

Once again, an inquiry will draw attention to the value of teachers' work

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The last time a comprehensive independent inquiry into the value of teachers' work was conducted was in 2002, to inform Federation's case in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission in 2003.

In the years since that hearing, the NSW government has changed the law so that the union is no longer allowed to prosecute the case for pay rises, based on the increase in the value of teachers' work, in the Commission. Furthermore, the NSW government imposed, by law, a policy restricting salary increases to a maximum of 2.5 per cent a year.

The 2002 investigation — the Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW — was co-sponsored by Federation with peak parents body the Federation of Parents and Citizens Association.

Known as the Vinson inquiry — after its chair, eminent social scientist Tony Vinson — media coverage of hearings, conducted across the state, drew attention to the conditions and experiences of public school students and their teachers.



The inquiry's findings provided a basis for Federation's campaigning for several years. Momentum provided by the Vinson inquiry's recommendations assisted the union in achieving a reduction in class sizes in the infants years.

The stage was set for the 2003 NSW Industrial Commission hearing, where dozens of Federation witnesses gave evidence on the changes to teachers' work they had experienced since the previous work value case in 1991/92.

The Commission's final judgment acknowledged "revolutionary" changes to teachers' work and delivered salary increases of between 12 and 20 per cent over two years, depending on a teacher's classification.

Unfortunately, this avenue of redress is no longer available to the union, as today's legislation does not allow for a work-value case to be heard in the Industrial Relations Commission.

Since the 2003 case and decision, teaching has become far more complex, with much greater parental and broader societal expectations for every child's education. The government, however, has refused to enable this to be reflected in our remuneration and status.

The purpose of this year's Valuing the Teaching Profession inquiry is to examine and report on how the nature and complexity of teachers' work has changed since 2003. The new inquiry is looking at how the work of a

teacher requires a greater skill set, a deeper understanding of complex interconnected factors and a wider brief than it did 17 years ago.

Members have until the end of term 2 to share their accounts of changes to the profession with the Valuing the Teaching Profession inquirers. For more details or to lodge a submission, [click here](#).