

NEWS EXTRA

Independent Schools **IEU CLAIM for NEW MEAs**

Late last year over 350 NSW and ACT independent schools issued Notice of Employee Representational Rights as the first step in the commencement of bargaining for new teacher and support staff multi-enterprise agreements (MEAs).

The Union has met with the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) to discuss our claim and we have further meetings scheduled. The Union is seeking three-year agreements which would commence from 1 January 2021.

Pay rises

We have claimed annual pay rises for teachers of not less than 2.5% per annum in NSW. For teachers in ACT schools, the claim is not less than 3% per annum which is the increase received by teachers in ACT government and Catholic systemic schools).

For support staff, the union is seeking pay rises of 2.5% per annum plus additional increases to match the Department of Education 'pay equity' increases for support staff in government schools last year.

Teacher claims

Standards Model MEA claims

Access to the Band 3 (Experienced Teacher) classification in Standards schools should be easier. Many teachers are reluctant to apply for Band 3 because of the difficulties in the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority (ISTAA) process and the upfront fee that some schools require teachers to pay themselves at the start of the process or pay back at a later date. The process should be made much simpler and alternate pathways should also be offered, such as relevant postgraduate study.

The Band 2 Proficient pay rate which is currently \$99,000 should be increased – it is well below the current top pay step for Proficient teachers in government schools of \$105,000.

Teachers should not have to wait for pay rises as a result of Band progression. Under the current MEA, teachers can only progress from Band 1 Graduate to Band 2 Proficient on two occasions a year, in February and July. This progression should occur from the next pay period. Pay rises as a result of progression to Band 3 should apply from 1 January each year, as should the annual percentage pay increases.

The ISTAA fee should be paid by the employer in all cases and the teacher should not be required to reimburse the cost which is currently over \$1000.

Hybrid Model MEA claims

The Band 2 Proficient pay scale currently has six incremental steps which should be reduced to five steps to allow teachers a quicker progression to the top of Band 2. A shorter scale is consistent with NSW government and Catholic systemic school pay models.

The Band 3 Experienced Teacher salary rate in the Hybrid MEA should be increased by \$2000 to match the Band 3 rate in the Standards Model MEA as the same ISTAA process and criteria apply in each case.

Teachers should not have to wait for pay rises as a result of Band progression. Currently teachers can only progress from Band 1 Graduate to Band 2 Proficient on two occasions a year, in February and July. Pay rises as a result of progression to Band 3 should apply from 1 January each year, as should the annual percentage pay increases.

The ISTAA fee should be paid by the employer in all cases and the teacher should not be required to reimburse the cost which is currently over \$1000.



Other teacher claims

The 1 January school service date should be abolished for new teachers. A small number of schools appoint and pay new teachers from 1 January, not the first day of required attendance in the school year. The problem is that when '1 January' teachers finish up at the end of Term 4 or when they resign, sometimes many years later, the teacher is only paid to 31 December and not the start of the next school year. This can cause financial hardship to the teacher and often there are no pay records to actually demonstrate the teacher was in fact paid from 1 January when they started. The vast majority of schools appoint new teachers from the first day of Term 1 or the week before the school year starts and this practice is to be preferred.

Schools should publish a school calendar no later than Week 2 of Term 1 including all meetings, major events, whole school assessment tasks and required attendances to assist teachers in planning the school year and to identify pressure points. If circumstances require, the calendar could be changed with reasonable notice.

The union is seeking that secondary schools publish timetables that identify the face to face teaching load of full time teachers. Schools must nominate the number of teaching hours of a full time teacher as this number is used to calculate the pay for part time teachers. However, teachers often do not know what the figure is. If the figure were published, it would create greater transparency for part time teachers and full time teachers who are told they are 'underloaded'.

Year 12 teachers should not be allocated replacement classes after Year 12 leave until after the relevant Year 12 exam; after that date teachers should only be allocated timetabled classes for up to 33% of their Year 12 load or supervisory duties for up to 50% of the Year 12 classes. This is a standard provision that applies to teachers in government and Catholic schools as well as many independent schools and reflects the heavy workload of Year 12 teachers in Terms 1-3.

Support staff specific claims

Personal/carer's leave should be increased from the current standard of 10 days per annum (the legal minimum) to 15 days per annum, in line with teachers' personal/carer's leave. The evidence requirements should also be brought in line with teachers, so that a medical certificate may only be required by the school in some circumstances.

Long service leave should also be increased from the current rate of 1.05 weeks per year. This is well below teachers' long service leave and below that applying to support staff in government and Catholic schools, including Catholic independent schools.

Review of boarding house staff working conditions – hours of work and staff arrangements in the MEA are confusing for boarding staff.

General claims for all employees

Emergency disaster leave of not less than five days per annum (where a staff member is unable to attend work because of a natural disaster affecting them or the workplace). This has been recently agreed in Catholic systemic schools in NSW.

Paid parental leave for the primary care giver (extending the current maternity leave entitlement to fathers). Catholic schools provide 14 weeks paid parental leave to an employee legally entitled to take parental leave in respect of the birth of a child if the employee will be the primary carer. This would apply to the very small number of fathers who are primary carers of infants and also makes clearer the entitlement for same sex couples.

Overnight Allowance for support staff and teachers required to attend school camps – the union is seeking the modern award allowance of around \$50 per night for employees required to attend overnight camps or excursions.

Access to arbitration of disputes before the Fair Work Commission. Currently the Fair Work Commission can only make recommendations not binding orders to resolve a dispute even where a school is clearly in breach of the MEA or National Employment Standards. This is a standard workplace right available to the vast majority of teachers and support staff employed across Australia.

Claim for community service leave (up to five days of paid leave) – the union is seeking a facilitative provision so that employers can approve staff to take leave for example as part of the State Emergency Service or Volunteer Fire Brigade.

Union member entitlements – the IEU Rep at school should have a specific right in the MEA to email members on work emails about union business – some employers dispute this. In addition, the long-standing practice of union members attending union training in school time on the basis that the union reimburses the school for relief should be an MEA entitlement. Members elected to the state-wide Executive of the union (which meets for approximately 10 days per year) should also have the right to be released on a similar basis.

Next steps

Union Organisers will be visiting schools and/or contacting union Reps to encourage Chapters to meet to endorse the claim. IEU Organisers are also available to address schools by electronic means.

The union is of course aware that this is a very difficult environment for consultation to occur. However, the AIS has insisted they wish bargaining to proceed at this time. The union therefore requests that Reps either hold a meeting to endorse the motion or circulate it by email to union members for endorsement.

Please add any other issues relating to the claim or any other issues of concern to members at the moment.



Authorised by Mark Northam, Secretary, Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch
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PROPOSED CHAPTER MOTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS NEW MEAS

CHAPTER MOTION

This meeting of members at:.....

in:..... endorse the claims as set out in this NewsExtra.

Date of meeting/email vote:.....

Vote: For

Against

Comments.....
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Any other issues.....
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Please hold a meeting as soon as possible or circulate to members via email and email motion to ieu@ieu.asn.au (Attn: Zuzana) by Friday 3 April 2020.



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