

## TEACHER RESIGNATION SURVEY

**I.D. Number** [            ]

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| 1.  | <b>Age</b>   | [      ]                 |
| 2.  | <b>Gender</b>  | [      ]                 |
| 3.  | <b>Training:</b> 2 year trained; 3 year trained; 4 year trained; 5 year trained or more: |                          |
|     | <u>initial</u>   | [      ]                 |
|     | <u>subsequent</u>  | [      ]                 |
| 4.  | <b>Primary/Secondary/Other:</b>  | [                      ] |
|     | If secondary, <u>subject specialisation:</u>   | [                      ] |
| 5.  | <b>Completed Years of Teaching</b>   | [      ]                 |
| 6.  | <b>Position Held at Resignation</b>  | [                      ] |
| 7.  | <b>Educational Region(s) Taught In:</b>  |                          |
|     | <u>last</u>  | [                      ] |
|     | <u>previous</u>  | [                      ] |
|     | <u>other</u>   | [                      ] |
| 8.  | <b>Years at last school</b>  | [      ]                 |
| 9.  | <b>Occupation(s) Prior to Teaching</b>   | [                      ] |
| 10. | <b>Occupation(s) Since Resignation</b>   | [                      ] |
|     |  | [                      ] |
| 11. | <b>Salary prior to resignation (\$000s)</b>  | [      ]                 |
| 12. | <b>Salary now (\$000s)</b>   | [      ]                 |

Part B: Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Could you tell me why you became a teacher? How did you feel about teaching before being accepted in teacher training?

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2. Did your views on teaching change during your pre-service training? If so, why was this?

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3. What were your early teaching experiences like? How did you feel about being a teacher at this time?

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4. Can you trace how your attitude towards teaching might have changed during your career? Can you find reasons for these changes?

[illegible]

5. What sorts of things gave you greatest satisfaction as a teacher?

[illegible]

6. What sorts of things gave you greatest dissatisfaction as a teacher?

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7. Can you describe what led up to your decision to resign? Was there a critical moment or incident that led to this decision or was it a decision that you gradually came to?

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8. Did you share or discuss your decision to resign with others? If so, how did they influence or try to influence your decision?

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9. Can you describe your feelings around the time that you resigned?

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10. How do you feel about teaching now? What would it take to induce you to work again for the N.S.W. Department of School Education?

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11. How have your experiences as a teacher affected you?

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12. Are there any other comments about teaching or your own experiences as a teacher that you would like to mention?

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## Appendix 2: Requests for Assistance

### 2.1: First Letter to "Education"

8th October, 1991

The Editor,  
"Education"  
N.S.W. Teachers Federation  
300 Sussex St, Sydney

I have been a member of Federation since 1975 and a member of the Lecturers Association since 1989. For the past 18 months I have been undertaking a study of **teacher resignation from the N.S.W. Department of School Education**. The secondary research for this study has been completed and the next stage of the project will involve telephone interviews with resigned primary and secondary teachers (including executive teachers and those on secondment) from across all regions.

I intend to use as a cohort those teachers who have or will resign between day one of the 1991 and 1992 school years.

Gaining access to these teachers is my problem at present. I believe that people are entitled to their privacy and for this reason I do not intend to ask the D.S.E. for information regarding personal details of resigned teachers, not that this information would be likely to be forthcoming in any case.

I intend to advertise more widely early in 1992 once resignations for the period under study have been confirmed but I would be very grateful if your could publicise my project in "Education" before the end of the year. Teachers will be required for a pilot of the project in the latter part of 1991, with the remainder of the resigned teachers to be interviewed by telephone in the first half of 1992.

To date, studies of teacher resignation have largely employed quantitative aggregated methods, whereas I intend to employ largely open-ended interview questions to provide a more human and personal perspective to the resignation of teachers. I believe that the project is of significance and would be happy to discuss details of it more fully.

Resigned teachers or teachers intending to resign before the beginning of the 1992 school year can contact me at any of the following, giving details of day and evening telephone numbers and addresses. I will write to all teachers or former teachers who reply giving details of when I will be contacting them.

Yours Sincerely,

Steve Dinham  
Lecturer in Education

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| Steve Dinham<br>Faculty of Education, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, P.O. Box 10 Kingswood,<br>2747. Phone: (047) 360275 or (047) 513703 [home] Fax: (047) 360400 |
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## Appendix 2: Requests for Assistance

### 2.2: Letter to Schools

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY, NEPEAN  
Faculty of Education

The Principal  
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Dear Principal,

I am presently undertaking a study into teacher resignation from government schools in New South Wales.

What I wish to do is to interview primary and secondary teachers who have resigned or will resign between the first day of school in 1991 and the first day of school in 1992.

Initially I will be interviewing resigned teachers by telephone, by means of a structured, largely open-ended interview schedule.

My problem lies in contacting these teachers or former teachers and I would appreciate it greatly if you could publicise my project in your school.

Teachers or resigned teachers (including those in executive positions and those on secondment) can contact me at any of the following:

Steve Dinham  
Faculty of Education  
University of Western Sydney, Nepean  
P.O. Box 10  
Kingswood N.S.W. 2747

Phone: (047) 360275 (work) (047) 513703 (home)

Fax: (047) 360400

As a former teacher myself, I believe that the successful completion of my project could well have significance for teacher pre-service training, teacher induction and the professional development of practising teachers.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Dinham  
Lecturer in Education



## **Appendix 2: Requests for Assistance**

### **2.3: Article for "Education"**

13th November, 1991

The Editor,  
"Education"  
N.S.W. Teachers Federation  
300 Sussex St, Sydney

Below is a brief article explaining my research project into teacher resignation. I would be grateful if you could find a place for it in the next edition of "Education". I hope that I can share the results of my research with you in 1992.

Yours Sincerely,

Steve Dinham  
Lecturer in Education

## TEACHER RESIGNATION: A NON-ISSUE?

Steve Dinham

**Researcher:** "Research carried out both in Australia and overseas has shown that the first few years have a critical bearing on whether a person is to make a successful career of teaching. Many teachers don't make it past their second year of teaching."

**Education Department Official:** "Good."

I have had the above conversation in various forms and with various people in N.S.W., Victoria and Tasmania in recent times. Despite the fact that N.S.W. has experienced an annual resignation rate of between 5.5% and 7% in the past five years and that this is undoubtedly personally, socially and economically costly, there seems to be a strange reluctance on the part of those involved with education to see teacher resignation as a significant problem. Even in systems such as the Northern Territory where annual resignation rates approach 20% per annum, providing that resigned teachers can be replaced -- often with a less experienced and hence "cheaper model" -- all appears to be well.

Occasionally, the media highlight a principal who has resigned in dramatic circumstances, and sometimes there is an attempt to link teacher resignation with poor rates of pay, but in reality while we know how many teachers have resigned in a given period, we know little of their characteristics, experiences and reasons for resignation. What happens to the information in that little box on the official resignation form? How important *is* pay in influencing resignation? What role does stress play in resignation? What about the status of teachers and media criticism? How have some of the recent changes to promotion and school administration procedures in N.S.W. affected resignation? Is teacher survival a case of "throw 'em in the deep end and see who can swim"? How important *are* the first few years of teaching? What gives teachers most satisfaction, and most dissatisfaction? What about the recession? Are the "best and brightest" more likely to resign, or is it the disaffected and unsuitable, the latter a judgement implicit in the reaction of the anonymous education official quoted above.

It would seem that any corporation that employed 50,000 tertiary trained employees, each of whom took three to four years to train during which time they contributed very little to the productivity of the corporation, would or should be very concerned about losing to other employers both inexperienced people yet to make their contribution to the organisation and experienced personnel with skills gained over many years. It would also seem essential from the point of view of the organisation's culture, efficiency, future planning and growth,

to understand why these people are leaving, and yet it seems to be a case of "out of sight, out of mind" and even "good riddance" when it comes to teacher resignation.

It is because of the above unanswered questions that I have been undertaking a study into teacher resignation and allied areas such as teacher induction, teacher stress and teacher satisfaction for the past 18 months. I have already interviewed a number of teachers who have resigned during 1991 and the personal accounts of their careers and the circumstances that contributed to their eventual resignation have proved to be extremely interesting and valuable. However, I need to talk to **many** more resigned teachers before any firm conclusions can be drawn. Interviews will be conducted by telephone at a convenient time (and at my expense!) and typically take 30-40 minutes.

Please contact me if you have resigned or will resign from any position within the N.S.W. Department of Education teaching service between the beginning of the 1991 and 1992 school years, or you know someone in that position, please bring this to their attention. Naturally, anonymity will be assured, and your response could well have implications for teacher pre-service training, teacher induction, and the professional and personal development of teachers in the future. It might also help to answer some of those unanswered questions.

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| Steve Dinham<br>Faculty of Education, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, P.O. Box 10 Kingswood,<br>2747. Phone: (047) 360275 [please leave message on answering machine if office<br>unattended]<br>or (047) 513703 [home] Fax: (047) 360400 |
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## Appendix 2: Requests for Assistance

### 2.4: Letter to Sydney Morning Herald

6th February 1992

The Letters Editor - R.S.V.P.  
Sydney Morning Herald,  
G.P.O. Box 3771  
Sydney 2001

I would appreciate it greatly if you could assist me in my current research into teacher resignation by including the following request in your R.S.V.P. column in the near future.

**Resigned Teachers** - Researcher wishes to interview by telephone teachers who resigned from the N.S.W. Department of School Education during 1991. Please leave contact details on answering machine (047) 360275 or fax (047) 360400. [Steve Dinham, Faculty of Education, University of Western Sydney, Nepean]

Yours Sincerely,

Steve Dinham  
Lecturer - Faculty of Education

## **Appendix 2: Requests for Assistance**

### **2.5: Independent Teachers Association Journal Advertisement**

23rd December 1991

NSW Independent Teachers Association  
Box 116 GPO Sydney 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently conducting research which involves interviewing teachers who have resigned from the NSW Department of School Education. I would like to place the following advertisement in the first and second editions of "Newsmonth" in 1992. Could you please send me an account for the two advertisements, or, alternatively if you could leave a message on my answering machine [(047) 360275] or fax me the details [(047) 360400] I can send you a cheque.

Thank you for your anticipated assistance,

Steve Dinham  
Lecturer in Education.

#### **Did You Resign From the NSW Department of School Education in 1991?**

Researcher wishes to interview by telephone teachers who resigned from the DSE sometime during 1991. Please contact Steve Dinham, University of Western Sydney, Nepean on (047) 360275 and leave contact details on answering machine or fax (047) 360400 . Anonymity assured.

Note: The above advertisement was also placed in the "Sun-Herald" of Sunday 8th March.

## Appendix 3: Pilot Interview Responses

### 3.1 "Mary"

Mary is a 34 year old primary teacher who resigned from teaching in 1991 after six and a half years of permanent teaching interrupted by periods of maternity leave. As an assistant or unpromoted classroom teacher, Mary taught mainly Kindergarten to Year 2, both in the eastern suburbs of Sydney and in the North Coast region where she presently resided. Originally three year trained, Mary completed qualifications to gain four year trained salary and status and at the time of her resignation was at the top of the classroom teachers' salary scale on \$38,000 per annum. Since her resignation in mid-1991, Mary had undertaken music teaching on a one-to-one basis, but has earned very little from this.

Mary recounted how she became a teacher because she "liked children, people and learning" and because her mother was in the process of training to become a teacher while Mary was at high school, and Mary found what her mother was doing to be "interesting". She also "knew teachers that I liked" but "didn't know what to expect" when she decided upon teaching as a career.

Mary was critical of her pre-service training because "we didn't go into the classroom much". When she undertook practice teaching in schools "we were thrown in the deep end" and "learnt a lot more than from a book", according to Mary. By the end of her third year of training, Mary knew the "realities of teaching", but was still critical of her training, believing that it could have been far more practical, "like an apprenticeship", and that trainee teachers would have found it useful to "see themselves" teach on video.

Mary described her early permanent teaching experience as "miserable", because she was on "reserve" at a school without a class of her own for the first six months, and spent her time "covering books, cleaning the storeroom and relieving other teachers". Mary said she "didn't know what to do or what was expected of me". Her school had an "85 per cent Greek population, and college had not prepared me for that". College, according to Mary, had been more "theoretical". Mary described her first year as "a series of shocks, until I got used to it". Mary stated how an appointment to her own class in the second half of her first year "got me started".

Mary recounted how her attitude to teaching had changed over the years, particularly once she had children of her own and realised that "children are people, not things to be taught". She became "more understanding" and met many people and gained new ideas from them, "not just theory from books". She was exposed to new values and to the different backgrounds of her pupils. Mary also noted how she encountered health problems during her career and realised that she "needed to think about myself, and to learn to say no" in the interests of her health.

Mary gained greatest satisfaction as a teacher from "seeing a child discover something", and she gained "joy from leading without telling". Recognition for her work from others and using her musical talents "creatively" also gave Mary satisfaction. Mary also reflected on how teaching helped her to "discover things about myself from teaching children". She described this as an "honest growth process".

Mary also recounted, however, how the "pettiness" of other staff caused her stress. She was very critical of some of the changes that had occurred recently in education, and how they had been accompanied by bureaucratic policies, rule changes and "jargon", much of it unnecessary and "nonsense" about things "you should just do". Being responsible for "everything from go to whoa" including writing teaching programs and "kids' health" was also stressful to Mary.

As to her decision to resign, Mary mentioned how teaching in a large country town with a significant Aboriginal population was difficult for her, "although I'm not a racist". There were problems and "friction" in the town, and it was difficult to teach when "there was hatred in the atmosphere". The school couldn't solve the children's behavioural problems without "help from the parents ... both sides". She also mentioned how, despite being over 30, she was one of the youngest members of staff due to the desirability of North Coast schools, and how the older staff "wouldn't accept change". She was not permitted to take a class to Canberra on an excursion "because I was too young". There was "a pecking order" and an "autocratic, traditional Principal". Mary felt that her "professionalism was not recognised ... it wears you down ... the staff was divided [between] modern [and] traditional" teachers.

Mary felt that this situation was taking its toll on her family, as was the travel each day to the school. She "couldn't do it properly" and there were "too many worries". She became pregnant but "only told a few teachers close to me ... I didn't tell the rest of the staff, [it was] not their business, I was sick of being railroaded, I kept it to myself". She had been seeking a transfer to a school closer to her home and received this three days after

school broke up. She began at her new school but took maternity leave after six months. Mary resigned when her maternity leave ran out.

Mary didn't feel bitter about resigning, but she "couldn't handle it at the time" and couldn't go back to teaching. There were divisions at both her recent schools between "traditional and modern teaching" and Mary said she "couldn't align with the old methods of my supervisor". Mary was "too tired" and "wanted to stay at home with my family".

Perhaps surprisingly, Mary said that she still "loves" teaching, but her family was now "at the top of the list". She still enjoyed her one-to-one music teaching greatly and was actually "looking forward to going back" to teaching at some time in the future, but was glad to be "out" at the moment. There seemed to be a great deal of criticism of education in the media which she found distressing.

The only thing that would induce Mary to return to teaching at the present time would be if something happened to her family. If she had "nothing to do, no family, then I would teach". Mary was not critical of the Department of School Education as "they were doing what they can", although she would have liked a transfer closer to her home earlier. Pay was not a issue, Mary believing teachers to be "well paid".

Reflecting upon her career, Mary said that "it taught me a lot about people ... it made me grow ... you have to accept people rather than judge people from different cultures". She did, however have some suggestions to make concerning teaching. Although she had completed her training in the 1970s and was not familiar with teacher training today, Mary felt that it should be more like an apprenticeship [this was the third occasion on which this was mentioned]. As a result of her experiences Mary also thought that the three year limit on maternity leave should be extended. She "would have liked to stay on the list of permanent teachers", but the rule gave her "no option" but to resign. Her family was her "priority".

Mary also commented that after her last period of maternity leave, she found it difficult to adjust to the changes that had occurred in schools during her absence, and that she would have benefited from some counselling, "to talk to someone, not that I was sick". Measures such as release from face to face teaching for primary teachers had been introduced in her absence, and she found it difficult to adjust to this, believing that this it was disruptive to children and teachers. In education, "activity is valued", rather than quietness, and pupils don't have the opportunity to "concentrate and absorb ... things are too fast, too noisy, too sophisticated, but I suppose this is [the case] everywhere", Mary said.

### **3.2 "Mark"**

Mark is a 53 year old former primary teacher who resigned prior to the end of term 1 in 1991 after 33 years of teaching. As will be explained later, his last position was as a classroom teacher, but prior to 1991 he was Principal of a primary school on an annual salary of \$40,000. Mark was presently working as a self-employed insurance agent on commission to a large insurance company, and based upon his earnings to date, he estimated that his annual salary would be in excess of \$65,000.

Mark grew up in a small country town and decided upon a career in teaching -- "I just wanted to be a teacher" -- while at high school. There were few employment opportunities in his home town and thus Mark had "no other real choice" of a career. Initially Mark was two year trained although later he gained three year trained status. Mark was "fairly satisfied" with his teacher pre-service training although he felt he was not adequately prepared for his first appointment to a one teacher school, feeling that perhaps his training could have better prepared him for this situation by being "more practical".

Mark found his first appointment to a one teacher school difficult, chiefly because he had to cope with a wide range of pupils from Kindergarten to high school correspondence students. He did not feel adequately prepared for the infants pupils (K-2) as he was primary trained and described teaching these pupils as "very difficult".

During his career, Mark stated that he gained greatest satisfaction from "classroom teaching" and getting "good results". He also spoke of the "camaraderie within the school, people pulling together" giving him satisfaction.

Reflecting over his long career, Mark stated that he was "very happy with teaching until 1988". Prior to this, in 1984, Mark had been an exchange teacher to Canada and while overseas he had realised "how hard we worked [in Australia] and [our] lack of support and resources". Classroom teachers in Canada were "there to teach", according to Mark, and were well supported with school counsellors, etc.

In 1988, Mark was appointed as Principal to a primary school with 84 pupils, which grew to 160 students in the three years Mark was in charge. As a "P3", Mark had to teach full-time while handling the administration of the school. He ran a "good, happy school and got good results", but he spoke of "hypocrisy" and "lies being told" from 1988. Mark said that "non-educational decisions were being made by politicians ... not for the good of education" and "this bugged me".

Mark's greatest source of dissatisfaction was "decisions being made whether you liked it or not", and the lack of "liaison and input" which ran counter to his way of running a school. The lack of support he received as a full-time teaching Principal also caused concern. Mark believed that instead of receiving the substantial pay rise that principals received in 1989-90, he would have rather received "one day a week off" from the classroom. At this time, because of his administrative responsibilities and the changes occurring in education, Mark arrived at school at 7-30 in the morning and often his wife, a secondary teacher, would come across to the school at 10-00 in the evening to ask him to come home. Mark recalled that "I wasn't getting on top of it ... it bugged me ... expectations were too high, and people who said they were [coping] were kidding themselves". Mark used the term "hypocrisy" several times to describe the changes that had occurred in education since 1988. He said that "the system was being revamped, but no improvements were being made ... salary went up but there was no real advantage". Mark recounted how he was occupying a school residence and how he had been informed that his rent would not be increased. Several weeks later, he received a letter stating that his rent had been increased by 150 per cent. He spoke of not being able to get concrete or consistent answers from departmental officials.

Due to the growth in pupil numbers, Mark's school was to be reclassified at the end of 1990 and Mark was unsure of his position. Conversations with the local regional office proved fruitless and he learned indirectly that a new non-teaching principal or "P2" had been appointed to take his place, and that due to its higher classification, other assistance previously lacking would now be provided to the school. At first, the Department of School Education denied this, but later confirmed that this was in fact the case and that there was now no place for him at the school. Mark then applied for a "P3" position in the local area but none was available, so he took up a position as a classroom teacher for seven weeks at the beginning of 1991 while he "organised his affairs". Mark maintained that "pressure was put on me to make a decision" and subsequently, he resigned, his resignation to take effect ten days prior to the end of first term. Mark described how his Principal and cluster director attempted to talk him into delaying his resignation until the end of the term "so that a casual teacher would not have to be hired from global budget funds".

Mark decided to resign at the same time as he and his wife were moving from their teacher residence to another home as "it seemed a good time to make a break, although it was a huge step, not taken lightly". Mark did not discuss his decision with anyone from the Department of School Education. Mark stated that despite his love of classroom teaching "I could no longer work in a system I felt was heading for chaos ... I no longer belonged in the system, my priorities no longer mattered ... standards, the feelings of people, job satisfaction, discussion, democratic processes".

Mark said he "never wants to go back" to teaching, despite being registered as a casual teacher, and that "I should have made the decision years earlier". Although he was working hard at his new job selling insurance, Mark felt "motivated" and revitalised, and was gaining great satisfaction. He couldn't believe how he was "treated as a professional" and the freedom and flexibility he now enjoyed, although he found it difficult to break the habit of regular hours. His new work was "not stressful or tiring, just satisfying".

Mark also recounted how during the period leading up to his resignation he had written to the [previous] Premier Mr Greiner and two Ministers for Education, but had received no replies. He had however spoken to the Premier at a function recently and Mark recounted how the Premier had admitted that "we made mistakes in Education, we need to talk to people". The Premier had undertaken to answer his letters, but two months later this has not occurred.

Mark also described how his wife, a Home Economics Head Teacher, was "battling on", but that her subject area was "up in the air" due to recent reorganisation of the secondary curriculum. Mark was "very cynical" about such changes, believing that they were not for the good of education.

### **3.3 "Allison"**

Allison is a 39 year old primary teacher. Originally two year trained, Allison upgraded to three year trained and later four year trained status. At the time of her resignation, Allison was an Assistant Principal in Metropolitan South West Region. Earlier in her career, Allison had taught in Metropolitan West Region. In all, Allison had 10 years full-time teaching and eight years as a casual supply teacher with the Department of School Education.



Allison now worked as a Teacher Librarian at a leading private school for girls in Sydney on an annual salary of \$40,000.

Allison recounted how she became a teacher because at the time, the "options for girls were limited ... teaching, nursing and clerical work". She had thought of being an accountant, but teaching had only a two year training period and "I wanted to get married". In any case, Allison stated that she "had an interest in children" and wanted to teach.

During her initial teacher training, Allison realised through practice teaching that "it was a lot harder than you thought", but her experiences confirmed her desire to be a teacher. Allison's first appointment was to a suburb in Western Sydney which then had a very poor reputation. Of her first year, Allison "really enjoyed it immensely".

In the years that followed, Allison's opinion of classroom teaching "stayed much the same, I always enjoyed it", but she "became negative because of the increase in workload, particularly in an executive position" for which she did not receive a reduction in face-to-face teaching duties.

In her career, Allison gained most satisfaction from teaching infants and "seeing the spark ... learning, teaching reading, especially slow learners ... just the kids". She also gained satisfaction from supervising "first year outs, student teachers and teaching 'dem' lessons" to teacher trainees.

However it was during her time as an executive teacher that the changes occurring in education and the increased workload "hardened" Allison. She was especially critical of changes to school staffing and class size arrangements because as her school had a fairly transient population, classes had to be adjusted almost weekly as pupils came and went, causing composite classes to be formed and reformed. These changes to class sizes which occurred from 1989 were described by Allison as being "the killer". She also felt that she was not appreciated by the Department and was "just a number". As mentioned previously, Allison resented the imposition of "irrelevant" administrative tasks on her full-time classroom teaching.

Allison described the circumstances leading up to her resignation. She had been acting as an Assistant Principal in a school for two years as no one else wanted the position who was qualified for it. At the end of the two years, Allison passed an inspection to qualify her for a permanent appointment as an Assistant Principal, but someone else was appointed to the position at Allison's school and she in turn received a promotion elsewhere. In her time as acting Assistant Principal, Allison had built a good relationship with parents who were "up in arms" at her transfer and wrote letters to the Department on her behalf in an attempt to keep her at the school. Allison herself approached the Department pointing out that it would have been simpler and more effective to keep her where she was and to give the new Assistant Principal the other position. A person concerned with staffing at the Department reacted to this suggestion with the statement: "don't expect the Department to be logical". Allison termed this "the beginning of the end", feeling that she was "just a number" to the Department.

At her new school, with an even more transient population than her previous one, the changes in class sizes were more frequent, and the parents, many of whom were unemployed, spent much time visiting the school to complain. Allison "tried to explain" as her Principal had "passed the buck" to her on this and other issues. Her Principal had been "demoted" from a larger school and Allison described him as "schizophrenic", a "back stabber" and "a maniac". She was working hard to sustain the school, but the other Assistant Principal (male) and the Principal did not appreciate her efforts and called her a "yuppie". She approached her local Cluster Director (female) for advice concerning the behaviour of the Principal, but was told the Department intended to "leave him here, what do you expect?" The Cluster Director gave her no help or advice, but rather a "pat on the back" for her efforts.

Then, as Allison related, "Schools Renewal hit, I could see the writing on the wall ... all the extra work ... couldn't control it". The whole school had to be reorganised and the bulk of the work fell on Allison. She was working long hours, as did her husband, and her teenage children were suffering as a result. Allison believed that "it [Schools Renewal] tipped me over the top". Allison described herself at this time as being "burned out ... I hated going to school for the first time, my hands shook on the steering wheel going to school, I didn't want to be there, I went to a doctor with skin rashes, nausea, continual tiredness ... classic stress ... it has taken a year to recover". Allison applied for leave without pay in the second half of the year, but new regulations prohibited this, so she "began to look in the newspapers ... I found a job, applied for it and got it". She discussed her decision to resign with one executive teacher at the school, with a classroom teacher at the school who was a long term friend and with her previous Cluster Director, who offered to hold her job for her until the end of the year if she wanted to go back.

Allison related how she was now enjoying her teaching once more and was over her stress. She would not return to the Department of School Education unless it "comes to its senses" and replaces "illogical structures" such as the "comparative assessment debacle ... there is chaos in schools". Assistant Principals were overworked and a

"fairer logical system" was needed. Standards of entry into teacher pre-service training needed to be lifted, some student teachers in her demonstration lessons for the university appearing to be "spaced out", according to Allison, and the Department of School Education needed to do a "P.R. job" to improve the status of public education and teachers.

Ironically, Allison believed that she had discovered how a self-managing school can operate effectively in her private school. Allison had put both her children into private schools and discouraged their interest in teaching as a career. She said she had a "thankless last four years ... overworked, underpaid and undervalued ... you can't turn off like other professions", but now "I love it, I'm happy to be there".

### 3.4 "Christine"

Christine is a 40 year old former primary Teacher-Librarian from the North Coast Region. Initially two year trained, Christine upgraded her qualifications to four year trained status during her 20 years of teaching. Following her resignation in 1991, Christine opened a music shop in the north coast town where she lived, music being a long term interest.

Christine explained how she became a teacher because "I didn't know what to do ... it was a last resort. I was living in New Guinea and the only other choice was working in a bank, [and] I had no respect for that". Thus, Christine found herself at a N.S.W. teachers' college. During her training, a fundamental change occurred in Christine's attitude towards teaching. She recalled that "I decided I loved it as soon as I got in front of a class, the power, the challenge of organisation, seeing kids respond".

Christine's first appointment was to a small rural school in N.S.W. She had requested a city appointment as she didn't have private transport and "felt hard done by, the males got Wollongong, the females were sent west ... We heard it was to make sure the Department got value from the female teachers as they thought they usually resigned after a few years to have children". Despite this, Christine enjoyed teaching in a small country town where "the people were different, it was very enjoyable, although there was a culture and weather shock. After three months however, Christine received a transfer at her request to the city, after she was made a "forced transfer". She went from teaching "26 kids in a 3/4 to 41 kids in 6C in the city".

Reflecting back over her career, Christine said she "loved teaching ... it was the peripheral stuff that got me down". She gained great satisfaction when "kids created something beyond what they thought they could do ... I instituted a school orchestra and felt proud of it". She also gained satisfaction from "art, craft, and the camaraderie of the staff, if it was a good one". However, she found the bickering between the Teachers Federation and the Department, the "back stabbing and lying", a cause of dissatisfaction. She believed that "level headed, average people" from both sides should sit down together to work things out, and that as far as the government was concerned, "education was an expense that they must bear".

Physical teaching conditions were also a cause of dissatisfaction and stress for Christine. She recounted how she used to "wake up at two in the morning" worried about the power points in her old library which leaked water, and how her Principal, a "nice bloke, wouldn't rock the boat" with the Department to have essential repairs to the school made, and how she "sounded like a broken record" because of her complaints. Eventually, her school moved to new premises valued at \$3,000,000. Christine described her new library as "an absolute disaster, the whole library was designed without consulting me ... it leaked in one corner and the carpet was pulled back and nothing was done for a year ... walls facing the sun were almost totally glass and it was 42 degrees inside ... I went home like a wet dishrag after school ... it dehydrated me ... when I went home and looked at food I felt ill, I feel stressed just talking about it".

Christine also recounted that due to changes in the classification of ancillary staff in schools, she was allocated a former Home Science assistant as a library aide, and how this person could neither type nor understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction, as "she had a mental block ... she did her best, but it was difficult". The new library had an increased number of books to catalogue, and her assistant was of little use to Christine. To compound matters, the Department of Education decided not to utilise ASCIS (Australian Schools Cataloguing Information Service), a computerised system which provides full details for book cataloguing and obviates the need for manual transcription of information from books. Because ASCIS was not available, this meant that every new book had to be entered manually onto computer, a great increase in workload. Christine described how the "ostriches in government" were actually adding to costs, and not decreasing them in a time of recession, and how she was forced to "compromise my standards" in her work as a librarian. She believed that principals did not "understand the complexities and complications of the job" and that librarians were undervalued.

For Christine, the critical issue precipitating her resignation was a staff meeting at which it was decided that the Principal and two Assistant Principals would travel to a two hour course to learn how to locally hire teaching staff. Christine thought that the idea that a person could learn how to hire a teacher in two hours was "insulting to the profession" and that her superiors were hypocritical as the school had recently been on strike to protest against the new procedures, but apparently was now prepared to support them. Christine had also experienced problems with losing key members of her orchestra, and went home from the staff meeting in a poor state. Her husband, a non-teacher said "you are resigning", and Christine replied "yes, I think I'm ready".

According to Christine, the decision to resign "had been building", and she and her husband had discussed in a semi-serious way the possibility of her opening a music shop on property they owned. Despite her fears that she might not be able to cope with the demands of the business and felt "inadequate", Christine and her husband decided to go ahead with the venture. Christine said that despite her uncertainty, she "was relieved to be leaving ... things are going to get worse", and that "every single teacher that came up to me said 'congratulations for resigning', and I know a lot of teachers in the area".

Christine noted her feelings toward teaching at the present time and said "I will miss it, but I haven't had time to think ... I wouldn't recommend it ... it is jobs for the boys, affirmative action is dead and the interview situation doesn't help women, [as] the private sector [when helping in the selection process for new appointments to promotions positions] won't go for women".

Christine believed that teaching had helped her to "become much more confident, I can get up and speak at the drop of a hat", and she had become "heavily involved in the local community" because of the confidence that teaching had given her. She had wanted to become a librarian "since sixth class", and teaching had enabled her to fulfil this ambition. She was also pleased with her "growth in music knowledge since college". She was, however, looking forward to the challenge of her new career.

### 3.5 "Sarah"

Sarah is a 40 year old former secondary English Head Teacher. Four year trained, Sarah resigned in 1991 after 17 years of teaching with the Department of School Education on an annual salary of \$39,000. Since her resignation, Sarah has undertaken some casual teaching.

Sarah recounted how she "always wanted to be a teacher" and that she had not been interested in other possible occupations such as office work. She wanted a university education and a teacher's scholarship made this possible. She entered teaching because "I wanted to help kids, it was the most useful thing I could do ... I wanted to pass on knowledge". During her university training Sarah's "idealism" about teaching did not change.

Sarah described her first year of teaching at a fairly notorious school in Sydney's Metropolitan West Region as "horrific". By her own admission, Sarah had come from a "middle class" background and was not prepared for the "swearing, the incest ... We had to do playground duty in pairs ... I discovered a world I was totally unprepared for ... It was a shock to the system, I thought I had made the worst decision of my life."

Despite these initial problems, Sarah spoke of how she gained great satisfaction during her career from "seeing kids when the light goes on, when they understand a difficult concept" and how "it was great to see tough little nuts turn into decent human beings". Even now, her former pupils from the early 1970s and later still contact her to describe the pleasure they had gained from "reading a book, seeing a play" and this on-going contact gave Sarah great satisfaction.

However, Sarah also recounted how over the years she had become "more cynical, although I still love kids ... I became disenchanted ... the respect of teachers from kids and the community was eroded, we were blamed for society's ills which we had no control over". She found that declining attitudes and discipline in class caused her dissatisfaction, and how an "incredibly increased workload, constant changes, the penny pinching, having to put my hand in my own pocket for in-service" reduced the pleasure that she had previously gained from teaching. Sarah was particularly critical of what she saw as change "without philosophical foundation".

Sarah described how she "couldn't have lunch properly for 17 years, couldn't finish a cup of coffee" because of the necessity to deal with the morning's problems, and how the Department of School Education treated its teachers like children: "You get into trouble for leaving school five minutes early, but they don't recognise that you were there the previous night 'til six o'clock". There were "very few rewards, no recognition, the give and take from the Department was disappearing". Sarah found the legal responsibility towards her students draining, and related how she had experienced urinary tract problems because "you can't go to the toilet when you need to", something that people in other occupations "don't understand".

Sarah also described the circumstances leading to her decision to resign. In an effort to alleviate her feelings of dissatisfaction, Sarah took a promotion to Head teacher at the beginning of 1989, leaving the school where she had spent the previous 10 years. A year later she met her prospective husband and married. Because of her age and her desire to start a family, "it was now or never ... I had given up a lot of things for the job and decided to do something for myself for a change ... there is a lot of emotional blackmail in teaching to do things 'for the good of the kids', and the quality of my own life was being eroded".

Sarah recounted how prior to her resignation, her husband, who was not until that time familiar with the workload of teachers, "was amazed" at the amount of work she undertook "without pay", working "to midnight on week nights and marking all Sunday ... the worry about kids". Her husband also told Sarah how she was "a totally different person and much easier to live with" during the 1990-1991 Christmas vacation, their first holiday together, and that this made both of them realise the effect that teaching was having upon her.

During the early part of 1991, Sarah spoke "at length with friends and my husband" and "thought long and hard" before making the decision to resign. Sarah described her emotions at the time of her resignation as "mixed, there was a sense of loss, of walking away ... there was elation, fear ... I felt selfish because of the emotional blackmail", but she also felt that the "stability" of teaching had gone and people were "up in the air". The previous promotion system had been well understood but now "people talk their way into it [promotion]" at interviews, and some very capable people were not good at presenting themselves in this manner. Sarah thought that some teachers were "debasementing themselves, saying things they didn't mean" in order to gain promotion.

Sarah described her present feelings towards teaching. As mentioned previously, she was doing some casual teaching and "still liked the job" and was "still enjoying being there". She enjoyed the social contact and not being a Head Teacher, but she was pregnant now and had no intention of ever returning to full-time teaching. She also recounted how, when returning to her old school for a one month period of casual teaching, her former colleagues appeared "tense, strung tight, miserable, stressed" while they remarked how Sarah looked "years younger, a different person" after six months off teaching.

Reflecting upon how her years of teaching had affected her, Sarah said that she had become "fairly cynical about the government", and how teaching had "opened my eyes [about] low income areas ... the problems in families". On the positive side, Sarah had become "a good manager of people" and had "never stopped learning ... it gave me an inquiring mind".

Sarah also had some concluding points to make about where she saw education heading. She thought that in the next few years "we are going to lose a lot of good teachers" and how teaching will "lose the cream of Year 12 ... we are getting a second rate teaching force, it is not seen as a viable career by secondary students, they don't see the joy, only the negatives, they don't want to be part of it". Sarah believed that the secondary curriculum was being "diluted, getting easier ... skills are disappearing ... there is time wasting, colouring in". Sarah was also concerned over how students wanted "payment for doing things, certificates for just doing what was expected" and that the use of rewards had "gone too far".

### 3.6 "Vicky"

At the time she was interviewed at the end of 1991, Vicky was a 23 year old secondary mathematics teacher in her first year of teaching. Having gone straight into teaching from university, Vicky was presently on the bottom of the four year trained scale on an annual salary of \$27,000. She had decided to resign from her Metropolitan West Region school at the end of 1991.

Vicky recounted how she became a teacher because she "always liked kids and always wanted to be a teacher. I thought that it would be really good". These views changed somewhat with Vicky's first practicum when "I ran into lots of problems. I was not good at discipline ... I pictured that it would be like it was when I was at school, and it wasn't".

Vicky's first appointment was something of an unusual one, being to a new school with only Year 7 students. She "loved it for the first month but then the kids settled in and started mucking up". Vicky had real problems controlling her classes and attributed this to the fact that "I'm too soft. I also knew a lot of the kids socially and it is hard to have a social relationship and to teach them at the same time".

During her short career, Vicky gained most satisfaction "from successfully organising an excursion to the zoo", and from the fact that "some kids have come around, kids that hated maths now know the work". She also found it "nice to be working and not studying" and said she "liked the kids in general".

Vicky's greatest source of dissatisfaction came from her attempts to discipline her classes. She found it "hard being a probationer, with the Head Teacher giving me more attention and being watched constantly". Her fellow teachers were in adjoining rooms and had to come into Vicky's room to quieten her class, something that Vicky found "embarrassing". According to Vicky, there were "hints" that she would be declared "unsatisfactory" and this was confirmed when the Principal asked to see her. The Principal said that if he was in Vicky's position he would resign so that there "was no black mark against me". She had not seriously entertained resignation to this point, and was "determined to keep trying" until the Principal suggested resignation.

As a result, and despite the fact that Vicky was still unsure as to whether she would be declared unsatisfactory and what would happen due to the fact that she had trained under a scholarship which tied her to the Department of School Education, Vicky began to seek alternative employment and quickly gained a position at a Christian secondary school where she was to begin teaching in 1992.

Vicky discussed her decision to resign with her family and friends and found her Principal "really helpful". At the time of the interview, Vicky described herself as feeling "frustrated, I don't know what is going to happen, things are on hold. I am disappointed with myself and I am hoping that next year will be better. It will be totally different as I will be teaching Years 9 to 12 and I hope that the staff will be more positive towards me". Vicky said that she believed in showing her liking for the children she teaches and hoped that a Christian school would be more compatible with her values in this regard.

Vicky believed that her Head Teacher "tried really hard to help me. It was his first year as a Head Teacher and he has taken it personally ... He was almost too helpful". Vicky stated that as a result of her experiences, she will "try not to make the same mistakes twice".

During her first year of teaching Vicky said she was "emotionally stressed and always sick. I have discovered what kids these days are like". She also said that she "didn't realise all the extra parts of the job and didn't know anything about being on probation or having to get a Teacher's Certificate. After I graduated, I thought that I was qualified".

Vicky was critical of the lack of information from the Department of Education regarding probation, the conditions of her scholarship and "what we were signing on for" and believed that this should have been provided during her final year of training. Vicky was also unsure of what would happen regarding her unsatisfactory assessment. She was due to have an interview at Regional Office in the following week but did not know what to expect from this.

### **3.7 "Bob"**

Bob is a 39 year old former English-History Head Teacher who took leave from the Department of School Education at the end of 1989 to take up a position as Lecturer in Education at a university. Initially on a two year contract, Bob had now secured tenure at the university and had subsequently resigned from the Department. Originally three year trained, Bob completed a BA and a MEd (Hons) degree during his 15 years of teaching experience, firstly in Western region and later in Metropolitan South West region. Bob's current salary, despite his two years service at the university, was only equivalent to the current salary for a Head Teacher.

Bob recounted how he became a teacher chiefly because of the influence of several fine English and History teachers during his secondary education. When he entered pre-service training, Bob had "no real commitment to education ... I was not a wonderful student [at school] and did not think that schools were a wonderful place ... [however] I wasn't interested in private enterprise". During his teacher training, Bob "was influenced a lot by sociology. I had a negative view of school prior to college but became interested in helping people who were poor achievers and quickly became involved in alternative styles of teaching and learning".

Bob spent the first five years of his teaching career at a country central school in Western Region and described his early experiences as "a dream, I had no problems with discipline and could concentrate upon developing curriculum and teaching". Being in a school with the full range of students from Kindergarten to Year 12 gave a "good perspective ... it felt good, there were a lot of young people and a lot of freedom to be innovative and to be appreciated by others". Despite the fact that not all the students were high achievers, Bob "got on well with the kids. They were friendly and it was very rewarding".

Over the course of his career, Bob "continued to have commitment ... my ideals and values did not change, although I tended to take on more whole school responsibilities". However, Bob did experience some problems

with discipline at his second school and as a result, he "developed a tougher exterior", something which was not necessary at his previous school where as Bob described it, "I could be myself".

In teaching, Bob gained greatest satisfaction from "being able to teach the whole range of kids and from achieving something positive, creating self-esteem in kids". Later, as a Head Teacher, Bob gained satisfaction from "whole school roles, affecting change in other teachers, changing their practices and attitudes towards things such as testing and streamed classes, from running in-services and team-teaching" and from changing his faculty from one being conservative to one which was "open, reflective and trying things".

However, the streak of conservatism that he encountered in schools was also a source of dissatisfaction to Bob, who spoke of a "lack of vision and breadth of experience" in others and of some teachers being like "brick walls" when it came to encountering new ideas and change. As a Head Teacher, Bob also found it "unrewarding to deal with a range of problems superficially. I was doing a lot, and not doing it well".

In 1988, Bob had applied for promotion to the newly created position of Leading Teacher and despite securing an interview, failed to gain a position. This caused Bob to "take stock", and when a Leading Teacher was subsequently appointed to his school and "achieved very little", Bob concluded that to affect change in schools he would need to become a principal, but "there were too many constraints" attached to this role and Bob decided that he "didn't want to be a boss". There were a few other disappointments such as his Principal's failure to support Bob's idea for a "sub-school" within the school, and as a consequence, Bob began "looking around for alternatives" and eventually he applied for and was offered a lecturing position.

At the time he left teaching, Bob said that he was "sad to leave the environment and the kids, but was glad to leave" when he was offered a lecturing position, despite the initial drop in salary. He felt that he had been "in a rut" and was concerned with the administrative load that head teachers were expected to carry while still teaching 22 periods per week. He felt that he was "juggling" his responsibilities and said that "I was working every night ... I like to do things properly and was not making much headway ... there was too much to do and policies etc. fell on the head teachers".

Bob felt that he had "grown out of teaching" and was "more professionally fulfilled now, more autonomous" and said that "I wouldn't want to go back now either as a Head Teacher or a teacher". However, on reflection, Bob believed that "teaching suited me ... I was able to express myself though teaching. I really have enjoyed people contact and had no other real interests aside from my family and sport". He also stated that "teaching has allowed me to understand my own kids better". Bob believes that he might have stayed in teaching, but that being three year trained initially meant that he "had to do further study, and this was a stimulus for further study and development".

To conclude, Bob described himself as being "basically an idealist ... I never had a real missionary zeal about my subject" and that as a result, he "didn't fit in. I was prepared to be open and reflective" and because of inter-faculty politics at his last school, "the interests of the kids were the last things considered". Bob believed that "schools need to change ... to become more liberating for students who need a greater part to play ... [there needs to be] more adult learning". Although he had considered opening a school of his own at some stage, Bob was content with his current role in teacher education which gave him some of the freedoms he believed were presently lacking in school teaching.

## Appendix 4: Additional Interview Responses

### 4.1 "Jane"

Jane is a 43 year old primary trained teacher who resigned from her position at a Metropolitan East Region school in 1991. Originally a mature aged student, Jane had previously worked as a secretary and for a real estate agent prior to undertaking a three year primary teacher training course. Following graduation, Jane worked for the Department of School Education for three and a half years as a casual teacher, mainly in secondary schools. Jane took up a permanent position with the Department as a primary teacher in 1991 but taught for less than a term before resigning. Following her resignation, Jane was once again working as a casual teacher in secondary schools.

Jane described how as a student she had attended Catholic schools in the 1960s and how, in her words, she had "stuffed around" until her father "pulled [her] out of school" and forced her to enrol at secretarial college after the equivalent of Year 10. She eventually became a secretary, but described how she felt "something was missing, I felt unfulfilled, wasted" and how she "had always wanted to be a teacher". She then left to work for a real estate agent and became a valued employee, but was forced to leave when she had a child as she could not handle both responsibilities.

A friend then showed her a newspaper clipping for a primary teacher training course. Although she would have preferred to become a secondary teacher, Jane felt that university and secondary teaching might have been beyond her because of her many years away from study. She applied for and was accepted into the course and began in mid-1983.

During her experiences in schools during practice teaching, Jane was "appalled at the accepted levels of behaviour, at the violence in the system, and at the airy fairy crap" that she encountered both in her training and in the ways the children were being taught at school. Jane believed that a "great deal had changed from 20 years ago" when she had last attended school. She was concerned that she and her colleagues did not have "guidelines" to help them cope, particularly with the teaching of reading. Jane went so far as to say that none of her peers left college knowing how to teach children to read.

As mentioned previously, Jane's early teaching experience was as a casual teacher in secondary schools. She described her first such appointment to a "tough Greek" boys' school, where the students were "out of control", being violent and sexually aggressive and suggestive towards her. She recounted with pride how she achieved a "good level of discipline" with her students and was "proud of how I broke through" and "got them interested and working". By contrast, Jane's next major appointment was to a predominantly white middle class "wasp" [white Anglo-Saxon Protestant] school where there was less freedom and "teacher powerlessness" because of "fear of what the parents would say".

Jane recounted how she gained great satisfaction from "breaking through to kids" and from "getting them working [and] seeing work [as] worthwhile". Satisfaction was also derived from "gaining kids' respect" and from "good rapport with staff ... professional attitudes in the workplace" and from a "willingness to extend yourself". However Jane found the "lack of professionalism on the part of some teachers" a cause of dissatisfaction and was surprised that this was "worse than the typing pool" where she had previously worked, Jane having had the expectation that teachers would be "more professional".

Jane was also critical of what she saw as the "creeping" problem caused by new promotion procedures where teaching ability was being increasingly undervalued while being a "high flier" outside the classroom was seen more favourably by those appraising staff for promotion. This was a "fault of the new system" where people were only doing things around the school "to look good". Jane was also critical of the fact that despite the new procedures, the Department was still "not weeding out bad teachers".

Following three and a half "happy years" of casual teaching in secondary schools where she felt valued and had achieved much, Jane decided to seek a permanent position which, because of her qualifications, had to be in a primary school. Jane described this period of her life as "a nightmare". She arrived at her school after the start of the school year in 1991 and there was no one to help or advise her. The Principal had apparently had three heart attacks and "hid in his office all day". Eventually, a teacher in the staffroom "who seemed to know what was going on" took Jane to her room, a portable building without heating or cooling adjacent to a noisy highway. She later learned that she had been given the "worst class in the school", a school from where almost every member of staff "wanted to leave".

Jane's class comprised "nine nationalities who solved their problems with violence". There was "no discipline, it was stinking hot and the kids were out of control". Previously Jane had experienced success with difficult students, but her present situation proved her downfall. She described herself as "drowning, everyone knew but no one helped". Possibly because she was "older", no one realised that she was "on probation" until several weeks had passed. Her supervisor, the Deputy Principal, then told her that she was to report to his room every day at 8-45 a.m. with two foolscap pages of lesson notes for the day's lessons. She was also to write her teaching program for the year. The Deputy Principal would wait for Jane "every morning on his verandah and would be looking at his watch". He would read the day's lesson notes without comment, tick them and then tell Jane where she "could have done better". Jane said her supervisor "wanted all the paperwork" but gave her "no practical help in the classroom".

Because of the preparation required for both her lesson notes and her program, Jane was working until 3-00 or 4-00 a.m. every morning, while at school, no one came near her classroom or offered her any advice. One day Jane went to the Deputy Principal "with tears rolling down my face, I had hit a fifth class boy, something I had never done to my own children". The Deputy told her "don't worry, if anyone complains we'll try to cover it up". Still in her words "drowning" in the classroom, Jane had to contend with the students "tearing up each others' books and throwing them out the windows". Jane was "determined to be tough and ripped up some books myself to show them what they were doing".

Jane's health then deteriorated and she had ten days off on sick leave. When she returned to the school she was told that some parents had complained about her destroying her pupils' books. She asked the Principal for a resignation form but he refused to give her one "because no casuals would come to the school" to take her place. She then told him that she "would sit outside his office until he gave me one" and 15 minutes later he reluctantly gave her a form. Jane said that in the remaining four weeks before the end of term when her resignation was to take effect "no one came near me".

In total, Jane had three weeks teaching, ten days off sick and four weeks waiting for her resignation. She believed that at her school they "didn't give me a chance ... no help". She had spoken to a number of other probationary teachers at the school and their attitude had been "to keep their heads down until the three years was up" when they could then apply for a transfer to another school.

Jane said she felt "terrible sadness at [the time of her] resignation ... they knew I was drowning and nobody helped ... I was resentful of my inhumane supervisor and thought it was the end". Following her resignation, Jane was immediately approached to take on "block casual" teaching in a high school and worked continually in this manner for the remainder of 1991. Jane said she "loves" high school teaching and "would love a permanent job ... I love kids, enjoy teaching and enjoy seeing their eyes light up" and said that she "was not disillusioned with teaching". Jane eventually completed her probation by dint of her long periods of casual teaching and her present Principal was attempting to gain her permanent status as a secondary teacher, although this posed some difficulties.

She felt valued in her present school and believed that teaching has made her a "more self-confident person, made me see I have something to give, good organisational skills ... broadened me as a person, but made me more humble, does that make sense?"

However there had been personal difficulties. Jane's marriage broke up after her resignation. It appears that Jane's husband resented her achievement and she realised later that he had "tried to sabotage me all the way through ... after [she had experienced a problem] he pretended to reassure me ... he called me 'the professional' and had urged me to give it away completely". Her husband and some of her friends had thought that Jane had changed "but I was the same person I had always been when I was working as a secretary, only more self-confident".

To conclude, Jane hoped that what happened to her "won't happen to other teachers" and called for special provisions to be made for probationary mature aged teachers as these people are "given more responsibility but less help" when they come to a school.

## **4.2 "Karen"**

Karen is a 48 year old teacher with an interesting background. Karen originally undertook two year teacher training in New Zealand, had 12 years experience as a primary teacher in New Zealand and Australia and later completed a BA, a Graduate Diploma in Special Education, a Graduate Diploma in Language in Secondary Schools, and was currently completing two Master of Education degrees with different universities. In addition to her years as a primary teacher, Karen had worked as a casual teacher, for an educational company, and for six



years as a permanent secondary teacher. Her last position with the Department of School Education was as a Support Teacher, Learning Difficulties in a large Metropolitan West Region high school. She has spent the last 14 years in Australia. She resigned from the D.S.E. in January 1991 and currently worked as a classroom teacher in a private Baptist School in western Sydney.

Karen recounted how she became a teacher in New Zealand in the early 1960s because career choices for women were limited at the time to nursing, secretarial work, and teaching, and it was only the latter that appealed to her. Karen considered teaching "a nice job, and something to go back to after having a family". Her views on teaching did not change during her two years of initial training.

Karen's first appointment was to an infants class, and in Karen's words she "loathed it, hated it ... it was a class of 30 which was small for the time, but it had 13 nationalities and three kids couldn't speak English". Karen worked for only one year and left to get married. In the following year she tried a variety of other jobs, mainly clerical in nature, and then went back to teaching.

Over the years Karen came to enjoy teaching and to "love learning", Karen being "happy to share with others". She gained satisfaction from "the reaction of kids ... when they said they enjoyed something, when you awakened something in them". The "occasional pat on the back from parents" also gave Karen satisfaction. On the other hand, Karen found the workload, particularly the work that needed to be completed out of school time, a cause of "frustration". Karen stated that in her opinion, English teachers tend to have a greater workload than other secondary teachers. She described teaching as "a seven day a week job" which "you could make a 24 hour a day job if you were not careful". Karen also "hated marking exams", particularly since she was unconvinced of their efficacy.

Karen had not considered resignation prior to 1990. She had been teaching at a high school for four years without incident when a new Deputy Principal was appointed. Karen's position was as a Support Teacher, Learning Difficulties, and her role was helping teachers in the classroom on a team teaching basis "right across the curriculum". Withdrawal of students from class was considered "a last resort". However, Karen's new Deputy Principal had a view of her role "that was 20 years out of date, he wanted me to be a remedial reading teacher and set up a reading room for this purpose" so that Karen could teach students on a withdrawal basis. Karen had studied extensively in her area and considered what the Deputy Principal wanted was dated and without any research basis. According to Karen, the Deputy Principal "utterly undermined my position ... anything I said was wrong". To compound matters, the new Head Teacher English "treated her staff without professional regard, we were treated like children".

Despite the fact that Karen spoke very highly of her Principal, Karen stated that the Deputy Principal "was like a bulldozer, a jerk, the boss couldn't control him". Karen believed that she had little status as a Support Teacher and that her role was not as clearly defined as other positions in the school. She was also critical of the fact that in-service should have been provided for the Deputy Principal so that he could have better understood her role. Because of her lack of status, Karen said she did not see any point in taking the matter to higher authorities in the Department of School Education.

At the end of 1991, Karen saw an advertisement for an English teacher at a private Christian school. Without telling anyone at her school, she applied successfully for the position. When she told the Principal she was resigning, he tried to convince her that it would be difficult for her to teach in a Baptist school as she was an Anglican. However Karen decided to take the position as she was keen to return to English teaching and had requested a transfer in status from her present position as a Support Teacher under the supervision of the Deputy Principal. Ironically, since her resignation, Karen has received several notices from the Department that she had been appointed as an English teacher to her old school, although she had not been employed by the Department since the beginning of 1992.

Despite the fact that her Head Teacher at her new school was previously Head Teacher at her old school and she had very high regard for this person, Karen said she was "very fearful about what I was going into, whether it would work out". There was also a "problem with severing my ties at ----- High School, I had been heavily involved at the school and had enormous respect for the Principal". It was all rather sudden as Karen "had no intention of leaving until last year, I only wanted to change faculties".

At this stage Karen said that she "wouldn't want to return, I have no desire to go back [to the Department]". Despite this, Karen believed that "education is really good" in N.S.W. and although she was going to a private school, there are "the same rules, it is really the same system". As to how teaching had affected her, Karen stated that "it is part of my life, my central being, it is inconceivable not to be a teacher, I have been a teacher for so long". Karen believed that teaching had made her self-confident and that she could get up and speak in front of people without any fear, although possibly this was more a function of her age, when, at the present stage of her life, Karen "no longer cares what other people think".

Karen did express concern about recent changes in Education in N.S.W. which she thought were "happening too quickly ... there is no support system around to help classroom teachers to implement the changes". She also disliked "teacher bashing in the media and the political interference in education in the last few years such as the Basic Skills tests which are a load of crap ... I have little faith in tests".

Karen concluded by stating that "teaching can still be very exciting, although I resent the hours sometime, I'm only one person ... society expects far more of us now, we have to teach all the kids all the skills". Karen said that she "does not despair about the education system, people have always complained".

### 4.3 "Judith"

Judith is a 46 year old former primary teacher with some 24 years of teaching experience. She initially taught for six years with the D.S.E. as an infants teacher before resigning. She then had "12 months off" before teaching for six months as a casual secondary teacher with the Department. This was followed by more than a year in Catholic secondary schools before another six months away from teaching when Judith and her husband moved house to another area. She then taught for two years in a Catholic primary school before taking another six months off to have a child. Judith then spent the next five years teaching almost full-time with the Department as a casual teacher. She then returned to full-time permanent teaching with the D.S.E. for nine years before resigning for a second time.

Initially two year trained, Judith completed both a BA and a MLit through external study. At the time of her resignation at the end of 1990, Judith held the position of Assistant Principal in a primary school in the Riverina region where she grew up. She now worked as a lecturer at a country university on an annual salary of approximately \$40,000, similar to her final salary level with the Department.

Judith recounted that "for as long as ever, what I wanted to do was to be a teacher". There were no teachers in Judith's family and she considered teaching to be "a fairly professional job, reasonably respected in the community ... my family were pleased and encouraged me to be a teacher". During her initial two year training course, Judith's views about teaching did not alter, although she experienced a "revolting last prac. I have often said that if I had it first up I would never have completed the course".

Judith's first appointment was to a fairly isolated school where she taught "Kindergarten classes of 48-49 ... there was no extra help, no aides ... I have memories of this huge class of absolute extremes, there was inbreeding in the [Snowy] mountains ... some could hardly speak and others were very bright and would later be sent to boarding school ... the huge diversity of kids was overwhelming but I enjoyed it". Judith said that despite the circumstances "you just managed, I was quite determined to make a career of teaching".

At Judith's second school there was a vacancy for the then position of Deputy Mistress of the infants department. By this time, Judith had five years of teaching experience but was told she was ineligible to apply because she lacked the required 12 months of extra experience, despite having done all of her teaching with infants classes. Although there were firm regulations that existed at the time that restricted movement of staff between infants and primary positions, the vacant position was given to a primary teacher at the school with no experience in infants teaching, a situation which Judith described as being "most unusual". The new infants Deputy Mistress was given a class next door to Judith's and despite the fact that the two got on "quite well" on a personal level, the lack of experience of the Deputy Mistress meant that she frequently had to seek help from Judith, who "knew how much she didn't know".

When Judith missed out on the promotion, she made a request to the Infants Mistress, "a strange woman who later committed suicide", to gain experience in the primary school to improve her prospects for promotion. However, Judith was told that the only way that this could possibly happen was if a replacement could be found "who could play the piano and wasn't first year out". At the end of her sixth year of teaching, Judith "was so cranky" as a result of what had happened that she resigned.

Looking back over her total career, Judith gained greatest satisfaction from "finding another way to teach reading ... I went into a lot of schools when teaching casual and saw some excellent teachers. I wanted my own class back". Judith also gained satisfaction from returning to permanent teaching with the Department after waiting more than four years to be re-employed. Gaining her two degrees was also a source of satisfaction. She could have opted for "the easy way out and done a college conversion course" to upgrade her two year trained status but deliberately chose the more difficult and more highly regarded option. Finally gaining promotion in her second period of full-time employment with the D.S.E. was also a source of satisfaction as "I proved to myself I could do it". Judith "really enjoyed teaching" in her second period with the Department, although she was not sure whether this was due to changes in education or more maturity in herself.

On the other hand, Judith found the unrealistic expectations held by parents for their children to be a source of dissatisfaction. Having grown up in the town where she was teaching, Judith knew the academic ability of many of the parents who had been only "ordinary" students at school, but who had made money from their trades and businesses and now believed that "money can buy anything, and can't accept that their kids, although very nice, are only average". Judith also recounted how she had worked very hard for her first inspection for promotion, and although successful, she resented how males that she had worked with appeared to pass inspection much more easily due to what she termed "the old boys' network". Although she "may have done too much, the men appeared to do very little" and this made Judith "angry". Sexism from her superiors was a source of dissatisfaction and Judith stated that "I have worked with some very difficult men, and some very efficient women". In particular, Judith described her last Principal as an "autocrat" who resented the fact that requests were often made for Judith to act as a consultant to other schools. In her opinion, Judith's Principal felt threatened by this and by the fact that she had higher qualifications, and as a result, attempted to make it very difficult for her to leave the school. Judith believed that her Principal put the school before the professional development of its staff, and Judith found it "terribly frustrating being held back".

The "new directions happening in education" were also a source of dissatisfaction to Judith. She believed that the "whole mould of education" was being changed with classroom teaching and curriculum development being downgraded in favour of "managing, computing and accounting". She believed that the government had "duped" schools and the public and that while schools were supposed to be more independent, they had in fact lost control over areas such as curriculum where stricter controls were now in place.

In the time leading up to her second resignation, Judith described herself as "feeling totally stifled" and how she felt "hopelessness about the direction of education". The "constant knocking of teachers, the low self-esteem, the constantly being on guard [against criticism] got me down, it was so constant ... I felt total frustration".

At the time, Judith had applied for three positions outside the classroom. The first as a consultant with the Department Judith thought she had "no chance" of obtaining, but received interviews for both the others, a position in a regional office and a position as a lecturer. She missed out on the position at the regional office, and Judith described how the letter advising her of this came opened in the school mail and passed from the school secretary to the Principal before it was passed on to her, a situation which made Judith "very angry".

Judith had obtained her MLit degree with the intention of both making herself more qualified for promotion and of widening her options, but her intention was "not clear cut". She was offered the position at the university and accepted. Despite the fact that the position was tenured, Judith took a year off from the Department on leave without pay as a precaution, but as her Principal made it so difficult and because she was enjoying her new job so much, she resigned officially in mid-1991 from the Department. She believed that she "needed a change in direction" and felt "absolute relief" about her decision to leave the Department and because "big brother [the Principal] was not watching me any more".

The only way that Judith would return to the Department was in some form of consultancy role, but not on contract, although ironically, in the past 12 months, Judith, still living in the same town as previously, had been approached twice by the Department to sit on interview committees to select teachers for promotion, a situation which Judith found "amusing, they sought me out".

Judith concluded by noting how her teaching career had made her a "lot more tolerant and compassionate ... it widened my views and opened my eyes, I had a middle class background". Teaching had also made Judith "more self-motivated, I clarified my own ideas and now think for myself, I have now got a proper philosophy of education".

Judith found her new role and the freedom she enjoyed to be greatly fulfilling and was "a lot happier and relaxed now".

#### **4.4 "Julie"**

Julie is a 28 year old secondary Science teacher. Holding a BSc and Dip Ed, Julie resigned after five and a half years of teaching at the one Metropolitan West Region high school. Following her resignation, Julie joined the Australian Federal Police before deciding that the job was not for her and returned to casual teaching with the Department of School Education before obtaining a permanent position at a Catholic school on the same salary she would have currently been earning with the Department.

Julie recounted how she became a teacher because it was "really what I wanted to do ... I did well at the H.S.C. and was hassled by my family to do something like law, but I was idealistic and wanted to do something worthwhile". Julie had a number of "really terrific teachers" in her senior years and they encouraged her interest in teaching, despite the "hype" at the time concerning the supposed poor salary of teachers. Julie described herself at the time as being "really positive about teaching".

If anything, Julie's feelings about teaching were reinforced as a result of her course of training at university, which combined the BSc and Dip Ed concurrently and utilised "master teachers" who were able to lend their expertise to the training program. In Julie's fourth year of training, she had a master teacher who "was a great role model, we had a similar philosophy of education".

However, Julie described her first year of full-time teaching as "horrendous". She had replaced a "really experienced teacher" and inherited "the bottom Year 7 and 8 kids" that this person had formerly arranged to teach. The behaviour of the students was very poor and Julie's Head Teacher, although a "nice guy", held a "sink or swim attitude when it came to discipline" and left her to her own devices. She frequently went home from school "in tears" during her first year and this situation was compounded by Julie's marriage at the time. She was the youngest member of staff and had no close friends to turn to, but decided to "stick it out until the end of the first year" when she thought that she might resign because of her problems.

However, things began to improve in Julie's second year of teaching. A new principal had been appointed at the same time as Julie and began to "make his mark, the tone of the school improved". Julie made friends with some of the staff and "got some rapport going". She also became involved in school sport.

Over the next four years, Julie described how she changed from "young and naive to hardened, grown up". By the end of her fourth year at her school, Julie was a year co-ordinator and was heavily involved in school life. She was also involved in her old university's "master teacher" program and her professional expertise was recognised by others. However, her marriage "broke down" at this time and during the next year things began to deteriorate. It was the "Metherell era" and Julie saw "morale plummet" at her school. Julie believed that there was "no support from anywhere" and an experienced Head Teacher at her school described the state of morale as "the lowest in 30 years". By this stage, Julie considered herself a very effective teacher but several new Science teachers were posted to her school and Julie believed these teachers to be "incompetent, they were from overseas [due to the shortage of Science teachers] and could hardly speak English ... The professional standard was a joke ... It made a mockery of what I had done ... by the end of the fifth year I'd had enough, it was the system, not the kids" that was behind this state of affairs, according to Julie.

Reflecting back over her career, Julie stated that she gained greatest satisfaction from "relationships with kids, seeing them achieve. I was close to some of my senior classes, they were not really bright but they were a great bunch of kids ... I'm still in contact with some of them and went to a lot of their 21st parties". She also gained satisfaction from being "close to kids in sport" and "being a year co-ordinator was great ... I had a party for them at my house at the end of the year and they made a great speech about me. I also had close relationships with other teachers".

On the other hand, Julie found "falling professional standards and attacks from the media, uninformed criticisms about long holidays and teachers being treated like grubby little unionists" sources of dissatisfaction. People felt that they could criticise education because "they've all been to school, that makes them experts", according to Julie. The "import of inferior teachers" was also a major source of dissatisfaction, Julie believing that the state education system "should be first rate, not crumbling". She felt as if she was "hitting my head against a brick wall" in her attempt to maintain standards and decided "not to be a martyr, enough was enough".

To compound matters, a number of the university students that Julie had worked with as part of the master teacher program were apparently "left off the Department's computer" following their graduation and could not obtain employment, despite the fact that there was a shortage of Science teachers at the time and it was necessary to import science teachers, "rubbish" as Julie termed them, from overseas. Julie had worked closely with these university students, who she described as being "fine teachers". Some were forced to work as casual teachers while others took up different careers altogether. Some resigned as a result of the "pathetic" way they were treated by the Department in their first year, according to Julie, who was still in contact with them.

Julie decided to resign as she had "no faith in the system whatsoever". She discussed her decision with others at school who were "supportive", although her Head Teacher told Julie that she had made "a huge error, he said that I was a natural teacher but he would not interfere in my decision". She had intended to resign at the end of 1990, but her intake into the Federal Police was delayed until mid-year so she returned to her school for the first half of 1991. She then resigned but lasted only "several months" with the Police as it was not like she thought it would be. She realised that "it was not teaching I disliked but the system" and that joining the Police was a way of "getting away and winding down".

Julie returned to her old region and filled out a form listing 20 schools where she was prepared to teach. She heard nothing and two months later received another copy of the same form which she again filled out. Another month passed and she was sent the same form yet again. She had been doing some casual teaching at her old school but was becoming "desperate" to obtain a permanent position and so answered a number of advertisements for Science teachers at private schools. Julie was offered three positions and eventually chose to teach at a Catholic school where she began teaching in 1992.

Julie described the way she was treated by the Department when she attempted to be re-employed as "fairly pathetic, they mucked me around ... I was quite stunned considering the shortage of Science teachers in Met-West".

Julie believed that her experiences with the Department in the last few years "flattened" her, and that she "lost my dynamic, I was surrounded by idiots ... I saw the whole school plummet, it flattened me, flattened a lot of people" and that there is not "a snowflake's chance in hell" that she would work for the Department again. However she decided that she "really wanted to teach again" and was regaining her enthusiasm at her new school and said she was almost "back to my best" again.

#### **4.5 "Francis"**

Francis is a 42 year old primary teacher who has resigned on two occasions from the Department of School Education. Originally a three year trained specialist infants teacher, Francis taught for seven years, then resigned to raise a family before returning to permanent teaching again in 1991 when she taught for only five weeks before resigning once more. Since her latest resignation, Francis had taught only one day as a casual teacher and was currently unemployed at the time of her interview. All Francis' teaching has been in the Metropolitan West Region.

Francis recounted how she became a teacher because "it was the only thing left to do, I wanted to be a librarian but my parents couldn't afford uni ... it was a sign of the times, everyone applied for it [teaching]". Francis won a scholarship to a teachers' college and at the time Francis thought that teaching was "a good job, a good career", although she thought that her high school "pushed it [teaching as a career] a bit".

Francis' views on teaching did not change during her three years of training and she "still thought it was good". Her first appointment was to a "very large" kindergarten class. She "enjoyed it, I was well trained [although] it was harder to get on with the staff than with the kids, there was a lot of politics". Francis felt that her "Principal wasn't happy with me, I don't know why ... she wrote a bad report on me at the end of my first year but I didn't get to see it". An Inspector of Schools was called in as a result of the apparently poor report but the Inspector "said the Principal was crazy, it was just a difficult class" and advised the Principal to give Francis a better class in the coming year. However Francis recalled that "she gave me a difficult class of repeats".

Francis eventually taught for six years at her first school and "got more confident as time went on, I even thought about promotion but I liked Kindergarten best, I liked what I was doing". Francis believed that she was "excellent at the end, it built up". However Francis applied for a transfer to a school closer to her home and spent her seventh year of teaching at "a huge school, it had 15 infants classes". Francis believed that the Principal of her new school "had spies on the staff but I didn't know ... She tended to pick on some of the staff. I was given the worst class in the school". Despite these circumstances, Francis maintained that she would have remained at her new school if she had not resigned to start a family.

After 12 years away from teaching, Francis received an offer from the Department for a permanent position in a primary school from the beginning of 1991. Despite the fact that she was not told what grade she would be teaching, Francis felt that she had to accept or she "would not get another offer" of employment. Francis went to the school and "as soon as I looked at the Principal I knew I was in trouble, it was almost a replay of my last school". Francis was given a year four class, "the worst class in the school, with the worst student in the school ... half the class was uncontrollable". Unbeknown to Francis at the time, her class had six teachers in the previous year.

Francis had no resources to teach a year four class and "they didn't tell me terribly much, they were very vague". Apparently her class had "fallen behind" in the previous year and "the parents were pushing ... I didn't know where they were up to and had no way of finding out. The previous teacher took the [teaching] program for the class when she left the school". To compound matters, Francis found the students in her "multi-cultural" school to be "racist" and fights broke out in her classroom. Francis recounted how "I tried every trick I knew, [but] nothing worked, I felt that they [the students] were trying to get rid of me. The Executive knew but didn't help ... the Principal only came near to criticise me for minor things ... My supervisor was not really helpful. She

had a class next door and arrived unannounced to watch me teach but did not explain why. There must have been more to it ... it got me on edge, forever being watched but not helped".

The parents of one of her difficult students, "a fighter", accused Francis of physically abusing their son "which really upset me, I was forced to break up a fight. The Principal eventually "worked it out" with the parents of the child concerned. Francis believed that the discipline policy of the school "was not working" and she was "coming home and struggling to complete her program and trying to control the kids". She believed that the other teachers felt that she had been "away too long" from the classroom and Francis admitted how difficult it was for her to "program in the new way ... I even had to buy the curriculum, it was like starting all over again. The ordinary teachers supported me but they had their own problems ... nobody had time to show me".

Finally, after five weeks, a fight broke out on her classroom floor and Francis went to see the Principal and "resigned on the spot". By chance, the local Cluster Director was with the Principal and Francis "told them what I thought, what had happened ... the Principal got really uptight because I dumped her in it". Francis filled in the official resignation form in front of the Principal and because she feared jeopardising her future employment, "wrote lies" in the space which asked her for the reasons for her resignation. However, the Cluster Director assured Francis that "she would sort it out, there would be no problems [with future employment] if I resigned". Francis believed that her Principal must have written a reasonably good report on her from what she able to glean at her interview held later with the Department where she was put on the list of casual teachers.

At the time of her resignation, Francis was "really angry, with the Department, with the Principal ... I felt ... I don't know, I lost all my confidence, they thought I was hopeless, I was upset for days".

Looking back over her experiences, Francis stated that in her career she gained most satisfaction from "seeing children learn, I had remedial classes and to see kids picking up the work gave me satisfaction ... I also had the choir, I was interested in music, and from art as well, seeing kids' talents develop". However dissatisfaction arose from "some of the staff politics, not knowing if you were saying the wrong thing, I said an innocent thing in the staffroom once and a teacher didn't talk to me for months. I didn't know where I stood, and I wasn't the only one". Not "having support for difficult children and when the Principal didn't discipline children sent to her" by Francis was also a source of dissatisfaction. She had become "much more wary of senior staff, anyone in a promotion position ... I was really careful about what I said ... it was very stressful, I don't know what they are going to do or think".

Francis was "more worried about discipline now, kids have changed, they have less respect, less motivation to work". She was "nervous about teaching now, even Scripture", which she has taught for many years. Francis would only return to permanent teaching with the Department if she could take an infants class as it was "wrong to expect an infants trained teacher to teach K to 6" but she realised that things have changed, there no longer being separate infants and primary teacher training and that she could be allocated to any class within a primary school at the discretion of the Principal.

Francis concluded by saying that "they should offer refreshers for people going back after a gap" in the light of her experiences. She thought that others such as herself really needed to be brought up to date with curriculum and other changes in education and in methods to cope with the children of today and that "they should provide this, but they don't".

#### **4.6 "Paula"**

Paula is a 25 year old secondary Science teacher who resigned after one year and one term at her first school, a boys' high school in the Metropolitan North Region of Sydney. Paula had initially completed a Bachelor of Science degree at university, interrupting her three year degree studies to work as a teachers' aide with handicapped children for one year. After completing her degree Paula was faced with the decision of "what to do next" and considered an honours year before deciding on teaching as she "wanted a stable job with reasonable pay" and thought that teaching "would be okay" and that she could "fall back on the qualification" if she chose to do something else, although she "thought it would give quite a lot of satisfaction" and she would "quite like it for a while".

Paula's fellow students and acquaintances, some of them teachers asked "what are you doing it for?" and made Paula "quite apprehensive about teaching ... I got no support from friends". Paula completed her Diploma in Education year and "had good pracs" and was posted to her first school, a boys' school on Sydney's north shore. On arrival, Paula was "astounded at the lack of respect and the difficulty in getting through to them" and remembers thinking "How on earth am I going to get them to learn? ... there was so much preparation, it was chaos ... there was no lab assistant".

In contrast to her own education at "a good public school" and her favourable experiences during practicum, Paula now "saw what a stressful job it was, so unhealthy". She felt "not free to teach the way I wanted, I felt stunted, restricted ... I had to gear the whole lesson to how they would behave" and felt that she was "banging my head against a brick wall". The poor standard of discipline was a major source of dissatisfaction for Paula, as was the "morale of the other teachers ... they were always complaining ... there was a whole negative atmosphere", something which Paula thought problematic when "you are just starting your career". Some teachers openly questioned her choice of career and talked about resigning. Other teachers were concerned with salary and other industrial matters which Paula maintained did not interest her. Socially, Paula said that sometimes "I was embarrassed to say I was a teacher" and this concerned her.

Paula did however gain some satisfaction from teaching "a couple of good classes ... I could actually teach them fairly freely ... [they were] actually listening". Satisfaction came too from "seeing that I'd coped, and was doing my job properly ... although it was hectic", according to Paula.

However, at the end of her first year Paula gave notice that she was resigning and left her school at the end of the first term in the following year. She resigned because she "wanted to get out of a particular school" and to travel overseas. Teaching had enabled her to "save money". It was not teaching so much as "the school itself and the negative morale there" that contributed to her decision, according to Paula. Teaching "stressed me out, each day was a battle, I felt very exhausted ... the anger builds up but you can't let the students get to you ... the holidays are a relief, you need them". Other teachers, and in particular the Deputy Principal, did not try to dissuade Paula but rather advised her to "get out now if you want to, don't feel guilty".

Paula resigned and spent the next eight months travelling overseas. At the time of her resignation, Paula felt "no sadness, there was only one class I got somewhere with, I liked them ... I didn't miss the school ... [resigning was] a relief".

Paula believes that her teaching experiences "put me off kids a bit and made me realise more the problems of families in society". She saw the teaching role "becoming more like social work, especially for Deputy Principals ... there is not enough counselling to get the kids right". She also believed that her teacher training "didn't prepare me for all the discipline problems" that she experienced in teaching.

Paula felt that she will return to teaching some day, "but not at the moment", although there was no way that she would teach at an all male school, believing that a young woman faces too many difficulties in that situation and that "if you don't play sport, you have to win them over in other ways".

#### **4.7 "Liz"**

Liz is a 39 year old school counsellor. Originally she taught as a primary teacher for nine years before resigning to look after her young family. She then taught for seven years as a casual teacher before undertaking a one year full-time course to become a school counsellor. In 1990 and 1991 she worked as a school counsellor in Metropolitan West Region, being attached to both primary and secondary schools. Originally two year trained, Liz completed her fourth year of training, a post graduate diploma in special education, a qualification in educational administration, a BEd in early childhood and a psychology major as well as her school counselling course.

Despite the fact that she has only completed two years of her three year contract following her school counselling training and was still liable to pay a third of her \$33,000 bond, Liz intended to take leave without pay from 1992 with the help of a medical certificate and did not intend to return to the Department of School Education, having obtained a school counselling position in the Australian Capital Territory.

Liz recalled how she "always wanted to be a teacher" and considered teaching "a really important role". Her views on teaching did not change during her training nor during her early years of teaching. Despite the fact that she was "moved around a bit" and that some schools were happier places than others, Liz was "personally happy" during this period.

Although as mentioned previously, Liz had resigned earlier in her career for family reasons, this was not because of dissatisfaction with teaching. Her recent decision to leave, however, was the result of her experiences while a school counsellor. Her group of six school counsellors was supervised by a District Guidance Officer (D.G.O.). Liz maintains that she and her group were subjected to harassment and intimidation by her superior. This harassment took the form of verbal abuse, undermining of the credibility of the counsellors in the schools where they worked, and allocation of resources on the basis of compliance with the D.G.O.'s wishes. For example,

one counsellor had a departmental car taken away as a result of a clash with the District Guidance Officer. The D.G.O. stopped the six counsellors meeting as a group and engaged in "divide and conquer" tactics, according to Liz.

The counsellors decided to "go through official channels" within the region and the industrial section of the Department. A meeting was held with the [then termed] Regional Director but the matter was not resolved. Eventually Liz took the matter to an industrial court where it was settled out of court with the Department admitting liability, apparently the only time that this has happened in an harassment case of this type. Liz ultimately received a worker's compensation payment for stress experienced during the period she spent under the supervision of the District Guidance Officer.

During the 18 months that the whole process took, Liz maintained that she and her colleagues were told "lies" by regional officials and that every effort was made to dissuade the counsellors from their course of action. According to Liz, it was only because they "stood firm" that they eventually won out. At the end of her first year as a counsellor, Liz had received a favourable report from the Principal of the school where she was based, but 13 days into the next year, she was declared "of concern". Later this rating was overturned. During the period of the troubles with her supervisor, reports were written on Liz by people she had not worked with and hardly knew. This was revealed when she was shown her departmental file.

Of the six counsellors, one was on indefinite sick leave due to stress while another court case was being mounted by one of the six. All intended to leave the system as a result of their experiences. The D.G.O. had not been dismissed, and had not been demoted, although Liz believed that "the screws have been put on him" by the Department.

Despite or perhaps because of her successful action against the Department, her substantive position was taken from Liz and she was forced to work as a "mobile" school counsellor for the next six months. It was in this period that she applied for and obtained a position in the A.C.T. from 1992. Ironically, Liz maintained that the good reports principals wrote on her for the department during the dispute helped her to obtain her new position.

During her time as a counsellor and prior to that as a teacher, Liz said she gained satisfaction from "the privilege of seeing kids grow" and in counselling, from "seeing kids happy ... you could offer them something concrete". She also gained satisfaction from "being close" to her peers. Dissatisfaction came from the "lack of ethics" on the part of those in regional office and the "lies" she was told to "protect an incompetent". She felt that being on the "bottom of the rung", she was "not valued". Nothing would induce Liz to work for the Department again, despite the fact that she "had survived" her troubles.

As a parent, Liz was concerned with the standard of public education in the state, and she also worried that her experience with one region might be widespread. She had yet to inform the Department of School Education of her intention to seek leave without pay, and as mentioned previously, the matter of the bond needed to be resolved, but she was determined to leave.

#### 4.8 "Sue"

Sue is a 33 year old former secondary Home Science teacher. Four year trained with a BEd in Home Economics, Sue taught for eight years with the Department of School Education before resigning. Originally sent to Western Region, Sue was then posted to Metropolitan West Region. Following her resignation, Sue spent some time at a T.A.F.E. college, then worked for herself for a year designing and making children's clothing before returning to university to train as a special education teacher specialising in vision impairment. She now worked once more for the Department but at a small special school. Sue had retained her seniority with the Department and expected to be paid at the top of the graduate salary scale, although at the time of her interview she had only been working at her new school for two weeks and had yet to have her salary confirmed.

Sue recounted how she became a teacher because she "liked the subject area" of Home Science and "had always wanted to be a teacher". She did however question her choice of career during Year 12 when she thought that she would like to study fabric design or landscape architecture, but these courses were "too expensive" to undertake. Sue won a scholarship to study Home Science teaching and this "had a lot to do with" her decision to take on teaching as a career. At the time, Sue believed that there were a "lot of dedicated people" in teaching "who worked hard".

Sue described herself as being "totally overwhelmed" during her first practice teaching session and remembers standing in front of a class and thinking "what am I supposed to do?", a situation Sue attributed more to



deficiencies of her course of training than to teaching itself. At the end of her first year, Sue "had wanted to pull out", but she persisted and finished her training.

Sue's first appointment was to a central school in Western Region, a school Sue described as "very understocked and not very organised" due to high staff turnover. Sue recounted how she felt "very isolated" although she spent two years at the school before being made a forced transfer to a school where she didn't wish to teach. As a result, she took leave without pay for a term before being appointed to a city school, but was again made a forced transfer after two years and her duties split between two schools for two weeks before obtaining a position at her last school where she spent four years. Sue then took two years leave without pay to travel overseas and ultimately resigned shortly before this leave expired.

In her teaching career, Sue gained satisfaction from teaching textiles, her favourite subject, and from the times "when the class really enjoyed it" and she got rewarded for "work put in". However, she "didn't like being treated like a number", particularly during the time leading up to her second forced transfer when no one on the Home Science staff wanted to leave the school and "every morning we were asked who was going to go ... The school wouldn't help to select someone, and eventually I was chosen because I had no senior class ... I had given it to someone going for promotion". The large size of her last two schools was also a source of dissatisfaction to Sue because "you don't know [pupils'] names or the staff, and there is more chance of inconsistency" because of the large number of teachers. Not having time "to have lunch" and "arguing with kids" were also sources of dissatisfaction to Sue, as was the "nine to three" view of teachers held by the public.

Sue's decision to resign was precipitated by the way she "was mucked around" when she returned from leave and could not get a permanent position, despite the fact that she knew of a school with a vacancy for a Home Science teacher. Eventually, she decided to resign as her leave had almost expired and went to see the Department and said "give me the [resignation] form". Because Sue had taught for just less than ten years, she was not entitled to long service leave, but attempted to obtain a pro rata payment for her period with the Department. She had intended to go back to university to train as a special education teacher, but was advised by the Teachers Federation that if she stated "study" as being a reason for resignation, she would miss out on the pro rata payment. However, if she put "family" or "domestic" reasons on the form, she was likely to be paid. Sue thus "lied" on the form and received a payment of around \$3,000.

As mentioned previously, following the completion of her special education training course, Sue was offered a position with the Department at a small special purpose school from the beginning of 1992. Ironically, Sue was one of the few of her class to obtain a permanent position, most of whom were either unemployed, or working as "casual" or "mobile" teachers. Sue attributed her situation to the fact that she was qualified to teach Home Science as the special school needed someone to teach in this area up to School Certificate level. Sue believed that it must have "hurt the Department" to re-employ her.

At present, Sue was "a bit shell shocked" at her new school, but believed that she would be better off there because it was smaller than her previous schools and she would be "less lost in the system". Looking back over her experiences to date, Sue really "didn't know" how teaching had affected her, although she said that she "always extended myself ... I completed night courses to keep up with my subject area", but that she "gained most from my year out of teaching when I worked for myself" in a small business "making and selling kids' clothing".

In 1991, while Sue was completing her course, she tried to apply with the Department for employment as a special education teacher in 1992, but somehow they had credited her on official records with incorrect, lower standard qualifications. Sue "tried for six months to have this changed, but no one was responsible, I had untold phone calls and four physical visits [to the Department] ... eventually they changed it, but then lost my file".

Sue believes that "the system is a killer, I had endless trouble ... They lost my file at the beginning, then I had two forced transfers ... the system is too big ... there was an incredible bureaucracy when I wanted to get a casual number, I waited five months then found out that they had lost my file again ... I only got my present job on hearsay, someone knew that I had just completed the vision course and I was offered a job ... This is my third Tuesday [at the special school] and they only gave me the 'entry on duty' form today ... It will probably be another four weeks before I am paid".

#### **4.9 "Bill"**

Bill is a 39 year old primary teacher with 18 years experience with the Department who resigned from his position as a classroom teacher in May 1991. Two year trained and originally conditionally certificated, Bill completed a number of courses to obtain his permanent status.

Originally Bill wanted to be a mechanical draftsman, and during the holiday period following his completion of Year 12, Bill was alone at his country home when he received an offer to train as a draftsman and also a scholarship to train as a teacher. With no one to advise him, Bill decided to take the scholarship to a country teachers' college. At the time, Bill had no great desire to be a teacher, but had a "good opinion of teachers". These views did not change significantly during Bill's two year training course.

Bill spent only three weeks at his first school, a large Metropolitan West Region primary school before being transferred to an equally large Metropolitan West school where he was to spend the next 18 years. Bill explained how he received "plenty of help" and described his early years of teaching as "great". As he gained experience, he became involved in many across the school activities, including a long period as sport co-ordinator.

Bill stated that he gained satisfaction from "being able to communicate successfully with kids" and from "making them better people ... talking to them about life made them more interested in life". Bill also became something of an expert at mathematics and his teaching methods were favourably commented upon by other school staff and departmental officers. Bill recounted how when his students "did pretty super at maths, it gave me a bit of a buzz".

Bill thought that "face to face I had something to offer, but more and more the Department made justification in writing [for what he was doing] more important than being in the classroom". Bill "started to go for promotion twice, but was depressed to see people put on a show". Bill said that despite the fact that he did not "have a pretty room or pretty books", he thought that he was a good teacher and deserving of promotion but did not have the "gift of the gab" that others teachers possessed. When people he thought undeserved received promotion he found this "disheartening and pulled out twice".

Other sources of dissatisfaction for Bill were "trying to teach music" and the way that people changed when they were promoted to executive positions and treated those under them as "inferior". Despite the fact that "the wrong people were being promoted", and Bill resented this, he said he was "happy where I was" as a classroom teacher.

As mentioned previously, Bill was sport co-ordinator at his school and every year a major task was the organisation of the annual swimming carnival. In the weeks leading up to this Bill "worked at least 70 hours per week, and each year for the last four years ended up in hospital because of a heart problem caused by stress". Bill's doctor told him in 1990 to "get out of teaching" for the sake of his health. At the beginning of 1991, "strings were pulled" to get Bill a transfer to a new school.

Bill's sister had recently bought a newsagency on the N.S.W. central coast and Bill and his wife were invited up to see it. On the way in the car, Bill's wife noticed in a newspaper another newsagency for sale in the same area and they decided to have a look at it while they were visiting Bill's sister. Despite the fact that they "had no intention to buy", Bill and his wife did just that. Bill described this as "a sudden decision that had been building for four years, if you understand what I mean".

Back at his school, Bill told his colleagues of his decision to resign at the end of first term and there was some "disappointment ... it was a new school and strings had been pulled to get me there". However, no one tried to dissuade Bill from his course of action. At the time of his resignation, Bill "felt sad to leave a sinking ship and sadder still to leave the kids part way through the year, but I had to think of my health, my life". However, despite these feelings of sadness, Bill and his wife were "excited" about living on the central coast which they found to be "beautiful" and by the opportunity to operate their "own business".

Bill and his wife had been operating their newsagency since May 1991 and despite working "110 hours per week with only one half day holiday a year on Christmas day", they were "loving it". Money was not an issue in his resignation, according to Bill, although he was earning a fair deal more than he previously did as a two year trained teacher.

According to Bill, "things are changing too quickly in education" and the only way that he would go back to the Department would be as some kind of mathematics consultant. He could not be a classroom teacher again. Bill believed that teaching "narrows your life and outlook unless you have a social life", although having his "own kids made me more aware".

Bill recounted how recently he had returned to visit both his previous schools and how his visit "made me feel really sorry for teachers because of the conditions, the kids, it is a horrible bloody job". Bill was very critical of the Department and of "politicians and bureaucrats who try to justify themselves by changing something that is working well". Bill cited recent syllabus changes which in his opinion were unnecessary.

Bill strongly believed that it was "the most important thing in education" -- despite the fact that recent teaching graduates are "good people" -- that trainee teachers need to "get into classes quicker under classroom teachers [and] for much longer periods ... teachers' college taught me nothing".

#### 4.10 "Hazel"

Hazel is a 35 year old former primary teacher who took maternity leave from the Department of School Education at the end of 1990 and took up a position as a lecturer in Mathematics at a university early in 1991. She resigned formally from the Department at the end of 1991. Hazel taught for 13 years with the Department, all in Metropolitan West Region schools. Originally three year trained, Hazel later completed a Graduate Diploma in Education Studies which she converted to an MEd degree. At the time she resigned, Hazel was on the top of the four year trained salary scale on \$38,000 and took a pay cut to \$36,500 when she took up her position as a lecturer.

Hazel went straight to college from high school, although her first choice of a career was not teaching. She missed out on a scholarship for her first choice but took up a scholarship to train as a teacher. Hazel said she "always had a fairly good respect for teachers ... my parents forced a respect for teachers ... teachers were fairly well respected in the community". Hazel's views on teaching didn't change during her training, except for the discovery that "teachers worked harder than I thought they did".

Hazel's first permanent appointment was as a "Reserve Teacher" at a Metropolitan West Region primary school where she spent one term. Hazel described this as "fairly good ... I gained a lot of experience". Hazel was then given a permanent position at another Metropolitan West Region school close by where she spent nearly six years. Hazel described her second school as "fairly tough but enjoyable ... there was a really good staff". Hazel spent her final seven years at another Metropolitan West Region school which Hazel described as "excellent ... I got all my executive training. The Principal really pushed me, made me work to my potential".

When asked if her attitude to teaching had changed during the course of her career, Hazel said "Not really ... I gained a feeling of how important a job it really was ... how much impact teachers have on people's lives".

In her career, Hazel gained greatest satisfaction from "just knowing I'd done well on a class ... had done well with children, you can't beat that feeling". She also gained satisfaction "when big events I planned came off well".

Dissatisfaction came from the "times when things didn't work ... I also had some element of frustration with the public image of teachers ... I saw the effect [of this] on the morale of teachers".

Hazel described her decision to leave the Department as "something that just evolved, a set of circumstances ... in the last couple of years I got more and more involved in staff development, in-service ... educating teachers ... I got part-time work at the university ... it was just a set of circumstances ... I had been at such a wonderful school where I was treated as an executive even though I wasn't, that I wouldn't have taken less than an A.P.'s [Assistant Principal's] job ... I would have waited a couple of years to pick something up".

Hazel did not consult anyone regarding her decision to leave the Department, a decision she described as "mine alone". When asked how she felt at the time, Hazel said "I remember the day really clearly ... It felt strange ... too simple ... signing a form with practically no information on it ... I was sad I suppose, it was a final step".

When asked how she felt about teaching now, Hazel said "I miss it, miss the kids ... I often think of being back in the classroom ... trying this and that ... I haven't regretted it, but I miss it". "Nothing" would stop Hazel returning to the Department, she believed, as "nothing ever came between me and teaching ... I could still work in the system without it upsetting me".

Hazel believed that teaching had been "a very positive effect on me ... brought out my strengths and helped me bring up my weaknesses ... challenged me ... I was lucky enough to have people around me to say 'try this' ... I don't know whether I would have got it in another field ... it is a social field".

By way of final comment, Hazel said that "one of the biggest problems teachers face is unrealistic expectations which they don't have time to face ... changes to curriculum, community demands ... teachers are just like the infantry ... they slog on and do their job". Hazel closed by saying that although she knew there were problems in education, "I'm lucky, I've had very positive experiences and there was always someone to help".

#### 4.11 "Linda"

Linda is a 27 year old former secondary science teacher who had taken leave without pay with the intention of not returning to the Department of School Education and intended to resign when her leave expired at the end of 1992. Holding a BSc Dip Ed and an MEd, Linda taught for four years with the Department in the Metropolitan East Region of Sydney, having entered university straight from high school. At the middle of the graduate salary scale when she left the Department on around \$32,000, Linda was earning slightly more at \$34,000 annually in her new position as an education officer at a fauna park, although she maintained that with the longer hours and shorter holidays she now experienced, salary was not a factor of importance in her decision to leave the Department.

Linda's two older sisters were teachers and it was "assumed" that she would follow suit, something that she "resisted" in her final year of high school, despite the fact she admitted that she had been interested in teaching up until that stage, although more in primary teaching. She was undecided between studying languages and applied science at university, and when she "just" missed out on the marks required for environmental science and was accepted into science education, she decided to take up the offer as it would still gain her a science degree. At this stage Linda thought teachers to be "fairly good role models" and that teachers must have generally been "success stories" at school, Linda having a "good opinion of most of my teachers". She considered teaching a "reasonable career", particularly as her two sisters were teachers and her family was "encouraging" her to follow this path.

At the end of her first year at university, Linda attempted to transfer to the applied science course, but was unsuccessful and did not attempt to do this in her later years at university. She found that she "enjoyed the education" part of her concurrent BSc Dip Ed, although "very early on" she realised that teaching was "a lot of hard work". She also became increasingly "concerned with the public perceptions of teachers and was already starting to build up defences".

Unable to secure a permanent position in her first year of teaching, Linda worked as a casual teacher, an experience she described as "good and bad", as it enabled her to work at a variety of schools and with a variety of students and fellow teachers, although overall, Linda said "I enjoyed that". She had "no horror stories" of her first year, and described it as "exciting and challenging".

Her experience at a variety of schools made Linda realise that "the most important thing was the staff ... peers were really important" in forging a happy and effective school. Linda had taught casually at a school during her first year and when she was offered a permanent position there she was "happy to go" as she knew the staff to be friendly and helpful. Linda spent the next three years at the school, a time which she described as "turbulent, a difficult time with strikes ... I was constantly justifying the strikes, etc, to people, although I didn't bother arguing after a while". During this time Linda's "attitude to the workload didn't change", and she found it heavy and demanding. There were also slight personal problems with her fiancée, who "worked with adults all day" and wanted to "relax at night", while she "worked with kids all day and wanted some adult company and conversation".

Despite the turbulent conditions she described, Linda spoke very positively of the three years she spent at her school. The "peer contact was important ... terrific friendship ... I loved the kids and teaching, and I'm still teaching now". Linda gained satisfaction from "getting on with students that other people found difficult ... I got them on side, although I didn't get a huge amount of work out of them". Being accepted by other teachers was important and "being invited to other staff lunches etc, when not everyone was invited". Linda also gained satisfaction from "coaching a sports team that no other teacher would take, it was going to be disbanded and we won".

Dissatisfaction for Linda came from the poor public perceptions of teachers mentioned previously and from the leadership at her school which she described as "not poor, but not great, not what it could have been". "Difficult Year 12 students who didn't want to work" and "parents sticking up for kids" while general "parental support was lacking" also caused dissatisfaction, Linda stating that "no one comes to parent teacher nights ... no value is put on education at home ... parents shirk their responsibility". Linda also described her "frustration with changes being made all the time [in education] ... more documents, more policies, it was frustrating, I didn't have the time to do it properly, you only had a 40 minute lesson to incorporate all these policies ... I felt I didn't have control, there were all the perspectives [to be included], I didn't have the time physically ... I didn't do it as well as I would have liked, I always had work to do".

Linda had "thought about resigning" at the end of her third year, as she "wanted to move on, do other things, I was not loving school as much, I was not so keen to go to school" and she tried unsuccessfully to obtain

alternative employment. In her final year, Linda decided to give teaching one more try and gained a position as Year Adviser, something which she found very rewarding and which "improved [my] job and made me very happy". However, at the end of her fourth year her present job "came up" and friends suggested she apply for it. Things "went well" and she "got the job", taking leave without pay from the Department from the beginning of 1992.

Linda told a few people including fellow teachers, family and friends of her decision and they were generally "encouraging, even envious", although she was advised to take leave rather than resigning in case "things didn't work out". Departmental regulations normally preclude working while on leave without pay but someone she spoke to at Regional Office said not to worry about it and her application for leave was processed "very smoothly ... they didn't seem to mind".

At the time she left her school, Linda was "excited, I wanted to leave, although I was sorry to say goodbye to my good friends at school ... I was sorry for the kids, I had some good classes and had some regrets that I didn't get everything out of [teaching] ... I was still getting better, but the job came up and all that wasn't worth staying for".

Linda maintained that she was still teaching in her new role, but would not return to the Department under present circumstances. She would like to see "more variety in teaching such as 'industry links' ... if teachers could work in industry for a year you wouldn't lose so many people ... zoo secondment [for Science teachers] is excellent, but only a handful ever get to do it". Linda believed that teachers need "a terrific pay rise ... people equate money with status" and that she had not been adequately rewarded for her years of study and had received "no credit whatsoever" for her MEd degree which she completed while teaching. She found the degree to be very rewarding personally but she "didn't even receive one increment [in salary] ... I'm still paying off H.E.C.S. [Higher Education Contribution Scheme] and got nothing for it".

Looking back over her career, Linda found the total experience "really positive, teaching should be compulsory for everyone, it shows you what kids are like today". Linda gained from "dealing with people, mediating ... people skills", and had "lots of good memories ... it gave me many skills for my new job". Linda was however, critical of the way she was "thrown in the deep end" by being given a Year 12 class in her first year, believing "it was good for me but maybe not the best for them. I shouldn't have been given that responsibility although I liked it ... The class had lots of teachers the year before and had got behind".

Linda did however enjoy the unusual experience of teaching at a small city school of only 400 pupils, although the uncertainty over the school's continuing status did cause "low morale ... we were insecure ... the Department wouldn't tell us if the school was going to close [as] others had in the area". Linda described her school as "terrific, there were all sorts of ethnic backgrounds, but no group dominated". This was particularly important to Linda who, despite speaking faultless English, had an ethnic background herself. The school was "very laid back, maybe too much", although she understood that this situation was changing with the appointment of new senior staff. Linda did however describe her "frustration" with certain aspects of the school, including the fact that she, with all her qualifications, was not allowed to operate the photocopying machine, while "someone straight from school could". There were "lots of small things" in the school that caused Linda frustration.

Linda had a final critical comment to make concerning the establishment of "centres of excellence", "selective high schools", "technology high schools" and the like, believing that all schools in a public system should be recognised, and recounted how her school, despite its small size, was able to maintain a language department and teach five languages with success, while another school where she had taught offered only Japanese, but was designated a "centre of excellence" for foreign languages while hers was not. This "was awful for morale", according to Linda.

#### **4.12 "Grahame"**

Grahame is a 40 year old former music teacher with the Department of School Education. Originally five year trained with a BA (Hons) Dip Ed, Grahame later completed part-time a certificate in teaching students from non-English speaking backgrounds and a Master of Music degree. Grahame taught for over 16 years in metropolitan high schools, mainly in the eastern and northern suburbs. At the time of his resignation from the Department, Grahame was on the top of the assistant teachers' salary scale on \$38,000. He was now employed as a music lecturer at a university on an annual salary of \$44,000. In Grahame's case, the higher salary he now enjoyed was a significant factor in his decision to resign, particularly in view of his heavy workload as a music teacher for which he felt inadequately compensated and which will be described in more detail later.

Grahame was frank about his reasons for initially taking on teaching, describing how his mother was a single parent and that the only way that he could afford to go to university was to take up a bonded teacher's scholarship. A secondary reason Grahame wanted to go to university was to avoid conscription during the Vietnam war, or at least delay possible entry to the armed forces while he completed his degree, as he was against the war and his older brother's "number had come up" for conscription. His third reason, in "priority order", for becoming a teacher was that "I thought I might quite like it". He also said he had some "really good teachers at high school ... I still see some of them, they were good role models when I started teaching". At the time, Grahame considered the general public to have "quite a good opinion" of teachers.

Grahame "thoroughly enjoyed" his four year honours degree study, but described his Diploma of Education training as "appalling". Grahame's first appointment was to a disadvantaged inner city school with a high migrant population. He described the school and the students as "violent, scary" and found the workload heavy, recalling that "I never had migraines before". Grahame "quite enjoyed" his first year of teaching, although as a result of the deficiencies of his Dip Ed, he "didn't have a clue teaching wise", and what got him through was "sheer determination, I quite liked the kids and really grew to love it".

After the first few years, Grahame increasingly came to enjoy teaching, and he was "very positive, I really enjoyed it, I enjoyed the classroom contact ... my teaching strategies and resources improved ... I always loved it". Grahame gained great satisfaction from the contact with students, and with their parents. He described the rewards he gained from taking students in Year 7 "who knew nothing about music ... and were great in Year 12 ... some became professional musicians and told me that they would never have done it without me".

However, while enjoying classroom teaching, Grahame stated that what "really appalled me ... what was absolute appalling was the way schools [where he taught in his early years] were run ... there was no common sense, we even tried to get rid of one principal, unsuccessfully as it turned out".

Grahame stated that "of the half dozen principals I had, I only respected two as people ... [the rest] were appallingly inept, bigoted, sexist ... they were against excursions, group work ... any form of free thinking ... how did they get to their positions? I could tell you some horrendous stories". Grahame believed that music teachers operated under special difficulties, being expected to "organise school bands, choirs, rock eisteddfods, play the piano on school assemblies, organise annual concerts ... I would get to school at 7-30 in the morning while maths teachers I shared a staffroom with arrived at five to nine and opened a text book ... I worked every lunchtime, after school, and most weekends and only got a period off a week, or at most two or three at my later schools ... It was a bit off".

Grahame also recounted how at one stage his pay stopped for six weeks and how he "went to the Department, they were so inept, nothing was done ... I went to my local member, to the Federation ... no one was responsible. Eventually I received a grovelling letter from the Minister [for Education]. They then paid me twice for the six weeks! ... I sent a cheque for \$5,000 back but it wasn't acknowledged. When I eventually resigned, they sent me a bill for the \$5,000 ... The building society had to go right back through their records to find that the cheque had been cashed". Grahame also recounted how he ordered equipment and it would not arrive for 18 months, and how he had to spend up to \$1,000 of his own money every year on "records, scores, even a cassette player the Principal wouldn't buy for me". The "power of principals over conditions, allocations and how you were treated" was also a source of dissatisfaction to Grahame.

Grahame was also deeply concerned with "the inequity of the system ... at my first [disadvantaged] school I received only a \$400 [annual] budget from the Principal and no help, at my second school \$1,500 and plenty of help and moral support, which is even more important than money ... at my last school [on Sydney's more affluent north shore] the Principal apologised the first year because he could only give me \$4,000 ... in my last year there he gave me \$12,000 ... this made me think about the public system, its inequity".

At his last school, Grahame "had everything a music teacher could want ... a good boss, double music electives through to Year 12 which is quite unusual, the support of parents", but he saw his present position advertised and applied for it. He was offered the job the next day and went to his Principal who told him "if you don't take it, you're a fool, you would be fantastic and owe it to the system to help turn out good music teachers". The Principal arranged for Grahame to leave the school immediately and he started as a lecturer the following day. For Grahame, resignation brought "immense relief ... I had taken long service leave twice, I was burnt out the first time and found it really hard to go back after the second ... it was a physical relief [to resign], I was always so exhausted ... no more rehearsals, I loved it but it was killing me". Grahame felt "intense panic" that he had to present his first lecture in two days time, but also "pride, determination" in "moving up another step, more kudos".

Grahame maintained that despite his love of the classroom, he "could never go back, I don't have the energy", and that as a result of his new role he "sees the bigger picture ... I would be bored and frustrated in a school ... [there is] a mentally faster level in lecturing".

Reflecting back over his experiences, Grahame believed that teaching "made me the person I am today, I came from a narrow, poorish family ... I was introverted, naive, insecure as a person ... Teaching gave me so much more confidence, it also taught me how to refine my thinking skills ... gave me a chance to explore music content ... I had amazingly good training at university [in the BA (Hons)], it gave me a depth and width of experience ... I developed into a person".

Following the turbulence of "the Metherell years", Grahame felt from his new position outside schools that "things seem a lot better ... things seem to be running better now, more smoothly after Metherell, schools are paying for in-service now out of their staff development funds, this is more logical", but he did admit to still feeling "a little bit of spite" towards the Department of School Education.

#### **4.13 "Brian"**

Brian is a 42 year old former English History teacher and later Teacher-Librarian with the Department of School Education. Five year trained with a BA (Hons) Dip Ed, Brian later completed a course to gain qualification as a librarian. Brian taught initially for two and a half years before resigning and later returned to the Department after 10 years away, during which time he taught overseas for four years in New Guinea and in Europe. He again taught with the Department for two and a half years before resigning once more at the end of 1991.

Brian's father was a lawyer and there was pressure on him to take up law, which he studied for one and a half years at university before dropping out of the course and spending the next few years doing "lots of jobs". Eventually, Brian took up a scholarship to train as an English History teacher. Brian had "no strong feelings about teaching ... it was a job, a way of keeping myself". He had "not much idea about [public school] teaching, I went to Catholic schools, although I had some positive experience with public schools".

Brian described his honours degree as "four years in an intellectual pond". It was half way through his Diploma of Education before Brian "went into a school ... I never had exposure to the workplace". Even during his Dip Ed, Brian still felt isolated from schools and commented that "even when the subject of discipline was raised, we were told that there was nothing to worry about".

Brian described his first year of teaching as "horrific". He was posted to a city boys' school but only lasted there for one term, during which time he was "beaten up at school by students". The same week as the assault occurred Brian was arrested for shoplifting, a situation he attributed to "a stress reaction on my part" to the assault by students. Brian was sent to trial and described the magistrate as "not sympathetic whatsoever ... I was in a trance state ... courts are set up along the same lines as schools ... lines that run, and grind over people". Brian attempted, with legal assistance, to defend himself but was found guilty and placed on a bond.

Brian described the Principal of his first school as being "out of the system ... he used to trumpet on about sport", while the Deputy Principal was "a little martinet ... I had terrible trouble with her". Brian's Head Teacher "used to come into my classroom and cane the living daylights out of the kids ... he was actually caning me". After one term of this situation, Brian was posted to another school, this time co-educational. Brian had two years at this school during which time "kids stoned me at sport, and followed me home in the afternoon ... the school had a weak boss and I was always a target". Brian was then posted to another school, one which he described as "a good school, but I was not good enough for it". Brian "didn't enjoy it any better" and so he resigned and moved interstate.

During the 10 years following his first resignation, Brian taught for four years in New Guinea which he "enjoyed immensely" and also taught English overseas. However, Brian eventually found himself out of work and with the recession making "jobs tough" to find, as "a last ditch" he applied once more to teach with the Department. The Department lost his letter of application, "but were willing to offer me a position if I was prepared to teach in the west [part of Sydney] ... I said yes and a woman pressed a button and two seconds later I had a school ... it gave me bad feelings about where I was going".

Brian taught for two years at his new appointment before "the Boss and the Leading Teacher carpeted me ... the Leading Teacher was good, he was just there as a witness. The Principal told me that I was in the wrong business and that he would arrange to get me a move and for my travelling [expenses] to be paid". A transfer to a school in Western Region was arranged, but things did not go well, Brian being "made to teach Year 7, I always hated junior classes". At his new school, Brian "had problems with the library staff, the kids didn't like me and I didn't like the town ... the social skills required were beyond me". Eventually, Brian's new Principal, "a nice guy ... talked me out of it. He said 'you are never going to make it', and I got another job which was the best break of my life", despite the fact that Brian took a \$12,000 salary reduction to take up his present position in a council library in the far western outskirts of Sydney.

Reflecting back over his experiences as a teacher, Brian said that he gained satisfaction from "any response from kids ... it was fantastic". Brian said he had most success with "big fat girls who were out of their peer group ... they would work for me, and I could do things for them but there were very few of them ... they had no chance in the academic stream, some didn't even speak English at home". On the other hand, Brian's greatest source of dissatisfaction was that of discipline. Brian believed that there was a certain irony attached to discipline in schools in that "kids demand to be forced to do things, and I couldn't do it ... I was pushed around as a kid and rebelled against discipline ... in the classroom I had to force them to keep quiet, and they could see through me ... I could keep them bottled up for a month and then they would explode". Brian stated that he "loved libraries, but didn't have the social skills ... I accepted that". Brian was also critical of his second last Principal for arranging his transfer to the Western Region as "he should have talked me out of it [teaching] then". He also complained that he was still attempting to recover the \$1,200 it cost him to move to his last school.

At the time of his second resignation, Brian sought help from both the Department and the Teachers Federation to obtain a job away from teaching but "they were so inflexible ... they wouldn't help me to transfer to a non-teaching role". Brian would have liked to teach at the Correspondence School in Sydney as "they were my sort of people at the 'Corro' but they were winding it down". At the time of his resignation, at first Brian "felt like I was drowning, there was desperation, a recession and no chance of a job ... I even considered being a prison warder and went for lots of library jobs, even library assistant jobs". He was very pleased to be offered a librarian's position, despite the substantial pay cut, as "this is where I am suited".

Brian believed that he "has no option" to return to the Department, given the "finality of the tone" of the letter he received following his resignation for the second time, and anyway he "always had a love hate relationship with teaching ... I love to teach but no one seems to want to learn from me ... I like to serve people, I have the calling but I'm introverted ... I find the lesson format abhorrent".

Brian believed that his experiences as a teacher had "belittled and embittered me to a large extent ... I took the wrong turn ... You need to be born to it, to love people ... I wish that the school system was a bit more human ... school does not teach you to be a human being, the system toughens them [students] up, I feel a bit sorry for them ... I met one of my old students in the library one day but he denied in front of his friends that he knew me". Brian also believed that the actions of the current state government in the area of education amount to "class warfare, I can see why people send students to private schools".

#### **4.14 "Michael"**

Michael is a 57 year old former secondary school principal who took "early retirement" from the beginning of 1991 after 34 years with the Department of School Education, although he maintained that he was forced out because of conflict with the Department. Originally five year trained with a BA (Hons) Dip Ed in French and German, Michael was earning an annual salary of \$62,000 when he retired. During 1991 Michael worked three days per week as a casual teacher at a Metropolitan West Region high school. During the early part of 1992, Michael worked less regularly as a casual teacher because he and his wife planned to travel overseas from the beginning of April. During 1991 when he worked three days per week, Michael "didn't notice any drop in salary and probably had more disposable income because I wasn't paying \$24,000 in tax and superannuation, although I have noticed it this year".

Michael recalled that "the main reason" he became a teacher was that he had "a savage French teacher" at high school and this made him "determined to teach French so that kids would like it ... my parents were also both teachers and my father tried to dissuade me from being a teacher, although it was more a case of making sure I had considered other things". Michael stated that he was "busting to become a teacher" and that the standing of teachers at the time "must have been pretty high ... I lived in a country town ... the lifestyle appealed to me ... I couldn't think of any other profession I wanted to be in".

Michael enjoyed his honours degree, but described his Diploma in Education as "a bit of a nuisance year, I had already done four years and was busting to get out ... there were good and bad lecturers ... the method lecturers were good ... and there was less work than the honours year".

Michael spent his first three years at a country high school in the Hunter Region. He described his first year as "the happiest year I spent anywhere ... I loved it ... I had three years there ... my predecessor was quite hopeless ... I enjoyed life back in a country town ... I was in everything ... I still go back". However, being a languages teacher, Michael wanted to travel overseas to hone his skills, and the only way that he could this was to resign. Michael travelled to Europe where he taught in a London school for three months. He also spent "considerable time in France". When he returned to Australia, he "got a job straight away with the Department" at a leading



boys' school in what is now Metropolitan East Region. Michael taught at the selective government school for seven years before taking a promotion to what would now be described as Head Teacher Languages at another leading Sydney high school where he spent eight years. Michael then took a promotion as Deputy Principal to a Western Region high school for six years, before being appointed as Principal to another small Western Region high school where he spent three years. Michael's final appointment with the Department was to a very large Metropolitan West Region high school where he spent six years.

Michael believed that his attitude to teaching changed "in the early '70s when I was a Head Teacher. My Principal didn't like my subject area [languages] ... it was a real struggle ... I started combing the Saturday 'Herald' and have done ever since". Michael considered resignation, but a number of his friends had resigned and had experienced difficulty in securing employment, so Michael "got scared ... took promotion and stayed around ... I was totally satisfied until the 1970s".

As a teacher, Michael gained most satisfaction from "interaction with kids in the classroom and in sport ... I go to reunions and my old students come up and say 'I remember what you said' about this or that". To a lesser degree, Michael also gained satisfaction from "interaction with staff" and from "the subject matter ... I wouldn't have gone into it otherwise". As a Head Teacher, Michael "enjoyed the role ... it is the ideal position, but I haven't greatly enjoyed the Deputy or Principal positions ... The Principal's job bored me to an extent and the pressures from outside left me dissatisfied". Dissatisfaction had also come when Michael had been a Head Teacher and there was "antagonism for the subject matter from the boss ... it was quite traumatic, the small subjects really suffered in the school".

As a Deputy Principal, Michael had "no worries with the boss whatever ... it was the nature of the job in a small country high school ... I was in charge of all the unmastered departments ... I had over half the staff. The best part of being a Deputy Principal was classroom teaching. I found it difficult to deal with other people's problems ... I am a little bit diffident in discipline ... I prefer all avenues to be explored before people are sent to me".

As a Principal, dissatisfaction came from "frustration with the system, especially the hierarchy of the [Metropolitan West] Region ... sheer frustration at getting action or being able to do something about certain types of kids ... we had 1,420 kids but not as many disruptive kids as elsewhere".

Michael recalled how he had experienced coronary problems in 1987, but was not sure whether this was due to heredity, diet, or stress. He had "never had a nervous breakdown or anything like that, but the stress built up". Following treatment for his heart condition, Michael became "determined I wasn't going to sacrifice myself on the altar of the Department ... but I couldn't seek medical retirement because I wasn't really sick". Following this incident, Michael felt "growing frustration with the job of boss ... you went in on Monday expecting to do this much work in the week, but there was vandalism on the weekend, teachers sick ... the work just built up ... you can't do any real leadership because of the workload ... I did lead, but not as much as I wanted to ... I was diverted by trivia I couldn't really give to anyone else".

Finally, at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, Michael "had a blue with the D.I. [District Inspector] and the Regional Director [now termed Assistant Director-General] over a suspension ... A student had 'physically affronted' a teacher by tightening his tie around his neck ... I wanted him suspended and moved but the Region refused ... for the first three weeks of 1990 there was a battle royal with the Regional Director ... letters arrived from [him] every two days ... I was criticised for things which were quite irregular such as not having a caring school. Very grudgingly they moved the kid after the staff threatened to strike ... I said 'I'm not going to put up with it' ... we won, but it was a Pyrrhic victory ... the school was kicked the rest of the year ... it was obvious that the school couldn't do much while I was there ... I decided that I could live without [the Assistant Director-General] ... it upset my family, and this, plus the medical problem and the extra duties being put on principals ... were the main reasons why I took early retirement".

Michael arranged to take the last five weeks of the 1990 school year off on long service leave to "organise" his affairs and only the two Deputy Principals at the school knew of his decision. At a regular staff meeting prior to going on leave, Michael "told the staff I would not be going back ... they were a bit stunned but quite happy, by that I mean that they knew what I had been through and it was probably good for someone else to come ... they knew how I felt at the time". Michael had applied for transfer to other schools, but was "not greatly serious" about this.

Michael timed his retirement until after the second large pay increase for principals in January 1991 so that he would benefit from a larger superannuation payment and pension. At the time he left, he felt "great relief, not a great amount of regret, the only regret is my colleagues, not the kids ... you don't miss them when you get out of the classroom ... it was a big school. I wish that I could have stayed to 60, it would have been much better financially ... but there was no way I was going to put up with the churning in the stomach every Monday morning ... I never want to recreate it, all the malarkey ... that's not for me".

As a casual teacher, Michael said he "enjoys teaching, as long as it is my own subject ... I enjoy language teaching very much". On returning to the Department full-time, Michael said that he "would never do it ... I'm now 57 ... I would only go back if they had a position like an adviser to principals, a counselling capacity ... I would love that".

Reflecting upon how teaching had affected him, Michael said that he had "become cynical about power in higher echelons" and that he was "a strong opponent of so-called promotion on merit ... they threw the baby out with the bath water ... I have been involved on selection panels ... it is extremely frustrating ... hundreds applied ... then you cut it down ... cut it down again to one ... you could only go by what was said in the C.V ... I had four people for four days for my List Four inspection ... you couldn't have anything more solid than that ... interviews and C.V.'s are repulsive, specious ... it is difficult to staff remote schools ... the old system was perceived to be reasonably fair ... there are a lot of grumblings now".

Michael was also fairly cynical about the devolution of certain responsibilities to schools as "when I wanted help from the Region I didn't get it and when I didn't want help they butted in ... the chopping and changing with financing over the past year leads me to believe I got out at the right time ... I am not interested in what is happening generally in education ... only interested in what is happening in the classroom ... I'm a casual classroom teacher and while it continues to suit me I'll keep doing it".

#### **4.15 "Dennis"**

Dennis is something of an unusual case, having submitted his resignation at the end of 1990, then withdrawing it before taking leave in 1991, during which time he worked as a "long block" casual teacher. Dennis returned to full-time teaching in 1992, but maintained that he would resign as soon as he found alternative employment.

Dennis is a 38 year old secondary history and economics teacher, although he is classified as an English History teacher, the source of some of his problems, as will be seen later. Dennis was born overseas and speaks both his native language and English fluently. He completed one year of law studies in his native country before leaving to travel the world. Eventually, after travelling widely and working at "anything and everything" in many countries, Dennis settled in Australia and later enrolled as a mature aged student at a university in Sydney where he completed a BA in South American history and economic history, but had no English in his degree. He then undertook a Diploma in Teaching at a College of Advanced Education before working for five years with the Department as a permanent teacher and an additional year as a casual teacher. Currently a classroom teacher in Metropolitan West Region, Dennis previously taught in Metropolitan South West Region and also taught in Metropolitan East Region during his year of casual teaching.

Dennis recounted how he became a teacher because he was "28 at the time and looking for something permanent", was "interested in history ... I thought I could identify with teenagers, and because of the long holidays, in that order". He had also experienced a "rigid, draconian education system" in his home country and "thought Australia was more liberated and I could be a more new-style teacher".

Dennis enjoyed his three years in the BA degree, but was scathing about his experiences in the end-on Diploma of Education which he undertook at another institution, believing "some of the lecturers to be criminally incompetent ... we had only one good lecturer and he was straight from school and alive, fresh. The others had been there for many years and were an anachronism. What they taught us was trivial and not up to postgraduate standard, it was irrelevant, we did two hours of sport a week and just played tennis, we should have been taught first aid ... we were wasting our time". One lecturer was required to teach the students personal development, sex education and about drugs but "didn't know anything herself, she didn't know what a 'bong' [used for smoking marijuana] was, the students used to walk into the room saying 'bong on, bong on', she didn't have a clue what we were talking about. The lecturers were out of touch and the students used to arrive a half-hour late for lectures and ask to leave a half-hour early, it was an attendance marathon ... someone should have been held responsible, our enthusiasm was crushed out, we were brought down intellectually, although I'm not sure that this was deliberate. The lecturers at [Dennis' previous] University were of higher intelligence than the students, many were world class, but they were mediocre people at ----- College".

Dennis received his first permanent appointment to a "fairly rough, but improving school" in the south west of the Sydney metropolitan area. He found it "difficult to control junior classes at first, but enjoyed seniors right from the beginning". Dennis was "just getting to like it [the school] at the end of the second year when I was forced out ... I had a personality clash with the new Head Teacher ... he threw his weight around, used to come late to school and was never reprimanded. He was inefficient ... the system is far too hierarchical, only one-quarter of the brain power of ordinary teachers is utilised ... you get no input until you become a Head Teacher

... only the Executive make decisions, it is a huge waste of human resources. Schools only need a hierarchy to discipline students ... The power increases as you go up. This is quite wrong in a democratic society".

During his years as a teacher, Dennis "remained pretty keen about my subject [history], but lost my aspirations to be a social worker type of teacher. I lost my altruism a bit". Dennis maintained that he gained "no satisfaction from teaching. It is just like an office job in the public service". Dennis stated that "teachers are expected to give out positive reinforcement all the time but get none themselves ... there is no pat on the back or financial incentive, no feedback from the Principal ... They are quick to jump on you when you make a mistake". Because he had "been transferred around so much ... I was always at the bottom of the list and got shifted", Dennis has "never seen a group go through from Year 7 to Year 12", something that he felt would give him satisfaction when he began teaching.

Although active in the Teachers Federation, Dennis "disagrees with the Federation and agrees with the Greiner Government on [ending] centralised appointments ... [with local hiring] you get to work with someone you click with". He disliked the "way I was treated by Regional Office bureaucrats ... they stonewalled me, they are acrimonious towards teachers, there is no personal flavour, they need to decentralise more".

Dennis recounted the circumstances leading up to his first abortive resignation. He had been transferred to a new school which only had Years 7 to 10 and was given four Year 7 and 8 English classes and one Commerce class. The classes were "mixed ability and I found it impossible to teach them ... I was not trained and did not like the way English was taught, all Australian novels about adolescence ... in my old country we read literature from around the world, including Australia". Dennis stated that he "had absolutely no support, and had discipline problems with two of the classes ... I was the only male on a young female English staff with an older female Head Teacher. I was older and didn't fit into the mould. Because I was cosmopolitan she [the Head Teacher] thought I was a degenerate and was feeding stories about me to the Principal".

Eventually, Dennis was told that he was to be designated "of concern", the middle rank between being declared unsatisfactory or satisfactory. He "resented this ... I had arguments with the Principal, they had gone behind my back". Dennis submitted his resignation and then "withdrew it a week later and took leave without pay from the school instead". Dennis maintained that in the four years that his school had been opened, eleven teachers had been designated "of concern", including four others at the end of 1990 who also "took leave without pay to get away". As mentioned previously, Dennis taught long casual blocks at Departmental schools and also taught at a T.A.F.E. college the following year, despite the fact that he was not supposed to do this under the conditions of his leave. He taught social sciences for two terms and English for two terms, receiving "excellent references ... it proved that I could teach English". However, since returning to permanent work with the Department, Dennis has attempted unsuccessfully to have his year of casual teaching credited to his service record so that he could be placed on the same salary increment level that he would have been on had he stayed with the Department as a permanent employee. He had also tried to use his references to have the "of concern" designation removed, but had been told that references for casual teaching cannot be used for this purpose and that he would have to be assessed later in 1992.

Apparently, Dennis' new school had yet to be informed of this and Dennis was waiting with some trepidation for this to occur. He maintained that he was "doing really well now at school, the Head Teacher is happy and I get on well with the other teachers and the students. Everything will be going fine until the letter arrives, 'check him out' ... I've been prejudged by bureaucrats who won't face me, I've rung Regional Office but the people there won't talk to me, 'oh no, you're the teacher who left ----- High School under false pretences', they say".

Dennis said he felt "very bitter against my previous Principal and Regional Office for the way they treated me ... The Principal was both prosecutor and judge ... I felt that I was doing the job as well as anyone else ... One day the Principal reprimanded me on the assembly for touching a student in front of all the kids ... There was harassment, the Deputy Principal rang me up at 9-30 at night while I was in the bath to tell me I would have to teach maths the next year ... They thought I was a trouble maker because I was involved with the Federation at the school". Dennis said that he "had my heart set on teaching once, but I'm totally disillusioned now ... I think that I would have been happier in law or in advertising, I was much happier then than I am at the moment ... However, at his new school Dennis said that "I have regained some confidence, I've improved in all areas and I want to get on with it, but have the 'of concern' rating hanging over my head ... there are no specific charges, just petty allegations such as I was late for school five times in two terms ... it is difficult to defend".