

12 February 2020

OPEN LETTER to:

The Hon. Jacinta Allen, Leader of the House and Minister for Transport & Infrastructure; **The Hon. Jaclyn Symes**, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and Minister for Regional Development and Resources; **The Hon. Martin Pakula**, Minister for Jobs, Innovation and Trade; **The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio**, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change; **The Hon. Marton Foley**, Minister for Creative Industries; **The Hon. Adem Somyurek**, Minister for Small Business; **The Hon. Gayle Tierney**, Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education; **The Hon Melissa Horne**, Minister for Public Transport

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

Dear Ministers,

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.

I am writing to you following our correspondence with the Hon James Merlino regarding the teacher shortage crisis in Victoria and urge you to support the Minister for Education in dealing with this issue.

Victoria's teacher shortage has been well documented. For our learning area, this has reached crisis point. In 2019, DATTA Vic carried out research with schools throughout the state on the perceived shortage of Technologies teachers. The results were alarming – 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.

The **2019 Technologies Teacher Shortage Report** for Victoria is attached, and can also be downloaded [HERE](#).

The effects of this crisis are far reaching. Technologies education aims to prepare our students to be tomorrow's creative problem solvers and innovators. They will work in growth areas such as engineering, robotics, transport, construction, infrastructure and communications. They will be the innovators behind emerging fields like medical technology, generative design and renewable energies. Victorian businesses currently spend over \$4 billion each year on design services, which represents a significant impact on our economy. Young people with these skills and knowledge will be essential to a successful Victorian economy in the future, but without clear pathways from school through to vocational or tertiary education, we face a looming skills shortage. We have written to you as your portfolios are directly related to these fields.

Employers already face difficulties in recruiting appropriately skilled and qualified staff in these areas - evident in the statistics from the Victorian Occupational Cluster Reports. For example, in 2018, regional employers filled only 25% of engineering trade vacancies, and in 2019, 89% of qualified engineering professionals were deemed unsuitable for employment due to lack of appropriate experience. Unless we can equip our students with the capabilities to fill these positions in the future, this situation will only worsen.

DATTA Vic has been working hard to develop solutions to this problem, 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 have asked to meet with the Minister for Education to discuss the findings of the Technologies 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

We would welcome your input into how we can increase initial teacher education opportunities, how we can promote Design & Technologies education as a career for industry professionals and how we can continue to upskill our existing teachers to reflect the advances in technologies and

Yours sincerely,



Travis Burroughs
DATTA Vic President