

I wrote this paper 34 years ago and presented to [REDACTED] inquiry into the crisis facing teaching in NSW schools.

It has since been sent to [REDACTED] enquiry (and others) without reply !

**I strongly believe it is very relevant !**

Dear professor [REDACTED]..... thank you for your time

My name is **Warwick [REDACTED]**. I am now 57 years old I have a degree in science from [REDACTED] university and a NSW teaching certificate. I taught science for 11 years at [REDACTED] High School, [REDACTED] and was then head teacher of science and agriculture at [REDACTED] High School for a further two years. I attended parent nights, speech nights, dances, farewells, excursions, sporting teams, clubs, presentations and many community duties. I was chairman of the [REDACTED] science teachers' association for one year and was on the committee setting high school certificate exam questions for two years before I resigned from the department suffering exhaustion and high blood pressure. Stress leave did not exist in those days and the department refused my application for long service leave because they 'could not find someone to replace me' !

I enjoyed teaching very much. I was a Teachers' Federation member. Later on, secretary of [REDACTED] high school's parents and citizens association for two years and I attended the parents annual conference in Sydney one year.

My wife was a NSW teacher for 30 years teaching infants and primary.

One of our children has a degree in nursing from the University [REDACTED] and the other a degree in science and medicine from university [REDACTED].

I have worked for myself for the last 20 years and held positions on rural cooperatives, the rural training council of Australia, the rural industries research and Development Corporation and many other activities with a particular interest in micro and macroeconomics and structural and social adjustments within industries

I must say every day since I left teaching has been a holiday !

I have just been accepted to a graduate position with the NSW department of mineral resources. It is a job I look forward to with great enthusiasm. I must point out, this new job is for the same person, me, with the same qualifications (a degree in science), and the same employer, the NSW Government. The job came at nearly twice the teachers salary ( \$108,000 + pa when I left in 2012), a total of 13 weeks annual leave when flex leave is added in for all hours outside of and 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM when worked. ( these flex/rec days could be taken at any time, in any number or combination. An additional \$20,000 per year to spend attending training courses of my choice from a list provided to me. Vehicle and daily accommodation and meal allowances were always paid in full. The brand new motor vehicle to be replaced every two years. The nice modern brick house for \$40 per week rent. Full uniform clothing including hat sunscreen and boots, flexible hours and the ability to work from home whenever appropriate. Long service leave and sick leave when eligible. ( My earlier application for Teachers' long service Leave was refused on the grounds that they could not find a replacement for me!) All travel allowances and living away from home paid in full including attendance at Interstate conferences. **Remember, same person same qualifications I** found the conditions with the mines department excellent and I was able to recover to my normal health and fill my superannuation account with enough money to retire after just over 10 years. I

was then 68 years of age and would like to have continued working but felt I had other things I would like to do, and I had the money ! All this paid for by a mining safety levy !

**Would you be interested in hearing my carefully considered ideas about how to improve the teachers situation in NSW as I see it before my time becomes consumed with my new commitments? if so please read on.**

Maybe the majority of teachers today from my generation average about 55 years of age, are tired, worn out and not very happy. They are separated 35 years from their original training. They are counting the days to retirement as they are contracted to teach to the age of 65 they still have nearly ten years to go.

Some struggle through mental and physical sickness trying for an early medical retirement.

We have recently seen a large group of young, competent enthusiastic graduates wait for years on waiting lists for jobs or some casual work as their first experience of teaching. Many gave up and went on to work for other more attractive industries. They have told others not to bother with teaching as a career and as a result, numbers and standards have fallen. Future teachers will not be from the top students and subsequently their pupils will see them struggling in the classroom and not be attracted to become teachers themselves and standards will fall even further. I predict a downward spiral. The very low TER required for a teaching entrance training is because of very low numbers of applicants. Universities do not set the TER, it is set by the number of applicants for the places. Present day students watch their teachers struggle with their low TER abilities , the very standard which ranked their success at school level !

The resources needed to attract and retain quality teachers cannot be afforded in the short term. Any pay rise or reduction in workload would cause a huge gap in the state budget. Simply, we have fallen so far behind it will take 20 years to reallocate our state priorities and resources to place teachers and teaching where it should be. To put it another way, we are currently allocating enough resources to school education to last till about 12 noon and then we should send everyone home each day.

You might say, " how ridiculous" ..... well, Hospitals close beds if they're short staffed. What if the school could not fill all staff positions ? could they close down a few desks in a bad situation ? A school could close a whole year, say year 7 for three weeks. Hospitals close whole wards if short staffed. For a few weeks country police stations closed for hours or days if staff are unavailable due to sick or other leave. Schools do not do these things because the staff, the system, the community expects/demands/needs them to keep looking after the children regardless. Schools put multiple classes at into the playground with just one teacher if short staffed.

### **my suggestions:**

1. I believe being employed in the army or Air Force is very stressful and retirement at age 40 is usual. currently receiving a large lump sum pension after working for the 20 years.
2. Teachers fall into this stressed category and should be contracted at age 20 for 20 years. Quite long enough to teach until they attain age 40 and then compulsory retirement.
3. Teacher Retirees at age 40 should also be paid significant pension per annum on completion of their contract.( say, \$16,000 per annum) This amount equals about (when this paper was written) \$4000 per quarter which is equal to unpaid overtime earned over the 20 years of the contract. This is

the same as in similar jobs but which in those jobs is paid in cash or days on full pay in lieu. Or, flexible holidays, overtime penalty rates and so on at the time the hours are earned.

5. the average government worker has the same holiday time as teachers about 11 weeks if flex days public holidays days in lieu and four weeks annual leave are all added up. Those days can be taken flexibly to mesh in with private needs not as fixed times as they are for teachers.

6. the payment need not be an immediate budget problem as the department has 20 years before the first required recruit under this contract payment is due.

7. The payment need not be lump sum even then, it could be paid fortnightly. Then, clever young people would then want to become teachers, they would see the fairness of this contract, they could see the end coming.

8. The average age since most recent training would then eventually average only 10 years not the present 30 years so a huge improvement would occur.

9. Some government agencies routinely spend \$10,000 to \$20,000 per employee per year on training. Why are teachers kept in the dark teachers should enjoy at least one week every year on full-time all expenses paid, professional training in their subject area and on education in general.

10. New teachers could plan a career knowing of the 20 year horizon and ending at age 40.

11. They could then move on to use their skills elsewhere in the community as mature experienced citizens and professional organisers of people .

12. They would be moving over at age 40 to let the new enthusiastic ones in.

13. Casual staff will be in much smaller need but more highly paid.

14. These 20 years are prime years for which we have as a species evolved to work with children.

45 year olds to 65 year olds are beyond needing the stresses of children every minute.

15. This proposal would be particularly attractive to men.

16. This proposal does not clearly articulate the possible differences between teaching as a career for men versus the nature of the career for women what happens with women pilots in the RAAF?

17. Could the department contract for say just two years some of the brightest graduates in advanced science (or any other discipline for that matter) to teach year 11 and 12 students some of the latest ideas in their discipline. Fresh from university, these special INTERNS would get highly paid contracts and would work alongside experienced classroom teachers. They would not be allowed on their own with students. This will also provide some stimulus for updating for the classroom teacher. Some of these special INTERNS may even enjoy the experience so much as to choose to go back to study in education degree to complement their area of expertise and become teachers. Private schools have been doing some of these things for many years.

I still think of the THOUSANDS of hours I did at night and weekends and during holidays for which I received no payment or support from the education department. They even employed 'inspectors' that went around writing reports, telling most teachers that they were not up to an expected standard with their teaching ! I still suffer moments of what is now called PTSD !

thank you.

Warwick [REDACTED]

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