

3 October 2013

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT **CASUAL TEACHING – BETTER COVER BUT QUALITY STILL AN ISSUE**

Ten years ago, the then Department of Education and Training responded to concerns about classes without teachers by:

- increasing the number of teachers approved to teach casually
- giving temporary employment to extra teachers in hard-to-staff schools
- running a call centre that helped schools find casual teachers at short notice.

These measures significantly improved the supply of casual teachers to schools in South Western and Western Sydney.

“The Department of Education and Communities is to be congratulated for improving casual teacher cover,” said the Acting Auditor-General, Mr Tony Whitfield. “However, finding casual teacher cover in rural and remote communities continues to be a challenge,” he added.

The four towns of Broken Hill, Moree, Griffith and Dubbo accounted for a third of unsuccessful attempts by the call-centre to fill casual teacher vacancies. Other rural principals told us that they do not ask the Department for help because there are no casual or temporary teachers in their area.

While coverage has improved, the quality of casual teachers remains an issue for many school principals. Only a quarter of surveyed principals rated the casual teachers assigned by the call centre highly.

If a school is unhappy with a casual teacher's performance it does not rehire them. But the Department's call centre sends out teachers, who principals refuse to hire, to other schools.

“When the Department chooses who to send to a school, it does not favour a teacher who has good reports from other schools,” said Mr Whitfield.

Additionally, the register used by the Department to assign casual teachers to schools needs to be reviewed. One quarter of the 49,300 casual teachers registered by the call centre have not worked recently, and some are no longer seeking casual work.

The Department needs to build on its achievement in three areas:

1. Do more to support rural and remote schools that struggle to attract casual teachers
2. Collect and use feedback about teacher performance when deciding which casual teachers to assign
3. Remove inactive teachers from its register, so it can assign casual teachers more efficiently.

“With improvements in casual teacher availability, the focus now should be on providing quality teachers, especially in hard-to-staff schools,” said Mr Whitfield.

Further information

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Key Statistics about NSW government schools and education

2,223	Number of schools
61,664	Number of teachers (Full Time Equivalent)
47,217	Number of permanent teachers (headcount)
49,300	Number of approved casual teachers (headcount)
	Of the 49,300 casual teachers approved by DEC
c. 37,000	Want a permanent teaching position
c. 11,000	Did not teach in NSW government schools in 2010-11
c. 11,700	Taught for less than 10 days in 2010-11
1,873	Were assigned work by Casual.Direct in 2012
Nil	Casuals have had their approval to teach revoked because of poor performance since 2006
One	Teacher is not currently being assigned by Casual.Direct because of poor performance
1,187,943	Days taught by short-term relief in 2012 = eight per cent of all teaching days
c. 1,086,000	Casual days organised by schools themselves - 91 per cent of relief days
c. 57,000	Casual days organised by Casual.Direct – 5 per cent of relief. Primary schools made 80 per cent of requests to Casual.Direct
c. 7,000	Area relief days organised by Casual.Direct – 1 per cent of relief
c. 38,000	Teacher relief days supported by DEC – 3 per cent of relief

Exhibit 3: How principals view the quality of instruction provided by

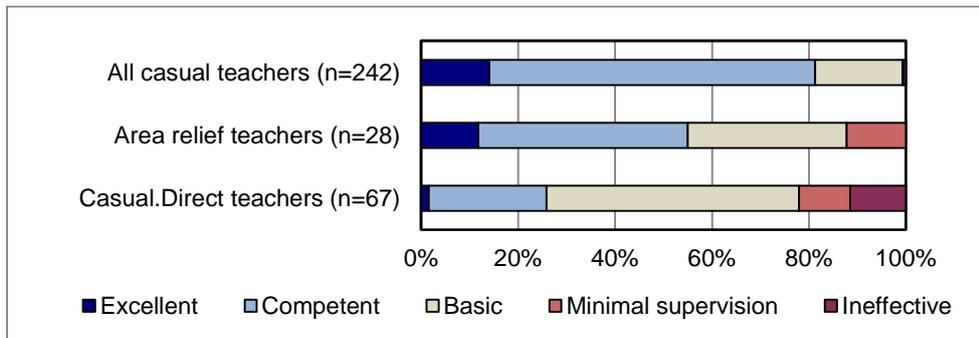


Exhibit 6: Casual.Direct requests and the number of casuals registered

