

12 February 2020

OPEN LETTER to The Hon. James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education



Subject: Report on the Shortage of Design & Technologies Teachers in Victoria

Dear Minister,

I am the President of DATTA Vic, the professional association for Teachers of Design & Technologies and Systems Engineering in Victoria. DATTA Vic supports and advocates on behalf of educators working in primary and secondary schools across the state who are teachers of Product Design and Technology, Electronics, Textiles, Robotics, Engineering and STEM.

Victoria's teacher shortage has been well documented, especially the impact it has on rural schools. We welcomed the news that the State Government is addressing this issue with funding to implement the recommendations of the *Expert Advisory Panel for Rural and Regional Students*.

However, for the Design & Technologies learning area, this shortage has reached crisis point – both in metropolitan Melbourne and in the regions. In 2013, DATTA Vic carried out research with our members, with the intention of compiling accurate data on the perceived shortage of Technologies teachers across Victoria. The results were alarming – over 90% of schools reported facing difficulties finding qualified Technologies teachers, and 85% stated they were using unqualified teachers from other learning areas to deliver the Technologies curriculum. In 2019, we repeated the research, and the **2019 Technologies Teacher Shortage Report** for Victoria was produced, which can be downloaded from [HERE](#).

As expected, the situation has worsened in the past 6 years. 97% of schools now struggle to find qualified Technologies teachers to fill vacancies. Around a third of schools have reduced their Technologies Education programs due to the teacher shortage, and, perhaps most alarmingly, 70% of schools believe Work Health and Safety for teachers and students is being compromised.

DATTA Vic has been working hard to develop solutions to this problem, including:

- Building partnerships with the Tertiary Education and TAFE sectors to increase opportunities for initial teacher education in Design and Technologies,
- establishing national [Design & Technologies Week](#) to raise the profile of the learning area amongst the wider community
- delivering a [Teaching Design Masterclass](#) for unqualified teachers from other learning areas charged with delivering the Technologies curriculum

However, we have limited capacity to tackle the problem on our own. We are managed by a volunteer committee of practising teachers and employ two part-time members of staff to develop and deliver our programs.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at a convenient time to discuss the findings of the Teacher Shortage report, and specifically:

- How the Governments proposed programs can specifically target Design & Technologies faculties throughout Victoria
- What can be done to increase Initial Teacher Education opportunities for new Technologies teachers
- How can the Department of Education and other stakeholders work with DATTA Vic to support the upskilling of existing teachers in Design & Technologies

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Travis Burroughs'. The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Travis Burroughs
DATTA Vic President