

AEU Victoria – State of Our TAFES

The AEU surveyed 490 Victorian TAFE teacher members to gather insights into the key issues they face and their views on the matters that most affect them. This snapshot covers findings in a range of key areas including:

- the scale and impact of teacher shortages
- teachers' views on remaining in the profession
- workloads and work intensification
- class sizes and associated occupational health and safety issues
- the learning and wellbeing needs of students
- funding and resources.

Teacher shortages

Is there a shortage of teachers in your area or department?

Yes	78.7%
No	21.3%

What is the impact of the teacher shortage? (select all that apply)

Increased workload	68.8%
Increased class sizes	39.8%
OHS risks	35.1%
Reduced provision	26.9%
More online delivery	12.9%

What do you consider are the main reasons for a shortage of TAFE teachers?

Excessive workloads	52.9%
Better pay and conditions in industry	52.4%
Workplace stress	48.6%
Lack of funding impacting teaching & learning	41.6%

How long do you expect to remain working in TAFE?

0-2 years	22.0%
3-5 years	22.3%
6-9 years	20.1%
10+ years	13.2%
For the remainder of my career	22.3%

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Have you considered leaving your job at TAFE in the last 12 months?

Yes	69.3%
No	30.7%

What would encourage you to stay? (select all those that apply)

Improved pay levels	70.6%
Reduced administrative duties	61.7%
Better treatment from employer	54.4%
Reduced teaching workload	48.4%
Better career development/pathways	36.3%
Reduced working hours	35.5%
Smaller class sizes	35.1%
Improved job security	23.0%
Improved OHS	19.4%
Other (please specify)	18.2%

Comments

Effects of staff shortages.

Classes are being joined together. We have one unit where three classes are joined together with a casual teacher employed 1 day a week! - Teacher at a metropolitan TAFE

Unable to have sick days/ carers leave if required as there is no one to cover me. - Teacher at a metropolitan TAFE

Causes of staff shortages.

Madness of compliance never seen before. We want to train, teach and educate rather than spending countless hours trying to prove that we teach. – Teacher at a metropolitan TAFE

The dismal pay level for a teacher transitioning off the tools into teaching. – Teacher at a metropolitan TAFE

Insufficient funding for teacher's to be trained and supported sufficiently to complete their job. Lack of support and recognition of the many responsibilities a teacher has. - Teacher at a non-metropolitan TAFE

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Workload

Over the last two years, have the following increased, stayed the same or reduced?

	Reduced significantly	Reduced slightly	Stayed the same	Increased slightly	Increased significantly
Working hours	2.5%	5.0%	36.5%	29.0%	27.0%
Pace and intensity of your work	2.3%	2.5%	13.3%	34.7%	47.2%

53% of respondents employed on a full-time basis reported working unpaid hours, with more than half of these respondents working 4.5 hours or more unpaid work per week.

Has the amount of time that you spend on each of the activities below increased or decreased over the last two years?

	Decreased significantly	Decreased slightly	Stayed the same	Increased slightly	Increased significantly
Administration	1.3%	1.6%	11.4%	26.1%	59.7%
Quality assurance/compliance	5.5%	5.2%	16.7%	26.1%	46.5%
Marking/Assessments	2.4%	3.8%	22.9%	29.1%	41.8%
Routine course review and development	8.9%	8.4%	21.3%	26.2%	35.2%
Student consultation and individual communications	3.5%	7.8%	22.1%	34.0%	32.6%
Personal Tutorials required due to student learning difficulties	0.9%	1.6%	32.4%	37.7%	27.4%
Meetings	4.1%	4.7%	35.9%	31.3%	24.0%
Personal Tutorials required due to shaving of hours	1.4%	2.1%	43.3%	29.4%	23.9%
Lesson preparation	10.4%	12.3%	24.8%	29.3%	23.2%
Teaching	2.9%	5.8%	39.5%	28.9%	22.8%
Research and reading	12.9%	11.5%	34.1%	25.5%	15.9%
Supervision	7.9%	7.3%	51.7%	19.8%	13.4%

Please rank the top five contributory factors to changes in your workload over the last two years by entering numbers 1 to 5 in the spaces below.

	1	2	3	4	5
Increased administrative work	39.3%	12.7%	13.0%	13.0%	22.0%
Impacts of artificial intelligence on teaching and learning	31.4%	20.9%	19.8%	9.3%	18.6%
Insecure employment status	29.2%	10.6%	13.3%	21.2%	25.7%
Reductions in the number of staff	19.9%	17.7%	19.5%	19.0%	23.8%
Increased student numbers / class sizes	19.9%	23.1%	16.7%	19.4%	21.0%
Increased online or blended course delivery	19.1%	20.9%	21.8%	20.0%	18.2%

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Impacts of reorganisation or restructuring	19.1%	11.9%	22.2%	20.1%	26.8%
Widening of duties considered within my area of responsibility	17.4%	25.8%	16.1%	15.3%	25.4%
Cuts to student curriculum/teaching hours	16.1%	15.3%	23.4%	22.6%	22.6%
Irregular timetabling, unpredictable scheduling	15.9%	19.3%	12.4%	23.4%	29.0%
Increased use of technology for marking, communications and admin	12.3%	17.8%	24.0%	15.1%	30.8%
Number of management/departmental meetings	11.4%	14.6%	29.3%	21.1%	23.6%
Student pastoral care needs	11.1%	18.7%	26.9%	18.7%	24.6%
Student expectations of staff availability	4.6%	23.6%	25.9%	24.7%	21.3%

Over the last two years has the size of your classes...

Increased	53.1%
Stayed the same	29.0%
Decreased	12.9%
Don't know	4.9%

Do you believe your class sizes present an OH&S risk?

Yes	53.7%
No	46.3%

Have you had adequate time over the last two years to maintain the following?

	Yes	No
Development of curriculum	24.8%	75.2%
Providing sufficient time for students to learn and practice skills	35.6%	64.4%

Comments on workload

I don't spend any time on other activities. I would love to have more time to get up to date on the current industry challenges and skills. But there is no time that has been dedicated to professional development. We don't need more "Compliance" training. We need to have time to go to industry events and learn about the current trends so we can teach our students current knowledge and skills.
- Metropolitan TAFE teacher

I have been instructed to develop 20 units of competency this year with no additional non-teaching time to complete these. I've completed 19 and was given 3 more to do today. I'm working overtime without any pay. – Metropolitan TAFE teacher

Preparation requirements have increased exponentially and insufficient time is allocated to this. Preparing a session is more than writing a PowerPoint - it is scaffolding learning that is aligned with the assessment and involves activities designed to build competence - that all takes time, effort and skill and this is never recognised. – Metropolitan TAFE teacher

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One of the biggest issues is the time allocated to complete activities does not represent the actual or true time it takes to do the job! For example: preparation and correction! - Non-metropolitan TAFE teacher

Student needs

Has there been a change to the number of students presenting with additional needs enrolling in Fee Free TAFE?

Yes	58.7%
No	6.6%
Don't know	34.7%

Please select whether each additional need is more or less prevalent among students in the Fee Free TAFE student cohort

	Much more prevalent	More prevalent	No change	Less prevalent	Much less prevalent
Mental Health	36.1%	39.8%	23.2%	0.9%	0.0%
Literacy and numeracy	34.8%	46.0%	18.0%	0.6%	0.6%
Digital skills	21.9%	44.9%	29.2%	3.7%	0.3%
Culturally and linguistically diverse	23.4%	40.0%	34.8%	1.9%	0.0%

Have additional learning and student support services been allocated to meet these needs?

Yes	17.3%
No	51.0%
Don't know	31.7%

Comments

More students getting enrolled ... with additional needs but teachers are not getting trained to cater to the students' additional needs. However, management expect teachers to provide the students full support. - Metropolitan TAFE teacher

The criteria for support for students presenting with additional needs is not being met in some cases, which leaves them without the necessary services required for them to get through their studies and day to day school work. - Metropolitan TAFE teacher

limited availability of support staff means students who need it often cannot access it when needed. Or, students who are identified as requiring support do not access it and it falls to the teacher. – Non-metropolitan TAFE teacher

Unfortunately, students choose a free TAFE course rather than a foundation course which they would be better suited to and then have the literacy and language skills to do a free TAFE course. – Non-metropolitan TAFE teacher

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Funding/resources

Does your institution have enough capacity in terms of funds, course availability and materials and infrastructure to meet the needs of industry and the local community?
Please indicate the extent to which each of the following do/do not require additional investment

	Investment is adequate as it is	Requires some upgrading and investment	Requires significant additional investment to bring up to standard	Not sure
Teaching staff	4.9%	39.0%	51.9%	4.3%
Administrative support	10.3%	33.2%	48.4%	8.0%
Equipment	11.6%	38.0%	44.8%	5.6%
Support staff – LLND, Foundation studies etc.	6.1%	31.7%	44.1%	18.2%
Student Support	13.4%	33.3%	43.6%	9.7%
IT equipment	13.3%	37.6%	43.2%	5.9%
Classrooms	14.5%	39.3%	37.9%	8.4%
Internal and external building structures	17.1%	34.6%	33.7%	14.6%
Material support for workplace delivery	14.8%	30.2%	33.1%	21.8%
Material support for online/blended delivery	13.5%	37.9%	29.0%	19.5%

How well are you currently supported to deal with the following challenges?

	Very well supported	Well supported	Neither well supported nor unsupported	Generally unsupported	No support at all
Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff	1.2%	14.6%	26.9%	32.8%	22.2%
Provided with time to develop teaching and learning content	2.4%	14.6%	31.1%	32.3%	18.2%
Supporting students who have fallen behind	2.1%	16.4%	32.0%	31.0%	16.8%
Supporting students with additional needs	1.7%	17.1%	32.7%	31.0%	14.2%
Pastoral care and supporting the mental health of students	1.7%	19.5%	30.2%	31.6%	13.5%
Adequate ICT equipment	3.5%	24.7%	31.1%	26.4%	12.0%
Supporting new students enrolling through government programs (e.g. Fee Free TAFE)	1.9%	12.3%	34.6%	23.2%	11.8%

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TAFE Institutes are increasingly shaving hours off the delivery of courses and teachers are being allocated less and less time in direct contact with students to cover the course content. Have you had hours shaved off a course you teach?

Yes	58.4%
No	41.6%

Respondents identifying course shaving estimated student contact time had been reduced by 23.4% on average.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Inability to recruit and retain qualified TAFE teachers is a significant issue	52.4%	38.6%	7.9%	0.6%	0.6%
Workload pressures make it difficult for me to do the job to the level that I would like to	44.6%	39.4%	12.9%	2.3%	0.9%
The quality of education that my TAFE is delivering is being affected by a lack of funding	39.7%	38.2%	17.2%	4.0%	0.9%
Unmet student demand for places in my area of teaching is a significant problem	14.7%	25.7%	46.8%	9.5%	3.2%
My pay and working conditions reflect my professional value and the work I do	6.3%	10.3%	17.0%	30.2%	36.2%

Overall, have you noticed changes in any of the following over the last two years?

	Significant decline	Some decline	No change	Some increase	Significant increase
Student wellbeing	19.6%	42.8%	17.5%	12.5%	7.1%
Student engagement	17.9%	46.4%	19.3%	12.9%	3.1%
Number of students with additional needs	5.9%	3.5%	16.0%	39.4%	34.4%
Staff wellbeing	31.7%	44.9%	8.7%	7.1%	7.1%
Staff morale	40.6%	39.0%	9.0%	5.7%	5.2%
Staff workload	12.7%	6.4%	7.8%	27.8%	44.5%
Class sizes	6.1%	8.7%	26.7%	35.9%	21.5%
Number of classes offered by your institute	8.8%	28.4%	25.3%	22.2%	14.8%
Student expectations of teacher availability	3.1%	6.4%	27.7%	36.3%	26.1%