

Thursday 28 April 2022

Catholic school staff endorse public sector teachers' strike

The Independent Education Union of Australia expresses its full support for the NSW Teachers Federation and its members who are taking industrial action on Wednesday 4 May. The IEU also supports the Federation's bans on implementing new government policies.

"It's time for meaningful action now," said IEUA NSW/ACT Secretary Mark Northam.

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents more than 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in non-government schools as well as early childhood teachers.

"Teachers and support staff across the government and non-government sectors are dedicated professionals who have been pushed to breaking point," Northam said. "The sharply rising cost of living, lack of real wages growth, ever-increasing workloads and global pandemic have led to crippling staff shortages. Our members are exhausted and burnt out."

The IEU is in the process of negotiating new enterprise agreements for its 18,000 members in Catholic diocesan schools. The union's campaign, Hear Our Voice, calls on employers to:

- Pay teachers what they're worth (an increase of 10% to 15% over two years)
- Give support staff a fair deal (pay parity with colleagues in public sector schools)
- Let teachers teach – cut paperwork
- Allow time to plan
- End staff shortages.

To take industrial action, the IEU is bound by federal legislation requiring a formal, complex and time-consuming balloting of its members in Catholic diocesan schools. But this process is well under way.

"The union has obtained a Protected Action Ballot Order in the Fair Work Commission to enable balloting of members," Northam said. "This will proceed during May and, pending its outcome, will authorise similar industrial action in late May."

"We urge employers to Hear Our Voice," Northam said. "It's time for a fair deal for teachers and support staff – it's the only way to attract and retain the right people to fix the critical shortages and guarantee teaching and learning for our students now and into the future."

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch President Chris Wilkinson said: "For too long the needs of teachers and support staff have been ignored, and now increasing workloads, growing class sizes, lack of casual staff and constant data collection requirements have hit crisis point. School staff deserve pay and conditions that reflect the complex work they do each and every day.

"We stand with our colleagues in the NSW Teachers Federation. We all need our voices to be heard."

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The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.

Authorised by Mark Northam, Secretary, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch