

From: Mr Nigel Page

Wednesday 23 February 2005

Addressing Term of Reference Number 2.

The inquiry should:

"Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences. "

I would, in all modesty, classify myself in this category. I completed my first degree in Physics in 1983, graduating from a renowned English university with honours. I am a former Royal Air Force commissioned officer and aircraft pilot. I most recently worked as a military aircraft simulator instructor for a major multinational defence company in the Middle East for 10 years. I was granted Australian permanent residency nearly 5 years ago and I trained as a secondary school teacher, majoring in physics and mathematics as an external student at Queensland University of Technology, combining full-time study and work during 2003 and 2004. I completed my BEd with an Education Queensland S-1 suitability rating.

Although I would be delighted to take up a classroom teaching position in the state sector (because I do really enjoy teaching school children, and I think I'm quite good at it), the reality is I can barely afford to do so. Even with all the experience outlined above I would still be engaged as a four-year-trained teacher, being paid the same as a raw first-time graduate. I am not the only one in this position. I have been very fortunate to have been appointed to my current position, with its commensurate salary (which, incidentally, is still only a fraction of what I was earning just a year ago). My motivation to become a teacher in Australia may have been, in part at least, motivated by altruism, but the reality of paying for a home and family tends to sharpen one's focus.

If the education system really wants to attract high quality students from diverse backgrounds and experience, consideration should be given to acknowledging prior experience when initial salaries are awarded.

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