



Research brief

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND TEACHER SALARIES

In New South Wales, 90.8 per cent of teaching positions are in Local Government Areas that are unaffordable for a single teacher income household.

The problem

School systems are facing a significant issue as housing affordability and rising costs of living are intersecting with a global shortage of teachers. Currently modelling suggests the New South Wales public school system needs an additional 13,000 teachers to meet demand this decade. Where these new teachers will come from and be able to afford to live is a pressing concern.

What we did

We analysed house sales (strata and non-strata) and weekly rental costs by Local Government Area (LGA) against public school teacher salaries overtime to better understand the current state of housing affordability for school teachers. To identify the level of affordability, we drew on established thresholds (e.g., 30% of weekly income, or 3 times annual salary).

Key findings



Housing unaffordability

Currently, 90.8 percent of teaching positions are in LGAs that are unaffordable for a single teacher income household.



Increased transportation costs

The unaffordability of housing is forcing teachers to commute further to work adding financial and time costs.



Schools inaccessible for staff

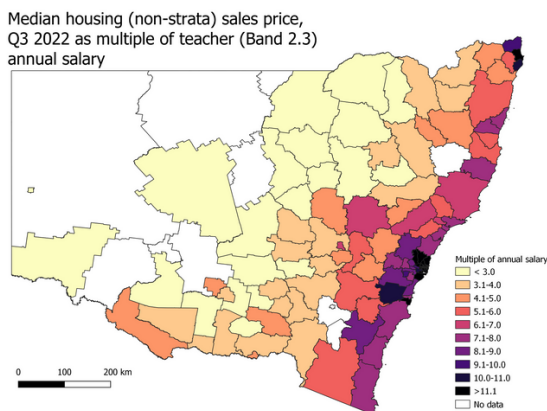
Many schools traditionally thought of as easy to staff are becoming inaccessible due to housing and transportation costs.

GET IN TOUCH



THE SYSTEMIC IMPLICATIONS OF HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND TEACHER SALARIES

Schooling has a unique geographic scale. With all school-age children and youth (6 to 17 years) legally required to attend school, wherever there are children and youth there is a need for schooling. If housing costs make living near some schools inaccessible on a teachers' salary (see Figure below), the ability of school systems to meet their obligations to citizens is compromised.



Rents are not more affordable

New teachers, those fundamental to addressing workforce shortages, are particularly vulnerable to unaffordable housing. Based on currently available data and assuming a single income household, **there are 675 schools representing 22,703 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching positions located in Local Government Areas (LGA) where the median rent for a one-bedroom dwelling is unaffordable for graduate teachers.**

The issue is not limited to new graduates. **For top-of-the-scale teachers (non-promotional positions), there are 70 schools representing 2059 teaching positions located in LGA where a one-bedroom place is unaffordable.** Housing affordability is a significant, albeit somewhat invisible issue impacting the teacher shortage.

When the gap between the supply and demand of teachers reaches a certain tipping point, a school system faces a major crisis. Housing affordability is creating a rapidly approaching tipping point for school systems as many schools not traditionally considered difficult to staff become inaccessible for teachers.

No one body owns the problem of a teacher shortage, but everyone has a stake in it. Any attempt to address the unfolding housing affordability crisis for the education workforce require long-term thinking coupled with immediate action based on the best available evidence and modelling.

To read more

The published article from which this Research Brief is based can be accessed at:

Eacott, S. (2023). The systemic implications of housing affordability for the teacher shortage: the case of New South Wales, Australia. *Australian Educational Researcher*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00621-z>

Sustainable Development Goals



The researcher

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Professor Eacott leads an interdisciplinary research program concerned with the central question of **How do we organise education to get the outcomes we desire?** Work within this program seeks to develop tools for educators, systems, providers, and individual organisations to better understand the provision of education.

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