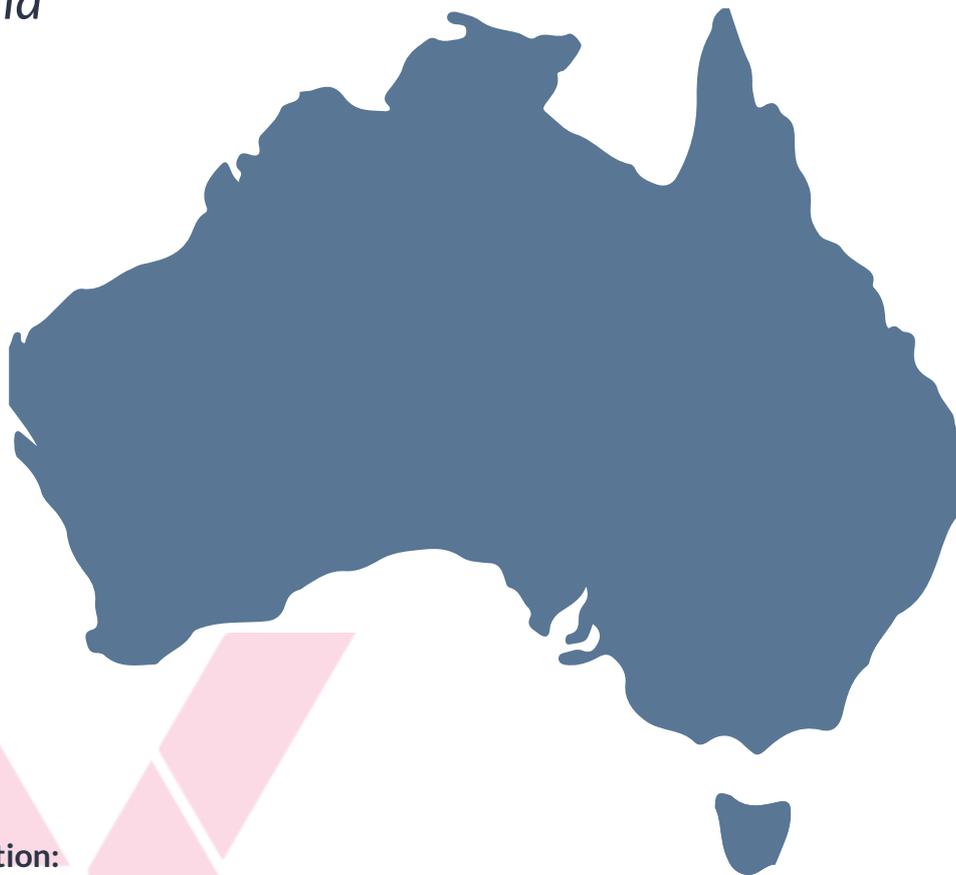


**Inquiry into the status of the teaching profession
For the Federal Department of Education, Australia
December 2018 Report**

Submission conducted by:

Smart Education Australia (Smart Leaders & Smart Teachers)

Tes Australia



Contact information:

Managing Director – Tyson Wood
tyson.wood@smartteachers.com.au
07 3112 8566

3/127 Creek St, Brisbane, Queensland 4000
ABN 89 115 129 989

www.smartteachers.com.au | <https://www.tes.com/en-au/>

Executive Summary

Smart Teachers and Tes Australia specialise in the attraction, recruitment and retention of teachers.

Committed to education advancement in Australia, we aim to use our community, resources and expertise to shine a more positive light on the teaching profession to help attract and retain more quality teachers.

This submission presents insights and recommendations gathered from Smart Teachers and Tes' ongoing services to teachers and schools, as well as two surveys conducted across our national audience of teachers and schools in 2018.

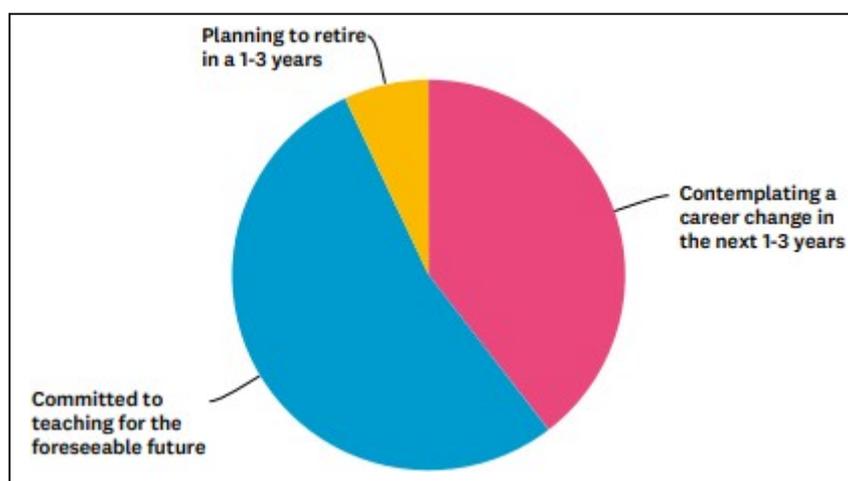
Smart Teachers was established in 2005 and is a recruitment agency that supports 48% of independent schools across Australia. We specialise in matching schools with appropriate teachers to maximise career opportunities for candidates whilst ensuring new staff members add long term value to school communities.

In 2015 Tes launched in Australia and partnered with Smart Teachers. The Tes story is an extraordinary one: its digital community is one of the fastest growing of any profession globally, and boasts a 100-year heritage at the centre of the teaching and education community.

With 67,722 Australian teachers registered with Smart Teachers and 11.4 million users registered world-wide with Tes (approximately 630,185 in Australia), our business depends upon us successfully supporting our educators and ensuring that the teaching profession remains an attractive and meaningful career path.

From 14 - 18 December 2018, we ran a short survey that has been completed by 1,964 Australian teachers. Our initial findings support several other data reports currently in circulation:

- 7% of teachers are planning to retire in 1-3 years¹
- 40% of teachers are contemplating a career change in the next 1-3 years¹
- 53% of teachers are committed to teaching for the foreseeable future¹



Many of the schools we work with across the country are currently reporting difficulty in finding and retaining quality teachers¹. With up to 47% of teachers intending to leave the profession in the next three years¹, it is inevitable that the retention situation will get worse.

This report will discuss key recommendations we can offer, based on our industry insights through working closely with Australian schools, our education alliances and, most importantly, our teachers. Our objectives are to support our Commonwealth government in strengthening relationships with universities to bring teacher training in line with industry expectations, improve working conditions for teachers, raise the esteem of the profession and consequently improve education outcomes for future generations of Australian children.

We welcome any requests for more information to support this inquiry.

Key Findings

Aspects related to teacher recruitment act as barriers to the attraction and retention of teachers in Australia. Historically, the localised nature of job advertising and school recruitment has served the needs of schools well; however, since 2014 attracting suitable teachers has become harder due to:

- **A decrease in teaching supply**
ANZSCO reports that from 2014 to 2017, the number of applicants per job advertisement decreased from 13.2 nationally to 8.7, while the suitable applicants per job decreased to 1.9 in 2017 - the lowest in 10 years².
- **Decrease in suitable candidates per job**
From January 2017 to December 2018, Smart Teachers assisted in the appointment of 1,701 teachers into 430 schools across Australia. Schools spanned independent, Catholic and government sectors. Due to curriculum variations, pedagogical frameworks, faith emphasis, clientele and budget, the difference in suitability evaluation was as different from school to school within sectors as it was between schools across sectors.

The decrease in suitable candidates per job led to an increase in:

Casualisation of employment

In 2017 and 2018, 74% of all jobs registered to Smart Teachers were contractual. This is relatively unchanged since 2014. Outside of contracts that resulted from existing staff's leave arrangements, the bulk of contract jobs stemmed from school concerns over candidate suitability. Some schools subsequently offered permanent roles when a suitable candidate was found or after a candidate started the job and proved they were suitable for a permanent offer.

The casualisation of the teaching profession is a big reason why it's become less attractive, and why early career teachers are at risk of leaving. 16% of teachers surveyed perceived contract employment to be the most significant threat to their wellbeing as a teacher¹. Casualisation leads to uncertainty and a lack of autonomy over lifestyle aims including housing.

¹ Smart Teachers and Tes Australia, Recruitment and Retention Whitepaper, 2018

² ANZSCO Reports

Lack of support for early career teachers

A 2013 Teaching and Learning Senate Inquiry determined that new teachers were most likely to be offered contracts. This led to early career teachers not always benefiting from the induction and support offered to permanent employees³.

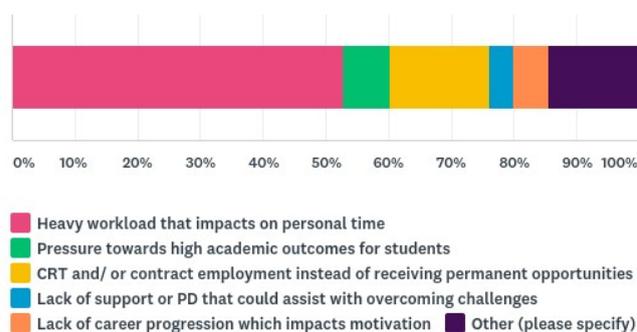
In 2018, Smart Teachers reported that only 2% of permanent jobs went to new teachers. A reluctance to appoint graduates stemmed from a school's inability to offer the support needed by a new teacher.

Unsuitable teachers in the classroom

Since 2015, the proportion of vacancies filled decreased from 92% to 86%. Coupled with the decrease in suitable applicants per job, teachers teaching outside their field of study became more likely. A recent study by The Australian Mathematical Science Institute reported that between Years 7 and 10, more than 75% of students will be taught mathematics by a teacher who is trained in another subject area. Further to this, up to 38% of maths lessons are taught by teachers trained in subjects other than mathematics⁴.

The appointment of unsuitable candidates increases the level of workload on the teacher and those around whose support is required. 53% of teachers perceived a heavy workload and its impact on personal time as the most significant threat to their wellbeing¹.

Q5 What do you perceive to be the most significant threat to your wellbeing as a teacher?



In 2018 the most downloaded news story on one digital media site was 'To retain our best teachers we need to stop killing them with planning, marking and meeting'. It was downloaded 9428 times in Australia⁵.

³ Australian Broadcast Corporation 2016

⁴ The Sydney Morning Herald

⁵ Tes 2017

Recommendations

The following recommendations befit the Parliamentary Committee's Terms of Reference

- Provide appropriate support platforms for teachers, including human and IT resources.
- Increase the attractiveness of the profession, with better workplace conditions, and improved career and leadership structures.
- Identify ways of reducing the burden of out-of-hours, at-home.
- Investigate ways to increase retention rates for the profession, and avoid 'burn out' of early-career teachers.

Increased visibility of teaching jobs

To increase the suitability of applicants per teaching job, schools and authorities should address some of the aforementioned causes of stress, to create a happier teaching force, which in turn will shine a more positive light on the profession.

Quality teachers are available nationally and internationally. Schools and authorities need to advertise with greater visibility and reach across the whole of Australia, and strategically within international locations. There is a wide range of both free and paid-for recruitment services that can provide this visibility to active job seekers locally, state-wide, nationally and internationally. This will help raise the number of suitable candidates per job. In turn, this will help increase permanent offerings and minimise the unsuitable hiring that leads to greater workload stresses and pressures.

More consistent quality hires will improve teaching and learning outcomes

Changing to more integrated recruitment methods has proven to increase the suitability of applicants per teaching job. From 2017 to 2018, our agency alone saw 87% more schools in Victoria, NSW, Queensland and the Northern Territory outsourcing their recruitment. Simultaneously, 891 non-government schools and 10 Catholic Diocese across Australia utilised an integrated online platform that gave them free access to digital recruitment tools. The teacher audience on the platform has national and global reach, apart from looking for education work, thousands of educators visit the site each day to access news and resources. This has allowed schools to promote their vacancies to the largest education audience currently available. It has also allowed them to attract passive job seekers that are not necessarily looking but could be tempted to change roles for a more progressive opportunity. Providing this wider reach for schools to attract suitable applicants helps them in securing the most suitable teacher for their role.

In this time, ANZSCO reports³ revealed suitable applicants per vacancy:

- Increased in NSW from 1.5 to 3.3
- Increased in Victoria from 1.7 to 5.2
- Increased in Queensland from 2.3 to 3.0

Recruitment autonomy and flexibility for government schools

A trial of new recruitment techniques within Queensland Independent Public Schools is a case study that supports this recommendation. From September 2017 to December 2018, 21 government schools with Independent Public School status trialled advertising their roles across a national job board and using a national recruitment provider. Previously, they relied on Department assistance,

word of mouth or other localised practices. Aiming to improve their hiring while continuing to utilise Departmental support, 94 contract appointments directly connected to the new attraction and recruitment approaches were made. 67% of the appointments were extended long-term or made permanent.

Of the IPS appointments that were not extended or made permanent, the prevailing reasons were:

- The contract was fixed and did not offer the possibility of continuance
- The teacher received a permanent offer in another school sector and accepted this in favour of an extension of contract
- The candidate did not accept an offer of extension, choosing another contract that was closer to home however remained in teaching

3 appointments were not continued due to suitability.

All schools who had used these new attraction and recruitment techniques did so again, with 21 new appointments made thus far for January 2019 commencement.

This trial reaffirms the importance of allowing greater provision for new advertising and recruitment tools to attract and hire more suitable teachers. So, doing this increases the likelihood of, and speed in which candidates are extended thus giving greater certainty, stability and satisfaction within the teaching community.

Greater recruitment training and support

To assist in increasing the number of suitable candidates applying for jobs, greater recruitment training and support is required for schools to recognise the challenges currently faced, and adjust all aspects of their attraction and recruitment processes. Training for school leaders on attraction and selection of appropriate staff is recommended.

Enhanced attraction and recruitment skills at the school level will increase the number of suitable applicants and improve hires.

Integrate greater human resource support for schools

- 23% of teachers state they have not received a position description for their role¹
- 18% of teachers state their position description does not accurately match their current duties¹
- 32% of teachers state that their position description is accurate however it is rarely, if ever used to supervise, support and monitor progress and development¹
- 26% of teachers state their position description is accurate, matches their current duties and is used by their supervisor to monitor and develop them¹

This suggests that only a quarter of teachers have documentation that accurately defines their teaching role in the context of their school's expectation.

It is recommended that schools receive greater human resource support in this area. The market holds new information and resources that make it easier to create and integrate this documentation. Further research suggests this improves hiring and improves alignment between

management and teachers; this creates greater capacity for teacher satisfaction and increased output.

Investigating ways to increase retention rates for the teaching profession, and avoid 'burn out' among early career teachers

Teachers were asked to share what they think is the most important improvement we can make to better equip teachers entering, or in the early years of their career. 72% of the respondents have been teaching in Australia for 4 or more years¹.

40% recommended making it compulsory for graduates to be mentored extensively in their first two years¹. More explicitly, it is recommended that the early years of a teacher's employment be:

- Recognised as a paid apprenticeship where universities and employers collaborate to support the teacher in a more experience-driven learning environment.
- Equipped with a level of release time to help them better manage their learnings and workload.
- Supported by a mentor at the school who is given release time to provide the necessary level of ongoing, bespoke support.

10% recommended that teachers need to be supported with more regular performance assessment, and support for further development in relevant areas¹.

18% recommended an increase in placements throughout university so students gain more experience early on. Collaboration between universities and placement professionals can better match student teachers to practical experience, monitor experiences and shape more bespoke learnings so that graduates arrive into the profession better equipped to manage the role of a teacher and employee of a school¹.

17% recommended that early career teachers should be provided with more team-teaching opportunities or support staff assistance¹.

Further recommendations centre on increasing university entrance requirements. According to the Varkey Foundation's Teacher Status Index 2018, "some of the best performing education systems clearly recruit their teachers from the top third of each graduate cohort. According to McKinsey (2007), in South Korea and Finland, which perform at the very top of the international assessment programs on pupil achievement, teachers are recruited from the top 5% and top 10% of graduates, respectively."⁶

Greater collaboration to increase teaching materials and support

In a September 2018 report, David Edwards of Education International states that "teachers worldwide also face a shortage of teaching materials⁷."

Governments, education authorities and businesses are producing resources at a greater rate. There exist in the market over 700,000 free or paid-for resources online for Australian teachers. Collaboration between governments, education authorities and businesses specialising in sharing

⁶ Varkey Foundation 2018

⁷ Education International 2018

resources and supporting teachers will increase the quality, quantity and accessibility of resources and support.

Conclusion

Teachers rank their profession lower than the general public does in countries studied such as the UK, US and New Zealand⁷. In Australia, though no such data exists, 39.6% of teachers intend to leave the profession in the next 3 years and of those surveyed, over 72% have four or more years of teaching experience.

We intend to use our community support and range of recruitment and retention services to prevent the 39.6% of teachers from leaving the profession. Our recommendations offer insight into the areas we believe will help create a happier and optimum work force.

We intend to support the Parliamentary Committee should you require any further insight now or into the future.

Survey Methodology

Smart Teachers conducted a survey on the National Status of Teaching. We had 1,964 teachers from across Australia respond during Friday December 14th to Tuesday December 18th 2018.

This survey was shared with our Smart Teachers database via email and our company Facebook page. We also had Smart Teachers staff spread the survey through their personal social media accounts on Facebook and LinkedIn.

The survey structure comprised of 11 closed and open-ended questions in an attempt to retrieve quantitative and qualitative data. We have had 1,729 teachers submit statements in their own words as to what they believe would improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Australia.

Terms of reference

1. Smart Teachers Survey - National Status of Teaching, 2018
2. Smart Teachers and Tes Australia, Recruitment and Retention Whitepaper, 2018
<https://www.tes.com/sites/default/files/teacher_progression_whitepaper.pdf>
3. ANZSCO Reports- Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
 - Department of Employment, Labour Market Research – Teachers, 2011-2012
 - Department of Employment, Labour Market Research – School Teachers, 2012-2013
 - Department of Employment, Labour Market Research – School Teachers, 2013-2014
 - Department of Employment, Labour Market Research – School Teachers Australian Capital Territory, 2015-2016
 - Department of Employment, Labour Market Research – School Teachers, 2014-2015
 - Department of Employment, Labour Market Research – School Teachers, 2015-2016
 - Department of Employment, Labour Market Research – School Teachers, 2017
4. Australian Broadcast Corporation 2016, 'Australian Teacher Shortage Fears As Student Numbers Soar', ABC, viewed 18 December 2018 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-18/fears-of-looming-teacher-shortage-as-student-population-soars/7096102>>
5. Singhal, P 2018 'Almost 1 in 10 students will never be taught by a qualified maths teacher', The Sydney Morning Herald <<https://www.smh.com.au/education/almost-one-in-10-students-will-never-be-taught-by-a-qualified-maths-teacher-20181126-p50icb.html>>
6. Tes, 2017 'To retain our best teachers we need to stop killing them with planning, marking and meetings', Tes <<https://www.tes.com/news/retain-our-best-teachers-we-need-stop-killing-them-planning-marking-and-meetings>>
7. Varkey Foundation 2018, Global Teacher Status Index 2018, industry report, Varkey Foundation <www.varkeyfoundation.org/what-we-do/policy-research/global-teacher-status-index-2018>
8. Education International 2018, The Global Status of Teachers and the Teaching Profession, Nelly P Stromquist, ISBN 978-92-95109-67-4, viewed 3rd December 2018
9. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, Labour Market Research – School Teachers, ISSN: 2201-215X, viewed December 2018