

INQUIRY INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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I am a retired Mathematics Teacher. In my final year of High School (1974), as a student at North Sydney Boys High, I was having a chat to my Science Teacher in the playground. He was a young, first-year teacher who had done an excellent job during that year. He said to me (and I'm paraphrasing here) "This is crap. I've done four years training at University, and they are paying me this lousy salary. I'm leaving at the end of the year to do Law". (Bear in mind that a teacher's salary in 1974 was much better, in real terms, than it is today). That teacher's name? Brad Hazzard. I hope the current Health Minister is part of this inquiry, as he can offer first-hand information about one of the myriad of reasons that people are leaving, or failing to even consider, the teaching profession. It is 17 years since I was in the classroom, and the goalposts have been shifted dramatically for teachers with respect to workload and expectations. It saddens me that, if I was leaving school now I may not consider following the same path. I loved teaching, and I remained in the classroom for my entire career. I didn't seek promotion as it took you out of the classroom. I didn't want to be an administrator, but more of these tasks are now being lumped onto classroom teachers. My advice is simple. Let teachers teach (and give them the time to do so) and pay them accordingly.