

# Australian Education Union



## Beginning Teacher Survey 2007

### Results and Report

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## 1. Summary

This is the third year AEU Beginning Teacher Survey. 1732 teachers with one – three years experience participated in the survey nationally.

The results remain consistent in terms of the priority concerns for beginning teachers:

- Workload;
- Behaviour Management;
- Pay; and
- Class Sizes.

The survey results showed that:

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

- Only **47.2%** had **On-going or permanent employment**.
- **44.7%** are employed on fixed term contracts of 6 weeks or more.
- **50%** had been teaching at their current school for 1 year or less,
- Just on half (**52.2%**) believed they were **NOT given adequate information** about teacher working conditions and rights upon employment.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION CAREER

- **47.9%** believed they would **NOT be teaching in the public system in 10 years time**. This is despite **49.5%** saying they had CHANGED careers to start teaching.
- **46.1% of first year teachers** (320) said they would **not stay teaching in the public system longer than 10 years**.
- **6.9%** of all responses (121) were from first year teachers who did not see themselves in the public system for more than 3 years.
- **55.5%** said they would leave the public system and would be **working in another industry**.

### PRIORITY CONCERNS FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Beginning Teachers report these as their same top 4 concerns, in the same order, as the last 2 year's surveys:

<b>[Workload]</b>	<b>60.4%</b>
<b>[Pay]</b>	<b>59.8</b>
<b>[Behaviour Management]</b>	<b>55.5</b>
<b>[Class Sizes]</b>	<b>54.8</b>
[Professional Development]	31.7
[Tenure of Employment]	31.6
[Peer/Mentor Support]	28.2

- Workload stayed as most often cited and increased by 3%; Pay moved up above Behaviour Management which decreased 2%; and Class Sizes stayed same.

- Beginning teachers' areas of expertise broadly represented all areas of teaching, nevertheless **28%** reported they had been **asked to teach outside of their area** of expertise/qualifications.
- **38.2%** said that their participation in FORMAL MENTORING was provided by their school. **52.7%** said they have **never had formal mentoring** - 7% increase from 2006.
- **32.1%** said that their participation in an ONGOING INDUCTION process, (including time off from classroom teaching), was provided by their school. **55.3%** said they **have never been involved with an ongoing induction process**.
- **38.2%** said that their participation in professional learning around BEHAVIOUR/CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, was provided by their school. **41.2%** said they have **never been involved with behaviour management** professional learning.

### PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

- **38.9%** rated their **pre-service teacher education as "Satisfactory"** in preparing them for the reality of teaching and **27.4%** rated it less than satisfactory (being either 'poor' or 'very poor').
- Beginning teachers (**86.2%**) **did not think their training adequately prepared** them for dealing with difficult parents and colleagues
- **69.1%** felt their training did not provide an adequate grounding to teach particular groups of students, such as students with disabilities, students from non-English speaking backgrounds and students from dysfunctional backgrounds
- **45.89%** said they took part in **mandatory Indigenous Studies units** at university (up 4% from 2006) but **73.2%** felt **inadequately prepared to meet the needs of Indigenous students**.
- **39.2%** say they feel satisfactorily supported by the education system now but **35.3%** say they feel the needs of Indigenous students are *poorly or very poorly* supported now.

## 2. Overall Response

- **42.3%** (732) respondents were in their first year of teaching
- **42.2%** of respondents were 20-25 years old.
- More (**24.5%** up from 17.4%) were over 35 years in this year's survey.
- Reflecting the teaching population, **78.1%** of responses were from female beginning teachers.
- **35** (2%) respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- The sector breakdown of responses were:
 

<b>Primary</b>	<b>49.5%</b>	<b>(856)</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>(663)</b>
<b>Pre-School/Early Childhood</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>(117)</b>
<b>Senior College</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>(56)</b>
<b>Special School</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>(39)</b>
		<b>(1732)</b>
- **42.6%** of responses were from teachers in Non-Metropolitan schools. **5.4%** (93) from remote areas further than 500km from their nearest capital/regional centre.

### 3. Key Issues

#### 3.1 Employment status

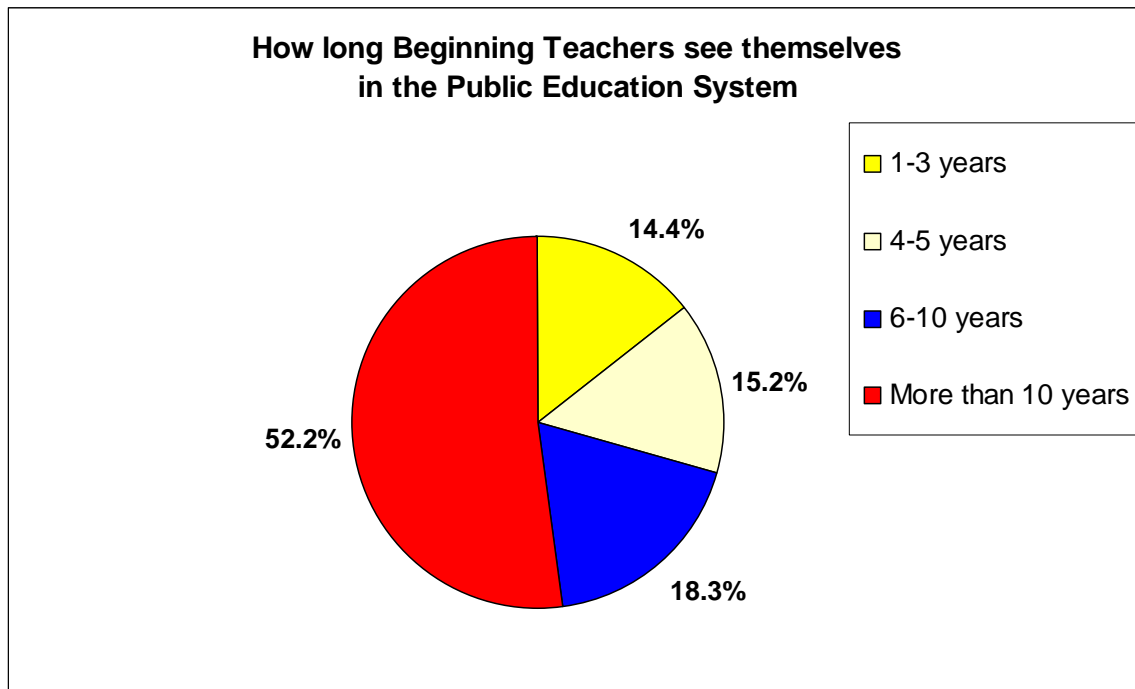
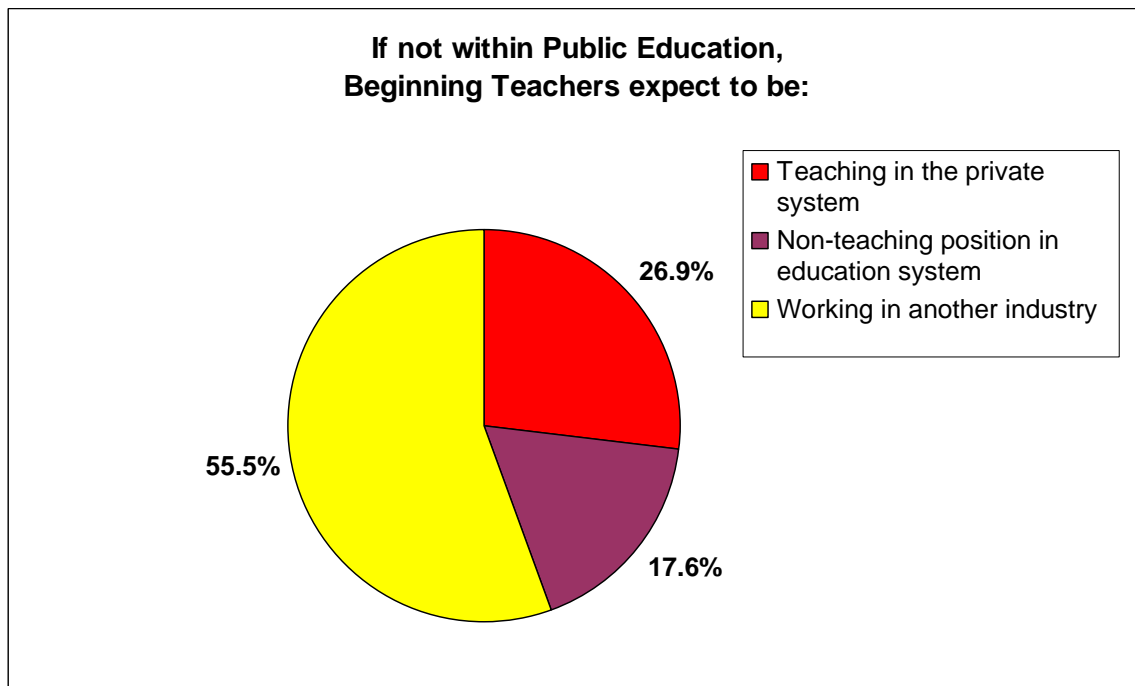
Q09: Mode of employment / employment status?	
On-going/permanent	<b>47.2%</b>
Appointed for a fixed term of more than 6 weeks, but not permanent	<b>43.9</b>
Appointed for a fixed term of 6 weeks or less	<b>0.8</b>
Relief/Supply teaching only	<b>8.1</b>

- There was an overall increase from 45.27% to **47.2%** of **On-going/permanent employment**, but **44.7%** were on fixed term contracts **without permanency**.
- **52.2%** believed they were **NOT given adequate information** about teacher working conditions and rights upon employment.

The overwhelming majority of comments **viewed negatively** the possibility of having to **negotiate their own pay and conditions**

#### 3.2 Public Education Career

- **52.2% said they WERE committed** to teaching in the public system for more than 10 years, which was a 2% increase from 2006. (see Figure 3.2.1)
- **46.1% of first year teachers** (320) said they would **not stay teaching in the public system longer than 10 years**.
- 6.9% of all responses (121) were from first year teachers who did not see themselves in the public system for more than 3 years.
- 49.5% of respondents had **CHANGED Careers** to begin teaching, **47.6%** of those said they did not believe they would be teaching in the public system in 10 years time.
- Of those not committed to staying, **55.5%** would be **working in another industry**. (see Figure 3.2.2)

**Figure 3.2.1 Beginning Teachers' future plans in the Public System****Figure 3.2.2 Future Working Preferences if not teaching in the Public System**

- Qualitative answers for those who answered “Other” (239 in total) to what they might be doing if not teaching included:
  - *Stay at home mum*
  - *Medicine*
  - *University: Retrain for another career*
  - *Adult education*
  - *Tutoring*
  - *Have a family and then return hopefully in a job share role*
  - *casual teaching and retirement*
  - *Go into politics to try and save public education*
  - *Don't know; depends how much pay and conditions improve.*
  - *Teaching in Tertiary Education Sector*
  - *NO PLANS UNLESS I AM NOT OFFERED PERMANENCY*

**Some Qualitative answers around teachers’ reasons for staying or leaving the public education system:**

- *I think the stress level will be very high and the wages not sufficient to encourage me to stay longer.*
- *Q16 is totally dependent on whether or not I became a permanent employee or not!!! I love teaching and am good at it but how can you comfortably purchase a house and have kids when you are not guaranteed of work the following year or pay over the holidays!*
- *My workload was incredible. As a second year teacher I was given 5 English classes which included one year 12 class and one year 11 class. I had multiple students with learning difficulties and limited teacher aide support in the classroom. I was also expected to undertake extra curricular activities such as debating in my lunch hours and in some nights. My marking load was so excessive that I would have to work most nights until 8pm, and I was leaving my house at 7am to go to work each day. I had to work at least one full day out of every weekend and all public holidays. Most school holidays I had to go into work just to try and catch up on my marking as my school required we mark all student drafts also. I worked out I was only on about \$11 an hour for the hours I was doing. I feel my mental health and self esteem has suffered greatly, and I admit that the school I was at was a very good school, so I can't imagine what it must be like for some other beginning teachers. I am currently on sick leave without pay.*
- *Public education needs committed teachers, I believe I am*
- *I have made the decision to become a teacher as a lifestyle choice. I love teaching and enjoy watching children learn. I am hopeful that pay conditions will improve in order for me to stay in the industry. I am hopeful that there will be more emphasis placed on the importance of teachers.*
- *I do not have a permanent job and am trying to start a family. I am teaching on a lot of blocks but still have no entitlements to maternity leave (which is almost impossible for any casual). Once my children come along, casual teaching will not allow me to have permanent set days, making child care very difficult.*
- *I have recently left the teaching profession and returned to my previous area of employment. I am now working shorter hours (I was spending 60~70hrs per week teaching - including lesson preparation etc), and earning nearly twice as much. I am still passionate about improving conditions for teachers - particularly public school teachers. There is no more important profession for the improvement and development of society.*

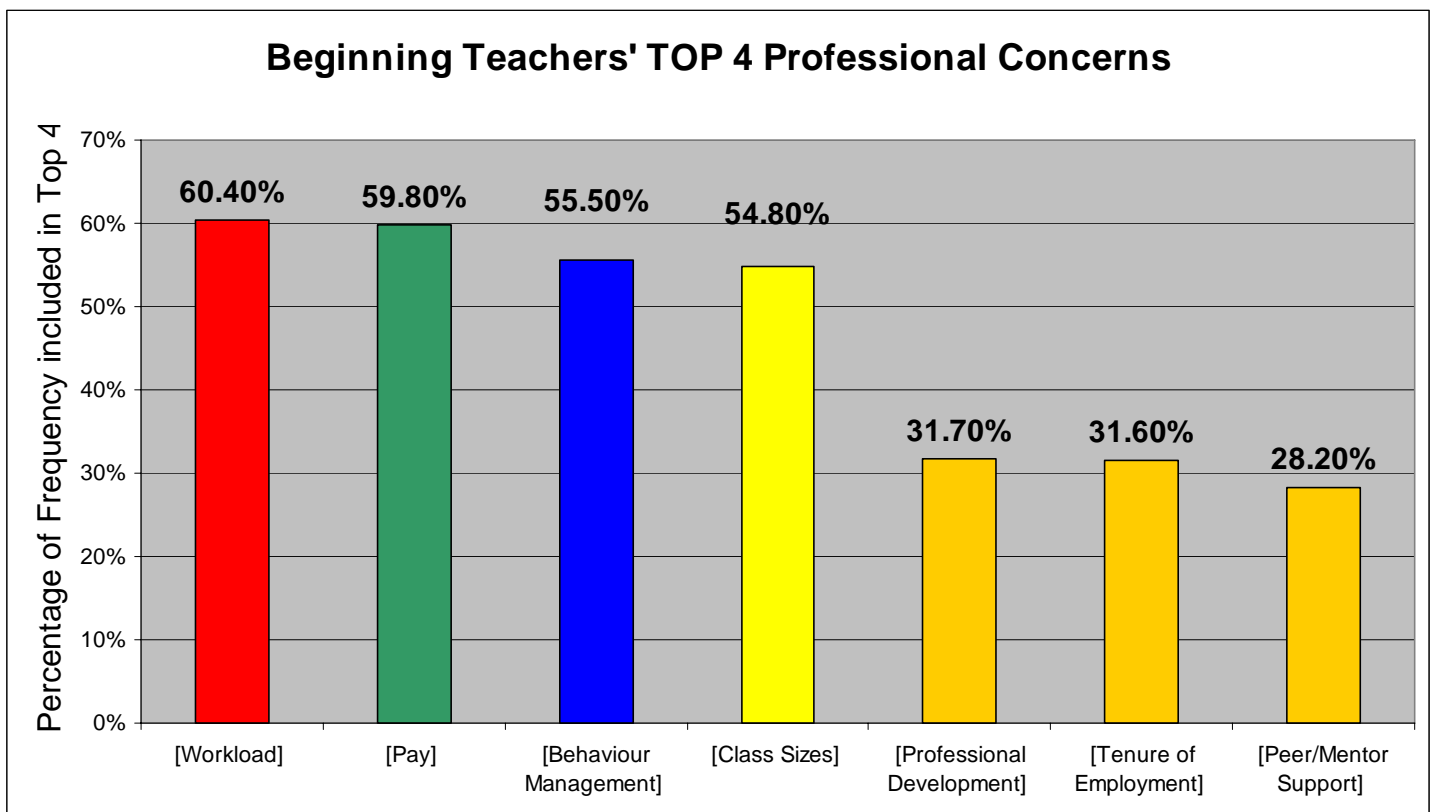
- *Poor pay, poor conditions, generally overworked for the time we have, I find myself getting to work at 7:30 am and not leaving before 6pm most nights only to continue marking etc when I finally get home. Holidays are not holidays they are just time when I can finally try and get some curriculum written. At the school I teach at teachers have to put everything together themselves.*
- *That was a hard question to answer. I expected when I trained to teach that I would continue teaching until I retire. I find it difficult to get continuous work in one school which can be unsettling. If that continues I would consider going back to my old career.*
- *Because I enjoy teaching*

### 3.3 Professional Concerns and Support

Beginning Teachers report these as their same top 4 concerns, as the last 2 year's surveys:

	2007	2006
[Workload]	60.4	58.74
[Pay]	59.8	54.58
[Behaviour Management]	55.5	57.58
[Class Sizes]	54.8	54.27
[Professional Development]	31.7	30.95
[Tenure of Employment]	31.6	30.87
[Peer/Mentor Support]	28.2	29.02

Figure 3.3.1 Top 4 Professional Concerns Displayed by Frequency Included



- Workload stayed as the most often cited and increased by 3%;
- Pay moved up above Behaviour Management and decreased 2%; and Class Sizes stayed same.

By sector, the following were the most notable results to provide an indication of the experiences and expectations of beginning teachers:

- Primary

Primary teachers' most frequently included the following in their top 4 concerns:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
<b>[Workload]</b>	<b>59.3%</b>	61.01%
<b>[Pay]</b>	<b>57.9</b>	53.02
<b>[Class Sizes]</b>	<b>55.8</b>	58.4
<b>[Behaviour Management]</b>	<b>50.6</b>	52.04

In comparison to 2006 results, Primary teachers' concern over pay has surpassed that for Class Sizes.

- Secondary

Secondary teachers' most frequently included the following in their top 4 concerns:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
<b>[Behaviour Management]</b>	<b>65.2%</b>	65.08
<b>[Pay]</b>	<b>61.9</b>	56.12
<b>[Workload]</b>	<b>60.9</b>	57.4%
<b>[Class Sizes]</b>	<b>53.6</b>	50.09

In comparison to 2006 results, Behaviour Management remains clearly the main concerns for Secondary teachers, with concern for Pay slightly increasing over Workload from the previous year.

- Senior Colleges

Tenure of Employment (**39.3%**) is included in Senior College teachers' top 4 concerns, and they report much higher concern (**69.6%**) over Workload.

- Pre-school/Early Childhood

Class sizes (**66.4%**) is the concern most often reported in the top 4 by Pre-school/Early Childhood teachers

- Special Schools

Following Pay, (**67.6%**) the stand-out concern for teachers in Special Schools is Professional Development (**54.1%**). Class Sizes is not within their top 4.

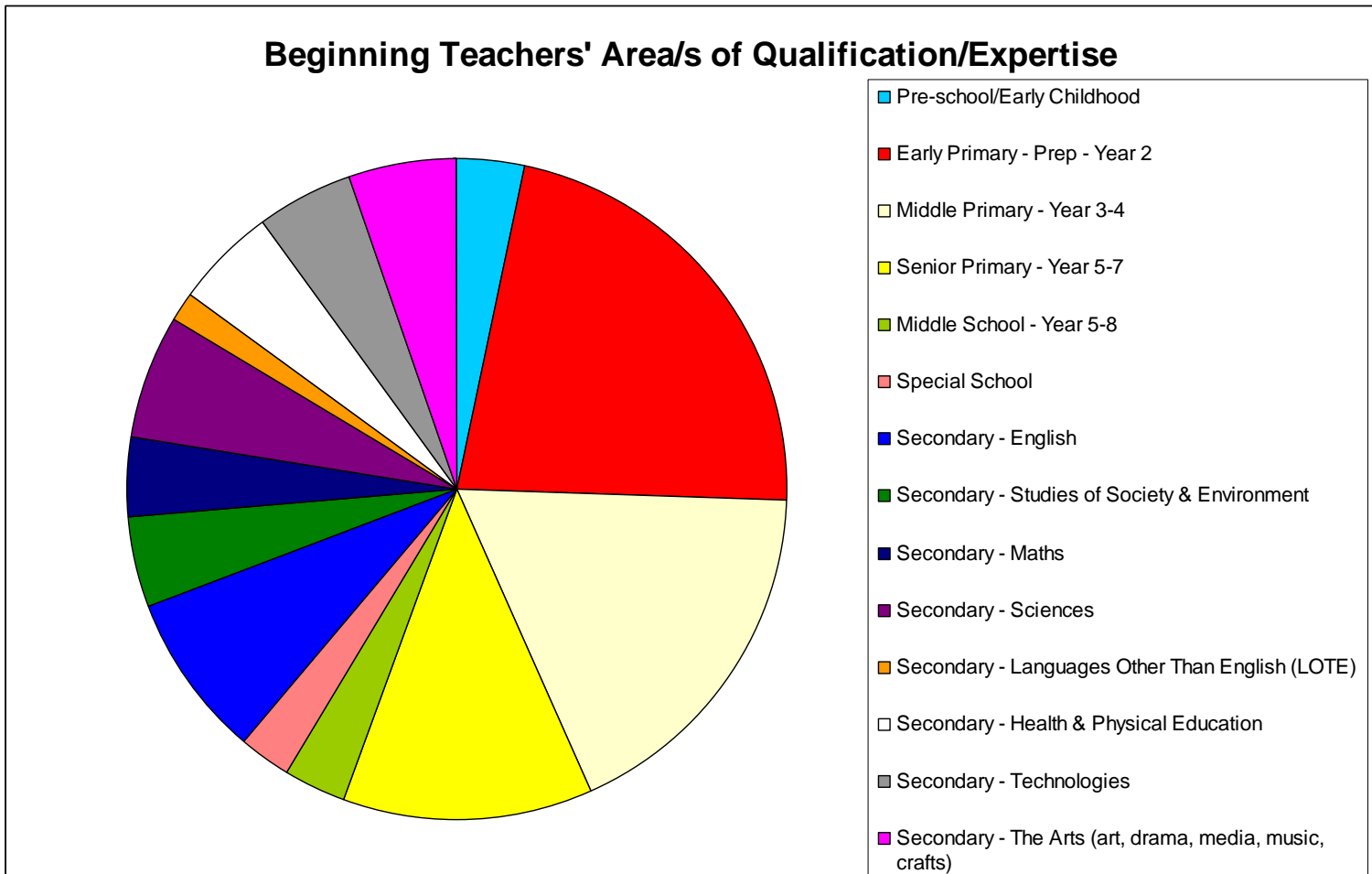
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Members

Similarly with Special Schools, concern for Professional Development opportunities is high (**40.6%**) amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, though included just outside their top 4 concerns.

## Professional support

- Beginning teachers most often cite receiving the **most professional support from School Colleagues (75.1%)**, the second highest level of support reported comes from *other beginning teachers* (9.4%) or *family* (7.3%) rather than a formal mentor (4.9%), and Department initiatives (1.5%).
- Beginning teachers' areas of expertise broadly represented all areas of teaching (see Figure 3.3.2).
- Nevertheless, **28%** had reported being **asked to teach outside of their area** of expertise/qualifications.

Figure 3.3.2 Areas of Expertise/Qualifications of Respondents



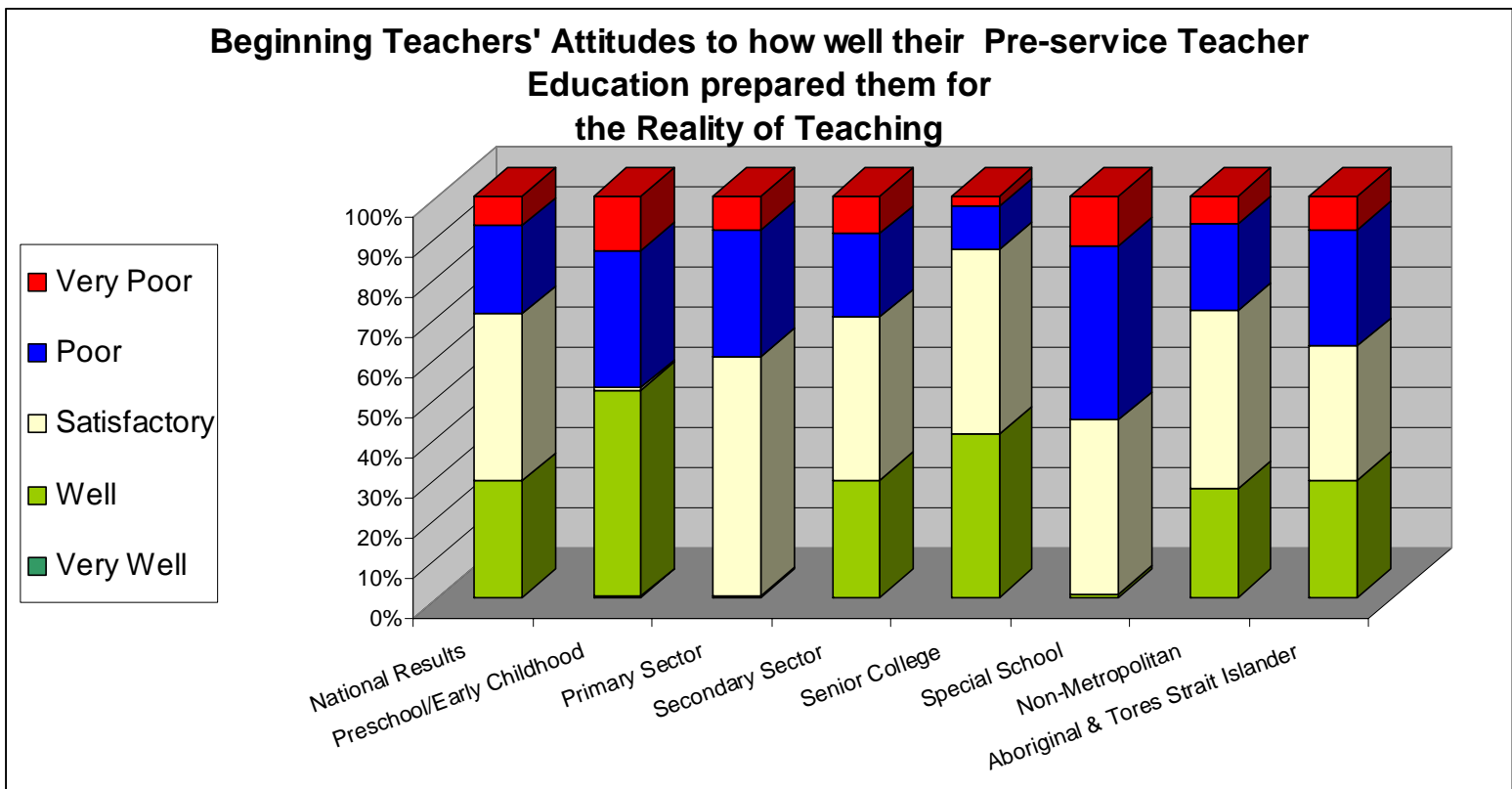
### Qualitative answers around what areas they are teaching that are outside their qualifications/areas of expertise:

- *I am primary trained working in a high school and teach Math, English and SOSE*
- *I teach history and geography as well as science - this involves a lot of extra work.*
- *Working with students with special needs who are given no funding in the public school system*
- *To gain a temporary position at a school, I was required to teach music, agriculture and geography.*
- *History - I am now doing correspondence at uni to be qualified to teach it as well.*
- *Bridging program for refugee arrivals.*
- *Teaching early primary students in YCDI (You Can Do It) programme as a literacy helper*
- *I completed a Bachelor of early childhood, and was appointed to a position teaching a year 6 class.*
- *I am ECE trained and have taught PE. I am currently teaching music in two schools.*

### 3.4 Pre-service Teacher Education

The majority of participants were not satisfied with the preparation their pre-service education provided.

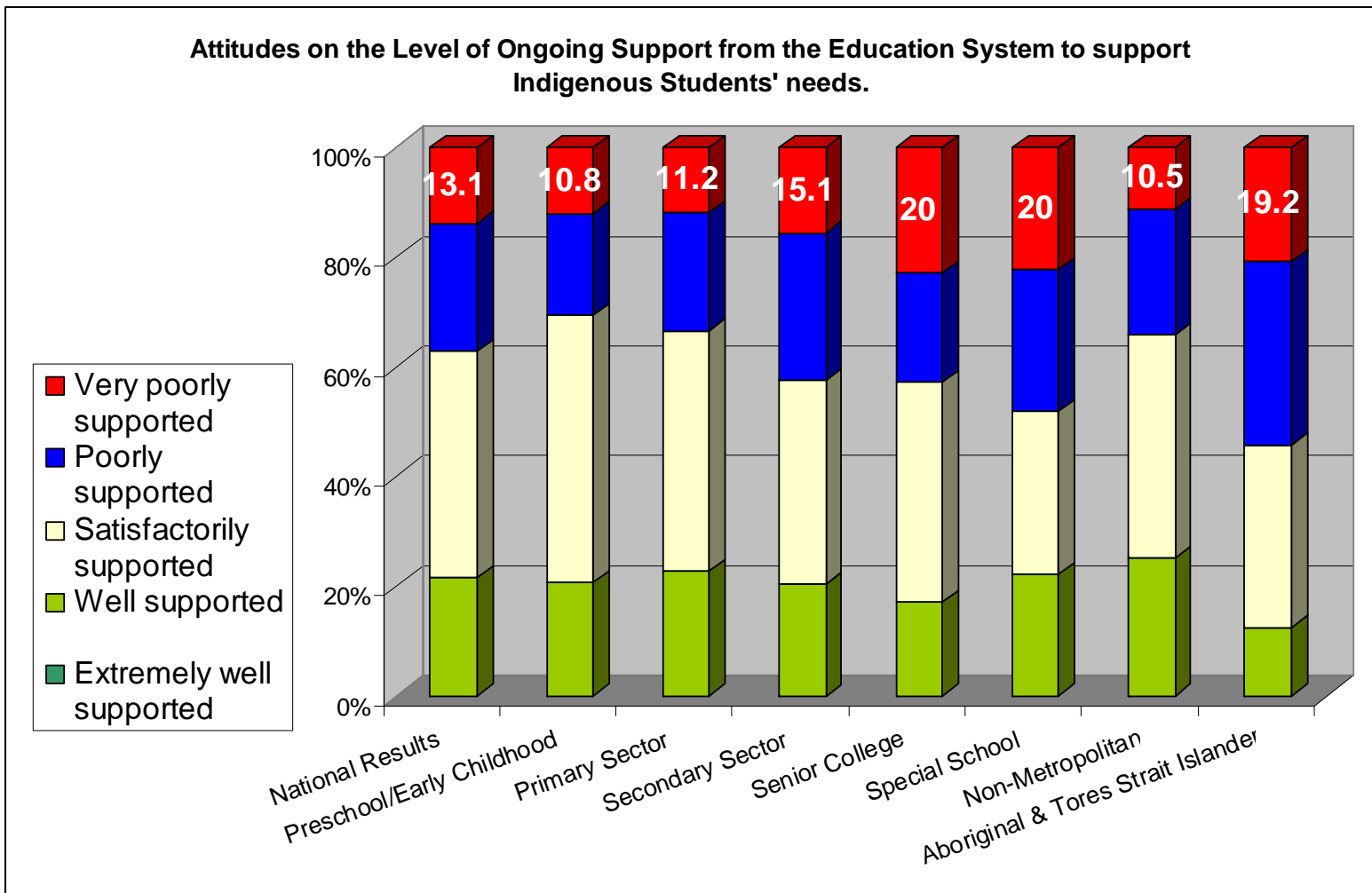
Figure 3.4.1 Attitudes to Pre-Service Education



- **39%** of responses nationally, rated their pre-service teacher education as only **Satisfactorily** preparing them for the reality of teaching.
- **27.4%** rated it **less than satisfactory**, (being either “Poor” or “Very Poor”)

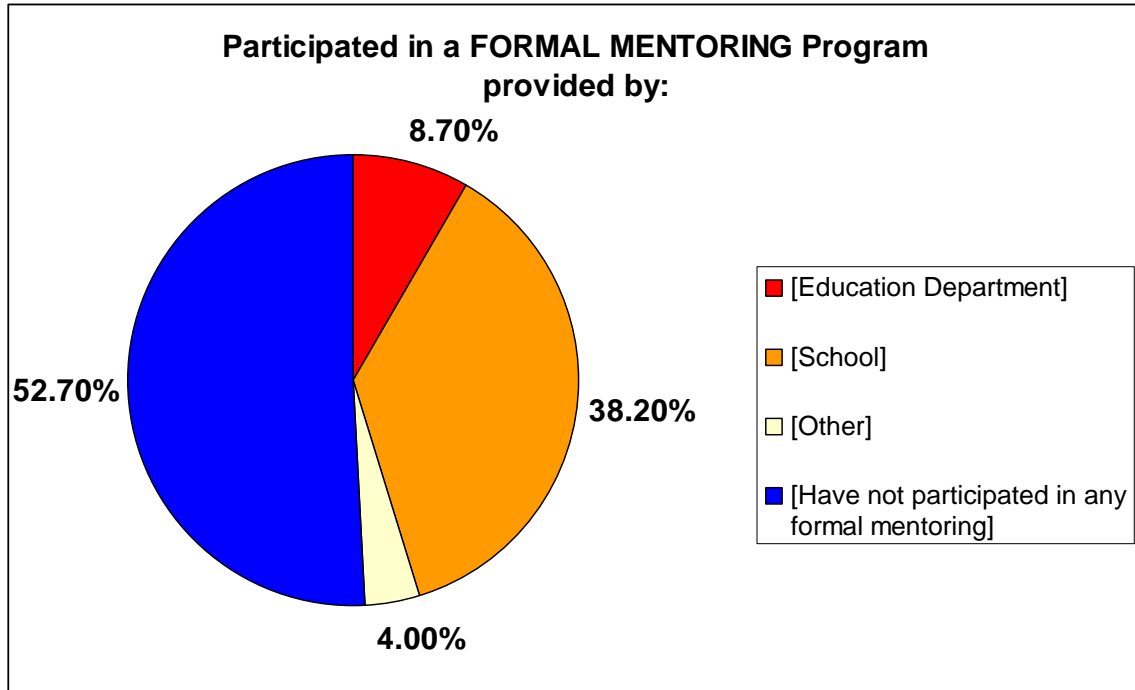
- Further, **86.2%** of beginning teachers surveyed **did not think their training adequately prepared** them for dealing with difficult parents and colleagues, and **69.1%** did not think they were provided a grounding to teach particular groups of students, such as students with disabilities, students from non-English speaking backgrounds and students from dysfunctional backgrounds.
- **45.89%** said they took part in **mandatory Indigenous Studies units** at university (up 4% from 2006) but **73.2%** felt **inadequately prepared you to teach Indigenous students**, this result was consistent across sectors and states/territories.
- **39.2%** say they feel **satisfactorily supported** by the education system now but **35.3%** say they feel the needs of Indigenous students are *poorly or very poorly* supported now.

**Figure 3.4.2 System Support for Teachers to meet the needs of Indigenous students.**

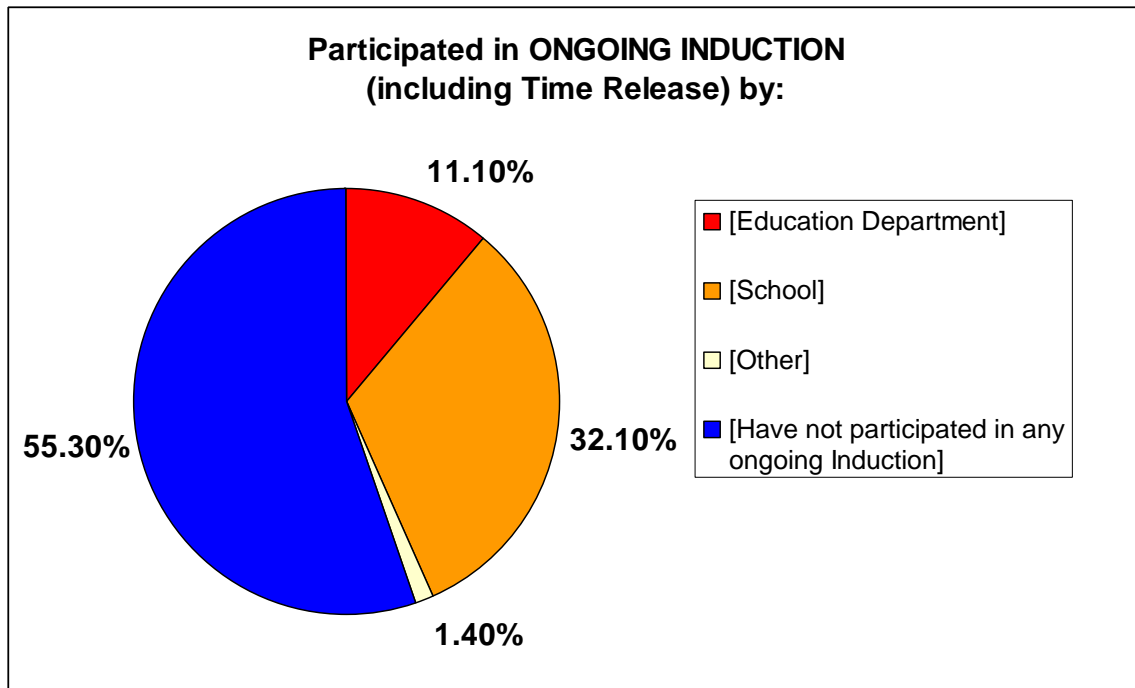


### 3.5 Professional Development

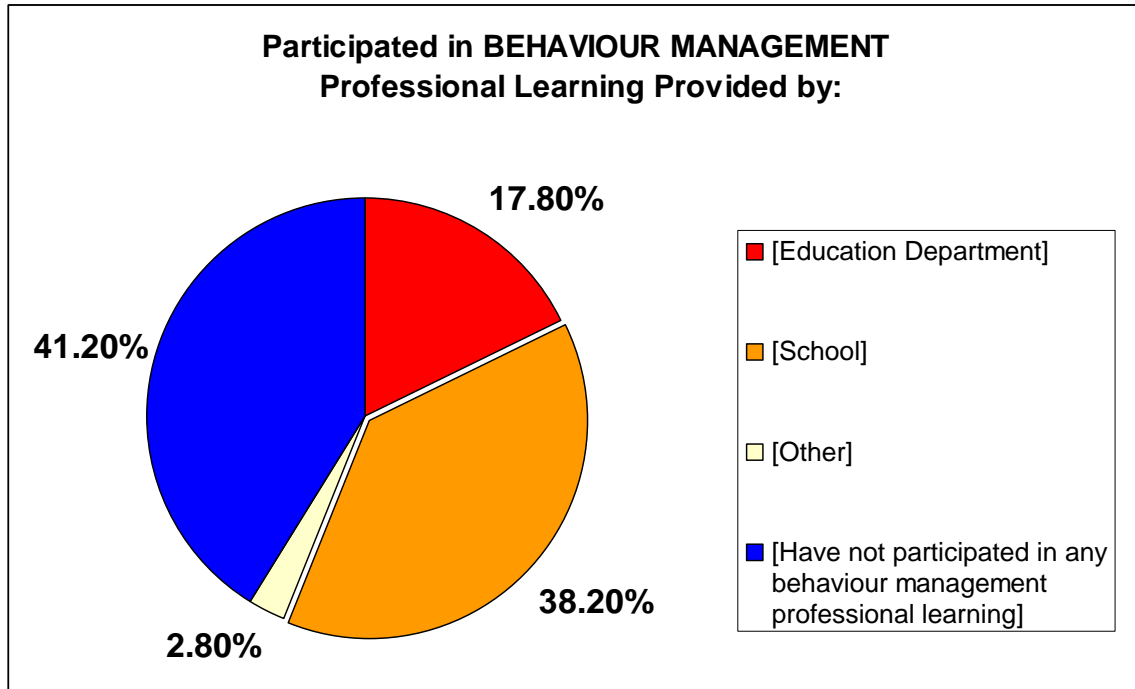
- **38.2%** said that their participation in FORMAL MENTORING was provided by their school. **52.7%** said they have **never had formal mentoring** - 7% increase from 2006.



- **32.1%** said that their participation in an ONGOING INDUCTION process, (including time off from classroom teaching), was provided by their school. **55.3%** said they **have never been involved with an ongoing induction process**.



- **38.2%** said that their participation in professional learning around BEHAVIOUR/CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, was provided by their school. **41.2%** said they have **never been involved with behaviour management** professional learning.



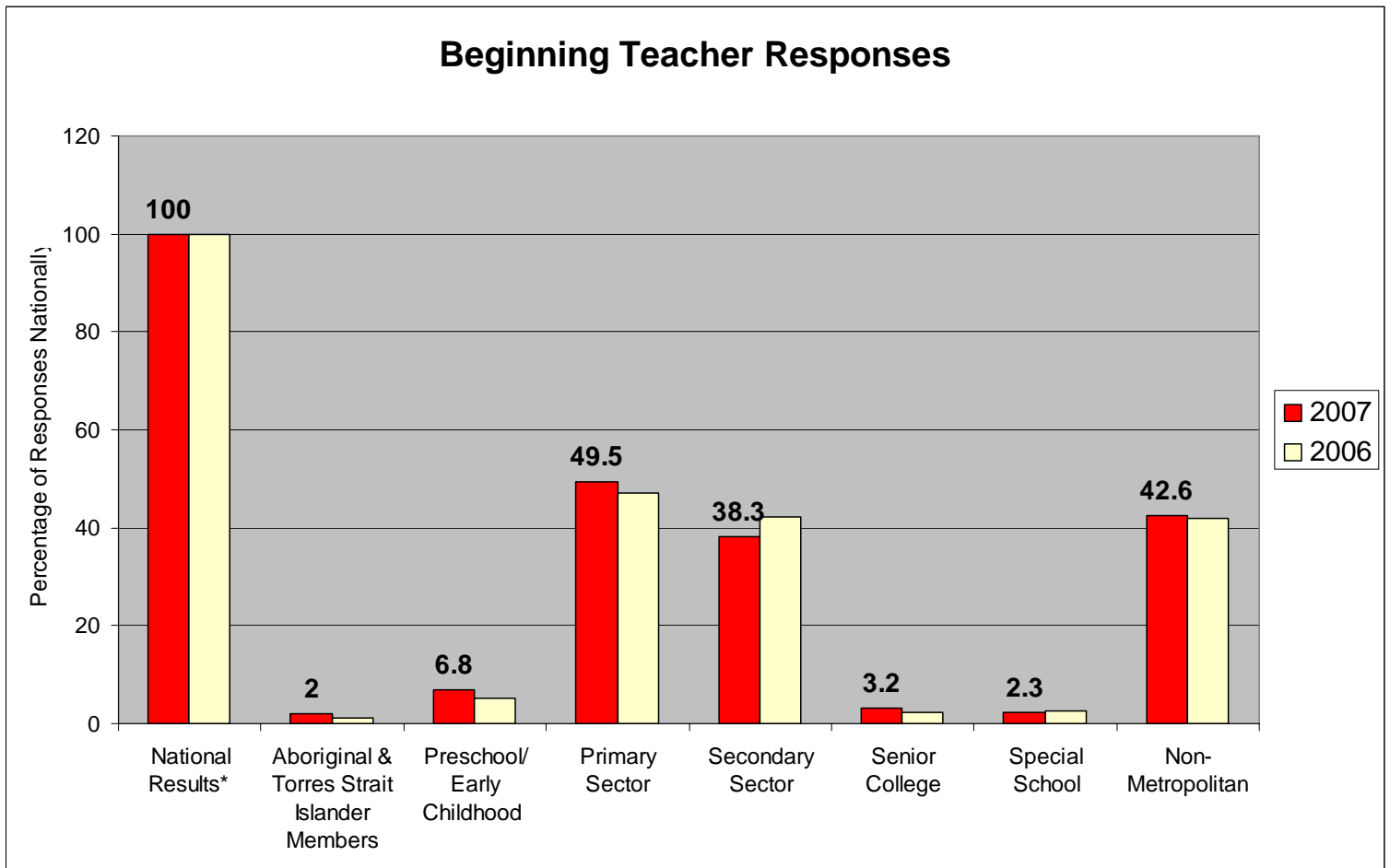
- Senior College beginning teachers are the only ones whose access to Induction with time release is provided more frequently by the Department (**31.8%**) where **29.5%** had accessed ongoing induction at the school level.
- Pre-School/Early Childhood Teachers and Non-Metropolitan Teachers appear to be receiving the least professional development in all 3 areas mentioned.

## 4. Reporting areas

### 4.1. Sector and demographic breakdown

	2007		2006
National Results	100.00%	(1732)	(1299)
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Members	2%	(35)	(17)
Preschool/ Early Childhood	6.8%	(117)	(66)
Primary Sector	49.5%	(856)	(613)
Secondary Sector	38.3%	(663)	(547)
Senior College	3.2%	(56)	(31)
Special School	2.3%	(39)	(33)
Non- Metropolitan	42.6%	(737)	(544)

**Figure 4.1.1 Number of Responses from identified sectors and membership groups**



**\* In all of the tables to follow, the “\*” indicates the national figure, as the total national response rate for the sector.**

#### 4.2. Beginning Teacher Attributes

- The age of beginning teachers is increasingly mature aged. Though the majority (42.2%) of respondents were still 20-25 years old, this proportion had dropped from 2006.
- 24.5% were over 35 years, which has continually increased (17% in 2006 and 8.6% in 2005).
- The age differences are reflected in part by the fact that in comparison with the 2006 results, there were less in their first year of teaching (42.4% opposed to 49% 2007).

##### Figure 4.2.1 Ages of Respondents

20-25 years	<b>42.2%</b>
26-30 years	<b>22.2</b>
31-35 years	<b>11.1</b>
Over 35	<b>24.5</b>

- Like the rest of the teaching population 78.10% of responses were from female beginning teachers.
- 86.3% of respondents did **not participate in the survey** last year or in 2005.
- There were 121 (0.07%) respondents who were in their first year of teaching and indicated they had a commitment no more than 3 years in the public education system.

##### Figure 4.2.2 Geographical Location of Respondents

Metro	<b>57.4%</b>
rural/regional - less than 200kms from regional centre	<b>23.6</b>
rural/regional -200-500kms from regional centre	<b>13.6</b>
rural/regional -more than 500kms from regional centre	<b>5.4</b>