



News^eextra

NSW/ACT Independent Education Union

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The IEU calls on all members to join the stopwork action on Thursday 5 February for the first two hours of the school day, before commencing work at 10.30am.

It is essential that members throughout the state participate in the action and send a clear message to Catholic employers that we demand a fair settlement of both wages and conditions.

Thursday 5 February

Why should members stop work?

At a time when Government school teachers are starting the year with significant pay increases and a comprehensive package of conditions, Catholic employers are withholding settlement in an attempt to force the Union to abandon claims for much needed conditions in systemic primary and secondary schools.

Traditionally in wages rounds, Catholic employers have engaged in negotiations in the lead-up to Government settlements and then reached agreement with the Union without delay. The current appalling and unprecedented behaviour harks back to a long gone era when Catholic teachers were just meant to be grateful for anything the employers were prepared to offer.

What do the employers say?

Catholic employers have written to the Union stating they will meet Government increases only when there is an "overall agreement" with the IEU. They have indicated they want a full and comprehensive resolution of all matters in the claim. However, they have done nothing to advance such a settlement even though they've had the claim for six months.

Instead Catholic employers have told teachers that they will match the salary increases without seeking any trade-offs. In short, the employers' version of a comprehensive settlement is to offer you the money with the insulting

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promise not to reduce your working conditions!

In letters to teachers in diocesan schools across NSW, employers argue that there is no benefit to stopping work because "unlike the Government sector, Catholic systemic employers have not sought any trade-offs in return for salary increases". This is a distortion of the current Government situation.

While the Government may have sought significant cost offsets in the early days of negotiations, the actual settlement is a different story. Members would now be aware of the wages outcomes of 4.4% from the first full pay period (fpp) on or after 1 January 2009; 3.8% from the fpp on or after 1 January 2010 and 3.8% from the fpp on or after 1 January 2011.

Government teachers also have a genuinely comprehensive settlement, including a resolution to the highly vexed dispute over teacher transfers and the granting of an additional two days of professional development on the



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last two days of Term 4. Changes to sick leave reduced the annual entitlement but removed caps. This outcome has actually provided better access to sick leave for many members and is not a cost saving for the Government. There were some changes to Workers Compensation conditions but these arrangements never even existed in Catholic schools.

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What is the IEU position?

For the IEU the wages outcome is, of course, a central feature of every award round. The Union views the Government salaries result (12.48% over three years) as a good outcome in the current political and economic climate. Catholic employers, however, are wrong to think this is only about the money.

The Union is ever aware of the professional demands on teachers, especially in light of the 'intensification' of workloads. In contrast to your employers, our view of a "comprehensive settlement" is one that provides working conditions to enable you to do your job well. That's why our settlement has to include:

- professional development days in line with the DET settlement
- other practical measures to support teachers including establishing online resources, agreed guidelines for student assessment, record keeping and reporting and a commitment to using Educational Impact Statements

- guaranteed release for New Scheme teachers and their mentors

- greater protection for part-time teachers, and

- review of maximum class sizes in secondary schools in practical and VET subjects.

The Union is also committed to improving conditions in primary schools to better reflect Government school conditions, including two hours release from face-to-face teaching and reduced class sizes in years K-2.

The Union will seek a 'Leave Reserved' clause along the lines of one now agreed in the Government sector. This will enable the parties to deal with the issue of allowances that may arise from higher accreditation levels at the Institute.

There are also a number of administrative award improvements.

What next?

As you would be aware, members voted on this industrial campaign at the 2 December stopwork meetings. The IEU Executive has authorised the change in arrangements for the stopwork meeting for 2009 and has recommitted to a one day stoppage if the employers fail to reach settlement.

We again urge you to support this action.