



News^eextra

NSW/ACT Independent Education Union

Website: www.ieu.asn.au

17 July, 2008

Your wages, conditions and job security – what lies ahead?

Support Staff, Maintenance and Outdoor Staff in Catholic Schools

All members are urged to attend one of
the advertised meetings early this term.

- By attending a meeting, you will show your support for the union campaign for your pay rise and find out how you can advance the claim back at school. You will hear the claim explained in detail and provide your input.
- As the next negotiating sessions will be held on Monday 28 July (support staff) and Tuesday 29 July (maintenance and outdoor staff), you will receive a report on the response of employers to date.

Tuesday, 29 July

4.30 pm

Hornsby RSL Club, 4 High Street, Hornsby

Wednesday, 30 July

4.30 pm

Burwood RSL Club, Shaftsbury Rd, Burwood

Thursday, 31 July

5.00 pm

West's Wollongong Leagues Club
Hargreaves Street, Unanderra

Thursday, 31 July

4.30 pm

Trades Hall, Devonshire House
Ground Level, 406 King Street, Newcastle

Monday, 4 August

4.30 pm

Blacktown Workers Club (Wattle Room)
55 Campbell Street, Blacktown

2.5% IS NOT ENOUGH

In February this year, the IEU made the salaries claim of 5% per annum and additional superannuation for all support staff and maintenance and outdoor staff. Prior to the awards' expiry on 30 June 2008, an interim 2.5% increase was secured for support staff in diocesan schools and maintenance and outdoor staff in all Catholic schools.

The IEU has accepted this increase because it is an interim, no-strings attached down-payment of 2.5% except that it will be recognised in the final settlement. The Union remains free to pursue its stated salaries and conditions claim.

What is the Government doing?

Support staff and general assistants in government schools, with whom our wages are typically benchmarked, received an offer of 2.5% in full settlement of their claim. This has been rejected and a special case will be heard before the NSW Industrial Relations Commission in September and October of this year.

It is understood that government school support staff are due to give evidence in this matter. The Union representing these members, the Public Service Association (PSA), is seeking 6.5% per annum over three years.

Despite some differences in the two claims, the IEU will not accept any outcome that falls below any settlement or decision in respect of the PSA claim for staff doing similar work.

What does this claim mean for Catholic Independent schools?

Maintenance and outdoor staff in all Catholic schools are covered by the same award. They therefore have received the 2.5% interim increase and are involved in the same negotiations.

There is a separate award for support staff in Catholic Independent schools and this expires on 5 October 2008 with a 'no extra' claims provision extending until 31 December 2008. These members have therefore not received the 2.5%, however the claim for the total percentage increases and conditions is the same.

Therefore, it is important that all members receive information about the claim and have the opportunity to provide feedback about their own priorities.

CONDITIONS CLAIM

The Catholic employers have largely responded to each element of the conditions claim by either refusing it, or arguing that it remains a matter to be negotiated with each individual diocesan employer. The IEU does not accept these responses and is preparing to formally respond prior to the negotiating meetings scheduled in late July. The key conditions claim is outlined below:

- Additional Superannuation
- Improved Long Service Leave entitlements to two weeks per year after ten years
- Removal of the cap of 154 days on the accumulation of sick leave
- Review of staffing levels in regional dioceses including the appointment of senior clerical staff to all schools
- Review and recognition of support staff roles (e.g. Finance and IT). Also clarification of criteria for Laboratory Assistants to Level 5 classification
- A range of other improvements to award provisions.

Job Security

At the first negotiating meeting, the IEU conveyed to Catholic employers the immense difficulties faced by support staff, particularly school assistants, where they are engaged on a succession of temporary contracts lacking any degree of permanency. The IEU noted the process undertaken by one diocesan employer in recent years where a 'snapshot' was taken of the hours and a proportion of those hours were offered to employees as permanent hours. The IEU continues to press for a regular process by which a core of permanent hours will be granted to these members by each diocesan employer.

EMPLOYERS' PROPOSALS

It is disappointing that a number of employer proposals seek to diminish or remove existing entitlements, including:

- The reduction of minimum start provisions for all casual employees
- Restriction in the payment of the medication allowance to only employees with ongoing responsibilities
- Variations to cap the payment of travelling expenses.

The Union has rejected these proposals on behalf of members.

Further details on these issues will be discussed at the meetings. **Be sure your school is well represented.**