

Valuing the teaching profession



an independent
inquiry



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Introduction

In early 2020, the NSW Teachers Federation resolved to commission an independent inquiry into the state of the teaching profession in the public schools of NSW and the significant changes that have affected the profession since 2004.

It did so in the context that there had been no comprehensive review since the 2003 case in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission (IRC), whose Decision was handed down in 2004.

The Inquiry Panel comprised:

Chair: Hon Dr Geoff Gallop AC
Former Premier of Western Australia and Minister for Education, Emeritus Professor, School of Government, University of Sydney

Hon Dr Tricia Kavanagh
Former Justice of the NSW Industrial Court and Deputy President of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission

Mr Patrick Lee
Former Chief Executive, NSW Institute of Teachers.
Hon Associate, School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney.



The Terms of Reference directed the Panel to inquire into the changes that have taken place in the practice of the teaching profession in the public schools of NSW. The starting point for the Inquiry was 2004, the last formal inquiry into the value of the teaching profession, which was undertaken by the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW. A near contemporaneous study, the Vinson report, overlapped in many respects with the Industrial Relations Commission investigation.

The Panel was directed to examine the impact of policies and mandated changes in practice imposed by governments and their agencies. Seven parameters of significant effect on the practice of teaching, and the context within which teachers' work, were specified without limiting the matters that might be considered (e.g. the impact of technology, regulation, industrial arrangements, changes in roles and expectations, movements in attraction and retention, changes in curriculum, assessment and reporting, and the impact of research and reports).

In making recommendations, the Panel was to have regard to proposals to better support teachers and the profession, including through necessary and appropriate resources and remuneration.

Approach

The proposed design of the Inquiry included an initial phase of research by the Panel (late term 1/early term 2 of the school year), a series of meetings with schools and teachers across the state in term 2 (May through June), receipt of teacher submissions by July 2020, and formal hearings in term 3 (July through September). With the effect of COVID-19 on schools and teachers, the statewide hearings in term 2 were put aside, and the organisation of the formal hearings delayed. Expert witnesses who made submissions were commissioned or invited to contribute to hearings held in early October, with evidence from selected teacher witnesses, who had made submissions, heard in late October/early November.

Apart from these formal proceedings, the Panel was greatly assisted by more than 1000 submissions from teachers and schools, and the appointment of NEW Law principal Mr Neale Dawson as Counsel Assisting, and his team.

The Inquiry Report chapters commence with a consideration of the essential features and purpose of teaching, and examines the findings of the IRC's 2004 Decision and the Vinson report to provide a foundation for describing and assessing the nature of the changes to the practice of the profession over the past 17 years.

Chapter 3 examines key contextual features of this period, which have had such a dominant impact on teaching.

Chapters 4 to 7 identify and examine the major policy changes affecting the experience of schooling and the conditions under which teachers have worked since 2004 and continue to shape teaching in the coming years.

Chapters 8 to 11 address key issues the Panel believes deserve serious attention to support a confident, well-qualified and resourced profession to meet the legitimate and important goals of the public schooling system.

The Report was delivered to the NSW Teachers Federation in February 2021.

Terms of Reference

The panel has been appointed by the NSW Teachers Federation to inquire into the following matters:

- (a)** changes in policies, procedures and/or practices of:
 - 1. the New South Wales Department of Education
 - 2. the New South Wales and Australian governments (including intergovernmental agreements); and
 - 3. other relevant government agencies, which have impacted on:
 - 1. the delivery of education
 - 2. decision making processes in education
 - 3. support services available to schools
- (b)** the effect of new/changing technologies across the system
- (c)** changes to regulation of the profession
- (d)** changed industrial arrangements governing the work of teachers and principals
- (e)** changes to the roles of classroom teachers, specialist teachers and those in executive positions and community expectations of them
- (f)** movements in attraction to the profession and retention within the profession
- (g)** the impact of changing curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements
- (h)** relevant international, national and state research and reports
- (i)** any matter reasonably incidental to a matter mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (h) above.

Further, the Panel was asked to consider the following in its recommendations:

- (a)** how to best support teachers and principals in NSW public schools, including through investment in the education workforce and capital infrastructure
- (b)** how to best improve the status of the teaching profession, including, but not limited to matters going to remuneration.



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Initiatives are needed to provide more time for teachers to plan lessons, engage in professional development and collaborate with colleagues

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Executive summary

It is now 17 years since the work and salaries of teachers were subject to systematic examination in a work value case before the NSW Industrial Relations Commission.

Since then, we have seen significant (and still ongoing) increases in the volume and complexity of work generated by government decisions and heavily influenced by the social, economic and technological environment. Coupled with this has been a similarly significant increase in the responsibilities required of principals, their executive teams and classroom teachers.

It is a general finding of the Panel that the interplay between the contextual variables, myriad government policies and initiatives, and increased responsibilities since 2003/04, is of a scale and intensity that dwarfs the findings in each of the assessments found in the 1970, 1980/81, 1990/91 and 2003/04 work cases and in the Vinson report.



At the same time as these increases in work, complexity and responsibility there has been a decline in the relative position of teacher salaries alongside that of other professions and a reduced attractiveness of public sector teaching as a career; this being a contradiction that needs urgent attention by way of a significant upgrade in teacher salaries and an improvement in career options (see Recommendations 2 and 8).

Evidence from experts and teachers pointed to a range of factors besides salaries that needed attention if public schools and their teachers were to achieve the purposes and goals required of them, and as outlined in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration of 2019. These include:

- the ways the teaching profession is engaged and policies and programs are developed and implemented
- the management of all aspects of staffing, including workforce planning, promotion and professional development
- the allocation and management of time within schools
- the provision and funding of support services for schools and teachers, particularly but not only in relation to tackling educational disadvantage
- student assessment in all of its aspects, including testing and reporting to parents and the community
- the frame within which public education has been understood and organised as a collection of semi-independent schools rather than as a system that is inclusive, collaborative and expansive.

In relation to these identified factors of importance the Panel finds as follows:

- the implementation challenges that will come with the implementation of the recommendations from the Curriculum Review are significant and will require a more measured and realistic plan (see Recommendations 6 and 7)

- that the professional voice of teachers be taken more seriously in matters related to research, policy development and administration (see Recommendations 9, 10 and 11)
- the system of professional accreditation needs strong support, added to which should be initiatives to improve its administration and develop better career pathways attached to it (Recommendation 12)
- Local Schools, Local Decisions has failed and its successor, the School Success Model, doesn't address the problems facing public school principals and teachers; a much better proposal being a major resetting of the mix between department and local school initiative when it comes to staffing matters and the provision of support services (Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- initiatives are needed to provide more time for teachers to plan lessons, engage in professional development and collaborate with colleagues (Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- NAPLAN should be redesigned on a random survey basis, and this to be backed up by an improved involvement of teachers in assessment and more professional development so that teachers understand the range of issues associated with data, its collection, reporting and use (Recommendation 9).

In preparing its recommendations on how to ensure our public school teachers will be in a position to meet the current and future challenges related to their mandated obligations, the Panel is conscious of the budgetary implications that necessarily follow. With this in mind a staggered six-year approach to implementation is proposed, including for salary proposals which are in the range of what has been deemed necessary to ensure attractiveness and deal with significant change in earlier, more formal wage cases: 21–24.3 per cent (1970), 9.5 per cent (1981), 9–13 per cent for teachers and 20–29 per cent for executive staff (1991), and 12–19.5 per cent (2004). All of these involved a shorter phasing in of the increase.

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An imperative for the implementation of successful educational change is the careful and inclusive development of change proposals

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Recommendations

Responding to this evidence has taken the Panel to the following areas for recommended changes:

- recognising the consultation, support and resourcing needed for implementing successful educational change
- resetting the staffing and resourcing of schools, including the provision of specialist support staff, centrally employed
- addressing the outcomes of the Curriculum Review
- lifting the salaries and improving the career options of the public school teaching profession
- establishing and implementing a new resourcing standard for public schools



- working to produce a better understanding and mix of assessment tools, central and local, for evaluation of student performance
- continuing to review all aspects of administrative burden on schools and teachers, and simplifying the different regulatory regimes applying to them.

The following recommendations should be understood in the context of the relevant discussions in the chapters of this Report.

Time and resources for implementation

Recommendation 1

The Panel recognises that an imperative for the implementation of successful educational change is the careful and inclusive development of change proposals, trialling in schools where this is appropriate, associated training and professional development of relevant staff, appropriate resourcing, including allocation of dedicated time, and a realistic and professionally responsible implementation timeframe that is informed by other demands on teachers and schools that are concurrent.

The Panel recognises that addressing all the issues that have come before it and the implications of the recommendations the Panel has made need to be responsibly addressed over a reasonable timeframe.

In part this acknowledges the rate and volume of change that has confronted principals and teachers as well as acknowledging that our proposed changes require ample time to be professionally addressed and funded.

The Inquiry recommends a staggered six-year implementation plan (2021–2026).

A public education system, not a collection of schools

The Inquiry recommends that after the failure of Local Schools, Local Decisions there be a re-setting of the mix of departmental and school responsibilities and relationships in respect of staffing matters, support services, professional development and funding.

Recommendation 2 Staffing matters

In respect of staffing, the following issues should be addressed by the Department of Education as a matter of priority:

- staffing levels and processes that address the excessive use of temporary teacher employment, in particular of beginning teachers
- frameworks of expectations and good practice in the induction of new staff to be mandatory in all schools
- permanent staffing at a level to overcome the widespread shortage of casual teachers
- school counsellors to be provided on the basis of at least 1:500 students and a corresponding increase in senior psychologists education by 2023 to address the significant increase in student mental health issues
- implement a new statewide, standards-based promotions system, at the centre of which is an on-the-job assessment affirming aspirants' teaching expertise and educational leadership capacity; such assessment to be conducted by the Department of Education and precede actual appointment to positions in schools
- develop a more expansive career structure for teachers that includes centrally employed consultancy/advisory roles and better recognise expert practice within schools
- teachers' work to be revised to provide further for professional activities such as collegial preparation and planning time, data assessment and oversight of individual student progress. The time allocations to be achieved to ensure a further two hours for all primary teachers and a reduction of two hours to the current maximum face-to-face

teaching loads for all secondary teachers, including head teachers and deputy principals; further, the allocated professional, non-face-to-face teaching time for the primary deputy and assistant principals to equal the minimum afforded secondary deputy principals and head teachers respectively, with appropriate adjustments for teaching principals

- support all of these actions with comprehensive workforce planning, including selection and entry requirements into teacher training and scholarship programs to address shortages.

In addressing the above recommendations, the Panel suggests a priority be given to increasing this planning time for all teachers, including those in promotions positions, in primary schools, special units/schools and the most disadvantaged secondary and central schools, commencing in 2022, with the remaining schools being included from the following year. (Note: the colloquial naming of this allocated time as “release” time, while understandable as customary language, tends to undermine the educational power and effectiveness of the professional activities enabled by this time. Without it, much of the quality of practice espoused in government policy documents is simply not attainable in the context of the changing complexities of the educational endeavour). These new time allocations should be included in industrial instruments and in the staffing allocations for each school.

Such a timeline for primary teachers to access improved professional preparation time would align well with the proposed timeline for the introduction of revised primary syllabuses, as below.

Recommendation 3 Support services

That the Department of Education resume responsibility for the provision of specialist professional support services, regional/district based, including consultant and advisory roles in the areas such as

curriculum, disability, English as an additional language or dialect and well-being; to be accessible to schools and teachers in a timely manner.

Also, that the Department ensure that all students in public schools have access to the necessary technology to support their learning.

Recommendation 4 Professional development

That the NSW Government take steps to support the development of, and access to, high-quality professional development in areas nominated as priority areas.

The recently announced approach to nominating priority areas for teacher professional development (for maintenance of accreditation purposes) by the NSW Minister for Education should work to support emerging pressures in the system and to address issues revealed by research. The nomination of teaching subject/syllabus content should support the extensive efforts of many of the subject associations and be utilised to support the introduction of the new revised curriculum over the coming years.

However, nominating priority areas is not the same as developing and providing high-quality professional development in the nominated area — it merely mandates teachers find their own. Further, in relation to student well-being, more substantial central support services and resources are needed than simply mandating teachers’ professional development.

There is a major need for teachers to be supported by strategies to accommodate the wide range of ability levels in their classes, and the cumulative effects of incomplete learning in previous years. This should not be left to instructions to teachers to differentiate their teaching and be subject to extensive planning documentation and data entry relating to such differentiation. The focus should firstly be on manageable and adroit strategies, addressed through professional development support and workshopped among staff in more liberally afforded time to do just this.



Recommendation 5 Funding

That a review of the Resource Allocation Model be undertaken in tandem with actions to revise the employment of centrally based (regional/district) expert support staff, and a revised school staffing regime as set out above.

Curriculum review

Recommendation 6

The Panel supports the Government's first priority, new K–2 English and Mathematics syllabuses developed in 2021 for introduction in 2022. This implies that the reduction of extra-curricular demands, reductions in administration and compliance activities, have been achieved for 2022.

Revised years 3–6 syllabuses could be prepared and consulted on during 2022–23 for implementation in 2024, along with the core years 7–10 syllabuses (following the three-year cycle proposed by Professor Masters. The Panel believes that the factors set out in Masters' final report (pp.107–108; reproduced in chapter 7) need to be fully respected. These include:

- creation of enabling conditions, including increased time for teachers to focus on the priorities of the new curriculum
- provision of professional development support
- a reduction in the external compliance requirements on schools that dissolve instructional planning time
- reduction in the extra activities and programs imposed by governments over time without removal of previous mandates
- revision in the excessive documentary requirements of lesson planning documents (whether actually mandated or arising from precautionary actions in the face of uncertain inspection requirements of either NSW Education Standards Authority or the Department of Education).

One could add that Gonski 2.0, the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation Final Report on Local Schools, Local Decisions, international best practice in educational change and the statements of a number of witnesses to the Inquiry all testify to the importance of a substantial commitment to high-quality development, trialling, professional preparation and sensibly staged introduction of change, with a proper allocation of time for teachers to collectively and individually engage with the changes in the context of their school circumstances.

The development of a staggered package of professional development and support around the emerging syllabuses is a prerequisite for implementation.

The Panel notes that the Government's own proposed timeline for the implementation of the new curriculum specifies that by 2022, the Government is "to introduce reduced extra-curricular demands on schools and address compliance demands". This should be a threshold issue for any proposed action on commencing implementation of a new curriculum.

Recommendation 7

The remaining syllabuses should be programmed for proper development and implementation over the 2024–2027 period, having regard to:

- the recency of revised HSC syllabuses, and their first examination in 2019/20
- the possible priority for the revised approach to vocational education and training courses
- a possible information program to encourage less slavish, and documentation heavy, following of current syllabuses over this period
- revision of Languages other than English syllabuses postponed until after 2026
- syllabus development to broadly follow the three-year cycle proposed by Professor Masters.

The NSW Education Standards Authority to determine the outstanding issues from the Review,

including the nature of the syllabuses themselves, the appropriate inclusion of elements to address the outcomes of the Thematic Review of Writing and dropping of the untimed syllabuses notion. Other matters requiring resolution include whether a major project is compulsory for all HSC students, whether inside subjects or as stand-alone, and the applied knowledge dimension of syllabus requirements. The NSW Education Standards Authority to be properly resourced to ensure there is adequate time and access to seconded expert teachers for working parties to ensure high-quality outcomes.

Recommendation 8 **Salaries to overcome the relativities gap**

The Panel recommends the following issues and approach in resetting teachers' salaries:

- the final salary increase under the current Award of 2.28% was paid in January 2021. Government policy and its success before the Industrial Relations Commission portends a 0.3% increase in January 2022, further followed by a number of years of capped salary increases (no more than 1.5% pa)
- such an approach would undermine the standing and attractiveness of the teaching profession and be unjust given the evidence of change, intensification of work, increase in skills and expertise, and the value of the profession's efforts for the public good in NSW over the past 17 years. Without a significant increase in salaries, the State Government will not be able to address the significant shortage of teachers in NSW or recruit the additional ones to meet rising enrolments
- the Government should enter into discussions with the Teachers Federation during 2021 to address all of the issues raised in this Report, including the non-salary related recommendations and implement a staged movement towards improved salary relativities with other professions
- the level of increase applicable across the board should be in the range of 10–15%, achieved within the next two-year Award or salaries agreement

(2022–23), to restore the relativities with other comparable professions (absorbing the 0.3% projected increase). Such an increase of 10–15% would allow some differential quantum increases for teachers at the top of the scale, teachers in promotions positions and principals

- the Panel recommends that in the following Award or salaries agreement (2024–25), a further tranche of salary increases be implemented to further address the value of teachers' work generally but also value the work of the identified upper reaches of the profession, within a range of 10–15%
- senior psychologists education remuneration be set at deputy principal rate (no later than January 2022)
- a pathway to the head teacher rate for dual-qualified school counsellors should be included within the school counsellors' scale no later than January 2022
- in preparing its recommendations on how to ensure our public school teachers will be in a position to meet the current and future challenges related to their mandated obligations, the Panel is conscious of the budgetary implications that necessarily follow. With this in mind, the Panel has proposed a staggered six-year approach to implementation, including for the Panel's salary proposals, which are in the range of what has been deemed necessary to ensure attractiveness and to deal with significant change as in earlier, more formal, wage cases: 21–24.3% (1970), 9.5% (1981), 9–13% for teachers and 20–29% for executive staff (1991), and 12–19.5% (2004). All of these involved a shorter phasing in of the increases.



Recommendation 9 **A better mix of assessment**

The NSW Government commence a process to establish NAPLAN testing on a random survey basis, rather than a census testing and reporting basis.

Teacher involvement in assessment be strengthened through the national project to provide a bank of online tests aligned to the curriculum; such a movement would need to be associated with a steady attention to supporting teachers to develop greater expertise in diagnostic, formative and summative testing of their students and in the expert use of data within their classes and across the school.

Recommendation 10 **Addressing the burden of administration**

The Department of Education Secretary's Reducing Administrative Burden Group (2018) addressing administrative burdens on the profession be urgently reinvigorated.

Recommendation 11 **Involving teachers**

The operations of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation be revised to ensure the advisory products of its research are made available to teachers in a professionally usable format with associated professional development support where applicable, and that to this end, the Advisory Council of Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation be expanded to include practicing expert teachers.

Recommendation 12 **Induction and accreditation**

To support more effective and more consistent practice across the schools in the induction of teachers and supporting their progress towards Proficient Teacher accreditation, the Teacher Accreditation Act should be amended to establish NSW Education Standards Authority as the accreditation authority.

This would address the predicament of so many casual and temporary teachers who struggle to have their teaching practice considered by busy principals when they are only present for limited periods of time. The cost to individuals of prolonged periods of employment prior to such accreditation is exacerbated by the now very significant salary gap between the Graduate and Proficient Teacher rates. Proficient Teacher accreditation would still be based on in-school assessments of competence against the Standards.

If the Act allows it, this might be initially effected by the Secretary of the Department delegating this role to the NSW Education Standards Authority for public schools.

Assumptions

An initial task the Panel set for itself was to identify the principles that should apply to its investigations. General commentary about education is not always accurate or well informed and it is the aim of this Inquiry to bring realism to the discussion. Within the Terms of Reference, a range of questions arose.

Within what parameters do we assess work and workload? This brings us to an understanding of the purpose of education and schools in society.

What are the research findings that help us identify what we should regard as the key areas for attention? What is it that really makes a difference in education?

What is it about public schools that makes them distinctive within the wider system that is NSW education? This goes beyond the classroom to the school community.

With respect to the questions above, the Panel's answers are as follows:

- Education should be defined and understood in expansive terms as agreed by the nation's education ministers in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration of December 2019
- Teachers and principals are the key participants; commitment by them and support for them being the key to productive outcomes for the community at large
- Public schools should be acknowledged as providers for all and the dominant providers of education for minorities and for those with a disadvantage or a disability.

All too often the first point is forgotten or ignored.

All too often the second is undermined by a failure to provide the enabling conditions for educators to provide the desired education in the context of their school communities.

All too often the third is the victim of "out of sight, out of mind".



The purpose and goals of education

There are many aspects to an education system but respective of all is the question: What is the purpose of education? Running an education system, one may or may not be fully cognisant of principles that govern thinking and practice. We need to bring those principles to the surface and consider their meaning and implications for the system. It may be the case, of course, that there are a range of objectives in play and they may sit uneasily with each other. More simply, it may be the case that there are differing views within the system that dominate policy and practice.

The first aspect of a definition of purpose is the inculcation of particular knowledge, capacities and skills — personal, technical and intellectual — deemed necessary for participation in the life of the community, wider society, the economy and polity.

They are what we might call the “basics” of learning: fundamental skills and learning in the so-called STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subjects, and the wider range of learning about the natural world and human society past, present and possible futures; climate coming to mind in today’s world.

It is a learning model; the school as enabler and the teacher as facilitator for the students. It is more than a narrowly conceived definition, the literacy and numeracy it seeks includes both political and cultural literacy. It is about educating our children to achieve a full and comprehensive participation — at work, in the community and as citizens. It is a definition that points to the need for a sound general knowledge, specific capacities and skills and an appreciation of contemporary society. It takes time and involves stages, as the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration points out in its assessment of early childhood, the primary years, middle years and senior years. Each involves a transition, with the hope that in the process every student is encouraged and supported “to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face” (Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration, p2).

We are led to ask: Should there be more? What about the self as subject, as the Dutch educationalist Gert Biesta asks? He calls this the aspiration to “individuation” or “subjectification”, the process of becoming a subject.

“It is precisely *not* about the insertion of ‘newcomers’ into existing orders, but about ways of being that hint at independence from such orders, ways of being in which the individual is not simply a ‘specimen’ of a more encompassing order. Whether all education actually contributes to subjectification is debatable. Some would argue that this is not necessarily the case and that the actual influence of education can be confined to qualification and socialisation.”¹

It is important to note that what Biesta calls the “subjectification” factor needs to be considered alongside the knowledge, capacities and skills needed for work and socialisation; it’s not one or the other but rather one and the other.

This idea is framed within the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration of 2019. Consider, for example, the following quotes as part of Goals 1 and 2:

Goal 1 – the system should:

- ... empower learners to overcome barriers (p5)
- ... encourage young people to hold high expectations (p5).

Goal 2 – governments should support all young Australians to:

- ... have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity (p6)
- ... think deeply and logically and obtain and evaluate evidence as the result of studying fundamental disciplines (p7).

Strongly present in this nationally agreed definition of a good education is this commitment to the inculcation of individual confidence and creativity. As Biesta puts it:

“Any education worthy of its name should always contribute to processes of subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting.”²

These are powerful and commendable ideas, indeed values, and their incorporation into the curriculum, the school and the classrooms is never easy. It is what professional teachers and experienced educationists tell us is one of the driving forces of their commitment, whether confronted with high, not-so-high or low levels of educational attainment in the classroom. The Panel shares that aspiration with them. Indeed, as Lyndsay Connors has noted with regard to some children: “schools are the only place where they are safe and secure and where they have the guidance and support of adults who behave rationally and responsibly — teachers.”³

The working conditions of teachers

It’s now 17 years since the work of teachers was subject to an in-depth analysis by an independent body. That was the work value investigation by the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW in 2003/04 (evidence presented and heard in 2003, with a Decision in 2004). Preceding this — and feeding into its investigation — was the Independent Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW, chaired by Professor Tony Vinson. More about these reports follow in the next chapter but the Panel notes the importance that inquiry placed on the position of teaching in our social and economic systems. From the point of view of this Inquiry now, the following quote from the 2003/04 case says it most appropriately.

“The Decisions of this Commission, parts of which are extracted earlier, recite with perspicuity and incisiveness the importance of teachers to the future of our children and our society. There is little more we can say in that regard which has not been capably said by our predecessors, all of which remains true in the present day. It is not merely rhetoric, but a truth which forms the cornerstone of our findings, that ‘education is made or broken on the anvil of the human efforts, qualities and ideals of these teachers’.”⁴

What’s important here is the recognition of teachers’ work as a key factor in education. In 2005 this was confirmed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).⁵

“The first and most solidly based finding is that the largest source of variation in student learning is attributable to differences in what students bring to school — their abilities and attitudes, and family and community background. Such factors are difficult for policy makers to influence, at least in the short run.

The second broad conclusion is that of those variables which are potentially open to policy influence, factors to do with teachers and teaching are the most important influences on student learning. In particular, the broad consensus is that ‘teacher quality’ is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement.”

What has happened to workload and complexity of teachers’ work since 2003/04 and how that measures against remuneration and system support is the central concern of the Inquiry. What becomes important is how the term “teacher quality” is understood. In the view of the Panel, the definition provided by the OECD is a good start, but more is needed. First, they point to “readily measurable teacher characteristics such as qualifications, teaching experience, and indicators of academic ability or subject-matter knowledge”. Second, they add the following list of abilities:

- to convey ideas in clear and convincing ways
- to create effective learning environments for different types of students
- to foster productive teacher-student relationships
- to be enthusiastic and creative
- to work effectively with colleagues and parents.

Third is school leadership in all of its manifestations. The Panel noted that when the OECD was preparing its work plans for 2007/08, “school leadership” ranked third out of 29 activities.⁶ The Panel received significant feedback to the effect that individual teachers “cannot be supported or their talents sufficiently nurtured if the school itself does not change from a collection of independent classrooms to an interdependent organisation in which individuals routinely contribute to others’ improvement”.⁷

Ensuring this can happen reverts to the school executive and the priorities it sets for itself. What becomes important is not just how teachers’ work has changed but how principals’ (and other school



leaders') work has changed since 2003/04. As is said of the potential for leadership, it can improve school outcomes by "influencing the motivation and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment".⁸

There is, however, another factor of great importance to teacher quality and that is working conditions. This involves a range of factors; physical, organisational, sociological, political, cultural, psychological and educational.

Considering the position of the classroom teacher, Susan Moore Johnson⁹ has provided the following description of what benchmarks ought to be and how improvement under them might be demonstrated, given her own estimation of contemporary education in the USA. It provided a useful template for the Panel to determine the factors in play today, and how they

are rated by experts and practitioners. Crucially, these measures are simultaneously indications of the presence of necessary enabling conditions for effective teaching to meet the goals of the education system.

While the Panel was unable to adequately consider all of the infrastructure needs of the system, it is clearly the case, based on the demographic data, that there is a substantial challenge for the government to provide the schooling infrastructure needed to provide adequate education for every NSW public school student.

Benchmarks for School Workplace Conditions

Benchmarks for...	Moving from...	Moving toward...
Teaching assignments	Out-of-field or split assignments; excessive teaching load or class size	Appropriate teaching assignments; fair and manageable teaching load and class size
Working relationships among teachers	Working in isolation from colleagues	Working collaboratively with colleagues
Support for new teachers	Sink-or-swim induction	Ongoing observation of, interaction with, and advice from experienced colleagues
Support for students	Little assistance for students or for teachers in working with students; inadequate family and community support	Collective teacher responsibility for student achievement, comprehensive student support services, school-family-community partnerships
Curricular support	Under- or overprescribed curriculum, often not aligned with standards	Complete, aligned curriculum that can be used flexibly
Resources and materials	Routine shortages of instructional supplies; teachers spend their own money for essentials	Sufficient resources and materials; teacher stipends for extras
Assessment	Excessive focus on tested topics and test-taking skills	Standardized tests, as one part of a comprehensive assessment strategy
Professional development	A miscellaneous selection of one-shot workshops	Coherent, job-embedded assistance that meets individual teachers' instructional needs
Professional influence and career growth	Having the same influence and opportunities on the first day and last day of one's career	Progressively expanding influence and increasing opportunities for career growth
Facilities	Inadequate, unsafe, decrepit buildings for some schools	Safe, well-maintained, well-equipped facilities for all schools
Principal's leadership	Insufficient attention to workplace conditions and interdependent aspects of teacher's work	Actively brokers workplace conditions; encourages teacher interdependence and collective work

Source: Susan Moore Johnson 2006

The role of public schools

The Panel is strongly of the view that public school principals and teachers are best seen as part of a public system that is inclusive: an obligation that “covers all children and young people, from across the spectrum of individual ability and behaviour, and of social, economic, family and cultural circumstances”.¹⁰ For principals and teachers, understanding the meaning of human rights and how to apply it in specific circumstances of difference and diversity is part of the job description.

Second, public education is collaborative with other parts of government and the community dedicated to the “health and wellbeing” of all; it being understood that a “sufficient level of physical and emotional health” is needed if learning is to be possible.¹¹ This point, which will be discussed in chapter 3, is becoming particularly important given the obligation we all have to tackle the growth in mental distress and illness being recorded among children and youth.

Third, public school teaching is challenging and can be confronting because of the “extremely complex, with diverse and overlapping needs” of the system’s student cohort, these being the words of the Department of Education in its submission to the National School Resourcing Board in 2019.

It is the public system that carries the vast bulk of students with disability and disadvantage. It puts a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of principals and teachers. They are obliged to accommodate “the common and shared interests of all schools and students as well as the significant differences: This must be managed through policies that avoid marginalisation and exclusion and which depress educational opportunities in schools serving less advantaged communities as well as the level and distribution of schooling overall”.¹²

The statistics¹³ relating to this challenge are confronting and will be discussed further in chapter 3. In terms of numbers, they are as follows:

- the number of students with disability estimated to attract funding support has increased by almost 300 per cent since 2002
- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students in public schools has risen by 83 per cent from 2004 to 2019
- the number of students from a language background other than English (LBOTE) has increased by 45 per cent from 2004 to 2019
- students classified from a low socio-educational advantage status now make up 32 per cent of the student population
- one-third of NSW’s low socio-educational advantage students live in regional, rural and remote areas and 86 per cent of those are enrolled in public schools.

It follows that any serious consideration of the work of teachers will need to be mindful of these statistics and what they mean on a daily basis and what they mean for the necessary level and type of support. One thing the Panel has concluded is that imagining and promoting a “system” that is little more than a collection of semi-independent schools, minimally united and supported, is not a sound basis upon which to build the commitment, capacities and leadership needed to turn the corner on disadvantage. It’s but one aspect of what the Panel believes is inadequate support for the aim of reducing educational inequalities across the student population in NSW. In fact, the incidence of inequality is growing, as David Hetherington has shown in his issues paper for the Public Education Foundation, *What Price the Gap? Education and Inequality in Australia* (April 2018). He notes that inequality is found in access to teachers, resources and curriculum, and in test performance. It increases as students move through their school years and exists within sectors as well as between them.



It may be the case too that particular developments in the environment in which schools operate can exacerbate an already challenging mission. We've seen this with economic recessions, fires and floods and more recently with the COVID-19 pandemic. Nor is it the case that government policies outside of the province of education will always be neutral or positive in their effect on what is happening in the school or classroom. Economic policies matter, as mentioned above, but so too do security, social support and health policies. It's a very complex matter but evidence tells us that inequality can be reversed and that our government schools will need to be central to that endeavour.

It's all about enabling professional conditions; time, remuneration and priorities, and whether the teacher, school and system have the right set to make a difference not just today but for the future, already with us as evident in the NSW Curriculum Review report and the Productivity Commission report on mental health. Both have recommendations that are as significant and challenging as we've seen in the past 20 years.

Idealism, realism and the way forward

What the Panel learned from these initial observations of factors that matter to the Inquiry is that the public school teacher today is caught in the middle of two powerful forces, the idealism of the broad goals of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration and the stark realities of many of the communities they have been engaged to serve.

The former drives them to expand the learning and horizons of their students and the latter disciplines them to keep their feet on the ground with respect to the educational challenges in places of entrenched and generational disadvantage. Part of the way these seemingly contradictory forces can be managed to good effect needs to come from the agency and professionalism of the individual teacher but so too does school leadership, collaboration and collegiality matter, along with supportive working conditions.

¹ *Biesta, 2010, p. 21.*

² *ibid.*

³ *Connors, April 15, 2020.*

⁴ *Crown employees (Teachers in schools and TAFE and related employees) salaries and conditions award (2004) NSWIRComm 114.*

⁵ *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2005, p. 2.*

⁶ *OECD, 2008.*

⁷ *Johnson, S. M., 2012, p. 119.*

⁸ *Pont et al., 2008, p. 9.*

⁹ *Johnson, S. M., 2006, p. 4.*

¹⁰ *Connors & McMorrow, Submission to Inquiry, p. 3.*

¹¹ *Gavrielatos, Submission to Inquiry, p. 11.*

¹² *Connors & McMorrow, op. cit., p. 3.*

¹³ *Gavrielatos, op. cit., pp. 34-37.*

The starting point

This Inquiry was commissioned to examine factors relevant to considering the value of teachers' work in the NSW public schooling system since 2004. A baseline for this consideration, against a background of significant changes to the context within which teachers undertake their profession, policy demands that have been introduced and changes in professional and administrative practices, it is convenient to briefly examine two significant documents from the beginning of this period.

The Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award [2004] NSW IR Comm 114 (referred to as the IRC 2004 Decision)¹⁴ of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) followed an extensive examination of all facets of teachers' work in 2003 by a Full Bench of the IRC. It was substantially a work value case

that determined, within the technical principles then applying in that industrial context, the value of changes in teachers' work since the previous such review in 1990/91. The IRC's Decision contains extensive descriptions of key aspects of teachers' work and the changes that occurred over the previous period. As such it provides something of a baseline for this Inquiry.

The second foundational document for this Inquiry is the report of the Independent Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW (the Vinson report)¹⁵. Released in 2002 after a year-long inquiry in 2001, and revisited in an audit of the implementation of its recommendations in 2005, this report examined closely the many dimensions of teachers' work but within a wider perspective that included the operation of the public schooling system itself. The report was included in evidence in the 2003/04 industrial case, and informed much of the evidence advanced in that case, but had wider application in that the inquiry, although commissioned by the NSW Teachers Federation, was given support by the Department of Education, and a number of its recommendations led to consequent changes as a result of government decisions.

Taken together these documents describe the condition of teachers' work up to 2004.



The 2004 IRC Decision

It is important to understand the place of the IRC 2004 Decision within the tradition in NSW of periodic reviews of the professional work of teachers, and the resetting of arrangements that determine its practice and, in effect, its place within the wider community. The IRC's Decision summarised the history of the regulation of teachers' salaries and conditions, commencing from the first Award in 1919 by the then-Industrial Commission through to 1970 in a series of agreements and determinations.

In 1970, the Industrial Commission undertook a comprehensive examination of the work performed by teachers, the first of four such cases subsequently in 1980/81, 1990/91 and 2003/04. The Industrial Commission employed various principles applicable at the time, such as the work value principle, the special case principle, a structural efficiency principle and so on. Beyond the significant adjustment to salaries that resulted from each of these cases, there were various changes made to the broad arrangements applying to the profession: salary scales were restructured, primary and secondary teachers' arrangements were brought together, new classifications were introduced and various conditions addressed.

It is significant to note that since 1970 there has been a need for an opportunity, a mechanism, for such a major review of teachers' work to ensure that the value and importance to the community of the profession is reassessed and reset. While these cases proceed on the basis of quite strict application of the relevant principles, the end result is a repositioning of the place of the teaching profession within the wider community, an exercise aimed, in part, at ensuring the profession's value to the community is recognised, the reality and complexity of teachers' work is recognised, and to support the profession to attract and retain practitioners for the education of the children and young people of NSW across 13 years of schooling.

An indication of the way the profession is considered in these cases, and the importance of there being mechanisms for ensuring its status is addressed, recognised and protected in a contemporary way, can be found in an extract from Sheldon in the 1970 case.

"Teachers are certainly the biggest professional career industry group in the community. Their numbers are so large that any award materially increasing their salaries must necessarily involve a great sum of money, but this fact is not a legitimate barrier to their right to receive remuneration commensurate with their work and its contribution to the welfare of the community. Education is the concealed mainspring in national development and, more importantly, a vast contributor to the spiritual betterment of society.

The heart of education is teaching. Buildings, equipment, high-level planning and new educational philosophies are essential in an efficient and progressive system of education. But all this is meaningless waste unless it bears fruit in the classrooms where today thousands of individual teachers communicate with hundreds of thousands of individual children. All the departmental planning, organisation and academic groundwork are channelled towards this personal relationship and in the end, education is made or broken on the anvil of the human efforts, qualities and ideals of these teachers.

It must follow that, great as may be the cost of placing the salaries of teachers at a reasonable level, this is something which the conscience of the community must face. To do otherwise would be to exploit one section of the community in the supposed interest of all. Such an approach, originally based on the conception that some work is so vital that those who make it their vocation can be expected partially to live off their dedication, is today completely outmoded. It is certainly short sighted. In truth the cost of providing reasonable salaries for teachers is, I believe, less a public burden than a public investment which must return very real dividends although, not being based on material values, they can never be quantified."¹⁶

It is significant that the mechanism afforded teachers to have the currency of the arrangements applying to their profession reviewed every decade or so was abolished by the government's decision in 2012. The application of a 2.5% wages cap for the NSW Public Service since that time — with a 12-month wage “near-freeze” of 0.3% imposed in 2020, and to apply to teachers during 2022 — has meant that it has been 17 years since a comprehensive examination of the work of teachers and its value to the community has been undertaken. The implications of this for remuneration will be considered in chapter 11 of this Inquiry's report.

This Inquiry was established to examine teachers' work and changes to it over the past 17 years. It does not do so as an industrial tribunal, nor is it required to apply the technical principles that apply to wage fixation. This Inquiry was commissioned to undertake an examination of teachers' work more broadly, including in terms more consistent with the approach of the Vinson Inquiry. Nonetheless, the descriptions and assessments of the IRC, as well as the rules applied, are valuable and authoritative as a baseline for the current Inquiry, particularly when fleshed out by the Vinson report's treatment of the same issues.

One important element of the IRC's Decision is its acceptance of the principle that its consideration of teachers' work at a particular point in time might include retrospective and prospective factors.

“Work value changes may have both retrospective and prospective elements. That is, an assessment of work value changes may involve an analysis of changes which have already occurred — the traditional work value case — or changes which are yet to be implemented (but are known), for instance, by virtue of workplace agreement or by force of statute.”¹⁷

That is, it is reasonable, necessary even, to have regard to measures being put in place that will direct the nature of teachers' work in the coming years even within the formal application of strict wage fixing rules

and principles. This will be an important consideration in this Inquiry in a number of areas to be discussed in this Report in later chapters, for instance the outcomes of the NSW Curriculum Review, (final report 2020) and expected changes arising from other reviews (such as by the NSW Audit Office into elements of teacher quality regulation and review of the pivotal schools' policy known as Local Schools, Local Decisions.

The report of the Vinson inquiry

Professor Tony Vinson, with two senior inquiry officers, undertook an extensive examination into all aspects of the NSW public education system. It produced 85 recommendations, and an audit was undertaken in 2005 in relation to implementation of those recommendations. The focus of the Vinson inquiry was broad. The Vinson report commenced with an accounting for the “assets” of the public education system, including the student population and its inclusive nature, the significant outcomes of schooling, the qualifications and commitment of teachers, the quality of pedagogy and school leadership, the incorporation of computers into the system. It acknowledged the role of public schools as a “haven from racism” that was experienced by some school populations in the wider community. The report addressed issues such as buildings and amenities, departmental structures and governance, selectivity in schooling, and the pattern of public investment which, while not the specific focus of the present Inquiry, undoubtedly carry implications for teachers in their work.

The Vinson report addressed the issue of teacher professionalism as its first priority, and in describing the raft of new initiatives then under development, set the stage for the present Inquiry to address the historic reshaping of regulation of the teaching profession enacted by the Institute of Teachers Act (2004). This is addressed in chapter 5 of this report.

The other key issues and findings of the Vinson report are summarised in tandem with those of the IRC Decision in the following section.



A view of the teaching profession from the IRC 2004 Decision and the Vinson report (2002 report and 2005 audit of its implementation)

Key issues

The issue of teacher professionalism

The Vinson report privileged the issue of teacher professionalism as its first focus.¹⁸ It recorded the submissions from teachers who expressed their concern over the lack of acknowledged professional status, and listed increasing regimentation of teaching through excessive specification of a centrally determined curriculum and increasing accountability on the basis of statewide testing of students. They expressed concerns about poor and underfunded access to professional development and lack of teacher agency or control in this regard, demoralisation stemming from the necessity for bruising and protracted industrial struggles to achieve fair salaries, and poor relations with the Department of Education.

Stress and concern stemming from new child protection processes that were perceived as lacking procedural fairness were registered. Vinson recommended that an improved approach to accountability in teachers' work should include a universal, regular, non-punitive goal-setting system linked to standards with clearer processes to separately address under-performance and complaints. Vinson accepted that the issue of salaries was intrinsic to the matter of professional status. Vinson also considered the often bitter industrial struggles for salary improvements were instrumental in the low level of trust between the teachers and the Department of Education, as well as being significant in teacher morale. Salaries are addressed specifically in this Report in chapter 11.

The report recounted recent history on moves towards the establishment of a teacher registration scheme in NSW and supported it as a necessary element in cementing the professional status of teaching. This

history includes explicit support for the establishment of a teacher registration authority by both teaching unions before the Royal Commission into the Police Force¹⁹, a ministerial discussion paper on the establishment of a teacher registration authority in 1997, the failure of a Bill in the NSW Parliament in 1998 to establish such an authority, the recommendations for the establishment of more explicit professional structures and processes for teaching from the 2000 report *Quality Matters*²⁰, and preliminary work aimed at the development of professional teaching standards for NSW teachers and the foreshadowed establishment of a NSW Institute of Teachers.

Vinson strongly supported the establishment of an Institute of Teachers as a way to more firmly underpin the professional status of teaching, with functions covering initial teacher preparation and qualifications, ongoing registration and professional development, registration on the basis of professional standards and application of these standards at different points of a teacher's career.

The IRC case did not address this issue. The establishment of the Institute of Teachers in 2004/05 and its significance for and impact on teachers and their work from 2005 to 2020 is addressed in chapter 5 of this report.

Curriculum and pedagogy, including the nature and pace of curriculum change

The Education Act 1990 established the modern form of the NSW school curriculum and the following period resulted in very significant, even unprecedented, change in curriculum structures and introduction of new syllabuses across the whole of schooling. Vinson traced the establishment of the NSW Board of Studies, the introduction of key learning areas (KLAs) and requirements for study in the primary and secondary curriculum and the major changes that followed. The IRC traversed the same area, noting the shift to outcomes-based syllabuses and the impacts on teaching, assessment and learning. Vinson recommended the office of the Board of Studies be absorbed into the Department of Education, the establishment of a pedagogy clearing house,

and importantly that curriculum change should be introduced in a more measured fashion, with trialling of new syllabuses in some schools and associated with appropriate professional development to support the changes.

The notion of an “overcrowded” curriculum was addressed in both documents, largely devoted to the introduction of multiple cross-curriculum perspectives and inclusion of numerous social learning courses or modules to address issues of community concern. In terms of syllabuses themselves, the focus was on the multiplicity of outcomes, and the pressure this placed on teaching time, resultant assessment and reporting, and impacts on teacher judgement. Vinson particularly finds that curriculum change was too often imposed from above with little coordination between the Board of Studies as a source of curriculum mandates and the Department with responsibility for supporting implementation in schools through provision of resources and professional development.

The present Inquiry addresses the more recent experience of curriculum change in NSW in relation to the highly significant shift to the NSW version of a new Australian Curriculum and the NSW Curriculum Review that sets the basis for yet another cycle of curriculum reform; a quite different approach to the notion of an “over-crowded” curriculum arises in this context.

Assessment of student performance, reporting and statewide testing

Vinson makes only passing reference to the shift from norm-referenced to standards-referenced assessment of student learning, introduced in the previous period along with redesigned syllabuses. There is one reference to the introduction of the statewide testing regime, the Basic Skills Test. The IRC 2004 Decision devotes some more detail to these issues, and the associated reporting on student achievement. The Decision identified a shift from periodic in-class testing and reporting on the basis of class ranking to more continuous assessments to identify achievement of outcomes as a basis for further progress. It noted more detailed reporting requirements as indicative of a greater emphasis on teacher judgement, but also

noted the application of externally produced outcomes schedules opened up greater external accountability oversight.

In relation to statewide testing, the Decision noted the progressive introduction, from 1989 to 2001, of five different formal tests covering basic skills; writing, literacy and language, numeracy and computer skills. Ultimately the IRC found that the increased work value accompanying these changes had been adequately compensated for in agreed salary adjustments over the previous periods. For the purposes of the present Inquiry, it is suffice to note that these tests were in some cases marked by the teachers at school, that there were diagnostic uses to be made of the results through teacher judgement (a point clearly advanced by the Teachers Federation in the case) suggesting timely return of results from the tests. The significance of these practices within the operation of schools and teachers’ work is considerably less, and different from, the effect of the new regime of NAPLAN testing and its public reporting, by school, on a public website (MySchool) that emerged in the period under review in this Inquiry. This issue is treated in this report, especially in chapter 9.

Technology

Vinson noted the rapidly increasing introduction of computers into schools as part of preparing students for the information society (“knowledge age” in the words of IRC witnesses), and he records that there were expected to be 100,000 computers available across the state’s 2200 schools by the end of 2002, that schools were being connected to the internet, and email accounts for students were expected by the end of 2003. There was considerable reporting of deficient technical maintenance and logistical support. The IRC 2004 Decision described more fully the impact of computerisation, including on school administration, data collection, and within syllabus requirements (as an object of study and in skills needed). While the IRC accepted the impact of access to the internet in terms of access to knowledge, the complexity in managing it in teaching, and the deficiency in training support, it considered that at that point, these changes were within the general expectations of professional updating or were included within its assessment of general curriculum change.



The contrast with the nature, rate and multiple impacts of technology on teaching, learning, student welfare and accountability in the recent period is dramatic and is addressed in this report in chapter 3.

Vocational Education and Training

The two reports addressed the significant developments in vocational education and training within schools (and TAFE, beyond the focus of this Inquiry). In summary they include the introduction of work-related competencies across the curriculum but more specifically the development of vocational education and training in schools, the nine new Industry Curriculum Frameworks (nationally agreed), structured workplace learning, industry qualifications and experience for the teachers, work placements and assessment of competencies. Rising retention rates (to year 12 in NSW: 33.7 per cent in 1973, double that rate by 1993. In 1999, the apparent retention rate to year 12 was 68 per cent, slightly reduced from the peak in 1994 of 70 per cent²¹) increased the demand for such courses. The IRC accepted the significance of these developments for the teachers involved, and the pattern established then underpins the more significant further changes in the retention rate, and the replacement of the School Certificate in year 10 by the Record of School Achievement that governs school exits from years 10 to 12, that occurred in the recent period (addressed in chapter 7).

Schools, communities and students

Vinson expansively addressed these issues in chapters on student welfare and discipline (chapter 5), rural and remote education (chapter 7), schools, communities and remote education (chapter 8), and inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (chapter 9). The IRC 2004 Decision addressed them in sections devoted to student behaviour and discipline, student, parental and community expectations, students with special needs and, somewhat allied, child protection requirements.²²

Professor Vinson was a witness on these matters in the IRC case, with the substance of the material in his report reflected in various ways in the IRC decision.

The treatment of each of these topics provides a base for the ongoing and changing developments in the period under review in the present Inquiry. The matters are addressed in various parts of this report, with the significant impact of new technologies on teaching and learning as well as on student behaviour and welfare, the introduction of Local Schools, Local Decisions' devolutionary practices and abolition of central resources and supports, retention rates and attendant upper secondary changes, demands for differentiated teaching, and recording and reporting within the context of the Disability Standards for Education legislation and aligned policies, all evidence of dramatic developments in the recent period in comparison to what is outlined in Vinson and the IRC Decision, though building on them.

Teacher education

Vinson addressed issues of teacher education in chapter 11 of his report although it did not feature in the IRC 2004 Decision other than with regard to the qualifications required of vocational education and training teachers. Vinson discussed teachers' views of the quality of graduates particularly with regard to classroom management, entry requirements, supply and demand trends, coverage of classroom management within initial teacher education programs, induction of and support for beginning teachers, and continuing professional development. He noted the anticipated establishment of an Institute of Teachers as a suitable vehicle to address these issues.

The role of the Institute of Teachers, and its successors, in establishing new requirements for teacher preparation programs and approving these programs will be considered in chapter 5.

Current Inquiry and its relation to the Vinson/IRC reports of 2002 and 2004 and the three previous IRC Decisions in 1970, 1981 and 1991

There has been a formal mechanism in the period 1970–2011 for an independent examination of teachers' work, and assessment of its value, and an outcome that repositioned teachers' salaries along with implementing various structural changes to key career elements. The decisions, following comprehensive reviews of teachers' work and changes in the previous period, resulted in salary increases as follows:

- 1970: 21%–24.3%, payable over 13 months, with a further 3% National Wage Case increase paid within this period
- 1981: 9.5% payable over nine months
- 1991: Teachers 9%–13%, executive staff 20%–29%, payable over seven months
- 2004: 12%–19.5%, payable over 18 months.

There were also other elements of the decisions that introduced significant changes such as the progressive merging of two-year and three-year trained scales, then merging these with the four-year and five-year trained scales to produce the common scale in place until the standards-based scale introduced by agreement in 2016.

The gaps between these decisions were 11 years, 10 years and 13 years. It will be 17 years since the 2004 Decision when the current Inquiry delivers this report.

In brief, this report will attest that the extent and depth of changes in teachers' work, the value of this work to the NSW community, and the degree to which teachers, principals and other school leaders, and schools themselves, have taken on a range of responsibilities, both educational and social, on behalf of the community with dramatically reduced departmental support, significantly exceed the considerations that led to the salary adjustments in the previous reviews.

The substantive chapters will set out the changing social realities that have governed the changing work of teachers, government and departmental policies and practices that have determined that work, and the experiences of teachers working under these policy regimes. Implications for a fair resetting of teachers' salaries, based on this evidence and scholarly research into the relative positioning of teachers' remuneration, will be addressed in chapter 11. The report will make recommendations as well to address some of the key features of teachers' work and school operations that the evidence reveals to be urgent in the interests of properly supporting and respecting the profession of teaching in NSW.

Conclusion

This report will build on a number of the trends in teachers' work and the operation of public schools identified in these two foundational documents. In some cases, changes are incremental, in others they are dramatically different while still continuous with emerging trends identified at that time. On top of that, there are significant aspects of teachers' work, and the practice of schooling, that would be virtually unrecognisable at that earlier time. This Inquiry is not established as an industrial tribunal and is not confined to narrow work-value principles; rather it is commissioned to provide a full assessment of the changes in teachers' work and the operations of schools resulting from the various factors specified in the Inquiry's terms of reference. The Inquiry's perspective is both retrospective across 2004 to 2020, and prospective, required to also consider the emerging demands on teaching at the time of writing.



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- ¹⁴. *Crown employees (Teachers in schools and TAFE and related employees) salaries and conditions award (2004) NSWIRComm 114.*
- ¹⁵. *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW, 2002.*
- ¹⁶. *Crown employees (Teachers in schools and TAFE and related employees) salaries and conditions award (2004) NSWIRComm 114, op. cit. para. 15.*
- ¹⁷. *ibid, para. 92.*
- ¹⁸. *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW, op. cit., pp. 38-70.*
- ¹⁹. *The Royal Commission addressed this issue in Volume 4 of its report dealing with the education sector under its supplementary paedophilia reference (New South Wales, Royal Commission into the New South Wales Police Service, 1997, pp. 360-364).*
- ²⁰. *Review of Teacher Education, New South Wales, 2000.*
- ²¹. *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW, op. cit., p. 73.*
- ²². *Crown employees (Teachers in schools and TAFE and related employees) salaries and conditions award (2004) NSWIRComm 114, op. cit. pp. 245-316.*

The context of teaching

There are many factors that influence the work of teachers, some the result of their own agency, some due to initiatives taken by governments and the agencies they administer, and some from the external environment and how it is changing. It is these external factors that will be addressed in this section of the report.

Many such issues could be recognised as having some influence, but it is the Panel's view that three stand out for special attention, namely: developments in public school populations; the emergence of an increasingly online and data-driven society; and a significant increase in the prevalence of mental distress and disorders among children and adolescents. Each of these makes a material difference to the working life of principals and teachers and no estimation of what shape education policies should take can be complete without consideration of their impact.

Public school students today

The assumption that teaching in public schools today is “extremely complex, with diverse and overlapping needs” was outlined in chapter 1. It takes us to what has been happening with respect to students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with language backgrounds other than English, and disadvantaged students generally, including those in regional, rural and remote NSW.

The fact that public schools are uniquely placed as providers of education for disadvantaged communities has always been the case but today it is even more so. We might say that what has been quantitative change has now become qualitative in its effects. In chapter 1, the statistics related to numbers were recorded, here the Panel outlines the changes in proportions:²³

- students with disability, up from 4.2 per cent in 2002 to 15.6 per cent in 2019, the largest increase of all
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, up from 4.7 per cent in 2004 to 8 per cent in 2019
- students with a language background other than English, up from 26.4 per cent in 2004 to 35.9 per cent in 2019



- low socio-educational advantage students. From 2013 to 2018 the numbers are up by 13.4 per cent and now make up 32 per cent of the student population
- students living in regional, rural and remote NSW. One third of low socio-economic status students live in these parts of the state, with 86 per cent enrolled in government schools.

Before looking at the issues that come into play because of the wider range of interests public schools have to cater for, it is important to recognise the importance of the pre-school years. The report, *Lifting Our Game*, commissioned by the states and territories in 2017 had this to say:

“Educators have understood the importance of the early years for well over a century. In the past two decades, neuroscience has introduced powerful new evidence, helping us to understand why the early years are so important in establishing the underlying skills and behaviours that are essential to a child’s lifelong learning, behaviour and health.”²⁴

The case for the proper provision of early childhood and pre-school education has been well and truly made, best seen as a social, economic and environmental investment.

However, this same report points out that Australia is below the OECD average in terms of such investment. Not only, then, do public schools face the complex challenges related to the way school populations have developed in Australia but also from the failure to properly develop and integrate early childhood and pre-school education. It matters because there’s a lost opportunity to identify developmental needs and follow that up with early intervention strategies to ensure all children are well placed for the primary years of education, particularly, but not only, those with disability or disadvantage.

Students with disability have been the fastest growing cohort in public schools in NSW. The introduction by the Commonwealth of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) has been a driver here, as has the lifting of the school leaving age and improved capacity to detect and diagnose disabilities.

Proper and professional support for the growing number of Indigenous students in the public system remains a stated priority, relevant to all areas of education, including the Australian Curriculum and the purpose and goals of education laid down in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration.

What works, what might work and what doesn’t work when it comes to individual students remains the subject of much community-wide discussion and often fierce debate, with the individual teacher in the classroom or the principal responsible for school culture and performance being at the end of the line. They have a specific job to do but in so doing they can’t ignore the history of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations within which schools work and from which they cannot escape. It’s a challenge of great significance, both personally and educationally, and again one given prominence in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration.

It was most encouraging to hear from an Indigenous teacher co-managing programs in a regional high school, a role that requires a minimum of three hours in addition to a regular full-time load. The range of the work being done involves monitoring and training volunteers, mentoring students, supporting other staff to implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the curriculum and course work, facilitating academic support services, assisting in applications for grants to the school and scholarships for students, co-ordinating summer school opportunities with universities, building community partnerships with Indigenous organisations, and developing school resources to support the local language within the curriculum and the school campuses.

The results from these endeavours are not only the development of pride and self-confidence among students and parents but also an increased overall awareness of Indigenous history, cultures and languages. Essential to all of this, the teacher reports, are the partnerships developed with the local Aboriginal community.

Similar issues present themselves in the education of students from a language background other than English (LBOTE). These include E/ALD children and young people from newly arrived migrant and refugee background communities, including international students. For example, in 2016/17 up to 10,500 refugees arrived in NSW, the greater percentage of which were families with school-aged children who enrolled in public schools. Indeed, 91 per cent of all refugee students in NSW are enrolled in public schools, “cementing the reality that public education, and more specifically their teachers and schools, do the heavy lifting in this area of multicultural education”.²⁵

Adding to the complexity are shifts in intake. When we look at the period from 2000–2015, we see the largest increases from China, Arabic nations and Vietnam, each growing by around 36 per cent, 26 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively. However, if we use 2009–2019 as a reference, the major increase has come from Indian language communities.

For a public school, all of this means not just challenging issues with respect to pedagogy and learning but also those related to racism and multiculturalism. As is the case with Indigenous students, principals and teachers are on the front line in relation to tackling discrimination and promoting mutual respect.

We’ve already noted that such inequalities begin to affect education and learning indicators in the earliest years, and the issues are not just sociological but neurological. What’s more, they continue to operate through the school years and beyond. It’s been found by the Grattan Institute that inequality widens as children move through their school years.²⁶ The stark

reality of the system is, as pointed out in chapter 1, the educational gap between the high-performing and bottom-performing students has grown, not diminished as proclaimed to be the objective.

Inequality within the public sector is also challenging for policy makers as are the deeper inequalities across the systems. It is important to remember what factors are often associated with socio-economic disadvantage, and can impact heavily on children and adolescents. The Mental Health Commission of NSW²⁷ has reminded us that “almost a quarter of children live in a family with a parent who has mental illness”. These families can face “very complex issues with drug and alcohol misuse contributing to poverty, domestic violence and relationship breakdown”.

All of these factors are part of what is a “harder-to-teach” environment overall, with more numbers and more pressure to deliver, with respect to disability and disadvantage. As well as more pressure from the law, more pressure from the communities served and more pressure arises within the school and classroom.

The technology factor

In the 2003/04 Industrial Relations Commission work value case, the question of information and communication technology (ICT) was acknowledged as an issue, but one that wasn’t in any sense unique to educators or indeed of such significance that teachers could not be expected to keep in touch and up to date with developments. It was seen as a factor in the life of a teacher and one that they were expected to manage as others in the wider workforce were expected to do.

Since that time, however, three developments have meant that a different assessment is needed. First, as it relates to the pace and depth of change and what it means for teaching and learning and the day-to-day administration of schools. Second, how it has come to feature in the daily lives of children and their parents and what that has come to mean for schools and classrooms. Third, how competence in this domain is now part of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).²⁸



Under Standard 2, a Lead Teacher is required to “lead and support colleagues within the school to select and use ICT with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities and content knowledge for all students”. To become a Proficient Teacher after initial induction to teaching, a teacher must demonstrate proficiency in integrating ICT into teaching strategies.

What has happened with respect to new developments in ICT since 2003/04 has been truly remarkable. In 2019, the CEO of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, David de Carvalho has described these changes as the “Great Digital Revolution”. To illustrate his point, he takes us to 2007 and lists the ICT developments of that year:

- the first iPhone is sold
- Facebook (in late 2006) opened its platform to anyone with an email address
- VMware software company goes public. It is the software that enables any operating system to work on any computer and is the foundation of cloud computing
- Hadoop Software is launched, providing a free, public, open-source framework that enabled multiple computers to work as one — the foundation of big data
- Google launched YouTube and its own operating system Android
- IBM launched Watson, its cognitive computer
- Netflix streamed its first video
- the mysterious Satoshi Nakamoto launched the Bitcoin phenomenon
- Twitter established an independent platform and went global.

De Carvalho goes on to conclude that “each of these events on their own [was] significant, but collectively they arguably represent the biggest technology inflexion point in history since the invention of the printing press”.²⁹

In his submission to the Inquiry, former head of the NSW Education Standards Authority Tom Alegounarias wrote that the implications of this for the work of

teachers can’t be under-estimated. It means “new and qualitatively different domains of expertise” are required and, at the same time, it has thrown up a “proliferation of educational data” needing analysis and a response.

“The ‘bottom line’ for teachers is that to meet expectations in this area they need to build [a] confident working understanding of at least: the relative uses and advantages of qualitative and quantitative data; a range of empirical methodologies; the formal concepts of validity and reliability; and the relationship of all these to different forms of assessment along the formative and summative continuum.”³⁰

It’s not just a matter of educational issues associated with data and measurement that are important but also the sheer volume of online platforms that principals and teachers are required to know and use as part of their work. According to one deputy principal, “the need to use a range of new online platforms and systems has been exhausting.”³¹ The Department’s staff portal provides direct links to more than 50 different internal websites and applications. As is the experience in many public agencies in many jurisdictions this has come at a considerable cost. For example, the Government’s Learning Management and Business Reform, which was aimed at student administration, support services, finance and human resource and technology services, was expected to cost \$485 million over its eight-year implementation. It came in at \$755 million.³²

What the research clearly reveals is that it is not a straightforward issue. Technology and the data capacity it generates ought not to be viewed as an “end in itself”. A contemporary teacher needs the knowledge and intellect to be able to use technology wisely and not be overwhelmed by a technological fundamentalism. To quote the OECD:

“Teachers — with a changed and extended role — are central to the way ICT is adopted and used at the classroom and student level. The supposition that teachers might be displaced by the technology has been largely discounted, even though the media

and popular opinion seem still to characterise the technology as valuable independent of teachers. Not only does this fail to understand the key role of the teacher in using ICT in schools, but by disempowering the teacher and stressing the technology, it undermines the educational potential of the technology itself.”³³

This conclusion is backed up by Professor Pasi Sahlberg: “Technology can only be as good as the people who use it.”³⁴

What is crucial in this respect is proper support for technology and its professional use in teaching and learning. What this means in the real world of education today is described in evidence from an ICT teacher:

“Despite there being no centrally provided support for the upkeep and maintenance of both the infrastructure and software that accompanies technology in schools, this support is still required in order to continue to benefit from the advantages associated with interpreting more technology into teaching practice. The teaching staff themselves are upfilling the gap in addition to their own responsibilities. The continual addition of responsibilities like this contribute to the complex nature of the work of teachers.”

What is apparent is an additional layer of complexity to what is expected from the teaching profession.

One aspect of the increased use of ICT devices and applications throughout the community and its impact on the daily lives of teachers is that of connectivity with parents. As one teacher witness said:

“Teachers are much more visible now, there are greater community expectations on them, and this, in turn, places teachers under greater pressure and work demands. This can be seen in the support that students expect from teachers when undertaking formal assessment ... Now there is an expectation for us to give feedback on practical assessments or drafts before you even give feedback on the actual assessment task.”³⁵

Related to this complication are the ways and means by which social media can be put to negative as well as positive purposes when it comes to schools, their principals and teachers.

This takes us to young people and their access to and engagement with the internet and digital technology. Writing in the UK in 2020, Chris Hollis and colleagues³⁶ summarise the complex nature of the contemporary situation as it affects child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing:

“The rapid expansion of access to, and engagement with, the internet and digital technology over the past 15 or so years has transformed the social, educational and therapeutic space occupied by children and young people in contemporary society in remarkable ways. First, it has created previously unimaginable opportunities for learning and development and personal exploration and growth. Second, it seems that the very same qualities and characteristics of the internet that make these positive contributions possible, such as its immediacy, portability, intimacy, unconstrained reach and lack of supervision and regulation of content, has opened children and young people up to a range of serious social, intellectual and mental health risks. Finally, over and above these ‘effects’, the digital space is increasingly successfully being harnessed for the identification and treatment of mental health problems. Accordingly, the internet is not so much a double as a triple-edged sword, with regard to children’s mental health.”

In other words, what they see is “a complex mix of positive and negative influences” when looking at the matter from a mental health point of view. What, then, is a consideration from an educational point of view?

The Panel was fortunate to receive submissions from teachers involved in ICT teaching and management. One of them spoke of the steps necessary to harness the important role ICT can play in assisting students to think and learn. Although the use of iPhone and the various gadgets was widespread, it didn’t mean that the technology was being used in a “productive way”.



“It is true that students are experts at engaging with many aspects of technology. However, in my experience this is primarily in applications relating to gaming and social media.”

As a result, the teacher writes, “you have to teach and develop their skills explicitly and from scratch.”³⁷

In the years relevant to this Inquiry, two major developments have occurred when it comes to computers in schools. First was the Digital Education Revolution of the Rudd government and second was the Bring Your Own Device policy of the NSW Coalition government.

Under the Digital Education Revolution policy, more than 200,000 laptops were delivered to NSW school students and an extra 400 information technology support officers were employed to provide assistance to teachers and students. A mid-program review of the Digital Education Revolution in 2013 concluded that “the basic building blocks for improved digital education performance are now in place. While the DER was responsible for some of these building blocks, it was recognised that the true value of the DER has been the significant, planned and sustained school level engagement it has helped to engender.”³⁸

The move to Bring Your Own Device raised a range of issues for the teaching profession that were presented to the Panel through written and oral submissions. First, there was the end of a system of centrally funded, school-based support officers, support being left as a matter for schools as they determined were necessary. Second, there are the implications of the new policy for classroom teachers. An information and communication technology teacher observed:

“The result of this policy was such that when entering a classroom, a teacher was faced with the prospect of having 12 students that have their own but different devices and the rest of the class that would be sharing a school device ... When planning a lesson, a teacher would have to meet the complexity of utilising these devices in a way that did not disadvantage those students without a device.”³⁹

This was further complicated by the high levels of face-to-face teaching in NSW and what this meant for the capacity to plan lessons in collaboration with others. “The sheer amount of hours we are expected to be in front of a class really prevents any extensive and authentic collaboration. As such, a teacher is required to plan effectively to meet this need in their own time.”⁴⁰

Nor is this issue just about the classroom. It is worth noting that 5 per cent of public school students did not have home internet access compared with 2 per cent of non-government school students. The research related to this finding also found that it wasn’t just a matter of access to the internet, but of the living conditions to make its use in a home setting viable. It said that 15 per cent of NSW public school students live in “unsuitable housing”, which means homes with an insufficient number of bedrooms. The mix of inadequate access and unsuitable housing is a particular problem in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. About 21 per cent of Indigenous students who attend public schools did not have internet access at home. When it comes to housing, 33 per cent of Indigenous students lived in a home with six or more people.⁴¹

In considering information and communication technology, there is another aspect of the issue that has attracted the attention of researchers; the impact on student behaviour and wellbeing of smart devices. In its 2020 report *Growing Up Digital Australia*, the Gonski Institute concluded:

“Children come to school with their devices, they are constantly online and connected, and do an increasing share of learning using digital tools in school and at home. The vast majority (84 per cent) of educators see digital technologies and media as a growing distraction in student learning. Four of five teachers believe that students cannot focus on learning tasks compared to three to five years ago, and three of five say that students’ overall readiness to learn has declined.”⁴²

Add to that another finding that “children from lower socio-economic families spend about 60 minutes more time daily on digital screens than those from wealthier families”. The study also found that “children from

lower socio-economic families watch more TV and play video games compared to their more affluent peers, who spend an hour a day on school-related activities, including homework and reading”.⁴³

Concern about the impact of smart devices — as a distraction from learning and as an instrument of bullying — led the Government to establish a Review into the Non-Educational Use of Mobile Devices in New South Wales Schools. This Carr-Gregg report (2018) has led to the banning of mobile phones in public primary schools. High schools were given a choice to opt into a ban or tighter restrictions. This is another issue requiring analysis and good judgement from the profession.

Child and adolescent mental health

That society is experiencing a crisis in mental health among children and adolescents has been well documented and commented on. Giving evidence to the Panel, Professor Ian Hickie⁴⁴ noted that it is not just an increase in these problems that should concern us, but the fact that they are increasingly associated with more self-harm and suicidal behaviour — and even at younger ages. COVID-19 and its necessary lockdowns have added to what is already a challenging world for young people.

Professor Hickie described an increased reliance on schools to deal with the issues raised by this explosion in mental distress and illness. This, he explains, is partly due to failures in health service delivery, particularly as it relates to assessment and early intervention, but also because of social changes that have led to reduced contact between children and young people with other parents and the wider community. “So”, he notes, “the role previously played by church people, by sporting coaches, by community leaders, by all sorts of people has rapidly declined in the last part of the 20th century and continued to decline in the 21st century. So, we fall back on teachers and their continuity in schools seeing kids over time.”

To understand an individual student in terms of their educational achievements and potential at any point in time, as teachers are increasingly required to do, is one thing, but add to that the requirement to understand where that student fits in, in terms of their social and emotional development, is another. Indeed, neuroscience has taught us that a simplistic age-based notion of development is faulty. Age-based classes are one thing, levels of educational, social and emotional development can be quite another, and also related in their effects.

The NSW Mental Health Commission⁴⁵ provides statistics that indicate the dimensions of the challenge.

“Of the million or so school-aged children in NSW, about 100,000 will have mental health problems such as disruptive behaviour, anxiety and depression. One in 10 preschool children (aged three to five) show significant mental health problems, including poor emotional, behavioural and social skills and the rate of mental health problems among children aged four to 16 years is about 14 per cent.”

Once again, there has been a differential impact with public schools carrying a significant proportion of the burden, with “children in disadvantaged families are more than three times more likely than those in well-off families to suffer from mental health disorders”. The Mental Health Commission describes, in the following words, what principals and teachers have told the Panel is the day-to-day reality of their work:

“They may be kids who have been in negative environments, from conception through the critical stages of early brain development, or who have been victims of trauma, violence, abuse or neglect.

They may be kids whose parents, for a variety of reasons including drug and alcohol abuse or mental illness, struggle in that role.

They may have complex mixes of developmental, relationship, behavioural, trauma and mental health issues.



They are likely to be challenging and disruptive in early education and school, the truants, the 'difficult' kids.

They are the children diagnosed with a conduct problem or anti-social behaviour that reflects the complexity of their home and family environments as much as anything medical.

They are at greater risk of struggling at school, and later of unemployment, poverty, severe mental illness and alcohol misuse and criminal offending. Children exposed to extreme poverty or disruption — sometimes through immigration — from their cultural, family and community supports are particularly at risk.

A difficult future for these children is not inevitable, but the critical time for doing something about it is in childhood.”

This increased reliance on teachers to provide much of that support has raised the question as to whether this is a step too far, complicating an already jam-packed mission to educate children along the lines laid down in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Statement. It is one thing to support “appropriate socialisation” and the “development of emotional skills” within the school population but quite another to deliver the full range of health services needed to understand and tackle serious forms and manifestations of illness. A more realistic way forward, says Hickie, is a partnership between education and health. In the absence of such a properly developed partnership, in view of the lack of adequate support within schools due to the shortage of school counsellors, and in light of the seriousness of the issues involved, it’s not surprising teachers are feeling challenged and not supported in the burdens they have been given. “We have,” says Hickie, “rather lazily relied on schools to be the simple way that we’ve managed many of these issues.”

The Panel notes the late-2020 declaration from the NSW Minister for Education that priority areas of teacher professional development for accreditation purposes will include student/child mental health. While this appears to be an acknowledgement of

the pressing issues in this area, well attested to this Inquiry, simply directing teachers to undertake related professional development is an inadequate response, seeming to continue the policy agenda of devolving to schools and teachers the responsibility to cope and resolve rather than institute a system-based, well-resourced strategy to address the issue.

Vicarious trauma

What should never be forgotten in this context is the mental health of the teachers themselves. They may have students who are the victims of physical and sexual abuse and the self-harm and even suicide that can follow. It’s appropriate to focus not only on the trauma in children and adolescents exposed to what is often called “challenging household circumstances” but also on the vicarious trauma that can affect teachers. It can manifest itself in many ways, teaching not only being about a curriculum, a syllabus and a class but also our emotions and feelings attached.

For those affected by vicarious trauma many behaviours may follow — and are similar to those that follow post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Withdrawing from friends and family; feeling unexplainably irritable or angry or numb; inability to focus; blaming others; feeling hopeless or isolated or guilty about not doing enough; struggling to concentrate; being unable to sleep; overeating or not eating enough; and continually and persistently worrying about students, when they’re at home and even in their sleep.”⁴⁶

Adding to the stress related to such trauma is often the feeling that a teacher is isolated and alone, hopelessly overwhelmed.

An assistant principal from regional NSW, teaching a class of students with serious behavioural disorders and emotional disturbance, described what may happen.

“You see people who you think are really on top of their game and they’re coping really, really well and then suddenly something else in their life happens and they fall in a heap. And you think, ‘Oh, wow how did that happen?’

But when you think of the vicarious trauma that these young people that are coming into our settings can sometimes bring, when you actually sit down and have a look back at all the things they’ve dealt with, you think it’s no wonder that that’s happened.”⁴⁷

The assistant principal goes on to describe the difficulties faced in accessing relevant support for students and teachers in a regional setting.

This issue is being taken up by a range of professions that find themselves on the front line of service delivery; firefighters, police officers, trauma doctors and nurses, child welfare officers, psychologists and counsellors and case managers of all sorts have come to our attention. With teachers, these professionals “may recognise the cumulative stressors that they face, but they don’t always realise that their symptoms are a common reaction to working with traumatised children — and that these symptoms have a name”.⁴⁸

It remains the case that such issues as they affect students and teachers aren’t likely to subside any time soon. Fires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic can’t just be expected to vanish from the landscape, nor will refugee resettlement no longer be required or entrenched disadvantage disappear quickly, even with better strategies. Pressure to make wellbeing as important an issue as literacy and numeracy has been flagged by the Productivity Commission’s report on mental health.⁴⁹ Indeed, it proposes a tough regime of accountability on the part of principals and schools, alongside and equal to other targets that have become part of the furniture. Working out how this can be done in a way that doesn’t overburden the public school

system as one responsible agency among others that need to be involved, and which recognises the teacher as well as the student dimensions, puts it into the category of a “complex question”.

Given these considerations, it is promising to report that professional development in student/child mental health is one of four areas that will be required of teachers to maintain their teacher accreditation, while as noted above, this being far from sufficient to address the issue. The Panel is of the view that occupational health and safety considerations should also lead to parallel initiatives with respect to teacher mental health, and in particular, the whole issue of vicarious trauma.

Other factors

There are many other external factors that might be considered as having an influence on teachers and teaching. There is, according to witness Tom Alegounarias, real concern among teachers that “too many parents are demonstrating disrespectful and antagonistic attitudes towards teachers”. Coupled with this are parental expectations about reporting requirements. “It is also expected that students are tracked on a continuous rather than periodic basis and that teachers be prepared to provide an analysis at short notice,” he told the Panel. He noted too the dramatic exacerbation of this pressure courtesy of email and other communication methods.⁵⁰

This would be a factor relevant to all schools, and not just those in the public sector. It is the case, however, that there is a strongly held view in sections of the community and commentariat that public schools have failed and as much as possible should be privatised or at least corporatised and be more accountable to individual parents rather than an over-arching public interest which is said to be defined and propped up by “elites”.

Often linked to this set of attitudes is what Biesta calls “a relentless pressure to perform”, with the standards relating to this performance “increasingly being set by the global measurement industry”. For many teachers, this is seen as narrowing down what counts as education and what counts in education, as Biesta puts it.⁵¹



That such attitudes exist was certainly the conclusion reached by many of those, practitioners and others, who made submissions to the Inquiry. Among other things, it was seen to affect morale and the self-worth — or otherwise — of the teaching profession in the public system.

Among those “other things” would be the choice to send children to a public school thus impinging on the overall mix, particularly in low socio-economic status communities. So too might be the choice of the “best and brightest” from universities to take up the challenge of public school teaching.

It’s most important that ill-informed prejudices don’t replace either the high hopes we have for the system as laid down in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration or the evidence the Panel gathers about what will best achieve those high hopes. It is the Panel’s view that the recommendations it makes about remuneration and support for quality teaching in quality schools will be important in this regard.

In relation to all matters related to attitudes towards teachers and teaching, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call and window of opportunity for serious rather than prejudiced thinking. It has raised a number of matters.

First, that parents have had a direct and personal experience of the complexities and challenges of teaching rather than an indirect one all too often influenced by media prejudices and the vested interests that feed it.

Second, the community has discovered how the schooling system is a vital element in the day-to-day functioning of our economy; take it out of the equation and all sorts of challenges result.

Third, that the already significant disadvantages faced by low income and marginalised communities are exacerbated by their relative lack of ICT capacity and culture. Learning itself requires some preconditions, learning online even more so.

Fourth, and most importantly, there was a clearly demonstrated and positive response from the community as to the commitment and creativity of teachers and principals in this crisis. Just to take one study, that of 1000 primary school parents in NSW, among the findings were the following:

- 91 per cent of parents reported they had a greater level of respect for teachers following the COVID-19 lockdown
- 98.5 per cent of parents reported they were satisfied with the communication they received from the school during that period
- 99.7 per cent of parents said they were satisfied with the work of their child’s teacher
- 96.6 per cent of parents reported they felt supported by the school during the COVID-19 home-schooling period
- 86.8 per cent of parents reported their child was moderately to highly engaged in learning during the COVID-19 home schooling.⁵²

None of this is surprising to the Panel, having heard of the initiatives that were taken to deliver an education to students at home, and sometimes in very difficult circumstances. Creativity in the context of scarcity was needed as were demanding commitments of time and effort.

Take, for example, the work of staff at Wilcannia Central School in western NSW. In their situation many families did not have computers for children to work on, or reliable access to the internet. Every few days they made a 9km round trip to hand-deliver lesson packs to ensure learning continued, making sure they practised social distancing along the way.⁵³

Conclusion

Following from this description are three of the challenges facing teachers:

1. to provide a good education for all, including the growing cohort of students with disability and disadvantage, many of whom haven't had the social and emotional start in life needed
2. to manage their way through the jungle that is the contemporary revolution in ICT with its forever developing — and unequally distributed — devices and applications
3. to ensure that schools and teachers are in a position to play their role in partnership with health, in addressing the crisis in child and adolescent mental health.

In relation to the first, the Panel will report that there is a shortfall in funding deemed necessary, a failed devolution and all that came with it, and inadequate curriculum and other support for schools.

In relation to the second, the Panel will report the inefficiencies of the Bring Your Own Device program, the inequities in access to devices, and the overload of data requirements being placed on schools and teachers.

With respect to the third, the Panel notes the challenging cases that are now presenting themselves in a school setting, the shortage and under-valuing of school counsellors and the inadequacy of health services much needed to be part and parcel of a mental health agenda.



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 50. Alegounarias, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
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 53. Allam, April 24, 2020.

Chapter 4:

A cascade of policies (2004-2020)

This period in education history in NSW has been marked by dramatic, far-reaching change.

The sources of such change are many, including: policy demands from the Commonwealth government as a condition of funding contributions to state and territory school systems; progressively changing funding allocations from the Commonwealth to government and non-government schools that position these sectors differently; the impact of global doctrines governing the delivery of public services; implementation of new forms of accountability for such services that affect those who deliver them; changing views, and supporting policy and legislation, concerning human rights that demand the inclusion of groups of citizens and their children habitually excluded or inadequately supported; rapidly and profoundly changing economic realities; an unprecedented technological revolution; and many other factors.

This chapter will select some of the key policy changes that have had the most direct impact on NSW schools and the work of teachers for the period under review. The overriding sense is of a period of rapidly changing and often overlapping policy imposts that are by no means supported by the resources, time allowed, professional development, and consultation that would be reasonably included to achieve the intended outcomes of those policies. The evidence before this Inquiry, however, attests to the efforts made by schools and teachers to support and implement the directions mandated, particularly where the human rights of their students are most in focus. The policies indicated below provide a context for the evidence the Inquiry heard about the reality of teachers' work over the past 17 years.



The Commonwealth and its major initiatives

The provision of schooling in Australia is a state and territory responsibility. These jurisdictions administer their public education systems, open to all, and register or approve non-government schools/systems and have the power to hold them accountable. Attendance is compulsory to an age that has steadily risen over the decades, now generally 17 years. With capital grants in the 1960s and the advent of the Commonwealth Schools Commission by the Whitlam government following a landmark review into the nature, capacity and needs of Australia's schools, *Schools in Australia* (the Karmel Report), the Commonwealth became a significant player in the affairs of the nation's schools.

The Commonwealth became a funding partner to all schools in Australia from this time, and in relation to the schooling sectors some 70 per cent of its support for recurrent funding of schools was allocated to the public schooling systems, broadly in line with enrolment share. Over the period 1974–1996, various revisions of the funding formulas emerged, along with special beneficial national programs focused on particular issues (innovations, choice and diversity, girls' education, support for Aboriginal students, etc). In general, the funding share between the sectors moved slowly to benefit the non-government sector until 1996 to 2007 when there was a significant escalation in this trend.

This period of the Howard government included the introduction of measures to withdraw funds from the public system where there were enrolment shifts and the introduction of a socio-economic status funding system that funded the non-government sector but guaranteed or maintained previous funding levels where the new measures indicated lower per capita grants were warranted. Artificial arrangements were agreed to secure participation in the new evolving system. The end result of this process was the gradual reversal of the Commonwealth government's relative financial contribution to the different sectors.

The significance of this for the present Inquiry is to indicate that there is a comparative financial/resourcing context within which the public system and its teachers undertake their work, work that disproportionately serves the needs of the most disadvantaged students according to a number of key metrics (addressed in chapter 3).

Other than quixotic initiatives, or mandates, such as compulsory flag flying or the provision of school chaplains (but refusing the funds to support school counsellors), a program still running in 2020-22, the other contribution of the Commonwealth concerned opening up debate about a national curriculum and focusing on contentious approaches to the teaching of Australian history. Commonwealth Department of Education reviews of the funding system acknowledged significant flaws and inequities, but these were not addressed before the change of government in 2007.

The period of the Rudd-Gillard governments (2007-13) had a major effect on the schools of NSW, and Australia, and set the foundations for developments through to the present. In summary, they include:

- the introduction of the Smarter Schools National Partnership Programs (focusing on teacher quality, literacy and numeracy, low socio-economic status schools, devolution initiatives and others) that ran for a number of years. These delivered some real funding increases to public schools for the first time in a decade, but were to be expended in the agreed areas under formal agreements with each jurisdiction. However, as has become entrenched, the short-term initiatives lapsed with their funding, and generally involved short-term commitments, temporary appointments of teachers, and time-bound program initiatives
- major programs such as the Building the Education Revolution — a significant contribution to renewing school buildings as a response to the global financial crisis — and the Digital Education Revolution were indicative of the greater financial capacity of the Commonwealth government to mount significant new programs under agreements with jurisdictions

- jurisdictions were bound, as a condition of the new funding, to support far reaching changes to the shape of school education in Australia. New “education architecture” was developed: the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to develop a new Australian Curriculum to be implemented by all jurisdictions; and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to develop national teaching standards, establish a national system for accrediting teacher education programs and develop other policy documents for application in jurisdictions (certification of expert teachers, a teacher performance and development framework, a principal standard and others). These agencies have had a significant impact on schools and teachers as policies and practices were dramatically revised to comply with the new national directions. In particular, in NSW schools, a comprehensive curriculum overhaul was required, and the already established teacher accreditation system and approval of initial teacher education programs were affected with specific implications for teachers
- the introduction of the MySchool website, and the introduction of NAPLAN, the national testing regime in literacy and numeracy for all students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 has had ongoing ramifications for schools and teachers. The ideology of enhanced school choice was expressly proclaimed as a point of MySchool; parents invited to choose schools, and move students, on the basis of MySchool data on basic skill results, school financial data, comparisons with other schools etc. While NAPLAN replaced earlier NSW tests, the publication of school test results, by year level and reported in comparison with other schools, was a dramatic shift that teachers and parents report has had significant effects on school practices
- an example of one of the many other requirements attached to the new Commonwealth funding regimes was the push from the Commonwealth for public systems to progressively devolve their

operations to schools themselves. While different jurisdictions had differing histories in relation to this particular policy option (one loudly propounded by some academics, national and global “think-tanks” and opposed by others), NSW commenced a small trial of such devolution in the pre-2011 period under the pressure of this mandate. With a change of government in NSW in 2011, this was to grow into the most significant policy impact on NSW in the period under review, a policy that after almost a decade has now been subject to significant criticism from a government-initiated review with an impending replacement model that preserves the heart of its predecessor. As outlined in chapter 6, this policy, which dramatically devolved departmental responsibility for school education, has severely affected teachers and schools since its introduction.

- in 2011, the Rudd-Gillard governments established a comprehensive review of the school funding regime, the so-called Gonski review, versions of which have framed Commonwealth school funding since. This key initiative and its modifications will be discussed in the sections on funding below
- presently, the NSW public sector is bound, as a condition of Commonwealth funding, to a series of policy actions and requirements to participate in national actions, through eight national reform initiatives and further actions set out in a bilateral agreement that covers 2019-23. The national reform initiatives are set out here⁵⁴:



The National School Reform Agreement commenced on 1 January, 2019

The eight national reforms

These reforms are based on the evidence of what works and have been informed by several key reviews, including Through growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools.

Reform 1: Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth

The development of learning progressions that describe the common development pathway along which students typically progress in their learning, regardless of age or year level. Teachers will be able to tailor their teaching by easily identifying where a student is at in their learning and the next steps needed for them to progress. More information on this initiative is available from the Online Formative Assessment Initiative website.

Reform 2: Opt-in online learning assessment tools to assist teachers

The second reform builds on the first, through the development of accessible, quality resources and professional learning that assists teachers to monitor and understand student progress. This enables teachers to tailor their teaching to individual student needs so the learning growth and attainment of every student is maximised. More information on this initiative is available from the Online Formative Assessment Initiative website.

Reform 3: Review senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training

A review of senior secondary pathways to ensure students leave school with the best education and skills to enable them to navigate life beyond school. More information on the review is available on the Education Council's Pathways Review website.

Reform 4: Review teacher workforce needs of the future

Develop a national strategy to support better workforce planning by analysing future workforce needs in areas that would benefit from a nationally coordinated response. This will help build our understanding of how to attract, support and retain a high-quality teaching profession, with the aim to staff all schools and subjects adequately. This work is being led by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and more information can be found on the AITSL website.

Reform 5: Strengthening the initial teacher education accreditation system

Further strengthen the accreditation of initial teacher education programs across Australia, in recognition of the need for ongoing effort to ensure quality, consistency and transparency.

This will ensure graduate teachers have undertaken the highest quality training and are classroom ready. This work is being led by AITSL and more information can be found on the AITSL website.

Reform 6: A national unique student identifier

A unique single number for every student, which will help share information on student learning between schools, sectors and states without using a student's name. This will provide students, parents and teachers with a comprehensive record of progress and attainment.

Reform 7: An independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development

Establishment of an independent national evidence institute to undertake research on what works in improving school outcomes and the translation of this research into practical resources for use by schools and teachers. More information on this initiative is available from the Education Council website.

Reform 8: Improving national data quality, consistency and collection to improve the national evidence base and inform policy development

Data improvement activities that will help measure the impact of these reforms and understand what works best for improving student outcomes. The data and research gathered will be used to help inform future ideas and ensure our education system is continuously improving.

The bilateral agreement contains a summary of policy initiatives that the Commonwealth accepts the NSW education sector has delivered in the previous five years. It is a convenient account of key areas of change, the effects of which have been amply attested to by submissions and witnesses to the Inquiry.

To date (end 2018) NSW has:

- a) implemented the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Strategy to build the core skills for all students, including the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions
- b) strengthened the teaching profession in NSW through the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning program
- c) provided more authority to local schools to implement the programs best suited to their students, through Local Schools, Local Decisions
- d) enacted new measures of, and support for, student wellbeing, including through the Tell Them From Me survey
- e) implemented needs-based funding to support all students through the Resource Allocation Model
- f) put in place the School Leadership Strategy to provide additional support to school leaders so that they can focus on leading teaching and learning in their schools
- g) developed and implemented the School Excellence Framework to provide schools with evidence-based standards of effective school practice
- h) established the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation to embark on evidence-based, data-driven approach to education
- i) developed and implemented the Regional and Remote Education Blueprint, a detailed plan to improve student learning in regional, rural and remote schools
- j) enacted minimum standards for students to enter initial teacher education courses
- k) implemented Connected Communities, which is an innovative program to increase engagement from Aboriginal students to improve their learning outcomes
- l) committed to providing universal access to two years of early childhood education for all children

The bilateral agreement commits the NSW Government and the Department of Education to implement the following initiatives by end 2023.



Table 1 — NSW bilateral reform plan

Reform Direction	Actions	Sector(s)	Timing
Reform Direction A — Support students, student learning and achievement			
	Deliver the review of the K-12 curriculum to ensure the school education system is preparing students for the challenges and opportunities for the future.	All sectors	End of 2019
	Implement the refreshed curriculum post 2019 review, ensuring teachers are supported to implement a streamlined curriculum, including timely and formative assessments.	All sectors	From 2020
	Embed evidence-based practices (particularly to boost early achievement in literacy and numeracy), including implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Plan (LNAP).	All sectors	End 2020 (LNAP), Ongoing
	Meet the needs of students at risk of educational disadvantage (including students with disability, Aboriginal students, students with low English proficiency and students in rural and regional areas) through evidence-based pedagogy, quality teaching and leadership and innovation.	All sectors	Ongoing
Reform Direction B — Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement			
	Strengthen the mandatory content requirements of ITE courses in identified areas of STEM, Literacy/Numeracy, Students with Special Needs and Classroom Management.	All sectors	Ongoing
	Identify and support cohorts of high quality teachers across sectors for certification at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher level.	All sectors	2019
	Raise the bar for entry as a teacher in government schools through strengthened employment mechanisms.	Government	2019
	Improve the quality and relevance of professional learning, focused on improving student learning outcomes.	Government	2019
	Build a strong pipeline of leaders through early talent identification, systematic induction of new principals and delivering high quality development programs for current and aspiring school leaders through a School Leadership Institute.	Government	2019
	Lifting the Burden to allow schools to focus on teaching and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the administrative burden on schools, principals and teachers to increase the amount of time to focus on high quality teaching and leading. • De-cluttering the curriculum as part of the NESA review. Harmonising the Commonwealth / State administrative arrangements.	Government All sectors Non-government	2019 2020 2019

Reform Direction	Actions	Sector(s)	Timing
Targeted initiatives to improve system and school effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tailored support to improve every school, from capability-building to targeted intervention, using the School Excellence Framework to identify need and drive improvement 	All Government	2019
The Commonwealth will work with NSW to address identified NSW teacher workforce needs (particularly in the areas of maths and science) including through the development of a national and state specific teacher workforce strategy reflecting respective areas of responsibility.		All sectors	2019
Strengthen accountability measures for non-government schools that receive state funding, initially through development of memoranda of understanding with the sectors.		Non-government	2019
Implement a school level investment strategy to ensure that needs-based funding makes an impact on student learning through effective expenditure, aligned to school planning.		Government	2019
Reform Direction C – Enhancing the national evidence base			
Establish a Catalyst Lab to explore and test innovative educational practice in partnership with schools and other partners.		Government	2019

In 1988, then-federal Minister for Education John Dawkins released a short but influential paper *Strengthening Australia’s Schools: A Consideration of the Focus and Content of Schooling*⁵⁵ that heralded a concerted push by the Commonwealth to forge leadership in developing a national schooling response to changing Australian economic and social realities. Priorities advanced in this document included: developing a national approach to curriculum; an emphasis on the knowledge and skills necessary for a changing economy; greater accountability for schooling outcomes including a nationally common approach to assessment; increasing retention rates to year 12 (standing at 53 per cent in 1987); examining national guidelines for teacher preparation and registration; restructuring schooling by re-ordering spending priorities rather than the provision of extra resources, and tying state and territory governments and schooling systems into agreed national directions. These directions laid the foundation for ongoing Commonwealth government influence over schooling ever since.⁵⁶ With differing emphases between Coalition and Labor governments (particularly around issues of equity and choice), there

has been a consistent and deepening effect flowing from Commonwealth agendas, with jurisdictions participating as a condition of essential funding with greater or lesser degrees of reluctance or alacrity as changing politics dictate.

It can be seen from the examples of Commonwealth-demanded, national policy directions and reforms listed above, most currently in the 2019–23 National Schools Reform Agreement, the extent to which the experience of NSW public schools and teachers over the 2004–2020 period have been affected by the participation of NSW in these national agendas.

A tumult of state policies

The Inquiry heard from a school principal who retired from a secondary high school in 2010 after a highly regarded lifetime of teaching and leading public high schools in NSW. In her submission she listed just the policies that affected her school in the period 2004–10. This list is instructive and concludes before the escalation of policy impacts that commenced from, and built on, Every School, Every Student and Local Schools, Local Decisions.



The policies required the development of knowledge and skills in relation to a range of legislative requirements including discrimination, child protection, health and safety. The information was provided but there was little practical support to accompany the extensive documentation.

1. Aboriginal Education Policy 2005 replaced by Aboriginal Education Policy 2008. Introductory Guide 2009 — Turning policy into action
2. Anti-Racism Policy 2005 replaced 1992 policy Anti-Racism Education — Advice for schools 2017
3. Multicultural Education Policy 2005,
4. Assisting Students with Learning Difficulties 2007 Learning and Support program
5. Gifted and Talented Policy implemented 2006
6. People with Disabilities Statement of Commitment 2005
7. Enrolment of Students in Government schools 1997 Enhanced Enrolment Procedures 2006
8. Leading and Managing the School 2004
9. School Attendance Policy 2005. Updated 2015 National Standards Student Attendance
10. Curriculum Planning and Programming Assessing and Reporting to Parents Policy K-12 2005.
11. Literacy K-12 Policy 2005
12. Numeracy K-12 Policy 2007
13. Sport and Physical Activity Policy 2002 updated 2015. Sport Safety Guidelines Risk Management
14. Bullying of Students Policy 2011 replaced Anti Bullying Plan 2007
15. Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures
16. Nutrition Policy 2011
17. Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy 2006
18. Student Health in NSW Public Schools. A Summary of Consolidated Policy 2004 implemented 2005
19. Child Protection Policy Responding to and Reporting Students at Risk of Harm 2002 revised and released 2010 to reflect changes to Child Protection legislation under “Keep them safe a shared approach to child wellbeing”
20. Incident Notification and Response Policy 2007 updated 2017.
21. Recent updates regarding COVID-19

These policies were supported by a range of implementation “guidelines”, “plans”, “procedures” and some had additional resource material.

Besides the sheer number of policies, a crucial issue is the manner in which they are introduced into schools. Evidence from a number of witnesses, including the principal referred to above, described the following experiences as common:

- an earlier approach that included training and development of relevant staff in the new policy was replaced by a presentation that one or two staff might be released to attend. This then disappeared with no presentation happening at all
- frequent announcement of policy changes in the media with no prior communication to schools or principals (an approach alive and well in 2020)
- frequent delivery of procedures, information and resources to schools after enactment of the policy had commenced
- overlapping linkages between policy documents and supporting explanatory documents is complex and confusing. An example given was the “seven implementation documents for the Student Discipline Policy, which have links to other processes and requirements”. Further changes to the suspension policy were announced during this Inquiry
- an effort was made with the introduction of Local School, Local Decisions to address policy overload by consolidating some 200 policies, but a new “Policy Management Policy” indicates the ongoing complexity for schools through the A-Z policy library. However, with the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, responsibility for so much more was transferred to schools
- an A-Z policy tool issued to schools in 2016 was withdrawn after proving ineffective. A later version was also withdrawn in 2018, but the requirement to produce evidence of policy compliance continued

- new requirements for schools to provide evidence of policy compliance emerged in the Local Schools, Local Decisions era, added to by new NSW Education Standards Authority school registration requirements (with random and cyclical inspections introduced) and the Department's School Excellence Policy demands.

Case study: The impact of these changes

The following is an account of a retired principal who has worked with a number of schools in the Sydney area to support then negotiate the cascading evidentiary demands for policy compliance.

"The requirements to produce evidence of policy compliance came from two significant changes that seem to be interrelated. The first came from changes to legislation which required that the Department of Education could demonstrate that government schools were able to meet similar requirements in relation to buildings and facilities, curriculum etc that applied to non-government schools for the purposes of school registration. NESAs announced that it would conduct cyclical and random inspections of government schools to determine that the requirements were being met. At a similar time, the Department introduced the School Excellence Policy in 2016 supported by the School Excellence Framework, which was later replaced by the School Excellence Framework V2 2017.

Schools were required to develop a three-year school plan in consultation with the community that set strategic directions, targets and milestones in the domains of learning, teaching and leading. Schools were required to conduct a yearly self-assessment that would be considered by a 'panel of peers' (other principals and directors) once every five years. It was called an external validation (EV) aimed at validating whether or not the school self-assessment was correct.

At the time I was working at the "X High School", the guidance material about what was required for either the inspections or external validation was very vague. I believe that many schools undertook a range of additional tasks to demonstrate their school's compliance due to the lack of guidance. The schools I was at spent a great deal of time preparing their evidence for the external validation process aligning their reflections on where they have made progress with the descriptors in the three domains of the SEF (School Excellence Framework), the Learning, Teaching and Leading Domains.

The Learning Domain has 18 themes, the Teaching Domain has 15 themes and the Leading Domain has 15 themes. Themes chosen for the EV process are then aligned with the descriptors for one of three designations, "delivering", "sustaining and growing" or "excelling". I have assisted schools to prepare their evidence of progress in keeping with the descriptors of the SEF. Each school wants to share its findings and analysis with the visiting external validation panels in a very professional dialogue.

Some schools have produced overly detailed evidence and reflection booklets complete with a large number of graphs, data walls, photographs and annotated work from teachers and students. I worked with the principal of "Y High School" in 2016, in designing diagrammatic representations of all the relevant curriculum documents for years 7-10 and for years 11-12, which NESAs officers might request from schools as part of an inspection. We were interpreting the demands from the small amount of information available in the early stages. We were assisting the head teachers of faculties to streamline their documents in line with efficient and effective curriculum delivery.

The principal and I shared our diagrams and support documents with colleagues in other secondary schools anticipating an inspection from NESAs. The lack of clear guidance from NESAs and the Department caused a massive increase in workload as we tried to anticipate



what might be needed. It concerns me that in the period I was working with these schools (2016-2017) on these issues, schools collected vast amounts of data and evidence because they were unsure of what was required. They also spent school funds engaging casual teachers to release staff to do this work, and also on additional support people like me to help them. In my opinion, the data and evidence collection and record keeping were excessive. The schools were accountable and had high standards. The vagaries around inspections and external validation caused them to spend valuable time and resources as they had to guess at what was necessary. Many of these resources could have been allocated to better support teachers and students if the Department and NESAC had been clear in what they required. In my opinion high standards, high expectations and sound learning does and can occur without recording everything in minute detail. There needs to be trust in the judgement of teachers who are accredited to meet system standards.”

on annual salary increases; the Government’s rejection of the Masters curriculum review (NSW Curriculum Review) timetable for development and implementation of a new NSW curriculum (to be completed effectively by mid-2023 for communication to schools and full implementation in 2024); and others.

A scan of policies enacted for the public school system, prepared for the Inquiry, demonstrates the overlapping and cumulative impact in demands on teachers throughout the 2004–20 period. They are reproduced here as a reference point for the issues raised by submissions and witnesses to the Inquiry. It is not complete, with further announcements being made in the final months of 2020. Announcements were made about: new professional development requirements for teacher accreditation; a new Schools Success Model, which purportedly replaces Local Schools, Local Decisions while continuing key features and adds further accountability requirements; new directions around teaching reading and phonics tests, after the quashing of previous Department-supported literacy strategies; earlier retreat from requiring a nominated level of academic attainment for employment of new initial teacher education graduates (since reversed); the Government proposed a salary freeze for a year, effectively endorsed by the Industrial Relations Commission with a 0.3% increase awarded and its announcement of a further three years of a 1.5% cap

Major legislative and policy changes regarding education — retrieved from NSWTF annual reports

Date	Originating from	New/changed legislation/policy reports/reviews/inquiries
2004/05	NSW Government	NSW Audit Office conducted a performance audit of annual school reports
2004/05	Commonwealth Government	Input via AEU re: Education Disability Standards, which became Regulations under Commonwealth disability Discrimination Act
2004/05	NSW Government	DET's new Professional Development Policy, moved funds from central provision to individual schools
2005	Commonwealth Government	Report of National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy, released December
2005	Commonwealth Government	Schools Assistance (Learning Together — Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Regulations 2005. Tied school recurrent funding to a range of reporting requirements
2005/06	NSW Government	Report "Strategic Evaluation of VET in Schools in NSW – trial of teaching VET in years 9 and 10
2007	NSW Government	Professor George Cooney's Review of the state-wide assessment program in NSW, which recommended the abolition of the School Certificate
2007	Commonwealth Government	Worked with AEU to develop responses to Federal Inquiry into Academic Standards of School Education
2006	NSW Government	Industrial Relations (Child Employment) Act proclaimed.
2006	NSW Government	Inquiry into the Occupational Health and Safety Act by Justice Stein
2008	NSW Government	New staffing procedure
2009	Commonwealth Government	Announcement by Federal Government in April that a national reporting system will be introduced with school performance league tables based on NAPLAN data
2009	Commonwealth Government	Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
2009	Commonwealth Government	National Curriculum and National Partnership Programs Literacy Numeracy
2009	NSW Government	Wood Inquiry recommendations, child protection, to be implemented by Term 1 2010
2009	NSW Government	Education Amendment Act 2009 — raised the school leaving age
2010	NSW Government	Changes to Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funding allocations
2010	NSW Government	Legislative Council Inquiry into provision of special education
2010	Commonwealth Government	Review of Funding for Schooling established [Gonski]
2011	Commonwealth Government	AMES teaching centres to close 30 June
2011/12	NSW Government	Special education funding changes, Every Student, Every School
2011/12	NSW Government	Restructuring of the Department of Education and Communities through Local Schools, Local Decisions
2012	Commonwealth Government / NSW Government	Signing of the Council of Australian Governments' National Partnership Agreement
2011/12	NSW Government	Submission to Ministerial Advisory Group re framework for implementation of the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Plan
2011	NSW Government	Board of Studies draft syllabus documents for English, History, Science and Mathematics which incorporate aspects of the Australian Curriculum



2012	NSW Government	Board of Studies propose a Record of School Achievement (ROSA) to replace the School Certificate
2012	NSW Government	Review of School Consultancy Program
2011/2012	NSW Government	Wood Royal Commission led to creation of Child Wellbeing Units
2010	NSW Government	Keep Them Safe 5-year action plan mid-point review
2013	Commonwealth Government / NSW Government	National Educational Reform Agreement
2012	NSW Government	Restructure of Departmental positions, deleted Priority Schools Funding Program, Priority Action Schools, Country Areas Program
2012	NSW Government	Drug and Alcohol Prevention Unit abolished
2013	NSW Government	Great Teaching, Inspired Learning
2013	NSW Government	New Working With Children Check started on June 15
2014	NSW Government	Rural and remote education: a blueprint for action
2014/15	NSW Government	Performance and Development Framework for principals, executives and teachers in NSW public schools
2014/15	NSW Government	Resource Allocation Model (RAM)
2014/15	NSW Government	Learning Management Business Reform (LMBR)
2014/15	NSW Government	Review of curriculum, planning, programming assessing and reporting to parents K-12 policy
2014/15	NSW Government	Validation of Assessment 4 Learning and Individual Development (VALID)
2015	Commonwealth Government	Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment inquiry into students with a disability
2016	NSW Government	NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Provision of Education to Students with Disability and Special Needs in NSW Schools
2015/16	Commonwealth Government	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data — changes to the collection process
2018	Commonwealth Government	Through growth to achievement: report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools (Gonski 2.0)
2008	Commonwealth Government	10 years of Closing the Gap targets for Aboriginal education
2018	NSW Government	New School Development Review procedures
Other policies implemented	Last updated	
18/11/2008	16/4/2018	Aboriginal Education Policy
30/8/2005	27/5/2020	Accreditation at Proficient Teacher in NSW Public Schools Policy
1/1/2007	9/4/2020	Assisting Students with Learning Difficulties
21/3/2011	14/2/2020	Bullying of Students — Prevention and Response Policy
5/3/2010	31/7/2018	Child Protection Policy: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm
1/12/2015	17/1/2018	Child Protection: Allegations against employees
1/1/2006	18/5/2020	Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12
1/9/2006	14/4/2020	Gifted and Talented Policy
22/3/2005	9/03/2020	Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A summary and consolidation of policy

Other policies implemented	Last updated	
17/8/2007	13/9/2019	Incident Notification and Response Policy
20/9/2007	10/1/2017	Literacy K–12 Policy
4/8/2006	22/11/2016	Management of Conduct and Performance (Imminent update of guidelines)
20/9/2007	10/1/2017	Numeracy K–12 Policy
31/7/2006	31/8/2020	Performance Management and Development Policy
27/2/2004	20/11/2020	Professional Learning Policy for Schools
15/02/2016	30/11/2020	School Excellence Policy
15/3/2011	7/12/2018	Social Media Policy
26/11/2013	6/12/2019	Student Bring Your Own Device Policy (BYOD)
8/5/2016	6/12/2019	Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy
27/1/2020		Student use of digital devices and online services
14/11/2005	13/3/2020	Working with Children Check Policy
Other initiatives		
		Wellbeing Framework for schools
		Child protection — mandatory reporting
		Health Care
		NAPLAN/VALID/PLAN
		Disability Strategy — a living document
		Personalised support for student learning
		High Potential and Gifted Education (Due for implementation at beginning of 2021)
		Education for a Changing World – Policy Reform and Innovation Strategy
		Rural and Remote Education Blueprint
		What Works Best
		Great Teaching Inspired Learning
		Local Schools, Local Decisions
		Closing the Gap
		School improvement frameworks
		Resource Allocation Model
		Quality Teaching, Successful Students

The exposition of the policy environment of schools in the 2004-2020 period itself attests to the deepening complexity of school life and teachers' and principals' responsibilities, and their work. The array of issues and processes addressed reflect the changing social, economic, and cultural contexts governing school education and the vastly expanded expectations

the community and governments have of teachers. Comparisons on this basis with the policy changes reflected in the 1991 and 2004 Industrial Commission decisions strikingly show the dramatic escalation in the nature and pace of change endemic in school life in the post-2004 era. With the devolution of responsibilities to schools to meet these intensifying challenges,



teachers and school leaders have responded under circumstances of reduced or no central support but with multiple evidentiary requirements of compliance. The evidence before the Inquiry demonstrated the efforts of teachers and their schools to meet the challenges given them, and other chapters of this Report address this in more detail.

The funding and resourcing context

This Inquiry was not commissioned to inquire into school funding policies and has no brief beyond the scope of the NSW public school sector. However, the capacity of the teachers in NSW public schools, the largest schooling system in the nation, to practice their profession to meet the legitimate expectations of the community, is dependent on the adequacy of resources to do so. It also operates as a system, and as individual schools, in a policy environment of differential overall student characteristics and financial resources that exist between government and a large non-government sector of schools. While this Inquiry will not address what is known as “state-aid” issues, it is important to consider how Commonwealth and state funding and school funding policies position public schools and their teachers to fulfil their mission.

As indicated above, the period since the Whitlam government has been marked by a series of different funding models, in earlier times based on various resource standards (the Schools Recurrent Resource Standard, the Education Resources Index). After a different model (the Socio-Economic Status funding model under the Howard years, including various artificial modifications to bring all non-government schools under a model that generally involved overfunding schools that would have lost income if the model had been correctly applied), the original Gonski model developed the Schooling Resource Standard as a common basis for the application of Commonwealth and state/territory funding across all schooling sectors.

With the base level of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) derived from what the Gonski model considered to be the necessary funding for relatively well positioned schools to deliver acceptable educational outcomes measured by NAPLAN results,

a formula was developed for the relative shares of Commonwealth and state/territory funding to the government and non-government sectors.

A submission from Lyndsay Connors AO and Dr Jim McMorrow sets out the current operation of the funding legislation and its positioning of government school systems.

“The current bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and NSW governments covers funding for the 2019-23 quinquennium. That agreement notes that NSW contributed 70.8 per cent of the SRS in 2019 and commits to providing 72.2 per cent in 2023. This is an increase of less than 2 per cent, equivalent to an additional \$180 per student on average in NSW public schools from the NSW Government. The NSW/Commonwealth bilateral agreement confirms that the state would limit its contribution to 75 per cent of the SRS by 2027. Over the same period, the Commonwealth Government has contracted to increase its share of NSW public schools’ SRS from around 18 per cent in 2019 to its limit of around 20 per cent by 2023, an average increase of just over \$700 per student.

This means that the formal agreement between NSW and the Commonwealth would result in NSW public schools operating at only 92 per cent of the SRS by 2023; and a maximum of 95 per cent by 2027.

By contrast, the Commonwealth will achieve its 80 per cent share of the public cost of the SRS for non-government schools by 2023; while the NSW Government is scheduled to reduce its funding share from the current 25 per cent in 2019 to 23 per cent by 2023, assuming the political will to do so. As a consequence, non-government schools will be operating at around 103 per cent of the SRS over the agreement’s funding period, while public schools will be left to operate at from 88 to 92 per cent over that period.”

The submission also points out that the NSW funding allocation includes the resourcing of the NSW Education Standards Authority and depreciation of capital assets, which if excluded would adjust the NSW Government's share from 72 per cent to 68 per cent. This results in an 88 per cent target for government schools, but 103 per cent for non-government schools. Further, the Commonwealth's commitment to index its grants at 3 per cent when wages growth is approximately 2% will disproportionately advantage non-government schools given the huge disparity in Commonwealth funding levels between the sectors.

The 2020 Budget Papers show that overall Commonwealth funding to NSW schooling sectors is \$2.807.6 billion (42 per cent) to the government school sector, and \$3.852.7 billion (58 per cent) to non-government schools. The enrolment shares are approximately 67:33.

State funding and resourcing

An attachment to the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation's *Local Schools, Local Decisions Evaluation Final Report* includes an historical analysis from the Teachers Federation of the steps towards the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy.⁵⁷ It includes the following information:

During the period from 2008 until the introduction of Local Schools, Local Decisions, Department-commissioned reviews from Boston Consulting Group and PricewaterhouseCoopers proposed devolution of responsibilities to schools as ways of cutting costs and reducing staffing levels, including specific proposals to terminate more costly experienced teachers on the top of the scale and require principals to ensure costs were restrained under devolution of funds⁵⁸. A Commission of Audit report (2012) advocated devolution with reduction of centrally supplied services with no increase in expenditures⁵⁹, and liberally referenced the previously cited reports commissioned by the previous Labor Government. On September 2012, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the public comments of the general manager of finance and administration in the Department at the time, including that "the Local

Schools, Local Decisions policy is just a formula to pull funding from schools over time" and a further report indicated that the loss of some 1600 jobs in the Department was factored into the business case for the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy⁶⁰.

The 2011/12 NSW Budget introduced savings measures designed to meet an immediate reduction of \$201 million and a further \$1.7 billion over a four-year period to 2016, with 600 position removed from state and regional offices and 400 positions from school administrative staff in schools, along with the 2.5% salaries cap.⁶¹

On the back of these cuts to the resourcing of NSW public schools, Local Schools, Local Decisions is a policy that monetises central supports provided to schools, dissolved the services and requires schools to themselves develop or purchase locally available replacement services to support the neediest students according to various equity indicators. The review of this policy by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, while being timid in its recommendations to redress the predicament of schools under the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, signified its failure.

The evidence before this Inquiry highlights the pressing necessity for a newly designed, central (based in regions/districts) offices for specialist support services in curriculum and student support across a range of indicators, that can be readily accessible by schools and teachers; supports that will not be adequately generated locally, or at all, under the current monetised model. There is need for a resourcing standard for the staffing of schools that presumes a revitalised overall system-wide framework of specialist support provision, and that incorporates sufficient permanent staff to reduce dependence on casuals, who are often simply available, and addresses the excessive incidence of temporary teacher employment.

Desirably, a renewed approach to developing such an objective standard would draw in the Commonwealth funding model. This Inquiry believes that such an approach should be the focus of new work, along with appropriate renegotiation of the industrial staffing agreement between the Department and the Teachers Federation. Models, such as that proposed by Connors and McMorro, based on meeting the staffing needs of schools, should be examined in this work.



⁵⁴ Council of Australian Governments, 2020. The following two excerpts from the NSW bilateral agreement are found at the same website: <https://www.education.gov.au/national-school-reform-agreement-0>.

⁵⁵ Dawkins, 1988.

⁵⁶ See Lingard et al. (1993) for an account of the significance of this document in ushering in an era of 'corporate federalism' to Australian schooling policy and practice.

⁵⁷ Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE), 2018d. It is to the credit of Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation that it included the submissions to its evaluation in the Final Report from the Primary Principals Association, the Secondary Principals' Council and the NSW Teachers Federation. It does not follow that the consequent recommendations adopt the force of these submissions. The Panel reviewed the BGS and PWC reports for itself.

⁵⁸ See Boston Consulting Group, 2010 (pp. 188-193) and PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2009.

⁵⁹ NSW Commission of Audit, 2012.

⁶⁰ Johnson, P., 2017.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 5.

Teacher accreditation and professionalism

The NSW Institute of Teachers Act was passed by NSW Parliament in April 2004, promulgated to commence in January 2005.

With this Act, a new regime of teacher regulation was introduced to all NSW schools, bringing to an end a long and tortuous history of attempts to achieve such an outcome. The operations of the Institute of Teachers, and its successor agencies — the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, 2014–16, and the NSW Education Standards Authority, 2017 to present — have had a progressively profound impact on the practice of the teaching profession in NSW over the period covered by this Inquiry.

It is useful to briefly visit the prehistory of the Institute of Teachers Act, as it throws considerable light on the diffident and ambiguous approaches to supporting stronger professional structures for teaching on the part of governments and school employers.

Background to the Institute of Teachers Act (2004)⁶²

As far back as 1968, the Martin report proposed that each Australian jurisdiction should establish a board of teacher education to determine teaching qualifications in tandem with universities. Such bodies were established in Queensland and South Australia in the early 1970s, in the context of establishing qualifications standards after disputes over governmental policies for quick fixes with underqualified persons in the midst of teacher supply crises in the late 1960s. Teachers and their unions in these jurisdictions strongly supported these steps. In Victoria, there was intense industrial agitation around establishing “control of entry” provisions to prevent hiring of unqualified persons to teach. An authority was legislated in 1976 in Western Australia, but the legislation was rescinded before promulgation on a pretext that it allowed the government to enact open-ended standards for entry to the profession that might undermine the purposes of the Act.



In the period 1993–97, there were cooperative efforts between the Australian government and teaching unions to establish a national professional body for the teaching profession, the Australian Teaching Council. While state and territory governments were initially engaged and invited to participate on the governing body, opposition led by the NSW government was successful in undermining the initiative and after the 1996 federal election the Howard government withdrew financial support for the project.

The fledging organisation commenced the development of professional policies around teaching standards, competencies for beginning teachers, beneficial induction practices, professional development entitlements among others, but ultimately these found no institutional home, although a number of universities did use the competencies for beginning teachers document to frame professional experience/practicum placement reporting. Elected teachers from the NSW public school system participated in the governing bodies of the Council during its existence.

In NSW, teaching qualifications were determined by the Department of Education, including through the use of a Classifiers Committee. Non-government teaching qualifications were effectively unregulated, with a weak provision included in the criteria for school registration requiring only appropriately qualified or experienced persons or others supervised by those with qualifications or experience. Other aspects of regulation of the teaching profession were entirely dependent on employer mandates, legislation and, sometimes, included in industrial instruments.

The Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service in the 1990s was extended, under a paedophilia reference, to examine the handling of serious misconduct in schools. The lack of any cross-sector provisions or processes for dealing with serious cases of professional misconduct became a major focus. Both teaching unions appeared at the Royal Commission (the Teachers Federation represented by its general secretary) and made submissions

strongly supporting the establishment of a teacher registration authority that could set standards for the profession, include teachers themselves in the oversight of all aspects of the profession, such as entry standards, teacher training standards, induction and professional development practices, and a transparent disciplinary function for appropriate cases. The Royal Commission's recommendations supported these proposals.

In 1997, the NSW Minister for Education released a ministerial discussion paper for a Teacher Regulatory Authority. This proposal reflected the strong opposition of non-government school authorities (although not their teachers union) by proposing to strongly regulate public school teachers through a mandatory scheme while leaving non-government teachers to participate voluntarily. Teachers strongly opposed this model, and eventually a Bill was brought before Parliament to regulate the whole profession. The initial form of this Bill, however, proposed entry to the profession might be on the basis of "standards" that did not require an academic teaching qualification (again reflecting accommodation of private school employers' preferences), a formulation that was revised during the legislative process. In the event, voting on the Bill was tied in the Legislative Council and lapsed at the proroguing of Parliament in March 1999.

Following this failure, the NSW government established an Inquiry into Teacher Education, by Professor Gregor Ramsey, that substantially addressed the professional status of the teaching profession, resulting in the report *Quality Matters* in 2000. A government taskforce that included teaching unions was established in 2001 to advise on the implementation of recommendations from this report. It proposed to government in 2002 that an Institute of Teachers should be established, covering the school teaching profession in NSW. It should be noted that, between 2002 and 2004, teacher regulatory authorities were established in Victoria, NSW, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia, to join Queensland and South Australia, with the ACT also establishing one in 2010.

Key features of the Institute of Teachers Act (2004) and their impact

The NSW Institute of Teachers established under this Act departed in crucial respects from the model adopted in all other jurisdictions (and overseas jurisdictions such as Scotland, England, Ontario, British Columbia), as well as departing from the proposals of the taskforce that advised on this matter. The key features of difference included:

- teachers would be “accredited” rather than “registered”, and crucially accreditation would only be required of those newly entering the profession from October 2004 or those returning after a five-year absence or more. Applicants for accreditation were required to have an offer of employment prior to seeking accreditation, and in any case, initial accreditation was granted by the employer not the Institute (see below regarding Teacher Accreditation Authorities)
- existing members of the profession were left outside of the purview of the new Institute
- accreditation decisions would not be made by the Institute itself but be delegated to school employers or their representatives established as Teacher Accreditation Authorities
- Professional Teaching Standards would be developed at Graduate, Competence, Accomplished and Lead levels, with the first two being mandatory for new or returning teachers and the latter two being voluntary recognition of expert teaching
- provisions relating to disciplinary actions for misconduct were vague and undeveloped, inconsistent between the schooling sectors, and proved unusable until later legislative amendment. Revocation of accreditation was also delegated to the Teacher Accreditation Authorities, rather than being the prerogative of the Institute
- the Institute was given the function of approving teacher education programs (as were interstate authorities) and the function of developing professional development policies for ongoing maintenance of accreditation
- while advice on policy relating to teacher accreditation was a function of a Quality Teaching Council, comprising 21 elected and appointed

teachers and employer, parent and teacher training academic representatives, governance was vested in a small board that did not include teachers.

The Second Reading speech⁶³ supporting the Bill set out the Government’s aspirations for the new Institute. The focus was on a body to represent the “professional interests of teachers”; with the establishment of a comprehensive regime of teaching standards seen as both supportive of the quality and status of the profession as well as fulfilling a public accountability role. Policies were to be developed by the Quality Teaching Council, approved by the Minister and then implemented through the Teacher Accreditation Authorities.

Over the period 2005 to 2013 the Institute:

- developed a system for the approval of initial teacher education programs, based on the Graduate Teaching Standards with specific requirements in the areas of special education, classroom management, literacy and numeracy, information and communications technology, English as an additional language or dialect, and Aboriginal educational priorities. These requirements, including entry provisions and subject content requirements, were developed cooperatively with the university sector, experienced teachers and school leaders
- established a scheme for registering professional development courses, for the purposes of fully accredited teachers maintaining their accreditation over rolling periods of five years. Major providers were endorsed to develop and deliver suites of courses covering different teaching standards
- instituted the accreditation system, with new graduates typically moving to full accreditation (Professional Competence, later renamed Proficient Teacher accreditation) over three years for full-time teachers (five years for part-timers and casuals). An accreditation report that involved documentary evidence of teaching practice against all the separate descriptors of the teaching standards (initially 46 descriptors, revised to 37 when the national version of the teaching standards replaced the NSW standards from 2012)



- over time, a system for teachers to seek accreditation as Accomplished or Lead teachers (revised to Highly Accomplished and Lead with the national version of the teaching standards from 2012) was developed. This form of advanced certification was voluntary, and involved very substantial bodies of teacher evidence, observation of teaching by externally appointed and trained observers, and referee reports relating to nominated standards. There was no extra remuneration for such accreditation until 2016 with an annual payment of \$6300 initially established.

In 2013, the Minister embarked on the merger of the Institute of Teachers and the Board of Studies, with the new Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) operating from January 2014. The broad rationale for this merger was given in the Second Reading speech, expressed in these terms (summarised):

BOSTES would have a 'distinctiveness and policy power' and be a 'single source of accountability for driving improvements across all schools and systems'. It would deliver the government supported actions proposed in the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning (March 2013) report; and 'ensure the key variable of teacher quality is at the heart of school organisation and is focused on improving student learning outcomes'. It was said to be most significant reform since 1990. The new Act mandated the inclusion of early childhood teachers, and all experienced school teachers, as yet not accredited, by the end of 2017; the national version of the teaching standards, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) was incorporated into the Act; provisional and conditional (initial) accreditation was transferred from Teacher Accreditation Authorities to the agency itself; and holding a Working With Children Check Clearance (WCCC) was made a condition of accreditation. Provision was made for teachers seconded to the Department or other agencies (such as BOSTES itself) to retain their accreditation while continuing to work with and support teachers in curriculum, pedagogy and student assessment.⁶⁴

An external review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards in 2016 led to yet another agency redesign, with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards replaced by the NSW Education Standards Authority, established from January 2017. The Second Reading speech rationale for the new agency was expressed in these terms (summarised):

NESA 'will shine a spotlight on practice across government and non-government schools'; it will 'shine a spotlight on problems in schools'; school registration will now involve assessment of the quality of teaching and learning in determining compliance with the requirements for registration; there will be a regime of random and risk-based audits and unannounced inspections; an entirely new governance Board is implemented with the heads of the three schooling sectors being members (but possible conflicts of interest are to be proactively managed); new committees introduced with the Quality Teaching Committee being reduced from the 23 members of its predecessor to 11, five of whom are elected teachers; NESA will undertake thematic reviews into aspects of teaching to inform policy; and responsibility for the suspension and revocation of accreditation in cases of misconduct or failure to meet professional teaching standards is transferred from TAAs [Teacher Accreditation Authorities] to NESA itself.⁶⁵

Through these various organisational changes, the core legislation governing teacher accreditation and the application of teaching standards remained. Key changes resulted in a reduction in the number of teachers involved on the key advisory committees, the transfer to the agency, away from the Teacher Accreditation Authorities, of responsibility for initial accreditation and for suspension and revocation of accreditation for misconduct, or for failing to maintain teaching standards. The general theme of integrating the various aspects of oversight of school life (teacher preparation and practice, curriculum, assessment, school registration) became stronger through these progressive changes, along with a replacement of a discourse around teacher professionalism through

standards and accreditation to a stronger discourse of oversight and accountability.

The teacher accreditation scheme has undoubtedly had a major impact on the structure and practices of the profession in NSW. The four-level structure of the Professional Teaching Standards introduced through the Institute of Teachers legislation was unique in Australia and formed the basis for the national Australian Professional Standards for Teaching that replaced all comparable sets of teaching standards across all Australian jurisdictions, from 2014 when introduced into NSW legislation.

A significant review of teaching in NSW conducted by the heads of the Department of Education, the Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers resulted in the recommendations contained in *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* (2013) being adopted by the NSW Government. The thrust of the proposals were directed at: concerns around university practices in entry to teacher training programs and lack of attention to basic literacy and numeracy competence of graduates; strengthening partnerships between schools and universities in teacher training; providing release time and resources to support beginning teachers (including casual and temporary teachers, unfortunately not effectively implemented despite Cabinet approval); harmonising teacher accreditation requirements and ongoing employer-based teacher development processes to reduce duplicated imposts on teachers; and expanding recognition of professional development activities for accreditation purposes (including school-based professional development). A number of these measures reflected responses to issues raised by teachers around the implementation of the accreditation system.⁶⁶

The impact of teacher accreditation in NSW

Debate around the impact and significance of teacher accreditation in NSW ranges across: support for a long overdue establishment of a formal professional structure for teaching not reducible to employment relationships; recognition that explicit standards

for teaching are integral to professional status and recognition; the power of scaffolding teacher preparation and induction into the profession around mentoring and a focus on standards; the significance of teacher input to teacher preparation program requirements and approvals; acknowledgement that the 18 years (until 2018) of only partial coverage of members of the profession eroded the legitimacy of the scheme; irritation of teachers over sometimes conflicting messaging and requirements from the teacher regulatory authority and school employers; complaints about excessive evidentiary requirements for accreditation and at times punitive practices; concerns over lack of support in accreditation for the increasing numbers of early career teachers who were casual or temporary; and a common but not exclusive academic discourse that characterised the teacher professionalism agenda as merely an instrument of neoliberal policies of control and accountability.

For the purposes of this Inquiry, it is proposed to focus on the evolving experience of teachers under the teacher accreditation legislation and attendant policies. The Panel notes the history of support by teachers, their unions and professional associations, for a formal professional structure that establishes credible teaching standards, defines and protects qualifications as essential for entry to the profession, affords teachers participation in the oversight of the profession, and assures the public of the integrity of the practice of the profession and its members.

With the introduction of teacher accreditation in 2005 and the adoption of the NSW Professional Teaching Standards, a common professional language underpinned the core elements in the approval of teacher education programs, the induction of new teachers into the profession, the benchmark for attaining the full licence to teach (now known as Proficient Teacher), and the requirements for demonstrating higher levels of expertise.

Ongoing professional learning, a common requirement of all professions, was institutionalised in the periodic “maintenance of accreditation” requirements (every five years for full-time teachers, seven years for casuals and part-time teachers). A large suite of new



professional development courses were developed and registered, most provided by the Department of Education, other employing authorities, teaching unions (the Teachers Federation established a dedicated Centre for Professional Learning to provide courses based on the teaching standards), professional teaching associations (subject associations and others), university faculties, and over time individual schools, public entities such as the State Library, the NSW Art Gallery, Musica Viva and others, and private providers. This represented a very significant investment by teachers of their time and commitment to maintain and expand their professional practice, linked to the public and explicit standards of the profession.

At its best, schools developed more purposeful programs and strategies for the induction of new teachers, both into their schools and to the profession at large. New roles were created in schools to provide collegial support for the new teachers and support them in achieving Proficient Teacher status.

The Panel heard from the founding chief executive of the Institute of Teachers, Tom Alegounarias, that the initial training of a teacher, while fundamentally based on the attainment of an approved qualification, should be considered complete only after a well-supported, purposeful induction based on the teaching standards. The Panel heard from teachers about their experiences of induction, and in particular of examples where principals recognised the value and power of utilising the teaching standards to support and encourage new teachers and maximise their enthusiasm to remain in the profession in a time where so many pressures can make the profession daunting.

Case study

The principal of a large western Sydney secondary school outlined that school's approach to the induction of the large number of beginning teachers typically appointed annually.

The school of more than 80 teachers, about 1100 students, 56 per cent from non-English speaking backgrounds, low socio-economic status, more than

400 students requiring individualised learning plans for different specialist reasons, received between eight and 12 beginning teachers annually (12 in 2020).

Features of standards-based induction practice:

- apply funding that resulted from the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning report for release time for new teachers and their mentors (available from 2014)
- appoint professional practice mentors from 2013 (drawn from the pool of teachers already accredited and familiar with the process)
- focus on accepting and supporting student teachers for practicum places, building a positive relationship with the school that sometimes results in future employment there
- commence induction by linking new teachers with their teams prior to the school year, including during end of year professional activities in the prior year
- term 1 focus on core school platforms, survival strategies, classroom management strategies etc
- commence work on accreditation requirements, preparing for and engaging in classroom observation practices
- shared reflection on classes, and feedback including from senior staff
- support for selecting and annotating relevant evidence for the accreditation process
- align professional development, and annual personal performance planning, and goal setting, of staff generally to teaching standards, generating commonality of experience and language across experienced staff, mentors, and new teachers.

Consistent with the approach of using the teaching standards to scaffold mentoring, good professional learning practices and induction, this school also gives explicit support to teachers to embark on accreditation as Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

One of the demands the phased-in form of the accreditation scheme placed on senior teachers was the requirement to become familiar with the application of the teaching standards to the “new scheme teachers” when the Standards did not apply to the senior teachers themselves. This was a challenge that many principals, deputies and other senior teachers took on, although it was not a universally successful

experience particularly where the beginning teachers were few, or alone, and more so if they were on temporary appointments; a phenomenon that became far more prevalent during this period.

The combination of the changes to the Staffing Agreement from 2009 (every second appointment available for school-based selection and appointment upon an interview) and the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy of devolution, has resulted in an explosion in temporary and casual employment becoming the most common experience for graduating teachers. The Panel heard of the experience of teachers spending years, some up to five years, on temporary engagements, and a study from academics at the University of Sydney set out the extent of this development and its impact on the morale of new teachers.⁶⁷

The phenomenon of temporary and casual teaching for the first years undermines the intentions of teacher accreditation, especially where initial engagements in the Department are often for six months or less, which denies the teacher access to the beginning teacher support funding.

The introduction of the teacher accreditation system from 2005 also had to run the gauntlet of mixed messaging to teachers coming from the Department and from the teacher regulatory body. The Department, as the Teacher Accreditation Authority, controlled the actual accreditation of new teachers and developed its own, separate documentation and templates for this. At the same time as the Professional Teaching Standards were introduced by the Institute, the Department promulgated a professional learning system, the Quality Teaching Framework, which functioned as an alternative language for teaching to which the Standards had to be mapped through a complex matrix. Further, the requirement for accredited teachers to log their professional development courses with the Institute was confused by the Department simultaneously developing its separate online system for teachers to log their courses.

The result of these developments was a less than harmonious introduction to the new professional regime in the experience of many teachers.

Over time, the Institute and its successor bodies revised the requirements and processes for accreditation to better address the concerns of teachers. Teachers before the Panel attested to their early experiences where local interpretations of requirements resulted in pressure to produce excessive documentation, but also how the process has been streamlined in recent years.

The teaching standards were revised from 2014 with the introduction of the national version, the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching, structured on the NSW model of four levels. The reduction in the number of standard descriptors (the unpacking of the seven core Standards) from 46 to 37 was welcomed but teachers commented that the number of such “dot points” (analogously with criticism of syllabus dot points) tends to lead towards more mechanical production of evidence for accreditation purposes, putting more emphasis on accountability check-offs rather than genuinely useful reflection on professional practice linked to standards.

Changed requirements from the NSW Education Standards Authority that remove the requirement for professional development to formally be documented to all Standard descriptors, or all Standards, has gone a considerable way to addressing this issue.

Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher recognition

Various submissions and witnesses to this Inquiry commented on the introduction of new categories of accreditation, Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher, into the salary scales. As they are the only truly new career positions introduced, and appear to hold some promise for recognition of expert practice, it is important to consider them in some detail.



The first attempt to create career levels that were not formal promotion positions but rather recognised levels of expert classroom practice was formulated by teaching unions across Australia in the early 1990s. In the context of what was then known as Award Restructuring, a common claim for recognising advanced skills teachers was made, and various versions of this category were granted by industrial tribunals across all jurisdictions. The common elements of the new category were that it was recognition of classroom practice expertise, the teacher remained a classroom teacher, there were no extra duties, and the value of the Award was set by the NSW Industrial Commission at an extra \$1200 (this became the rate across Australia with a minor variation in South Australia).

However, in the midst of entrenched industrial confrontation in the public school system at the time, and no agreements being reached, the arbitrated form of the Award for NSW public school teachers was a set of quotas for such positions in schools and assigned duties. This fundamentally changed the concept, from open access to any teacher who met the criteria of expert practice to a competitive, rationed set of positions.

In general, this category of recognition lapsed over time in most jurisdictions or was absorbed into the common scale, for a number of reasons. Among them was the low level of remuneration (less than half on an average annual increment along the common scale, hardly a true recognition of expert practice), weak criteria with no robust evidentiary metrics, and no evident consequences or implications for practice among teaching colleagues. It suffered also from being, at the time, one of the only mechanisms for gaining a salary increase outside the then very restrictive wages policies under the Accord between the Commonwealth government and the ACTU. It was seen ultimately as a simple salary entitlement of most teachers.

With a change of government in NSW, agreement was reached to abolish the position from the teachers Award.

It would take the recommendations of the Ramsey report of 2000, which urge a greater development of recognition of expertise and pedagogical authority in the teaching profession, for the matter to be revisited. The consequent introduction of the Institute of Teachers Act in 2004 included the legislated specification of the Professional Teaching Standards at four levels: Graduate Teacher (attained through an approved teaching qualification), Competence (later known as Proficient Teacher, the full licence to teach attained after up to three years of induction), and Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher. The NSW Professional Teaching Standards were developed with extensive consultation across the profession by the Interim Committee for the Institute of Teachers (2002-05) and were subjected to a validation process undertaken by the SiMERR National Research Centre at the University of New England.

Subsequent years involved the development of a process for accrediting teachers at these two higher levels. The elaborate effort in the US to certify highly performing teachers through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards was highly influential in modelling this initiative, and in Australia, through especially the Australian Council of Educational Research publications, a similar model was advocated.

In NSW, the Institute developed a voluntary accreditation policy and process for Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher through to 2012. Elements of the process included a preliminary online exercise for ascertaining readiness for such accreditation; requirements for substantial documentary evidence of practice against all of the Standard Descriptors under the seven Standards (now 37 descriptors in the national Australian Professional Standards for Teaching that replaced the NSW Professional Standards); payment of an application fee (set at about half of the cost to the Institute of delivering the accreditation process); an external observation of the teacher's practice by an Institute-trained external observer at arm's length from the applicant; and referee attestation of the teacher's practice in relation to nominated Standard Descriptors.

In line with the Teacher Accreditation Authority structure of the Institute's operations, senior officers in the Department (Regional Directors initially) were designated as the Teacher Accreditation Authority decision makers, assessing the totality of evidence submitted. The Teacher Accreditation Authority's decision was subjected to an Institute-conducted review by a cross sectoral Moderating and Consistency Committee, but the final decision lay with the Teacher Accreditation Authority, which could accept or reject the Moderating and Consistency Committee's advice.

It needs to be said that there was a lengthy timeline for establishing this process. It was somewhat overtaken by three developments:

- appointment of a number of roughly analogous positions (called HATs, Highly Accomplished teachers) by the Department under the 2009–12 Teacher Quality National Partnership. These were appointed on simplified criteria, appointed to schools to lead mentoring and other activities, were on three-year engagements while Commonwealth funding applied, and the teachers were supposed to simultaneously undertake formal accreditation through the Institute. These positions lapsed with the conclusion of the National Partnership, emblematic of the general effect of Commonwealth programs within state schooling systems
- development of a national model for certifying Highly Accomplished teachers and Lead teachers by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership that reflected the NSW model with some procedural variation. A number of jurisdictions have taken this up (ACT, Northern Territory and South Australia initially, in recent years also Queensland)
- announcement by the Commonwealth in 2012 of a Rewards for Great Teachers program, to commence in 2014 with payment of \$10,000 as a one-off recognition of certification under the national approach as Highly Accomplished Teachers. It was this announcement, and the necessity for jurisdictional processes to be recognised by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership that gave some impetus to take-up of the scheme.

The Commonwealth program was abolished in 2013 before it benefited any teacher, the funding allocated to this program being redirected into the new Gonski general funding scheme.

This episode illustrates the often ephemeral nature of Commonwealth interventions. This one didn't get started, but would have resulted in a Commonwealth one-off payment of employees of the Department outside their Award, with no agreed role or purpose for the recognition within the NSW career structure.

Finally, the accreditation of teachers at Highly Accomplished or Lead has not matured yet into an effective mechanism for the widespread recognition and reward of expert teachers. A sense of the slow growth of the scheme is seen from the following figures: at 1 January, 2014, there were 30 accredited at Highly Accomplished teacher and 11 at Lead teacher; at 30 June, 2019, there were 120 and 80 accredited, respectively. In 2019-20 a further 19 and 11, respectively, were added, giving a current total as at 30 June, 2020, of 241 accredited teachers at this advanced level. Efforts to promote the accreditation might be reflected in the figures that show, during 2019-20, 217 teachers commenced applications and a further 175 teachers completed initial assessments.⁶⁸

These figures cover the entire teaching profession, with the Panel being advised approximately half were in the government schooling system. With perhaps around 120 such accredited teachers recognised at expert levels of practice, it is clear that this has not yet become close to an adequate form of recognition of the advanced levels of expertise to be found in public schools. Nor has the Department found ways of integrating the Lead (and perhaps also the Highly Accomplished) level into progress towards school leadership positions and careers, as an option open to teachers. The focus on actual expertise in teaching, modelling and providing instructional leadership to colleagues, could be built into a reformed school leadership development process as considered in chapter 10.



The focus on recognising high-level expertise of classroom teachers should not be lost. Supporting initial teacher education student mentoring and supervision, induction of new and transferring teachers, playing strong roles in collaborative learning and teacher observation of practice should be seen as integral components of teaching itself and could underpin greater visibility and legitimisation of this form of accreditation in schools.

The Panel believes the focus proposed by Ramsey, in his foundational Quality Matters report of 2000, for the equivalent of the Highly Accomplished accreditation of a professional specialisation (subject specialisation in particular, but others as well) would better accord with how teachers see their roles and improve the attractiveness of undertaking this accreditation. This would not require new Standards, rather development of subject-specific evidentiary guides. The emergence of recognition of primary specialisations within initial teacher education programs by the NSW Education Standards Authority is a hint at what might be accomplished.

It remains that significantly higher salaries should apply (see chapter 11) and that steps are needed to make the process more nimble and accessible, as the teaching profession would surely currently be able to identify, at least impressionistically and from collegial experience, thousands more teachers expert in their subjects, other specialist roles, and teaching across primary subjects, within the profession than is indicated by the current accreditation numbers.

The Panel was advised that a review of the process and evidentiary requirements was underway in the NSW Education Standards Authority. If this is to be effective in better recognition of expert teaching within the public school system it needs to be more strongly supported, be built into the career paths for teachers, linked to promotions processes (perhaps by becoming prerequisites for promotion and built in to better, new on-the-job assessments that should precede applications for and appointments as senior school leaders), but retain the underlying notion that this recognition is recognition of teaching expertise.

Linking highly accredited teachers with improved university/school partnerships in teacher training placements, in mentoring new teachers, in leading professional learning practices in schools, would keep the recognition of such expertise closely attached to modelling and improving teaching practice among colleagues.

Such a development would be consistent with the recommendations from the submission of Professor John Buchanan and his colleagues from the University of Sydney, a Grattan Institute report and others, that are further discussed in chapter 11.

Teachers' professional work

Debates about the concept of “teacher professionalism” and about the status of teaching as “a profession” are ongoing and are often unproductive. Appeals to teacher professionalism are a well-trying discourse of governments and employers designed to dissuade teachers from engaging in campaigns, including industrial action, to not only defend and advance working conditions but also often precisely to protect professional standards such as the necessity of appropriate qualifications for entry to the profession.

Indeed, the origin of the campaigns for teacher registration systems in Australia was precisely to protect the necessity of formal qualifications and appropriate teacher preparation programs with both academic and practice components, from the opportunistic actions of governments in the face of shortages.

There is a somewhat standard academic discourse that establishes formal teaching standards to govern practice, accreditation of teacher education programs by the profession, and other indicia of professions such as requirements to maintain proficiency and meet standards of ethical conduct, as mere strategies of the neoliberal state to disempower and control teachers' work. The evolution of accreditation policies, and the practices that more easily satisfied them, reflect in varying degrees the operation of required tasks that are easily quantifiable (documents and professional

development hours) for accountability purposes, but also efforts to open up “what counts” for maintenance of professional standing by revising requirements to embrace teacher practice more holistically. The Panel considers that there is further work to do in this regard.

There was considerable evidence before the Panel from teachers expressing their commitment to high levels of practice in the interests of their students and to deliver the empowering benefits of a well-grounded education for all. If there was a constant theme in this evidence, it was that the combination of policy impacts in the evolving realities of today’s society and schools makes it increasingly difficult to deliver what the teachers know they are capable of and are committed to.

Broadly, teachers support the concept of the teaching standards and the importance of formal qualifications and other measures defining their profession but lament the often-bureaucratic impositions that turn potentially quality professional processes into time consuming accountability exercises. Strongly articulated curriculum is seen as a public benefit that supports an equality of access to the knowledge and other goods of the society by all children. However, through the NSW Curriculum Review it was apparent that syllabuses were often seen as overly detailed, over-loaded documents that became constricting when implemented within ever-increasing demands for detailed documentation and data reporting on lessons. Teachers support high-quality teacher education, and the formal accreditation of these programs with input from the profession itself into decisions about the content of teacher preparation. However, there are grounds for disquiet about the entry standards many universities apply, seemingly in the interests of the business model of the institutions themselves.

The employment circumstances confronting graduates as they enter the public system are increasingly marked by long periods of temporary, short-term appointments, which are far from conducive for a strong, supported transition to confident, skilled professional practice.

The issue of autonomy was raised frequently. Teachers do not have a privatised relationship with students as “clients”. Schooling is a public good, provided to all young people by the whole community as a right. Curriculum is, among other things, a selection from the culture, a design around knowledge, skills, values, traditions and preparation for the future, that the community devises and licences through its democratic processes. Teacher autonomy needs to be understood within this context. It is best enacted on the basis of intellectual depth in the teaching disciplines and pedagogical practices, to adapt the formal curriculum to the exigent circumstances of the school and the classes of students. There needs to be credible time available for teachers to develop their approaches to student engagement, importantly to be able to do so with shared time with their colleagues. Teaching standards, curriculum documents, research on sound pedagogy, expertise in assessment, feedback and reporting, comprise the professional framework within which schools and teachers exercise their professional judgement in the interests of their students.

The weight of the evidence before this Inquiry, in relation to how teachers have negotiated the introduction of an entirely new professional framework over the past 17 years demonstrates a desire for well supported and resourced opportunities to address the needs of their students. Teachers are doing so in circumstances where the conditions of professional practice are severely challenged by changing social and economic realities; where policy prescriptions from Government and the Department of Education simply demand more to be done, with severely reduced central system supports, and without the provision of teacher time in any way comparable to that built into teachers’ work in the best performing education systems around the globe.

The significance of the impact of the accreditation scheme on teaching is underlined by the fact that teachers’ salaries are now structured around the accreditation levels, and that continuing employment to teach is conditional on demonstrating ongoing maintenance of professional accreditation on the basis of the Proficient Teacher Standards.



Emerita Professor Raewyn Connell concluded her statement to the Inquiry with this reflection on teachers' work:

“Teachers as a group, rather than individually, have a formative role in social and economic processes. The central purpose of their labour is to help the rising generation develop their intellectual, social, practical and creative capacities, a task that is simultaneously vital, elusive and fantastically complex. Teachers have to deploy a wide range of their own capacities — intellectual and emotional, manual, creative and practical — to do the job. Though pupils encounter teachers as individuals, the work is, in fact, strongly collective and powerfully shaped by the institutional system. It is no wonder that teachers' public image is contradictory and that governments often reach for showy short-term solutions to tough long-term educational problems. Teachers have to deal with changing technologies as well as shifting policies and management practices, declining support for human services, diverse and changing school populations, the effects of migration and economic inequality, and the traumas in pupils' lives produced by colonisation, racism, family violence, disabilities and community conflicts. It is an impressive sign of teacher professionalism that so much good teaching actually happens in our public schools.”

Ensuring the viability of the teacher accreditation system

This final note briefly addresses unfinished business in the scheme for the accreditation of teachers in NSW.

- The Teacher Accreditation Act should be amended to eliminate the convoluted scheme of Teacher Accreditation Authorities as quasi-franchises of the NSW Education Standards Authority as the regulatory authority. The NSW scheme is out of kilter with all other teacher registration systems in Australia, and to no benefit. There should be a clear distinction between the prerogatives of employing authorities and the membership of the profession.
- The announcement in December 2020 of significant changes to the professional development arrangements for teachers (government-nominated priority areas and stricter quality oversight of courses in priority areas) should be approached with care for the efforts teachers and professional development providers have made to develop and deliver registered professional development. More importantly, recognition should be given to the more holistic professional learning practices of teachers with their colleagues that respond to the exigencies of their schools and students, as well as their own diagnosed professional needs at any particular time.⁶⁹
- A serious consideration is needed of the future of the Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher accreditations. There is evidence of reticence to support such accreditations of recognised expertise by some who see such recognition of expertise unattached to specific roles as undermining an egalitarian culture (as in the experience of those told to “keep it quiet” upon successful accreditation). There should not be quotas but an expectation that such accredited teachers will regularly perform roles such as supervising student teachers and oversight of such placement programs in liaison with senior management and university staff, play significant roles in the induction of new teachers, and in school-based professional development such as lesson study strategies, collegial observation practices aligned to teaching standards and agreed pedagogies in use at the school. After all, these activities are intrinsic to good teaching itself.
- The impending NSW Education Standards Authority policy option of undertaking the accreditation through modules and “banking” achievements progressively should be embraced. However, there is a strong case for the generic standards at these levels to be developed into subject-based guidance as to what an expert teacher in each of the school disciplines looks like. This is an issue analogous to the barren debate, hopefully passing, of the alleged primacy in knowledge and skill of “generic capabilities”, said to be relatively free of content and transferrable in an unrestricted manner. For teachers of particular subjects, grounded in the

discipline-specific content and related pedagogies, recognition as an expert teacher is recognition of teaching in that field. A powerful discussion of these issues, commissioned by the Department of Education itself, is found in another study headed by Professor Buchanan from the University of Sydney Business School.⁷⁰



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- ^{62.} Some useful history is provided in Swain (2000). The paper notes the 1991 decision of the Annual Conference of Teachers Federation to support the establishment of a teacher registration authority for NSW that was controlled by and answerable to the profession itself (p. 21).
- ^{63.} NSW, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly, May 12, 2004.
- ^{64.} Summarised from New South Wales, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly (October 30, 2013).
- ^{65.} *ibid.*
- ^{66.} This account differs in emphasis from the critical stance found in Stacey (2016).
- ^{67.} The Panel was afforded access to a Pre-print Draft (9 September, 2020) of: Stacey, M, Fitzgerald, S., Wilson, R., McGrath-Champ, S., & Gavin, M. "Teachers, fixed-term contracts and school leadership: Toeing the line and jumping through hoops". This paper interrogates the impact of Local Schools, Local Decisions and the current staffing procedures on rising rates of temporary contracting.
- ^{68.} These figures are available in the annual reports of the former Institute of Teachers (the 2014 figures) and NESAs (2019 and 2020 Annual Reports).
- ^{69.} Reference can be made to Mockler (2020). Within a dominant critique of the operation of teaching standards and the policy approach to professional learning, there are useful indications in this paper for a fuller recognition of teacher practice and learning that could be acknowledged and included in professional accreditation processes. The late 2020 announcement of abandonment of currently registered courses affords an opportunity for a differently construed approach to professional learning recognition.
- ^{70.} Buchanan et al., 2018.

Chapter 6:

Local Schools, Local Decisions

Although the radical implementation of devolution into the NSW system came in 2012 there had been proposals to that end circulating since the late 1980s as part of what became known as New Public Management.

What had been a discussion about how schools could better relate to their local communities — an issue never far from the attention of active school principals — was broadened out to become a full-on case for changing the way our public school system was to operate.

In the Greiner era two reports stand out; that of management consultant Brian Scott and that of former Senator for NSW Sir John Carrick. Carrick⁷¹ recommended the creation of a new Board of Studies and the shift of many teaching and learning functions from the Department to it. Among a whole range of proposals for change was support for “the broad

principles of decentralisation and devolution”. One casualty emanating from the report was the loss of all subject inspectors. The Scott Report⁷² presented a picture of “the self-managing school” as the best way forward; part and parcel of its attraction for economically focused politicians being the privatisation of cleaning services and reductions in teaching positions, both primary and secondary.

The scene was set for conflict about the management of the public system, conflict that continues to this day. Fast forward to the period relevant to our Inquiry and there were another two reports — in this case commissioned by a Labor Government — on the subject of administration and staffing. The first by PricewaterhouseCoopers⁷³ and the second by Boston Consulting⁷⁴.



The Boston Consulting Group report (2010) extolled the virtues of devolution and how it would assist in trimming the costs of running a system, Victoria seen as a good case study. The PricewaterhouseCoopers report (2009) was specifically focused on “school-based employee related costs”. To that end it proposed more power to principals: “We believe that increasing principal accountability for managing school-based costs should be focused on driving a positive financial impact in the short to medium term whilst also maintaining educational outcomes.”⁷⁵

When a change of government came in 2011, it was these ideas that set the frame for policy — “efficiency” and “effectiveness” on the one hand and “devolution” and “localism” on the other. That would mean a reallocation of expenditure and accountability from the centre to the schools, with efficiency and effectiveness won along the way. It went like this: ⁷⁶

“An examination of the Annual Reports of the NSW Department of Education reveals the extent of the initial impact of Local Schools, Local Decisions. From the period 2012–2015 there was a net increase of staff in schools by an additional 2197 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. This was based on increasing enrolments due to population growth. However, for the same period, state and regional non-school based educational support positions serving schools decreased by a net 698 FTE.

The loss of positions was from a wide range of areas that schools relied on that included curriculum support, professional development, staffing, equity programs, drug and alcohol education, student welfare, student behaviour, community liaison, regional ‘new arrivals’ programs, rural education, staff welfare, arts programs, state-wide library services, assessment and reporting, special education and multicultural education.”⁷⁷

Coinciding with this, schools were given Gonski-enriched monetary allocations determined by the Resource Allocation Model. It was made up of a base school allocation (permanent staffing costs, operational funding plus a remoteness/isolation factor), and equity loadings determined by factors related to socio-

economic status, Aboriginality, disability and language proficiency). Room was also available for targeted (individual student) funding.

The extent of the devolution that emerged from all of this — and the sweeping up of the extra Commonwealth funding that came — was significant with schools now managing 70 per cent of the total public school education budget as opposed to 10 per cent in 2013.⁷⁸

What came out of this was a change in the roles of both the Department and schools. Associated with this was a language that pictured much that had been done by the Department as “back-office bureaucracy” as opposed to “frontline teaching”. In reality, a good portion of the so-called bureaucrats were educators “drawn from the teaching service, based on experience and expertise, to provide professional support, resources, face-to-face advice for teachers in schools”.⁷⁹

To illustrate the point, the Teachers Federation submission takes us back to the Labor-initiated changes in 1996 that replaced 10 regions with 40 districts, and which was essentially maintained until 2003 when our Inquiry begins. Approximately 800 non-school based positions were distributed across the state, mainly in 40 local district offices, staffed by people with a teaching background and public servants. The distribution was relatively uniform with some localised variations. On average, each district office had 20 staff led by a district superintendent, comprising:

- a minimum of four curriculum consultants, including literacy and numeracy consultants
- a technology adviser
- student-welfare staff
- a home-school liaison officer
- special education staff
- an officer dealing with staff welfare
- officers acting as the first point of contact on personnel and salary matters, along with school maintenance, assets and cleaning
- additional consultants and support personnel to meet local needs.

At around the same time there was a restructure of state office, with a Deputy Director-General Teaching and Learning, with directorates that included:

- Assessment and Reporting
- Curriculum — Secondary Education, Primary Education, Early Childhood Education
- Distance and Rural Education
- Special Education
- Student Welfare
- Specific Focus Programs
- Training and Development — School Programs
- Vocational Education.

In contrast — and as a result of developments since 2003 — the Department now plays more of a regulatory and supervisory rather than a teaching support role. There are 110 Directors, Educational Leadership but their role isn't such as to provide a replacement for the loss of support positions in curricular, teaching and learning and professional development.

Also, within the Department is the Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation. It reports on a range of issues relevant to teaching and learning but its Advisory Council has no representation from the NSW Teaching Service, thus confirming what is often described as a “sense of remoteness” from what we might call “the real world of teaching”.

A consequence of the devolution policy has been a shift of power and responsibility in relation to staffing and management. In staffing matters there has been a reduction in the numbers and system expertise at the centre and more work required for applicants and selectors, in particular school principals and their executive teams at the local level. In respect of the results of all of this on time and workload the NSW Curriculum Review⁸⁰ put it this way:

“The implications of more devolved responsibilities and greater autonomy included a shift in principals’ work away from teaching and learning to financial and other management issues. Increased requirements for school data analysis and reporting and other new accountabilities had seen an intensification of workloads and a reduction in principals’ abilities to be ‘instructional leaders’. Some report becoming increasingly bogged down with governance and compliance.”

This view about “red tape” was presented in many of the submissions to the Panel and it was confirmed in the Department’s own evaluation where two-thirds of principals said Local Schools, Local Decisions had not had a positive effect on simplifying administrative processes⁸¹. Worth noting here, and addressed previously in relation to teachers and their work, is the impact of the digital revolution and its systems. All too often, one principal told the Inquiry, “the systems are put out before they are ready. It is overwhelming to all of the staff. No time is given to understand the systems.”⁸²

It’s just not the case that locally chosen support from the marketplace of consultants and other experts can offer what had been available before. Indeed, in many of the schools working in disadvantaged communities, particularly but not only those in rural and remote NSW, such support, including staff required, may just not be available. This can directly affect a school’s capacity to deliver and also indirectly on requirements such as professional development that can’t be undertaken because of a lack of temporary or casual staff to fill in when necessary.

It’s one thing for the Department to be continually evaluating the effectiveness of its policy of devolution and making additions and subtractions as circumstances require, but quite another to axe what developed over many years by way of internal dialogue and externally driven pressure, and hand over a bucket of money to schools as an alternative. What was an asset embodied in the support staff and the knowledge they had developed over the years was effectively



sacrificed in the interests of an ideology developed in other contexts and for narrower private sector purposes. Rather, it is the view of the Panel that the public system is just that, a “system” not a “collection of schools”. Indeed, “the notion of a stand-alone school, self-managing its destiny, is the antithesis of what is needed” when it comes to tackling disadvantage.⁸³ Dr Ken Boston, former Director-General of NSW Education is very direct in his conclusion: “School autonomy is an irrelevant distraction.” What’s needed for children from backgrounds of “aggregated social disadvantage” is “immediate diagnosis of learning needs, and immediate and intensive personalised teaching. They need one-to-one and small groups teaching, speech therapists, counsellors, school/family liaison officers including interpreters, and a range of other support”.⁸⁴

Doubts about the efficiency and effectiveness of Local Schools, Local Decisions have been expressed by many, including the Auditor General who expressed concern that there wasn’t adequate oversight of how schools were using the funding.⁸⁵ Add to that the educational leadership and administrative implications and the conclusion by the Government itself that “it did not lead to improved results across our system”^{86a} and you have a seriously flawed policy.

There are two ways of looking at the various criticisms of Local Schools, Local Decisions. It could be viewed as “good in principle but flawed in its implementation” because of inadequate preparation of principals, insufficient oversight and direction from the centre and, contrary to expectations, a greater administrative load in areas unrelated to teaching and learning. All of this, then, has led to poorer rather than better learning outcomes as laid down by the Government and developed as required targets. The other view is that it is flawed in principle, with the flaws being revealed and exacerbated through implementation.

The Government’s response^{86b} has come with the School Success Model re-emphasising the targets it wishes to see achieved in relation to NAPLAN, Aboriginal education, HSC performance, attendance at school, wellbeing and pathways to further education or work. It notes that more “time” is needed to manage to these ends but no specific initiatives follow to back this up. The same applies to the reference to “support”, which morphs into a case for more central supervision and direction. In the event of failure to meet the targets “additional support and direction” will come from the Department, the emphasis being more on the “direction” than the “support”. As the headlines described it:

- “State to intervene in failing schools” (*The Sun-Herald*, 6 December, 2020)
- “Minister takes back power from principals” (*Sunday Telegraph*, 6 December, 2020).

That’s the message the Government wished to send to schools and the wider community — and it was sent!

What’s missing in all of this is a hard-headed analysis of why Local Schools, Local Decisions was always going to be a flawed initiative. First, it failed to recognise the incapacity of the system created to properly address matters of inequality and disadvantage. Second — and despite its stated intentions — it didn’t take seriously enough the question of educational leadership in schools.

As we’ve noted earlier in this Report, serious levels of disadvantage weigh heavily on the public system. It’s a difficult business to handle whether it involves a principal seeking to engage a difficult parent or a teacher seeking to engage an uninterested student in the classroom.

To illustrate the point, it is useful to consider provision for English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students. It’s an area of education about which NSW can be proud, having built a world-class system following the decision to appoint EAL/D-qualified teachers back in 1969. According to researchers in the field, the NSW program played “a central role in achieving the Government’s multicultural and equity obligations in education”.⁸⁷

In considering the best way to deliver English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) education, a number of factors need to be considered. In the first place — and in common with other areas delivering for disadvantaged communities — there is the depth of the challenge involved for the teacher and the school.

“... while it may take about two years to achieve basic conversational fluency in spoken English, students typically require a minimum of five to seven years of English language and literacy support in order to close the gap in academic performance with their English-speaking peers. For refugee and other students with disrupted education and limited literacy skills in their own language, a significantly longer period of support is usually required.”⁸⁸

To put it plainly and simply, as Watkins, Noble and Wong do in their study of working with students of a refugee background, “It’s complex!” They point out that the needs of such students “are not simply the pragmatic requirements of educational performance, but must address complex linguistic, social, cultural, psychological and economic needs”.⁸⁹

Second, and in relation to the first point, it is imperative that funding and management systems are part of a “whole-of-system” strategy that reduces the “long tail” of educational disadvantage. With the imposition of Local Schools, Local Decisions, “flexibility” has replaced “strategic” as the key word to describe practice. It’s an area of delivery that needs commitment and consistency, and is vulnerable if not backed up by clearly stated policy and then embedded in the system by fully engaged schools and specialist practitioners.

What research indicates is that devolved, market models of delivery don’t produce the results that “district-level systems of ESL [English as a second language] professional support and leadership” do. A 2012 study from the UK put it this way:

“Decentralisation leads to inefficiencies in funding distribution; time-wasting due to teachers and managers repeating work already done by others elsewhere; and a lack of knowledge through a lack of effective training programs.”⁹⁰

What has followed with the implementation of Local Schools, Local Decisions in NSW has been nothing short of tragic, whether one is talking about experts to support principals and teachers, proper qualifications for English as an additional language or dialect teachers, the use of temporary and casual teachers and a culture of “flexibility” in relation to core obligations. Both “time” and “expertise” have become real issues for staff involved, whether it’s their own professional development or their responsibility to engage other teachers and the migrant communities they serve.

This conclusion about the structural flaws of the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy applies particularly, but not only, in relation to disadvantaged students. As Professor Ian Hickie⁹¹ put it in relation to monetised models generally:

“This type of model has been very attractive in disability and other areas for some time that if the funding was available per student the services would be available ... simply monetising it doesn’t mean you’re going to have the service environment that can deliver those services in a particular way. So, I am much more attracted to the regional service organisations we were discussing earlier.”

In relation to teachers, he concludes that it is not just a matter of “teachers’ skill” but of supporting teachers to be “part of teams” and having services available at a regional level. Certainly, it is the Panel’s view that the availability of such services wherever the school is located shouldn’t be a matter of chance as it would appear to have become.

The other concern the Panel has about Local Schools, Local Decisions is its failure to take the question of educational leadership seriously enough. This matter will be addressed in another chapter.



^{71.} *Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools, 1989.*
^{72.} *NSW Government, 1989.*
^{73.} *PricewaterhouseCoopers, op. cit.*
^{74.} *Boston Consulting Group, op. cit.*
^{75.} *PricewaterhouseCoopers, op. cit., p. 18.*
^{76.} *Gavrielatos, op. cit., Appendix 1.*
^{77.} *Gavrielatos, ibid., Appendix 1, p. 7.*
^{78.} *Gavrielatos, ibid., p. 38.*
^{79.} *Johnson, P., op. cit, p. 2.*
^{80.} *NESA (2020), as cited in Gavrielatos, op. cit., p. 38.*
^{81.} *CESE, 2018e.*
^{82.} *Anonymous principal, as cited in Gavrielatos, op. cit., p. 38.*
^{83.} *Gavrielatos, op. cit. Appendix 1, pp. 1-2.*
^{84.} *ibid., p. 2.*
^{85.} *Audit Office of NSW, 2020.*
^{86a.} *NSW Department of Education, 2020c.*
^{86b.} *NSW Department of Education, 2020c.*
^{87.} *NSW ESL and Refugee Education Working Party, ca. 2013, p. 7.*
^{88.} *ibid., p. 4.*
^{89.} *Watkins et al., 2019, p. 7.*
^{90.} *Wardman (2012), as cited in NSW ESL and Refugee Education Working Party, op. cit., p. 27.*
^{91.} *Hickie, op. cit.*

Chapter 7:

The curriculum

The Education Reform Act 1990 (now the Education Act) introduced major changes to the NSW school curriculum, the main structure of which remains in place.

Authority for curriculum development was placed in the newly established Board of Studies and mandated for all schools. Key learning areas (KLAs) were mandated for primary (six KLAs) and secondary (eight KLAs). Specific subjects, with hours of allocated time, were mandated for junior secondary studies. Numerous school-developed courses were reduced and a cycle of curriculum review was commenced. Significant further revisions of the model introduced in the 1990 Act followed: the 1995 Eltis report (a clearer K–10 progression, structured in two-year stages, with some reduction in the number of outcomes in syllabuses) and the 1997 McGaw report (separation of the tertiary entrance score from the HSC certificate, a shift to criterion-referenced assessment, strengthened advanced courses and introduction of vocational education and training subjects into the HSC).

The 2003/04 review of teachers' work in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission acknowledged the significance of these changes in its decision in that case, and they are amply described in the Vinson report of the same time.

The period 2004–2020 has seen ongoing changes to the curriculum mandate for NSW schools, some of them considerable, and the period ends with the conclusion of a two-year further comprehensive review of the curriculum, the recommendations of which are now driving expedited syllabus redesign for progressive implementation from 2022–24.

This chapter considers the introduction of a national curriculum for Australian schools and its effects in NSW, the impact of the decision to abolish the year 10 School Certificate, NSW efforts to strengthen the HSC, and the 2018–20 NSW Curriculum Review led by Professor Masters.⁹²



National curriculum

The 2009 National Education Agreement signed by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments followed decades of various attempts by the Commonwealth to achieve a national approach to schooling. The establishment of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in 2008 provided the vehicle for the development of the Australian Curriculum. Savage⁹³ described the significance of this:

“The formation of ACARA and the Australian Curriculum has set in motion dramatic shifts in curriculum policy and development processes across the Australian federation. In less than a decade, roles and responsibilities that were unambiguously the preserve of states and territories are now negotiated at the national scale. Whilst the axis of power is rapidly shifting, however, the mechanics of policy and governance appear to be increasingly opaque.”

It is not necessary for this Inquiry to document the considerable manoeuvring that unfolded as shaping papers for the curriculum areas were developed and consulted on, a new curriculum published, timetables for progressive implementation in different jurisdictions settled and, in particular, the NSW approach of adopting and adapting the Australian Curriculum within the preferred NSW syllabus structure for presenting curriculum content to the teaching profession (see Hughes *op. cit.* for a summary).

The fact is, that through the institutional evolution of the NSW curriculum authority (from the Board of Studies until 2013, through the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards 2014–16, and the NSW Education Authority from 2017), NSW teachers worked on syllabus committees to develop whole suites of new syllabuses to address the new Australian Curriculum within the NSW framework for K–10 curriculum. During this time, ongoing controversy about aspects of the Australian Curriculum led to a 2014 review that resulted in further changes in relation to the new general competencies and cross-curriculum priorities that are features of the Australian Curriculum, along with some pruning of content from first versions.

For NSW teachers, and students, the new syllabuses were introduced for K–10 from 2014 to 2018.⁹⁴

However, while the teachers of the state were required to revise their lesson planning and associated teaching to accommodate the national curriculum, they did so in a context of ongoing debate about the NSW approach, as well as seeking to address the implications of the 2010 decision to raise the school leaving age to 17, which held significant implications for the final years of schooling. The 2016 Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Review (a review of the merger of the Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers) criticised the form of incorporation of the Australian Curriculum into NSW syllabuses, despite widespread support by NSW educational stakeholders, including teachers, for the NSW approach.

In 2018, the year the last of the new syllabuses were being introduced, the Federal Government released *Through Growth to Achievement: report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools* (March 2018),⁹⁵ sometimes referred to as Gonski 2.0. Among its recommendations were proposals for the further significant redesign of the Australian Curriculum over five years, structuring the content in the “learning areas and general capabilities as learning progressions”. A review of the senior secondary curriculum was called for. General capabilities were to become more prominent in designing learning and new online formative assessment instruments were to be developed for teacher use.

Before the final year of introducing the revised syllabuses was half way through, NSW launched another major review that was publicly presented as NSW’s action to implement the Gonski 2.0 prescriptions. Hughes described it thus:

“In May 2018, the NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, announced a review of the NSW curriculum to ensure that it equips students to contribute to Australian society into the 21st century (NESA 2018a). The Minister hailed the Review as ‘the first comprehensive shake-up of the Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum since 1989’ (NESA 2018b).

The Review [was managed by the NSW Education Standards Authority] and led by Professor Masters, CEO of the Australian Council for Educational Research. Professor Masters stressed that the Review would not just be 'a matter of tweaking what we currently have but a major redesign of NSW education. We need to be thinking about what the curriculum should look like for the future, we need to be ambitious and visionary' (Singhal, 2018).⁹⁶

The outcome and implications of the NSW Curriculum Review are addressed later in this chapter.

Changing student populations, credential reform and ongoing effects on curriculum

Mandated curriculum does not exist in a vacuum, and its implementation is deeply affected by the changing realities of the society and classrooms. A standard set of distinctions can be made between the formally mandated curriculum, the version of this curriculum that is planned by teachers, the actual curriculum that forms the basis of classroom teaching and learning as it transpires, and the curriculum that is assessed both formatively and summative. Accordingly, in considering the curriculum dimension of the changes to and the value of teachers' work, both the formal changes in the content and structure of the formal curriculum as well as the fate of this curriculum as it is addressed through these further contexts of actual teachers' work and the engagement with it by students are relevant.

As well, the formal curriculum, as mandated by the Education Act and embodied in NSW Education Standards Authority syllabuses, does not exhaust the full provision schooling offers students. As recounted in Vinson and the Industrial Relations Commission Decision 2004, there are numerous additional programs addressing social issues that become the responsibility of schools and teachers, progressively increasing in number and scope with rare deletions of earlier programs. The NSW Curriculum Review final report addressed this issue:

NSW Curriculum Review (p26-27) Increased expectations of schools

The Review also heard widespread concerns about additional expectations and demands that have been placed on schools and that further reduce time for quality teaching and learning.

A number of submissions observed that schools are now fulfilling functions that once were responsibilities of families and other institutions in society. Some described this as 'filling a vacuum' created by broader societal changes — particularly in relation to student mental health, wellbeing and the development of personal qualities.

Numerous references were made to other pressures resulting from decisions to delegate to schools responsibility for addressing various social issues. One person observed that schools had become 'the solvers of all of society's ills', with new issues constantly being added to the curriculum. The Review was told that a recent scan of political announcements had identified a diverse set of issues that schools were now being asked to address, including 'anxiety/depression, resiliency training, childhood obesity, road safety, water safety, Asian studies, healthy school canteens, bushfire safety awareness, languages, cyber safety and anti-bullying'. Others mentioned drug education, first aid, stranger danger, healthy eating and pet safety. Additional programs of these kinds consumed significant teaching time and detracted from other aspects of teaching and learning.

While all these social issues were recognised as important, they were seen as contributing to a 'chopping and changing of the curriculum' in response to topical political issues and pressures from 'non-school bodies' and special interest groups. These changes were 'often made hastily and without proper consideration of the impacts on time, resources, funding or even the benefits of such changes'. When such additions were made, consideration was never given to what might be removed from, or de-emphasised in, the curriculum.



There was a view that it should be more difficult for governments to add social issues of these kinds to the school curriculum and workload of schools. Some suggested that schools and teachers should 'push back' on expectations that they address issues better addressed by parents, allied health professionals or other organisations.

Elsewhere in this Report there is an account of significant changes in the context of teaching (see particularly chapter 3).

In relation to the effect on the curriculum, besides the impacts of "war, migration, refugee settlement and globalisation" on the size and nature of NSW student populations, Fitzgerald outlines how structural changes in the Australian economy have shaped schools. Figures are cited from 2010 that show that some 7000 students (of a year 10 enrolment of 54,607) did not return to school in year 11, with disproportional effects on low socio-economic schools losing up to a third of their students.⁹⁷

Independently of the extensive curriculum changes flowing from the accommodation of the Australian Curriculum into NSW syllabuses during this period, the NSW Government introduced further highly significant changes to the upper levels of schooling, including:

- legislating to raise the school leaving age from 15 to 17 from the start of 2010 (students to be in school, or training, full-time employment or a combination of these)
- abolishing the School Certificate after 2011 (externally examined in five areas)
- replacement of this certificate with the Record of School Achievement (ROSA), thereby devolving to schools and teachers a considerable increase in the tasks of "grading, testing, assessing, monitoring, moderating and credentialing" across increasing areas of the curriculum, including vocational and life skills courses undertaken by students post year 10
- undertaking the first significant review of the HSC since the McGaw reforms commenced in 2000. The Stronger HSC Standards reforms were announced in 2016, with implementation from 2017 to 2020 (see next column)

- announcing on 24 October, 2019, by press release from the Premier, that Mathematics was to become compulsory for all students in NSW through to year 12.

Stronger HSC Standards (2016)

In the first significant review of the HSC since the McGaw report (1997) (recommendations were commenced in 2000) and a further set of seven reforms were announced by the Government in 2016. After a year of preparation, the new initiatives were introduced in schools and through the HSC examinations of 2018 through 2020.

In its document Stronger HSC Standards in 2016, the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards described the significance of the reforms as follows:

"The HSC was last revised more than 17 years ago. Since then, the world has changed dramatically. The use of the internet and mobile technology has exploded, leading to a rapid increase in the globalisation of society. The ubiquitous use of information technology in society, and its potential applications, has transformed all aspects of contemporary education, including subject content and teaching methods. Within individual subjects, content knowledge has been amended or reconceptualised. New disciplines and interdisciplinary applications have emerged.

The jobs of the past that could be performed with minimal levels of knowledge and skills are either disappearing or have been supplanted. Employers now require workers with transferrable skills and a solid foundation of knowledge in key areas, including: literacy and numeracy skills; creative thinking and problem-solving skills; an ability to work collaboratively; and character attributes such as curiosity, flexibility and resilience.

Students are now required to stay at school until they turn 17 to gain a higher level of education, which in turn is associated with improved career opportunities, higher earning capacity, better health,

wellbeing and social interactions. The economy and society as a whole benefit from a more highly educated population through improved health, welfare and justice outcomes.

The challenge for our schools is to educate high school students for emerging workplace and societal demands by providing them with a sound basis of knowledge and the skills required to adapt their thinking in changing circumstances. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) calls essential knowledge and skills the new 'global currency'. The students of the HSC reforms will need this currency in order to become the independent thinkers, problem-solvers, and decision-makers of the future."⁹⁸

In brief, the new initiatives included:

- introducing a minimum literacy and numeracy standard for receipt of the HSC; students to meet the specific standard over years 9–12 through a number of options including a requisite NAPLAN benchmark in year 9, successfully taking an online-specific NSW Education Standards Authority assessment in years 10–12, or successfully meeting specific new literacy and numeracy elements in relevant subjects
- revised syllabuses in English, Mathematics, Science and History (with others to follow) with greater emphasis on depth of knowledge and skills, first taught in 2018 and examined in 2019; a new Science Extension course introduced in 2018
- a new five-year cycle for syllabus revision through use of a new online, interactive e-syllabus platform (previously syllabuses were only reviewed with a government mandate and funding allocated)
- new guidelines for school-based assessments, including capping the number of assessments and anti-plagiarism guidelines; a more challenging focus of HSC questions to reduce predictability, introduced from 2018
- introduction of a common scaling mechanism across general and advanced levels in Mathematics, to address the decline in candidatures in higher level Mathematics stemming from perceived advantages for ATAR ranks from taking easier courses.

These reforms, including revisions to vocational education and training courses, have been introduced over 2017–20. While teachers have attended to these changed requirements, revising their planning and teaching and supporting their students through the changes, it is remarkable that the NSW Government announced a major, comprehensive review of the whole NSW school curriculum in 2018. Teachers and schools have been required to participate, through reflections on their work and submissions, to a review with far-reaching terms of reference while only commencing to implement the Stronger HSC Standards reforms.

It says something about the ease with which government considers it reasonable to release wave on wave of "reform" and change onto the school population and the work of teachers with little consideration of the resources and time needed to accommodate constantly changing requirements. Inquiry witnesses reported an analogous carelessness with regard to the effect on teachers' work when they described mandated requirements to load literacy and numeracy data onto the PLAN 1 platform only to have this platform put aside and a new one introduced, rendering the whole time-consuming data-loading effort redundant.

Along with the continued delivery of the Life Skills courses to ensure access to all students, these ongoing and in some cases dramatic changes in curriculum and the consequential influence on teaching, assessment and reporting have seen the teachers of the NSW public system constantly addressing the demands of the community and government mandates through the period under review. Teachers have been required to do so within a further organisational context of the dissolving of departmental professional supports as equity indicators were monetised and schools left to address intensifying needs on their own. The intensified accountability and data collection requirements provided a further challenge to the teachers in implementing curriculum and associated pedagogical and assessment/reporting demands, in particular through the erosion of time to properly address the professional demands of the changes.



NSW Curriculum Review

Launched in May 2018 by the Premier and the Minister for Education, this was heralded as the most significant review of NSW school curriculum since the 1989 review that led to the 1990 Education Reform Act. It was said to be the NSW action to implement the recommendations of Gonski 2.0, and singled out was the objective of dissolving the existing year/stage-based structure of syllabuses (setting out the learning outcomes required for each age-based, year/stage of schooling) and replacing it with multiple points along learning progressions in each study area, requiring teachers to simultaneously teach each student at whatever different learning point they had attained. Syllabus content would be differentiated by, and be unique to, each point on the learning progressions. A further major focus was to address the “over-crowded curriculum”, an issue raised in the Vinson Report.

Professor Masters released his interim report in October 2019 after extensive consultation and submissions, and the final report in April 2020, along with the Government’s response.

The final report provides considerable support for the issues and concerns raised by teachers in their submissions to this Inquiry. In particular, the chapters addressing societal changes, their effect on students and the changing student populations, the influence of technology and increasing parental and community expectations, vindicate the testimony of witnesses and submissions to the Inquiry. These are addressed elsewhere in this Report.

The outcomes of the NSW Curriculum Review will affect schools and teachers in the period following the release of this Inquiry’s Report. However, it is important to indicate the decisions and processes now being put in place as a result of the Government’s response. The revision of the NSW curriculum now being embarked upon will require the active engagement of the teaching profession through the syllabus working parties and committees of the NSW Education Standards Authority, as has been the case in all previous curriculum revisions. The foreshadowed changes will

be introduced in the context of the mounting pressures of ongoing policy change, devolved responsibilities that have dominated the work of teachers over the past decade, and the resulting erosion of usable time to address the professional demands of curriculum change.

The final report summarised its overall proposals as follows (see next page):

The new curriculum

The new curriculum being proposed by the Review is based on the introduction of ‘new syllabuses’ for all areas of learning throughout the years of school. These new syllabuses are designed to address concerns raised with the Review about the need to prioritise depth rather than breadth of learning, to better integrate knowledge and skills, and to provide greater flexibility for teachers to respond to the learning needs of individual learners so that every student makes excellent ongoing progress in their learning. The development and introduction of these new syllabuses could take up to a decade.

Figure 1 summarises the key features of new syllabuses and the issues they are designed to address. These features apply to all subjects of the mandated curriculum in the early and middle years of school, as well as to all subjects in the senior years.

The aim of the new curriculum is to ensure every student	Existing Syllabuses	New Syllabuses
learns with understanding	<p>Overcrowded Teachers say overcrowded syllabuses make it difficult to teach important content in depth.</p> <p>Many students lack the depth of understanding required to apply subject learning in new and unfamiliar contexts – as evidenced by declining performance in PISA.</p>	<p>Refocused Teaching and learning are focused on developing students’ deep understanding of important concepts, principles and methods in each subject. Factual and procedural knowledge remain essential but the syllabuses of the new curriculum prioritise depth rather than breadth of learning.</p>
builds skills in applying knowledge	<p>Separation of knowledge and skills Existing syllabuses undervalue and underdevelop skills in applying knowledge. This is reflected in the content of most tests and examinations; the separation of ‘general capabilities’ from subject knowledge; and the separation of knowledge-based and skills-based learning in the senior years.</p>	<p>Integration of knowledge and skills Learning in every subject is a mix of theory and application, with no subject focused only knowledge or only on skills. New syllabuses develop skills in applying knowledge (for example, critical and creative thinking) and provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate such skills.</p>
makes excellent ongoing progress	<p>Progress based on time Existing syllabuses are time-limited. Many students are forced to move to the next year-level syllabus before they have mastered the current syllabus, and so fall increasingly far behind over time. Many other students ready for the next syllabus are required to mark time and are not adequately challenged.</p>	<p>Progress based on attainment New syllabuses are untimed. They do not specify when every student must commence, or how long they have to learn, each syllabus. Students progress to the next syllabus once they have mastered the prior syllabus. Students who require more time have it; students ready to advance are able to do so.</p>

Figure 1 Key features of ‘new syllabuses’



The proposed curriculum overhaul involves:

- the redesign of all syllabuses, reduction of content, refocus on core concepts
- emphasis on depth of understanding and skills in application of knowledge; incorporation of technology, analytical, critical and creative thinking, collaboration and communication in learning
- all subjects to be redesigned into sequences of “syllabuses”, progress through which is untimed, with each progression point being an amalgam of specific content and required understanding and skills
- early years focus on literacy and numeracy, both in emphasis and allocated curriculum time; all students to learn a second language in primary
- defining a minimum standard for all middle year subjects to be attained before completion of schooling; developing a stronger, clearer mandatory set of studies in Aboriginal societies and cultures
- significant overhaul of senior school studies, creating new learning areas (groupings of subjects), integration of vocational and academic studies and a focus on knowledge application, inclusion of a major project for all HSC students, and further review of the utility of the ATAR.

While the recommendations around the streamlining of curriculum content and a focus on core concepts and principles have been well received and accord with concerns raised in this Inquiry by submissions and witnesses, the central proposal of untimed syllabuses, if enacted literally, would have a dramatic effect on the work of teachers.

While some see it as a formalisation of the differentiation requirements (including from disability modifications, inclusion strategies, lesson plan specifications, data recording) that have become dominant in classroom practice, the challenges of which have been such a feature of teachers’ evidence to this Inquiry, others see it as undoable and conceptually flawed. The proposal as outlined in the final report adopts a novel concept of syllabus, now seeming to refer to chunks of content (an amalgam of specific content and required knowledge/understanding and skills) at each point of a new highly detailed/

differentiated progression within each subject (where the course for the subject is what would conventionally be known as the syllabus itself).

Whether this approach, irrespective of the seeming support for it in the Government’s response, is ever adopted should be open to question and would have dramatic effects on teaching if it were to be adopted in literal terms. There is further ambiguity around the significance of the defined minimum standard in each subject if it is required to be met before a student is allowed to progress to a senior secondary study in that area.

The Government response to the final report broadly supported the recommendations. Exceptions include matters supported in principle but referred to the NSW Education Standards Authority for further advice (untimed syllabuses, development of a set of new senior secondary subjects integrating knowledge and application, a mandatory major project, further review of the ATAR), and the mandatory second language in primary was merely noted.

The major departure from the final report’s approach and recommendations, and one of major importance for the focus of this Inquiry, is the Government’s mandated timeframe for the development and introduction of the new overhauled curriculum for all NSW schools.

The Government mandated the introduction of the new curriculum according to the following schedule:

- by 2021, the review of school-based subjects and reduction in their number by 20 per cent
- in 2022, introduction of new K–2 English and Mathematics syllabuses (all developmental and design work, and consultation through to finalisation, completed in 2021 and advised to schools); revise senior secondary learning areas; Government to introduce reduced extra-curricular demands on schools and address compliance demands
- in 2023, introduction of all remaining K–2 syllabuses, and introduction of years 3–10 English, Mathematics and Science syllabuses (accordingly, developed and finalised and advised to schools, in 2022)

- in 2024, all remaining year 3–10 syllabuses introduced to schools (advised to them in 2023); introduce new senior secondary syllabuses.

There are no specific commitments to trialling new syllabuses, nor to teacher support for what the Government itself declares as the biggest curriculum reform in 30 years, other than this statement:

“The NSW Government has set an ambitious timeframe for reform. We acknowledge the need to work closely with the education sector and other key stakeholder groups to achieve effective change and reform.

The NSW Government will work closely with the sectors to ensure that appropriate professional learning, supported by educational research and evidence, is accessed by teachers.

As a priority, the NSW Government will work with the sector to identify the impact of current extra-curricular issues and topics and compliance demands. Making more time for teaching is key to achieving the curriculum reforms.”

A flawed agenda

The significance of the Government response to the final report of the NSW Curriculum Review, in terms of the focus of this Inquiry, cannot be understated.

The Panel heard extensive evidence of the cascading effect of policy change on schools and teachers' work. More than anything else, teachers have nominated the absence of time to address the changing realities of classrooms, of student characteristics and community expectations, and the increasing demands the policy responses make on them. Academic studies from the University of Sydney, and others, have clearly documented the transfer of mandated work from reasonable school hours to teachers' own time. The complexity of the demands of meeting student needs and the obligations of data logging all aspects of their work further impact on teachers' capacity to undertake their work as individual teachers, much less

having available usable time to collaborate with their colleagues (in planning, in diagnosing student needs and devising strategies, in sharing assessment data etc).

Numerous witnesses to the Inquiry pleaded for new initiatives to be properly developed with teacher input, and to be thoroughly trialled, before being mandated or otherwise introduced. The failure of the Department of Education to properly develop high-quality teacher professional development support for new initiatives, and provide access to it in a professionally engaging way (not just more online modules for teachers to pursue individually in their own time, away from colleagues) was constantly raised.

There is considerable literature that addresses the key requirements for successful educational reform for significant changes to teacher practice.

There is nothing about the Government response to the NSW Curriculum Review that reflects cognisance of the requirements for successful change, nor anything that reflects a genuine understanding of the current realities of teachers' work. There is no tangible commitment to a reduction in the face-to-face teaching hours of teachers to allow the other core aspects of teachers' professional work with their colleagues to be undertaken. The Inquiry heard that the hours of face-to-face teaching have not been revised since the 1950s (secondary teaching) or 1984 (primary teaching). The OECD, international comparative studies, the Gonski 2.0 report, and the NSW Curriculum Review's final report itself, in different ways, raise the centrality of teacher time, and professional preparation and support, as integral to quality teaching and, of course, reform and change.

Given the importance of this issue, and to highlight the somewhat shocking mandate the Government has adopted for the introduction of the curriculum overhaul, the Inquiry sets out the advice of Professor Masters in his final report for the successful implementation of the new curriculum, which the Government has substantially adopted.



First, on the “enabling conditions for curriculum change, and on the centrality of time”, the final report said this:⁹⁹

Creating enabling conditions

The successful introduction of the new curriculum will depend on the creation of a number of enabling conditions, including increased time for teachers to focus on the priorities of the new curriculum; teaching, assessment and reporting practices aligned with the principles and intentions of the new curriculum; and professional capacity-building to support schools’ delivery of the new curriculum.

Time for teaching and learning

Many teachers who spoke with the Review described being under time pressure. Some commented that this made it difficult to teach important content in depth. Teachers described experiencing time pressure from a number of directions. Much of it arose from the amount of content in syllabuses. Teachers regularly described being under pressure to cover large numbers of specified “dot points”. Some reported that the volume of content meant they moved quickly from one dot point to the next in an effort to cover everything, often skating across the surface of the curriculum in the process. This was not true of all syllabuses, including some recently redeveloped syllabuses, but a consistent comment from many teachers was that there was simply too much to cover in most syllabuses. Some people questioned whether teachers were over-interpreting what was mandated in syllabuses and attempting to teach more than was necessary. There was speculation that some teachers were covering not only mandated content, but also material that was intended to be illustrative rather than essential. On the other hand, some teachers believed it was not always clear in syllabuses what was mandated and what was not. It was also suggested that many teachers worked in schools with a strong focus on compliance and so had become risk averse. Support for this suggestion

came from some individual teachers’ explanations that the reason they attempted to cover everything in syllabuses was to avoid their school being judged “non-compliant” or their students being disadvantaged when they reached the Higher School Certificate. Whatever the explanation, many teachers described feeling under pressure to cover large amounts of syllabus content and described the outcome as a form of teaching that they themselves considered less than ideal.

In addition to concerns about the amount of content in some syllabuses were concerns about extra requirements imposed on schools by governments and school systems. Submissions to the Review listed a variety of topics that had been added to the work of schools in recent years in response to specific events, pressure from lobby groups, and government concerns about health and social issues not being addressed elsewhere. Schools pointed out that these issues were added with little or no consideration of their impact on the rest of the curriculum or the workload of schools. There was rarely any systematic evaluation of whether these additions achieved their purposes, and when new issues were added, nothing was removed.

A range of other recent developments were considered to have reduced teachers’ time to teach the curriculum. These included external compliance requirements. There were numerous references to “box ticking” and paperwork now required of teachers. A particular issue for some teachers was the amount of time spent on programming (lesson planning). The Review was shown examples of extensive documentation prepared by some teachers as part of their programming. It was explained that this documentation was required by principals so that it could be put on file in anticipation of visits by NESA inspectors. But according to some teachers, the required documentation did not always reflect what they did in practice.

The consequences of being under time pressure were identified as: reduced ability to slow down teaching and to reteach when necessary; less classroom time to develop students’ deep understandings, including by explaining and illustrating the relevance and practical application of content; reduced ability to

work with individual students to diagnose difficulties and to provide personalised teaching; and reduced opportunities to attend to student wellbeing and to support students with personal issues impinging on their learning. Increased teacher workload and stress also were identified as consequences of time pressures.

The development of new syllabuses that are less prescriptive, contain less factual and procedural content, and prioritise deep learning of essential facts, concepts and principles in each subject is one response to current concerns about time pressure. It is not envisaged that teachers will do less teaching under the new curriculum, but that they will be less focused on covering large amounts of material and will have more time and flexibility to develop students' understandings of content, including through opportunities to apply those understandings. Greater clarity about what is mandatory and what is not also will assist many teachers.

Beyond this, consideration should be given to ways of limiting the extra-curricular topics schools are asked to add to the school curriculum. A review should be undertaken of the requests that have been made of schools in recent years to determine whether all are still required, and protocols for adding such topics in the future should be developed and reviewed.

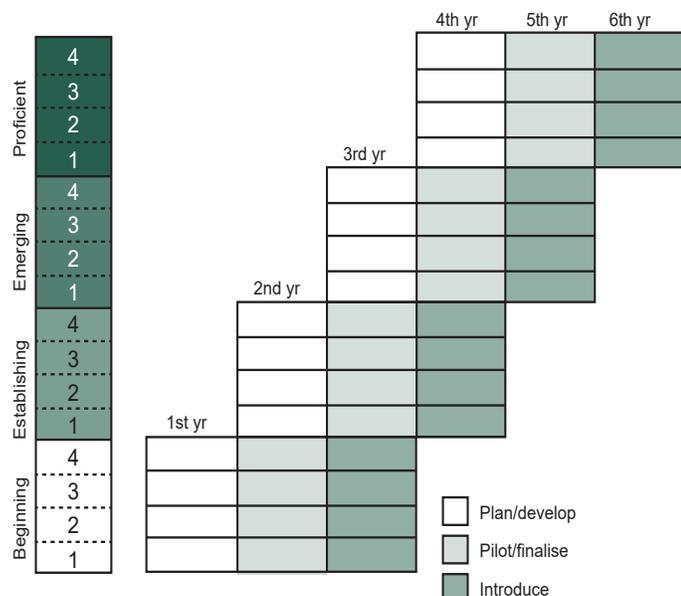
Efforts also should be made to reduce the amount of time teachers and school leaders now spend on paperwork and compliance activities. This should begin with a review of what is currently expected of teachers and schools to determine whether all existing requirements are necessary and whether some reduction in compliance activities is possible.

The final report also set out a model timeline for the development of the new early and middle year syllabuses (K–10), essentially overlapping progressions of three-year processes with a total time of six years: ¹⁰⁰

Early and middle years of school

Work should be commenced as soon as possible on the development of new syllabuses for English and Mathematics. It is proposed that syllabuses for these two learning areas be developed in parallel. Figure 16 provides a timeline for the staged development, piloting and introduction of these new syllabuses. Work begins in the first year with the planning and development of four syllabuses appropriate to the early years of school. During the second year, these syllabuses are piloted and finalised for introduction into schools the following year, and work also begins on planning and developing the next set of four syllabuses. This process continues until all syllabuses are introduced in the sixth year.

Figure 16 Timeline for developing, finalising and introducing new syllabuses





While a decision to decline the recommendation for totally untimed syllabuses, and the dramatic redesign that would be involved, would assist in the time needed for syllabus review, the approach set out in the Government response is seriously at odds with the advice given in the final report as to the necessary preconditions for successful curriculum change. Given that the work of the NSW Education Standards Authority in delivering the mandate is predicated on the involvement of senior and experienced teachers (on working parties, and as seconded or employed teachers with specialist expertise) is itself a major contribution of the teaching profession to their work, it should be simply non-negotiable that a professionally realistic, credible and respectful timeline and provision of professional development support be built in to the process of change.

This Inquiry does not believe that the Government response meets this benchmark in itself, and in the context of the current and ongoing pressures on teachers, principals and school communities that this Panel has heard, considers the mandated approach to be unreasonable, and unworkable, if a truly high-quality outcome is expected. That this highly pressured and rushed major curriculum revision is proposed in the absence of any specific commitment of time, resources and professional support, at a time of a Government-initiated wage increase of 0.3% for 2022, with proposed further wage capping, seems to this Inquiry to be quite unconscionable.

⁹² NESAs, 2020b

⁹³ Savage (2016), as cited in Hughes, 2018, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁹⁵ Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, 2018.

⁹⁶ Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁹⁷ Fitzgerald, *Submission to Inquiry*, p. 11.

⁹⁸ Board of Studies, *Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES)*, ca. 2016.

⁹⁹ NESAs, 2020b, pp. 107-108.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 112.

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention of teachers

Numerous reports on the teaching workforce lament the lack of high-quality, accurate and comprehensive data. Nonetheless, there are a number of studies that point to trends that are important for the themes of this Inquiry and the future staffing of the public school system in NSW. This chapter will draw on a number of these, while drawing attention to the increasing difficulty in gauging the full impact of recent policy and workload impacts on teaching careers stemming from the rising rates of teachers subject to successive temporary engagements, whether in the same school or across schools. Key data reports and studies include a NSW Education Standards Authority study of graduate teacher attrition¹⁰¹; the first Pipeline Report of the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Project¹⁰²; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's ITE Data Reports; Associate Professor Rachel Wilson's study on initial teacher education admission trends¹⁰³; and further studies referenced below.

Shortages

Reports of current and looming teacher shortages are growing. As well, McGraty and Van Bergen (2017) extracted the proportion of male teachers in Australian schools from 1965 to 2016 and extrapolated the proposition there could be a vanishing point with the absence of male teachers in the service from 2067! In referring to this theory, Buchanan noted: "It is possible we are degrading the environment and habitat of all teachers, putting in jeopardy their capacity to survive."¹⁰⁴

Both are rather alarming theories, but statistical research does entice researchers to consider end games.

Evidence before the Panel as to existing shortages is the concern. The Department's published workforce projections for 2015–2022 said there was an adequate supply of primary and secondary teachers "except in the areas of Mathematics, science with physics



and some specific subjects in particular geographical locations".¹⁰⁵ The NSW Auditor General in 2019 acknowledged these shortages, noting the expected retirements over the next decade and resignation rate among early career teachers. The Auditor General, notwithstanding the assurances of the Government, stated the Department of Education was not accurately tracking the supply and demand for secondary teachers. A review of the Department's scholarship and sponsorship programs to encourage teacher entry found: programs were not targeting workforce needs; there were no performance outcomes; some programs were not filled (20 per cent); scholarship graduates were appointed outside areas of demand; scholarship graduates are appointed to schools over establishment allowance; 30 per cent of scholarship students withdrew from their program before appointment; and a further 9 per cent do not complete the required three years of service; programs were not addressing mid-career transitions into teaching. Such lack of supply was endorsed in the following evidence: The principal of a high school in a thriving regional township spoke of six teacher vacancies and having year 11–12 students sitting on the grass; a country high school in a rural area cannot get any casual teachers to assist with teachers' time out for preparation and data work. Surprisingly for an idyllic North Coast township an English head teacher could not be found.

Teachers status: permanent, temporary and casual

There are 44,000 permanent teachers in NSW. Permanent full-time tenure has been traditionally the category of employment for most Australian teachers.

The devolution of financial and staffing responsibilities to the individual school as well as increased "competition" between schools based on publicly reported student outcomes (Programme for International Student Assessment and NAPLAN), and the effects of the staffing mechanism and Local Schools, Local Decisions as discussed elsewhere, have led to this increased expansion in the number of temporary positions in NSW schools. Temporary teachers in NSW "are employed full-time for four

weeks up to a year or part-time for two terms or more" (NSW Department of Education, 2018) and receive pro rata pay of permanent teachers plus holiday pay and sick leave.

In 2013, 14.3 per cent of teachers were on an engagement of three years or less, much higher than contract work across the private sector (3.8 per cent in 2018) and higher than the general public sector's 12.5 per cent (Gilfillan, 2018).

From 2007 to 2013, the proportion of school teachers on 1–3 year engagements doubled (McKenzie et al. 2008, 2011, 2014). Many of the temporary teachers are new teachers and therefore, relatively inexperienced (Willett et al. 2014), a point recognised by the NSW Department of Education (2018).¹⁰⁶

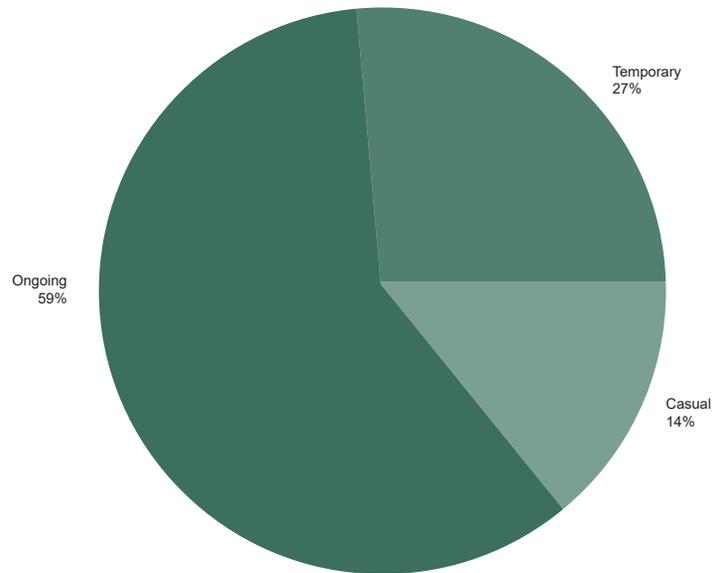
The casual teacher provides replacement for sickness or other reasons and can be employed for a day or week, commonly at short notice and may be dismissed at short notice. The Award for public school teachers provides for one-day, half-day and minimum two-hourly appointments, with "casual loading" as compensation in lieu of some paid leave and other standard employment entitlements. Casually employed teachers ranged up to 20 per cent of total teachers for more than a decade through to the late 1990s. A discrimination case by a group of women with Teachers Federation support sought the creation of a new category of "temporary" employment to provide greater security for those in casual employment through more continuous periods of work and included some improved conditions. Subsequently, an agreement was reached to introduce the temporary teacher category in 2001.

With the creation of a new category of employment, the number of temporary positions increased.

Figure 36: Government school teachers by type of employment, NSW, 2017¹⁰⁷

Figure 36 shows that 59% of government school teachers in NSW were employed on an ongoing, or permanent basis. This is a decrease of 4 percentage points since 2016, while the proportion of temporary teachers has increased by 4 percentage points.

NOTE: Figure represents 76,420 individuals. 'Ongoing' teachers are those individuals employed on a permanent basis. 'Temporary' teachers are those individuals employed in one engagement full-time for four weeks or more, or in one engagement for one to four days per week for two terms or more. Teachers on leave at a time of census have been removed.

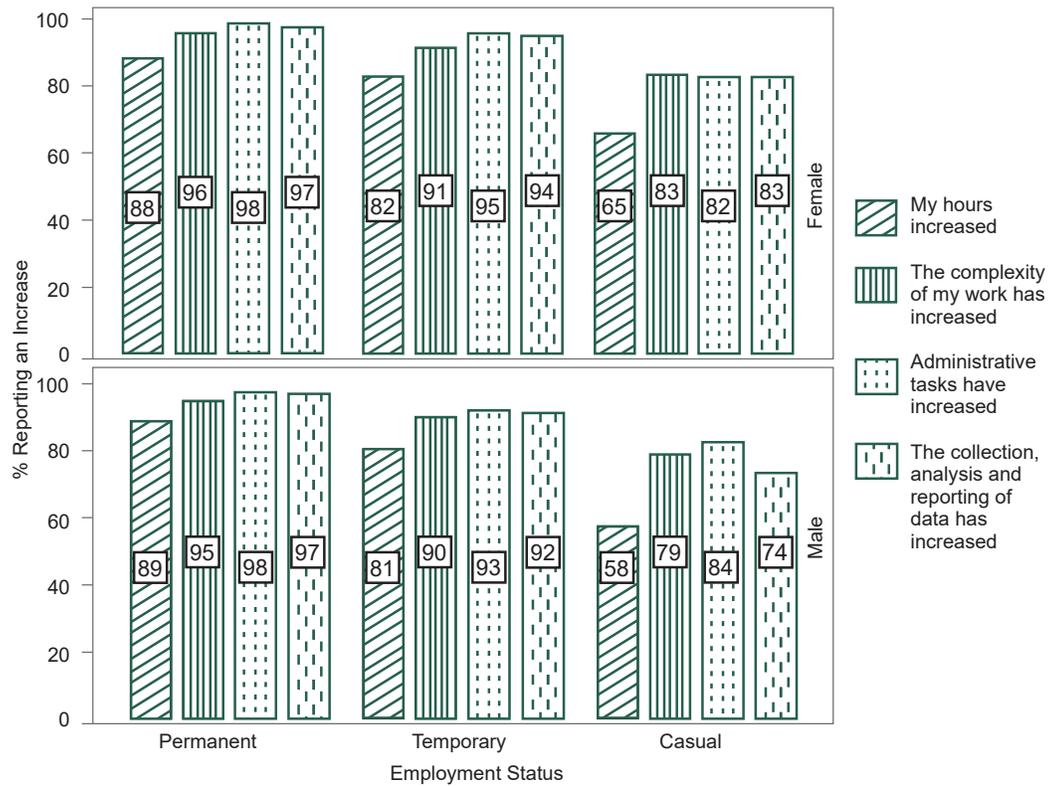


Temporary teachers, in their evidence, expressed frustration. They want a permanent position but because of their status feel they are not valued yet are required to perform the full role of a permanent teacher. Under the present staffing arrangements with a permanent position vacancy at a school, the school can generally offer a serving temporary teacher candidate only one of each alternate vacancy. The temporary teacher applying for a permanent position goes through a long local selection procedure. As

the temporary teacher is seeking security of tenure, they generally assume extra duties to impress with their willingness and to “prove” themselves. Many, in evidence, claimed that in so volunteering they lose control of their workload. Certainly, the following graph analysis indicates the temporary teacher workload is similar to that of the permanent teacher.



Figure 1: Changes to work and employment status¹⁰⁸ Pre-print Draft, 9 September, 2020



The quantitative data suggests that a large proportion of temporary teachers are in their first decade of teaching and relatively young.¹⁰⁹

Our future teachers

The introduction of the seven Teacher Standards, the rigorous requirements for teacher accreditation (as discussed in previous chapters), the sometimes onerous obligation and responsibility carried by the individual teacher and the employer (the Department) for ongoing professional development, all provide a recognition that the experienced teacher is highly qualified and skilled. The community has the assurance therein of the standards being met and that the trust placed upon the teacher for the care and social and intellectual development of their child is well founded.

An important advance in information about the characteristics of the Australian teaching profession and whether it changed over time was published by the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University in 2007. The School posed the question: “Had teacher/teaching quality fallen over recent decades?” Using data on the academic aptitude of the student teacher enrolment historically over two decades from 1982 to 2003 the researchers concluded:

“The aptitude of new teachers has fallen considerably. Between 1982 and 2003, the average percentile rank of those entering teacher education fell from 74 to 61, while the average rank of new teachers fell from 70 to 62.”

The researcher recommended two significant elements needing to be reversed. The first was the need to reverse what they had found above as the downward trend in the enrolment of high-achieving students

into teaching courses. Some of the reasoning for the downward trend was identified as poor remuneration for teachers and the opening up during that period of alternative, better-paid professions to women. As to enticing students with aptitude to seek a teaching career it was recommended teachers' salaries should be used to attract the high-achieving student into the profession. The research expressed the view that this would be cost effective and raise the quality of the teaching profession.¹¹⁰

The Grattan Institute then followed on and updated the Australian National University Research Centre (by Leigh & Swan statistics up until 2003) and published data on the educational aptitude of the cohort of student enrolments in education from 2003 to 2017 (as published in 2019).¹¹¹ Within the period of time their

data was collated, the federal policy for universities allowed the institutions to enrol as many students as they could educate. By 2010 it was clear some were enrolling students into the teaching degrees from an even lower percentile range of academic achievers at a time when it was recognised the profession had a great need to attract students with high academic attributes. The Grattan research delved deeply into the enrolments of student teachers from 2003 to 2017 and found the downward trend was continuing. It went further in its analysis and examined possible causes.

The following statistical research reveals the circumstances as follows:

Figure 2.1: Few students with an ATAR 80 or above choose undergraduate teaching¹¹²

Undergraduate enrolments by broad field of study for students with an ATAR of 80 or above, 2017

NOTES: Agriculture and Hospitality excluded due to low volume. 'Education' includes curriculum studies and teacher education. Includes domestic onshore commencing bachelor-degree student enrolments for all students with a known ATAR 80 or above and aged 20 or younger — regardless of the basis of admission.

SOURCE: Special data request from the Department of Education and Training.

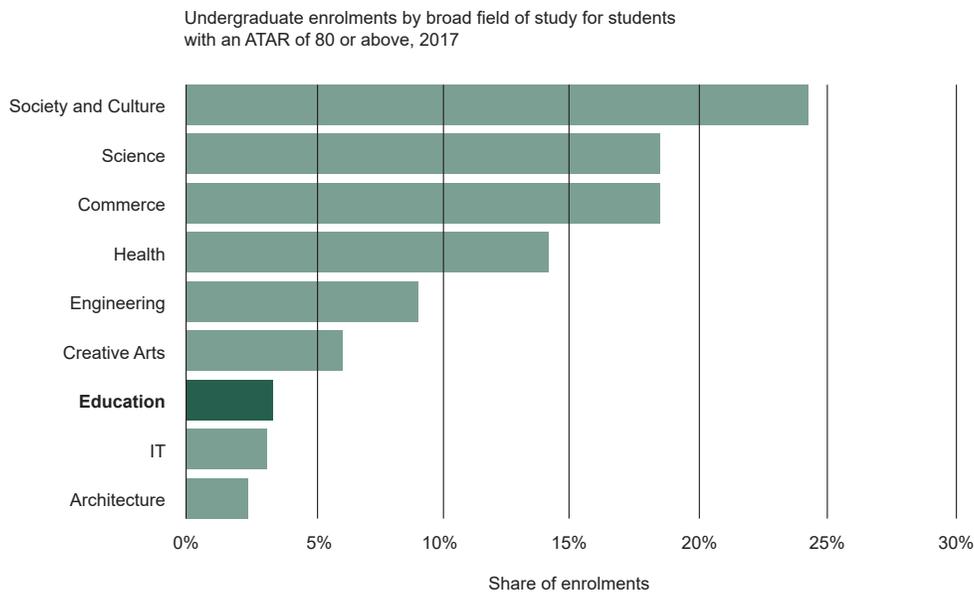




Figure 2.2: The higher your ATAR, the less likely you will enrol in undergraduate teaching¹¹³

Undergraduate enrolments by field of study and ATAR group, 2017

SOURCE: Special data request from the Department of Education and Training.

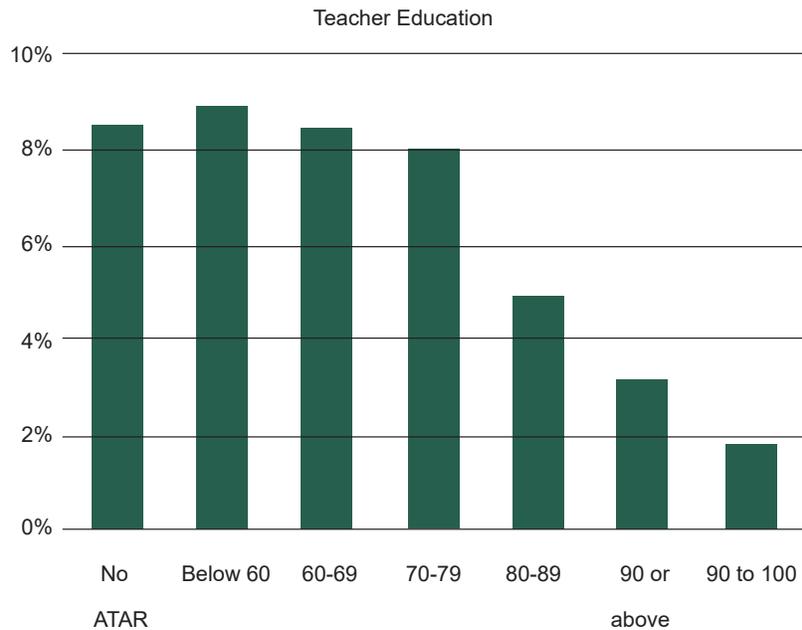


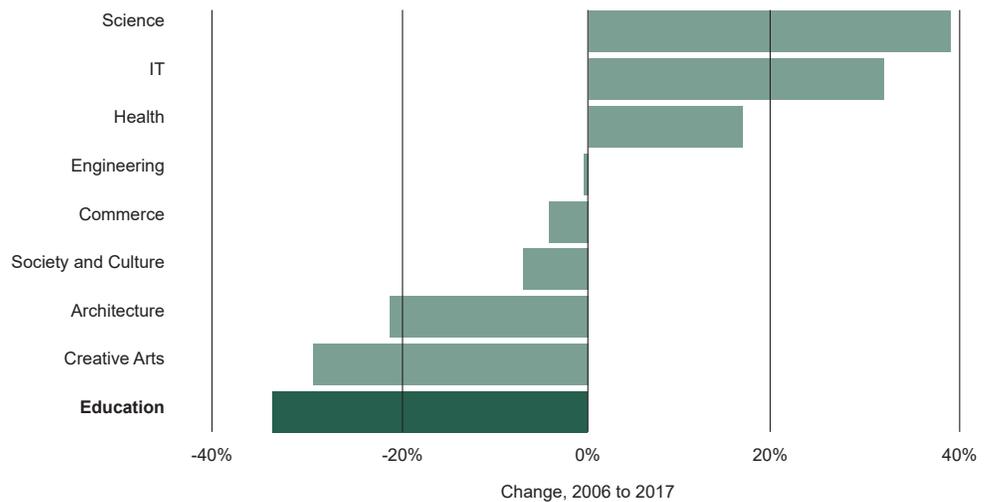
Figure 2.5: Undergraduate education courses are attracting a much smaller share of high achievers than 12 years ago¹¹⁴

Undergraduate enrolments by broad fields of study for students with an ATAR of 80 or above, 2006 to 2017.

NOTE: Agriculture and Hospitality excluded due to low volume. 'Education' includes curriculum studies and teacher education. Includes domestic onshore commencing bachelor-degree student enrolments for all students with a known ATAR 80 or above and aged 20 or younger — regardless of the basis of admission.

SOURCE: Special data request from the Department of Education and Training.

Undergraduate enrolments by broad field of study for students with an ATAR of 80 or above, 2006 to 2017

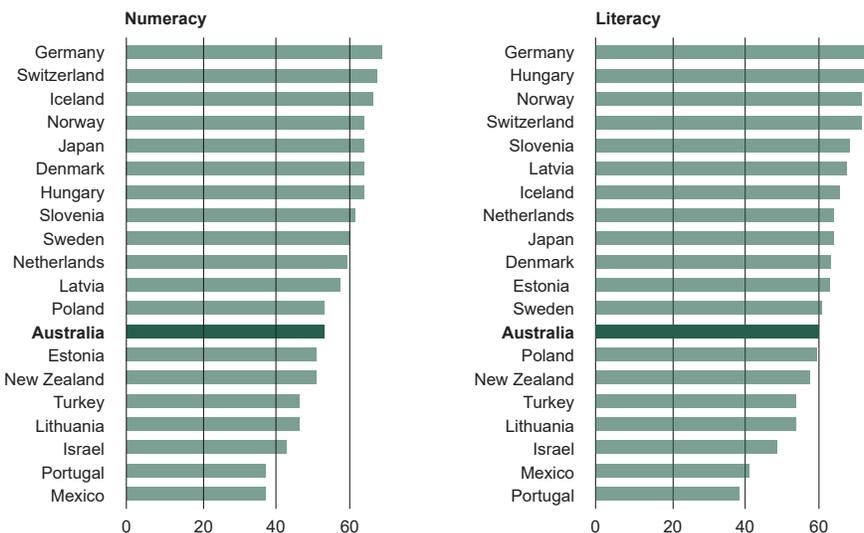


The Grattan Institute examined the maths and reading Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) score of students expecting to work in teaching as a percentile of each country's PISA achievement, 2015. Of note, PISA tests for 15-year-olds are done every two years.

Figure 2.7: Fewer high-achieving 15 year-olds are interested in becoming a teacher in Australia than in other countries¹¹⁵

Maths and reading PISA score of students expecting to work in teaching, percentile of each country's PISA achievement, 2015

NOTE: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international test of 15-year-old students. Non-OECD countries excluded. Data unavailable for some OECD countries. SOURCE: Han et al, (2018).



A review of these studies was conducted by Buchanan et al. in the Sydney School of Business who, along with their own analysis of similar statistics, concluded that all the collated data provides substantial evidence in favour of two propositions, namely:

- teacher quality is an important determinant of student achievement
- teacher aptitude has declined substantially over the past generations.

They commented:

“Partly as a result of this research, raising the average quality of the teaching workforce has received increasing policy attention.”¹¹⁶

Wilson (2020) from a similar database argued:

“Low standards at admission contribute to the current low status of the profession, and calls for the development of a national teacher recruitment strategy.”¹¹⁷

As Buchanan said, continuing policy initiatives have now been taken in an attempt to ensure the teaching profession attracts students with academic aptitude.

A further poll conducted for the Federation in March 2020 sadly found more than half those surveyed said teaching was not an attractive career for young people; 53 per cent said it is less attractive than it was 10 years ago; 60 per cent acknowledged the increased workload of teachers over the past 10 years; 54 per cent said the complexity of the job had increased; and 46 per cent agreed school teachers in NSW were paid too little.¹¹⁸



Entry to the teaching profession in 2020

There have been various measures introduced at different times to address entry requirements. Historically, two-year Diplomas were replaced by three-year Diplomas of Teaching, then three-year Bachelor of Teaching degrees. Secondary teaching was more frequently structured as initial undergraduate degrees plus a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education, a default four-year qualification. This was the general position across Australia in the early 1990s when the Commonwealth Schools' Council recommended a standard four-year qualification be supported (not universally supported by some who considered teaching was a semi, or emerging, profession that needed to justify further training).

With the establishment of teacher regulatory authorities in every jurisdiction in the early 2000s, a four-year qualification for teacher registration was mandated (the NSW Institute of Teachers mandated it with the approval of initial teacher education requirements issued in 2007, though historic three-year qualifications continued to be honoured). NSW also introduced, from 2007, specific subject content requirements within initial teacher education programs and for entry to post-graduate programs. Entry to primary initial teacher education undergraduate programs required a Band 4 in English and Mathematics, or “catch-up” courses within the program.

The National Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs issued by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (supported by all jurisdictions) in 2011 required institutions to implement measures to take entrants to teaching programs from the top 30 per cent of the population in academic capacity, although no specific measure such as an ATAR rank was mandated.

In NSW, the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning report (March 2013) proposed that all entrants from school into undergraduate initial teacher education programs should have achieved three Band 5 results in the HSC including in English from 2016. This would have equated, broadly, to an ATAR closer to 80 than the

often suggested 70 as a desirable entry benchmark. However, a provision in the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning recommendation that recognised students may undertake a full year of successful study in non-educational discipline studies in another faculty and should be able to transfer into an initial teacher education program on this basis, led to widespread restructuring of four-year Bachelor of Education programs with the first year dedicated to non-education units without meeting the three Band 5 requirement. There was no specific study known to the Inquiry about the residual operation of the three Band 5s measure, nor what its impact on a number of universities would have been. However, the data on declining ATARs within the cohort that is admitted on this basis (variously set between 17 per cent and 33 per cent of all entrants) and data showing the residual majority of entrants either not having an ATAR at all or having one that is not reported (and who are admitted on some other basis) strongly suggests the impact would be severe in a number of institutional cases.

All teacher education students were also required to pass literacy and numeracy tests before their final year professional placement, from 2016. With annual pass rates hovering around 92–93 per cent across all institutions, it has been suggested that this is an inadequate gatekeeper of quality (Wilson 2020, p47), although the low benchmark of these tests that still sees up to 10 per cent in some institutions might indicate some of the impact of generally low entry requirements.

In 2018, the NSW Education Minister announced the five criteria that teacher graduates had to satisfy before being considered for employment as public school teachers and the policy applied to all students commencing teaching degrees from 2019 were:

- a minimum credit grade point average in their degree
- being able to prove sound practical knowledge and ability
- superior cognitive and emotional intelligence (measured via a psychometric assessment)
- demonstrated commitment to the values of public education

- an undergraduate degree not completed entirely online (with some exceptions).
- from 2019, the achievement of a Band 4 in HSC Mathematics (or the equivalent) became a prerequisite for primary school teachers and will apply to students sitting the HSC from 2021.^{119 & 120}

Further evidence

This section will present some of the summary findings of the studies referred to above. The panel acknowledges the still imperfect state of the overall data relating to the teacher workforce, and strongly supports the ongoing development of the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Project that is progressively bringing together data from all teacher regulatory authorities, from employing authorities especially in the large systems, and from initial teacher education institutions. The pipeline report, besides addressing entry, commencement and completion data, is also beginning a large project to map the actual subject content units of study undertaken by all initial teacher education students. This represents a welcome attention to the subjects teachers are actually being trained for and are qualified to teach; something that is widely reported to be inadequately attended to with teachers being required to teach out of field.

The inadequacy of the Department of Education's workforce planning was noted by the Auditor General and was raised numerous times by witnesses to this Inquiry. There is in place a system agreed between the Department and the NSW Education Standards Authority for assigning subject codes (subjects the teacher is qualified to teach, based on the units included within their qualifications) that is administered by the NSW Education Standards Authority upon the initial accreditation of teachers. However, it is important that this foundation be built upon, and amplified through the recruitment and staffing system to ensure all students, and in particular the most vulnerable, are taught by teachers qualified in the field/subject they are teaching. Anything else is grossly negligent of a student's right to an education, and unfair and stressful to the teachers so assigned.¹²¹

While professional development support for such teachers would be responsible, and build in a disincentive for such appointments, the preference should be on a systematic approach to appointing appropriately qualified teachers. Given the cross-over and similarities between some areas of teaching, the professional development approach could be used in appropriate cases.

Are there other professions where practitioners habitually practice in fields they are not trained in or qualified for? Is it a measure of the care governments and the Department have for both students and the teaching profession, that this situation is not addressed as a matter of some priority?

1. The detailed study by Wilson was summarised in an executive summary as follows:

Executive summary of findings

1. The findings of this report are in line with previous research identifying a clear downward trend in the academic attainment of students entering initial teacher education. The data available is not sufficient to monitor standards comprehensively, but where ATAR and subject preparation (e.g. level of maths undertaken) data are available they show concerning downward trends; academic standards of intakes are neither stable nor assured.
2. There is a notable lack of transparency in the monitoring of academic standards of students entering initial teacher education. ATAR is reported on entry for only 17% of the 2017 cohort, and no other indicators are available. More than 65% of entrants would have an ATAR granted within the past two years but this data is not recorded if entry is on a basis other than ATAR. Over the decade there has been rapid growth in students entering initial teacher education on a basis other than ATAR. No other measures are available to monitor academic standards at entry to teacher education programs.
3. Within the limited ATAR data available, the past decade shows increasing numbers of students



entering with low ATARs (30–50 increased by x5 and 51–60 by x3) and declining numbers are entering from mid to high ATAR brackets (71-80 down by 1/5; 81-90 down by 1/3). However, the numbers of students entering from the highest ATAR bracket (approximately 500 nationally) are stable — although declining as a proportion of the total, as cohorts become dominated by lower-attaining students. While it is reassuring that teaching continues to attract this small, high-ability cohort, the diminishing esteem of the profession — possibly fuelled by entrants with weak academic backgrounds — threatens the retention of this small group in the future.

4. The ATAR trends sit alongside rapid growth in the number of students entering initial teacher education. This growth is not fully explained by growth in population and school student numbers. Neither is this growth in commencing students matched by growing numbers completing initial teacher education. The number of students entering initial teacher education in 2016, when compared with 2006, grew by roughly 4800, but over the same period the number of students completing initial teacher education grew by only 600.
5. The most recent six-year completion rates for these students are extremely low. Less than 60% of students complete their course after six years. There has been a clear downward trend in the six-year completion rates for teacher education.
6. Growth in online initial teacher education accounts for an increase in approximately 4000 students in annual intakes over the 2006 to 2016 period. There has also been substantial growth in the numbers of students entering from TAFE (nearly 1200 more in 2016 than in 2006). Although growing, these cohorts have very low completion rates (online courses = 41%, TAFE entry = 50%). It seems reasonable to question whether the growth in initial teacher education is driven by a quest for enrolment numbers; including via pathways that have not been verified as legitimate foundations for the deeply challenging intellectual work of teaching; and through delivery modes that offer cost efficiencies but have not been validated in terms of outcomes and knock-on effects on student achievement.
7. Low completion rates for initial teacher education are related to academic standards at entry (ATAR), type of program and socio-educational background. The completion rates are related to ATAR scores (e.g. ATAR 30-50, 3000-plus entrants, 58% completed versus ATAR 91-100, approximately 450 entrants, 69% completed in six years by 2016); the mode of the program (external mode, online, approximately 3000 entrants, 41% completed versus internal, approximately 14,800 entrants, 59% completed in six years by 2016) and the type of enrolment (part-time, 3000-plus entrants, 36% completed, versus full-time, approximately 6400, 60% completed in six years by 2016).
8. Completion trends suggest that many students are entering initial teacher education with little prospect of completing the degree. This also suggests that the system is highly inefficient, recruiting students who are not likely to complete their course, and/or providing course design (part time/online) that increases the likelihood of students failing to complete their course. The costs of this inefficiency go beyond monetary terms, with large numbers of students bearing the psychological weight of failure as well as financial burdens.
9. The three key findings: 1) ATAR declines; 2) poor transparency/incomplete reporting; 3) increases in numbers and declines in completions; suggest that Australia's academic standards for entry to teaching are neither stable nor assured. This situation poses a serious threat, with spiralling and accelerating dynamics negatively impacting on the esteem of the teaching profession, Australian students' outcomes, and national educational and economic progress.¹²²

Wilson's study, taken together with other studies presented to the Inquiry that address the workload pressures experienced by teachers under current policies and changing social and economic realities, draws attention to the impact on the attractiveness of the profession. The public treatment of the profession by governments and hostile commentators in the

media (although the community's experience of the profession through the COVID-19 challenge of 2020 has significantly shifted parental and community appreciation of the real value of this profession) adds further hurdles for school graduates, with many alternative career options. The public "rating" of the profession through the key (though not the only) messaging system that is comparative salaries, is addressed in chapter 11.

One study¹²³ that attempts to refute the notion that teaching is unattractive to "the best and brightest" points to a survey of career aspirations of students in NSW public schools (from year 3–12 across 2012 to 2015) and expressed interest in teaching. The study shows school students across the ability range, including highly achieving students, express interest in teaching, and for a range of credible motivations, showing that there is a good potential foundation for the promotion of the value of the profession. However, the fact remains that the available data demonstrate declining entry standards, numerically stable but proportionally declining high-achieving school graduates entering teaching, sharply declining completion rates, inadequate early employment practices (extensive initial temporary employment experiences, inadequate resources and time for effective induction), and the decline in salary relativities do not add up to an increasing pursuit of a teaching career by as many high achieving school students who might be attracted to the inherent nobility of the profession.

1. The Australian Teacher Workforce Data Report 1 (Pipeline Report, *op. cit.*) contains the most extensive data currently available. It is consistent with the others presented here, and extends it.

Some national findings include:

- initial teacher education enrolment growth (numbers, 2006–2017) of 2 per cent annually, but completions growing at 0.4 per cent
- reductions in the number of completions were largely due to decreases in completions in primary education, which fell at an average annual decrease of 0.6 per cent per year between 2006 and 2017,

falling most rapidly between 2014 and 2017. This compares with growth of an average 1.4 per cent per year, from 2006 to 2018, in Australian children aged 5 to 12 years

- completion rates (not numbers) decreased from 57 per cent to 47 per cent (undergraduate, commenced in 2006-12) and from 82 per cent to 76 per cent (postgraduate, commenced 2006-12 and 2013). These rates are based on completion within six years from commencement year.

Of note: postgraduate primary completion rates declined by 10 per cent from 2006–14 and postgraduate secondary rates from 84 per cent to 77 per cent (2006–12 commencements).

Other findings include: growth in online programs and enrolments in them, lowest completion rates to be found in these programs and a growing incidence of NSW teacher education students studying in interstate programs.

2. The NSW Education Standards Authority Attrition Report provides an overdue examination of data on the attrition of teachers new to the profession over the first six years of teaching. Widespread but unsourced references to anywhere from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of teachers leaving in the first five years abound in the media. This study references the important studies by Weldon¹²⁴ and the Queensland College of Teachers¹²⁵ and adds an examination of teacher accreditation attrition data from NSW over six years.

A key table shows a breakdown of six-year attrition rates from accreditation between 2009 and 2013, by NSW universities from which the teachers graduated. The report finds that a rising number of NSW teachers are leaving the profession within six years:

"The proportion of NSW graduate teachers who were removed from the accreditation list within six years of being granted initial teacher accreditation peaked at 13.0 per cent in 2013. 2013 represented a significant increase on the previous four-year average (10.0 per cent). Both 2014 and 2015 are already above 12.3 per cent, which would indicate there has been an increase in the rate of graduate teachers leaving the profession in more recent years."¹²⁶



It is clear that there have been changing mechanisms introduced to attempt to regulate entry to initial teacher education programs, or to address issues of standards of these programs. The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group reforms were just the latest of nationally originated reforms. There is no consistent entry benchmark, whether using ATARs or other measures. While universities and the Australian Council of Deans of Education point to a range of other mechanisms applying to entry (interviews, psychometric or other tests, referee reports, community engagement indicators, application letters addressing motivations etc) there are no objective or comparable rubrics governing such measures and little to validate their effectiveness in the context of low academic capacity. It is one thing to argue there is more to teaching than intellectual capacity, it is another to dispense with it. A number of these entry measures appear to be recruitment rather than selection measures.

The interplay of public presentations of teachers' work, hostile accounts of teachers' capacities and motivations through various culture wars, growing reports of the pressures teachers experience in their work, the evidence before this Inquiry of the multiple and overlapping effect on teachers of the lack of time to actually undertake the escalating duties, and logging of data on them, when added to the declining relativities of salaries in other professions, all add up a profession that needs, and deserves, a considerable reappraisal by Government with regard to respect and support. This Report spells out a number of actions that are needed. Salaries are just one such action and it is addressed in chapter 11.

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- ¹⁰¹ NESAs, 2020a.
¹⁰² Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2020.
¹⁰³ Wilson, 2020.
¹⁰⁴ Buchanan, 2020, p. 14.
¹⁰⁵ NSW Department of Education (2015), as cited in Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
¹⁰⁶ McGrath-Champ et al., 2020, pp. 3, 13.
¹⁰⁷ CESE, 2020.
¹⁰⁸ McGrath-Champ, et al., *Submission to Inquiry*.
¹⁰⁹ *ibid*
¹¹⁰ Leigh & Ryan, 2008
¹¹¹ Goss & Sonnemann, 2019.
¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 11.
¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 12.
¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 14.
¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 16.
¹¹⁶ Buchanan et al., *Submission to Inquiry*.
¹¹⁷ Wilson, *op. cit.*
¹¹⁸ Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
¹¹⁹ NSW Government (2018), as cited in Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
¹²⁰ Mitchell (2019), as cited in Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
¹²¹ For a discussion on an Australian project to provide systematic professional learning support for out-of-field teaching, see Kenny et al. (2020).
¹²² Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11.
¹²³ Gore et al., 2016.
¹²⁴ Weldon, 2018.
¹²⁵ Queensland College of Teachers, 2018.
¹²⁶ NESAs, 2020a, p. 3.

Chapter 9:

Workload, time and complexity

Of the many submissions the Panel received from teachers, the questions related to time, its availability and use, and workload, the amount and its complexity, were most frequently raised.

Underneath these concerns could be discerned a sense of frustration caused by the conflict between what teachers were doing — and more so in recent years — and what they believed they should be doing for teaching and learning, for their students and for themselves as true professionals. As one high school teacher from a regional city put it:

“All the administration that you have, data collection, data reporting ... parent emails and even just thinking, teachers want to spend time on their core business, which is teaching and learning.”

Even “checking and responding to emails as a teacher can easily add an hour to your work day outside of your teaching activities”, another said.¹²⁷

In order to examine this issue, the Panel has been fortunate to have the 2018 report *Understanding Work in Schools* authored by Susan McGrath-Champ, Rachel Wilson, Megan Stacey and Scott Fitzgerald and ongoing research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) into the work of teachers in their member states, including Australia.

Understanding Work in Schools was based on the responses of 18,234 NSW public school teachers, executives and principals. It raised a range of significant questions about the current situation in NSW that were consistent with what the Inquiry heard from practitioners in the field, namely “that many teachers are struggling to preserve this student focus in the face of the new work activities that impose additional hours, work demands and personal burdens upon them” (p5).



Their findings on hours of work were as follows (pp14–17):

- assistant principals and head teachers — on average 58 hours per week (45 at school and 12 at home)
- principals and deputy principals — on average 62 hours per week (50 at school and 12 at home)
- full-time classroom and specialist teachers — on average 55 hours per week (43 in school and 11 at home).

Their conclusion from this:

“By our measure, teachers are reporting hours of work at school (inclusive of contact and non-contact time) at approximately 1720 hours per year, suggesting they are high on an international, as well as domestic, scale.” (p14)

The OECD work, although dealing with Australia as a whole, adds weight to this conclusion. In his submission, Pasi Sahlberg looks at the OECD account of statutory net teaching hours in public primary schools over the year (2018) and summarises as follows:

“According to OECD, Australian Primary School Teachers have 870 required hours of teaching in their annual workplans, compared to 783 in OECD countries. In the United States primary teachers teach about 990 hours and in Finland 677 each year.”¹²⁸

For lower secondary teachers in Australia, it is reported in the OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report 2018 that they work on average 45 hours a week compared with an average of 39 hours among the OECD member states. What’s more, this study shows a 2.1 hour increase in the average working week in Australia from 2013 to 2018.¹²⁹

It’s the view of the authors of *Understanding Work in Schools* that NSW teachers’ work is in a category of “very long” working hours. This, they say, is having “severe impacts upon teachers” both personally in terms of career aspirations, family commitments

and work-life balance and educationally in terms of hindering good teaching and learning. Indeed, they say it has the potential to “overwhelm teachers’ professional focus on teaching and student learning”.¹³⁰

Besides its finding that the annual hours of work spent in the classroom by primary teachers is higher in Australia (870) than in the OECD average (783), the OECD finds the number of hours for secondary teachers was lower at 811, but still higher than the OECD average of 709 (lower secondary) and 667 (upper secondary — general programs).¹³¹

This takes us beyond the question of “working hours” to a discussion of “work itself” and what it involves for a NSW teacher today. What teachers see as important are activities such as planning for and teaching in their discipline, collaborating with and learning from their colleagues, meeting the special needs of their students, communicating with them and caring for their wellbeing, and being one in a school team of professional educators.¹³²

What the University of Sydney researchers found in responses from teachers about changes in the past five years was as follows:

- 87.2 per cent said hours of work had increased
- 94.9 per cent said the complexity of work had increased
- 95.1 per cent said there had been an increase in the range of activities
- 96.4 per cent said the collection, analysis and reporting of data had increased
- 97.3 per cent said that administrative work had increased.¹³³

The reference to “administrative tasks” was reported on in all school settings and associated with compliance with state policies and the collection, analysis and reporting of data. Talk of “red-tape reduction” being the result of the sorts of changes that have been made by governments has been questioned; see chapter 6, which deals with the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy.

It's not just the nature of some of the changes — and the way they affect the teaching and learning functions of the system — but the amount of, and rate of, change itself that has been a significant factor in the daily life of a teacher. As one put it: "It used to be that change was sporadic. Change is the new normal."¹³⁴ There has been, as was noted earlier in the Report, continuous change in the way the system is arranged, in the policies that guide it and in the overall environment that shapes it. No sooner has one change been addressed, if not fully implemented, then another comes along!

What we see in relation to workload is a range of tasks layered over each other and for which a balanced mix needs to be found:

- between planning lessons (individually and collectively) and then teaching them
- between planning and teaching and the assessing and reporting of student performance
- between planning, teaching and assessing and participating in school-wide functions deemed necessary, including professional development and school administration
- between all of that and then working with parents and the wider community to build support for teaching and learning, for example, in English as an additional language or dialect or Indigenous communities.

If you are a teacher, none of this can be avoided; the pressures are real and the search for a mix that will work for the individual, for the school and for the system is a matter for judgement and one that requires insight and experience.

However, what is clear to the Panel from both the research and submissions from principals and teachers is that the overarching principle for determining where the lines are to be drawn, and the balance found, should come from the need to ensure that a good education is provided for all. As it is put so well in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration: "A vision for a world-class education system that encourages and supports every student to the very best they can be,

no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face."¹³⁵

To this end, principals and teachers want to eliminate processes deemed "unnecessary, cumbersome and extremely time consuming" and this must mean better "system-level planning" that involves proper consultation.¹³⁶ The considered view of practicing teachers and school leaders about what this should mean for policy is outlined as "three, strong, overarching themes" in *Understanding Work in Schools*:

1. increased time and support for collaborative learning, primarily through reduced face-to-face teaching time and, to a lesser extent, opportunity for more in-school professional learning to support collaboration for teaching and learning
2. increased specialist teaching support — for students with special needs and broader curriculum support
3. greater consultation, due diligence and sensitive timing is needed for the implementation of further change in schools.¹³⁷

In response to these workload issues, the Panel notes the evidence from the OECD to the effect that Australian secondary teachers are the most stressed of all. The 2018 TALIS report shows that 58 per cent of Australian teachers said they experienced "quite a bit or a lot of stress", the OECD average being 49 per cent.¹³⁸ In the "Context of Teaching" chapter, the Panel pointed to the link that may develop between this stress and more serious mental illness. The concept of "hard-to-teach" developed as an important factor to consider for very good reason. It's a reality for some schools and a personal, as well as an educational, challenge for the teachers involved.

For this reason, the Panel is strongly supportive of proposed measures to increase the time available outside the classroom to plan and collaborate with colleagues as, all too often, teachers find themselves "no longer the master of their own domain"¹³⁹ and weighed down by administrative tasks and a



continuing stream of new work requirements from the Department, and sometimes from it as the deliverer of Commonwealth policy.

In one of the submissions from a country-based primary teacher, the Panel was reminded that relief time for primary teachers has remained the same — two hours a week — since 1984:

“I was in one of the first small schools in 1984 to receive RFF [release from face-to-face teaching] time of two hours. This has remained the same throughout my career. RFF time should be increased for primary teachers and it is totally unfair it has not been increased since it commenced.”¹⁴⁰

For primary teachers, increased release from face-to-face teaching is most important, as should consideration of this matter for secondary school teachers. In their case, the last review was held in 1954.

This is not just a workload issue, but one that takes us to the complexity of teaching today. First, there is the individualising and personalising nature of the task. As a teacher put it to the Panel: “This personalisation is taking a lot of time. Again, this is a good thing to be working on, but it is time-consuming for teachers and has not been considered in the traditional allocation of our face-to-face time.”¹⁴¹

Second, there are the additional layers that have been incorporated into the curriculum, the “learning across the curriculum” elements that require teachers to be able to “focus on horizontal alignment and integration, as well as vertical alignment as traditionally understood in the profession of conceptual learning”.¹⁴²

As the same teacher put it when discussing the cascade of changes experienced in the years since the last work value case:

“Added to this context is the fact that the work that we do is more cognitively complex in itself. There are a large number of things that we need to be across and there are layers to everything that we do. This includes layers of additional policy, evidence-based practices and reporting requirements that we

must be constantly cognisant of in all of our work. This is not to say that these are bad things, but just that they have definitively changed the nature of work.”¹⁴³

Yes, there is more of it and it is more complex — and teachers are spending more time in responding to it. As Connors and McMorro put it in their submission:

“Research demonstrates that teaching is an intellectually demanding profession that involves highly complex tasks.”

They go on to describe why this is so:

“Teachers are responsible for the general as well as strictly educational well-being of children and young people and this entails a range of activities that are often described as ‘duty of care’. Keeping students physically and emotionally safe and secure involves a range of tasks for teachers: checking attendance; playground duty; managing excursions; and counselling individual students and groups. Teachers need to be able to deal with their students collectively and to deal with their individual differences — to support them to shape their behaviour as individuals but also as a group.”¹⁴⁴

The third complication for teachers today, along with that created by individualised learning and curriculum complexity, is related to data, its collection, its analysis and its use in the classroom. It is seen by many practitioners who submitted to the Panel, as too time consuming with too little relevance in relation to the emphasis being placed on it. As one teacher put it to the authors of *Understanding Work in Schools*:

“We are all about collecting data and evidence, ticking boxes. Our focus is on paperwork and [work health and safety] rather than the kids’ educational, social and emotional needs ... we focus on paperwork, not developing quality lessons for our kids, only because we don’t have the time. We spend an hour on paperwork for an hour lesson.”¹⁴⁵

The reference to “ticking boxes” was a persistent theme.

Part of the explanation for this can be seen in the comments by former NSW Education Standards Authority head Tom Alegounarias referred to earlier in the Report and to the effect that there was a “lack of confidence in educational measurement” and, indeed, the whole issue had become too polarised — and polarising. Data, as Alegounarias pointed out, can be important for teaching and learning and for that to happen, it needs professionals guiding the process and teachers in tune with what is involved and what can be learnt to assist them with their work; what he calls “evidence of effectiveness”. What’s needed, he says, is better preparation of teachers in respect of all aspects of data and more cooperation between measurement experts and educational practitioners.

An information and communications technology teacher who gave evidence to the Inquiry argued that data can — and should — help “teachers to teach better” and “students to learn better”, viewing the subject not just as a teacher training question but also one of time and support:

“It is worth noting that the development and sharing of the skills needed to breakdown this data is not something that has been continually supported ... the more practical repackaging of data is something that teachers have had to do themselves.”¹⁴⁶

Data is recognised as part of the complexity of teaching today and, if applied professionally, is recognised as an aid to the teaching and learning function and for which system-level support is required. The Panel concurs with this position but notes the continuing importance of qualitative as well as quantitative assessment. As Counsel Assisting the Inquiry Neale Dawson put it in his closing address to the Inquiry:

“Teachers generally observed that, in under-emphasising the role of qualitative data, the Department is ignoring the ability of teachers to constantly make assessments of students’ progress, and to amend learning and learning processes accordingly.”

All too often this is forgotten in our “age of measurement”.

The Panel was also concerned to hear from many who made submissions that in respect of NAPLAN, pressures existed to “teach to the test” at the expense of other areas of the curriculum. Add to that what many have labelled as “invidious public comparisons and ranking of schools based on test scores with no regard to differences in their students’ backgrounds”.¹⁴⁷

As noted earlier, the Panel accepts the need for testing and measurement as an essential part of what is required of teaching and learning today. It is crucial, though, that its limitations be understood, that it is applied professionally, and that it is not used for purposes other than those related to education. It’s not an end-in-itself but rather a means to the end of better teaching and learning.

A submission from former NSW Education Standards Authority head Tom Alegounarias states: “On the causal relationships in education they are rarely clear and usually contingent on specific circumstances, and therefore diagnoses or prescriptions will be tentative. It follows that policy leaders need to learn depth and expertise in the nature of data, educational evidence and processes for imposing practices.”

In this context, the Panel notes the submission from Professor James Tognolini and Sara Ratner of the Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment at the University of Sydney in respect of the complications of measurement. When it comes to quantitative data there are different sources — Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), NAPLAN and HSC — that can produce different accounts as to whether progress is or is not being made, according to the data produced. They stress that each of these tests do different things. For example, PISA, as useful as it is, was “never designed to be the ultimate measure of teacher performance, work value or system-wide performance”. The HSC and NAPLAN on the other hand are much more aligned to teacher performance because they are based on the curriculum being taught. It follows, they say, that it is always better to provide a “range of verified evidence” rather than “one-off measures”.¹⁴⁸



It is interesting to note that while PISA results portray an image of declining standards, Tognolini and Ratner's analysis presented a contrasting picture, over the same time frame, finding more NSW students than ever had achieved the top Band 6 results in Chemistry, Mathematics and advanced English in the HSC.

Noting the comments of some of the practising teachers and experts about the importance of educational data and the need to approach its collection, recording and reporting in a professional and relevant way, the Panel notes the work of the Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment in promoting an understanding of good practice in this domain. This activity aims to underpin better professional learning in preservice teacher education as well as ongoing professional development around testing and the use of data within their classes and across the school.

What's missing in all of this is a proper process for determining what aspect of data is needed for teachers and learning, and what isn't. There should be a teacher's voice in "professional judgement processes relating to data and evidence, it is necessary to establish the substance of data-related issues but also the confidence of teachers, that will encourage reciprocal constructive approaches from teachers". This is not just the case in relation to data but to policy-making and administration as well. The Panel has noted the lack of a teacher presence on the Advisory Council of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation and is of the view that such a situation should be remedied, it being important that a better relationship is developed between researchers and practitioners.

The establishment by the Commonwealth of a National Evidence Institute for educational practice, risks adding a further layer of pressure on schools, and perhaps conflicting advice, and the Panel considers it advisable for the NSW Government to be proactive in regulating the effect that this new initiative might have on schools.

On another front, there is a consultation space in place, that being the Secretary's Reducing the Administrative Burden Group set up in 2018, after the initial findings of the *Understanding Work in Schools* study.¹⁴⁹

It was in this context that the Panel considered the question of NAPLAN, as it has become not just one form of assessment but the major one, and a driver of much that happens in schools and classrooms. Given the influence it has had on time and workload — and on views teachers have about their roles as educators — it should not be surprising that it is controversial. Add to that MySchool and the way the information it reveals has been presented in the media as the test of performance rather than one among others.

Writing a report about the teaching profession and not giving serious attention to the issues that the profession has raised in respect of NAPLAN/MySchool would leave a gap in the recommendations; particularly given the expansive view of education required of, and strongly supported by, those experts and practising teachers who made submissions. "Whenever standardised tests are running the show," noted Sahlberg, "it narrows the curriculum ... And it often makes teaching and learning very boring, when the purpose is to figure out the right answer to a test."¹⁵⁰

A similar point has been made by Professor Masters:

"Parents have sometimes drawn incorrect conclusions about the quality of a school from publicly reported test results. And public comparisons of schools have resulted in a range of unanticipated negative consequences such as narrowing teaching and increasing levels of teacher and student stress."¹⁵¹

As was pointed out by Tognolini and Ratner, each test has its own assumptions and objectives and the results they produce need to be interpreted carefully. In NSW's case, there's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), NAPLAN and, of course, the HSC and ROSA, along with all that is done on a regular basis by teachers and schools by way of assessment. What's needed is a good mix that provides evidence relevant for both overall system evaluation and classroom teaching. With regard to the former, the Panel recommends a redesign of NAPLAN that would involve the use of a properly stratified random sample of students. In proposing this, the Panel notes that PISA, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

(PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), all prominent international assessment tools, use sample testing. The benefits from this alternative are clear; the processing of important and useful knowledge without the time and ethical issues raised by NAPLAN. NSW school principals, surveyed as part of their work for the Reducing Administrative Burden initiative, reported: “NAPLAN takes out at least one full week of teaching for each of their students. Every year. Every school. Every student.”¹⁵²

The Panel notes the national project to develop a bank of online test items aligned to the curriculum, to be available to teachers and schools in tandem with learning progressions to monitor progress in specific areas and provide information for follow up in the classroom. It is consistent with the position taken in the second Gonski report, *Through Growth to Achievement* (2018)¹⁵³ and should be inspired by the NSW Education Standards Authority’s principles of effective assessment.

Putting these elements into one package allows for proper reporting to parents and the avoidance of the inappropriate system of rating that has come with MySchool. As Professor Masters has pointed out, some schools even use NAPLAN in their marketing and school selection processes. He goes on to conclude:

“An obvious strategy is to stop reporting school results publicly and to restrict access to school-level data to individual schools and school systems. The primary focus of literacy and numeracy testing might then return to its original purpose on informing teaching and learning.”¹⁵⁴

There should be a proper teachers’ voice in policy development, implementation and administration. This certainly applies in record keeping generally and when talking of data, and its potential role in teaching interventions and overall assessments. As Sahlberg has put it:

“There is a strong positive relationship between high school system performances and the level of professionalism of teachers. Important aspects of professionalism include both rights and responsibilities of professionals to planning-decision making and evaluation of their work and duties.”¹⁵⁵

There are no easy answers to all of the questions raised by the workload and complexity challenges facing teachers today. Even with the recalibration of time required and the removal of administrative tasks deemed unnecessary, it is still going to be a difficult business requiring intellect and commitment; particularly, but not only, if their work is in “hard-to-teach” schools. Many children and young people today have experienced the trauma associated with COVID-19 and, as Professor Masters has noted, “parental anxiety and the addictive nature of technology have led many young people to be more isolated, more anxious and less social”.¹⁵⁶ The value to society of the work of teachers and the role of our schools today can’t be underestimated when it comes to the salaries paid and the conditions of work.

On the basis of the important research that led to *Understanding Work in Schools* and feedback from teachers themselves, the Panel is of the view that there is a better way that will provide better results. It involves:

1. reducing face-to-face teaching time and increasing the opportunities for in-school collaboration and lesson planning
2. increasing the direct supports provided for curriculum implementation in general and special needs, of teachers as well as students
3. ensuring that all aspects of data collection, reporting and use are better approached and managed in the interests of teaching and learning
4. providing for teacher input to decision-making and implementation as ought to be the case for a recognised profession.



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- ¹²⁷ See Appendix 2: Workload, time and complexity, pp. 16, 23.
- ¹²⁸ Sahlberg, *Submission to Inquiry*, p. 2.
- ¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 2-3.
- ¹³⁰ McGrath-Champ et al., 2018, p. 5.
- ¹³¹ OECD, 2019, p. 427.
- ¹³² McGrath-Champ et al., 2018, & Sahlberg, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
- ¹³³ McGrath-Champ et al., 2018, pp. 28-31.
- ¹³⁴ *Submission to Inquiry*.
- ¹³⁵ Education Council, 2019, p. 2.
- ¹³⁶ McGrath-Champ et al., 2018, p. 50.
- ¹³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 49.
- ¹³⁸ OECD [TALIS 2018 results: Volume II] (2020), as cited in Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- ¹³⁹ *Submission to Inquiry*.
- ¹⁴⁰ Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
- ¹⁴¹ *Submission to Inquiry*.
- ¹⁴² *ibid.*, p. 19.
- ¹⁴³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁴ *Submission to Inquiry*.
- ¹⁴⁵ McGrath-Champ et al., 2018, p. 56.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Submission to Inquiry*
- ¹⁴⁷ Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
- ¹⁴⁸ Tognolini & Ratner, *Submission to Inquiry*.
- ¹⁴⁹ McGrath-Champ et al., 2018, p. 4.
- ¹⁵⁰ McGowan, January 7, 2018.
- ¹⁵¹ Masters, May 17, 2018.
- ¹⁵² NSW Teachers Federation, 2020, p. 5.
- ¹⁵³ Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁵⁴ Masters, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁵⁵ Sahlberg, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- ¹⁵⁶ NESAs (2020), as cited in Gavrielatos, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

Principals and school leadership

With or without Local Schools, Local Decisions, the work of a principal is complex, difficult and important. With Local Schools, Local Decisions, the complexity and the difficulty has been compounded and workloads increased significantly and in ways not always beneficial to the educational mission of the school.

As was indicated in the submissions from principals — and other school leaders — this was frustrating and stressful, particularly given the high expectations that exist in the community about individualised learning and student wellbeing.

Submissions were received from the Secondary Principals' Council and the NSW and Australian Primary Principals' associations. In respect of the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, the following points were raised, namely that it led to increased workload

due to an increased number of casual and temporary teachers and because of general procurement processes and asset management generally. Add to that the lack of curriculum consultants and centrally provided professional learning provision, which used to be part of the system.

The Primary Principals' Association placed some emphasis on the increased workload due to budget and HR issues under the “you get better at it with experience but I imagine being a beginning principal now and I shudder with horror ... The sheer number of communications coming from so many directions before you even just get in the school setting is enormous”.¹⁵⁷

These comments confirm the finding of a 2017 study of principal workload that found when it came to time used by principals, 30 per cent was spent leading teaching and learning in the school and 40 per cent on leading the management of the school. In respect of the latter it was almost a case of anything from fixing the plumbing, to tree audits to technology



troubleshooting¹⁵⁸. Similar concerns were made by Professor Masters in his NSW Curriculum Review, and quoted earlier in this Report.

It's important that these findings about principal workload, amount and diversity, are situated in the context of our understanding of the important role principals need to play if we are to have a "high-performing system"¹⁵⁹.

Work by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)¹⁶⁰ has made it clear that school leadership needs to be a "priority in education policy agendas". Quality school leadership is crucial, and it needs to be sustainable.

The reasons for this are twofold. First, because of its influence in the "motivations and capacities" of teachers and, second, because of its influence on the "school climate and environment". For policy-makers then the question becomes: How can school leaders bring about this influence in a positive way? What are the characteristics of a good principal? What support is required for the task to be performed well and what processes should be in place to ensure those selected are capable, both personally and professionally?

There's a lot that can be said in relation to these issues but a good starting-point is the work of the American academic Professor Susan Moore Johnson, which the Panel referred to earlier in this Report. She points to the scheduling support they can provide for collaboration among teachers, to the partnerships they can develop with local community agencies that can assist, to ensure provision of instructional resources, to arrange for professional development including proper induction and mentoring for new teachers and to work with staff and students to "develop norms for acceptable behaviour and a system of discipline to reinforce those norms". In an important sense, such a principal is "the broker of workplace conditions"¹⁶¹.

The Panel is also of the view that the "influencers" of a good school and quality teachers involve not only principals but also school leaders of all sorts — deputy and assistant principals, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers, instructional leaders, head teachers

and other specialists there for particular reasons; the relationship within the leadership team being as important as the relationship between the principal, other school leaders and the teachers themselves. As the OECD has also said in its work on leadership, there is a need to "recognise and reward distributed leadership" either "in formal ways through team structures and other bodies or more informally by developing ad hoc groups based on expertise and current needs".¹⁶²

In this context, the Panel has also noted the work of the Grattan Institute on how the nation's education systems could make better use of our top teachers. They pointed to the investments that have been made in "a smorgasbord of programs focused on instructional leadership" but conclude that not all have been well executed. What is needed, as the Panel argues in its report as well, are better teacher career paths and more effective teacher professional learning.¹⁶³

The new roles Grattan recommends are Master Teachers and Instructional Specialists. To do the job well the following skill sets are said to be required:

- strong teaching capability, proven by certification under the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as a Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher
- a strong understanding of how to teach their specialist subject, sometimes called pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)
- strong capabilities to lead adult learning, including the emotional intelligence to have difficult conversations.

They are specific in their proposal — one Instructional Specialist for every 10 teachers and one Master Teacher for every eight Instructional Specialists.

As the Panel will outline later in its Report, this idea of career pathways can be linked to wage structures that encourage and reward expanded roles for teachers, along with existing rewards for length of service and promotions.

Included in development of the career options for teachers should be consideration of:

- the emergence of the Instructional Leader type role: rather than the oft repeated limited-term nature of such experiments, positions such as these should be developed and built into the teaching career structure. There are different options for doing this, including roles attached to groups of schools, in-school placements (as has occurred in some places under recent staffing options chosen by some principals), and the role needs to be considered in the context of the reflating of the centrally provided expertise to schools based in districts
- review by the NSW Education Standards Authority of their evidentiary requirements to ensure a more expeditious, though rigorous, ascertainment of expert teaching, and more rapid growth in the number of teachers attaining such recognition and being acknowledged as leaders among their colleagues in the professional activities they engage in. Consideration should be given to building such accreditations into the ladder towards senior promotions positions. This would accord with the recommendation for a pivot towards an objective assessment of instructional leadership capacity in preparation for leadership positions in the system.

Building up a system driven by educational leaders and not overwhelmed by administrative chores won't be easy, and isn't a "quick fix" of the sort we see all too often in policy-making, including in education. Nor does it require a complete overhaul of policy but rather step-by-step improvements in the suite of measures needed — good wages and conditions, clear career paths that are backed up by professional development and strong leadership from the principal. As Ben Jensen and his colleagues have put it in reflecting on Singapore's success:

"Singapore did not implement all of its reforms in one go: it changed one aspect at a time over many years, pragmatically trying what worked and discarding what did not work until it achieved a finely balanced, interconnected approach."¹⁶⁴

In all of this it will be the principal that "holds formal authority in the school, supervises the work of teachers, and serves as a link between the school and the community".¹⁶⁵ To do this job well they need significant decision-making capacities and the room to exercise them in the environment they find themselves. However, continues the OECD, "autonomy alone does not automatically lead to improvements unless it is well supported. In addition, it is important that the core responsibilities of school leaders be clearly defined and delimited. School leadership responsibilities should be defined through an understanding of the practices most likely to improve teaching and learning."¹⁶⁶

It is a responsibility of those running the education system to be able to determine where the lines should be drawn and where the priorities should be set. As the deputy president of the NSW Primary Principals' Association put it so well when commenting on the Government's School Success Model:

"[The] Auditor General's report and [Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation] research into [Local Schools, Local Decisions] both show that the required improvements are at the system level in the provision of resources, tools and support to schools."¹⁶⁷

It reminds us that the evidence base for Local Schools, Local Decisions was weak, as is that for the School Success Model, particularly given what the NSW Secondary Principals' Council sees as a failure of the new model to reinstate statewide consultancy services, to employ more school counsellors and to ensure "fit-for-purpose" technology solutions.

In an article dealing with the response to the Government's School Success Model, an unnamed official involved in implementing Local Schools, Local Decisions comments that some principals have struggled under the "vast suite" of new responsibilities that came with Local Schools, Local Decisions, including the management of budgets, chasing contractors and developing fire safety plans. The official notes the variability in the capacity of principals



to manage this extra work and with respect to the ministerial criticisms of principals implicit in School Success Model says:

“If they don’t think they have enough quality leaders to put in schools, perhaps they should be putting more energy into that.”¹⁶⁸

That is a good point that takes the Panel to the processes involved in placing teachers into promotion positions, including as head teacher, assistant principal, deputy principal or principal.

The Panel has noted that there is an agreement between the Teachers Federation and the Department to jointly develop a new process for promotion into executive positions (Agreement Between the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Teachers Federation on the Staffing of NSW Public Schools 2016–2020). This issue of promotions — and its link to succession planning generally — has also been raised in the Bilateral Agreement Between NSW and the Commonwealth on Quality Schools Reform (2018). It was agreed to “build a strong pipeline of leaders through early talent identification, systematic induction of new principals and delivering high-quality development programs for current and aspiring school leaders”.

In relation to the agreement between the Teachers Federation and the Department there has been slow progress and agreement only on the general principles involved. It now is more than four years since it was signed.

Of the current system, a retired school principal has written:

“Since the previous process of a formal inspection in situ was abolished in the late 1980s, primarily in order to save the cost of retaining a workforce throughout the state of secondary subject and primary inspectors whose role included observation of candidates seeking promotion, the only method of promoting a teacher has been through a local selection process without any formal observation or assessment of the teacher in the workplace.

The Department of Education has no formal role to play in the selection process apart from some perfunctory administrative responsibilities. No detailed information on the successful or unsuccessful candidates is reviewed or retained by the Department. The entire selection process is one that is opaque with no information disclosed to anyone apart from the local panel members. The Department has no knowledge of the experience or attributes of the candidates or, indeed, the successful applicant.

Critically, the panel is not required by the Department to apply any system-wide formal standard in the assessment of candidates that is both universal and known. While all teachers must be accredited and measured against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as a condition of employment, in contrast, those seeking to fill critical leadership positions in schools are not subject to any assessment against any recognised system-wide criteria or benchmark. Worse, the current model essentially operates as a market, based on supply and demand, with more-difficult-to-staff schools having a much smaller pool, if any, of suitable candidates from which to choose. This, by definition, means that a floating standard is applied.”¹⁶⁹

This is an issue that ought to be given serious attention, and well resourced at a system level. In other words, a formal role for the Department should be restored in what is, after all, one of the key factors in ensuring high-level performance. In the assessment of a teacher, including workplace observation, teaching and learning should be prioritised, as would commitment to the values associated with a public education system. In this context, the Panel notes the important work of the School Leadership Institute and the role it can play in succession planning generally and educational leadership in particular.

It is important that what is sought from the process is professional educators, and to that end, professional educators with both teaching qualifications and experience should be the primary assessors. It follows too that the range of school leaders emerging will be

educators in whom the trust required in respect of the important decisions they have to make, for and on behalf of their school communities, will be affirmed. Note too, it will bring the Department back into the process in a more serious and systematic way, as enablers of better teaching and learning rather than mainly deliverers of compliance and control.



^{157.} *Submissions from the NSW Primary Principals Association and the NSW Secondary Principals' Council to Inquiry.*

^{158.} *Deloitte, 2017, p. 4.*

^{159.} *On this concept, see Jensen et al. (2016).*

^{160.} *Pont et al, op. cit.*

^{161.} *Johnson, S. M., 2006, pp. 15-16.*

^{162.} *Pont et al., op. cit., Chapter 3, pp. 73-105.*

^{163.} *Goss & Sonnemann, 2020.*

^{164.} *Jensen et al., op cit., p. 5.*

^{165.} *Johnson, S. M., 2006, p. 15.*

^{166.} *Pont et al., op. cit., p. 9.*

^{167.} *Henebery, December 10, 2020.*

^{168.} *Baker, February 29, 2020.*

^{169.} *Submission to Inquiry.*

Chapter 11:

Salaries

Introduction

Teachers regard themselves, and rightly so, as members of a profession. They are well trained today and enter the profession through a number of pathways: with a three-year university degree plus a one-year teaching diploma (four years trained), a graduate degree plus a Masters in Teaching (five years), or a double degree (four years) with a major in education. There is also a new program to attract experienced persons with other skills and qualifications into the teaching profession. Further, under the NSW system each teacher is required to be accredited and to do regular professional development upgrades. A teacher in the NSW public school system is therefore a highly trained and skilled specialist.

However, one of the major identified features in all the research has been the expressed need for the community to value its teachers and the general conclusion is that salary levels are indicative of the level of respect given to a teaching professional by its community.

History

Before the Panel considers the status of a teacher's salary in today's economic environment, the Panel has examined the teacher's salary as it has historically evolved within the services provided by various NSW governments. Reference to the history of how teachers' salaries have evolved allows an examination of how its teachers are valued by that community.

The regulation of teachers' salaries and conditions of employment has been conveniently recited in the Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award (2004) NSW IR Comm 114. In that Full Bench of the Industrial Relations Commission Decision, the Commission gave some analysis of the significant judgments that considered the many aspects of teachers' employment beginning with the introduction of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1919 and the first Award for teachers: the Public Service (Teachers) Award, 1920.



In that first Award, the salaries for teachers were fixed in accordance with the type of school in which they were employed: high school, intermediate high school or primary school rather than in accordance with the teacher's qualification and that appears to have been the practice until 1946. From 1943 to 1954, salaries were regulated by the Public Service Board under "s14B" agreements under the same Act and were generally increased each alternate year or every three years. It was not until 1961, that there was made a new Crown Employees (Teachers) Award by the NSW Industrial Commission. Salaries were further increased and working conditions considered. Then in 1964, there was a formal acknowledgement that the qualification of a teacher should be used as a benchmark for determining salary. That Award prescribed, inter alia minimum salaries for two-year and four-year trained "certified assistants".¹⁷⁰

The 1970 Judgment

The Full Bench of the Commission paid particular attention to teachers' salaries in the Crown Employees (Teachers — Department of Education) Award 1970 AR 345. The Justices expressed the need for recognition of the status of the teacher, the value of his/her work and the professionalism of their skills. So, the teacher was acknowledged as a professional. The Award prescribed, at first, an interim increase of 7–9% for two-year trained, up to 10% for high school principals with the full increase of 14%, and included a national wage case increase of 3% across the board taking the salary increase to 17%. Special attention was paid to primary/central principals and their deputies.

The tone in the reasoning of the Full Bench after their comprehensive examination of a teachers' workplace, is caught in the comment of Sheldon J. saying:

"Education is made or broken on the anvil of the human efforts, qualities and ideals of ... teachers. It must follow that, great as may be the cost of placing the salaries of teachers at a reasonable level, this is something the cost of which the communities must face."

So, the community is given notice it will be held accountable for the respect in which they hold their teachers through the salaries they pay them.

The 1981 Judgment

In 1981, the Full Bench, in reviewing the Teachers Award, commented as to the fast-moving changes within society and the reflected change in teachers' work saying:

"In the last six years education has undergone considerable change. These changes have been brought about by:

- Changes in the nature of school populations;
- Changes in society and society's attitude about schools and teachers; and
- Changes in schools and in the education system itself.

These changes have enormously increased the workload of teachers. They have also necessitated teachers developing additional skills and they have forced teachers to shoulder additional responsibility."¹⁷¹

The Commission gave special attention to high school and central school principals ("and mistresses") with increases of 4.3% in November 1980, plus a 2.5% allowance and adjustments, a further 3% increase plus 3% allowance giving a total of 12.8% and it identified special payments for district guidance officers and education officers.

The 1991 Judgment

In 1991, in the Education Teaching Services Case, the Full Bench reviewed the role of executive teachers within a school structure: the principal, deputy principals and lead teachers. The Court ruled all executive staff rates of pay at deputy level be increased up to 23.25%. At the same time given the adoption of the 1989 State Wage principal, teachers also received between 9% and 13% increases,

Principals from 1991 onwards therefore had their work revalued with the receipt of pay increases between 20% and 29%.

The 2003 and 2004 Judgments

It was not until 2003–2004 that the NSW Full Bench then conducted another assessment of the work performed by teachers after the 1991 final case decision. The Commission in 2003 ordered an interim increase of 5.5% for all teacher salaries and in addition a final 6.5% staggered over two years. In all teachers received 12% increase in salary after 2004. In a supplementary decision, the Commission increased the salaries of executive staff in a range of 7.5% taking the total increase in a range between 12% and 19.5%.

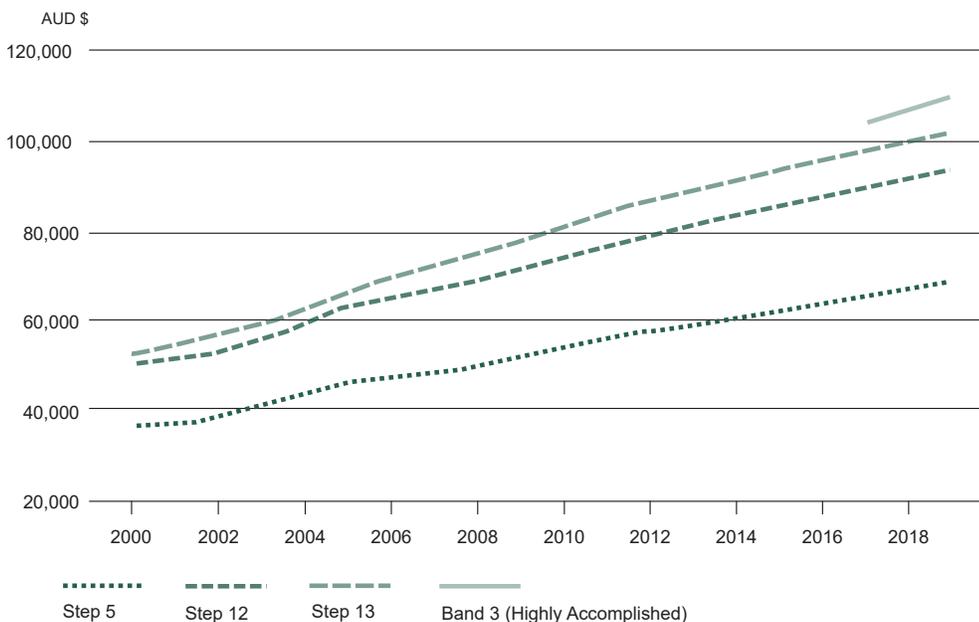
It is of note that each case after 1961 took into its consideration the credit given in previous cases that allowed for particular adjustments in salary. For example, the 1961 case allowed for change in society and its recommended increase was taken into account in the later 1970 consideration. Teachers have also had the benefit of the cost of living increases into their salaries in the normal course.

The Buchanan et al. research into the salary trends in teacher education then took into account the increasing payments after the effect of the 2004 Awards and in graph form reveal:

Figure 2.1 NSW Teachers' Pay (Standardised time series, nominal rates) ¹⁷²

Figure 2.1: Source, Authors' calculation based on Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award, various years

NOTES: 1. Salary levels are nominal rates
 2. Classifications are entry level (5) and upper two classifications (12 and 13) for years 2000–2019. In 2017 a new "high accomplished classification" level was introduced as part of revamped classification structure. This is represented by the solid green line for 2017–2019.
 3. Full details of how a salary for each year and how matching between the old and new classification structures were derived is provided in Appendix 2. Details on the comparability of classifications and the transition to the standard-based remuneration, and the process of accreditation are in Appendix 2. Appendix 2 also details how the bases of wage movements, the classification effect and date of effect factors were controlled for in defining the derived standardised time series in Figure 2.1.





In its submission to the Inquiry, the University of Sydney Business School (2020), through Professor John Buchanan et al.¹⁷³, commented as to the statistical analysis (see page 118), that those in the upper classification received relatively large wage increases in the period 2000–2005. Increases were smaller in the following years; for the past eight years they have been subdued. This latter outcome is the result of the statutory increase capped at up to 2.5% as regulated in NSW Statute in 2012 (see below). The statistical analysis therefore reveals:

- for entry-level teachers, under the old classification 5 (and current equivalent) their salaries rose from \$36,549 per annum in 2000 to \$68,929 in 2019
- for those in classification 12 (and current equivalent) they rose from \$50,239 per annum in 2000 to \$93,793 in 2019
- for those in classification 13 (current equivalent) they rose from \$52,182 per annum in 2000 to \$102,806 in 2019

The relevant amounts for 2021 are Band 1 \$72,263; Band 2.2 \$98,330; Band 2.3 \$107,779.

It can be concluded from this review of the major cases that when work value cases have been brought before the NSW Industrial Commission for an examination of teachers' and principals' working conditions, quite significant salary rises, usually ranging from 10%–20%, have been awarded, in steps, over a couple of years to all in the teaching profession. But from the dated case law, it also appears such cases have only been brought around every 10 years. The last work value case was brought before the Full Bench of the NSW Industrial Commission in 2003, some 17 years ago, and before that in 1991 after 13 years. This Inquiry into valuing the work of teachers must look at a number of criteria in order to express a view of the monetary value of a teacher in 2020 taking into account all the changes within the profession from 2004 to 2020 and the present economic circumstance in NSW going into 2021.

Relativities

The OECD in 2019, acknowledged teachers' salaries have a direct influence on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. The payment for work done influences decisions to enrol in teacher education, to become a teacher after graduation, to return to the teaching profession after a career interruption and/or to remain a teacher. In general, the higher the salaries, the fewer the people who choose to leave the profession (OECD, 2005[1]).¹⁷⁴

It is also necessary to consider the relativities of teachers' salaries in our region. A poll conducted by the Varkey Global Teacher Foundation in 2019 found the starting salary of a teacher in the highly performing Singapore education system is paid \$AU65,997.04, below that of a teacher in Finland or Switzerland and sitting just below a starting salary of a teacher in Australia. However, the salaries under the Singapore system continue to increase at a much faster rate given the recognition, through a financial bonus system, that acknowledges a teacher's particular skills and professional development. The salaries of executive teachers in a school in Singapore are approximately similar to those in Australia but they enjoy better working conditions and extensive time off from face-to-face for professional planning and collegial work, unlike Australian teachers. New Zealand teachers rate very highly in all categories.

Teachers' salaries relative to overseas teachers

A further relevant analysis is to consider how teachers' pay as a professional sits in contrast with other comparable occupations across advanced industrialised countries. The OECD's teachers' database compares teachers' actual salaries relative to earnings of other tertiary educated workers. The findings were for lower secondary teachers (a sub-group commonly regarded as indicative for teachers as a whole). In the bulk of OECD countries, teachers earn between 80 per cent and 90 per cent of the earnings of tertiary educated workers in other occupations. While Australia is part of the general trend, it is at the higher

end of countries on this measure. However, as in many other countries, teachers in Australia are paid below the average earnings of other tertiary qualified workers in the labour market.

When it comes to relativities a comparison must be made with a profession, which is fairly regarded as comparable.

Teachers' salaries in NSW relative to other states

Further, it can be seen (below) NSW public sector teachers have, over the years, played a leading role in setting standards in wages and conditions for other states and territories' salary rates paid to teachers. NSW now sits in the middle of Australian teachers' pay rates, along with South Australia.

Teachers' salaries in NSW relative to other professions

One essential question that needs to be considered in any assessment of the salaries of the teaching profession in 2020 is whether a teacher's salary has retained its relativity in relation to the salaries earned in other professions, particularly in NSW. Generally, it is accepted teachers' starting rates (previously Step 5 but now Band 1) have always reflected the standard earnings of a professionally qualified worker in our society. That is a relativity that statistical analysis reveals has been maintained (Figure 2.1).

Figure 4.3.2 (next page) shows the income of a selection of typical professional occupations in 2016. These occupations are commonly regarded as relevant professionals when making a comparison with

Figure 4.1 How Australian states and territories pay their teachers, 2011 and 2020: Top classification as percentage difference with NSW teacher salaries¹⁷⁷

Figure 4.1 All categories are the highest classification for classroom teachers before promotions. NSW category is Highly Accomplished teacher; South Australia category is Highly Accomplished teacher, Western Australia is level 3.2 as at December 2019; Victoria category is Leading Teacher 3.2; Queensland is Highly Accomplished; Tasmania is Teacher five-year trained level 13; ACT is Experienced Teacher level 2; Northern Territory is CT9 classification. See Table A4.1 for sources (Appendix 4)





teachers' pay. Each requires a degree qualification and a professional certification is required to practice and there are often ongoing requirements for professional development to maintain certification to practice the profession.

As Buchanan commented:

“Unsurprisingly the dispersion of earnings early in the careers of all these professions is rather narrow. It starts to diverge mid-career and is most pronounced

in the more mature age brackets. Significantly the figure illustrates that primary and secondary teachers have amongst the lowest incomes of all the major professions examined. Particularly notable is the disparity in earnings of teachers and pharmacists, accountants, electrical engineers and economists — occupations where it is more likely that the major source of income is wages and salaries received from paid employment.

Figure 4.3.2 Earnings of specific professionals/degree-qualified workers vs teachers, rates prevailing at the 80th percentile of total yearly income of full-time workers for each occupation at each age grouping, Australia, 2016¹⁷⁸

SOURCE: ABS: Australian Census 2016
NOTE: This figure reports the annual earnings at the 80th percentile for each occupation in the various age groups. Appendix section A4.2 provides full details of how this figure was generated. It also provides details of how to use the menu-driven system devised for this project to reproduce this diagram for any percentile of interest.

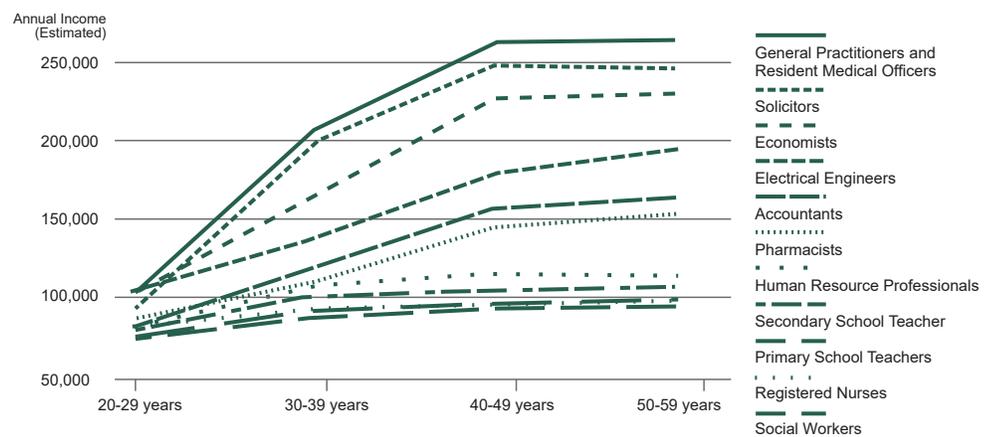
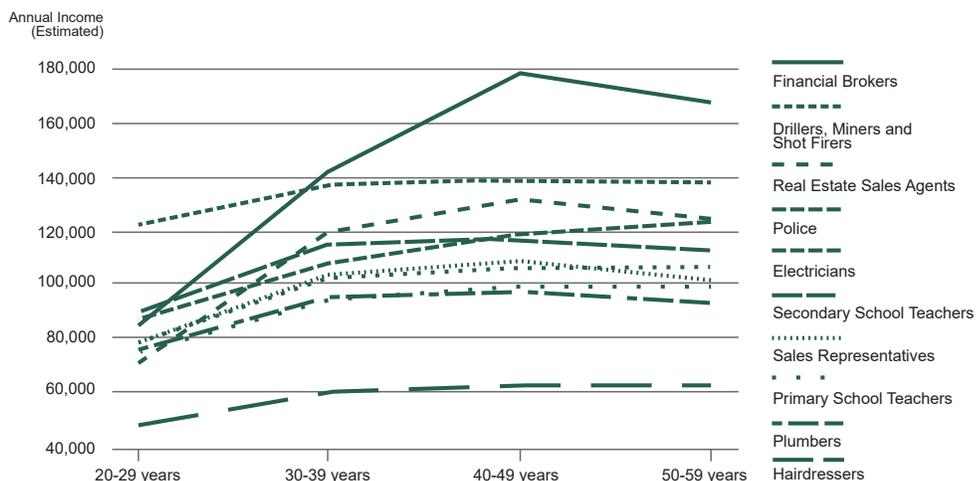


Figure 4.3.3 Earnings of specific non-professionals/non-degree qualified workers vs teachers, rates prevailing at the 80th percentile of total yearly income of full-time workers for each occupation at each age grouping, Australia, 2016 ¹⁷⁹

SOURCE: ABS: Australian Census 2016
 NOTE: This figure reports the annual earnings at the 80th percentile for each occupation in the various age groups. Appendix section A4.2 provides full details of how this figure was generated. It also provides details of how to use the menu-driven system devised for this project to reproduce this diagram for any percentile of interest.



Buchanan noted:

“What is striking about it is the relative stability in the relativities over the 20-year period. During the period of strong wage growth in the early 2000s, higher-grade teachers were receiving a rate of pay that was just a little above that paid to someone at the 80th percentile. From 2006 onward, however, there was a modest realignment. The rate of both upper classification and the 80th percentile, have moved at a very similar rate.”

From this comprehensive research it is possible to conclude teachers’ pay in NSW is a long way off parity with most other professionals; and has been drifting further away in past decades. The long-term trends and deep-seated differences in relative earnings persist and need to be addressed to ensure members of the teaching profession are properly compensated for their increased and changed working conditions (as the analysis in the prior chapters has revealed), their up-skilling and new responsibilities. The salary of a NSW teacher should reflect their professional status and demonstrate the value in which they are held by their community. There is no justification for its earlier relativities with the basket of other professions to be eroded as has happened.

The 2011 Regulation affecting teachers’ salaries

Following the initiatives to move towards Local Schools, Local Decisions between 2008 and 2012, and while in the middle of the most important reform of devolving to the individual school principal the powers and monies to administer each individual school (through the allocation of a school budget under the Resource Allocation Model allocation in 2014), the NSW Government introduced a public sector wage policy, which capped wage increases to 2.5%. The Government first introduced the 2.5% maximum cap on salaries but allowed further increases if the industry could establish before the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) productivity improvements. However, later when the decision by the Government to proclaim a regulation binding the salary cap for all public servant pay increases up to 2.5% (as the maximum NSW public servant pay increase) there was no acknowledgement of the prior opportunity for a productivity increase. In effect, the opportunity for a work value case being brought before the NSW Industrial Commission was abolished. Further, the Government has abolished the NSW Industrial Court and there is therefore no opportunity for an independent judicial review of teachers’ salaries.



The NSW Treasury policy, endorsed by the NSW Government, has had an extraordinary effect on the individual teacher. Wage caps permanently reduce the nominal wage base and accumulate further income losses to the individual over time. Workers continue to suffer income losses many years after the wage capping.

The cap was within a few years adopted, as the duration of an enterprise agreements finished, by the public sector employers and also the Commonwealth for their public sector workers. (The Commonwealth set a 2% maximum.) The following graphs indicate there has been a stagnation of the wages and salaries of the national workforce from 2008. There has been no wage increase to reflect the change in the nature of teachers' work, nor any acknowledgement of the time taken by the average teacher to complete the extensive new requirements placed on their work. The Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, in its implementation and conduct, has brought about a complete change in the working conditions and responsibilities of teachers and in that time their salaries have stagnated. Evidence supports the proposition that the Local Schools, Local

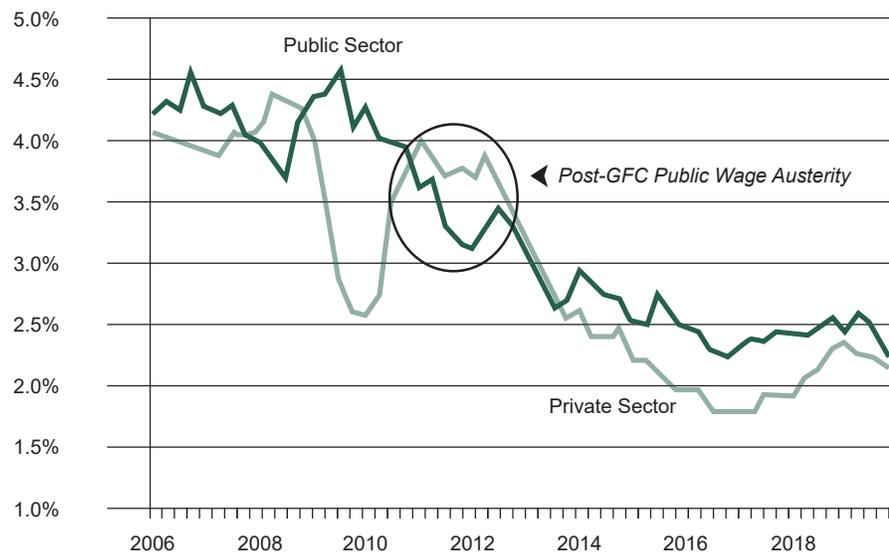
Decisions policy has behind it a determination to ensure significant financial savings for NSW.

The 2008-09 global financial crisis experience presents a powerful recent example of how public sector pay cuts in Australia negatively affect broader wage trends. So, the loss of wage increases was not the only financial loss suffered.

As shown in Figure 1 (below), public sector wages continued to grow at their previous pace (over 4 per cent per year), in part because of the inertial effect of existing union-negotiated enterprise agreements protecting normal wage increases. However, once the economy stabilised, private sector wages bounced back to their pre-crisis trajectory (around 4 per cent per year) by late 2010.¹⁸⁰

Figure 1. Year-over-year growth, Wage Price Index, Australia 2006-2019¹⁸¹

SOURCE: Author's calculations from ABS catalogue 6345.0



But then governments (both federal and state), as Pennington et al noted, introduced fiscal austerity policies for the public sector as a whole, including aggressive and unilateral policies of wage restraint on public sector workers. The result was a sharp decline in public sector wages growth, just as private sector wages growth had clearly recovered. The timing of the post-global financial crisis wage trends makes clear that public sector wage cuts played a leading role in creating lower growth expectations for the whole labour market.

“For almost three straight years beginning in early 2011, wage growth in the public sector was suppressed well below the private sector. Through 2012 and 2013 wages then decelerated sharply in both the public and private sectors. Since 2013, private sector wages growth declined to the slowest sustained pace than any time in the post-war period.”¹⁸²

Superannuation and the 2.5% pay rise under the regulations for 2020/21 year

The 2.5% cap has had a further compounding economic effect on the financial affairs of the more than 400,000 public service workers affected, including teachers, in NSW. Australia’s superannuation system is based on contributions paid as a percentage of workers’ nominal incomes. As workers progress through their working lives, the permanent reduction in their wages trajectory results in an accumulating loss in superannuation contributions.¹⁸³ Lower superannuation contributions in turn produce a loss of investment income on those forgone contributions. This leads to lower superannuation balances and reduced pension incomes paid out from those superannuation savings.

Wage freezes permanently reduce the nominal wage base and accumulate in further income losses over time. Hence workers continue to suffer income losses many years after the wage freeze. Table 1 (next column) shows that a temporary 12-month pay freeze for the typical NSW public sector worker would result in an immediate reduction in income of \$2000, compounding into a cumulative reduction in career income of more than \$50,000. The effect on superannuation balances and post-retirement incomes would also be severely hit.

**Table 1
Cumulative income and superannuation losses from NSW public sector wage freezes¹⁸⁴**

Average salary ¹	\$80,000
Length of freeze	1 year
Foregone wage increase	2.5%
Initial tear loss	\$2,000
Cumulative 20-year loss	\$54,367
Reduction in super balance ²	\$9,617
Loss annual super income ³	\$710

Source: Author’s calculations from ABS Catalogue 6248.0.55.002.
 1. 2018-19 financial year average.
 2. On retirement, assuming 20 years remaining service, 9.5% contribution rate maintained in future years, and 6% net return.
 3. Assumes same net nominal interest rate (6%) and 25-year declining balance annuity.

Therefore, the cumulative income losses resulting from the NSW Government’s proposed 12-month public sector wage freeze for an average NSW public sector worker on \$80,000 per year, in mid-career, with 20 years of service remaining before retirement, the loss is \$54,367.¹⁸⁵

While teachers received the final increase under the current Award of 2.28% wage increase in January 2021, recently the Government has proposed capping future increases for all public servants at 1.5 per cent per annum. Further, teachers expect as a result of the recent NSW Industrial Relations Commission decision that broadly accommodated Government policy, to receive a 0.3 per cent capped wage rise in 2022.

More generally, but of note, is the education sector contributes significantly to the NSW economy. In addition to supporting more than 70,000 full-time equivalent jobs directly, NSW public schools generate around \$2.6 billion in input purchases from dozens of other industries, which in turn support around 12,700 jobs across the full range of input industries. A total of \$9 billion in incremental labour compensation is generated by NSW public schools — including employees of schools, and workers in the school supply chain — which in turn increases consumer spending by \$4.5 billion and supports an additional 30,000 jobs.¹⁸⁶



Current status and future prospects for Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher accreditation

The emergence of mechanisms to include salary recognition of expert teaching, other than through promotions positions, is examined in detail in chapter 5. The current version, Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher categories were included from 2017, at a further \$6300 on top of the teaching scale and currently \$6941. However, as the Auditor General¹⁸⁷ acknowledged, only 102 teachers (in 2019) out of 66,000 permanent/temporary teachers have been recognised and accredited for the salary increase (estimated 120 teachers in late 2020).

The Inquiry was advised that the NSW Education Standards Authority has undertaken a number of reviews of its process in recent years including a further revision of the policy and procedures in 2020. The cost issue has the NSW Education Standards Authority subsidising the application cost by approximately half using teacher accreditation fees (interstate jurisdictions do not do this), but the approximately \$800 barrier remains. The salary increment for the accreditation of \$6941 is seen as little incentive, given the years taken, generally, to achieve the accreditation and the very uncertain and even begrudging way it is seen by some teachers and in some schools. It is not clear that there is a robust endorsement of this accreditation as a mechanism for recognising high levels of expertise within the profession, including by the Teachers Federation. On the other hand, teachers who attain this accreditation attest to its intrinsic value and are proud of what it represents.

Evidence from a number of witnesses advocated better recognition of expert practitioners within the profession, as in other professions. There have been numerous reports advocating such an approach, with a recent, strongly argued one being the Grattan Institute report *Top teachers: sharing expertise to improve teaching*. The following summary sets out the key elements:¹⁸⁸

A Grattan Institute survey of 700 teachers and principals, conducted for this report, finds that top teachers are often given “add-on” coaching roles, with inadequate time, training, or support to do the job properly. And some teachers believe those promoted to instructional leadership roles are mates of the principal rather than the best people for the job.

Our report calls for two new roles for Australia’s top teachers, giving them dedicated “day jobs” to improve teaching across all schools.

“Master Teachers” (the top 1 per cent of the profession) would have no formal classroom load but would be the overall pedagogical leaders in their subjects, working across a network of schools in their region. They would help identify teacher needs and coordinate training. They would guide “Instructional Specialists” (limited to 8 per cent of the workforce), who would split their time between classroom teaching and instructional leadership. Instructional Specialists would work in their own schools to support and guide other teachers.

Both roles would focus on specific subjects such as maths, science, and English. By 2032 there would be more than 20,000 Instructional Specialists and 2500 Master Teachers. Every teacher in primary and secondary schools and in government, Catholic and independent schools, would benefit from more than one hour a week with Instructional Specialists in their subject area. The new roles would help to spread teaching practices that have been shown to work well, and to generate new research in high-priority areas where Australian teachers or students may be lagging. The roles would be prestigious and well paid. Master Teachers would receive salaries of about \$180,000 a year (\$80,000 more than the highest standard pay rate for teachers), and Instructional Specialists up to \$140,000.

The new expert teacher career path would cost about \$560 per government school student per year by 2032. Governments can afford it: our blueprint would cost less than the planned increases to government school funding through the Gonski 2.0 model, and it would be one of the best possible ways to use the extra money.

It is not appropriate for this Inquiry to attempt to determine a new career and salary structure in detail. However, the ambition of the proposals in this report are indicative of what is required for full recognition of the work of expert teachers within the profession. The stripping away of central supports for teachers under the devolution experiment since 2012 has left schools to create various boutique roles and positions with no consistency across the system (hence no ordered career paths or consistently defined roles) and the implementation of the Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher regime has been desultory to say the least.

The opportunity exists — and is strongly supported by the Buchanan study and submission to this Inquiry — for the development of strong, robust new categories of expert practice with substantial and attractive remuneration. The current Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher accreditation process should not be abandoned but rather developed along the lines of the approach suggested in the Grattan report. The issue of whether these categories in the salary scales should have “duties” needs careful handling but the lessons of the failed Advanced Skills Teacher should be learned (an approach to this issue is considered in chapter 5).

There should be no quotas applying to such positions, access should be open but based on credible standards and process. The proposed invigorated expert teaching accreditation, building on the existing Highly Accomplished and Lead process and Grattan Institute suggestions, should envisage time for these expert teachers to provide leadership in mentoring and oversight of student teacher placements, induction practices for new teachers, and professional development leadership and expertise for colleagues.

This Inquiry believes there is a strong case for the Department and the Teachers Federation to work together to develop a substantial system for recognising teacher expertise and fold such recognition into the collegial practice of schools. This is formally addressed in the concluding recommendation below.

Conclusion

In doing this analysis of the recruitment and retention of teachers and the history and development of their salaries, any assessment made takes into account the following assumptions from the experts’ submissions received at the Inquiry: higher pay attracts high-ability candidates; teacher salaries have not kept pace with other professions; and teacher morale is currently low.¹⁸⁹

Pay alone is never the sole solution to such problems but as Buchanan et al. say:

“It is hard to overcome such problems without some significant adjustment in remuneration. Increasing pay is usually regarded as an ‘essential ingredient’ in any serious policy package devised to attract and retain labour. Such movements send a signal. In this case they would make it clear there was not just talk, but action about repositioning teaching as a valued occupation in society. Such a price signal could profoundly change Australians’ career decisions at the beginning of their working lives. More importantly it would impact on the retention of excellent teachers and make it more attractive for those interested in making the transition into teaching in later stages in their careers.”¹⁹⁰

The Panel is of the view the evidence from teachers and experts is persuasive in arguing that since the 2004 work value case there has been a markedly significant change in teachers’ work. All aspects of the work of teachers has grown in volume and complexity.

Salary recommendations

The findings from the various reference points considered in the Buchanan et al. submission highlighted the need for a sizeable increase if teachers’ wages are to be competitive in the contemporary Australian labour market.¹⁹¹ They argued teachers’ pay classifications are relatively compressed by international standards when compared with other professions in Australia, and teachers are paid far less relative to other professional and some non-professional occupations.



Sub-groups in professions can earn higher rates of pay. When managing relativities, the issue is not only about adjusting base salaries. Rather, a key associated matter concerns the creation of new, significantly higher paid classifications. This outcome is consistent with how earnings are structured in the more highly paid professions. It is desirable that in identifying highly paid classifications, teachers see such classifications as opportunities for advancement within the profession, acknowledging specialist skills. Such classifications would address the stagnation in salary after the top of Band 2 of the new standards-based salary scale (reached in the seventh year of full-time service).

Specific recommendations for teachers' salaries are made in the concluding chapter to this Report.



^{170.} *Crown employees (Teachers in schools and TAFE and related employees) salaries and conditions award (2004) NSWIRComm 114, op. cit. para. 11.*
^{171.} *ibid., para. 20.*
^{172.} *Buchanan et al., Submission to Inquiry, p. 12.*
^{173.} *ibid., p. 13.*
^{174.} *Gavrielatos, op. cit., pp. 60-61.*
^{175.} *Dolton et al., 2018.*
^{176.} *Buchanan et al., Submission to Inquiry, p. 18.*
^{177.} *ibid., p. 21.*
^{178.} *ibid., p. 26.*
^{179.} *ibid., p. 27.*
^{180.} *Pennington & Stanford, Submission to Inquiry, p. 9.*
^{181.} *ibid.*
^{182.} *ibid.*
^{183.} *The impact of wage suppression on long-run superannuation accumulations is considered in more detail in Stanford (2017).*
^{184.} *Pennington & Stanford, op. cit., p. 7.*
^{185.} *ibid.*
^{186.} *ibid., p. 19.*
^{187.} *Audit Office of NSW, 2019.*
^{188.} *Goss & Sonnemann, 2020.*
^{189.} *Wilson, op. cit., pp. 17-18.*
^{190.} *Buchanan, et al., op. cit., p. 30.*
^{191.} *ibid., p. 3.*

Findings and recommendations

Findings

It is a general finding of the Panel that the interplay between the contextual variables identified — especially in the changing nature of the school population, technology and community expectations, as well as myriad policies, programs, resourcing and accountability regimens introduced over this time — reveal a scale and intensity of change experienced by the public school teaching profession in NSW that dwarfs the findings in each of the assessments found in the 1970, 1980/81, 1990/91 and 2003/04 industrial Decisions and the Vinson report.

Observations commonly found in such Decisions, to the effect that change in itself is not a unique indicator of significantly added work value and that adapting to technological change and adoption of new techniques as research progresses and capacity allows is an intrinsic element of professional practice and expectations, are recognised by the Panel.

A number of the themes identified, especially in the two Starting Point documents (see chapter 2), continue into the succeeding period. Technological change and the integration of students with disabilities into mainstream classes are two important examples. However, the scale and intensity of the developments in each of these areas is far beyond what could have been contemplated, and the effect of the various policies mandated for schools, in part to address such changes, far exceed earlier experiences of change.

The addition of institutional change responding to ideological policy preferences that produced realignments of the relationship between schools and the Department of Education — pervasive new imposts for the assumption of responsibility by schools to determine needs, develop or find resources, record data at the level of the individual student and for lessons and sequences of lessons, and myriad other pressures on teachers and schools — all add up to a profoundly different climate of educational reality in the schools of NSW.



The Inquiry finds that the broad goals of education spelled out in the successive nationally agreed documents — the Hobart Declaration (1989), Adelaide Declaration (1999), Melbourne Declaration (2008) and the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (2019) — contain strong statements that identify the public purposes of education, concerns for inclusiveness and equitable access to the cultural and other resources of the community, support for individual growth and the capacity to critically engage in a democratic society, as well as the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the economic life of the nation.

Indicatively, the two overarching goals in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) statement and their immediate elaborations¹⁹² provide ample recognition of the public and personal growth purposes referred to by Biesta and others. They form a credible framework for understanding education, and the concerns and commitments of so many of the teachers the Panel heard from resonated with these purposes and values.

Teachers are broadly committed to these values, and see their work as being intrinsically valuable in the measure that they successfully afford access to their students, in their differing settings, to goals such as these.

However, it is also clear that the further expansion of such documents into sub-objectives — such as increased accountability and transparency, references to global economic circumstances and the importance of Australian competitiveness, demand for data to assess schools and student progress — tends to overcome the prominence of such sentiments. These elaborations are strongly aligned to the ongoing policy prescriptions emanating from the Commonwealth-State Agreements, the bilateral commitments and the endogenous NSW policy cascade over the 2004–2020 period, with the result that the wider democratic, inclusive and holistic goals of education are too easily lost in the mix.¹⁹³

The Vinson and Industrial Relations Commission (2004) documents indicated the relevance then to a consideration of teachers' work and the operations of schools of: emerging forms of teacher professionalism;

the centrality of curriculum, assessment and reporting practices; the emergence of universal testing regimes; technological developments; the importance of vocational education and training options within the curriculum and stronger relationships with the world of work; changing community expectations of schools and teachers; and of the importance of better forms of school/community liaison.

The material presented to the Inquiry demonstrated the extent to which, under each of these counts, the development of teaching and schooling practices in the context of changing social, economic and local community realities, has been qualitatively and quantitatively different from earlier eras under review.

Just three indications of this: first, the dramatic changes in technology (roll out of computers, Bring Your Own Device practices, differential access to devices and their platforms, social media and its influence on student culture and relationships etc.); second, the introduction of not only the 2005 Disability Standards for Education but also the detailed student assessment, personal plans, differentiated teaching and learning, data recording, updating justifications for financial support etc that accompanied the mandate of the Standards; and third, the introduction of a scheme of teacher regulation through the Institute of Teachers Act (2004) and its successor bodies that eventually included all teachers in new professional accountability practices and also led to the redesign of the teaching scale based on teacher accreditation requirements and practices.

Chapter 3 identifies the complexity of the student population in the present day, and the deep social and personal challenges faced by so many students and their teachers in striving to address their needs and entitlements to a rich and empowering education. The effect of inequality on the lives of students and their access to education is stark. OECD reports indicate growing inequalities and disparities within and across Australian education systems, and it is the public sector of schooling that bears the brunt of the resultant challenges. Instructive comparisons can be made with

the high-performing and most-populous provinces of Canada (Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia) in terms of quality of curriculum, inclusive strategies for embarking on educational change, relative absence of policy tensions and conflict between the federal and provincial governments, and especially the far greater inclusiveness within a more common schooling system that avoids the destructive competitiveness of the differential funding arrangements of Australia (see chapter 4).

The realities indicated in this chapter around social inequality, disabilities, the impact of the new technological world, and the trends and indicators in mental health among the NSW school population, were all forcefully attested to in detail by the experts and teachers from whom the Inquiry heard. The teachers spoke of the micro impacts of these factors, within the context of their city, regional and remote settings, and the resources available to them. Or not available to them.

The withdrawal of central, regional and district support services that helped teachers and school communities address these challenges so marked the discourse of the teachers in their evidence. The Department of Education's Equity Strategy Unit with its Directorate, the Multicultural Program Unit, Gender Equity Unit, Community grants program, Country Areas Program, all supported schools and teachers through consultancy, advice and resources. These have been abolished, replaced by monetising equity indicators that devolve to schools the responsibility to find their own supports. The Equity Funding Support Package for addressing rising English needs (reported to the Inquiry as standing at 23 per cent of the student population) follows the same devolved, monetised model with some documentary support and capped specialist positions.

Chapters 4 and 6 address the key policy and funding mechanisms that have underpinned the Government-initiated overhaul of the operation of the public school system in NSW that have had such a determinative impact on the work of teachers. One can trace a theme of intensifying Commonwealth government pressures and demands for school education to be

shaped according to national policies from the 1988 policy paper *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, issued by Minister Dawkins. An evolving focus emerged on testing, ending with NAPLAN and participation in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), with the MySchool website introduced on a rhetoric of, in part, supporting parental choice. Further priorities included data and accountability, national consistency in curriculum leading finally to an Australian Curriculum, and pressure for public systems to adopt greater levels of devolution to schools of responsibility for educational decision-making and delivery.

In NSW, the introduction of Local Schools, Local Decisions in 2012 was preceded by reviews and reports focused on cost cutting in the system and a pilot of devolution. The associated introduction in 2014 of the Resource Allocation Model (RAM), which directed the Gonski funds, needs to be seen in the context of the substantial cuts to the education budget from 2012 with the loss of substantial support services.

The teacher evidence of the effects of this managerial overhaul was compelling. There was evidence of principals and schools funding roles in their schools that were seen as valuable supports to address key needs, where appropriately qualified persons were available. School-based funds allowed a measure of localised shaping of overall staffing. However, the combined impact of the revised statewide staffing system, introduced from 2008, which devolved to schools the option to directly appoint through panel interviews every second staff appointment, with the Local Schools, Local Decisions devolution of monetised equity indicators, has led to a patchwork of temporary positions, roles of varying description and focus, the absence of a set of career specialist positions with identified qualifications and appointment procedures, backed by system-diagnosed needs in schools and appropriate appointments. Certainly, it has made it much harder for the public system to realise its egalitarian objectives.

Schools must use their funds to meet competing needs, often in a context of an absence of casual teachers to relieve internal appointments to particular



roles. Temporary positions have grown enormously since the introduction of this staffing category, on the back of the localised staffing system that incentivises prolonged temporary appointments among new teachers and results in specialist appointments within schools also being on a temporary basis.

The descriptions of the dissolving of the instructional leader role of the principal into the fabric of managerial and administrative duties were striking.

The Panel finds a strong case for the overhaul of the Local Schools, Local Decisions model, noting the very significant criticisms of it and of the carelessness attending its introduction, provided by the Department's own review (see the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation interim and final reports into the operation of Local Schools, Local Decisions). As noted in this Report, the late-2020 replacement, the Schools Success Model, apart from introducing yet another framing document to the existing panoply of policies, frameworks and planning imperatives, simply does not meet the criticisms of the Department's review but importantly will not result in the emergence of a revitalised public schooling system for NSW. The point made in the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation final report, to the effect that the NSW system is not (should be seen as) an aggregation of independent public schools but rather is one public school system, is strongly supported by this Inquiry but the Local Schools, Local Decisions and Schools Success Model sadly fail to deliver on this promise. The system operates as an accountability regimen, not an integrated and purposeful delivery system formed around strong public values with schools staffed and resourced to meet the noble goals espoused by Government.

The Panel considers the Resource Allocation Model should be revised in the context of a new and expanded staffing agreement to address the evident demand for qualified teachers to teach in their subject areas, for specialist roles to be built into the career structure and staffing arrangements. The revision should occur within the context of a development of specialist positions and programs anchored centrally and in regional/district offices, but there should be retained appropriate funds to afford constructive

opportunities for localised adaptations to community needs.

There are various approaches to such a revision available. Also to be addressed is the wider context of the Commonwealth funding mechanism that systematically disadvantages the public schooling system by locking in for the next decade, the underfunding of the system according to the Commonwealth's own Resource Standard (now folded into Commonwealth-state/territory agreements). Elements of a model advanced to this Inquiry in the Connors/McMorrow submission, which focus on the delivery of the required teaching capacity and compensates for different levels of experience, could be considered in a process that involves the Department and union working parties, utilising other expertise as relevant.

Chapter 5 traced the path towards a formal teacher accreditation system in NSW, analogous to the teacher registration systems interstate. Uniquely, the development of standards at four levels formed the basis for the adoption of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. A system for approving initial teacher education programs involving expert teachers and principals and teacher educators from the universities was established, enhancing input from the profession into teacher preparation. There was a substantial increase in the prevalence of professional development courses and programs, involving employing authorities, professional associations, unions, cultural institutions, universities and others. A process for accrediting Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers has been implemented and from 2017 a revised salary scale based around the Teaching Standards was introduced.

These are most significant changes to the teaching profession in NSW. The Panel heard from teachers who experienced heavy evidentiary requirements for accreditation at the Proficient Teacher level (needed for the full licence to teach), the sometimes confusing communications stemming from the delegated authority to the Department for accreditation decisions, uneven support in schools for temporary and casual teachers, and little support in schools in the early days of accreditation, where teachers requiring accreditation were in the decided minority.

However, there was also evidence from teachers who have been accredited for much of the post-2004 period as to the evolution of the evidentiary requirements and simplification of processes. Further, there was compelling evidence of the seriousness with which some schools and their principals approached the accreditation process, using it to scaffold professional engagement with universities in mentoring student teachers, building induction programs for new teachers, and aligning the professional development programs in the school (or supporting access to external programs) with accreditation processes and goal setting under teacher performance and development processes.

The Inquiry had the advantage of the final report of the NSW Curriculum Review, available from April 2020. This final report summarised many of the contextual changes that have taken place in recent years, changing community expectations, the impact of rising retention rates and the demands for more differentiated curriculum offerings in the final years of schooling.

The Panel outlines in chapter 7, the ongoing changes to the NSW curriculum, and associated assessment processes (abolition of the School Certificate, replacement by ROSA, the Stronger HSC Standards reforms being first tested in 2019 and 2020, while the Curriculum Review was proposing further fundamental changes). From 2014, teachers progressively adopted new syllabuses rewritten to include the Australian Curriculum, one of the biggest changes to curriculum in NSW history. There was considerable effort contributed by expert teachers to this rewriting, and there was consistent strong support across the profession for the approach of the then Board of Studies (now NSW Education Standards Authority) to accommodating the Australian Curriculum, despite later criticism in the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards review (2016) that did not reflect the professional consensus at the time of the syllabus revisions.

Nonetheless, the issue of overcrowding in the syllabuses was raised in the Vinson report and the NSW Industrial Relations Commission 2003/04 hearings, and this became a significant issue for the NSW Curriculum Review. The Government, in

announcing the review, heralded the opportunity to adopt the far-reaching proposals contained in Gonski 2.0 (although the support in that document for more time to be made available to teachers for planning curriculum and teaching hardly featured).

The Government's response to the NSW Curriculum Review's final report mandates the overhaul of all NSW syllabuses in significant ways, but according to a timetable for development and implementation that is seriously at odds with the final report's advice on what time is needed to properly address the reforms. The NSW Education Standards Authority will be required to harness the expertise of senior teachers and its own seconded and employed teachers with curriculum expertise to revise syllabuses, trial and implement them, effectively over two and a half years.

This cannot be done. It is a timeline that ignores well-researched requirements for the successful introduction of significant pedagogical change. The required changes are mandated for new K–2 English and Mathematics syllabuses in 2022, new syllabuses in all other primary subjects in 2023, new 3–10 English and Mathematics syllabuses also in 2023, and all other syllabuses, including for years 11–12, in 2024. The NSW Curriculum Review advised a period of up to 10 years to address all elements of the reforms properly, with rolling cycles of three years for each subject to address design, trialling and implementation.

Further, while the issue of streamlining content, and decluttering, does not of itself require syllabus writing from scratch, the further issue of “untimed syllabuses” remains unresolved. As this Report was finalised, the Government dropped this proposal on the NSW Education Standards Authority's advice. The proposal is deeply flawed and unworkable, but the matter of supporting teachers to accommodate a wide ability range within their classes remains a challenge that the teacher witnesses identified as a significant issue. The Inquiry supports the Government's resolution of the issue.



The timeline given for this most complete overhaul of the curriculum, coming so soon after the introduction of the Australian Curriculum into NSW syllabuses and the Stronger HSC Standards reforms, only just recently examined, should not be accepted by the profession.

In any case, if forced through, it will result in untried revised documents, inadequate support and professional development, rushed implementation and undoubtedly markedly different outcomes across the differently resourced schools of NSW.

As this timeline also coincides with ongoing further organisational changes in public schools (the intensification of accountability mechanisms through the School Success Model slated to commence from 2021), teachers could be forgiven for considering that there is little understanding within the upper echelons of the Department of Education, or Government, of the challenges of the schooling system, the pressures on teachers and students, or the necessary elements for introducing successful educational change. This was the consistently expressed view of teacher witnesses, alluding often to a sense of not being trusted, and the realities of their work not being understood or of importance to those running the system. This Report addresses these issues in its following recommendations.

The Panel considers that current workforce planning appears inadequate to address and anticipate challenges now visible in attracting and retaining teachers, and ensuring schools are staffed with appropriately qualified teachers adequate to the needs of each school. Successive impacts of different policies and practices lead to this circumstance, including: the changed Staffing Agreement (especially the school-based appointment practices); the remittance to schools of the obligation to design or find their own specialist supports to address equity indicators and needs; the lack of casual teachers in many places frustrating the capacity to relieve teachers for specialist roles; the explosion in temporary employment patterns for newly graduated teachers; the often inadequate induction support for new teachers compounded by rolling temporary and casual placements; opaque academic entry requirements into teacher training

programs (majority of entrants not based on adequate or transparent academic school-leaving results, and dropping ATAR trends for those who are so entered, with some entrants exhibiting troublingly low attainments).

These issues, along with the current inadequate processes for the development, identification and appointment of middle level and senior staff in schools as discussed in chapter 10, lead to recommendations for significantly revised approaches to the staffing of schools in the public system.

Chapter 11 on salaries, besides examining various relativities including the key factor of a comparison with the basket of other professions, is underpinned by the evidence given to the Inquiry of the most significant and profound changes in the nature of teachers' work over the past 17 years. These changes, and the ongoing impetus of change at an accelerating pace, more than meet the traditional measures adopted by tribunals for a significant resetting of the salaries and allowances applicable to the teaching profession. This is compounded by the length of time since the last examination of this issues. Approximately every decade since 1970 there was a necessity to reset the position of the teaching profession in a significant way. With 17 years having elapsed, compounded by capped salary increases at 2.5% annually since 2012 and further compounded by a proposed three years of salaries subject to a ceiling of 1.5% increases (a period when the Government is mandating teachers introduce the biggest overhaul of NSW curriculum in decades), the scenario confronting the profession is deeply problematic.

Taken with the fragile and inadequate staffing mechanisms currently in place, the salary levels in place and projected for the next three to five years are dangerous for the public standing of the profession, and for the quality of education available to the students of the state's public schools.

The evidence before the Inquiry demonstrates the effort and commitment of principals, other senior staff, and the classroom and specialist teachers in responding to the significantly changing realities of the student populations, the social contexts bearing on teaching, all within a period of dramatic organisational and policy change affecting schools.

However, the individual efforts of teachers are not sufficient to meet the challenges of a high-quality education, equitably available to all students. The expansive outcomes propounded in the Declarations of Goals for education need to be matched by the resourcing and empowerment of whole schools and the system itself to meet the expectations of the community. The desirable factors listed by Moore Johnson in chapter 1 are a sensible, well researched template for considering the health of the system.

In the recommendations that follow, the proposal for stronger recognition and remuneration of expert teaching within the profession (a slow developing issue from the 1990s attempt at the Advanced Skills Teacher) that the Buchanan et al. submission from the University of Sydney Business School research team, and other commentators, propose, needs to be seriously addressed.

Finally, both experts and teachers provided a wide range of evidence about:

- the rate and sheer volume of change coming from the top-down are, all too often, ill-thought-out and poorly implemented
- the heavy weight of expectation about “individualised learning”, particularly as it affects the challenges of classroom planning and delivery
- being pushed in directions not believed to be educationally helpful and consistent with what is understood to be the expansive role of education
- not being adequately supported to address the special challenges that are the responsibility of the public system
- continuing shortages of staff particularly, but not only, in rural and remote locations.

Recommendations

Responding to this evidence has taken the Panel to the following areas for recommended changes:

- recognising the consultation, support and resourcing needed for implementing successful educational change
- resetting the staffing and resourcing of schools, including the provision of specialist support staff, centrally employed
- addressing the outcomes of the Curriculum Review
- lifting the salaries and improving the career options of the public school teaching profession
- establishing and implementing a new resourcing standard for public schools
- working to produce a better understanding and mix of assessment tools, central and local, for evaluation of student performance
- continuing to review all aspects of administrative burden on schools and teachers, and simplifying the different regulatory regimes applying to them.

The following recommendations should be understood in the context of the relevant discussions in the chapters of this Report.

Time and resources for implementation **Recommendation 1**

The Panel recognises that an imperative for the implementation of successful educational change is the careful and inclusive development of change proposals, trialling in schools where this is appropriate, associated training and professional development of relevant staff, appropriate resourcing, including allocation of dedicated time, and a realistic and professionally responsible implementation timeframe that is informed by other demands on teachers and schools that are concurrent.

The Panel recognises that addressing all the issues that have come before it and the implications of the recommendations the Panel has made need to be responsibly addressed over a reasonable timeframe.



In part this acknowledges the rate and volume of change that has confronted principals and teachers as well as acknowledging that our proposed changes require ample time to be professionally addressed and funded.

The Inquiry recommends a staggered six-year implementation plan (2021–2026).

A public education system, not a collection of schools

The Inquiry recommends that after the failure of Local Schools, Local Decisions there be a re-setting of the mix of departmental and school responsibilities and relationships in respect of staffing matters, support services, professional development and funding.

Recommendation 2 Staffing matters

In respect of staffing, the following issues should be addressed by the Department of Education as a matter of priority:

- staffing levels and processes that address the excessive use of temporary teacher employment, in particular of beginning teachers
- frameworks of expectations and good practice in the induction of new staff to be mandatory in all schools
- permanent staffing at a level to overcome the widespread shortage of casual teachers
- school counsellors to be provided on the basis of at least 1:500 students and a corresponding increase in senior psychologists education by 2023 to address the significant increase in student mental health issues
- implement a new statewide, standards-based promotions system, at the centre of which is an on-the-job assessment affirming aspirants' teaching expertise and educational leadership capacity; such assessment to be conducted by the Department of Education and precede actual appointment to positions in schools
- develop a more expansive career structure for teachers that includes centrally employed consultancy/advisory roles and better recognise expert practice within schools

- teachers' work to be revised to provide further for professional activities such as collegial preparation and planning time, data assessment and oversight of individual student progress. The time allocations to be achieved to ensure a further two hours for all primary teachers and a reduction of two hours to the current maximum face-to-face teaching loads for all secondary teachers, including head teachers and deputy principals; further, the allocated professional, non-face-to-face teaching time for the primary deputy and assistant principals to equal the minimum afforded secondary deputy principals and head teachers respectively, with appropriate adjustments for teaching principals
- support all of these actions with comprehensive workforce planning, including selection and entry requirements into teacher training and scholarship programs to address shortages.

In addressing the above recommendations, the Panel suggests a priority be given to increasing this planning time for all teachers, including those in promotions positions, in primary schools, special units/schools and the most disadvantaged secondary and central schools, commencing in 2022, with the remaining schools being included from the following year. (Note: the colloquial naming of this allocated time as "release" time, while understandable as customary language, tends to undermine the educational power and effectiveness of the professional activities enabled by this time. Without it, much of the quality of practice espoused in government policy documents is simply not attainable in the context of the changing complexities of the educational endeavour). These new time allocations should be included in industrial instruments and in the staffing allocations for each school.

Such a timeline for primary teachers to access improved professional preparation time would align well with the proposed timeline for the introduction of revised primary syllabuses, as below.

Recommendation 3 Support services

That the Department of Education resume responsibility for the provision of specialist professional support services, regional/district based, including consultant and advisory roles in the areas such as curriculum, disability, English as an additional language or dialect and well-being; to be accessible to schools and teachers in a timely manner.

Also, that the Department ensure that all students in public schools have access to the necessary technology to support their learning.

Recommendation 4 Professional development

That the NSW Government take steps to support the development of, and access to, high-quality professional development in areas nominated as priority areas.

The recently announced approach to nominating priority areas for teacher professional development (for maintenance of accreditation purposes) by the NSW Minister for Education should work to support emerging pressures in the system and to address issues revealed by research. The nomination of teaching subject/syllabus content should support the extensive efforts of many of the subject associations and be utilised to support the introduction of the new revised curriculum over the coming years.

However, nominating priority areas is not the same as developing and providing high-quality professional development in the nominated area — it merely mandates teachers find their own. Further, in relation to student well-being, more substantial central support services and resources are needed than simply mandating teachers' professional development.

There is a major need for teachers to be supported by strategies to accommodate the wide range of ability levels in their classes, and the cumulative effects of incomplete learning in previous years. This should not be left to instructions to teachers to differentiate their teaching and be subject to extensive planning documentation and data entry relating to such differentiation. The focus should firstly be on manageable and adroit strategies, addressed through professional development support and workshopped among staff in more liberally afforded time to do just this.

Recommendation 5 Funding

That a review of the Resource Allocation Model be undertaken in tandem with actions to revise the employment of centrally based (regional/district) expert support staff, and a revised school staffing regime as set out above.

Curriculum review Recommendation 6

The Panel supports the Government's first priority, new K–2 English and Mathematics syllabuses developed in 2021 for introduction in 2022. This implies that the reduction of extra-curricular demands, reductions in administration and compliance activities, have been achieved for 2022.

Revised years 3-6 syllabuses could be prepared and consulted on during 2022–23 for implementation in 2024, along with the core years 7–10 syllabuses (following the three-year cycle proposed by Professor Masters. The Panel believes that the factors set out in Masters' final report (pp.107–108; reproduced in chapter 7) need to be fully respected. These include:

- creation of enabling conditions, including increased time for teachers to focus on the priorities of the new curriculum
- provision of professional development support
- a reduction in the external compliance requirements on schools that dissolve instructional planning time
- reduction in the extra activities and programs imposed by governments over time without removal of previous mandates



- revision in the excessive documentary requirements of lesson planning documents (whether actually mandated or arising from precautionary actions in the face of uncertain inspection requirements of either NSW Education Standards Authority or the Department of Education).

One could add that Gonski 2.0, the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation Final Report on Local Schools, Local Decisions, international best practice in educational change and the statements of a number of witnesses to the Inquiry all testify to the importance of a substantial commitment to high-quality development, trialling, professional preparation and sensibly staged introduction of change, with a proper allocation of time for teachers to collectively and individually engage with the changes in the context of their school circumstances.

The development of a staggered package of professional development and support around the emerging syllabuses is a prerequisite for implementation.

The Panel notes that the Government's own proposed timeline for the implementation of the new curriculum specifies that by 2022, the Government is "to introduce reduced extra-curricular demands on schools and address compliance demands". This should be a threshold issue for any proposed action on commencing implementation of a new curriculum.

Recommendation 7

The remaining syllabuses should be programmed for proper development and implementation over the 2024 to 2027 period, having regard to:

- the recency of revised HSC syllabuses, and their first examination in 2019/20
- the possible priority for the revised approach to vocational education and training courses
- a possible information program to encourage less slavish, and documentation heavy, following of current syllabuses over this period
- revision of Languages other than English syllabuses postponed until after 2026
- syllabus development to broadly follow the three-year cycle proposed by Professor Masters.

The NSW Education Standards Authority to determine the outstanding issues from the Review, including the nature of the syllabuses themselves, the appropriate inclusion of elements to address the outcomes of the Thematic Review of Writing and dropping of the untimed syllabuses notion. Other matters requiring resolution include whether a major project is compulsory for all HSC students, whether inside subjects or as stand-alone, and the applied knowledge dimension of syllabus requirements. The NSW Education Standards Authority to be properly resourced to ensure there is adequate time and access to seconded expert teachers for working parties to ensure high-quality outcomes.

Recommendation 8 Salaries to overcome the relativities gap

The Panel recommends the following issues and approach in resetting teachers' salaries:

- the final salary increase under the current Award of 2.28% was paid in January 2021. Government policy and its success before the Industrial Relations Commission portends a 0.3% increase in January 2022, further followed by a number of years of capped salary increases (no more than 1.5% pa)
- such an approach would undermine the standing and attractiveness of the teaching profession and be unjust given the evidence of change, intensification of work, increase in skills and expertise, and the value of the profession's efforts for the public good in NSW over the past 17 years. Without a significant increase in salaries, the State Government will not be able to address the significant shortage of teachers in NSW or recruit the additional ones to meet rising enrolments
- the Government should enter into discussions with the Teachers Federation during 2021 to address all of the issues raised in this Report, including the non-salary related recommendations and implement a staged movement towards improved salary relativities with other professions
- the level of increase applicable across the board should be in the range of 10–15%, achieved within the next two-year Award or salaries agreement (2022–23), to restore the relativities with other comparable professions (absorbing the 0.3% projected increase). Such an increase of 10–15%

would allow some differential quantum increases for teachers at the top of the scale, teachers in promotions positions and principals

- the Panel recommends that in the following Award or salaries agreement (2024–25), a further tranche of salary increases be implemented to further address the value of teachers' work generally but also value the work of the identified upper reaches of the profession, within a range of 10–15%
- senior psychologists education remuneration be set at deputy principal rate (no later than January 2022)
- a pathway to the head teacher rate for dual-qualified school counsellors should be included within the school counsellors' scale no later than January 2022
- in preparing its recommendations on how to ensure our public school teachers will be in a position to meet the current and future challenges related to their mandated obligations, the Panel is conscious of the budgetary implications that necessarily follow. With this in mind, the Panel has proposed a staggered six-year approach to implementation, including for the Panel's salary proposals, which are in the range of what has been deemed necessary to ensure attractiveness and to deal with significant change as in earlier, more formal, wage cases: 21–24.3% (1970), 9.5% (1981), 9–13% for teachers and 20–29% for executive staff (1991), and 12–19.5% (2004). All of these involved a shorter phasing in of the increases.

Recommendation 9 **A better mix of assessment**

The NSW Government commence a process to establish NAPLAN testing on a random survey basis, rather than a census testing and reporting basis.

Teacher involvement in assessment be strengthened through the national project to provide a bank of online tests aligned to the curriculum; such a movement would need to be associated with a steady attention to supporting teachers to develop greater expertise in diagnostic, formative and summative testing of their students and in the expert use of data within their classes and across the school.

Recommendation 10 **Addressing the burden of administration**

The Department of Education Secretary's Reducing Administrative Burden Group (2018) addressing administrative burdens on the profession be urgently reinvigorated.

Recommendation 11 **Involving teachers**

The operations of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation be revised to ensure the advisory products of its research are made available to teachers in a professionally usable format with associated professional development support where applicable, and that to this end, the Advisory Council of Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation be expanded to include practising expert teachers.

Recommendation 12 **Induction and accreditation**

To support more effective and more consistent practice across the schools in the induction of teachers and supporting their progress towards Proficient Teacher accreditation, the Teacher Accreditation Act should be amended to establish NSW Education Standards Authority as the accreditation authority.

This would address the predicament of so many casual and temporary teachers who struggle to have their teaching practice considered by busy principals when they are only present for limited periods of time. The cost to individuals of prolonged periods of employment prior to such accreditation is exacerbated by the now very significant salary gap between the Graduate and Proficient Teacher rates. Proficient Teacher accreditation would still be based on in-school assessments of competence against the Standards.

If the Act allows it, this might be initially effected by the Secretary of the Department delegating this role to the NSW Education Standards Authority for the public schools.



¹⁹². Education Council, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-8.

¹⁹³. See Buchanan & Chapman (December 1-4, 2011). While this paper is strongly focused on identifying elements of neo-liberal discourse, Human Capital Theory and Public Choice Theory in the Declaration, it does point to the elements, identified by others they reference, that serve the public, democratic and holistic purposes of education. Common to such critiques, there is no attempt to assess the element of education that is preparation for a fulfilling experience of the world of work other than as a cog in a globalised neo-liberal regime.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of evidence in teacher witness statements

Timothy Roberts, NEW Law

The following is a summary of the written evidence of teacher witnesses as contained in their statements to the Valuing the teaching profession inquiry (Inquiry). Teachers identified many changes that related to both an increase in the volume and complexity of their work. Given the scope of reflections within these statements, it is hard to imagine an aspect of a teacher's working life that has not seen some significant change in the timeframe that is the focus of the Inquiry. It is also difficult to represent, in any great detail, the full breadth of reflections teachers offered on the areas of their work captured by the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.



Technology

In addition to being a specific item in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference,¹ the changes in teachers' practice with respect to the use of technology is an important item for the consideration of the Panel as it was a matter addressed by the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) in their decision in *Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award (2004) NSWIRComm 114*. In this decision, the IRC felt the NSW Teachers Federation's (NSWTF) submission with respect to technology did not speak to a change in the complexity of the work of teachers that went beyond that which was experienced by all professions as a part of societal changes at large.² Significantly, the IRC highlighted that evidence from teachers themselves indicated that technology had actually made their work easier.³

Witnesses for this Inquiry would agree that, in some respects, technology has continued to make aspects of their work easier. For example, they mentioned that assignments could be submitted, and feedback returned to students with comparative ease.⁴ Further, the collection, storage, and return of physical assessment papers and documents in general has been made easier with technological advancements.⁵ This is in addition to general improvements in programing and the ability of teachers to work collaboratively.⁶ However, this perspective is not unanimous.⁷

Even taking into account that various technologies have made aspects of teachers' work easier, witnesses identified that the use of technology in schools has rapidly changed over the period of reference for this Inquiry.⁸ Further, that breadth of change is such that any benefits that have been gained could not be said to outweigh or obscure the additional work and complexity that teachers now have to deal with in contemporary classrooms because of advancements in the use of technology⁹ in schools. This includes both the administration of their work and the development and delivery of pedagogies that use technology. What is more, even in the above example, with respect to

the submission, marking and return of assessments through online platforms, teachers identified that what is not often considered in such a discussion is that these new platforms need to be explicitly taught to students for them to be able to use them effectively.¹⁰ Further, it is a mistake to assume that students have an innate ability to use these platforms.¹¹

It is important to note that classroom teachers and principals identify that they, and schools, receive no substantive support from the Department with respect to IT in their schools.¹² Any support, like that of a technical support officer, needs to be funded from the school's budget. If not funded, the work of IT support falls to teaching staff to undertake.¹³ This includes time and effort in upskilling colleagues and has been a particular issue during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴

The time required to overcome the challenge of teaching students how to use these new technologies is not explicitly provided for in face-to-face teaching time. What is more, teachers have expressed concerns that they have not been provided with adequate time to develop skills with respect to their own use of these new technologies, let alone develop the pedagogies required to teach students how to use them effectively.¹⁵ Further, the skills required for both have become increasingly complex.¹⁶ The effort and planning needed to incorporate this within the existing face-to-face time available, and in such a way that meets the curriculum requirements of their subject, is part of the increased complexity of their work.¹⁷

The scope of this work is made broader when considering that teachers use many platforms in class and in the administration of their work,¹⁸ and these platforms are constantly changing or being updated or replaced,¹⁹ including significant updates by the developers themselves.²⁰ Significantly, teachers have also noted that the Department has a problematic track record with respect to the delivery of their own platforms, LMBR and PLAN being notable but not isolated examples.²¹

Increased student and parent access to teachers

Teachers identified that the use and prevalence of technology has meant that students had often direct and regular contact with teachers via the platforms described above and more traditional communications such as email.²² Further, as an element of broader increasing community expectations regarding teacher accountability and the individualisation of student programs, the aforementioned educational platforms were also facilitating direct and more regular contact with parents.²³ This level of direct contact is well beyond what might have been contemplated before 2004 and means that teachers found themselves dealing with school-based issues well into their personal time.²⁴

While an aspect of the changes that relate to assessment more broadly, teachers also identified an increasing trend of student contact with respect to the marking of draft assessment tasks.²⁵ Especially in the senior years of schooling, it is both the expectation and common practice that teachers would review and provide feedback to students on drafts of their written assessment tasks many weeks before the due date of the final submission.²⁶ Given the uptake, some schools have had to enact policies to limit this practice and reduce the pressure this places on teachers.²⁷ This is an issue closely related to the growing expectation on teachers to spend considerable amounts of their time, outside of school hours, working with their senior students in the preparation for the HSC.²⁸ This includes working with students in the school holidays on final works or similar high-stakes assessments.²⁹

Social media

Another aspect of the influence of technology described by witnesses in their written evidence relates to teachers needing to use and manage social media. Witnesses spoke of both their professional use and the school's use of social media platforms.³⁰ That being said, the use of social media and devices by students in schools has also added to the complexity of the

issues teachers were required to deal with.³¹ This ranged from simply altering classroom management practices to accommodate and manage the prevalence of devices,³² both authorised and unauthorised,³³ to respond to students who themselves are having to deal with the impact of technology as well, including complex issues such as cyberbullying and sleep deprivation associated with gaming.³⁴ So complex are the issues teachers have been asked to grapple with, they identify that local school policy and resources will always be inadequate in meeting this challenge.³⁵ As a head teacher in a distance education setting surmises:

“To meet the range of issues associated with mobile phones, the whole school community and the P&C needs to be on board. I think in this space schools would prefer some decision-making from the centre that took this out of the individual school's hands. This would reduce the time and effort required of schools to do this all on their own and ensure consistency across the state.”³⁶

Digital Education Revolution (DER)

While the increase in technology was described by all teachers and relates, to some degree, to the evolving use of technology in society more broadly, some teachers were able to speak to the specific intervention of governments, at the federal and state level, that marked periods of significant growth in the use of technology in schools. The scope of changes resulting from the investment in technology that accompanied the Australian government-funded reform program, the Digital Education Revolution (DER), was the first of these reforms.³⁷ The result of the widespread introduction of laptops in classrooms meant teachers had to make significant changes to their practice, both with respect to developing the delivery of lessons to accommodate the devices, but also the way they manage their classrooms.³⁸ Teachers also spoke to the need to undertake a lot of professional development to better meet these changes.³⁹

Bring Your Own Device

While the DER was described as having a revolutionary impact on teachers practice in introducing laptops and other technology to both students and teachers on a large scale, teachers also identified



significant work and complexity associated with the shift from DER to the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy of the Department.⁴⁰ BYOD resulted in the removal of the provision of the laptops for students and, as the name suggests, shifted the onus on students and their families to provide their own device.⁴¹

The equity of this policy was of particular concern to teachers and reflected in the additional time spent preparing for the delivery of lessons with or without devices.⁴² The aim being to avoid the mistaken assumption that all students would be able to provide a device.⁴³ Related to this, is having to accommodate for the fact that even if a student had a device, it could not be assured that they would have the same functionality.⁴⁴ That is to say, teachers found themselves restricted in the delivery of their lessons to the lowest common denominator of device functionality and software available in the class. This has obvious limitations to the ability of teachers to prepare for lessons and is well captured in a head teacher's analogy of teaching students how to use a calculator to solve equations in maths.

"It is easier to teach students to press the same buttons in the same way, as opposed to 30 different students with 30 different models of calculators. In the same way DER provided this baseline for teachers, every student and every teacher had the same device and technology. The rollout of the Bring Your Own Device policy ... fundamentally changed this with many different devices that teachers were now encountering."⁴⁵

As a result, the widespread presence of disparate devices in classrooms, and their integrated use as a teaching and learning tool has meant that the work of teachers has not only significantly grown since 2004, but it has also become exceedingly more complex.

Data

The role of technology and its increased evolution in schools, is closely linked to what witnesses to the inquiry describe as the increasing role that collecting and analysing data has had in their work.⁴⁶ This has also been evidenced by its expected inclusion in

applications for classroom teacher positions.⁴⁷ Indeed, while it may be argued that the current focus on data would not have developed without the prevalence of technology in NSW public schools, it is clear that the role of data in their work has become one of the most pressing issues for teachers and is linked to broader notions of workload.⁴⁸

In the first instance, it was widely acknowledged by witnesses that teachers have always collected data of some form and that doing so is important.⁴⁹ There was no detractor from this position. However, even this acknowledgement exposed the need to make a critical distinction as to the type of data that is collected and relates to a core concern that the current approach of the Department favours quantitative data, that teachers are asked to apply statistical analysis to, rather than that of qualitative data that teachers have traditionally been apt in collecting and using.⁵⁰ This is not to say that quantitative data does not have its place, subject to some of the concerns described below.⁵¹ Instead, teachers observe that in under-emphasising the role of qualitative data, the Department is under-emphasising the existing role of the teacher in constantly making assessments of student progress as a part of ongoing interactions and as an extension of this, undervaluing the importance of an important element of the student teacher relationship.⁵²

Another concern of teachers about the role of student data relates to its use as a measure of teacher performance. This is part of a broader discussion with respect to teacher accountability.⁵³ Witnesses identified being called to account for the regression in student results based on their performance in a number of key assessments.⁵⁴ It was a concern to teachers that such an approach was being taken given these assessments were not designed for this purpose. This was particularly so with respect to NAPLAN. Teachers described being required to enter data, dutifully acknowledging a student's progress, or lack thereof in certain areas of literacy and numeracy, and then being called to account for the lack of progress that the teachers themselves have identified.⁵⁵

Given teachers' broad acknowledgment of the role of data to some degree, it is a concern then that they also generally advised of not having the time to

adequately prepare assessments, assess students, collect data, process data or, alter their practice and programing based on the information gained from such assessments.⁵⁶ One teacher advised that the role of data had become so intrusive that if they were not in front of the class, or dealing with well-being issues, they were in front of the computer entering data.⁵⁷ Despite this concern, teachers report on the high level of expectation to incorporate data into almost all aspects of their pedagogy. This is best exemplified in the breadth and complexity of teaching practice as seen in Department policy such as the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation document, *What works best: Evidence-based practices to help improve NSW student performance*.⁵⁸

Teachers also consistently advised of their concern that they were being asked to undertake high-level data analysis beyond what they had either been trained for within their teacher preparation studies or in any subsequent adequate professional development.⁵⁹ This is a particular concern given the limited resources provided by the Department to support teachers in using this information and the significant steps that schools had to take to make sure that they could efficiently and effectively utilise this data.⁶⁰ Ultimately, this has compounded the issue of limited time that teachers spoke to as they attempted to develop their skills, either through practice or professional development. In addition to all the other demands on teachers, this added requirement inevitably takes up significant amounts of their personal time that would otherwise be spent preparing for lessons.⁶¹ Indeed, as a relieving principal on the Mid-North Coast said when commenting on PLAN2, a platform designed to collect the data from regular and ongoing teacher assessments:

“It seems to me that there is something terribly ironic about the idea of spending hours of time plotting these students on a progression of their learning at the expense of preparing learning opportunities that would better enable them to move up that progression.”⁶²

Assessment

As can be drawn from the discussion above, the concerns teachers have identified with respect to data are linked to the area of student assessment. None of the Inquiry’s witnesses have questioned the importance of student assessment in the work they do. Indeed, it is impossible to facilitate the progression of student learning of any subject without assessment of some form. That being said, in a similar vein to the over-emphasis of some types of data discussed above, teachers giving evidence to the Inquiry have suggested that the Department’s emphasis on standardised testing, or even high-stakes testing such as the HSC, has potentially been to the detriment of student outcomes and definitely at the expense of teacher workload.⁶³

It is important to highlight that teachers have distinguished the use of these tests as summative assessment that is distinct from and often overshadows the ongoing use of formative assessment that teachers regularly use in their practice.⁶⁴ Indeed, it is formative assessment that teachers have identified they use to collect the qualitative data referred to above.

Teachers from primary and secondary perspectives identified NAPLAN and Best Start as being new and significant contributors to the collection of data with respect to student performance.⁶⁵ In secondary schools, additional tests were also identified such as VALID,⁶⁶ the HSC minimum Standard,⁶⁷ and the HSC itself.⁶⁸ As a head teacher in a distance education setting identified, this has resulted in there being a substantive external assessment for every stage of secondary schooling.⁶⁹ Teachers have advised the Inquiry that each assessment carried with it the work associated with the coordination of the testing events,⁷⁰ the processing and interpretation of the data gathered from them,⁷¹ and the adaption of practice to accommodate the expectation that teachers would work to improve these results.⁷²



In addition to these assessments, primary school teachers identified that they had to conduct continual assessments of their own to update records of student progress on PLAN2.⁷³ Teachers spoke of their frustration at the apparent waste of time associated with the loss of previously recorded information with the transition from PLAN⁷⁴ and reflected on how this undermined their confidence in the use of PLAN2. Related to this was the shift from the use of continuums to the learning progressions and the need to revise both their practice and professional knowledge on the subject.⁷⁵ Regardless, both updating PLAN and PLAN2 represent a significant change in teachers' work as a form of internal reporting not seen before 2004.

Some secondary teachers identified Scout, the Department's online platform for accessing student data, as a source of some frustration. In the first instance, this reflected a concern that they were provided with limited Department support or professional development to use Scout or in processing the data that is drawn from it.⁷⁶ It was highlighted that there was a significant amount of work that was required in processing this data to make it useful for classroom teachers.⁷⁷ Without specialist support in schools, it is expected that teachers carry out this work themselves.

While notionally an issue associated with the area of data more specifically — referred to here as the expectation that teachers access Scout to review student results across many external assessments to inform their teaching, in addition to those carried out as a part of normal practice — it highlights the significant increase in the complexity of work since 2004 that teachers across NSW public schools are now required to engage in. Further, the externality of these assessments has also significantly contributed to the perceived increase in teacher accountability that has been discussed elsewhere.

Curriculum

Despite the importance of aligning assessment with curriculum, it is noteworthy that teachers, with the exception of the HSC, indicated a limited link between the assessments of concern discussed above and their work in teaching that curriculum.⁷⁸ Indeed, NAPLAN was restricted to being described as a snapshot of student progress that should be treated with caution because of its own limitations and not discussed with respect to the curriculum. Similarly, teachers raised concerns with the utility of Best Start testing.⁷⁹ Further, assessment associated with PLAN/PLAN2 and meeting literacy requirements was discussed as an additional requirement for primary school teachers without a discernible purpose, a curriculum of its own regard, which needed to be addressed in the increasingly limited time available to teachers.⁸⁰

Teachers spoke to distinct concerns in the area of curriculum in their written evidence. In the first instance, it was clear over time the NSW curriculum had become incredibly complex over a period of increasing change.⁸¹ An example of this is seen in the statement of a non-school based teacher where they describe the development of depth studies in senior subjects that require a high level of teaching practice to deliver effectively.⁸² Similarly, they also describe the layering of curriculum demands that must each be incorporated in day to day lessons.⁸³ For example, in addition to the specific subject requirements, teachers must incorporate cross-curricular activities associated with the Australian Curriculum.⁸⁴ Further, teachers spoke to challenges in meeting the Department's expectation to be addressing literacy and numeracy in addition to syllabus requirements,⁸⁵ which themselves have been generally accepted as contributing to an overcrowded curriculum.⁸⁶ This is in addition to other priorities identified by the Department or NESA.⁸⁷

Taken in the light of the discussion of technology, data and assessment above, it is clear that in addition to having to grapple with increasingly complex aspects of their work such as the curriculum, teachers face the complex task of crafting educational programs that will incorporate, to a high standard, a breadth of demands on their work that was not even within the scope of similar discussions with respect to their practice in 2004.

It is a concern then that teachers view the announcements about proposed changes to the NSW curriculum with some scepticism.⁸⁸ In part, this came from the general notion of change fatigue that often accompanied discussions around the amount and pace of curriculum change in the evidence put to the Inquiry.⁸⁹ While a broader topic that encompasses all aspects of their work, teachers describe change fatigue as a reluctance by some in the profession to entertain new proposals, despite their merit, because they join an ever-growing list of changes that affects much of their work.⁹⁰ Experienced teachers such as a head teacher from the Mid North Coast described, with a mix of frustration and mirth, being around long enough to see previously replaced models of practice come back into fashion.⁹¹

More specifically to the area of syllabus/curriculum change, teachers described an apprehension regarding curriculum changes that came from a concern that, even until recently, they had already been undergoing a period of significant curriculum and syllabus change.⁹² Added to this, teachers also advised that, since changes to the syllabus to incorporate the Australian Curriculum, teachers have seen less and less support, both in resources and accessible curriculum expertise, in their work to incorporate further and seemingly ongoing changes to the syllabuses.⁹³ The work associated with these changes is enormous,⁹⁴ and added to a lengthening list of demands on teachers time outside of the hours spent face to face with students in class.⁹⁵ Beyond these concerns, it would also seem some teachers are alive to potential political motivations in the proposed changes.⁹⁶

Reporting

While not an area of broad reflection by teachers in written evidence, other than its ongoing place as a significant demand on teachers in an increasingly time-poor environment, it is important to note that some teachers offered persuasive criticism over the state of contemporary reporting. Specifically, there was some consistency in a perception that over time the regulation of the content of reports had developed such that they now lacked any utility.⁹⁷ This is to say that not only did teachers not find them to be a particularly constructive document, but they were also sure that

they were no longer what parents wanted either.⁹⁸ Concerningly, one teacher had suggested that the reports had become such that there was now a risk that unassuming parents and carers may misinterpret what teachers were trying to communicate regarding student progress.⁹⁹ This is not only a concern in its own regard, but a concern given how precious time is for teachers in NSW public schools.

Student wellbeing

In adding to the picture of the complexity of the work of teachers, witnesses to the Inquiry also report that there has been a significant, and seemingly exponential, increase in the amount of student wellbeing issues presenting in their classroom.¹⁰⁰ Teachers used this term to describe both welfare and mental health concerns. While restrained in describing an absolute cause for this increase, some spoke to how technology has played a role in amplifying anxiety and mental health concerns in students.¹⁰¹ Others spoke to the role of the increasing complexity of society and limited support for parents in general.¹⁰² One witness even spoke to the impact of the increasing marketisation of society in exacerbating mental health concerns in students.¹⁰³ Regardless of the cause, it was uniformly agreed that teachers were now expected to be aware of these issues, change their teaching practice accordingly, and proactively engage with students when these issues presented.¹⁰⁴

While teachers have always had charge of the welfare of their class, the contemporary standard to which this must be carried out and the complexity of the work that teachers must do to meet this expectation, far exceeds how this work would have been conceptualised before 2004. Teachers must not only be familiar with a range of issues affecting students but also develop strategies to meet the learning needs these create and actively participate in the support of individual students in overcoming these concerns. Further, as a part of an interconnected issue already identified, teachers are asked to do this work when they are increasingly time poor.

Students with a disability

In addition to complexities associated with an increase in the number of students experiencing wellbeing issues, teachers also identified a significant increase in



the number of students presenting with a disability.¹⁰⁵ From the outset, witnesses spoke of the difference between the Department's provision of support, while limited, for students diagnosed with a disability, and those students who, although not meeting a threshold for funding or support, required significant interventions to access learning experiences.¹⁰⁶ In short, this meant schools were having to support many students with high-level learning needs without funding or support to do so.¹⁰⁷

As above, teachers spoke to the expectation that they be able to identify and respond to these learning needs, associated with a wide range of disabilities, largely on their own.¹⁰⁸ Teachers discussed the challenges associated with meeting this expectation given both the diversity of student need, the highly individualised nature of programming called upon in contemporary classrooms, and the limited time available to carry out this work.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps the most concerning aspect of the challenges that witnesses to the Inquiry identified related to the lack of support that they advised was available to them in this task.¹¹⁰ Witnesses spoke to there being limited to no support outside of the generalist support of school counsellors and learning and support teachers.¹¹¹ As below, school counsellors identified being called to support teachers in these cases despite it being outside their area of expertise and available time.¹¹² Further, the Access Request process designed for those seeking additional support for students was identified as being unnecessarily bureaucratic and inadequate.¹¹³

This lack of support was seemingly so acutely felt, as teachers were able to compare it to the high level and expert support that they once received. While helpful, no Learning and Support Teacher can compare to what used to be teams of specialists in the local Department office that were available to visit a teacher and offer expert advice.¹¹⁴ The local availability of this support also meant that these experts developed knowledge of the specific students requiring support and were able to offer advice to teachers throughout a student's schooling.¹¹⁵ With the exception of a diminished version of itinerate teachers for deaf and blind students, no such support was identified to exist today.¹¹⁶ Beyond this, whatever local Department office

support that remains was identified by witnesses as being inadequate.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Outside of the schooling system, the only support for families with respect to the learning needs of students with a disability is that which they obtain through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Witnesses to the Inquiry described significant concerns about both the inability of some families to access the support they should through the NDIS and the impact the NDIS system had on the school.¹¹⁷

In the first instance, witnesses gave evidence that indicated many families were not accessing their full entitlement because of significant barriers such as language or literacy.¹¹⁸ This meant that schools were often put in the position of supporting them in completing much of the paperwork required for parents to access this support on their child's behalf.¹¹⁹ In addition to this impost, teachers described some challenge in facilitating NDIS workers in providing support for students in schools.¹²⁰

This issue was linked to a broader concern that many schools, and indeed many in the school community, were not able to access specialist support because, despite having the funding to do so, there were no specialists in the area.¹²¹ It should be noted this went beyond just areas that would traditionally be described as hard to staff.

School counsellors

The changing role of teachers with respect to responding to the complex learning needs of their students is connected to changes in the work of school counsellors that were also identified by witnesses. In NSW public schools, school counsellors hold dual qualifications as a teacher and counsellor. They are employed under the Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award 2020 and are members of the NSW Teachers Federation.

As one witness identified, school counsellors have been the subject of several past inquiries, of which a number have expressly recommended a reduction in the ratio of students to counsellors.¹²² Teachers and school counsellors gave evidence in this Inquiry that either implied or expressly recommended that the current ratio needed to be significantly reduced.¹²³ What is more, school counsellors advised that recent policy changes designed to address community concerns with respect to students' access to school counsellors had actually had the effect of reducing student access to school counsellors in large schools.¹²⁴

The pressure on school counsellor time is such that school counsellors themselves describe their work as triaging.¹²⁵ That is to say, they are aware they are not able to meet all the need in the school and are forced to perpetually respond to high level or emergency concerns.¹²⁶ Teachers are well aware of this demand such that they either take on the responsibility of student well-being as it presents,¹²⁷ or they attempt to dissuade parents from relying on school counsellor availability and instead pursue treatment through their local GP or other services.¹²⁸

School counsellors advised that they are aware that the above circumstances did not meet community expectations.¹²⁹ However, given their role in many of the formal school processes they were unable to respond in kind. This is related to a broader issue a witness advised was captured well by the Auditor General.¹³⁰ Namely, that the Department's processes are such that the school counsellor is integral to a great many of them. However, the limited provision of school counsellors means that they cannot be expected to carry out their duties to the requisite standard.¹³¹ While not explicitly echoed, it was certainly implied as being the case by others. The primary example being the involvement of the school counsellor in the Access Request process that relates to seeking additional support for student need.¹³²

While school counsellors, as a part of the broader teaching profession, are within the scope of this Inquiry in their own right, their evidence had significant merit as a witness of the changing work of classroom teachers. In addition to confirming the increase of

student need that teachers were now required to respond to,¹³³ their evidence also confirmed the lack of support that classroom teachers and schools received from the Department to respond to student need. Of specific concern was the loss of specialised support from the local Department office.¹³⁴ Counsellors spoke of the problems associated with relying on generalist advice in the form of Learning and Support Teachers and themselves.¹³⁵ In short, they were not qualified or equipped, and yet relied on, to meet the growing student need in schools.

Commonly named policies

It is beyond the scope of this summary to list all the policies that have been named in, or are critical to, teachers written statements. That being said it would be remiss not to name policies that were commonly identified by teachers as a source of, if not frustration, then at least consternation in their work. In the first instance, and perhaps most notably was the Department reform and policy framework called Local Schools, Local Decisions (LSLD).

LSLD was consistently mentioned by teachers as a contributor to both the changing nature of their work and increases in their workload. Teachers identified that the implementation of LSLD has led to a culture of schools "running their own race" with respect to many areas of schooling including technology,¹³⁶ pedagogy and curriculum approaches,¹³⁷ competition with other local schools,¹³⁸ support for students with specific learning needs,¹³⁹ and the Department's own policy and processes.¹⁴⁰ Critically, teachers associate LSLD with the loss of support and expertise from the Department that resulted in significant increases in their workload and referred to in various domains above.¹⁴¹ Further, it was associated by one principal as a source of the increased sense of accountability referred to by witnesses.¹⁴²

The individualisation/personalisation of learning has been consistently identified as a source of significant workload and referred to above. It is noteworthy then that some teachers identify that the policy framework of Every Student, Every School (ESES) was a contributor to the increasing dominance of this approach.¹⁴³ ESES



is the Department's Learning and Support policy that encompasses the work associated with the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) and it is with respect to this that teachers identified a requirement to develop and record information on the individual adjustments they need to make for students.¹⁴⁴ A similar individualisation of learning was identified as a requirement with respect to supporting Aboriginal students in their learning with the development of Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs).¹⁴⁵

It is clear that the scope of this work far exceeds the resources and support for teachers to carry this out. Despite significant portions of the student population requiring this individual support, only a small portion reach the threshold to secure funding from the Department, and even then, it is limited.¹⁴⁶

Finally, while not mentioned by all witnesses, the NSW Government's decision to increase the school leaving age was identified by teachers as a source of challenges. Teachers did not disagree with the notion of increasing the age at which students could leave school. However, and in a similar vein to the policies discussed above, the concern was that implementation occurred without the necessary support or resources. In this case, the concern was a lack of appropriate subject offerings in the senior years to cater for the new clientele.¹⁴⁷ Without engaging students with appropriate subject choices, one teacher described having to address behavioural concerns in senior years, something not widely contemplated before this change.¹⁴⁸

Support for beginning and early career teachers

Another area of consistent concern from witnesses was a perceived lack of adequate induction processes for beginning teachers,¹⁴⁹ and those in promotion positions.¹⁵⁰ While cognisant of the accreditation process for new teachers, witnesses identified concerns that not enough support is available.¹⁵¹ Further, many of them described a "sink or swim" approach to starting out in the profession,¹⁵² both for student teachers and those newly appointed.¹⁵³ While some spoke of a need for something akin to an internship to better prepare teachers,¹⁵⁴ the more general consensus spoke to a need for more time to

access collegial support and better prepare for lessons and the diverse student need they would encounter.¹⁵⁵

Most teachers advised of the existence of some level of mentoring for early career teachers. However, they felt that the Department's approach to mentoring was inadequate.¹⁵⁶ This perception was in part due to the limited time available to these teachers and their mentors.¹⁵⁷ It was also due to a lack of consistency as to who was allowed to be a mentor, specifically their training, and preparedness to take up this role.¹⁵⁸ Teachers did not identify any formal requirement as to who can become a mentor. This included no requirement that they have a demonstrated and working familiarity with the Teaching Standards, or even the process of gaining the Proficient Teacher accreditation status.¹⁵⁹ This left those being mentored exposed to uninformed advice and part of what was described by some teachers as a lottery as to whether they found a supportive mentor.¹⁶⁰

COVID-19

Witnesses identified several challenges and complexities that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first instance, teachers described the significant amount of work that was required to transition from the delivery of face-to-face lessons to conducting lessons online and from home.¹⁶¹ A primary concern of teachers at this time was the issue of equity. Teachers identified that they could not assume that students had access to the technology required to conduct online learning. The socioeconomic nature of some of the areas schools were located in meant that families did not have enough devices, or any, for all the students in their home to do online learning.¹⁶² What is more, even if they did, by reasons of affordability or remoteness, it could not be assured these students had access to the internet.¹⁶³

As a result, teachers put considerable energy in to preparing hard copies of lessons and the requisite resources for students to complete their learning offline.¹⁶⁴ Not to mention, in addition to being a burden on teacher time to develop, prepare and distribute, it was identified as a great expense for the school itself.¹⁶⁵ What is more, teachers identified that it seemed to be at odds with both the experiences

of some teachers in other better-off areas, and communications from the Department assuring the community about quality and impact of the learning experiences of students.¹⁶⁶

In addition to these issues, teachers identified two primary concerns with the Department of Education's handling of COVID-19. The first, and most often repeated, related to the Department's lack of communication to their own staff about significant changes as a result of the pandemic.¹⁶⁷ This included finding out about the return to face-to-face learning through the media.¹⁶⁸ Some witnesses also cited examples that indicated those at the district office were in the same position.¹⁶⁹ This had the effect of contributing to a sense of being undervalued by their own employer.¹⁷⁰

The second concern related to a lack of direct support for teachers during this time. The exception seemed to be some mention of the provision of professional learning online.¹⁷¹ However, teachers identified it was limited and, beyond this, teachers felt they were on their own.¹⁷² That said, teachers acknowledged that with collegial support and the leadership of their principal at the school level they were able to make some headway in difficult circumstances.¹⁷³

Conclusion

The evidence of teachers in their written statements has shown that the period of time since the 2004 work value case was one of widespread and significant change. Even in summarising the evidence given to the Inquiry, it is clear that nearly all aspects of the work of teachers has grown in volume and complexity. If teachers' reflections with respect to the effects of the recent COVID-19 pandemic are evidence of anything, it is that the profession is an incredibly resilient one. While an acute example of this resilience, the evidence of teachers has also shown that they have had to respond to increasing demands on them with respect to changes in technology, curriculum, assessment and increases in societal complexities that have particular impact in schools. Further, they have done this at a time when subject to increasing accountabilities and community expectations. It is a significant concern then that, despite this, they have advised of not having

the adequate resources or time to work collegially to best meet these challenges. Further, that this period in NSW public education is one in which schools had have had a significant reduction in the support provided by the Department.

¹ Valuing the teaching profession, an independent inquiry, 'Terms of Reference' [b].

² Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award [2004] NSWIRComm 114 [238].

³ Ibid [235]-[236].

⁴ Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8 [26], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 10 [57], [59], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 3 [14].

⁵ Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8 [26], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 10 [57], [59].

⁶ Classroom teacher (F) Greater Western Sydney 4 [15]-[16], Principal (M) Central West 11 [53].

⁷ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 3 [13], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7 [22], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 6 [28].

⁸ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4-6 [19]-[25], Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 3-5 [11]-[15], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7 [22], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 11 [47]-[48], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 16 [73], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 20-1 [66]-[68], Head teacher (M) Central West 7-9 [21]-[26], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 9-10 [54]-[56], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 4 [24], Head teacher (M) Central West 8 [25], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [15]-[20], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11].

⁹ Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 3-7 [11]-[27], Non-school based teacher (F) 12 [66], [68], Classroom teacher (F) Greater Western Sydney 4-7 [15]-[25], Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 7-8 [24]-[25], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 20-1 [66]-[68], Head teacher (M) Central West 7-9 [21]-[26], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [19], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 4 [26]-[28], Principal (M) Central West 11-3 [53]-[63].

¹⁰ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 2 [11], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 10 [58], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11].

¹¹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 2 [9], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 10 [58], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11].



¹² Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 9 [37]-[39], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7 [22], Head teacher (M) Central West 7-9 [21]-[26],

Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [17], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11].

¹³ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 9 [37]-[39], Classroom teacher (F) Greater Western Sydney 8 [28], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [15]-[20].

¹⁴ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney, 8 [33]-[35], 10 [41], Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 5 [17], Classroom teacher (F) Greater Western Sydney 5-6 [19]-[21], 8 [28], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [19], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 4 [27].

¹⁵ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 2, [8], 3 [12], Non-school based teacher (F) 11-2 [65]-[68], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7 [23], Head teacher (M) Central West 8 [26], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [19], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11].

¹⁶ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 10 [41], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7 [22], Head teacher (M) Central West 7-9 [21]-[26].

¹⁷ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 3 [12], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11].

¹⁸ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 8 [24], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7 [22], 8 [27], Classroom teacher (F) Greater Western Sydney 4-5 [15]-[18], Head teacher (M) Central West 9 [26], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 4 [26], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [15]-[20].

¹⁹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 3 [14], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [15]-[20].

²⁰ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11 [47].

²¹ Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 5 [16], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 12 [39], Retired principal (F) Sydney 19-20 [95]-[104], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney [48]-[51], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 13 [80], Principal (M) Central West 13 [61]-[63].

²² Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 11 [62]-[65], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 17 [79]-[82], Non-school based teacher (F) 7-8 [42]-[45], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 23 [133]-[135], Head teacher (M) Central West 7-9 [21]-[26], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [15]-[20].

²³ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 10 [42]-[44], 11 [44], Principal (F) western Sydney 10 [35],

Principal (M) Mid North Coast 5-6 [14]-[17], 7-9 [22]-[28], Head teacher (M) Central West 7-9 [21]-[26], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 11-2 [66]-[68], Principal (M) Central West 12 [59], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney 12 [42], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 16 [50].

²⁴ Principal (F) western Sydney 10 [35], Non-school based teacher (F) 7-8 [42]-[45], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7-9 [22]-[28], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 17 [79]-[82], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 23 [133]-[135], Head teacher (M) Central West 7-9 [21]-[26], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [15]-[20].

²⁵ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 6-7 [35]-[38], Non-school based teacher (F) 7-8 [42]-[45], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast, 21 [123]-[127].

²⁶ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 6-7 [35]-[38], Non-school based teacher (F) 7-8 [42]-[45], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 21 [123]-[127].

²⁷ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 6-7 [35]-[38], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 21 [123]-[127].

²⁸ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 11-3 [62]-[77], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 17 [81]-[82].

²⁹ Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 17 [81]-[82].

³⁰ Non-school based teacher (F) 7 [40]-[41] Principal (M) Mid North Coast 5 [15].

³¹ Principal (M) Mid North Coast 8 [26], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 15-7 [96]-[105], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 4 [25], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 16 [74], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11], Principal (M) Central West 12 [59].

³² Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7-9 [22]-[29], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 15-7 [96]-[105], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 16 [74].

³³ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 15-7 [96]-[105].

³⁴ Principal (M) Mid North Coast 7 [23], 8 [26], Retired principal (F) Sydney 22 [113]-[118], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 15-7 [96]-[105], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 7 [43], Assistant principal (F) Far West 4 [8]-[11], Principal (M) Central West 12 [59]-[60].

³⁵ Principal (M) Mid North Coast 8 [24]-[25], Retired principal (F) Sydney 22 [113]-[118].

³⁶ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 16 [103].

³⁷ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4-6 [17]-[25], 9 [37], Head teacher (M) Central West 8-9 [25]-[26].

³⁸ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4-6 [17]-[25], 9 [37], Head teacher (M) Central West 8-9 [25]-[26].

³⁹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4-6 [17]-[25], 9 [37].

⁴⁰ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4 [17]-[18], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 17 [104], Principal (M) Central West 11 [54]-[55].

⁴¹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 6 [26], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 17 [104], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 10 [60].

⁴² Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 6 [26]-[29], 10 [42]-[44], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 10-1 [61].

⁴³ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 6 [26], Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 7 [23].

⁴⁴ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4 [17]-[18], Principal (M) Central West 11 [54]-[55].

⁴⁵ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4 [17].

⁴⁶ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11 [46]-[47], Principal (F) western Sydney 4-5 [23], Retired principal (F) Sydney 16 [78], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 9 [53]-[54], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 14 [84], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 16 [95]-[96], Non-school based teacher 2 9 [44], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 13 [69]-[74], Head teacher (M) Central West 4 [10]-[11], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 6 [25]-[26].

⁴⁷ Non-school based teacher 2 9 [44]-[45]

⁴⁸ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 12 [71]-[72], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 16 [95]-[96], Deputy Principal (M) Riverina 13 [69]-[74].

⁴⁹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11 [45], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 14 [84], Head teacher (M) Central West 4 [10].

⁵⁰ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11-2 [45]-[52], Principal (F) western Sydney 4-5 [23], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 9-10 [29]-[31] Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 12 [46], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 16 [95]-[97], Non-school based teacher 2 6 [42], Head teacher (M) Central West 4 [10]-[11], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 6 [25]-[26].

⁵¹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 12-3 [53]-[56], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 12 [69]-[70], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 17 [97], Head teacher (M) Central West 4 [10]-[11].

⁶² Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 13-4 [83].

⁶³ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11-2 [47]-[52], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 10 [60]-[65], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 12 [74], 14 [88]-[90], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 8 [48]-[51], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner

West of Sydney 7-8 [21]-[29], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 5-6 [21]-[27].

⁶⁴ Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney 7-8 [21]-[29].

⁶⁵ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11-2 [47]-[52], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 6-7 [20]-[21], Retired principal (F) Sydney 9 [42]-[43], 10 [47], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 7 [39]-[47], 9-10 [55]-[58], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 12 [73]-[75], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 16-7 [95]-[97], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 9-10 [50]-[53].

⁶⁶ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 10 [59].

⁶⁷ Careers adviser (F) Northern Rivers 11 [28], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 10 [58]-[59].

⁶⁸ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11-2 [48]-[49], Retired principal (F) Sydney 10 [47] Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 12 [69]-[72], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 16-7 [95]-[97], Head teacher (M) Central West 4 [10]-[11], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 5-6 [21]-[27].

⁶⁹ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 10 [59].

⁷⁰ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 7 [39]-[47]

⁷¹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11-3 [47]-[56], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 7 [39]-[47], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 12 [69]-[70], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 16-7 [95]-[97], Head teacher (M) Central West 4 [10]-[11], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 5-6 [21]-[27].

⁷² Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11 [47]-[52], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 6-7 [20]-[21], Retired principal (F) Sydney 10 [47], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 7 [39]-[47], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 12 [69]-[70], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 16-7 [95]-[97], Head teacher (M) Central West 4 [10]-[11], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 5-6 [21]-[27].

⁷³ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 13 [78]-[83], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 11 [60], Principal (F) South West Sydney 15-6 [83].

⁷⁴ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 13 [80], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10-1 [56]-[59], Principal (F) South West Sydney 15-6 [83].

⁷⁵ Retired principal (F) Sydney 9 [42], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 2 [9]-[13], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 13 [78]-[83], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 11 [60], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney, 8-9 [30]-[33], Principal (F) South West Sydney 15-6 [83].



⁷⁶ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 13 [57]-[58]

⁷⁷ Retired principal (F) Sydney 7-8 [33], 10 [44] Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 12-3 [53]-[56], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 8-9 [46]-[54], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 5-6 [21]-[27].

⁷⁸ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 14 [87]-[90], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 2 [8]-[9], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 6 [22]-[27].

⁷⁹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 12 [51], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 7 [39]-[47].

⁸⁰ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 13-4 [78]-[83], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10-2 [56]-[62], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 7-12 [16]-[36].

⁸¹ Principal (F) western Sydney 5-6 [25]-[26] Head teacher (F) Distance Education 2-3 [7]-[14], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 8-9 [52]-[58], Non-school based teacher (F) 8 [46]-[49], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast [63]-[66], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 2-3 [7]-[13], Principal (F) South West Sydney 14 [72]-[75], Principal (M) Central West 10 [48]-[52].

⁸² Non-school based teacher (F) 9 [50]-[53].

⁸³ Non-school based teacher (F) 8-9 [46]-[49].

⁸⁴ Non-school based teacher (F) 8-9 [46]-[49], See also Head teacher (F) Distance Education 2 [11], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 11-4 [45]-[59].

⁸⁵ Retired principal (F) Sydney 9-10 [40]-[44] Head teacher (F) Distance Education 2 [9]-[13], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10-2 [56]-[62].

⁸⁶ Non-school based teacher (F) 8-9 [46]-[49], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 12 [66].

⁸⁷ Principal (F) western Sydney 6 [26], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 2 [8], 11-2 [66]-[74], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 2-3 [7]-[13], 11-4 [45]-[59], Principal (F) South West Sydney 14 [72]-[75], Principal (M) Central West 10 [48]-[52].

⁸⁸ Principal (F) western Sydney 7 [28], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 9 [59]-[63], Non-school based teacher (F) 9-10 [54]-[55], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 25-7 [145]-[153].

⁸⁹ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 1 [6], 12-3 [75]-[80], 14 [85]-[88], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 8 [52], 9-10 [59], Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [15]-[18].

⁹⁰ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 12-3 [75]-[80], Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [15]-[18].

⁹¹ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 17 [101]-[106].

⁹² Head teacher (F) Distance Education 2-4 [7]-[20], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast [63]-[66], Classroom teacher (M) distance education 6-7 [35]-[41], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 12-3 [68], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 2-3 [7]-[13], Assistant principal (F) Far West 5 [12]-[15], Principal (M) Central West 10 [48]-[52].

⁹³ Retired principal (F) Sydney 8-9 [36]-[39], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 4 [21]-[35], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 10 [61], Non-school based teacher 2 12-3 [63]-[65], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 2-3 [7]-[13], Principal (M) Central West 10 [48]-[52], Classroom teacher (M) distance education 6-7 [35]-[41].

⁹⁴ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 3 [15]-[35], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 15-6 [70]-[72], Non-school based teacher 2 12-3 [63]-[65], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 2-3 [7]-[13], Assistant principal (F) Far West 5 [12]-[15], Principal (F) South West Sydney 14 [72]-[75], Principal (M) Central West 10 [48]-[52].

⁹⁵ Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 11-4 [45]-[59], Assistant principal (F) Far West 5 [12]-[15], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 10 [61]-[61], Classroom teacher (M) distance education 6-7 [35]-[41], Principal (F) South West Sydney 14 [72]-[75].

⁹⁶ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 25-7 [145]-[153], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 12 [51].

⁹⁷ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 15-6 [95]-[99], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 2 [8]-[9], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 24 [139]-[140], Assistant principal (F) Far West 5 [14], Principal (F) South West Sydney 15-6 [80]-[83].

⁹⁸ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 15-6 [96]-[97].

⁹⁹ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 15-6 [96]-[97], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 2 [10].

¹⁰⁰ Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 9 [34], [38], Retired principal (F) Sydney 5-7 [21]-[28], Assistant principal (M) North Western 7-8 [21]-[23], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 15 [93]-[95], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 7 [42]-[45], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 5-6 [30]-[34], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 3 [14], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 3 [12]-[17], Senior Psychologist

Education (F) South West Sydney 7-8 [25]-[27], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 8 [38]-[44], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 4 [15]-[16], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 14-6 [40]-[49], Head teacher (M) Central West 5 [12]-[13], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 8-10 [40]-[48], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 14 [60]-[63], Assistant principal (F) Far West 8 [26], Principal (M) Central West 2-5 [7]-[22].

¹⁰¹ Head teacher (F) Distance Education 15-6 [96]-[99], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 7 [44]-[45], Non-school based teacher (F) 11 [64], Principal (M) Central West 12 [57]-[59].

¹⁰² Principal (F) western Sydney 11 [366], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 7 [43], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 5 [30], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 3 [16], Non-school based teacher (F) 11 [62]. Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 8 [29], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 8 [38], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 8-10 [40]-[48], Assistant principal (F) Far West 8 [26], Principal (F) South West Sydney 5-6 [24]-[28], Principal (M) Central West 2-5 [7]-[22].

¹⁰³ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 6 [31]-[32].

¹⁰⁴ Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 9 [34], [38], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 4-5 [12]-[13], Retired principal (F) Sydney 5-7 [21]-[28], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 7 [45], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 6 [34], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 3 [16]-[17], 3-4 [20]-[23], Non-school based teacher (F) 11 [61]-[64], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9 [45], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 4 [15]-[16], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 14-6 [40]-[49], 18 [56]-[59], Head teacher (M) Central West 5 [12]-[13], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 8-10 [40]-[48], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 14 [60]-[63], Principal (M) Central West 2-5 [7]-[22].

¹⁰⁵ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 5-6 [32]-[33], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 8-9 [35]-[39], Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 7-9 [25]-[34], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 8 [38]-[44], Assistant principal (F) Far West 6 [16]-[19], Principal (F) South West Sydney 3-5 [15]-[23], Special Education teacher (M) Macarthur 1-2 [5].

¹⁰⁶ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 5-6 [32]-[33], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 2-4 [10]-[22], Assistant principal (F) Far West 6 [19], Principal (F) South West Sydney 3-5 [15]-[23], Special

Education teacher (M) Macarthur 2-3 [8].

¹⁰⁷ Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 5-6 [18]-[20], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 6-7 [34]-[41], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 2-4 [10]-[22], Assistant principal (F) Far West 6 [19].

¹⁰⁸ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 6-7 [34]-[41], 8-10 [48]-[59], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 8-10 [36]-[43], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 8-9 [35]-[39], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 2 [10], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 11-4 [45]-[59], Assistant principal (F) Far West 6 [16]-[19], Principal (F) South West Sydney 3-5 [15]-[23], Principal (M) Central West 4-5 [20]-[22].

¹⁰⁹ Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 18 [40]-[41], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 7-8 [46]-[47], Non-school based teacher (F) 11 [56]-[60], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 8-9 [35]-[39], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 11-2 [54]-[55], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney, 8-9 [30]-[33], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 11-4 [45]-[59], Principal (F) South West Sydney 3-5 [15]-[23], Principal (M) Central West 4-5 [20]-[22] Special Education teacher (M) Macarthur 6 [19].

¹¹⁰ Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 5-6 [18]-[20], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 6-7 [34]-[41], 8-10 [48]-[59], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 8-10 [36]-[43], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 2-4 [10]-[22] School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-11 [46]-[53], Assistant principal (F) Far West 6 [19], Principal (F) South West Sydney 3-5 [15]-[23], Principal (M) Central West 4-5 [20]-[22], Special Education teacher (M) Macarthur 1-2 [5].

¹¹¹ Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 5 [18], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 8-10 [48]-[59]. Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 10 [42]-[43], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-11 [46]-[53], Principal (M) Central West 4-5 [20]-[22].

¹¹² School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 11 [52].

¹¹³ Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 5 [18], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 8-10 [50]-[59] School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 13-4 [62]-[67]

¹¹⁴ Assistant principal (M) North Western 4-5 [13]-[16], Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 5 [18], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 1 [6]-[10], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-11 [46]-[53], Special Education teacher (M) Macarthur 1-2 [5].

¹¹⁵ Assistant principal (M) North Western 4-5 [13]-[16], Secondary classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 5



[18], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-11 [46]-[53].

¹¹⁶ Assistant principal (M) North Western 4-5 [13]-[16], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 10 [48], Principal (F) South West Sydney 13 [69]-[71].

¹¹⁷ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 10 [60]-[63], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 7-8 [33]-[35], Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 6-7 [19]-[24].

¹¹⁸ Assistant principal (M) North Western 7-8 [23], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 10 [63], Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 6-7 [20]-[22].

¹¹⁹ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 8 [35], Assistant principal (M) North Western 7-8 [23], Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 6-7 [19]-[24].

¹²⁰ Assistant principal (M) North Western 7-8 [23], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 10 [60]-[63], Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 7 [23].

¹²¹ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 10-11 [64]-[66], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 7-8 [33]-[35].

¹²² Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 12-4 [47]-[54].

¹²³ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 7 [30]-[32], Assistant principal (M) North Western 7 [21], Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 12-4 [47]-[54], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 3 [18]-[19], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 7-8 [31]-[37], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 8 [43], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 14 [60]-[61], Principal (F) South West Sydney 4 [17], Principal (M) Central West 18 [19], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 12 [52].

¹²⁴ Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 7-48 [25]-[27], Principal (F) South West Sydney 4 [17].

¹²⁵ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 7 [32], Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 11-2 [39]-[46], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 7-8 [31]-[37].

¹²⁶ Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 11-2 [39]-[46], Principal (M) Central West 18 [19].

¹²⁷ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 3-4 [18]-[23], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 16 [48]-[49], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western

Sydney 14 [60]-[61], Principal (F) South West Sydney 4 [17], 13 [67], Principal (M) Central West 18 [19].

¹²⁸ Assistant principal (M) North Western 7 [21]-[22], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 15 [83].

¹²⁹ Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 10 [37].

¹³⁰ Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 14 [53]-[54].

¹³¹ Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 14 [53]-[54], See Principal (M) Central West 18 [19].

¹³² Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 8-10 [50]-[59] School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 13-4 [62]-[67], Principal (F) South West Sydney 12-3 [66]-[68].

¹³³ Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 7-9 [25]-[34], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 8 [38]-[44], Principal (M) Central West 18 [19].

¹³⁴ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 8-10 [36]-[43], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-11 [46]-[53], Principal (F) South West Sydney 13 [69]-[71].

¹³⁵ School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-11 [46]-[53].

¹³⁶ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 7-8 [31]-[32], Retired principal (F) Sydney 7 [32]-[35].

¹³⁷ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 7 [31], Principal (M) Mid North Coast 6-7 [18]-[21], Retired principal (F) Sydney 7 [32]-[35], Head teacher (F) Distance Education 17-8 [109]-[111], Non-school based teacher 2 3-4 [14]-[22], 9-10 [47]-[53], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 7-8 [31]-[33], Principal (M) Central West 6 [27], 9-10 [45]-[47].

¹³⁸ Non-school based teacher 2 3-4 [14]-[22], 9-10 [47]-[53].

¹³⁹ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 13 [56], Retired principal (F) Sydney 7 [32]-[35], Assistant principal (M) North Western 5-6 [17]-[18], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 11 [53], Non-school based teacher 2 3-4 [14]-[22], 9-10 [47]-[53], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 7-8 [31]-[33].

¹⁴⁰ Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 10 [43]-[48], Retired principal (F) Sydney 7 [32]-[35], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 13-4 [62]-[67], Non-school based teacher 2 3-4 [14]-[22], 9-10 [47]-[53], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 11 [56]-[58], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 7-8 [31]-[33], Principal (M) Central West 6 [27].

¹⁴¹ School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 11 [53]. Non-school based teacher 2 3-4 [14]-[22], 9-10 [47]-[53], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 11 [56]-[58], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 7-8 [31]-[33], Principal (F) South West Sydney 3 [9], Principal (M) Central West 6 [27], 9-10 [45]-[47].

¹⁴² Principal (M) Mid North Coast 6 [18], Retired principal (F) Sydney 7 [32]-[35].

¹⁴³ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 12-3 [54]-[55], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 8-9 [35]-[39], Assistant principal (M) North Western 4 [13]-[16], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-10 [46], 11-2 [53]-[55], Assistant principal (F) Far West 6 [19], 9[30], Principal (F) South West Sydney 4 [18].

¹⁴⁴ Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 15-18 [35]-[41], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 8-9 [35]-[39], Assistant principal (M) North Western 4 [13]-[16], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 2-3 [11]-[13], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 3 [17], School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 9-10 [46], 11-2 [53]-[55], Classroom teacher (M)

Greater Western Sydney 12-4 [54]-[59], Assistant principal (F) Far West 6 [19], 9[30], Principal (F) South West Sydney 4 [18].

¹⁴⁵ Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 10-11 [19]-[21], 15 [34].

¹⁴⁶ Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 18 [40]-[41]. Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 5-6 [32]-[33], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 2-3 [11]-[13].

¹⁴⁷ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 7 [43]-[47], Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 13-4 [60]-[64], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 5-6 [22]-[23].

¹⁴⁸ Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 13-4 [60]-[64].

¹⁴⁹ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 6-7 [39]-[42], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 9-10 [52]-[56], 13 [73]-[75], Non-school based teacher 2 4 [22].

¹⁵⁰ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 13 [73]-[75].

¹⁵¹ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 6-7 [28]-[29], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 9-11 [52]-[64], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 12-14 [67]-[79], Non-school based teacher 2 3-8 [14]-[39].

¹⁵² Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 6-7 [39]-[42], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 7 [37]-[41], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 12-14 [67]-[79].

¹⁵³ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 5-6 [30]-[38], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 7 [37]-[41].

¹⁵⁴ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 7-9 [37]-[51].

¹⁵⁵ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 6-7 [28]-[29], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 7 [42], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10-1 [57]-[64].

¹⁵⁶ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 6-7 [39]-[42], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 9-11 [52]-[64], Non-school based teacher 2 4-8 [23]-[39], Deputy principal (M) Riverina 11 [59]-[60].

¹⁵⁷ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 7 [42], Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10-1 [57]-[64], Non-school based teacher 2 4-8 [23]-[39].

¹⁵⁸ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10-1 [57]-[64].

¹⁵⁹ Non-school based teacher 2 4-8 [23]-[39].

¹⁶⁰ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 7 [40]-[41], Non-school based teacher 2 5 [26].

¹⁶¹ Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 14-6 [59]-[68], Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 22-23 [55]-[60], Careers adviser (F) Northern Rivers 5 [14], Classroom teacher (F) Greater Western Sydney 5-6 [19]-[20], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 2-5 [8]-[31], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 7-8 [39]-[47], School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 12 [52]-[53], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 1-2 [6]-[13], Non-school based teacher (F) 12 [69]-[71], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 7-8 [40]-[44], Classroom teacher (M) distance education 14-5 [83]-[90], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney 4-6 [15]-[20], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 11-3 [44]-[53], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 25-6 [89]-[94].

¹⁶² Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 23 [57]-[58], Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 15 [64], [67]-[68], Careers adviser (F) Northern Rivers 5 [14], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 2 [8], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast- 7 [36]-[37], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney 5-6 [18], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 11-2 [47]-[49], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 25 [93], Principal (M) Central West 12 [56].

¹⁶³ Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 23 [57]-[58], Careers adviser (F) Northern Rivers 5 [14], Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 15 [64], [67]-[68], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 2 [8], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 6-7 [34], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney 5-6 [18], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 11-2 [47]-[49], Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 25 [93],



Principal (M) Central West 12 [56].

¹⁶⁴ Teacher librarian (M) Hunter 15 [67], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 2-3 [8]-[15], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 7 [38], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 11-3 [44]-[53].

¹⁶⁵ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 2 [11], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8 [44].

¹⁶⁶ Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 6 [33]-[39].

¹⁶⁷ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 3 [16]-[19], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 2 [12]-[13], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8-9 [45], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney 17-8 [58].

¹⁶⁸ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 3 [16]-[21], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8-9 [45].

¹⁶⁹ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 3 [16]-[21].

¹⁷⁰ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 2 [7]-[9], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8 [42], Classroom teacher (M) distance education 15 [88]-[90].

¹⁷¹ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 8 [46]-[47]. Assistant principal (F) Southern Tablelands 26 [94], Principal (M) Central West 7 [34].

¹⁷² Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 23 [59]-[60], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 3 [16]-[21], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 8 [46]-[47], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 2 [10]-[13], Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8 [41], Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney 4-5 [15], 17-8 [58], Head teacher (M) Central West 2 [7].

¹⁷³ Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers 23 [59]-[60], Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 3 [16]-[21], Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 7-8 [39]-[45], Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 2 [13], Classroom teacher (M) South Coast 11-3 [44]-[53], Classroom teacher (M) Greater Western Sydney 4 [19].

Appendix 2: Summary of evidence related to workload, time and complexity

Timothy Roberts, NEW Law

The following are excerpts from the written and oral evidence of teacher witnesses provided to the Valuing the teaching profession inquiry (Inquiry) that go to the areas of workload, time and complexity. While no additional commentary is provided, it is important to identify that these three themes, evident in all of the evidence provided by teachers, would seem to relate to every aspect of teachers' work. It is then a difficult task to isolate excerpts of teacher evidence that go to these areas and capture the breadth of teacher reflections as to workload, time, and complexity. What is perhaps more challenging is finding a distinct line between teacher's reflections on these areas.

There can be no doubt that, since the time of the last work value case,¹ teachers have identified their work was more complex, greater in volume, and that they seemingly have less available time to complete it in. However, to teachers, the boundaries between the domains of complexity, workload, and time are not distinct. As has been discussed elsewhere, teachers gave evidence that spoke to changes in curriculum requirements. Complexity for many was meeting this increase in workload, both with respect to developing an understanding of content and the preparation and documentation associated with programing and the like, in their increasingly restricted available time. The question remains, if a teacher spoke directly to the complexity of this task, in which category should an excerpt of their evidence go? Further, how can a teacher articulate the challenges associated with the volume of their work, which is workload, without doing so with respect to time constraints?

In reality, many teachers referenced more than one, if not all three, of the titular domains when reflecting on the particular issues that they had identified. While important considerations, these questions do not prevent the task from being attempted. Instead, the indistinct and often overlapping nature of these concepts is something that should always be kept in mind when reviewing the following excerpts out of

context. Further, it should be understood that when an overlap has occurred, attempts have been made to avoid repetition by placing the excerpt in the most appropriate section.

Workload

After reflecting on the significant changes associated with accountability, a primary school teacher from a Sydney school clarified the scope of what teachers consider make up their workload.

"The level of accountability I have in terms of dealing with issues that are beyond the classroom that involve my students, and also the accountability in terms of having to ensure that students who are funded by the Department when it comes to ... whether it is disabilities or additional learning needs, and even things like learning English as an additional language or dialect, that accountability in reporting that adds to my workload. So, my workload is not so much just about what I do in the classroom, but it is all the additional things that I do outside of being in front of my students to ensure that they are getting what they need from me as a teacher."²

A head teacher from a high school on the Mid North Coast described a sense of increase workload and its impact.

"I think what has created and exacerbated the limited support available for beginning teachers is the increased sense of workload. An incredible sense of 'busy-ness'. When I came to this school, I remember thinking that this was the busiest place I had worked in. There is no down time. None of it. It is not even like you finish the reporting cycle and think, 'pew that is over', and go on to continue to teach. It is on the go, from the minute you walk in the door, to the minute that you leave, to after school, 24/7. This means that you do not have time as a head teacher, or deputy, to run beginning teacher mentor programs if they ever did exist. There physically is not time to do them. This is something that I have noticed has changed over my career."³



They also identified a cycle of change as a source of workload for teachers.

“Another symptom of this is the stress and workload that is created by what seems like the ever-changing season cycle of particular practice that depends on who is in the principal’s or director’s office. After a while, it was as if I was waiting for a particular approach I liked, say project-based learning (PBL), which I was using 20 years ago, to come around into favour again.”⁴

A non-school based teacher currently working in the Department of Education agrees.

“The amount of change that the profession has had to come to terms with has been one of the most significant contributors to our workload. It used to be that change was sporadic. Now it seems to exist in every part of our work and is expected. Change is the new normal.”⁵

While change itself is not problematic and only natural to some extent given the rapid development of our world, the evolution of technology being one component of this, the rate and breadth of change that has been undertaken in all aspects of a teacher’s working life has the effect of inhibiting our ability to reflect and see if we can do things better. It is as if the goal posts keep shifting.”⁶

They also identified other contributors to workload including the great breadth of Department policies.

“Not only do teachers have to understand them in isolation, they have to understand these significant policy documents with respect to each other and within a set timeframe. This process just keeps happening and is an example of the impact of constant change. The workload associated with this should not be underestimated. The ‘What works best’ document is complex enough in itself.”⁷

A principal of a high school in western Sydney agrees that the administration of policies is a significant contributor to workload.

“It is my professionally informed view that poor policy not only increases workloads; it also tends to ‘be siloed’ rather than focusing on the needs of the ‘whole student’ or ‘whole school’.”⁸

In 2018, I co-designed an annual operational plan that is now managed by a deputy principal with key staff overseeing the annual milestones and the expenditure of funding in each area. The time and effort spent to create, implement and update this plan (which supports the school’s strategic plan) has ensured more systematic operations and work practices. It is also a revealing insight into the increasing complexity and workload required for the school to deliver the regulations and policies of the employer. With over 100 adults, 1100 students and external contractors on site each day and with a turnover of over \$11 million the school is an SME (small-medium enterprise) that is larger than many businesses in Australia. Although I can access the ‘shared services’ of the Department of Education, I am expected to understand and implement almost 1200 policies, regulations and guidelines related to the compliance and management of the school.”⁹

With specific reference to the work of head teachers, this principal also said:

“As principal, I have observed and managed the impact of educational policy change on executive staff in secondary schools. It is worth noting that the ‘concessional allowances’ for head teachers in secondary schools have not been increased since 1954 despite significantly increased workloads. Head teachers have an allocated role — curriculum; well-being; administration; teaching and learning. In addition, while increasing the head teacher curriculum accountabilities for meeting NESA requirements, there is now an expectation that head teachers would also supervise new and beginning teachers, assist more experienced teachers with accreditation, and develop professional learning, programing, assessment and registration.”¹⁰

The non-school based teacher also identified the effect on teacher workload of the recent expectations associated with marking draft and practice assessments.

“It takes a lot of time to mark and provide feedback on the essays and assessments in Stage 6 subjects, but because you want to support your students you do not cap them at one draft, you let them send you more drafts. I think it is right for some schools to bring in tighter practice around this to protect staff and their workload, but this is definitely a challenge as you are balancing this with wanting to support students and helping them to do the best they can.”¹¹

The personalisation of learning.

“The personalisation of learning has created a big workload for teachers. There is now a need to provide, prioritise, identify, and evaluate data for each student individually in real time. This is on top of a need to also incorporate student interest, culture and community in the development of lessons for students. This is part of the work I am currently doing at the Department in trying to develop support materials for teachers to show them how to use student interest, culture and community.”¹²

Accountability reforms.

“Aspects of these reforms can all be seen as positive. Accreditation, registration and external validation all have this potential. However, they are seen as just additional workload without taking something away from teachers, like face-to-face hours or other expectations that already make up their responsibility. Given the pressures that are already on teachers, there is really no other place for these additional layers of responsibility other than personal time.”¹³

The breadth of a teacher’s work needs to be looked at and we need to peel away some of the layers that have been added on. We keep adding layers to teacher workload, without stopping to review or reduce face-to-face teaching. Teachers are no

longer the master of their own domains, but more an integral part of an education system designed to provide students with rigorous, integrated and personalised learning experiences.”¹⁴

Another non-school based teacher, currently with the Department, but recently working as a classroom teacher, also reflected on how teacher accreditation has affected the work of supervising teachers.

“In addition to the perspective of beginning teachers, it is important to note that learning and becoming familiar with the Standards has added to the workload of teachers tasked with supervising them. This is an element of their duties that did not exist prior to accreditation. Here, you are required to develop your knowledge of the Standards while trying to mentor someone and lead them through the best experience in addition to your already extensive responsibilities.”¹⁵

They also identified the processes around HSC monitoring as being a contributor to workload.

“These processes do not make me a better teacher, in fact I believe too much focus on HSC Monitoring Folders either takes teachers away from their core business, teaching, or creates unrealistic workload demands on teachers who already have a significant workload. This is compounded if you teach more than one senior class, of which I have taught up to five in one year. HSC Monitoring Folders have never been my strong suit but getting students to achieve in the actual HSC is a skill of mine and I know where I would prefer to focus my efforts.”¹⁶

A school counsellor, working in the Northern Tablelands, identified the ongoing demand on teachers work, even if they get support in meeting student learning needs.

“It takes a lot of people, work and effort to come up with an effective intervention to address student learning difficulties. It requires classroom teachers to use their time to develop strategies to support a child. After strategies have been developed, an ongoing process of implementation, record keeping, and monitoring and review occurs. This is to say



that even when you come up with strategies that work well there is still workload attached to them. Teachers are not released to undertake this work.”¹⁷

In their oral evidence, a non-school based teacher expanded on the workload associated the implementation of new syllabuses.

“I had teachers and head teachers call me. They were in a small school, they’re in a faculty of one or two, and they were here trying to develop resources across years 7–10 for four years of work ... So I can really empathise with the workload for teachers that they’re not given additional time to program, and it’s enormously challenging trying to personalise learning and meet the needs of their students so that they are engaged. And we need them to be engaged so that the learning is relevant and meaningful for them and they do take that learning away with them.”¹⁸

Another non-school based teacher identified that workload is a barrier to those already busy teachers looking for accreditation at the higher levels.

“I think with the Highly Accomplished as well, there seems to be barriers in terms of what you’ve got to be able to show that you are doing. And, you know, these are things that teachers are doing all of the time, but spending the time doing that paperwork, doing all of that work around it, I think, adds on to those huge workloads that these teachers already have, is that they can see when they’re looking through those highly accomplished standards that they are meeting them, but just thinking about ‘Where do I fit that in? Where do I fit in the time to work for that process as well?’.”¹⁹

Time

For a non-school based teacher working in the Department of Education, the issue of time is tied to the pressing need for teachers to be collaborative.

“As already mentioned, there is a greater need to be collaborative in our approach to schooling in NSW. While this is a positive, like everything, this is time consuming. To be clear, the more recent

focus of taking up a collaborative approach to our work is not just restricted to the implementation of Department policies. The collaborative programming that teachers are now using is an example of how we are also being more collaborative in our teaching and learning and this extends to school planning (Strategic Improvement Plan [SIP]), marking, and reporting processes.”²⁰

All of this collaborative practice takes time to implement within the school, across schools or in the school community. We would all acknowledge that this is the right approach, but it takes time. The face-to-face responsibilities that a teacher has, or those included in a role statement, have not decreased. This means all these additional elements of our practice that are not a part of our original role statement, are just added on. A teacher’s duties, particularly their face-to-face load, have stayed the same and these things are just added on top.”²¹

They also spoke to how technology was having an impact on teacher time.

“Teachers are required to be more mobile and agile than ever before. We are now expected to have emails on our phones and be checking and responding to these emails within a few hours, or overnight and after hours. You used to be able to leave your work email at work when you walked out the door. You might have always taken marking and preparation home, but now we are expected to be constantly working when we are not at work and this expectation is just a part of standard practice.”²²

And,

“The context of this technology and the availability of resources means that teachers need to be innovative and engaging, and students are expecting lessons to be more and more engaging. This is in part because of the nature of content students are accessing online. Students are watching many short clips online and this seems to align with the conversation about students’ attention span being approximately six to eight seconds. From this, teachers are feeling the pressure to create lots of small engaging activities in a lesson and this requires a lot of creation on their part.”²³

The planning and programing side of this is much more time-consuming. Finding the website, or the resources that are available, as we have so many to choose from, is time-consuming.”²⁴

Further, they discussed the demand on a teacher’s time is in part influenced by community expectations and the increased connectivity associated with developments in technology.

“Teachers are much more visible now, there is greater community expectations on them, and this, in turn, places teachers under greater pressure and work demands. This can be seen in the support that students expect from teachers when undertaking formal assessment.”²⁵

We know that feedback has such a positive impact on students, but where does this stop? Now there is an expectation for us to give feedback on practice assessments or drafts before you even give feedback on the actual assessment task. As a teacher you are happy to do that, but that is a big demand on your time, and this is personal time.”²⁶

Feedback presents a big work demand. This is definitely something I have seen evolve over my career. You never used to contact teachers like this after school hours. The only time you would seek their advice outside of class would be in staying behind at the end of the lesson or going to see them at lunch time.”²⁷

They also identify the curriculum itself as a source of time pressure.

“The current challenge is having a curriculum that is not congruent with the pedagogy required in contemporary classrooms. The density of factual and procedural content impacts deep learning and the opportunity to really engage students in real-world problem solving. We simply do not have the time. The school curriculum is designed for the traditional classroom but being engaged with at a time when technology is transforming how learning is taking place.”²⁸

Further to comments with respect to workload identified above, this non-school based teacher identified the challenges faced by teachers in personalising learning with respect to time.

“Whether a student has a depth study, Personal Interest Project (PIP) in Society and Culture, or collaborative investigation, a teacher might be required to refine and develop a driving question for every student, on an individual student basis, in the class. This personalisation is taking a lot of time. Again, this is a good thing to be working on, but it is time consuming for teachers and has not been considered in the transitional allocation of our face-to-face time.”²⁹

While inquiry learning is typical of Stage 6, the personalisation of learning more generally is taking place across K to 12 and is an important element in supporting student engagement. However, with face-to-face time and class sizes the way they are, this is incredibly difficult to achieve.”³⁰

I say this cognisant of the different research that is out there on the subject. There is some good research regarding reduced face-to-face hours in places like Hong Kong and Singapore. Here they utilise the additional time gained in reducing a teacher’s face-to-face contact with engaging in collaborative programing, providing feedback, and mentoring students. This means that more of this work, traditionally done at home, is done at school.”³¹

Indeed, when pressed by counsel assisting Neale Dawson as to what was the most important thing that could be done to improve the status of the profession and the working day of the profession, this non-school based teacher replied:

“I think from my perspective, a new structure is needed. We need to give teachers more time. If we could reduce their face-to-face teaching hours and have a structure that’s a system structure not a school structure ... Currently, teachers have a timetable and in a high school, they have periods that they’re teaching and periods that they’re not teaching, and some teachers would refer to those as free periods. And they do in those what they



will. You know, that's normally planning, sometimes it's putting discipline slips in the system or calling parents — there's always those things to do that there's never enough time for.

But I think if we can build in time for teachers to do the things that we know make a difference to their practice and improve student outcomes, things like time to collaborate, you know, collaboratively plan the programs and reflect on assessment to collaborate on when they're marking assessment, that moderation process, because that's capacity-building for teachers, particularly young and beginning teachers that are coming into teaching. It makes them feel supported, and they're also learning from people who have perhaps more experience.

So, yeah, building in that time for collaborative practice and also time with students whether it be mentoring or providing students feedback. That was something that I always did in my lunch breaks was the students that I'd mentor I'd meet with them then. But if that could be built into the school day, if there was time for those things, I think that would be a big advantage for teachers."³²

A head teacher at a high school in the inner west of Sydney echoed these comments, with respect to the time demands associated with technology, but also highlights an international context.

"As the OECD reports, Australia has one of the highest amounts of face-to-face teaching in the world. One of the consequences of this is the limitation it places on teachers to benefit from working collaboratively and better understanding how each other has worked to address student learning with respect to technology. Instead, teachers are left to address this individually and as required for particular learning experiences. Some schools do address this issue well. However, the sheer amount of hours we are expected to be in front of a class really prevents any extensive and authentic collaboration. As such, a teacher is required to plan effectively to meet this need in their own time."³³

Similarly, they identify time as an important factor in the Department's expectations with respect to data.

"It is worth noting that the development and sharing of the skills needed to break down this data is not something that has been centrally supported by the Department. While CESE has provided some tools, the more practical repackaging of data is something that teachers have had to learn to do themselves and reliant on their goodwill in finding both the necessary time and resources. If the Department genuinely wanted to support this type of approach, they should provide release time for teachers."³⁴

When questioned by Mr Lee about whether there had been any changes to a teacher's allocation of teaching time to meet data demands, this head teacher said the following:

"There isn't any additional time that has been allocated. So, our school and a lot of schools will use, like faculty meeting times or staff meeting times or some school development day sessions to sort of do the professional learning on data and for teachers to analyse the data. So, with the growing analysis of data I guess there hasn't been any additional time being given to teachers.

Our face-to-face teaching hours are still exactly the same as when I started teaching in 2007. I think exactly the same many years before 2007 as well. The amount of work and the complexity of work has definitely increased, and data is an example of that and teachers — we all want to do the best for our students. We know that the data does help us to teach them better. We know the data helps the students learn better.

We just fit that in. I know when I was repackaging the Best Start year 7 data, that was done on the weekend because you do need, like, a quite continuous block of time to be able to do that sort of work. And doing it in your nonteaching periods when there's, we have 50-minute periods at our school. Fifty minutes here and 50 minutes there you can't do it, like, you can't give it justice if you do it in that one-off time ... I think it's one thing to analyse the data. I also emphasise you also need to discuss what your

findings are, once you have that data. You have to discuss that with your colleagues.

That collaboration time, I think is really needed. And at the moment it's just done after school. It's done. I know there's a lot of teachers who will have a teachers' Google classroom group and doing that at 8pm at night time they're talking to each other, you know. 'In this test my students did this, my mean was this, my standard deviation was that, how does that compare with your class? I want to know that my class is travelling at the same pace as the rest of the year 7s'. There's a lot of activity on that teacher Google classroom on the weekends and after work hours.

There's just no time in the school day to fit that kind of work in. When we are still teaching the same amount of face-to-face teaching hours ... We just do it in our additional time. Because we know how much value it is. And all teachers just want to do their absolute best for their kids, so we end up just doing it a lot on the weekends and at eight at night."³⁵

A principal of a western Sydney high school expanded on their written evidence with respect to workload to highlight the impact of 'administrivia' on a teacher's time:

"My understanding is that the last time head teacher allowances in secondary schools were reviewed was 1954 and that was the year I was born. So, I do think it's timely that we do look at the workload in intensification, particularly for our middle management and we have to find ways to, I think, we have to find ways, we believe we're working towards some, find ways to make it a [way] to perhaps share the load more, work on secession planning but also build a capacity of other young leaders coming through.

I have a personal view that the quality of our graduates and our teachers who are coming into our schools at present, they are working at a very high level already and it's not just the graduate standards, it's the fact that many of them have Masters degrees, they've undertaken research,

they understand evidence and they are looking for opportunity and it doesn't necessarily; salary is not always what they're looking for. The work of Michael Fulham almost 30 years ago indicated that teachers actually need to feel a deep sense of work satisfaction to stay in the profession.

It's when you overload them with trivia and administrivia and expect each one of them, for example, to manage a cost centre within the accounting software, that's not their work and there are really clever administrative staff who are working at a paraprofessional level who can do much of that work and that's their work and they like to do it and that's where they want to work and we're freeing our teachers up to have the time that they need. My view is that they need more time than they're getting but we have to, if this is the time that's been allocated, then what principals need to do and what's our incredibly difficult work to do is to find ways to make the work that they do, the work that has impact on teaching and learning and outcomes for kids."³⁶

A head teacher from a high school on the Mid North Coast advised that limited time was impacting the ability of teachers to mentor and support others.

"Mentors should be on a reduced teaching load, at least the equivalent of a head teacher. Further, there needs to be a system, inbuilt into the timetable, where the beginning teacher and their head teacher are off at the same time. This only needs to be an hour. However, this time needs to be treated sacredly and dedicated to mentoring time where we talk about all the things that are bothering you and solutions to the problem, or whatever resources they may need."³⁷

At the moment this is restricted to hallway conversations or some rare moments at lunch time. This sometimes gives me only 10 minutes, time I would otherwise use to eat lunch, to drill down into a problem as complex as unpicking why a teacher might be having a terrible time."³⁸



The western Sydney principal identified previously agrees, describing the limitations on both collaboration and support for beginning teachers.

“I want the profession to have very high standards for itself. I want people who actually can string a few sentences together and annotate their evidence. I want it for our students, but I also want it for our teachers and I think the trick is not that it’s complex, I think we need to have really good sharing of excellent practice across the system but the fact that we don’t create the time that people need, even with the time allowances that beginning teachers have. It’s often insufficient and it’s very important to create time for them to work on their accreditation but also it’s very important for schools to use their own resource and find ways.”³⁹

A school counsellor in south western Sydney echoed this in their reflections on the support available to beginning teachers.

“The success of these teachers really depends on the collegial nature of the teaching staff at a school. It will certainly add to the pressure if you happen to be at a school which is not supportive. The concern then, given the increasing pressure on all teachers in schools, is whether their colleagues will be able to have time to be collegial. This support is essential given beginning teachers are not able to benefit from the district office support that I was able to benefit from when I started.”⁴⁰

They also reflected on the time pressures associated with the policy Every Student, Every School.

“One of the biggest changes in my teaching and school counselling career has been the introduction of Every Student, Every School. This came along with the idea that every teacher needed to be upskilled enough to cater for the vast array of learning, behavioural and emotional needs of all the students in their classroom. Rather than have specialists come into the classroom to work with the class teacher and offer support and/or strategies, the teacher was expected to do training in their own time, and mostly online, in order to upskill themselves to cater for these needs.”⁴¹

Another school counsellor, from the Northern Tablelands, identified a lack of time was a concern for school counsellors in their work.

“Despite the value and importance of the role of the school counsellor, there are not enough school counsellors allocated to public schools in NSW. This results in us not having enough time to put in place proactive strategies around mental health in schools and, instead, reacting to crises as they emerge. The pattern of our work is that we plan our day in advance around which students we will work with but very often such plans are abandoned to address critical issues that present themselves on the day.”⁴²

The many and ongoing crises that regularly occur means that there is little opportunity to be strategic about counselling interventions. Nor is there enough time to provide regular and consistent counselling support to students who require such intervention to address their needs. These crises include student self-harm, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and responding to disclosures of abuse.”⁴³

A classroom teacher from a primary school on the Mid North Coast identified the limitations of the available release time:

“There is not one teacher in my school, or even in my broader group of teacher acquaintances, that would not be spending several hours a week working at home out of school hours. Preparing and marking assessments, writing reports, communicating with parents, preparing lessons for the next day, reflecting on lessons, writing and refining your teaching program, editing your Professional Development Plan (PDP), reflecting on your PDP, and meeting the supposed legal requirements mentioned earlier, is all work that needs to be conducted outside of school hours.”⁴⁴

Teachers are not given additional release time to do this work. As the complexity of these tasks increase, and layers of more tasks are added on to existing responsibilities, the expectation of teachers to use their own time grows.”⁴⁵

Primary school teachers get two hours a week as release from face-to-face time (RFF). However, no teacher would actually get their full allotment of time to work on any of this material. For one, the teacher who is covering your class might be late, or a child might need your attention, or you might be asked to assist a colleague. It is a lovely idea that we are to use this time to work on all our admin tasks and lesson plans. However, this is never a reality.”⁴⁶

A teacher from the Northern Rivers also spoke to the limited time available to year advisers/ coordinators when responding to a question from Dr Kavanagh, as to whether there was anyone attached to a year group to assist coordinating communications.

“There is a person, there are year coordinators. They do a fantastic job. But they receive a small allowance, and the sheer amount of time that they are dedicating to that role already, to add something else of that scale, would be; it would crush them. Already at our school we have expressions of interest each year for the incoming year 7 student year adviser, every year it’s getting harder to find one. Every year they are like, ‘I’m already doing too much. I can’t be the year coordinator’. It’s a fantastic role. You develop fantastic relationships with those students. You follow them all the way through to year 12. The parents are super supportive and the relationship you have with them is excellent. It’s a fantastic facility, but it is undervalued and under supported at this point in time.”⁴⁷

A high school teacher seconded to the Department also spoke to the complex and time-limited work of teachers in the year advisor role.

“You want to help your students. Not just with their outcomes, their learning outcomes, you want to help them develop as people. You would have read this in the statements, kids are coming to school with really complex needs. A lot of the time our year advisers, if I can speak about year advisers, they are triaging kids with significant mental health issues on a daily basis, if not multiple times a day. And then to read something in the paper about you somehow not being good enough, is really demoralising and

really disheartening. Anything that can improve the status of teachers, I think, is always welcome.”⁴⁸

More broadly, they spoke to the cost of teachers not having adequate time to do their work.

“All of the administration that you have, data collection, data reporting, you know, parent emails and even just thinking, teachers want to spend time on their core business, which is teaching and learning. And these additional tasks take them away from doing that. And ultimately, who loses in that is students. If their teachers are so pushed to be doing all of these other requirements, and they are not spending that time on teaching and learning, no one benefits in that system.”⁴⁹

A retired head teacher and casual from Sydney spoke to limited time as a factor when implementing policy.

“I think time is the issue. If we’re expected to change any element of our teaching practice because of a policy that’s being implemented or something is being changed, then we need time to digest it, find its worth, and implement things appropriately and in a scaled format, so that it’s not expected, you know, within a timeframe that’s unachievable because there are so many other deadlines that we have to meet on a daily and term by term basis.

Sometimes these expectations are unrealistic and that puts an enormous amount of work pressure and stress on teachers, and middle management teachers, in particular. From my experience, policy implementation lies with head teachers to a very high degree, particularly the recent change to the way schools are doing their reports, they’re reporting on themselves now. We have to do that in terms of every year set milestones and goals and show that we’ve achieved them. There’s these levels of complexity associated with just being a teacher in a school that disallows us enough time to spend to really get to the bottom of those sorts of changes. It’s difficult.”⁵⁰



A primary school classroom teacher, from a school in the inner west of Sydney, made a clear recommendation to the panel regarding time.

“One of my recommendations is that primary classroom teachers be given release from face-to-face teaching that is parity with our secondary teachers. Secondary teachers get a far greater share of their teaching load as time in order to prepare for lessons or complete that accountability point of view. And so, as primary classroom teachers, I get two hours a week and I need to fit everything that I do outside of the classroom within that two hours, otherwise I’m spending time after school, before school, doing that. So, whether it is holding meetings or completing my own professional development, and so forth.”⁵¹

They later identified what teachers would best use this time for.

“I would probably say the most useful time that we get as primary classroom teachers is to be able to plan and work with other teachers within the school to ensure that we are consistent in our practice and what we are doing in our classroom. You know, being able to spend that time to work together to either plan or program what it is we are doing. Sometimes it might be needing to speak to the learning and support team because I have a student with complex needs.

So, being able to collaborate with other teachers within the school during that period. Sometimes you might need that time to finish off an online module that’s worth four hours or however many hours that it is to complete. So, I mean, it probably needs to be flexible to the teachers needs and requirements, but I’d say the biggest thing would be to work with other teachers to ensure that you can use that time effectively, so the students within that school have some consistency.”⁵²

Complexity

A non-school based teacher working in the Department of Education said, after discussing the broader environment of continual change:

“Added to this context is the fact that the work that we do is more cognitively complex in itself. There are a large number of things that we need to be across and there are layers to everything that we do. This includes layers of additional policy, evidence-based practices, and reporting requirements that we must be constantly cognisant of in all our work. This is not to say that these are bad things, but just that they have definitely changed the nature of our work.”⁵³

In a preceding paragraph they gave some further indication of what those layers are.

“An aspect of this is well-being, which has become a significant issue impacting the learning of our students. In addition to having to be across this issue, other layers also add to the complexity of our work. These include the professional development we must undertake and our accreditation requirements. Further, we have to take part in the registration of the schools we work in and the new Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) process in schools.”⁵⁴

And continued, in what was a section of their statement they called ‘Added complexity’, to discuss the role of data in this notion.

“Part of this relates to fact that data drives everything that we do, both in our business as usual, everyday things that we do, and what we report on. This might include developing correspondence in a non-school based role or, in a school setting, things like attendance, documentation and teaching and learning. Every decision that we make, at every level, needs to be justified and driven by data. What is more, data is not only collected and reported on, but needs to be made visual to be meaningful.”⁵⁵
Whilst evidence-based practice is ultimately a good thing, and the reporting requirements that justify the decisions that we are making are really valuable,

I believe it makes everything that we do just that more complex. What is more, to this we continue to add layers on top. The Department continues to produce great documents, templates, and support documents. As valuable as they may be, they just keep adding layers to what we do and take nothing away from existing expectations on our practice.”⁵⁶

A principal from a western Sydney high school agrees that data has played a role in complexity.

“With senior departmental staff using the limited data sources based on available statewide and national measures; external target setting and macro targets applied to individual schools, my work as a principal is increasingly complex. Ensuring that school-based and professional colleagues understand, for example, the complexity of ‘intervening variables’ and ‘cohort variation’ is only one part of the role of the principal working in the current context of educational measurement.”⁵⁷

The same non-school based teacher, identified previously, described how the curriculum has added to the complexity that teachers have to face in contemporary classrooms.

“Our curriculum has become more complex and crowded. For example, NSW now has the additional layers of the Australian Curriculum and the ‘learning across the curriculum’ content which includes both general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.”⁵⁸

These layers require additional professional learning, planning, and assessment and reporting to make sure we embed literacy and numeracy and general capabilities in all KLAs. This means that teachers are needing to focus on horizontal alignment and integration, as well as vertical alignment as traditionally understood in the progression of conceptual learning.”⁵⁹

They give the specific example of the depth study.

“The depth study itself is an example of the complexity of teaching practice that teachers are called upon to implement. A high level of practice is required of teachers to wrestle with this concept.

Naturally, this will require a lot of support for teachers in terms of professional learning to help them be assured that they have the skills to help students’ research.”⁶⁰

While complex, I feel that this is the way of the future. Students will need these skills, like domain-specific inquiry learning, critical thinking, and digital literacy. At the moment we tend to assume that students have these skills without explicitly teaching them. This will require a fair bit of work, but this is not a reason not to pursue this end, it is about making sure that the support is there and hopefully it will be.”⁶¹

Another non-school based teacher working with the Department also commented on the increased complexity of the curriculum in NSW.

“I obtained the Graduate Certificate of Teaching Asia from the Australia National University in 2013 with the assistance of a Department scholarship ... This type of expertise is called upon as ‘Australia’s Engagement with Asia’ is a priority area in the Australian Curriculum and has been adopted into the NSW curriculum.”⁶²

While a useful point of difference in my faculty, the necessity of this type of expertise is an example of the complex nature of issues that teachers now have to wrestle with, both in understanding and incorporating into teaching practice. Not every teacher has to undergo such training. However, these and other perspectives are a curriculum requirement that must be met.”⁶³

They added, echoing a point made by another non-school based teacher in the section relating to workload, that the Department’s expected pedagogical approach, as evidenced by documents like *What works best: Evidence-based practices to help improve NSW student performance*, has become more complex.

“The teaching practice it speaks to is incredibly complex. Even if teachers are engaged with the document and actively want to improve their practice, it is not an overnight fix. Implementation



will depend on the class you have or, if you are a high school teacher, the different kinds of classes you have. An approach that worked with one year 8 class might not work with the next year 8 class. This means you will need to reflect on and fine tune your approach. Having a look at how I make that work in my own context and day-to-day practice, to meet the varied learning needs of students, is a complex and time-consuming task.”⁶⁴

A head teacher from a high school in the inner west of Sydney said the following regarding a solution to issues associated with complexity:

“I believe that schools must be given greater scope for facilitating collaboration given the increasing complexity of our work. This is particularly true in the context of a restrictive, and somewhat antiquated, timetable and the introduction of programs like ICT safety, digital citizenship and project-based learning that are cross-curricular in nature. This in itself requires time to plan and organise for ongoing implementation.”⁶⁵

Further, they also describe the impact of technology on the work of teachers.

“I remember this rapidly changed when I was leaving [school name] in 2009 and the Digital Education Revolution (DER) was being implemented across NSW public schools. As I recall, towards term 4 all students in the year 9 cohort got the first batch of the little red Lenovo laptops. I believe this was the start of the rapid implementation and increase in complexity of technology being used in schools. Here, basically, all teachers and students got the little Lenovo laptops. However, when DER came out there was no infrastructure, such as wi-fi, to support its implementation. Teachers would have to work around these limitations and distribute files with USBs.”⁶⁶

For this head teacher, the complexity was heightened with the implementation of the successor to the DER program.

“The successor to the DER program, which ended in 2013, was the BYOD policy. DER concluded while

I was at [school name] and the school became one of the first schools to transition to BYOD. Given the low socioeconomic status (SES) of the community we could not implement BYOD fully. The complexity here relates to the Department’s withdrawal of its central support to schools in relation to technology.

This includes both the loss of the Technology Support Officer (TSO) and the provision of personal computers for all students. The SES of [school name] was such that we could not ask students and their parents to provide laptops for their schooling if some of them could not afford a device. As a school we had to assess who of the students could afford a laptop and who could bring their own. Given the lack of central support it fell on the school, through their equity funding, to provide devices for the students who could not afford them.”⁶⁷

The result of this policy was such that when entering a classroom, a teacher was faced with the prospect of having 12 students that have their own but different devices and the rest of the class that would be sharing a school device. Given the investment of many of the students and their families in such a device, it was not an option for a teacher faced with this challenge to not use the technology in their lesson. However, when planning a lesson, a teacher would have to meet the complexity of utilising these devices in a way that did not disadvantage those students without their own personal device.”⁶⁸

Further, they identify that this adds to the complexity associated with the individualisation of learning experiences.

“The complexity of this task grows when you take into account that a teacher will likely be accommodating many other specific learning needs in the class. As such, a teacher has the increasingly complex task of not only planning and preparing for the myriad of ways in which individual students engage with a lesson, but also the specific technology being used in the current operation of the BYOD policy.”⁶⁹

The principal from a western Sydney high school, identified above, agrees and adds that this personalisation applies to parents and the community as well.

“In my role as principal, it is no longer sufficient to provide parent/teacher nights, recognition assemblies and telephone contacts with parents whose children are causing concern or have concerns. There is a reasonable expectation from parents and community members that they (and their children) should have a ‘personalised approach’. Shifting to this type of approach is important; it is also complex.”⁷⁰

The second non-school based teacher, identified above, agrees that the expected level of contact with parents is an added complexity.

“A development that has added to the complexity of my work as a classroom teacher has been the role of technology in increasing access that parents have to teachers. For instance, parents often email on a whim. If they have an office job where they may have extended access to a computer throughout the day, they often expect an instant response, even outside of school hours. Checking and responding to emails as a teacher can easily add an hour to your workday outside of your teaching activities.”⁷¹

As a retired head teacher from Sydney describes, the issue of individualisation is particularly relevant for students with specific learning needs.

“Making accommodations for some of these needs is a relatively simple task. This is the case for visual learners employing the use of diagrams or videos. However, other needs such as vision impairment or hearing loss, are more difficult to accommodate. The complexity of planning for such a class can be mind boggling and teachers are now tested by this reality on a daily basis. Extra work for every lesson every day.”⁷²

The head teacher from a high school in inner western of Sydney, identified above, describes the impact of technology on teachers’ work beyond the classroom.

“I can think of no other organisation the size of a school, almost 1300 people when counting staff and students in the case of [school name], with the range and complexity of technology being used, that would have no or a part-time technical support person. Despite there being no centrally provided support for the upkeep and maintenance of both the infrastructure and software that accompanies technology in schools, this support is still required.

In order to continue to benefit from the advantages associated with integrating more technology into teaching practice, the teaching staff themselves end up filling this gap in addition to their other responsibilities. The continual addition of responsibilities like this contribute to the complex nature of the work of teachers.”⁷³

As everyone has laptops and widespread access to interactive whiteboards or screens in classrooms, the way that teachers are presenting material to the class has changed. This includes the way that teachers are differentiating instruction now that you have this technology. While the nature and complexity of these changes has already been mentioned, it has meant that the professional learning for technology has had to become more complex.

In [school name], 2010, the professional learning I was delivering was basic. It was related to solving questions like, how do you use Adobe Acrobat? How do you use Word and OneNote? What I am now doing is much more complex. At the moment this might be solving problems like, how do you use an iPad with your laptop while you are on Zoom and how do you control your main Zoom session with your laptop and also then join the Zoom with your iPad so you can annotate with your Apple Pencil in combination with your laptop? The incredible complexity of what is expected of professional development with respect to technology reflects the incredible complexity of what teachers are doing in the classroom with technology.”⁷⁴



As a Senior Psychologist Education in south-wester Sydney identifies, school counsellors also have limited time to do their work and this has consequences for the teaching staff more broadly.

"The sheer amount of work that a school counsellor needs to get through means that we must prioritise. The demands on our time are such that we can no longer afford to spend time addressing the relatively low-level counselling work traditionally associated with the role. This includes addressing behaviour and general student welfare, such as students who have been identified as having a lack of food or inadequate amenities at home.⁷⁵

These issues must be sent to a year adviser, head teacher or other appropriate role in the school to address. Instead, our time is taken up by the students with more urgent or pressing matters. This includes suicide, suicidal ideation, non-suicidal self-injury, domestic violence, homelessness and pregnancy. This has the effect of meaning that every day is a full-on day. Constantly dealing with, and triaging students with high levels of need impacts on the overall well-being of counselling staff.⁷⁶

¹ Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award [2004] NSWIRComm 114

² Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney.

³ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 12 [71]- [72].

⁴ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 17 [101].

⁵ Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [15].

⁶ Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [16].

⁷ Non-school based teacher (F) 6 [34].

⁸ Principal (F) western Sydney 5 [24].

⁹ Principal (F) western Sydney 9-10 [34].

¹⁰ Principal (F) western Sydney 8 [31].

¹¹ Non-school based teacher (F) 8 [44].

¹² Non-school based teacher (F) 10 [56].

¹³ Non-school based teacher (F) 13 [76].

¹⁴ Non-school based teacher (F) 13 [77].

¹⁵ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) 6 [30].

¹⁶ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) 15 [73].

¹⁷ School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 14 [67].

¹⁸ Non-school based teacher (F) Transcript 6.

¹⁹ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) Transcript 9.

²⁰ Non-school based teacher (F) 6 [37].

²¹ Non-school based teacher (F) 8 [38].

²² Non-school based teacher (F) 7 [39].

²³ Non-school based teacher (F) 12 [66].

²⁴ Non-school based teacher (F) 12 [66].

²⁵ Non-school based teacher (F) 7 [42].

²⁶ Non-school based teacher (F) 7 [43].

²⁷ Non-school based teacher (F) 8 [45].

²⁸ Non-school based teacher (F) 8 [48].

²⁹ Non-school based teacher (F) 9 [57].

³⁰ Non-school based teacher (F) 9 [58].

³¹ Non-school based teacher (F) 9 [59].

³² Non-school based teacher (F) Transcript 13.

³³ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4 [10].

³⁴ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 13 [57].

³⁵ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney Transcript 7-8.

³⁶ Principal (F) western Sydney Transcript 6.

³⁷ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10 [58].

³⁸ Head teacher (F) Mid North Coast 10 [59].

³⁹ Principal (F) western Sydney Transcript 10.

⁴⁰ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 7 [29].

⁴¹ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 12 [54].

⁴² School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 7 [31].

⁴³ School counsellor (M) Northern Tablelands 7 [32].

⁴⁴ Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 9 [46].

⁴⁵ Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 9 [47].

⁴⁶ Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 9 [48].

⁴⁷ Classroom teacher (M) Northern Rivers Transcript.

⁴⁸ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) Transcript 18.

⁴⁹ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) Transcript 12.

⁵⁰ Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney Transcript 3-4.

⁵¹ Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney Transcript 14.

⁵² Classroom Teacher (M) Inner West of Sydney Transcript 18.

⁵³ Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [20].

⁵⁴ Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [18].

⁵⁵ Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [21].

⁵⁶ Non-school based teacher (F) 3 [18].

⁵⁷ Principal (F) western Sydney 5 [23].

⁵⁸ Non-school based teacher (F) 8 [46].

⁵⁹ Non-school based teacher (F) 8 [47].

⁶⁰ Non-school based teacher (F) 9 [52].

⁶¹ Non-school based teacher (F) 9 [53].

⁶² Non-school based teacher 2 (F) 2 [11]-[12].

⁶³ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) 2 [13].

⁶⁴ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) 11 [55].

- ⁶⁵ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 4 [16].
⁶⁶ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 5 [26].
⁶⁷ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 6 [26].
⁶⁸ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 6 [27].
⁶⁹ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 11 [44].
⁷⁰ Principal (F) western Sydney 10 [35].
⁷¹ Non-school based teacher 2 (F) 13 [67]
⁷² Casual teacher (M) South West Sydney 9 [39].
⁷³ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 9 [38].
⁷⁴ Head teacher (F) Inner West of Sydney 10 [40].
⁷⁵ Senior Psychologist Education (F) South West Sydney 11 [39].
⁷⁶ Senior Psychologist Education [10]-[13].



Appendix 3: Summary of evidence relating to COVID-19 workload

Timothy Roberts, NEW Law

The following is a sample of de-identified excerpts from teacher witness statements that reflect the challenges faced by schools and teachers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preparation of learning experiences through COVID-19

A relieving assistant principal from a primary school on the Mid North Coast described the work associated with moving to learning from home, and some community contexts that resulted in additional complexity as follows:

“The community of our school is predominately from a low socioeconomic background. As not all of our families have access to a computer, let alone the internet, we were not able to transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead we were required to develop and send out packs of work that contained resources and hard copies for students to complete.

As the relieving assistant principal for Stage 1, the pack that my team were organising included a deck of cards, counters, colouring in pencils, lead pencils, a hundreds chart, a handwriting chart, and a work book. This was pretty much everything they would need for remote lessons. We had to assume that they did not have access to any, even the most basic, resources at home as we just could not be sure of what each household could readily access.

It was my task to source and purchase the resources that went into these packs. I was lucky enough to find bulk card decks for sale on eBay. However, this had to be done for every item, including bulk pencils and bulk workbooks. What is more, we also had to go about the extensive task of actually going into the school and putting them all together then take them to the Post Office to be sent out to students.

Preparing the learning materials, and the packs themselves, required a significant amount of effort and we had an extremely limited timeframe to complete it. What is more, to make this happen teachers had to work at school during the holidays to put it all together. Beyond this effort, it was also expensive, costing thousands of dollars. In addition to the expense of the material that went into the packs, the postage itself was costly as they were so heavy.”¹

A primary school classroom teacher from the Mid North Coast made similar but more extensive comments regarding the impact of COVID-19 on teachers’ work (references removed):

“It seems to be that every school is interpreting the rules in their own way and the Department has brushed their hands of the ultimate responsibility. Part of this is reflected in my colleagues lamenting the changes that have occurred since Local Schools, Local Decisions and COVID-19 is a perfect example of the result of such a policy.

Being regional, the area that I teach in is not the most affluent of places. What is more, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic there were already concerns regarding the limited connectivity to the internet that students and their families could access in normal circumstances. Despite this, the Department was asserting in all its media statements and materials that all students in NSW will have the same access to the same unit of work and that none will be disadvantaged. Ultimately, the message to schools that we received far later than the general public received messages was something to the effect of ‘you know your context, you do what seems best for your students and their families’.

At my school, given the aforementioned socioeconomic context and where families have between three and five children sometimes, we

could not possibly have assumed that every child would have the internet and a device to do their learning at home. Even if they did have internet access, they are not all going to have four or five computers for the kids to use all day long. We did look to loaning devices, but we could not get enough of the wi-fi dongles that would ensure internet access. Even in the event we could, some of our families live in particular parts of the area that they would not get reception anyway. What is more, this was also a community impacted directly by the recent bushfires.

Our main form of learning was paper packs that were sent home or picked up from the school. Teachers then made phone calls to each family to check in over a two-week period. This compares to friends and colleagues of mine in other schools in Newcastle, Sydney, and even locally, talking about how they are on Zoom constantly, having a lesson three times a day and then moving to an open forum where the students can jump in and out and ask their teacher any questions if needed. This is clearly not the experience of every student in every school.

The question remains then as to how the Department could promise that each student would access the same unit of work and no student would be disadvantaged. In the end it was the principals of local schools who had to face the situation based off the vague communications of the Department.

The process of going to home learning, and back again, involved a considerable workload. I struggle to grasp why the Department, as one employer for so many professionals across the state, with experts in every curriculum area of teaching, left every teacher to develop their own version of this home learning unit.

There were really no substantive resources made available. Those resources that were provided were limited and only made available weeks after we went to home learning. I also found them to be so generic that I questioned their applicability to the modern classroom, not to mention many of these resources relied on the child and their family having ongoing internet access. This did not seem realistic

and felt as if the Department was disconnected from its workforce.

Added to this was the fact that there was no real acknowledgment of our efforts. The Department would suggest that teachers were doing so well through this time. However, I found it hard to accept this praise as I knew, because they had not checked in on us in any substantive way, that the Department had no way of knowing this.

My school has, for many years, taken the position that textbooks are not required. We have not expended our own resources or required students to buy them. This is a decision based on the pedagogical approaches in the school which, depending on the teacher, reflect the student's specific needs or response to material. This is not to say that we do not use close studies of literary texts and the like.

The implication of this in the COVID-19 pandemic was that it was not as easy as asking the students to come and grab their Maths, English, and Science textbooks. Instead, it was the daunting realisation that we had to create all the material for the lessons from scratch. This had to be prepared two weeks in advance and involved photocopying ream upon ream of paper. While unavoidable, this was certainly at odds with the school's recent program relating to environmental awareness and saving paper and plastic. Instead, the focus was on sending home as much as we possibly could to keep the students occupied. We were not given extra time to complete this work."²

A classroom teacher from a Sydney high school provided a perspective from a secondary setting.

"While a truism, it is important to highlight that teachers are human. This means that they are experiencing all of the stresses and strains of the uncertainty this time during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is with respect to both their own life and their family life.

At the same time as this, teachers were called upon to adapt their long-term practice, extremely quickly. In addition to adapting the lesson content itself, they



were required to pick up new skills, particularly with respect to using a variety of new software programs, to deliver this content. Notable programs included Zoom and streaming services. To maintain the continuity of student learning, this had to be done within a week. What is more, it takes a significant amount of time to develop the content itself. This includes the time needed to use certain online programs to record mini lectures of material so that they could be uploaded, and for students to be able to access them at any time.

It is important to highlight the difference in skill set that teachers were required to engage with compared to other professions. For teachers it is not about just knowing how to use these platforms, it is also about using them in a way that is engaging for students. Being able to do both of these things was really challenging.

For a lot of teachers who were not using technology or delivering content this way to students, having to switch over to doing this was especially challenging. In speaking from my own personal experience in this time, this impacted on my own teaching as I am, in keeping with my collegial obligations, having to provide support and professional development to my colleagues who may have struggled with this change or, at the very least, were not particularly familiar with these platforms.

To say this another way, while we were all called upon to upskill in certain ways during this process, the stresses and strains are not just with those teachers, who may not be familiar with these platforms, it also rests with those who are called upon to support those teachers in the transition. People like me who may have some level of familiarity with these technologies, are called upon to be a part of the process of upskilling their own colleagues so that they can deliver content to students.

Prior to COVID, I was delivering content through Google Classroom and working with other colleagues to move other classes to this platform. This proved to be fortunate as we had some skill set in the school. However, the rapid and significant shift to only this platform pushed even this level of preparedness to the extreme.”³

As a school counsellor from south-western Sydney explains, this transition to learning from home did not just affect classroom teachers:

“Along with the rest of the teaching profession, school counsellors needed to learn new methods of communicating with not only colleagues but also students and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was initially done through email and/or telephone to check in with vulnerable students either directly to the student themselves or through the parent. The Department rolled out a teleconferencing platform called ‘Coviu’ and gave us some training into how to use it to contact students and/or parents. We were expected to do the training and then begin using this platform.

There has been some suggestion that we will be expected to continue to use this platform when students have returned to school as a way of communicating with school refusers or other students with mental health difficulties. This would be a change in our role given it currently does not include conducting therapy sessions with a student who is not at school.”⁴

A teacher from a Northern Tablelands high school also described some of the challenges associated with the transition and the effect this had on their colleagues.

“One of the most difficult times with respect to teaching during COVID-19 was when we were supervising students in the classroom and teaching online at the same time. What we were expected to do in a matter of days, we went about doing because of our desire to help the kids.

The full impact of this time only really hit us when we sat back at the end of the term and reflected. It was at this time that we could have marvelled at the work that we had done in essentially just picking up the ball and running with it. However, it was also at this time that the Government announced that they would be freezing the wages of teachers.

This was incredibly disheartening and made me question what they thought of the frontline workers, people like nurses, midwives, and teachers. This

also came with the realisation that while we had public support and appreciation, if we dared kick up a stink because of the issue of pay we would lose this support.

Obviously, this was a difficult time for everyone, not just teachers. However, for teachers there was an expectation that we changed everything about our work without much support from the Department.”⁵

However, they did note that COVID-19 brought some temporary change regarding the community’s perception of teacher work.

“The COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement for students to do their schooling from home did bring some temporary shift in the community to a greater appreciation of teachers and their work. However, I question whether it has remained so. There is a lack of understanding and a lack of appreciation for the work of teachers. This is often highlighted in the general comments that it is a 9am to 3pm job with lots of holidays.

A friend of mine was telling me of a comment a hairdresser made to the effect that this person was extremely displeased that, so soon after students were just doing their schooling from home, parents had to have the students back for the holiday. It was her opinion that the least teachers could do was be at school for a few weeks extra. At the very least this highlights a limited understanding of the work we do and a lack of value in education.”⁶

A high school classroom teacher working in a distance education setting, agrees.

“There seems to be a lack of understanding of what we truly actually do. I believe that parents and the community are really starting to see this and how tough the profession actually is. Mind you, after only five weeks of distance education and online learning, the community was relatively vocal about wanting to get students back into school.”⁷

The nature of their work in distance education meant this teacher also had a particularly well-informed perspective of the work required of teachers in moving to learning from home.

“Given the nature of our work, I would say that our school, like the other six distance education centres across the state, were the best prepared to meet the pivot to the delivery of online learning. Here, we had many resources and an understanding of what was required in its successful delivery.

I look at my colleagues in other schools and they had to start at ground zero where we had a bit of a stepping stone to begin with. We had to transfer our online and distance education practice across to our 650 students in the face-to-face setting and cater to them. We were lucky in a sense that we had a good framework to start with. However, if anything this highlights the magnitude of the task that my colleagues in schools across NSW had to grapple with.

I have already gone into a general sense of the work that is required to provide distance education, and the rest of the profession were essentially required to do that within days. They had to make distance education a reality for everyone. This would have been horrible. There was still a huge amount of work doing this for our face-to-face students, but I count myself lucky in comparison to my colleagues in other schools.

They had to start from square one and learn the things that we already had quite a lot of knowledge in. For instance, when we had to put our students on to the platform Canvas, we could do so relatively easily as we already had resources where we could get them all on to Canvas. That being said we still had to teach them how to use it, and reach out and contact them, but we were the lucky ones in relation to that. There is only a handful of distance education schools in the state, for the remaining two thousand odd schools it would have been tough.

The resilience of our teachers through this time has really shone through ... To their credit teachers did front up despite this risk. As teachers we do this for the sake of our students and to protect, care for, and educate them. It is my hope that as we move through this pandemic, my colleagues will get all the recognition they deserve in ensuring things kept running at this extraordinary time in our history.”⁸



Communicating with families through COVID-19

A relieving assistant principal from a primary school on the Mid North Coast described the work they undertook attempting to communicate with some families during this time.

“In the process of addressing each pack we discovered that a lot of families had not updated their details with the school. Further, even after posting to the addresses we had on record, a number of the packs came back. We had to resort to the other available details to try and contact these families. However, for some we did not even have the right phone details. This meant we had to resort to getting in touch with emergency contacts and the like to ensure that students received these packs.

Despite trying all reasonable efforts, we could not get through to some families at all. In a portion of these cases, this amounted to a welfare concern as we were not able to contact parents and carers to confirm the child was safe. In other circumstances, this meant we just had to wait for them to contact us.

In some of these situations, and due, in part, to the time constraints, I had to make up new packs, drive around the area and deliver them myself. Some students came back from home learning to advise that they did not receive the packs at all. All we could do in these situations is ask the children to get their parents to update their contact details with the school, so it did not happen again.

If it was not so serious, as it relates to the access of students to their education, it would be almost humorous to think that in the community of our school there is a random selection of people who received and did not return a deck of cards, coloured pencils, and, in addition to the rest of the work pack for year 1 and 2 students, some colouring in to pass the time in the pandemic.”⁹

Further, they noted:

“When contacting parents, I found that many of those that we were calling just wanted to have a chat. These members of our school community might include a single parent who has been isolated for an extended period with only their kids and are potentially bored. There is nothing wrong with this, but it highlights that teachers were put in the position of doing much more than just calling these homes to check up on the progress of a child and an example of the broader role we are continually expected to fulfil in the community.

As an extension of the trust the community has in their local teachers, these people often had no qualms opening up about their life and we were supposed to act in the role of counsellor.”¹⁰

Support from the Department through COVID-19

A relieving assistant principal from a primary school on the Mid North Coast described the communication and support from the Department on them and their teachers’ work during this time.

“A concern for me was the limited central support we got from the Department through the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I consider myself to be incredibly lucky to have a really good principal who was able to lead us through this difficult time. Added to this, I am fortunate to have a good relationship with my local NSW Teachers Federation Organiser. This combination meant I felt really well informed and was even able to use this support to help develop a roster to assist in the organisation of learning from home and the necessary arrangements to meet the requirement to have some staff at the school. Our initial efforts to move to home learning were met with some derision from the local Department office along the lines that we should not have taken these steps when we did. This advice was quickly retracted when the Secretary, Mark Scott, held a press conference where he said if schools are not already moving to learning from home then they

should be working towards this as soon as possible. This highlights a couple of things, first of all the capacity within schools to be on top of the rapidly evolving circumstances. Secondly, that schools, and it would seem local Department officials, were only finding out about these changes through media releases at the same time as the public.

It was the same with returning from learning from home. The teachers and other staff at the school, all only found out through the news. People from the community were contacting me for information and I would tell them that I was not aware of any official update on the situation. However, the next day a significant announcement was made on the news and via social media.

It is also worth noting that two days after we returned to face to face learning at school, we were informed by the government that they were going to freeze our wages. After all that we had just been through, this was incredibly disheartening and showed the Government's lack of value for the teaching profession."¹¹

A teacher from a Sydney high school, echoed some of these concerns.

"To their credit, the Department did provide some online professional development courses on how to use Google Classroom and the like. I understand that some of these were quite helpful. This was in addition to some distance-learning resources available online that were not universally available prior to COVID-19. I do not understand why these types of resources are not made available to all public schools as a part of standard practice. I say this despite some questions as to their standard.

Things moved so quickly it would seem as though they could not be carefully planned for. At the same time, while we had some of the support mentioned above, this has been limited by the history of

devolutionary practices in the Department and the getting rid of curriculum support and other support services for teachers to deliver content. This has meant that we were more on the back foot than we would have been. It is this type of support that would have allowed the Department to move more quickly and manage these changes in the circumstances."¹²

A classroom teacher from a Northern Tablelands high school also discussed departmental support at this time.

"I was told that the Department pulled off everyone working on other projects to help support teachers, I am not sure what exactly they did. If this was the case, why was it that we had to create a vast array of programs for every single year group in two weeks? Why couldn't they put out something statewide, even just skills-based for us to implement?

Curriculum experts, who are former teachers themselves, would have been best placed to provide support and consistency to what was happening in the state. Instead, we were doing home visits and trying to call everyone ourselves, as welfare was a massive issue. This included trying to put together units of work that could be done online and at home.

Added to this was a general concern with respect to communication from the Department. The exception being a fortnightly email from Mark Scott telling us how good we were doing. I note, he did not write separate emails to teaching and admin staff. As such, each of his emails to their detriment tried to cover all bases.

That being said, our principal was amazing. She was great with communication, and after her Zooms with Murat Dizdar, she would email us a list of information and questions she got out of it. A really good job in difficult circumstances. Putting aside these emails, the rest we found out in the media."¹³



A primary school classroom teacher from the Mid North Coast identified a similar concern.

“A concern that my colleagues and I had in this process was that teachers were finding out about COVID-19 developments second hand. This was the case in both the move towards remote learning and coming back to face-to-face teaching. A couple of times I happened to catch the update through Facebook. On one occasion it was my mother who let me know. She is not only not a teacher, but a retired professional. This was quite disheartening. Direct communication from the Department, our employer, came via email, usually the next day.”¹⁴

¹ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 2 [8]-[11].

² Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 6-8 [33]-[44].

³ Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 7-8 [39]-[45].

⁴ School counsellor (F) South West Sydney 12 [52]-[53].

⁵ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 1-2 [6]-[10].

⁶ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 6 [37]-[38].

⁷ Classroom teacher (M) distance education 15 [88].

⁸ Classroom teacher (M) distance education [83]-[88].

⁹ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 2-3 [12]-[15].

¹⁰ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 5 [29]-[31].

¹¹ Relieving assistant principal (F) Mid North Coast 3-4 [16]-[21].

¹² Classroom teacher (M) Sydney 8 [46]-[47].

¹³ Classroom teacher (F) Northern Tablelands 2

¹⁴ Classroom teacher (F) Mid North Coast 8-9 [45]

Appendix 4: Expert witnesses who provided the Panel with written and/or oral submissions

Tom Alegounarias	Former chair, NSW Education Standards Authority
Professor John Buchanan	University of Sydney
Ron Callus	University of Sydney
Trevor Cobbold	Save our Schools
Professor Emerita Raewyn Connell	University of Sydney
Dr Lyndsay Connors AO	
Dr Huon Curtis	University of Sydney
Malcolm Elliott	President, Australian Primary Principals Association
Denis Fitzgerald	
Dr Scott Fitzgerald	Curtin University
Amber Flohm	NSW Teachers Federation
Dr Mihajla Gavin	University of Technology, Sydney
Angelo Gavrielatos	NSW Teachers Federation
Steve Hannan	University of Newcastle
Professor Ian Hickie	University of Sydney
Dr Ben Jensen	Learning First
Joy Kyriacou	Teach For Australia
Associate Professor Susan McGrath-Champ	University of Sydney
Dr Jim McMorrow	
Maurie Mulheron	Former president, NSW Teachers Federation
Alison Pennington	Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute
Craig Petersen	NSW Secondary Principals Council
Henry Rajendra	NSW Teachers Federation
Sara Ratner	University of Sydney
Dr Philip Roberts	University of Canberra
Professor Pasi Sahlberg	Gonski Institute, University of NSW
Phil Seymour	NSW Primary Principals' Association
Dr Meghan Stacey	University of NSW
Dr Jim Stanford	Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute
Elizabeth D. Steiner	RAND Education
Dr Stephen Tierney	University of Sydney
Professor Jim Tognolini	University of Sydney
Associate Professor Rachel Wilson	University of Sydney



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