

NewsExtra

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NSW Christian Schools General Staff Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2020-2023 Vote YES

Who does the MEA cover?

The *NSW Christian Schools General Staff Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2020-2023* (MEA) covers general employees in over 40 NSW Christian schools. General employee means classroom support staff, school admin staff, preschool/childcare staff, school operational staff and others.

Key improvements under the MEA are as follows:

- **A 13% pay rises over four years for all employees, including an initial increase of 4% from February 2020.** These increases are well above normal inflation and were agreed in response to the IEU claim for additional pay rises based on comparison with support staff rates in other Christian schools and recent NSW public sector school support staff pay rises.
- **Flexible working arrangements clause** – this clause is now much more detailed in relation to the procedure if an employee seeks to change their working arrangements because of carer's arrangements (for example caring for a child of school age or younger) or for other prescribed reasons (such as being over 55 years). The employer is now obliged to try to genuinely accommodate the employee's request and should also consider other options to meet the employee's needs.
- **Inclusion of casual conversion clause** – a long term regular casual employee can apply to be employed on a full time or part time basis.
- **Penalty for insufficient notice of resignation** – the debt due to the school is now limited to one week if the employee resigns without giving the required notice.
- **Graduate pay** – the MEA provides a clearer progression structure for graduates other than nurses. Under the previous structure, it was not explicit how a graduate progressed from Level 5 (new graduate) to Level 6 (graduate with significant relevant work experience). This is now specifically set out in Clause 16.2 (d).

Change to personal/carer's leave

Personal/carer's leave will now accrue progressively during each year of service and will not be available up front in each year. The Union opposed this in negotiations but was told that the employers strongly wished to pursue this change. Any employee who runs short of personal/carer's leave as a result of this change should contact the Union for assistance. Note also that an employee may ask for personal/carer's leave to be advanced in the first year.

The Union did achieve a broadening of the circumstances for which an employee may take personal/carer's leave (unexpected personal emergency affecting the employee is now included) and a relaxation of the requirement to produce a medical certificate to cover absences.

Union recommendation

The Union has been advised that schools will conduct a vote of employees covered by the MEA in the first week of March. In order for the MEA to go to the Fair Work Commission for approval, a majority of employees who vote must vote in favour of the MEA. The MEA will be in place for four years, that is until the end of 2023.

Notwithstanding the change to personal/carer's leave accrual, which is less beneficial, **the Union recommends members vote "YES"** in the MEA vote because of the significant pay rises on offer and other improvements.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Union Organiser if you would like more information. Please also share this information with colleagues and encourage them to vote.

A final word

The IEU supports members. Invite your colleagues to join here: <http://www.ieu.asn.au/join-page>

