that they're asked to, in some instances, accept a salary that's equivalent to a graduate teacher rather than somebody with several years of experience that might be appropriate subject matter or other experience that could be recognised.

The CHAIR: And the main thrust of your thinking on these labour market issues is to use financial incentives. You say a 5 per cent permanent differential for science and maths teachers. Is that enough? The same outfit, AITSL, has spoken of $10,000 to $30,000 bonuses for in-field teaching, and I suppose that also applies to regional and remote. Isn't that more realistic than just the 5 per cent?

GLENN FAHEY: It's hard to know. Financial incentives are part of the picture. As many surveys will show, the pay itself is not always the strongest determinant of teachers' reasons for entering teaching or for staying in teaching. It does matter, by all means, but it's not everything. Many of the intrinsic motivation factors tend to rate even more highly than pay in many surveys. As far as what would be an appropriate level, if we compare graduates in those salaries to graduates in teaching, something in the realm of 5 to 10 per cent is likely to be sufficient. If we look at some evidence out of the UK, a 5 per cent salary supplement for in-demand subjects—and their level of in demand, when it comes to maths and science, is lower than our level of out-of-field teaching, though those definitions do vary. It may be the case that, in our environment, that may be different. But such a simulation, as far as I'm aware, has not been done.

The CHAIR: CIS are long-term holders of a view that ITE deviates from the evidence base in our university teaching colleges, and I certainly agree with that. What do you think of the idea that was floated, I think, by the Federal Minister—and certainly by Alphacrucis in their model—to make ITE more like an apprenticeship model? Essentially, instead of doing your training and then there's a prac, in-classroom experience and training is there from day one. It's integrated into all aspects of the teacher training.

GLENN FAHEY: As far as teacher preparation goes, the evidence suggests that the more time spent—and the environment in which teachers spend their pre-service period—working within schools, including managing classes, is the most significant determinant as far as their preparation or readiness for teaching, more correctly. So there's reason to believe that increasing the time and the quality of the time spent in terms of practicum is likely to improve the preparedness of Australian teachers.

The CHAIR: Do you think that is a way of getting the entrants closer to the evidence base? Obviously teaching in a classroom is a practical demonstration of what works and what doesn't work with the students, so that would help, wouldn't it?

GLENN FAHEY: Look, it's likely to help. Some of the evidence suggests that teachers that go through an intensive practicum in a highly supportive school that's high performing can complete their studies as effective as a third-year teacher, in US studies. This suggests that there's a significant opportunity for teachers that are engaged in a practicum to be more prepared and more effective when they enter the workforce. As far as comparing pedagogical practices, we would infer that it would be likely that teachers that go through a practicum may adopt and prefer or demonstrate adherence to specific practices more so than others. That's something that one would expect teaching performance assessments that are administered may be able to provide evidence on in future.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Mr Fahey, would you say that this submission has academic rigour?

GLENN FAHEY: It's not an academic journal and the Committee hasn't requested only academically published journal publications as part of its submission process.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: But you try and meet academic standards. I mean, you're an independent research organisation. Surely you aspire to academic standards to demonstrate your independence.

GLENN FAHEY: The submission includes a collection of data contained from Australian and international data sources as well as a range of academic sources, if that answers the question.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Do you think it's fair—I mean in terms of presenting evidence, you've opened your remarks by saying that the Centre for Independent Studies tries to take an evidence-based approach. The thing that concerns me about your submission is that it doesn't appear to weigh any counterevidence. There do not appear to be any significant observations about, I suppose, countervailing or contrary evidence in the assertions and the evidence that you've brought to bear in your submission. Why is that?

GLENN FAHEY: The call for submissions was to provide evidence to the best of our ability as far as the issues identified in the terms of reference. It hasn't specifically asked for weighing of different perspectives. Those perspectives come up in the course of the Committee's work and it's the task of the Committee to make those judgements.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: But surely in an evidence-based approach you would balance the evidence. You would look at the evidence that's available and you would weigh it, and, you know, it might come down one way or another but you would certainly make reference to contradictory positions and you would—it seems to me that in your submission you've cherrypicked the evidence. You've picked the stuff that supports the

ideological disposition of the CIS rather than actually taking an independent approach, a balanced approach, an evidence-based approach. Do you think that's a fair assessment of your submission, Mr Fahey?

GLENN FAHEY: The data sources primarily are from the ABS, the OECD and the New South Wales department's CESE data. I suspect none of those are in any way unbalanced or produced in any way without the highest standards of integrity. Is there a specific data source to which you would draw my attention?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Well, of course, if you present the evidence in a certain way, you can always suggest a certain line of action.

The CHAIR: Last one.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: But without the weighing of evidence, surely that creates a biased approach.

The CHAIR: Look, can I just say, we've had this line of questioning. It is unusual that there's a concerted attempt to discredit a witness. The Committee would normally work on the basis that everything submitted has an element of ideology. Can we get back to the substance of what's actually being recommended?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: To that, though, I think that establishing that—

The CHAIR: We can all attack people from the other side of politics, but in all due respect that's outside the terms of reference of the Committee.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: This is not a politician though. This is a person who is presenting as an expert witness.

The CHAIR: Everyone knows where the CIS comes from. Can we actually get to the substance of what they're—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: There is no substance if it hasn't been prepared in an independent manner.

The CHAIR: I think we're wasting the Committee's time going down this line of questioning. The point has been made. Can we have something a bit more substantial, please.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I think the submission is wasting the Committee's time.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I'll ask a further question then. I wanted to ask about the inclusion of the table, the comparative table on working hours—I'm just trying to find it, it's towards the end of the submissions.

The CHAIR: Page 32?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's an OECD table. What was the purpose of including this, Mr Fahey? You're trying to demonstrate that teachers, comparatively, don't have high workloads—was that the purpose of including that particular table?

GLENN FAHEY: There's a few different sources that compare working hours and teachers' reported conditions and satisfaction within the profession that compare Australian data and OECD data. That data is collected and made available to all potential users and is an internationally credible source, and I suspect that you're not impugning the status or integrity of that data collection. But consistently across those collections shows that Australian teachers, by and large, report higher levels of satisfaction and working conditions than is found compared to the OECD average. When we compare overall working hours, while it is true that not all countries have got the same labour market conditions and expectations, if we compare to other Anglosphere countries, teachers' working hours are broadly consistent with what you see in other Anglosphere countries.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: So the purpose of including that is to lead the Committee to drawing the conclusion that, in spite of the evidence that we've received from a whole range of other submissions about workload, that actually workload, internationally comparatively, Australian teachers aren't working that hard. That's what you're trying to suggest that we conclude from including that bit of evidence. Is that fair, Mr Fahey?

GLENN FAHEY: What I'd ask the Committee to take from that piece of evidence, on the numbers that are collected, which is based on survey data from teachers, is that working hours are reported as being similar to in other OECD countries. I think that's important and relevant information to the Committee. It doesn't make any judgement upon the quality or the workload of those hours. It simply states that that's the data that's available to us. I believe it is relevant to the Committee's work.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: The conclusion that you're suggesting the Committee draw is that the workload concerns that have been articulated by other sources should just be disregarded. Comparatively, it's not something we should put much weight on.

GLENN FAHEY: That's up to the Committee to make a judgement upon. But several sources of data have been provided which do look at the issue of teachers' work hours compared to other professions and also compared to teachers within other countries, and it is not just the number of hours that we have looked at. We have also looked at the composition of those hours and made the comparison that you see in one of the figures, which compares the time spent on different activities compared to other countries. The reason why that's done is because the OECD PISA and TALIS linkage data did look at the usage of teachers' time and tried to associate that with student outcomes to try to understand how the different usage of teachers' time and the amount of working hours that teachers have, what relationship that has to student outcomes, because that is a matter of policy concern.

The CHAIR: We'll have to go to Ms Courtney Houssos. She has a question and we are running out of time.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: One final question, Mr Fahey. You talk in your submission about the need for better collection of data. That's certainly something that's come up in our inquiry already. We heard in our last hearing about the issues with collating that data. Specifically, it was around merged classes and temporary combining of classes. What is the kind of data that's provided by the Victorian Government and how is it different to what's provided by the New South Wales Government?

GLENN FAHEY: The Victorian Government does produce or the Victorian department does provide a more detailed supply and demand report. I believe it's intended to be an annual publication but I don't believe it's publicly available for all years. That does provide quite detailed information by sectors, including early childhood through to primary and secondary school data, about current and projected teacher numbers and status. It's quite an informative report and something that I would recommend that other jurisdictions attempt to replicate. One of the other important items that's different about the collection in Victoria is it identifies what they call potential teacher supply, which are individuals who are not currently working as teachers but may be registered, which just gives a richer source of information about those that are potentially able to fill vacancies within the workforce.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: The Victorians actually provide a range of additional data on their VCE results and other measures throughout the system. So this is something that's consistent with the Victorian Government that the New South Wales department doesn't provide; is that correct?

GLENN FAHEY: I couldn't make a further judgment upon that, only to say that the teacher workforce report is more detailed and more timely than what we have available here.

The CHAIR: It being 11 o'clock, we're out of time. Thank you very much, Glenn, for your participation and answering so many questions—many scores of them from around the table. As I said, initially there's a lot of information in this report of yours. Your submission is useful to the Committee. We thank you again and we'll see you next time.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr NICK JENSEN, Director of Government Relations, Alphacrucis University College, sworn and examined

Associate Professor DAVID HASTIE, Deputy Vice President, Development, Alphacrucis University College, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Thanks, gentlemen, for your time and the excellent submission and the excellent work you do. I had the opportunity—was it last year?—to see that in your Newcastle hub, which now appears to be sort of where the orthodoxy is headed. This is how we do early teacher training. Would you like to make an opening statement on behalf of the college?

DAVID HASTIE: Yes, thank you so much. With all due respect to my colleagues who've made other submissions, unlike most of the submissions to this inquiry, we already have a solution on the ground that is working. All of the recommendations coming out of the teacher workforce roundtable that occurred last week—early placements, paid placements, closer monitoring, completion and retention rates, higher ATAR, closer VET-HE partnerships—have already been successfully, albeit on a smaller scale, implemented by the New South Wales Teaching School Hub model, with a 95 per cent retention rate and a much higher average ATAR for candidates.

We are extremely grateful to this Committee for recommending the Alphacrucis University College clinical teaching hub model in the 2021 *Future development of the NSW tertiary sector* report, which led to a $2.9 million investment in a three-sector pilot of the hub model—that's State, Catholic and Independent—currently running in the Hunter, in Wilcannia-Forbes, in our most remote regions, and the State school hub is about to start next year in the Riverina in a group of 10 schools. We have now included Indigenous women training as teachers in their home towns—a thing of great pride for us—and all of this without any Commonwealth-supported places. Those Indigenous women are paying $60,000 for their degrees where failing public tertiary gets Commonwealth-supported places just by sitting there. So we're not interested in thought bubbles and a hermeneutic of complaint at this inquiry. We want New South Wales to lead the charge in education reform and thank this Committee for so obviously sharing that vision with us.

The CHAIR: Could you just elaborate on the problem with the Commonwealth-supported places? It seems to me it's just quite random, isn't it? Historically some organisations were selected for that financial benefit, others were left out. It's got nothing to do with merit and you've been left out, unfortunately. How can that be corrected?

DAVID HASTIE: Yes. Julia Gillard, who was an excellent education Minister, handed out tranches of Commonwealth-supported places to non-government providers in the noughties. There's no formal instrument for endowing Commonwealth-supported places on non-government tertiary providers and that door shut, after which we commenced an education program at our university college. So there's been no instrument. It's been up to ministerial discretion. We simply ask the Commonwealth to come to its senses and to fund a program that's working really well. Whether that's by transferring from other institutions where it's not working well or coming up with some other source of the funding, we don't really mind. But it's the Matthew principle: Give to those who are doing well and don't give to those who aren't. Obviously it's a Commonwealth issue. This Committee can't resolve that, but this Committee would be in a position to exert influence, I think, on the Commonwealth.

The CHAIR: Is there any sign of progress with the new Minister, Jason Clare, who seems to be a supporter of this apprenticeship hub model that works so well?

NICK JENSEN: We've raised the issue with his office and the department, who have been responsive and helpful, but as of yet we're not aware that a review has begun. It's also worth putting into context that there was legislation at the start of last year that had bipartisan support and created a new category of university college, which Alphacrucis was recognised into. But as of yet there isn't any financial incentive attached to that, despite the recognition of superior higher education quality. As far as I'm aware, the previous education Minister was willing to look at whether CSPs should be considered now in light of the new category as an incentive for higher education bodies, but at the moment we don't know where that review stands.

The CHAIR: Was Jason Clare's Labor predecessor, Tanya Plibersek, supportive of bringing you into the CSPs?

NICK JENSEN: We hadn't had the conversation.

The CHAIR: Okay. We'll see what comes out of the new representations. As I mentioned earlier, I had the chance to have a look at the work at the Newcastle hub. It seemed to me that the quality of classroom practice was fantastic. The level of enthusiasm and engagement by the trainee teachers was exceptional. From what I could see, it was all working exactly how the system would like, particularly in servicing these regional areas. The work

you're doing elsewhere in Wilcannia, Forbes, Riverina and with Indigenous education is particularly valuable, given the teacher shortages—rural and regional. Is there anything you're looking to improve on the Newcastle experience? Obviously it's your first go at one of these regional hubs?

DAVID HASTIE: It's an entrepreneurial venture, and we're good at that because we're agile as a college. I think it's in a self-improvement spiral all the time. Probably how I would answer that is that we need to view schools as learning ecologies. The approach up to this point has been a lot of centralised bits and pieces, whereas schools are local. They're embedded in local communities and there's an ecology of learning where there are students. We are suggesting that trainee teachers should be enmeshed in the ecology of learning. Then you have your professional development, which should be microcredited into masters degrees and your leadership tracks.

All of these are interrelated and need to be connected through high staff stability—so low staff churn—and a sense of community, social capital and altruism of mission. I think probably what we're doing in the hub in the Hunter is starting to develop this notion of training their leaders as well. We're putting together an MBA education, so that there's a clear—and it's an ethos-centred one. It's about character and competency, with skills attached to it as they progress. In answering your question, that's probably the next step for us. It's a little off topic here, I suppose.

The CHAIR: No, I think the time suits you, with this apprenticeship model. The feedback I had from the trainee teachers was that they get plenty of theory but theory that doesn't work in the classroom is not much use, and the feedback they were getting in practice was the main point of enthusiasm for becoming teachers, going on with the profession. I thought it was outstanding from what I could see.

On your point three about compliance regimes, we've discussed here previously LANTITE and whether that could happen earlier. What are these other points you have made about the end-on compliance regimes that are onerous in keeping trainee teachers in the profession? You have mentioned continuous professional learning thresholds, pre-service values, ability testing, load obligations and identity management. What would you do differently to these problems that at the moment lead to a higher attrition rate than we'd like?

DAVID HASTIE: I think what's lacking in a lot of initial teacher education degrees is a unified narrative of what it means to teach. So, from whoa to go, you start, you finish your degree and you come out with a clear sense of what it means to teach and what it means to be in teaching, and that's enmeshed into a community. There are compliance levels like the TPAs and the LANTITE tests that have been brought in. You also have things like in New South Wales three band 5s, which must include English as well, and so there are these levels of compliance. I don't necessarily disagree with any of those compliance instruments. I think LANTITE is important, but it shouldn't be treated as a sort of our simple instrument; it's actually quite a complex instrument. The suggestions to move it to the front of training as a screening device—no-one's thought through the logistics of how that might work. If you've got thousands of people applying for teaching, who runs the LANTITE test? When does it run? Does it run in November or is it run in January? So there are all sorts of questions around that.

And what about really good teachers who don't get through the LANTITE test in the first go because they're really bad at maths but they're brilliant at everything else? What if they didn't finish school but they're in their thirties and they're going to be a brilliant teacher? So you need to have varieties of diversity of entry. I'm not talking about lowering standards but I'm talking about being flexible in the way that you use those instruments. However, I think a lot of the compliance constraints are ameliorated if there's a really strong sense of "We really believe in this and we're in this together and we're enmeshed in the community and we're enmeshed in a mission." In a lot of ways, higher pay—I'm not going to oppose it; it's a great thing. The research indicates that teachers work for altruistic reasons. They don't really work for money and the altruism needs to be connected into a sense of community mission. Whether you're a trainee teacher or whether you're a beginning teacher or a school leader, it needs to be the sense of local, autonomous and integrated mission.

The CHAIR: Just finally, how many of your teachers hit the LANTITE hurdle and drop out?

DAVID HASTIE: In the hubs, we haven't had anyone fail the LANTITE.

The CHAIR: Right, okay. That's a good sign.

DAVID HASTIE: Yes, but we do have a retail tranche of students who come through—normal, regular students—and we've had a couple of those who have had to do it a couple of times, but we've never had anyone fail it.

The CHAIR: Right. You get three attempts at it.

DAVID HASTIE: Yes.

The CHAIR: So your failure rate at the moment is zero. That's pretty good. Are there other questions? Courtney Houssos?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes. Thanks very much. Associate Professor Hastie, I was just interested in you expanding on that idea of the MBA for education. I think that's really interesting when you talk about the culture of a school. Obviously, part of that is about leadership training, but to transition from a masters of teaching to actually a specialised MBA for education, that's really interesting. I'm not aware of that. Is this the first time that that's been done, or are you modelling that off somewhere else?

DAVID HASTIE: We've actually got international benchmarks on that—about six different universities in the United States and one in the United Kingdom—but what we're talking about is not initial teacher education.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: No, no. Of course.

DAVID HASTIE: Master of teaching is an accreditation degree for postgrads. What we're talking about is—probably the equivalent would be in MEd Lead. But the problem is there is no unified approach to training school principals in this country or to training heads of department or to training deputies. There's no pathway, so what we're designing is a three-step pathway for heads of department, then for divisional leaders or deputies, and then for heads, but then culminating in an EdD, and Ed doctorate, for the ones who are really going to become executive principals. Principals in this country arrive in the job an average of 25 years after commencing teaching and they arrive in the job, a great deal of them, as brilliant educators but more or less sub-numerate: not able to run budgets, not knowing anything about capital works, HR, law. They're good leaders of learning and my wife is one of them. You arrive in the job and it's like sink or swim and they're not trained to do it.

You should train them early on how to manage a budget, how to think about law, how to manage parents and all of those complex things. They're essentially CEOs, if there was an industry comparison, of a medium-size business—incredibly complex, and they arrive with no training. So, the MBA Education is about technical skills whereas a lot of MEd Leads are more about soft skills—cultures, building groups and learning and all those sorts of things. That's what we're envisaging. It's a 12-unit masters rather than—there are some options around the place that do it in eight units. Key to the operation of it is—I mean, if I can just reflect: The key metric in Australian teacher training, whether it's ITE or whether it's professional development, is between an individual student and a tertiary provider. We believe that metric is flawed. We actually think that the key metric should be between the tertiary provider and industry. So, groups of schools say, "These are our training needs", and they say to tertiary, "Partner with us to develop a pathway that suits our context", because if you were teaching at Sydney High, it's very different than teaching at Wilcannia Central. There's a different set of needs. For 800 years the reverse has been the opposite; that industry has to go to tertiary, and tertiary tells them what to do.

At Alphacrucis University College, our signature is to partner with industry, whether it's in allied health or education or with churches or with social service organisations, and we sit down and co-design. We've walked down the spiral staircase of the ivory tower and you flip the academic capital into local communities. The MBA Education is currently being designed with the Teaching Schools Alliance Sydney and the St Philip's hub in the Hunter and basically we're sitting in a room and co-designing it with them and asking them: What is it that they need? What are the common elements? We're planning on launching it in a pilot phase in first semester next year and then launching it fully with half-sponsored candidates in 2024.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: That's really interesting.

DAVID HASTIE: All delivered onsite in the schools.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Wow, okay. I'm really interested in teacher shortage. I'm from regional New South Wales originally and it's something that we've seen—or we used to see— right across those remote, rural and regional parts of the State, but now it's really coming into metropolitan Sydney. But I'm interested in your programs that are based in those really rural and remote areas because some of those teacher shortages are—I can't think of a strong enough word.

DAVID HASTIE: Catastrophic.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, catastrophic—thank you very much. But your program is actually counteracting that. Can you just explain a little bit more about that and where they're located?

DAVID HASTIE: The key to fixing this is social capital. Another word for that is that the locals are all committed. If you want people to work in the bush, you've got to train them from the bush for the bush.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Exactly.

DAVID HASTIE: "Training on country for country" is our little signature phrase. You train people out there who are committed to the spirit of place. They have to stay; they want to stay. So you train the policeman's

husband or you train the grazier's wife who's been helping out at the local school and now it's time to train up. They're committed to the area, or you find that a volunteer-ist class of young people who just love the place and they don't want to leave. Now, it doesn't describe everyone and it's not the only way to train teachers, but the whole idea of a FIFO model where you incentivise people from Sydney to go out to Woop Woop, it hasn't worked. It won't work. It doesn't matter how much money you throw into that because they might go out for two years, get their money, and then they're going to be headhunted by a high-end private school in Sydney because they've got lots of initiative. You need to actually train from the bush for the bush in the bush, and you need to have a model that means that people don't need to leave to train.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yeah, exactly.

DAVID HASTIE: That's why we run out this model of minimum viable numbers per year in a cluster. You don't work with an individual school because you cannot; the business model doesn't work. You can't staff that, but if you're running with a group of 10 every year, then that's a minimum viable number where a tertiary provider—or we can—break-even in terms of the staffing and we can also appoint a local regional director who is in the region and can do the wraparound care of the candidates as they go through. I think that's essentially it. FIFO might work occasionally, particularly if they, for some reason, get attached to the town. But the statistics are terrible around the FIFO model, particularly in the remote and Indigenous schools, where the average tenure is like two years, one year; people come and go. It's no wonder that there is a low school participation because those communities say, "Well, the teachers don't really care about us, so why would we care?"

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, and it's much harder to establish that connection with the community when you are flown in. And you're right: There are some individuals who it will work for, but largely, especially now when you're looking at dual income families, the idea of an entire family relocating on a teacher's wage to a remote part of the State is just really not realistic anymore. So, I really like your idea about training people who are there—the policeman's wife or whatever it might be. I think that's a really interesting idea. Your submission says that teachers trained in schools are more likely to become teachers than those trained in universities. Obviously that's your experience, but do you have data that backs that up?

DAVID HASTIE: Yes. Our data for that is drawn from UK models but also the University of Melbourne. The University of Melbourne was really the trailblazer here in their Graduate School of Education, their MTeach. Their retention rates are a lot higher. Obviously it's an elite university. It's a campus-based model with two days in school and two days at the campus, so you have to live near the campus. You need to commute. Their retention rates are great. In fact, we modelled a lot of our clinical teaching—we prefer the term "clinical teachers" rather than "apprentices" because we don't see teaching as a trade. It's a profession. It's an intellectual profession. It does have certain trade elements like being able to deal with six-year-olds.

The CHAIR: Apprenticeships are very popular out there in public opinion land.

DAVID HASTIE: Yes.

The CHAIR: It's an easy-to-understand model. I think that's why it's a useful term. Just a bit of PR advice there.

DAVID HASTIE: We prefer the idea of a clinical intern in medical training, and that's what the University of Melbourne uses. The statistics are pretty strong coming out of the school-centred initial teacher training, or SCITT as they call it in the UK. The ones that work are the ones that do walk alongside with tertiary. There are a couple of models in the UK that are ideologically driven that cut tertiary out altogether because they're a bit left wing, according to the Cameron Government, and those models have struggled. But certainly this strong partnership between tertiary and school clusters—it really works.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I've got one final question about the mentoring that you provide. Do you provide additional mentoring once the students have completed their training? Something that we've heard from a lot of schools is that—I don't know what we would call it but a lot of what this Committee would regard as being successful schools—

The CHAIR: Best practice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Best practice. Thank you very much, Chair. They often run a one-year training program for teachers once they've finished university, with that understanding that, yes, you've got your theory but we need to train you up in what a classroom actually looks like. I understand that you're reversing some of that onus, but do you then provide that support to your teachers once they have completed their studies or is it really over to the schools then?

DAVID HASTIE: The schools are in this partnership of mentoring from the first day of training. So these students are put under mentors who are trained mentors. They're not randomly selected. We've got training

packs, a mentor training program and, in a lot of ways, they don't need to be mentored in the first year because they arrive ready.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, I understand.

DAVID HASTIE: It's been this really odd metric that tertiary has used in the last 15 years that you're meant to have competent beginners. You graduate as a competent beginner.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes.

DAVID HASTIE: If I'm in a hospital and I've got a first year out doctor stitching me up, I don't want a competent beginner. I want a proficient, right? We actually have aimed to lift the level of the graduate to proficient. You can put them in the classroom and they're ready to go. Not only that, they're known, because they don't get trained in the teaching school hubs and then go somewhere else. The idea is they get trained in the teaching school hubs and stay in those hubs as a part of the strategic HR design of those hubs so that they can plan rather than just react. Certainly this end-on training where students go in with the metric of student tertiary, do something inside the universities and get popped out the other side, it is a bit of a lucky dip. You hope that they're going to be okay, and then after two years you discover they're not okay, and you wonder how on earth they ever got through training, and then you've got staff churn issues. That's all ameliorated by this model.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Sorry, I said it was my last question, but of course I've got one more. It's really interesting. The whole testing of students before they enter the classroom at an academic level in terms of their maths skills or their English skills or the like is really designed to make sure that the theory has been applied, but we don't have a similar kind of test for the teaching part of it, which is the nuts and bolts of how you interact with kids in the class. Would you agree?

DAVID HASTIE: Oh, indeed. Well, we do.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Sorry, I should say other universities, but not yourself.

DAVID HASTIE: Yes. We have the most terrifying screening process in teacher education anywhere in the world. We have a short list of candidates for 10 spots. Maybe you might have 16 candidates. We put them all in front of a year 5 class. We say, "Come in with a lesson. You've got 10 minutes. Teach the year 5 class." Then we give them feedback. Then we put them in front of a different year 5 class and see how they go. The year 5s love it, obviously. They have a ball. Then you can watch these students and see how they respond to feedback and how they interact with kids. In fact, we've often had people in the interview and we think, "They're not so good." Then we see them in the classroom and we say, "These people are brilliant." And the reverse. They get in the classroom and say, "I haven't even applied for teaching, but this is not for me." There are other equivalents that are occurring in some universities through the Avatar program. I know at the University of Newcastle, Professor Sue Ledger actually brought it over from Edith Cowan where they have a computerised program where there's an actor and there are five gormless students sitting in a classroom on the screen, and the teacher has to interact with them in a digital format. That's one way to do it.

NICK JENSEN: My brother actually does that at the moment.

DAVID HASTIE: Does he really?

NICK JENSEN: He's an actor and he had to pretend to be five year 8 girls at once, I think.

DAVID HASTIE: It's lots of fun to watch. But obviously our model is based very much on that close partnership. If you asked universities to do it at scale, it would be really expensive, if they were running their current retail structure. But we do that in all of our teaching school hubs. It's a brilliant way to screen people right at the get-go because a subject specialist is a subject specialist. They can do maths, they can do literacy, but can they control a group of year 8s? Will they ever be able to control a group of year 8s? You can tell that in the first 15 minutes through this process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much for being here today and for your submission as well. Associate Professor Hastie, when we're looking at this problem, we're looking at about three different elements: one, how do you attract teachers into the profession; two, how do you keep them there in the first few years; and three, how do you keep them there at the end of their career? I take it when you look at your program and what you've outlined, it's very much for those first few years of somebody entering the profession. Was 95 per cent your attrition rate?

DAVID HASTIE: Success rate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Success rate, so a 5 per cent attrition rate and being able to keep people in the profession. What about at the other two ends? How does your model work in terms of attracting people, and

also—and it might seem like it doesn't in a sense—keeping people at the other end as well. Is there an impact on that too?

DAVID HASTIE: In terms of attracting, it's very much word of mouth, we've found. You advertise. In the first year of a particular hub, you'll get 16 applications. In the second year, 30. In the third year, 70. Currently there are well over 100 applications for 10 spots in the Hunter because everyone discovers the quality of the program. The word of mouth gets out. It's very local. So that's where we've seen the aggregated rise of the ATAR. The average is over 80, of the students going into this. In the Teaching Schools Alliance Sydney, which is not part of the NECSTEP funding, it's approaching 90, but they run mostly the MTeach. In terms of the other end of the career, obviously this is a new program so we haven't been able to track it for 30 years. But what this provides is a concurrent career trajectory that currently doesn't exist, and that is in the mentor program. So somebody who's a fourth year out teacher is going to be a really good mentor. They're not going to be a head of department for another three years or four years, but you can put them as a mentor, and they start to really refine their professional skills.

One of our arguments also, through the learning ecology idea, is that people who might not be going into a deputy's position would actually go into a thought leadership position. So they would go into higher degree research and become a part of the research culture and the data culture of that particular teaching school and be a part of the academic staff that teaches back into the initial teacher education program. We are actually seeing that happen. We've got numerous staff in the Hunter and a couple of other hubs who are now teaching the initial teacher education students as they come through. They are appropriately qualified according to TEQSA standards. In a lot of ways, I would speculate that that's what would retain them at the other end, but we still need to see.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the model in place—and I think that's a very good way to put it, in terms of from country, for country, and the like—how are you actually recruiting those people? How are you finding the police officer's partner to come into that program? What's your model for being able to do that in those communities?

DAVID HASTIE: It doesn't sound very attractive, but it's really tapping on the shoulder, the thing that works. So a principal's there and he's got three unqualified paraprofessionals or teaching assistants or an Aboriginal liaison officer. Basically, the principal goes up, taps on the shoulder and says, "Do you want to become a teacher? We think you should become a teacher." They say, "No, I can't become a teacher." "We think you can become a teacher." So you've got the existing school workers, then you've got the immediate graduates coming through. This is one of the wonderful things about being a dual-sector provider.

We are a VET provider as well as a higher education provider. Part of the funding that came through this Committee was to actually pay for 10 VET certificates in teaching support. We have students at school who are training to be teachers' aides, coming out with a Cert III or Cert IV in TA. When they go into the program, they're extremely useful and they're legally able to be used as TAs, rather than just unskilled TAs. You've got the recruitment directly from school, where you're actually identifying year 10 students, year 11 students and saying, "You're a natural-born leader of children." They might be running sports clubs, youth groups or Sunday schools. They might be working in after-school care already as a part-time job, so the locals are identifying them and they're coming vouched for because they're kind of known or somebody knows the cousin of the aunty of the someone who can say, "This person's all right, you should check them out." They're not a cold call.

Then you've got just broader word of mouth. One of the things we found interesting in the Catholic school hub is the connection through parish. There are people involved in parishes out there, and the word goes through the parish: Are you interested in this? We found that also in the Hunter because it's a faith-based affiliated school. In fact, a number of the local churches are tapping people on the shoulder who had nothing to do with St Philip's—kids who are going to State schools or whatever. They got involved through that network. It's all about social capital. We believe very much that local agency is what works and devolving the money and the power down to the localities, giving principals real power, real money to make decisions about who works in their schools and how they're trained, and having all of those wonderful bonding and bridging capital links.

Because you know what? Trust is the thing that makes this work. Trust is what makes things efficient and powerful. When you've got a local thing, trust is activated. When you have a centralised bureaucracy, there is no trust whatsoever between the centre and the periphery. So what you have to do is you have to build in all of these elements that sustain quality, which increases transaction costs. That's why it's incredibly expensive to run the NSW Department of Education. I'm not dissing them at all; they are wonderful people doing a great job. But the centre has all of these pipes out to the periphery and all these leaks along the way. So you need all these transaction costs, all these extra bureaucrats to run all the bits in between the centre and the periphery. If you can actually devolve the power down to the local community and get them to do it in a way where they can all trust

each other, the transaction costs come down. Our model is a lot cheaper to run than a centralised model, even though on face value it has some additional costs.

NICK JENSEN: Can I add something to that as well, Mr Farlow? One of the points that Professor Hastie raised was around the VET aspect. I draw the Committee's attention to the "In the same sentence" report released by Gonski and Shergold, where they identified one of the major problems is this gap between higher education and VET and that there were no universities in New South Wales that were dual sector. We think that's actually a fundamental aspect. If you're creating a learning ecology, you're not just doing teacher training on site and the postgraduate that we talked about earlier on site but also the VET pathways, which are all linked in from Certificate II all the way up to PhD. If you can create that local university presence on the ground using VET as a key part of that, I think that is what makes the model so powerful as it gets running and expands in the community.

DAVID HASTIE: If you think about lower literacy levels of certain members of our communities in remote areas—through no fault of their own—they're going to be brilliant teachers, but if you get them to write an essay, they're going to freak out. If you put them through a Cert III or a Cert IV, they start to get used to academic practice, and so the VET component becomes a bridge between no skill and a degree. In fact, in Wilcannia-Forbes that's really what they're looking at, particularly amongst the Indigenous candidates. They're looking and saying, "How do we upskill these wonderful people who are in our communities who can't write an essay? How do we bridge the link?" The VET component, we think, is very original. No-one else is doing it, and it really works.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Regarding your model and your partnering with schools, I imagine they're giving you some sort of insight into what their needs are on the horizon. Are you seeing an increasing need, in terms of vacancies and the like, from those school partners?

DAVID HASTIE: The vacancies in our school partners are the same as in all of the other schools: sciences, maths, design and technology, and languages. Languages have always been hard to staff, but the vacancies are the same. What this does is it enables strategic HR on the local level. You can say, "We've got a science teacher who's approaching retirement, our head of science, so clearly we're going to bump Bob up into the role of head of faculty and we're going to need another couple of teachers." So you start to map that out a couple of years in advance, and you say, "In this particular entry, we need science candidates," and so you start to pick out the science and the maths candidates coming through. That's what we call "strategic HR". If you think of a big accounting firm or a big engineering firm, none of them puts out a job for a rookie. They've trained them; they've got strategic HR. In Australian education, the whole notion of strategic HR, nobody understands it and nobody does it. It's just reactive HR. And here we are, we've been doing reactive HR for 15 or 20 years and we don't have enough staff.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of your model of having people on site, when there are those short-term vacancies—earlier in this inquiry we discussed the increasing number of hours that people are taking off because of illness and misadventure at the moment—I imagine there is some ability for teachers who are in training to be able to step into some roles in some capacity. Does that occur, or not really?

DAVID HASTIE: Legally they aren't allowed to be in a supervisory role and they're not allowed to be teaching. But what they do provide is an extra set of hands in the classroom. One of the big pressures in the past 15 years in the teaching profession is that it's no longer teacher centred; it's student centred. That usually means what we call "differentiation" in the classroom. You don't just teach to the centre; you actually have to teach to all of the different layers of learning. That means that if there's someone over here who's flying ahead and getting bored and someone over here who's way behind or getting frustrated, the teacher needs to be able to address all of that. If you've got an extra pair of hands in the classroom who can go over and help with the reading while this person is struggling, then that frees up the teacher to do something else. If a teacher is off sick, having an extra paraprofessional in the classroom doesn't alleviate that, but it might mean that the teacher doesn't go off sick in the first place because they're not so stressed out.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I've got a couple of questions. In your submission you make reference to the department's Grow Your Own initiative, which is included in the Teacher Supply Strategy. Could you perhaps elaborate on how your program differs from what is contemplated with Grow Your Own? As a complement to that, I also note that the CUC submission also touches on this idea of a local place-based approach to initial teacher education. Could you comment on those two elements?

DAVID HASTIE: I'm a big fan of the Minister's Teacher Supply Strategy. They're trying to do something. The Grow Your Own program is essentially where you identify an existing staff member, an existing TA and you seek to upskill them. I've just described that. The difference with the Alphacrucis University model and the Grow Your Own model is that one is individualistic and one is collective. Ours is collective. We seek to

have a group of schools where students learn shoulder to shoulder as a cohort and they become professional peers as they move into the teaching profession.

The Grow Your Own is, I suppose, for want of a better word, opportunistic in that it is based on what opportunities are sitting there: We've got a TA; let's grow them into a teacher. I think it's great. The problem with that is isolation. There is a risk of isolation because the student is learning alone in some remote area. Particularly in the online context, the data indicates that online learning for regional students has a huge attrition rate because they don't have that wraparound care. What we provide in the model—and this is crucial actually—the solution to this problem takes a thousand conversations. There's no one size fits all. We appoint a regional director, and the school cluster appoints the teaching school director.

They are two professionals who work shoulder to shoulder to sort out every single problem for those students. When a student in Hillston or something like that doesn't hand in an assignment, they find out about it a week after, these two directors. Whereas in standard tertiary if you don't hand in an assignment, two months later they fail because they don't have the wraparound care. I'm all for Grow Your Own. I wish it all the best, but I think it's not a large-scale plan, it's a reaction to what's on the ground, whereas this is strategic HR and it has that component of collectiveness. We really believe in the collective model and the efficacy of a collective model. It has that extra wraparound care to make sure that students don't fall over.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I wanted to raise three concerns that I have. I'm looking at this from the perspective of its applicability to the New South Wales public education system, which is a mass system with 2,200 schools. Your college, as I understand it, has grown out of the training needs of the Christian school originally—correct me if I'm wrong. I wanted to ask, first of all, how we could apply your model on a mass scale given the size of the public school system. I wanted to also address the question around, if Alphacrucis college was in the driver's seat, how we would navigate the secular question because there's clearly a Christian dimension to your organisation.

The third reservation I wanted to ask you to address is the risk of nepotistic arrangements emerging in the hub. If this is a long-term project in a particular area, you can see that there's a high degree of susceptibility to nepotistic arrangements emerging in terms of the staffing, which perhaps is not so much of an issue in an independent schooling context, but in terms of a public educational context where we've got a long-established principle around merit selection and trying to have open selection processes, that may be seen as a stumbling block for the rollout of this project, this approach, on a mass scale in the public sector.

DAVID HASTIE: Yes. They're excellent questions. I might answer the second one first because I think it feeds into the first one. I am a strong believer in a free, compulsory and secular State education system. We absolutely need it. I'm a product of it, actually. The design of the NECSTEP pilot recognised the fact that we were a faith-oriented institution. It would be inappropriate for us to be the tertiary provider for the State school sector. We totally recognise that. So we've gone into a partnership with the University of New South Wales, which has agreed to be the provider for the State school hub. Now, in terms of Alphacrucis being in the driver's seat, what we envisage is a Next Step office where we direct the theory, the training, we are the provider for the independent Catholic school hubs—which now are at a huge size in this country—and we broker the relationship and the resources between University of New South Wales and State schools.

We're meeting weekly with the department—have been for three months—to flesh out what it actually looks like. The pilot for the State schools is slated to run in the Riverina—there is a group of about 10 schools in the Riverina, stretching from Albury right down the Murray—starting next year. We've built into the design the element of secular delivery. Having a GO5 university like the University of New South Wales—being able to flip its campus into the regions—actually makes it a very attractive prospect not just for students but also for parents. Parents have the decision-making in terms of where their children are going to go. It actually is a huge value proposition that will leverage this program if UNSW is the provider.

That then leads to the question of scalability. Probably the best way to envisage this in the State school context is that the State school already has regional areas. So they already have regional domains, they have particular coordinators and managers, and what I would see is each of those regional areas should establish a teaching school. So a cluster of 10 or so schools become a teaching school and the tertiary provider flips its campus onto those sites. That way you could actually scale it up right around the State. We are actively pursuing those options with the department now and, I've got to say, they're working really well with us. They've put three senior managers on the working group, which is unprecedented. They're taking it very seriously.

The question of nepotism is a good one, and it actually goes probably to a more fundamental question of diversity. If you're training people in a group, in a region, how can we be sure that they're not in some little hothouse and they don't know what's going on outside of their sphere? That's why this needs to operate at scale. You need to have at least a cluster of schools that has a combined enrolment of 3,000 to 10,000 students. Any less

than 3,000 and it gets too expensive and the diversity is too limited. In the training model, the students actually move around from school to school in the cluster and they have different training experiences in the different schools. In the three formal pracs in the Bachelor of Education and the two formal pracs in the MTeach, we require the students to do those formal pracs in school sectors totally different to their own so they get that exposure to other way of thinking, other demographics and all the rest.

Nepotism—yes, it is probably a risk everywhere. The way that you manage that is you have a clear dividing line between tertiary and school. So they have to go through a double screening process: They have to go through the school screening process, but they also have to be accepted in the tertiary provider. If that student isn't up to scratch in the tertiary sphere, they fail. There's no leaning on us to make them pass. That's why there are two directors. The regional director for the tertiary represents the interests of the tertiary and the compliance layers, and the teaching school director represents the interests of the schools. Between those two, there's often quite a bit of tension over the years, we've found. "We really want this person to go to do this prac in this school." "You can't. That's inappropriate because they have a relative at the school." Or, "We really think this person should get extra consideration for an extension for this assignment." "We've given them an extension already. They're failing." We have built some checks and balances into it, but it was a good question. As the program develops, we want to make sure that that kind of thing doesn't happen.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: If applied on a mass basis then obviously it would transform the way we recruited teachers across the sector. I think that's a really critical issue that needs to be considered.

NICK JENSEN: Could I add one element to the scalability. We've had our economists have a look at this and we think that probably up to 33 per cent nationwide of teachers could be trained this way. That would be about 80 hubs around the nation. The numbers look fantastic on that because I think there are about $1.2 billion in offsets that you could have by avoiding the wasted CSPs, the staff churn—all these things—so really optimistic offsets as part of that. But scalability wouldn't be a simple thing, as David said. Each school and each hub would have their own issues. As long as that's done well and with trust, you could ramp it out more widely.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much for a fascinating session and thanks for all the work you do. As I mentioned, my own visit to your presentation at St Philip's was invaluable and I hope do you that again for other MPs to learn in detail what you're doing, because to see the classroom practice is to be inspired by it and know that Alphacrucis is really doing good work. I'm very glad that this Committee's advocacy has been helpful to you.

DAVID HASTIE: Thank you so much and thanks for having us. Anyone is welcome to come up and visit any of our teaching school hubs at any time.

The CHAIR: Highly recommended. Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

Dr SUSAN McGRATH-CHAMP, Professor (Honorary), Work & Organisational Studies, University of Sydney Business School, Teachers' Work in Schools Research Team, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

Dr RACHEL WILSON, Associate Professor, School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Teachers' Work in Schools Research Team, sworn and examined

Dr MIHAJLA GAVIN, Senior Lecturer, Business School, University of Technology Sydney, Teachers' Work in Schools Research Team, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. It is available to your team to make a short statement at the beginning of your evidence, after which we ask questions. It looks like Dr Wilson has hands up for the statement.

RACHEL WILSON: Yes. Thank you all very much for the opportunity to make this brief presentation. No doubt you've heard quite a lot already within the inquiry about teachers' work and how that's related to the teacher shortage. I just wanted to outline what contribution in specifics that our group can add to that. We are interdisciplinary in nature, I think, and we focus on large-scale data. In fact, we are going to focus on two large studies of New South Wales teachers. I think I'd like to table this report here. I have copies prepared.

In 2018, before COVID, we ran a large-scale study of 18,000 teachers. This was followed up with a smaller questionnaire in 2020, in the first COVID lockdown. We got 14,000 responding there. So we're talking about very large numbers of New South Wales teachers. We gathered an immense amount of detail on what teachers do, how much work they are doing and how their work has changed. I think you've heard this before. They do an enormous array of activities, and they're often competing activities. They are working, according to our data, 55 hours per week on average, and the workload has increased dramatically since 2013.

More significantly, our group asked teachers how they felt about their work. We did an evaluation of all the activities that they do to work out what they felt was most important and of greatest necessity, whether things needed more time and resources or were time consuming, cumbersome, and whether the work focused on teaching and learning or on compliance. We can expand on that today. The final section of our questionnaire focused on strategies that teachers recommended and ranked in relation to addressing their high workload.

What we found was that teachers want most to preserve their professional integrity by retaining the focus they have on their core work, that's working directly with students in classrooms. They told us that to do this best they would have reduced face-to-face teaching time. Teachers in New South Wales and Australia have very high teaching hours. Reduction in that would provide more time for collaboration. They also wanted essentially an acknowledgment of their professional judgement, which would enable the elimination of small processes which are essentially unnecessary, cumbersome and time consuming. The other strategies they recommend are available within the report.

Other key findings from our group more broadly relate to how there is increasing precarity or insecurity amongst teachers. Three in 10 teachers are either casual teachers or on temporary contracts. We found a tsunami of paperwork, admin and data requirements that now require teachers to sort of triage or prioritise their work. We also, looking over policy frameworks, found a rather problematic policy environment, with policy layering, short time frames and strategies which were contrary to research evidence. Further to this and within our submission is some data showing that most teachers do not feel highly valued by the New South Wales Department of Education. They feel less valued by the Department of Education than the broader community. Our group has also done research on intake into initial teacher education and broader structural problems. I can table a report on data relating to initial teacher education here, and this one which is on temporary teachers.

We made a lot of recommendations in the submission but the two most important are these. In the short term, of course, there's a dire need for a national teacher workforce strategy for better management, not only of recruitment but placement of teachers—so distribution's important—and retention, of course. Our feeling is that this must be built around points of principle. So the strategy needs to state a commitment to teachers, with some core values as to what that would look like that are in line with research, evidence and international best practice. We can expand on that if you're interested.

In the longer term, there is a bigger challenge in terms of addressing the teacher shortage. We must acknowledge that workforce strategy alone will not fix this. Teachers' work conditions are shaped by the broader education structures. There are many of these clearly identified as highly problematic at the moment. So rising educational inequity, segregation between schools, and difficulties in supporting schools according to their needs are all very influential in terms of how teachers are attracted to the profession and work within the profession. We need to extend and improve data collection on this and on teachers and on education more broadly.

But, most importantly, we need to value teachers' judgement. Our study showed that there was a mismatch between what teachers value in their work and are most committed to doing and the data and accountability frameworks that they're subject to. That creates an uncomfortableness in schools, which is at the core of the problems of workload and attraction to the profession. We need to align systems with teacher professional values. We look forward to any of your questions.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Thank you very much for your comprehensive submission and for coming along today and giving evidence. We've heard quite a lot in this inquiry so far about the impact of not just a lack of standing or respect for teachers but also a loss of autonomy. I think those things go hand in hand. That's been refuted by some of the submissions. I'd be interested in understanding more about how we measure whether that sort of feeling of not being valued in the community is actually contributing to people leaving the profession or not wanting to start in the profession to begin with. Do you have any data that backs that up?

RACHEL WILSON: We do. I'll answer first. As I mentioned, our data on what teachers do showed very clearly that they are oriented to particular educational goals. They are primarily oriented to working with students towards equity. This is reflected in the fact that they focus mostly on lesson planning and differentiation, providing additional supports, getting to know students on a personal basis. Those are the sorts of activities that promote equity. However, the teachers pointed out to us that these activities, which they value the most, are not built within the data and accountabilities system. A lot of the framework for measurement in Australian schools is oriented to literacy and numeracy data et cetera et cetera.

In fact, if you go to look at how that is monitored and reported at a national and New South Wales State level, you'll see that there's actually relatively little attention to equity, even though that's the number one teacher goal and it's our number one national goal. This disconnect and misalignment in the system I feel is at the heart of the uncomfortableness that teachers feel in their current work. It may also be at the heart of the difficulty in gaining respect within the community and attracting teachers to the profession. The profession is clear on what it pursues, but the system does not seem to be pursuing the same things. Despite the fact we have these national goals, the Mparntwe statement, which all Ministers have signed on to, there's very little within the system architecture that actually pursues those goals. I found gaping holes in how policies align.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Just teasing that out then a little bit—in terms of not feeling valued, are you saying then that if a teacher is valuing their own performance against measures of improving equity, but they are then getting measured from an official performance kind of appraisal perspective on things like literacy and maths—

RACHEL WILSON: Yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: —that is where that feeling of not being valued comes from?

RACHEL WILSON: Yes. I think they are working very hard but on things that they actually don't get recognition for. I think the broader community of parents and carers are given mixed messages on what Australian education is moving towards and aiming for. That creates problems with esteem for the profession. As I've said, I think within the profession they are quite clear on their goals and motivations. But the question is whether we are supporting them in pursuing those through policy frameworks—in particular, the data framework, the national data framework and State initiatives with data.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: When we talk about levels of burnout and stress in the profession, can you give the Committee any insight on what the major—obviously the status of someone's mental health is complex and is going to be impacted by a number of things, but what is it primarily? Is it low pay, is it not just too much workload but too much administrative workload, is it a feeling of not being respected? What are the main components do you think that are coming into that sort of burnout?

RACHEL WILSON: I think Susan or Mihajla can add to it but it's clear to me that there is research evidence supporting increased pay for teachers. That is an issue particularly in relation to cost of living in recent times in Australia. I think there are broader issues in relation to pursuing work which is not recognised and there is a whole raft of work conditions which are elaborated on in our report, which don't provide support. Indeed, there has been removal of a lot of educational supports for schools over the last two decades.

MIHAJLA GAVIN: Just to add to what Rachel has said, in addition to the complex variation of factors which come into these issues of stress and burnout for teachers, I think at the heart of it as well is teachers not valuing what they consider to be low-value administrative tasks, and teachers wanting to retain that core focus on teaching and learning at the end of the day, of being an educator compared to administration, documentation, compliance reporting. Teachers are saying, "What is the purpose of this? This is crowding out our core work of being a teacher." There is very strong evidence of that in the report that we've tabled. The 2018 study of over 18,000 teachers says that what we consider to be administration is not helping the system, it is not helping us as

teachers and is crowding out our core work of being an educator at the end of the day. It's something that is taking up far too much of our work but is something that we do not value at all.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: It's busy work; it's pointless work?

MIHAJLA GAVIN: Essentially.

RACHEL WILSON: And they get the job satisfaction from working directly with students. So when they are pulled away from that, that reduces the satisfaction which will offset any stresses.

SUSAN McGRATH-CHAMP: May I also make a comment there. That is that alongside or as part of the points that Rachel and Mihajla have made is the sheer quantum of hours. A classroom teacher is completing more than 55 hours. It is 55 reported at the time when we did the survey in 2018. The observation generally is it has increased since then and particularly during the COVID period. These are very big hours. If we are looking at what contributes to burnout, it is just simply the sheer investment of time. It is not just days, of course; it is nights and weekends, and there is no let up. The notion is that there is a term break but the completion of work continues during that time, commonly a bit of time to just recover—literally physically, emotionally recover—and then into preparation for the next period or working on things that need to be followed up from the previous term, the term that has just ended. Our study and our report provides great detail on hours worked across different categories of teacher and school teaching staff actually in the school hours and at home hours. That is 44 hours per week in the school and 11 hours per week at home and about 10 hours-plus per week or more during—I will call them "term breaks"; they are not holidays for teachers.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I have one final question and then I will hand back to my colleagues. We have heard a lot about the idea that a lack of career progression is what is stopping teachers from staying in the profession or joining the profession, particularly this highly accomplished lead teacher program and the idea that you get paid more once you've got to a certain stage. What's your opinion on that based on your research?

RACHEL WILSON: It's very clear within the research evidence, actually the pay gradient is a stronger factor for teacher productivity and attraction to the profession. It has been noted that Australia sits relatively comfortably in terms of graduate teacher salaries. Although that data is a little bit old and I think the cost of living changes in recent years, particularly in relation to metropolitan centres, that means that still remains an issue. But the gradient is stronger and there is an international report by Akiba, which I can pass on, which makes that very, very clear. I think, Mihajla, you might want to comment on early career teachers and what we have found there in relation to not pay but the insecurity in their initial employment, which is a very significant factor.

MIHAJLA GAVIN: I'm very happy to, if you would like to hear that at the moment. I am happy to talk about some salaries as well in a bit more detail if that is helpful to the Committee. Particularly with respect to temporary teachers, there are two particular papers that we have published and those are available in the submission. I think we have tabled one of them but we can provide a copy of the other as well. The experience of temporary teachers in the profession—you would assume that temporary or casual is the same; it is actually not. What we have actually found in the data is that if you are a—we have a lot of young teachers working in very precarious, temporary fixed-term contract. There is also a gender dimension to that. We have more female teachers than male teachers who are temporary teachers. We have more female than male temporary teachers who are in that position for a longer period of time and it is more challenging for them to move into secure, permanent, ongoing positions within the education system. It actually takes longer for them to gain that permanent status within the education system.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Just to clarify, when you say more you mean more as a percentage?

MIHAJLA GAVIN: As a percentage, that's right. We have actually seen over the last 20 years, the number as a proportion compared to temporary versus permanent, the percentage of temporary positions has increased within the system so the figures—there needs to be a bit more clarification around the figures. There is around about 20 per cent to 30 per cent temporary teachers within the system. The temporary category is a fairly new category, in the sense that it came about in 2001. It has only been around for about 20 years within the New South Wales education system but there has been that increase in temporary appointments within that system over that time and particularly since 2010. That's a key point in time where two key things happened: We saw the introduction over the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy within New South Wales, which provided more flexibility, particular around staffing as well as budgeting; plus we also saw changes to the staffing agreement, which determines the allocation of teachers within the education system. Basically what that meant was that, prior to that, we had a very centralised system in terms of appointing teachers to different parts of the State. That was decentralised, to an extent, such that school principals now effectively had greater local choice. They could now choose every second appointment coming into their schools.

I was also going to make a point with respect to salaries, in particular. Something that I think also feeds into that conversation around progression, as Rachel has said, is that salaries for teachers—we've had the salaries cap on teachers' wages and on public sector workers in New South Wales for about the last 10 years or so. If teachers want to be getting a higher rate above the 2.5 per cent, they need to start to trade off working conditions. The capacity to argue work value cases before the Industrial Relations Commission doesn't necessarily exist for teachers anymore. Once upon a time, teachers could actually get up and say, "This is the quantum of our work. This is the complexity of our work. This is how our work has changed and expanded." There's not that capacity to do so. The capacity to actually seek that higher rate of pay also feeds into that conversation around career progression as well.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thanks very much. That was a great—

SUSAN McGRATH-CHAMP: Could I add just one or two comments in regard to the temporary part?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Please.

SUSAN McGRATH-CHAMP: I just wanted to add to what Mihajla has said. When the temporary category of employment was introduced—it's a label given to fixed term—it was introduced, indeed, to deal with a growing problem of casual work. Casual is very, very precarious, and temporary was introduced and intended at the time, 20 years ago, to give teachers greater security, if only limited. A fixed term contract, say, for a term or for two days over a whole year is a bit better than casual. What it has evolved into, though, is an additional form of work that is insecure, precarious and which is being deployed, it appears, from what our analysis and observations of the system are, as a conduit for flexibility. A principal may wish to hire and may have a position—a situation—where they can hire another staff member, put them on permanent, if it's a local-choice arrangement, or temporary. Next year I might not have the same enrolments; the enrolments might go down. If I put them on permanent, I'm stuck. So they go on fixed term.

Programs of funding that are of a finite life—some forms of equity funding are a year or two years so teachers are appointed on a fixed term. This rests unduly heavily on the early career teachers. Enormous proportions of them are on these precarious employment arrangements at, specifically, a point in their life cycle where they need to be able to get a bank loan, pay a mortgage and establish themselves in life and in family. An ongoing series of contracts, never knowing what's coming next—and teachers have reported very clearly in the qualitative comments, some of which are in the submission and the report, that the fixed term temporary teachers often work as hard or harder than permanent teachers, and permanent teachers have said that too. They are actually exploited—I'll use that word quite bluntly—deliberately or otherwise by, "Well, you know, I have to work harder to hope that I can get a renewal of contract or another contract next term or next year." Tasks are actually shifted to temporary teachers because, "I'm a permanent teacher." This isn't a deliberate thing but just the way in which—I don't believe it to be deliberate—the dynamic can sometimes play out in this current, fairly precarious employment world.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thanks very much, Dr McGrath-Champ. That was very helpful in terms of exactly where I wanted to ask my next questions. We've seen this unique opportunity for additional education funding with what's colloquially known as the Gonski funding coming into schools. But at the same time we've actually seen a huge explosion in the temporary employment in schools instead of that traditional view that you start out as a teacher, you might do a bit of casual work until you manage to find yourself a permanent role, and that's okay because it won't be for too long. But what we've actually seen now with all of this funding coming into schools and the lack of certainty around it is this explosion of temporary employment. Would you agree with that analysis?

RACHEL WILSON: I think it definitely has played into it. Unfortunately, it's played into it with the new-career teachers. That's where, despite a relatively reasonable starting salary, having precarious employment at the beginning of a career in a profession has caused a problem in perhaps retaining early career teachers and, indeed, attracting others into training. But what we know about the Gonski funding is that it really hasn't been exercised as it was intended and planned. We know that there remains inequitable funding across schools in New South Wales and Australia more broadly. We also know that staffing allocations—and, indeed, student-to-teacher ratios—are enormously varied across sectors and schools. My thought here is that this is a broad management problem for the education system. It harks centrally from the fact that we do not have adequate data on our teacher workforce. We do not have adequate data even in the Australian Teacher Workforce Data set. We're basically operating in the dark in terms of what specialisms teachers have, where they are and how they're allocated.

Gonski might have created a little bit of a free-for-all where some schools got lucky, got extra pots of money and hired extra teachers, but that may have actually just complicated and added to the problem of inequity across schools. If we look at international research for best practice and effective teacher policies—I refer you to

the OECD report on *Effective Teacher Policies*—it is very clear that Australia, and perhaps New South Wales as a jurisdiction, are the sore thumb internationally. We send our brightest, most experienced teachers to our most advantaged schools. That's completely contrary to international best practice. We are the only wealthy nation in the OECD report to do that consistently.

We have more science teachers and mathematics teachers with specialist training in advantaged schools than disadvantaged schools—also uniquely an outlier internationally in that respect. Not only that but we have lower student-to-teacher ratios in the most advantaged schools. It is just so baffling that we have not pursued what's well-established education orthodoxy. You cannot have excellence without equity, and here we are with policies that are actually encouraging inequity. We're not monitoring it adequately within the teacher workforce or elsewhere in education.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, that's really interesting, Dr Wilson. In a package that was really designed to address inequity in the education system we've essentially exacerbated the problems that our schools are facing.

RACHEL WILSON: I said in the introduction that one of our key recommendations is, of course, that we need a national strategy. I understand there are good efforts towards collaboration for that with all the States. But I think before we get to any strategy on how to recruit more teachers, what to do on the initial teacher education et cetera, we need to be clear on what we want as a country. What are the points of principle in terms of how we value teachers and where we're going to place them? Are we really going to pursue equity there?

There are some researchers and commentators who were explaining this last week that in some ways we don't have a teacher shortage; we have a teacher allocation problem. We've had growth in teacher numbers; we've had reductions in student-to-teacher ratios in some types of schools, and they are typically more advantaged schools. How are we going to address that as an issue and work towards a more equitable allocation of teachers? Before the recruitment strategy, we need to work out what exactly it is that we want, and I think there's plenty of international evidence to guide us in that process. But we need to make a clear statement on how we value teachers, how we want them allocated and what sort of work conditions we're going to aim for.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: That's really helpful, thank you. I want to go to another part of your submission where you talk about the fact that—your research commenced before COVID, if we can remember a time. It shows that is not something that has just happened because it has been a really difficult couple of years and it has been a real challenge. Actually, this is a slow-burning problem. Dr Gavin talked about the introduction of Local Schools, Local Decisions in 2011 by the then Liberal-Nationals Government. That was, again, a key contributor to cutting those key supports out from within the department and putting more pressure on individual teachers.

I was interested to see that your figures show—the common misconception from a lot of parents is that you see the school hours and you think it's nine to three. But your research actually shows that they're working—I worked it out. The average teacher is working nearly nine hours a day at school and additional hours at home, and that just seems to increase the further you go up, whether you're a DP or a principal. How much of this do you think is related to workload? That was certainly something that came through really strongly in our survey that we opened as part of our parliamentary inquiry.

RACHEL WILSON: Susan, would you like to step in there?

SUSAN McGRATH-CHAMP: Yes. The 18,500 teachers that responded to our 2018 survey, and the 14,000 in 2020, attributed the hours and workload—they are companions. They are dual components. The long hours they're working are because of the demands that are placed upon them towards their students and the substantive, most important work of teaching, of being there with the students and developing and expanding knowledge. But all of the humungous load that accompanies that, particularly the compliance and administration components, were what teachers most strongly pointed to as having, if I can use the phrase, caused an explosion of working hours and workload. The administrative and compliance demands actually are threatening—we would go so far as to say no longer just threatening but actually intruding significantly on—the capacity to teach and to do the thing that teachers are most needed to do. There is also expansion. With many societal issues, that has added to the work of teachers. It's almost escalating and unbounded. It is many, many years since an earlier researcher, Professor Raewyn Connell, started out trying to count what it is that a teacher does. She got to over 70 activities and was still counting and stopped because you just can't—that was in the 1970s.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: A lot of the issues that you've raised have been about the culture in schools and the need for even some of those unnecessary administrative burdens. The previous witnesses raised the idea of an MBA specific in education, really designed at training our principals because they're playing such a crucial leadership role. Do you have, just briefly, any responses to that idea?

RACHEL WILSON: Yes. Look, in our earlier studies—and we did interviews with principals and followed up and analysed the questionnaire data for them—it was evident that many teachers felt they hadn't been adequately prepared for some of the roles that were foisted on them, particularly with the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy. But if we look across the strategies that teachers ranked in terms of addressing their workload, that sort of professional learning for leaders didn't rank highly. I could direct you to the report conclusions. I seem to have lost my copy. They were not crying out for additional teaching assistance or things like that, and that was because their primary focus is in retaining their attention on the core work.

This goes to your previous question on workload. The new activities have created the workload issue. Some of them are compliance, but some of them are just data collection. But they really pervade into classroom time. Because that happens, the teachers were essentially saying to us that, in many cases, they shoulder the burden of those new activities through longer work hours so that they can still do the stuff in their core job. It is that additional stuff that has extended their workload. For that reason, they put as their number one strategy "more time to collaborate, to focus and lift the quality of the classroom time". Unfortunately, that was mistaken in some policy circles as a call for more lesson plans. They didn't ask for that; in fact, that was the last thing teachers wanted. What they want is space and time for their work, more than anything else.

SUSAN McGRATH-CHAMP: As a footnote to that, I'd like to say that we need to be very careful when we take a microscopic look at teachers' work and start reconsidering that. We must be very careful not to go down the path of deskilling.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: To be clear, that was actually for principals. It wasn't for teachers. Anyway, I have taken up enough of your time. Thank you very much.

MIHAJLA GAVIN: Can I add briefly about the principals in particular? I think some of the seeds of this also started when Local Schools was introduced back in 2011. I did a study particularly on the piloting of this particular initiative of 47 schools, and the evidence coming from there was that a lot of the pressure was put onto principals. Principals enjoyed the fact that they had more autonomy and more authority around staffing responsibilities and also finances, so they could now control up to 70 per cent of the education budget, compared to 10 per cent some years earlier. But with that came a lot of compliance, a lot of responsibility and a lot of workload as well.

They were saying how their role had become a lot more managerial. In terms of the local choice arrangement for staffing, what would take one day to allocate a teacher to their school now takes a month or two, for example. There were also principals reporting that they needed to hire a business manager now. They had a lack of support from the department in terms of training around accounting and finance and budgeting and things like that, so they felt like they didn't have the skills that they needed within that. That might speak a bit to your question as well.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Absolutely, thank you.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: There is national anxiety about declining results on international assessments. The policy response has been to look to teacher quality and there's a real narrative, which I know you touch on in your submission, around accountability and that process of trying to work out what can be done to improve the results, obviously focussing on teachers. That's adding to the impost around data collection so that policymakers have a better line of sight of what's going on in schools to try and address this problem.

I wonder whether you might offer some comment about this accountability narrative that really seems to be leading to the work intensification? A sort of secondary question is in terms of the data collection processes—Check-in, PLAN2, NCCD, learning and support plans, and then there's the whole accreditation process which also feeds into this expectation around raising teacher quality and satisfying policymakers that the teacher quality issue is being addressed. I invite the panel to make some comments about that aspect.

RACHEL WILSON: Yes. Well, I think you've provided a good starting list on all the policy initiatives that teachers have been subjected to. From my perspective as a researcher, what I've observed over the last decade is increasing accountability frameworks for teachers and that involves minutiae and data work and administration. However, in relation to the broad educational challenges we're facing in terms of some declines in various indicators, I don't see that a pursuit of that line as coming to a productive end, essentially. I would argue that we're not collecting the right sort of data. We're certainly not collecting data that's aligned to our national goals that we've signed up to, which is excellence and equity first, but then confident and creative learners, lifelong learners—we need attitudes of learning for that—and active citizens.

So, from my mind, we're pursuing the wrong things. We're creating a lot of work for teachers and they feel uncomfortable with it because it doesn't go to their central professional values. And what I've also observed is a lack of upward accountability frameworks. So we have the downward ones and, indeed, people have claimed

that a lot of our educational woes are due to a teacher problem. Well, as I'm deeply familiar with all the data, I would beg to differ. A lot of our educational woes are to do with a lack of upward accountability, poor transparency and reporting against our national goals. I could cite many, many examples of this, but the first and foremost being in the national report on schooling. In the preamble it says it's going to look at equity and all the national goals. In the following pages they do not get there. They have footnote after footnote explaining that equity has to be looked at on the online data set. Well, if we really value it, surely we should be facing and indeed being very open and transparent on reporting educational data.

Attention to those things is really what's required to turn the education system around. We can't hope to have teachers distributed equitably or indeed, in relation to international best practice, have more teachers and the very best teachers in the most disadvantaged schools because we know that will give us the best return. We can't hope to do that if we don't have adequate data on teacher specialism and teacher geolocation, and we need annual reporting to say how we are going on that. So the accountability frameworks as they've been experienced in the last decade, I believe, have been mostly counterproductive. In our data it was super clear that teachers felt very uncomfortable with those frameworks and they felt, essentially, it was a waste of their time.

SUSAN McGRATH-CHAMP: In addition, I'd just like to add that attention to teacher quality, we need quality teachers, but there is also the issue of responsiblisation—holding a sense that it's the quality of teachers that is almost the sole or exclusive cause of declines in performance rankings. Now, the education system in Australia and in New South Wales is hugely complex, and that's nothing new to anyone in this room. To then allow, kind of, the beacon to point in one direction to just teachers and the so-called quality of those individuals, responsiblisation making it the individual's doing, fault, cause, that accounts for performance in international rankings. It could be reversed and say we need a policy quality index. What is the index of quality around the policies or around the system delivery or around other components of the very complex educational fabric that exists? When that is all really topnotch, along with top-quality teachers, then we might see some shift upwards instead of downwards in our rankings.

The CHAIR: But when you see teachers teaching away from the evidence base in classroom practice, what are you supposed to conclude?

RACHEL WILSON: Well, we do see that, but we don't have any comprehensive data on it, right. But if you look at the—

The CHAIR: Isn't the big fad that's emerged in teaching in recent times teachers as facilitators? The students are supposed to be self-starting learners, which is normally code for one kid in the group of four does all the work and they get it from the internet and a lot of it's rubbish, while the teacher walks around so-called facilitating instead of giving direct, explicit instructions. Isn't that a major problem?

RACHEL WILSON: There is no doubt that there is still a job to do there. There is no doubt at all.

The CHAIR: The trend is getting worse.

RACHEL WILSON: But what we're saying is that those challenges have been made more difficult, given the workload arrangements. Then if we look at the higher echelons of the education system, at a system level where accountability resides as well, and there is a commitment to it in the Mparntwe statement. It provides a rationale for teacher accountability but also system accountability. If we look at how the system has been operating that way and we review the OECD report on effective teacher policies, you can see that we're not complying with the international best practice. You can see the high-achieving countries are highly strategic. To quote this report:

> A high-quality teaching force is the result of deliberate policy choices, carefully implemented over time.

Now, from my observations over a career, I would have to say we have not been implementing careful choices. We haven't had a national recruitment and teacher workforce strategy and we don't have an open, transparent and well-reported data set on teachers. And that's not to mention the broader educational challenges we face, given that we've not be addressing our goals with appropriate data and monitoring. That is the framework of Australian education at the moment, and New South Wales is no different. It sticks out so obviously to me, and in fact I could table this report—I've got an additional copy here. I think it will provide very, very enlightening reading for the panel. Any country that wants to do well in education must strategise to send more teachers to the disadvantaged schools, to send their best teachers to the disadvantaged schools, to send the most specialised teachers to the disadvantaged schools, and we are doing the exact opposite.

The CHAIR: We could debate that extensively but we've run out of time. I will call the session to a close. I thank Drs McGrath-Champ, Wilson and Gavin for your participation and your submission and all the extensive documents you've tabled as well to inform the Committee.

CORRECTED

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Ms MARGARET SHEPHERD, President, Science Teachers Association of NSW, sworn and examined

Ms IRENA TASEVSKA, Executive Officer, Science Teachers Association of NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome Irena Tasevska and Margaret Shepherd from the Science Teachers Association. I also thank you for last week's science in the Parliament session in the Jubilee Room. For those of us who got there, it was fantastic. I haven't been that interested in science for about 40 years, listening to the students from Macquarie Fields High School. I passed on to my daughter the possibilities of investigative science, which sounds fascinating, so thanks for the work you did and thanks for the submission and attendance today. It's available to you to make a short opening statement. The Committee obviously is very interested in what we can do to increase the number of in-field science teachers in New South Wales.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Great. I've made a few points in this opening remark that are different to the report we submitted just to strengthen that information a little bit. We welcome the opportunity today to be the voice for our members and the community. Our think tank that we have to gather all this information has been working hard to share their ideas with us. Teacher shortages are not a new issue. In our submission, you will have seen this data and you will have seen commentary that the workloads and administration have increased and, in fact, become unmanageable.

What exactly does this mean for a science teacher? One of our science teachers developed a bit of an image to map out their week. This teacher indicated 53 hours per week in the classroom, of which 38 is face-to-face teaching, 25 per cent is lesson prep and programming, 11 per cent goes to assessment and marking—which has increased dramatically, I might add, since 2001; I can elaborate on that later—and 26 per cent goes to admin and other duties, which include paperwork, playground duties, homework club, restorative issues with children, behaviour management and NCCD data collection, which is mandated. It's a Federal Government funding requirement. In one systemic Catholic school—I grabbed some data yesterday—the workload has increased and grown quite exponentially due to increased numbers, more recently, of special needs students. This school has got 125 students out of about 1,000. The EAL/D priority and refugee students—they've got 50 students in the school. That's a lot of time extra required over and above the normal classroom preparation—as well as life skills and gifted.

This demonstrates that more than one-quarter of the teacher's time is spent on duties that don't need to be performed by them. They could be performed by administration and/or other admin staff. But on top of all of that, science teachers have extra. They have exacerbated workload because of the 50 per cent practical work that is mandated. Out of every two lessons, one lesson has to be an experiment or some work in the lab. Without access to a lab tech, as is the case in many schools, that means the teacher has to do the preparation and the gathering of all the equipment. I'd hate to be a chemistry teacher, trying to prepare all the chemicals and the risk assessment, get everything organised, unpack, put it away, make sure you've got the compliance and chemical safety and data done as well. Not having appropriate lab tech support is a significant issue for being able to be a great science teacher.

On top of that you add other ad hoc duties. These are specific projects. Every year we have science week and teachers love science week because it's an opportunity for students to engage in science outside the classroom. That's a week of activities. They've got to prepare all those. Student research projects—they require inordinate time getting the equipment ready for the students so that they can do it in their own time, mentoring the students outside class time et cetera. The Young Scientist Program—if schools want to submit projects into State awards, that takes more time. If you want to have excursions or incursions at school, that takes more time. Some competitions that they go in—so Big Science, crystal growing, titration competitions—they take before school, after school and lunchtimes. This work is vital and we must have that part of the school day-to-day life to encourage students' passion in science.

The one thing that we sometimes leave out of this discussion is the emotional impact on teachers. They're dealing with a modern day crisis of student wellbeing and we have to take that into account. You can't have a teacher go into a classroom, dealing with the myriad issues that they have, and then walk out and be normal and say, "I'm going to do my planning now." They are going to have to take some time to gather their sense of being and their drive again after they've had that emotional stress. Teaching is not just a case of being in the classroom. It involves children. It involves building relationships and that is getting harder and harder given the student wellbeing challenges that we are having now.

Now, what's happening next year? We've just had COVID. We've had lockdowns. We've had online lessons. That's right, next year we're getting a new syllabus! We're so excited. That means we have to now find the time to do all this programming and all this preparation for a new syllabus. We said this before: The four-year plan to introduce a new syllabus was far too short. That was before COVID, and we say it again. We need the

10-year plan that Geoff Masters recommended. All of those issues are building and building in the public arena. How do we address this impact on teacher shortage? There's no simple—we don't have "an" answer. Certainly, higher pay is one factor but it's not a solution on its own.

We need our policymakers to develop a comprehensive plan that focuses on attracting and retaining teachers and letting teachers spend their time on what they are trained to do. Workload and admin duties are a significant driver of staff shortages. If you go through all of the list, you'll be able to take every point that we put in our submission back to that increased workload. Add that to the feeling of being undervalued because of the ongoing wages issue disputes that are constantly in the media. The negative media impact about teachers needing to improve—constantly being bombarded. It has to stop. For science teachers, the constant pressure is also there to get more band 6s. Band 6s are not meant to be compared. A band 6 grade in one subject cannot be compared to a band 6 in another. They are totally different and yet every single year we have it in the media: "Here's the number of band 6s this school got," and "Where are the science band 6s?"

Every year the teachers cry because they're working so hard to help their students and then music gets 25 per cent band 6s and science gets 5 per cent. There's no comparison, but the media thinks there is. This is a huge downside that's been neglected now for a long time. We've been trying to discuss this inequity with NESA for years. The answer is the ATAR fixes that gap because then the sciences are scaled differently. But in the meantime, in the short term, what's happening is teachers are leaving teaching. They don't want to have to go every year to have a meeting with the principal who says, "Well, where are your band 6s? Why haven't you got more band 6s? They're getting band 6s in this subject. Why can't they get them in yours?" It's not about teacher quality. You can't compare one band 6 to another. This is putting pressure on the teachers who are already in the system. They are leaving. Add that to the new teachers coming through. They see this happening and then they won't want to be part of the story either. So this is draining the teachers. We can't have that anymore. Experienced teachers—

The CHAIR: I am sorry, Margaret, it needs to be a short statement.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Sorry. I've nearly finished.

The CHAIR: We've only got 10 or 15 minutes left and many of the Committee will be wanting to ask questions.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: All right. No problems. I'm sorry. I'll give you a copy of that document anyway.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Thanks for your attendance today. In your recommendations at the end of your submission you talk about significant reform focused on reducing administration workloads of teachers. Can you be specific? What kind of things could we take out in terms of the work? I mean, you mentioned the NCCD that serves a certain purpose in terms of trying to channel funding to those students who need it most. What kind of administrative workload elements specifically could we look to address?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: One of the—or many, actually. We've got Homework Club in most schools that has to be covered by teaching staff. There's one area. Who could do that? Somebody else that's not a teacher or pay someone to do it. We've got compliance issues that need to be addressed, so NESA requirements as well as system requirements as well as the NCCD. We've got the enormous data that needs to be collected from assessments. A lot of research was done by a number of researchers to say, "You need to gather data from assessment to help students improve in their practice." I have seen teachers have these massive Excel documents where the teachers have mapped out every single component of the assessment and worked out who's doing well in this area and who's not doing well in that area. It took them hours and hours to do it, and it's great. It's wonderful. It's just what we want for our students, but where is the time to do it? They teach five classes a week.

They get one period a day to do this other stuff. In that period, it may not be—they may have six periods Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. They don't get their periods off until Thursday and Friday. So all of this good assessment work that they're doing to help improve student results is happening at night-time. It's not happening in the daytime. Now, we don't want that to stop. We want the teachers to do that still. That is really important. So, do we take one class away from them? Instead of having five classes, do they have four? Give them four classes instead of five, they're going to have six periods extra a week to do their work at school, not have to take it home.

Not only is the data analysis huge, they also have, since 2001, increased the requirements of doing assessment because of standards referenced assessments. In standards reference assessment, before that, you would write an answer, you get a tick; one mark, good; tick, two marks, three marks—you add it up and it's done. But now they have to do a page or a page and a half standards reference assessment criteria. Then they have to

mark the assessment holistically so they get a mark out of five and they've got to work out where that mark fits, or out of nine where does that fit against the criteria?

The time to mark has doubled, if not tripled. Imagine the schools who've got 240 students in a school. For example, our science research projects, of which I have a copy here, this is a massive project that the students do. That has to be marked holistically. You can't mark that in five minutes. That takes an hour per student and if your job is to mark all of year 10 or all of year 9 because you distribute the marking as best you can—so you don't have a teacher marking their own class because then you get all sorts of other issues arising—how does that work? There's just not enough hours in a day to do what they need to do, so we need to look at how many classes the teachers are taking. Then of course with science you add the preparation for experiments and you've got—we always say to the teachers, "Do the experiment before you have to do it in class." When?

The maths just doesn't add up. If you're a teacher in this situation year after year after year—and then on top of that you get lambasted because you're not getting the number of band 6s. I can understand why they're leaving and why the new ones coming in are leaving. Look, people don't go into teaching for the money. Let's be honest. They don't go into the profession because they want something out of it. They become a teacher because they love kids. They want to be a teacher. That passion is there. We see it every day. We see it in our teachers.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I just want to ask one other question. The Minister has announced that they are going to look to provide support in terms of data entry, so non-teaching staff do data entry and I think there may have been a suggestion that they might also do marking as well or having student teachers do marking. I think there was some suggestion around that. Is that a practical solution? Will that work?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Data entry still needs to be double-checked, so no. Data entry in a way is useful because, as you do it, you see trends. You see, "Oh, why did so-and-so get that? What's going on with so-and-so?" So, data entry, maybe not. Non-teachers marking? Problematic. I don't think that's going to solve the problem in the short term or the long term, for that matter. It might help out, sorry, in the short term—give teachers a bit of a breathing space—but teachers need to get a feel for what their students are doing and often marking is how you do that.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thank you so much for your submission and for your very extensive introduction. We can hear the passion in your voice. The one question I want to ask you is, obviously we know that there are huge shortages in terms of our STEM teachers. What's the impact on a student if they have been taught science by a teacher who is not trained in science?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: That's a good question. If they're trained by a teacher who is not science qualified, they won't necessarily come out with an understanding of science. They may know the facts. They may be able to quote the particle theory. They may be able to quote Newton's law, but they won't be able to relate it or apply it to the bigger picture of science—the nature and practice of science. It takes much more knowledge for the teacher to build those ideas together for the students than someone who is not qualified. I'm not a physics teacher, for example. If I went in to teach physics, I could teach them but I'd be missing all of those other little special facts that go into help students build an understanding of the science. So, long term, it's problematic.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: And probably lacking that passion that then inspires the passion in students as well. Right?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Oh yes, yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: So that would have a direct result on their ability to perform at these higher levels that we want them to be able to do?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: If they're not getting that holistic understanding, then it's going to be impacting on them. I take on board your points about band 6s and the like. We want our students to do well, but the way for them to do well is to be taught by a trained science teacher. Would you agree?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes, and we have a lot of out-of-field teachers now and, as our data showed, a lot of brand new teachers, which is wonderful. We love new teachers but they require mentoring. The staff room that I've been going into recently, I never see any staff in there because they're always in the classroom, so how can they mentor someone when they've got no time?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I said I had one question. Of course I have always got more than one. You talk about mentoring and providing that support. A lot of the schools that we have talked to, what we colloquially call best practice schools, they provide really intensive mentoring, especially for that first year out. It

strikes me that teaching is one of the few professions where we say, "Okay, you've got your university degree" and—

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Off you go.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: —we shut you in an office or we shut you in a classroom and say, "We'll leave you to your own devices." What capacity do existing science teachers have to be providing that support?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Out of the goodness of their hearts, in whatever minutes they can grab between walking from one class to another. Driving to and from school on the telephone. Not much time left. Very limited.

The CHAIR: Finally, how do we get more in-field science teachers? One suggestion is the payment of bonuses through the ITE process. Is that feasible and how much would the bonus be?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: To work in a staff room, a staff room has science, maths, English—most schools have everybody in there together. How do you say to one teacher that you're worth more than another, so we'll give you more money than another teacher?

The CHAIR: Because that teacher is more desperately needed to have the expertise in the field of science along with maths.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Then pay all teachers more. Pay all teachers more. That's all. Pay every teacher more money.

The CHAIR: Yes, but that won't change the distribution of expertise as they go through ITE.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes, it will because if the teachers get more money and are publicly acknowledged as having more worth—we're taking a battering. Teachers are taking a battering. Rachel said it earlier: What are teachers worth these days? We are a public football to be kicked around. That's what it feels like. So if someone says, "Teachers are worth their weight in gold, regardless of the subject area they teach in," you will get the students who want to be teachers applying for ITE. Whether that's English, history, maths, French, whatever subject—TAS—because they are comparable to being a non-teacher, to being in industry. If you get them all, you will get good people applying. So money is an issue. But their public worth and what people say about teachers in public is what's going to be the most important—for people to appreciate what teachers have to do every day. And when COVID was on, I think some people got a better understanding, but I think that's slipped already.

The CHAIR: Yes. This is confronting, but I've got to say there's a lot of feedback—and it's not hard to understand—in the public arena where people say that teachers get 12 weeks' holiday a year and they work nine to three. From the evidence we're heard, obviously teachers are working well outside those parameters. Wouldn't it be better to formalise an arrangement where we say teachers get four weeks of holiday a year like everyone else and the other eight weeks are pupil-free lesson preparation and the like and that teachers work eight to five. They're the work hours. Wouldn't that build a better public understanding of the workload?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: That perception of "holiday" has to stop. There's one classic example. Teachers work during those two weeks.

The CHAIR: That's what I'm saying. Like in politics, we'd like a better public reputation too but perception matters.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: It does.

The CHAIR: If you say this job has 12 weeks of holiday, people say, "That's pretty cushy. We'd all like that." Haven't we got to change the formal definition of the holiday time and the work day to match up to modern professional standards?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: We can very easily fix that and say it's not a holiday time, it's a pupil-free time; instead of saying to people teachers are going on holidays.

The CHAIR: Where's that being said, though, other than here and through your advocacy? Where is that being said? Shouldn't the Government define it differently?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: That would be great if the Government said your time off class is—but we don't want it mandated. We don't want it in the—

The CHAIR: No, hang on. You can't say it and then not do it. It has to be mandated, obviously, with accountability for working those hours.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes. The teachers are using this time off for marking and for planning. That's what's happening now. And for PD in some cases. I know one of our conferences is on three days in the July school holidays, and many teachers go to that. So it does happen. But if you have a teacher who is really, really under the pump because they've got two or three classes that are really hard going in terms of behaviour management, the end of the term comes and they're drained. So they may need some days or a week just to lie on the lounge and get their sense of self back again. So what do you say to that person if we say, "You have to work during the holidays"? We just want it recognised that teachers do work in those student-free times. Because you have to account for that emotional drain on people.

The CHAIR: You also have to account for being at work, don't you?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes. I don't understand your meaning. Sorry.

The CHAIR: Well, you can't just have rules where for eight weeks of the year, notionally, voluntarily, teachers are doing pupil-free work without actually turning up to the workplace and being accounted for in that role. I would match this up with significant pay increases, but I'm just saying that teaching has an enormous public perception problem. A lot of people say—and they look at the official way in which it's done—this is a job that has 12 weeks' holiday a year, eight more than the normal standard, and they work nine till three. That's a perception that all of us need to overcome. I think to formalise it, matching it with pay increases would be the best way of doing that. But you can't make it voluntary. You can't have a job where people don't turn up to the workplace.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: You could have work from home, definitely, during those off-school times. That would be perfectly fine. And not one teacher I know works from nine to three, so where does that dialogue come? That's a student day. Teachers are eight till five normally.

The CHAIR: Sure, but this is what significant parts of the public say.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: So whose job is it to change that dialogue?

The CHAIR: I think the Government and the teaching profession should get together—

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes, and we do.

The CHAIR: —and negotiate a different deal—

MARGARET SHEPHERD: I'd love to do that.

The CHAIR: —where there's realistic hours where you do turn up to work with realistic pay.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes.

The CHAIR: That would be my solution.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Yes.

The CHAIR: But we need to end at that point because we've run out of time.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I just ask a quick question? In your opening statement, you said marking had increased since 2001 and you were going to elaborate. Could you elaborate?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: I sort of did a little bit. Standards referenced assessment—when I talked about the SRP, for example—requires teachers to write a very extensive marking criteria, which is new. I don't know if you can see that, but that's 2½ pages of what it is you're looking for. So a student who gets an elementary, basic, sound, thorough, extensive—so you have got to describe the standard that the student's working at for that particular criteria.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is that a national standard or State-imposed mandate?

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Good question. Standards referenced—don't know. I will take that on notice. I know it is in the NESA requirements, so good question.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Then it would be State.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: State. Okay.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: We're seeing NESA tomorrow.

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Okay. Great.

The CHAIR: Thank you. We've run up against the lunch hours now, so we'll have to adjourn. The Committee will resume at 2.10 p.m. I thank Margaret and Irena for their presentation and giving us lots of good material to take forward.

CORRECTED

MARGARET SHEPHERD: Oh, I hope so. Thank you very much.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

CORRECTED

Dr GARETH LEECHMAN, Chair, State Branch NSW/ACT Association Heads of Independent Schools Australia, and Headmaster, Arndell Anglican College, sworn and examined

Mrs SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK, Deputy Chair, State Branch NSW/ACT Association Heads of Independent Schools Australia, and Principal, Tara Anglican School for Girls, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome our representatives from the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia, Dr Gareth Leechman and Mrs Susan Middlebrook. Thanks very much for your submission and your participation today, which we very much appreciate. It's available to make a short opening statement before we get to questions, please.

GARETH LEECHMAN: Yes, sure. I'd love to do that, thank you very much. We're here representing the New South Wales branch of the Association Heads of Independent Schools Australia. The independent sector more broadly is a very diverse sector, and in this State there are over 500 schools and campuses educating over 220,000 students. It includes the full range of Christian schools, Islamic schools, Jewish schools, a Buddhist school and schools of no particular faith and those that might be aligned to the Montessori, Steiner and international schools.

Less than 10 per cent of the sector are those high-fee schools that the media tends to focus on, and that proportion is falling each year. About 20 per cent of the sector are also special schools and special assistance schools. Two-thirds of independent schools have a direct measure of income score of 104 or less, which means they serve predominantly low- to middle-income earners. Almost half the sector, 46 per cent, are schools with fewer than 200 students. Almost 40 per cent of New South Wales independent schools are outside Sydney, and there are some 50 schools with boarding facilities. The sector employs almost 20,000 teachers and around 10,000 non-teaching staff—that's FTE numbers.

The teacher shortage is affecting all sectors. It is more acute in certain subjects, and we would be happy to discuss this with you. The sector's representative body more broadly as we know is the AIS of New South Wales, and they've recognised that the teacher supply is of concern and they have started to launch a three-year strategy to try and identify, recruit and retain teachers, and their program is called Growing and Nurturing Educators, or GANE. Susan and I are happy to answer any questions that you might have.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thanks very much, Dr Leechman and Mrs Middlebrook. We really appreciate your time and your submission. In your submission you talk about how it's not a uniform problem, the teacher shortages, or difficulties in teacher recruitment, I should probably say, from your submission. Can you talk about some of those differences in the first instance?

GARETH LEECHMAN: Sorry, can you clarify the question again?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: You said it's not a uniform response. So we're not seeing the same challenges in rural and regional areas or in metropolitan Sydney or in different subject areas, or that there are different challenges. Can you explain a little bit more about that?

GARETH LEECHMAN: Yes, sure. The sector, as we've pointed out there, is quite diverse. Now, obviously I think what we're seeing in regional settings is—and this is something we're getting through the membership. We actually had a members' meeting yesterday, so it was quite good to ask them to get their information from there, and they are facing obviously significant issues, especially in some of those consistently hard-to-reach areas now—I'll say, mathematics, science, particularly physics and chemistry, design and technology. An emerging one in the regions is learning support, so finding appropriate teachers who have a skill set in that area who are able to offer support. I think in the city you're seeing still those issues. But I think especially on the fringes of the city you're starting to get again teacher shortages and challenges there in that space with similar sort of subjects, and especially in the city now increasingly something like languages, for example, is becoming more and more challenging to find teachers in that space.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: The Science Teachers Association appeared just before you and I asked them what the impact is of a non-science-trained teacher teaching science. What's your concern from a principal's perspective, even as individual principals yourselves, in recruiting people who are teaching outside of their subject area?

GARETH LEECHMAN: The first thing I think that all principals are trying to do is to recruit teachers within area. Obviously that is not always the case, even across our sector. And so one of the challenges you've got there in recruiting generally, if you're going to have to have that, is that you've got teachers with lack of, say, specific subject knowledge, content knowledge, specific skill set in that, and also, I suppose, most people who teach within knowledge have a very strong passion for their subject. And so often those people are teaching

slightly out of it, and it's not because they don't have the passion; it takes them time to develop that subject knowledge. Having said that, what I think some principals are looking at doing too is looking for staff who might be able to teach more than one subject. I can speak personally within that, and Susan might have another example. I can talk from an Arndell perspective just locally for us.

I had a dozen years ago a very good PE teacher who had maths as their second subject. A dozen years ago every principal advertising for a PE teacher would've had a lot of applications. Interestingly, that's changed as well. So I encouraged that young lady within our environment, "How about you think about actually majoring in your second-choice subject," which was mathematics, and we invested in her significantly and topped her up with skills and were able to encourage her to do further study and now she's a very, very good maths teacher who will take the odd PE class, so it's the reverse. So I think you're finding principals having to think creatively on their feet to look at the talent that's before them and see if they can then enable that talent to look at a second teaching area and make that dominant space. Susan, do you have any?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: I think a real concern, if people are being forced to teach out of area, is quality of teaching and learning and the burden that that places on the teacher as well. I mean, they do this because they want to do it well, and trying to teach classes where they're not feeling particularly skilled—I'm talking more in the high school end of things where the subjects are quite specific and the knowledge you need is quite specific. And to ask a history teacher to teach science is just an appalling thing to do to the poor people and therefore you have to give them a lot of support, so that puts pressure on other staff, it undermines the children in terms of their confidence in their teacher, and then you lose a teacher because they're not having a nice time, and off you go again. So it's not good to have that situation. I know in some schools, just to add to that, particularly in regional areas, they've had to limit the choice of the subjects available to students as well because they simply cannot get a physics teacher or they cannot get a design and technology teacher or whatever. So they are no longer able to offer those subjects for the students, which limits learning again.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: And is that in a regional area or is that also in Sydney?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: I've heard of it more in regional areas than in the city.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I just had one final question. There's been some talk this morning in our inquiry but also obviously last week out of the national round table around an apprenticeship-style teaching. How equipped do you find first-year teachers who come straight out of university? We've heard lots of evidence from schools in previous inquiries that they almost have to do a year of kind of cadet training or mentoring or quite intensive support in order to get teachers up to where they would like them to be and develop them. Do you personally as teachers or personally as principals? Or are you aware of other schools that do similar kinds of programs and what do you think about them?

GARETH LEECHMAN: Yes, in short. I think there's two components to the question that I'd respond to there. Firstly, I know when you pick up a first year out from university, they need to be supported appropriately through those first initial years of teaching, and that's come through the various reports. In preparing obviously for our conversation today, you've only got to read the various submissions that you've received, and it's about 50 per cent or 60 per cent withdrawal rate in the first five to six years of those who enter teaching, which is one of the issues that we face when you're facing a teacher shortage. We invest so heavily. When we actually get them on the ground, so to speak, we want to be able to retain them and make sure they're there for the long haul, not just for the initial three or four years and then seek employment elsewhere.

The second component that I see there is that, yes, we are now seeing emerging in the marketplace internship styles. For example, again through the submission you've got the St Philip's model, the hub that's happening up in the Hunter region. Within the group of schools that I'm part of, we've now just started in TASC looking at internships where we're getting final-year students contracting for 12 months as part-time teachers' aides. We are looking at ways so that they are actually becoming more prepared for that first year of teaching and becoming aware of "Is this really what I want to do?" Because once they're then on the ground, if they've already been able to experience a school in a more complete way and see what the role entails, we're finding, hopefully, that they will actually stay in the profession for longer, and that initial investment, even right from the university sector, and the government sector as well in terms of the HECS and the provision of financial investment from the Federal Government in that sense—that they stay in the profession for longer.

The CHAIR: What's your view of the hub model from a school perspective?

GARETH LEECHMAN: My personal perspective? I think we should continue to explore it. My initial experience in our own version of the hub model in TASC has been very positive. We had two this year. I took two interns on, and both of them by the end of the year will be fully employed in schools. One is already fully employed in a school because that school had a particular shortage within our hub of schools. Again, through

some of the flexibility of arrangements that we're seeing in trying to enable teachers in their final two years of study to actually start teaching—

The CHAIR: So you find that it applied more to your needs? I've got to say it's a bit confronting. I've been to government best-practice schools where the principal will say, "Pretty well what they do at universities is useless to us. I'd prefer they come here with not a lot tipped into them by the universities so I can retrain them more effectively in our model," the model that they develop for Smith Street school or whatever it is—the model that they're looking to develop in professional development classroom practice, collaboration and the like.

GARETH LEECHMAN: Yes, I can see why the principals would say that because one of the things we're noticing is still potentially some disconnect between the tertiary sector and the teaching sector.

The CHAIR: Yes, massively.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: I think there's not a lot of problem with the knowledge base of these young people who are coming out.

GARETH LEECHMAN: Correct.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: They're clever, but it takes a while to learn the craft of teaching, and you need a little bit of help. You need quite a lot of help with that. Then you layer over that the—whilst all schools are meant to be just school, every school is different and has its own culture. I know many of our schools have an approach to learning, so there's a lot of learning that goes into that so that the language of learning is across the school. People need support while they are learning that professional side of that as part of the context of any school that they would be in.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: There aren't many professions where you pop out of university and you're ready to do the job by yourself, are there? Whereas in teaching, we expect we can just put them in a classroom and they're going to be ready to go. That's just not the case.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes, I think people have undervalued the skill of the craft of it that comes with that. You need a lot of help for some years, and then managing—teenagers are wonderful beasts but not always calm and so there's an art to that as well so that you teach them where they're at. It takes a while to get to do that really well so that you're comfortable with it.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I have one last question because I'm hogging the time again. Obviously, having teachers teach out of their specialty area has an impact on all students, but it would have a particular impact on HSC students. Would you agree?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Absolutely, yes. One of the things that allows HSC students to do well is if they have confidence in their teacher. That relationship between teacher and student in those last couple of years is vital for our young people to feel assured that this is all going well, the teacher knows what they're doing. If you're only one page ahead on the day, it's not going to end well.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Is it your experience that that's happening, not necessarily in your schools but across the sector?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes. I'm aware that in some schools it's really tough to find highly qualified and experienced teachers to teach in that space. If you lose a teacher, it can be very difficult to replace them at the moment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much for being with us today. In your submission, you talk about how this is a problem that you've seen prior to COVID. You remark on this being an international problem as well and on what you were putting in place for what was effectively an international recruitment process. Do you want to take us back to 2019 and to some of the things that you were seeing even then before COVID hit?

GARETH LEECHMAN: Yes, sure. It's hard to think before COVID, isn't it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It is.

GARETH LEECHMAN: Within that context, you could start to see in certain areas it was getting harder and harder to recruit for specific subjects. So pre-COVID—say, pre-2020—maths was the classic example that I think all principals would be aware of, especially those who had the capacity to teach higher maths.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Extension, yes.

GARETH LEECHMAN: In the New South Wales system, extension 1, extension 2, for example. It was not too difficult potentially to try to find a Standard maths teacher, but those who were going to be teaching

the higher level and had the capacity to do it. Also, I think it would be fairly safe to say you're starting to see emerging issues in physics and chemistry—those sciences—and also, say, languages. What obviously happened during the COVID period has probably crystallised a few staff and the changes that they were required to make over the last couple of years. I think you've seen a higher attrition rate, it would seem to me anecdotally, of some of our experienced staff who have now reached maybe closer to retirement and have decided "I don't want to do any more of this" and have decided to retire in the past couple of years, which has then exacerbated, I would argue, some pre-existing problems.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I imagine that was probably impacted as well by some of the changes to teaching during the pandemic—

GARETH LEECHMAN: Correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —like the online delivery models.

GARETH LEECHMAN: Undoubtedly.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You mention in your submission that you've had advocacy to the Federal Government with respect to temporary skilled visas when it comes to certain subject areas such as maths or science and teachers in those areas. Have you got any update for us regarding how that's been received?

GARETH LEECHMAN: Yes, sure.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: There's a new government in place in Canberra so it might be difficult to reflect on that.

GARETH LEECHMAN: No, no. In terms of the way our association works, that would come through our national office. At the moment that would come through our CEO, Beth Blackwood, who oversees all of our doings across the country. They do a lot of advocacy in that space for us. Yes, with the change of government you've alluded to there—Jason Clare is the new Minister for Education—we're still waiting, I know, for an opportunity to chat to him. But we also work through Independent Schools Australia, which is a broader group that we work through in that advocacy space. Because I think what we're trying to do there is generate the dialogue and make people aware that this is an issue. So part of our advocacy is to look for solutions. One of the solutions that I suppose that in our sector we're looking at is trying to open up more opportunities for mid-career teachers to maybe make the change across. The two big factors that we're trying to advocate for there is money, in one sense: either fee relief for them to do courses or even scholarship-type programs. One of the biggest things that—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When you say "make the change across", do you mean changing to a different subject area or a higher level of subject area?

GARETH LEECHMAN: No, somebody might be, for example, an engineer or an accountant who might have a desire to become a maths teacher. One of the things that they will be challenged by, of course, especially if they're mid-career—they've still got mortgages to pay, they've got bills to cover, they've got their own families to oversee and those types of structures. What can we put in place there that might be able to incentivise through scholarship, through fee relief, through making their application through university/tertiary quicker, more efficient and effective? We're trying to have advocacy in that space to try to speed up those structures because when you do get a mid-career teacher coming across and it works well, which we are experiencing in our sector—some very positive movement across in terms of good success rate of those who make that decision—they bring a lot to the table in terms of educators because they've already been able to live a fair chunk of their life.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are you finding that independent schools are perhaps having a bit of an advantage in that area by being able to potentially pay mid-career teachers a little bit more than they'd be paid in the State sector?

GARETH LEECHMAN: The first thing I'd say there is that we're a very diverse sector. I said that in my opening comments. It's interesting: The median cost for independent schools across the State is actually $5,500 a year. In terms of the high-fee part of the sector, which tends to get the bulk of the focus, it's actually a very small minority. I can talk from that perspective as a lower-fee Anglican school. We work within the MEA. That is negotiated with the union and the AIS. That MEA is reflective largely of the broader MEA that the federation would work with the DET. Our pay rises tend to be dictated, too, by that same negotiation there. When you look at it in terms of remuneration, the remuneration structures fit the context of the college, I acknowledge that, but the bulk of them are working within an MEA structure that is largely based on State MEAs and State award rates.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I want to pick up on that last line of questioning. Obviously for those low-fee schools, this is perhaps not an issue. There was a bit of a discussion in the previous session around a

proposition to increase the pay for specific subject teachers. In some schools that are more affluent and that perhaps aren't within the master enterprise agreement arrangements, they have that option to be able to pay more for teachers in specialist areas that are in short supply. Are they doing that? Is that the experience and is it working?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: They might be, but the vast majority of schools wouldn't have the ability to do that. They don't have the capacity to pay that anyway. There would be a few schools, possibly, but not very many. Most of us work along with the MEA because that is our budget. That is how we do it. But it would be a very small proportion and I'm not particularly aware of anybody who is doing that.

GARETH LEECHMAN: From my experience and my dialogue, the vast majority are working within the MEA, even those in the high-fee component of our sector. It would be fair to say that, yes, there are some in the very small number in that high-fee sector who may be able to, but they still obviously have their own budgetary requirements that they have to meet.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: I think paying particular subject area teachers isn't actually going to solve the problem. I mean, there are equity issues in that. But, really, there is a more fundamental issue here about the teaching profession in general and why people do or do not choose teaching and the status of teaching and all of those aspects that go into it, rather than it just being a particular subject area.

GARETH LEECHMAN: I would add to the issue of pay that our thought process is that we know that initial teachers, when they come out of university, are actually getting quite a comparable or competitive pay rate. Where we need to look into that pay discussion is those experienced teachers and how we can appropriately remunerate them going forward as well. I think that's coming through the research papers I am reading as well. The start level is actually quite competitive and the issue we hit is around that 10- to 15-year mark when they are capped. Many may then seek either employment outside the teaching profession or we lose them from the classroom because they might start wanting to take on middle or senior management roles within schools, which is actually taking some of our best teachers outside of the actual day-to-day face-to-face teaching.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It was certainly expressed in the previous session that taking a differential approach to paying different teachers in different subject areas would actually be divisive and corrosive within the professional community within a school. Do you agree with that, or do you think that is not the case?

GARETH LEECHMAN: In short, yes. I think it would be very divisive within our sector. When I look at the schools that we represent, if you suddenly had within a staffing body, let's say, your maths and physics teachers getting paid X and the rest of the teachers with similar experience who continue to make a significant contribution to the students getting paid Y based on subject area, my gut reaction would be that, yes, it would be very divisive. Sue?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes. It's not going to solve the problem in itself, which is attracting good people to teaching to begin with and then retaining them. That would make it worse.

The CHAIR: What about the scholarship system, when you are paid the scholarship during ITE for maths and science teachers?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Why wouldn't you do it for everybody?

The CHAIR: A proper professional standard is to pay for expertise. In some types of expertise, like teaching, medicine—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: We are all experts, Mark.

The CHAIR: —engineering and science, there is an oversupply. When there is an undersupply, you have to pay in a market economy and in a market labour force to get the people you need. We are not running a commune here, are we? We are trying to run effective schools.

GARETH LEECHMAN: I think the issue that we are going to find, which is something interesting that alludes to the earlier question of the gentleman on my left, is that a new emerging area where we are finding a shortage is actually English, I would argue. This is my sixteenth year being a headmaster, so I have seen a lot of change. In recent times, I am finding it more and more challenging to recruit English teachers, for example. It's not just typical of maths and science that we need to be aware of.

If I look at English teaching—I take your point there—a pertinent thing is the recent decision at Federal level, not State level, to increase Bachelor of Arts degrees. Where are we going to get the predominant number of our English teachers from? Bachelor of Arts degrees. I think the issue of scholarship is going to be thinking more broadly in the sector. There is an increasing case for maths, science, design, tech, language and now, I would argue—I don't know if it's the same for you, Sue—in that area of English. If we look at English in terms of the

New South Wales education sector, it's the only compulsory subject for the HSC. So we need English teachers as much as we need maths teachers. The two also go together because of core literary skills. Anybody who has read a decent maths curriculum in recent times would realise the literacy levels that are required now just to access the mathematics curriculum.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Obviously, we have heard a lot of evidence around the increasing pressures on teachers. One of the things that is coming down the pipeline that may exacerbate the problem is the rollout of the new curriculum. Do you think that's likely to contribute to increasing pressure on teachers and potential burnout?

GARETH LEECHMAN: In short, yes. I think it was only being discussed at our members meeting yesterday that the pace of change in curriculum is not slowing down; it's actually increasing. All educators—all principals and teachers—understand that the curriculum should be a living document. Nobody denies that the curriculums that we teach in this State should continue to be reviewed, improved and enhanced on a regular basis. But I think I would be speaking for my teachers in my school and the sector more broadly that that has to be done in a way which is sustainable. I think at the moment we do have concerns that the pace is too quick. Sue?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes. My concern is that while a review of curriculum is welcome, the pace of review of the documents that are coming out and then schools having to respond and implement curriculum without a lot of time to think it through and support it and all of those things is a huge burden on people who are very busy. A lot of this discussion has been focused on high schools, but if you think about the curriculum implementation in primary schools and junior schools, those teachers have to implement all of the curriculum. In high schools they are—

GARETH LEECHMAN: Subject specific.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes, they are subject specific. But in primary schools it is across all areas, so the burden on them is quite significant. I don't think that is being thought through enough in terms of teacher preparation.

GARETH LEECHMAN: I think it would be worth pointing out, too, that even travelling in this morning for this Committee meeting, I had an email from NESA looking at two or three new curriculums that they want feedback on. I think we have to put this in the context more broadly that you have a group of teachers reconnecting back to the profession after two years of pandemic when they have essentially spent 12 months of that teaching remotely. You have a fast-tracked set of curriculum changes that are occurring when teachers are adjusting back to face-to-face teaching, which is their preference, and then you are burdening them again with further curriculum change, which is looking to be implemented over the next couple of years.

The CHAIR: In the industrial arrangements for your schools, are there defined work hours?

GARETH LEECHMAN: No.

The CHAIR: No, so it's like the government system where the work hours are not defined. They're not nine to three; they're not eight to five. Are you allowed to contact your teachers during the school breaks to see what work they're doing?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: I'm allowed because they're entitled to four weeks' annual leave, so we define that, in my instance, as the Christmas break. So we are allowed to contact them, but I'm also aware that teachers are working a lot on marking and preparation for the next term.

The CHAIR: Yes, sure. Do you monitor that during the other eight weeks where they're not formally on holiday?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: No, because they come back prepared for the term so I know they've worked.

The CHAIR: Right.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: I don't ask them to tell me what they're—

The CHAIR: So there are eight weeks where you're not really—

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: The eight weeks over Christmas?

The CHAIR: No, there are 12 weeks of school break in a year.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes.

The CHAIR: There are four weeks of annual holiday. The other eight weeks, you're not expecting teachers to submit the work they're doing at home so you can check on what they're doing and know that it's being done?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: No, but they're expected to be ready for the term, so therefore they have—

The CHAIR: How do you measure their readiness?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Because they walk into class with lessons prepared and resources ready.

The CHAIR: Are you in the class or you've got other monitors in the class to check that they are ready and the classroom practice is up to scratch?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes, we have programs that are monitored, scope and sequence documents which they report against. They're all timed in terms of what happens with the workload for particular weeks. It's all fairly tightly—and they build all of that.

GARETH LEECHMAN: I think across the sector there will be a breadth of approaches, but the way that we use it—a lot of people that I talk to—is you've got term time and non-term time and that you're making it very conscious to the staff that they are entitled to their four weeks' leave and that you do actually encourage them to do it. With that other eight weeks that you're alluding to, if I look at our particular context, the way we operate that we will have some of those—well actually professional development days we'll incur during that time. We will also know that I will have several staff who will do conferences or professional development experiences during that time. I will have several staff who will run holiday workshops, especially for HSC students, and so you can monitor that because when you're in, you're seeing them coming in to deliver work and you're treating them with that sense of flexibility, because I think the most draining part of the job is actually dealing with the people.

I think one of the sides of the job that we tend to forget about is that, regardless of whether you've got a group of young kindergarten students who in their first couple of weeks are just trying to figure out what school's about and then all the tears that that involves right through to year 12 students who are producing major works towards the end who are quite stressed, the most draining part of the job for teachers is actually that emotional support that they provide to all of the students under their care. What we encourage is that sense of professionalism with them to say you've got the non-term time.

Many of my staff I know—because obviously a lot of us as principals are working during the holidays and come in to prepare. You can see them getting photocopying ready. They can get lesson plans. They're getting their rooms ready for their teaching—whatever it might be. But you're also trying to give them that flexibility of work practice during that non-term time, which I think they see a lot of their friends who might be working in different professions getting the chance to refresh and to recharge those pastoral boundaries, and so that you expect them. But you can tell very quickly those teachers who have used that eight weeks well and some of those teachers who haven't used that eight weeks well.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I just wanted to ask you about models like Teacher Australia where teachers come from industry into teaching. Have you got any experience or reflections on those kinds of models?

GARETH LEECHMAN: I can't comment on that one specifically. Sue, do you—

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: No.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I just wanted to ask about the accreditation process. It seems to be that that's one of the pain points for teachers—the amount of documentation that's required to attain proficient teacher status and then to maintain that in an ongoing way. It seems to be just an additional stress and an added burden. Is there a way that that system could be simplified to make sure that obviously it's there to maintain some quality standard in terms of teaching the teaching profession but without the necessary paperwork and time burden that's associated? As principals you would know a good teacher when you see them. You see them every day. They're working with you every day. You'd be the best judge to know whether someone's up to the job or not, whether they're competent and proficient. Is that an area of reform that might be able to be looked at to perhaps lift some of the pressures off our teaching workforce?

GARETH LEECHMAN: I think the response that we had from our sector is first of all, whatever accreditation process we have in place we want to make sure that it's authentic and not just maintains in a negative way but actually affirms the professionalism of the teachers who have got that accreditation there. We therefore want to make sure that whatever accreditation process has a quality control mechanism about it. I think the second point to you there is, yes, you want to make sure that you've got a system that doesn't then become burdensome

for the staff to do, and obviously there is actually reform happening in that space at the moment. That's something again we're talking about there in terms of that.

One of the examples that we see there is, if we use the ETAMs, for example, at the moment there is a strong sense of—staff have to use the ETAMs, which is an online recording of their professional development and it's also helpful for them because it automatically creates ticks as to when they've hit their certain hours. One of the proposed changes there is to potentially move away from using ETAMs and throw the responsibility back on staff to monitor their 50 hours of their own choosing. Is there wisdom in potentially keeping ETAMs as a good mechanism for our staff to help them with that without becoming burdensome because they have to do it themselves? So, yes, I think you've got to look at your accreditation process to make sure it's efficient and effective but we also don't want to lose the quality at the same time.

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: Yes, I think the workload currently is very burdensome on people. It's become its own little industry of compliance for staff, but however that lands, it would need to be looked at so that it doesn't just become another tick-a-box thing. There is some value in people reflecting on practice, so I think there's a middle road in there somewhere that could be considered worthwhile.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Do teachers in your sector do the accreditation, the mandatory hours, on paid time or is that expected to be done in their own time?

SUSAN MIDDLEBROOK: They could do it either way. All our professional development opportunities that we provide for our schools I think across the sector as best we can, we do them in line to make sure that they're relevant for teacher accreditation. Some schools do that in their professional development days and would support that in budget allowance as best they can, and I know some people go off and do things in their own time as well because that's their interest area and not necessarily call on the school funds to do that. So a mixture I would think.

The CHAIR: We're up against time, unfortunately. Thanks very much for your contribution.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Ms MONICA DAVIS, Chief Executive Officer, Country Universities Centre, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

Mr BRIAN O'NEILL, Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia, before the Committee via videoconference, sworn and examined

Professor SUSAN LEDGER, Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Education, before the Committee via videoconference, on former oath

Ms ANNABEL STRACHAN, State Councillor, Rural Schools Portfolio, Isolated Children's Parents' Association of New South Wales Inc., before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

Ms DEBORAH NIELSEN, State Councillor, Early Childhood Portfolio, Isolated Children's Parents' Association of New South Wales Inc., before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome Ms Monica Davis, Professor Susan Ledger and Mr Brian O'Neill. Susan does not need to be sworn in because she appeared before the Committee in its first hearing in her capacity as Head of School-Dean of Education at the University of Newcastle. She is wearing two hats. We thank you all for your participation. Ms Strachan and Ms Nielsen cannot hear us. We will try to fix that. In the meantime, given the time constraints, it's available to the other witnesses to make a short opening statement to the Committee before we get to questions and answers.

MONICA DAVIS: I'm happy to kick things off, if you'd like. Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I am presenting from Ngarigo country in Cooma. I'm speaking on behalf of the Country Universities Centre [CUC]. The country universities centres are an asset for regional people who are considering entering the teaching profession and who would like to remain in their regional area to study and work. We offer dedicated study facilities and wraparound support to any Australian student from any Australian university, and with the support of the New South Wales Government we're able to offer these facilities for free to any regional student. In 2022 the CUC supported 187 teaching students at both postgraduate and undergraduate level. Research has shown that the CUC is increasing retention and success for these teaching students, with the CUC providing academic support, connections to local placements at local schools, reliable locations for exams and assessments, and a network of other students for peer support for all of these students.

The country universities centres are proudly providing local teaching graduates who are more likely to stay and teach in their regional areas, and assisting regional communities to grow their own workforces. The recent census data has also shown a significant increase in participation. The towns with a Country Universities Centre showed an average of 24 per cent increase in university participation, compared to just 5 per cent across non-metropolitan New South Wales. So we find that the country universities centres are both helping people who are considering studying teaching to be more successful but also lifting the number of people participating in studying teaching as well.

BRIAN O'NEILL: I am calling from Central Queensland University's Mackay's Ooralea campus on the land of the Yuwibara people. I will go first and I will hand over to Susan because we'll both be talking from different perspectives within SPERA.

The CHAIR: We normally just get one statement per organisation, given the time constraints. Susan or Brian?

BRIAN O'NEILL: Sue, do you want to go?

SUSAN LEDGER: No, you go, Brian; you are the former past president.

BRIAN O'NEILL: SPERA advocates for the education in the bush Australia wide, and we do so by advocating to governments, to education departments. We also celebrate the wonderful things about working in the bush. We celebrate the innovative practices through the Australian Rural Education Awards, and we also collect and actively research and publish our work through our journal, the *Australian International Journal of Rural Education*. We have our editor with us—that's Professor Ledger here now—and she's also the director of research. The way in which we focused on our submission was looking at it from a rural lens. Yes, there is a shortage, but it's been around for rural schools for the past decade. So we can bring a certain amount of experience to the floor on this issue.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Questions? Anthony D'Adam? We'll just backtrack a moment. Sorry, Anthony.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: That's all right. We have to hear from the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of New South Wales.

The CHAIR: Annabel and Deborah, can you hear us now?

ANNABEL STRACHAN: Yes.

DEBORAH NIELSEN: Yes.

The CHAIR: We have your submission. We might go to Anthony D'Adam for questions.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I might direct my first question to the CUC. I have to say initially I was very sceptical about CUCs but I'm a bit of a convert in terms of the project and what it's seeking to achieve. I'm not sure whether you heard the evidence earlier from Alphacrucis college. Both Alphacrucis' submission and yours touch on the issue around moving away from the FIFO approach to teaching staff and trying to find ways to recruit people into the teaching profession who have local roots who are embedded in communities. The Alphacrucis model seemed to contrast their approach to the CUC's by saying that their approach was based more on a collective approach to recruitment of students, whereas the CUC is relying on individuals to enrol in university courses and then be supported through the CUC process. I wonder whether you are able to offer some comments on why the CUC approach is the appropriate way or the best way to deal with the issue of finding teachers in remote areas.

MONICA DAVIS: Absolutely. I think there's space for all the different approaches to complement each other. We find that the CUC approach is very appropriate in our smaller, regional communities, where there are very small cohorts of students. We've also found that in encouraging a student to find the most appropriate university for them, their chances of success in study are increased. What that might mean is a student chooses their university based on the supports that are available at that university, a particular area of specialisation, or it might be the placement schedule, which varies across different universities, or where those placements are able to be offered. If we can connect a student with the best university for them, their chances of success are increased. Because we're working in fairly small communities—Cooma, where I'm calling from today, only has 7,000 people—we find that being able to find broader cohorts that, for example, Alphacrucis college might be able to work with, is something that is not as applicable or appropriate to our smaller regional communities.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Do you have an active role in recruiting for practicum places for CUC students in education? If you do, could you elaborate on how that works for CUCs?

MONICA DAVIS: Absolutely. We'll play a number of roles in advocating for students. The first is in trying to connect them with local schools. Each of our centre managers has very strong connections with their local schools, both high school and primary school, and will aim to connect students, university placement teams and those schools together to make sure that people can participate in the right type of placement for them locally because we know a lot of our students—the majority of them—are working with working commitments, caring commitments and often prefer to stay locally. So again we can assist them by making sure they can get that placement locally. But one of the other things that we will try to do is, if possible, connect them with something like an SLSO role to make sure that they can have those very strong connections with the school, again facilitating those pathways to employment once they've graduated.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What support is being provided by the Department of Education to facilitate that? Are there any areas for improvement on that front that you might be able to suggest?

MONICA DAVIS: Yes, absolutely. I would say that our collaborations at this stage are somewhat ad hoc on a place-by-place basis. I would say there's definitely opportunity for to us have a more strategic collaboration in this space and to work together. We've got a very positive relationship with the Department of Education but, as you suggest, there's always room to improve and build upon those relationships and make sure that we can maximise that partnership.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thank you very much to our panel for your submission, time and expertise. I know you have appeared before a number of our inquiries now. We like coming back to you. You are great witnesses for us and it is very helpful to tap into your expertise. I specifically wanted to start with the Isolated Children's Parents' Association. You flagged in your opening statement that teacher shortages have been confronting your students for years. Can you talk about the impact of that on your children?

DEBORAH NIELSEN: We certainly have suggested that it's longer than a decade that we have struggled with attracting and, particularly, retaining teachers. The impact on the children has been, in a sense, a community impact as much as on the children. Staying with the children, with the series of primary school teachers and some of them being very temporary, their primary schooling is often less than ideal and they are very—I don't have the statistic but I will personally go out on a limb and say in 80 per cent of cases they are behind their year

7 cohorts when they go to a high school. They usually have to go on to boarding school. If they don't go on to boarding school, they effectively finish school after year 6. What they do is attempt distance education in their homes, and often those homes have no-one suitable who is accessible to the student to help them with their distance education program. So, effectively, they become a disengaged student at stage four of their schooling. The best-case scenario is that they have a teacher for at least two or maybe three years through their primary schooling and they are reasonably able to adapt to a boarding school academic environment. But a lot of children are not in that lucky place. Have I answered your question?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Absolutely. Did you want to add anything else to that?

DEBORAH NIELSEN: There is a lot I could add.

SUSAN LEDGER: I want to add to the ICPA's response and Brian's response to say that this has been a longstanding issue for rural and remote areas. It's not a decade; it's probably about five decades. We have always had issues getting people to rural and remote centres. I think it primarily stems down to the status of the rural and remote areas and, in the same way, the status of the teaching profession itself. Both of those things come hand in hand. They both have discourses and languages around them that is often quite detrimental and negative. I think that's part of the need for us to really enforce the positives of teaching in rural and remote centres but, more importantly, prepare our students and our student teachers for teaching in rural and remote centres as well as our leaders.

I'll add to the comment from the ICPA that I'm a country person. I am a low SES person from the country and the first in my family to have a degree. I have lived this experience and my family has lived this experience. Some of my nieces have had first-year-out teachers for 10 years of their learning, as well as new principals. It does have an impact. This is why in all of the other inquiries we have called for looking at this as a whole-of-profession approach so that it's not just rural and remote as part of it but rural and remote planned for within the whole of the profession in how we attract students into the profession and how we support them through the program and specialise possibly in rural, remote or Indigenous studies. Often we don't even hear the word "Indigenous". Those schools are even harder to staff.

I think it goes back to what has been recommended—and I support the new task force recommendations—but I think we have to add diversity and equity in that or else we will continue to have persistent and entrenched localised disadvantage. We called this out in 2017 and people have continually called it out. We have a very much metro-centric approach to our policies, particularly with teacher education. We can't get our teachers out to the country; it's very costly. I must recommend that NSW Teacher Supply Strategy has some incentives now for that, but it only goes a tiny way to actually encouraging and enticing students out in that area.

We often have shortages in the area that mean we can't have mentor teachers training our pre-service teachers. I would nominate that we differentiate and actually suggest supernumerary people in rural and remote areas to support not only new graduates but our pre-service teachers out there. I think CUC could have a role in that because you provide a safe haven, I suppose. That's always important. I think what we are doing now is really important: getting everyone with some sort of commitment to rural and remote education to get together and solve it. We've had so many recommendations and reviews over the past 20-odd years. It's nice that hopefully we actually get some action as a result of this. I'm delighted at being part of the Halsey report and the recent RRRE review. We finally have Fiona Nash appointed as a commissioner of rural education. With that lead, I think we have great opportunity to actually advance this endeavour. I am excited about that.

The CHAIR: Susan, can I just raise the equity point about Indigenous schools that you mentioned? Three weeks ago I was at Walgett and Bourke high schools with an upper House colleague. It's not a teacher shortage there; it's a student attendance deficit. Some 150 students are enrolled at both high schools but only 50 were in attendance that day. I think there was maybe half that number after lunch. Yet there were 20 teaching staff available. There is a very high ratio of teachers to students.

SUSAN LEDGER: I think it's a bigger picture there, Mark.

The CHAIR: Some of this is uneven in the bush, isn't it? In some schools the educational problem is the students not attending.

SUSAN LEDGER: Yes. I know when I was teaching I would never blame my students for a lot of the behaviour. I would probably blame how I teach and what I'm teaching and the relevance of it. I think it's a bigger picture there and something we need to discuss. I think making sure that we have place-based safe environments for our students to go to is really important. I'm not sure if Walgett is having some issues at the moment. That's certainly an issue. The thought of sending out pre-service teachers or new graduates to that location is problematic.

We need to support where support is needed. I think it's more than just looking at teaching ratio, Mark. I think it's looking at what's happening within those contexts that's making it not as safe.

The CHAIR: We have a handle on what's happening and that's even more tragic. But I'm just saying that some of this is uneven across the State. On a separate inquiry on infrastructure, our committee went to public schools with a sea of demountables—30 or 40 demountables—and a sardine-type feeling. To walk past empty blackened classrooms, one after another, at Walgett and Bourke, where they didn't have enough students to turn on the lights and open the classroom that day, I've got to say, is pretty depressing on the flip side. The issues in Indigenous schools are a bit different to other schools, where we talk about teacher shortages and where a body of students attend every day.

SUSAN LEDGER: I would probably have to relook at some of those points. I think certainly we need to look at each school in each context, without trying to replicate those issues. There are certain times where certain schools go through some pressure points and we need to be aware and support that, have the wraparound support for schools in the same way that we have wraparound support for teachers and students.

The CHAIR: But isn't it parental attitudes to education? I've been to refugee-type schools in Fairfield where they get these people from a very disadvantaged background to three or four years into university, and the parents there are valuing education and for those families attendance is compulsory. It's outside the terms of reference I know but I'm just making the point that it is very uneven.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: My question is very much to the Country Universities Centre. We had Alphacrucis here talking about the importance of on-country, for-country learning, effectively, and I think that that's effectively what the CUC model does in a sense. We visited in the previous inquiry the CUC at Goulburn and saw the great work that they do. What sort of linkage and placement programs does the CUC have with local schools in an area as part of that course delivery program?

MONICA DAVIS: Certainly. So perhaps the best example I could give you is one from Cooma with our local Catholic school here. Through the process of students—we don't deliver university courses. That's very much the domain of the university but we'll support those students studying and we'll connect them with the principal at the local school who will say, "I am looking for a placement at this level or at this time." We'll also try and make sure we connect them with smaller schools in the region or more specialised schools for specialised placement. But through that St Pat's connection we've found that six of those students who we have facilitated to participate in a placement at that school have gone on to work at that school once they've graduated as well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: One of the things that was said to us today was about linking effectively and going out and finding teachers in regional areas, people who are part of the community, and encouraging them to take up a career in teaching. I think when we were hearing that before, primary school teaching might be one thing but when you're looking at specialised teaching—and we've heard about the shortages when it comes to maths and science in particular—that becomes a lot more challenging, I take it, as well. I'm just interested in terms of the panel here whether there are any programs you're aware of where there has been some success in being able to identify teachers within community who might be in another profession, for instance, to be able to come across into teaching, particularly in those areas where there are shortages.

MONICA DAVIS: I might just kick off by saying that our regional towns have a wealth of people with a vast variety of experience and those are the people who make excellent teachers, so people with some life experience, with experience in another profession. Nurturing those people is incredibly valuable through that post-graduate study option. Sue, would you like to add to that?

SUSAN LEDGER: I'd agree with that. I think we need to look at the assets that we have in the rural and remote areas and really build on that. There are some great programs around. I've just come from Cape York Group and they do a build-your-own group up here and they identify students and support them through, so I think that's one of the successful ones. Brian, you've talked about a couple in Queensland too.

BRIAN O'NEILL: Yes, and this is beyond the range [audio malfunction]. There's the work of Elaine Sharplin in WA. As part of her course, she took kids on a road trip through rural communities and let them work in schools. One thing I do want to point out, which isn't in my submission but it provides a great support to the rural school leader and also the teachers, is the introduction of the CLAW, Centres for Learning and Wellbeing, that are being developed in Queensland as part of the rural and remote strategy. There was an ADG, Assistant Director-General, appointed for rural and remote in 2016 and that's one of the strategies that he brought up.

SUSAN LEDGER: The other ones, Brian, in New South Wales are the Rural Experience Programs, where they fund REs, and this is only small but it's getting bigger because they're recognising the need. They're actually funding our students to go on rural placements. That's been really, really good. Grow Your Own is one of the New South Wales strategies—Support for Rural Beginners. New South Wales in their NSW Teacher Supply

Strategy has identified some really good programs. It's just working out how to scale that and make it a bit more open to more people.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: One of the other criticisms we've heard today has been in terms of the FIFO model, so to speak, of people who are brought from the city, encouraged to go to regional communities because of a financial incentive, go out there, take their two years or three years in regional communities and then leave. I'm just interested in whether that's been your observation as well and if there are better models. I think that the isolated parents want to make a point on that one.

DEBORAH NIELSEN: We can't cite any existing program, but as part of our submission into the strategies for supplying teachers, we have advocated federally and in our State councils for the recognition, accreditation and obviously remuneration of the home tutors who work in distance education classrooms, isolated distance education classrooms. This is not people who are electing to do distance education because of another reason. We're talking about classrooms which exist because the students are geographically isolated from a government school so they have to do distance ed. The task for that—and both Annabel and I can attest to this because we both have taught our children and my mother taught me so I know all very well—is a big job and it requires behaviour management, programming, motivation and student welfare. It's everything across a multistage situation. We've actually identified all the tasks involved and it has been at some levels approved that this is a teaching position, but of course it's not ordained as such because there is a teacher at the distance education school.

What we would like to see, and it could be very, very helpful in the present crisis, is if those home tutors wished, there would be a pathway, such as the lady from CUC spoke about, where they could be accredited. They may need to do some further training but they could be accredited, and as they actually live on the stations near the little village schools, they would be welcomed with open arms and, quite frankly, they would be a lot better, in a simplistic expression, than some of the four-year-trained teachers from the coast who come from the coast. I don't mean to be disparaging of them but they're often [audio malfunction] multistage schools and that's really the thing that's difficult, teaching multistage, even if you only have eight or 10. Because there's kindy and there's year 6 and all in between and you're the only teacher. That's the skill you need the most, and I have taught in those schools.

I felt that my training to be a high school teacher was not worth the piece of paper, but what I learned teaching my own children here at home in the kitchen was how I was able to become an effective teacher. This would all need to be regulated, and I'm only speaking from a personal point of view, which is not just [audio malfunction] but all over Australia home tutors feel that they can't do. We would love to that picked up and [audio malfunction].

SUSAN LEDGER: I'd love to be able to work on that. I think there's two points there. One, the fly-in, fly-out issue, and I'm not sure if it's a problem. Sometimes you don't want them to say there longer than for two years possibly. It's the same problem that happens in international schools. Some places are renowned for being short-term, mid-term or long-term stay locations. We see that in all of our schools now. What we need to do is actually do what you've said, Anna—identify those who are local so that we could build up their skills. New South Wales has the tender out at the moment for the upskilling SLSOs, who are often the ones that are doing a lot of the work in schools and particularly the rural and remote ones. They stay there the whole time [audio malfunction] people come in [audio malfunction] and watch people come in and out. I don't think we should problematise it as "fly-in, fly-out is bad". I think we should say for some people it's actually okay. You may not want them longer than those two years, but at least to actually try to get people to want to stay in these locations, and SLSOs are one of those.

The CHAIR: Annabel had her hand up?

ANNABEL STRACHAN: Yes—just another point for at the more isolated schools out here is accommodation. Some of our schools in these areas don't have second accommodation for any of this to happen, and it's not fair to ask a principal with all their personal possessions in their house to house someone else. I think that's a problem that we really need to rectify as well.

SUSAN LEDGER: Annabel, that has been a review. If you look at the *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education* over the past 30-odd years, it has been the number one issue—no accommodation in the private sector. Although, if you look at similar problems with Health, Health have been given huge amounts of money and accommodation to support their rural and remote nurses and health workers. We don't have that luxury, unfortunately, with Education at the moment. It would be nice if we could share those resources, possibly.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I just jump in on that one? I was up on the mid North Coast recently and I was speaking to some of the locals. They were telling the story of a teacher who was there on a temporary contract who couldn't find accommodation because of the impact of the significant rise in rental costs

in those communities and the lack of rentals being available. This teacher was sleeping in their car. I suppose the issue that I'm trying to raise here is that the accommodation issue is not unique just to teaching in the Western Division or in those isolated communities—but even rural communities on the coast. Do you have any comments in relation to that observation?

SUSAN LEDGER: It's the number one issue for all of our students, whether they're going rural, regional or remote. Accommodation is a huge factor.

MONICA DAVIS: That reflects our experience, as well, across all our regional communities. Schools have identified qualified candidates but cannot get them to the region because of housing shortages.

SUSAN LEDGER: That's exactly right, and that's nothing new. We've been putting in recommendations about that for a very, very long time. Brian, you're a witness of that.

The CHAIR: Is it the quality of the housing? Because certainly, on pricing, there are big advantages to getting out of the city.

MONICA DAVIS: In Cooma right now there are five rentals across the entire town, and only two of them would be houses that could house a family. My understanding is that there are more than 30 families waiting on a waiting list in most of the real estate agents, so it's quite a significant housing crisis across all people trying to come to regional areas.

SUSAN LEDGER: Monica, too, if you're placing prac students out in those areas to give them a taste—and if you give them a taste, they end up loving it and they actually will go back. We can't get accommodation short term; the rents are so expensive. We have had evidence, like you said, about—in cars, in tents, all sorts of different things.

ANNABEL STRACHAN: And in our western areas, there is no accommodation. There is a teacher house and that is it.

DEBORAH NIELSEN: And on occasions there's no water taps.

The CHAIR: Any other questions from the Committee members? If not, thank you very much to the panel. It's always important for this Committee to be acutely aware of the unique issues in rural and regional New South Wales, so we thank you very much for your submissions and participation. We'll carry forward a lot of those ideas for our Committee report and recommendations.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee adjourned at 15:24.