**Corrimal High bucks older teacher trend**

By KATE MCILWAIN

MORE than a third of NSW teachers are set to retire in the next five years, creating concerns over a loss of expertise and skills. But one Illawarra high school is bucking the trend by retaining its staff base.

Like many schools in the region, Corrimal High has a number of teachers who will retire in coming years, but principal Mark King said the school was successfully replacing them.

"The school itself is actually very lucky that we have a full range of staff," Mr King said. He said Corrimal was benefiting from a graduate program where high-achieving university graduates were fast-tracked into the school.

"We have some staff who are in their last years of teaching. I have staff members who will be retiring this year and I have teachers who have got a full 10 plus years ahead of them," Mr King said. This is at odds with what is happening statewide.

NSW Department of Education figures show 44.4 per cent of teachers are over 50 and 35 per cent will reach retirement age in the next five years. Only 9.6 per cent of teachers are under 30, leaving many in the profession wondering how it will replace its ageing workforce.

Mr King said he was concerned about the "system-wide" re-sourcing problems facing schools as more older teachers retired and fewer young teachers entered in the workforce.

Retiring teacher Gary Kemp agreed, saying it was important new teachers were mentored and supported.

"If does concern me and I think the biggest problem is making the job attractive enough, not just financially, which is important, but also with the support young teachers get," he said. There are so many teachers I have heard of who start teaching and just can't handle it. Those first one or two years can be very difficult. If you survive that and have great support from other staff like I did then you'll be okay."

NSW Teachers Federation regional co-ordinator Nicole Colman said the Department of Education needed to work harder to retain teachers.

She said an Australian Education Union survey of NSW teachers with fewer than four years experience found that only 46 per cent of those surveyed believed they would continue teaching for more than 10 years.

Mr Colman said this was partially because of changed superannuation rules, but said most departing early-career teachers cited lack of support in the classroom, workload and pay as reasons why they left.

A Department of Education spokesperson said there were a number of strategies to attract and retain quality teachers, including active promotion of teaching and teacher education, scholarships in areas of workforce need and an incentives scheme for rural NSW.
School's out after 36 years

By KATE McEWAN

ON Garry Kemp’s first day of work at Garriwill High School, all the male teachers wore ties and the cone was still used as a method of discipline.

It was 1970, and he was fresh out of teachers’ college starting a job he would do until January this year, when he retired.

“School in the 70s was a different place to now,” Mr Kemp said.

“There was an older, very stable population of staff. And the principal was just as strict with the kids as he was with the teachers,” Mr Kemp said.

I remember being called up and being told off because my Bernadette shoes that I was wearing in winter weren’t pulled up all the way to my knees. It was a hot day so I thought I’d put them down a bit, and that was pretty radical, I suppose."

Mr Kemp became a respected and popular teacher, involved in training sports teams and helping with vocational education courses.

He also campaigned for a new maths science centre in 2003 and spent years filling in as head teacher, deputy principal and principal, although he missed working with kids and always returned to the classroom.

When he knew retirement was near, Mr Kemp began mentoring a new generation of teachers.

“Having an older, experienced staff is great, but you really need the younger ones with energy and enthusiasm,” he said.

“It’s very important that we pass on skills and teaching methods because you don’t want to say it took me all this time to develop and I’m not going to share it,” Mr Kemp said.

Principal Mark King said Mr Kemp had been an invaluable part of the school.

“Garry was a bedrock on which effective teaching at this school was built.” Mr King said. “The number of students and staff that relied on Garry since the time he was at the school has just been immense.”