

# NewsExtra

November 2020

## Catholic Independent Schools – Model A Enterprise Agreement Bargaining Update

Your school is one of a small group of Catholic independent schools, bargaining as a separate group for new Teachers and Support Staff Multi-Enterprise Agreements (MEAs).

The schools are:

Brigidine College St Ives  
Mater Dei  
Mount St Benedict College  
Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta  
St Scholastica's College  
St Vincent's College (teachers only)  
St Joseph's College Hunters Hill

Santa Sabina College is seeking its own enterprise agreement (EA) but is currently on an EA similar to the current Model A MEAs.

The schools issued a *Notice of employee representational rights* to their employees in late October 2020 to commence bargaining for new enterprise agreements to apply from 2021 (current agreements expire on 31 December 2020). The Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (CCER) has been appointed as their bargaining representative.

The first bargaining meeting between the union and CCER was on 17 November 2020. However, at the meeting CCER advised the union that the schools did not intend to make new MEAs and would only make an interim offer for a pay rise of 2.28% to be paid by administrative action at the beginning of 2021 (the exact date has not been specified). CCER was unable to advise when the schools would be prepared to commence bargaining. The IEU has asked the CCER to confirm this position in writing.

The IEU has also sought clarification of the position of Santa Sabina College.

### **Why are the schools doing this?**

The pay offer of 2.28% reflects the pay increase contained in new MEAs applying to 30 other Catholic independent schools. These MEAs also contain other improvements in conditions which are reflected in the union's claim. The union had assumed these improved conditions would be agreed for this group of seven schools as well, in accordance with previous practice, but this has not occurred.

It appears that the Model A schools represented by CCER although commencing the bargaining process, are now refusing to make new MEAs because the Association of Independent Schools (the AIS) has also refused to make new MEAs for its 220 members. This change of position has occurred in the last four weeks, since the schools signalled they would start bargaining for new EAs in late October. A key difference between the Model A bargaining and the AIS bargaining however is that the AIS is representing **more than 200 schools** and has stated that it is impossible to reach a common position across all those schools. Each independent school is making its own offer to employees (see the IEU website for details) based on its own circumstances.

The CCER claims it is unable to negotiate **for seven schools** (eight including Santa Sabina), other than to make a common pay offer.

Other schools have not felt so constrained. The union has just made a new three year agreement with 47 Christian schools in NSW and the AIS is seeking to make a new three year enterprise agreement for 10 Christian schools.

### **What about the money?**

CCER have stated that they consider the 2.28% outcome represents the going rate in the independent school sector. Many AIS schools have yet to determine their pay increases for 2021 but a significant number have committed to the 2.5% claimed by the IEU. These include Kincoppal and Loreto Kirribilli. Others have offered less than 2.5%.

However, the union considers an interim pay rise is not good enough and the schools should seriously consider the totality of the union's claim and make new MEAs for three years. It is not good enough to refuse to bargain just because the AIS is not bargaining.

### **How does this fit with the Fair Work rules about bargaining?**

**It doesn't.**

Employers and unions are supposed to meet at reasonable times, disclose relevant information, respond to proposals of other bargaining representatives in a timely manner and not engage in unfair conduct that undermines collective bargaining. This abandonment of central negotiations across independent schools is unprecedented and has not occurred in the period since awards conditions in independent schools were first established by the union in 1970.

It is also the case that CCER has not indicated when it will be in a position to bargain.

### **The IEU claim**

The IEU claim is attached at the end of this NewsExtra.

### **IEU Chapter support**

Please hold an urgent IEU Chapter meeting to consider and endorse the attached Chapter motion. Please encourage any colleagues who are not yet union members to join the union. After your meeting email a copy of the Motion back to the union no later than **Wednesday 2 December 2020**. If you do not have one already, you should also elect an IEU Chapter Committee of at least four members (including at least one support staff member) to meet and discuss with your Principal/Head the school's position in relation to 2021 pay rises.

Your IEU Organiser will be happy to attend the Chapter meeting and the meeting with your Principal.

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



# CHAPTER MOTION

The \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of the IEU supports the IEU claim as attached to this NewsExtra.

Further the Chapter calls for an immediate commitment by this school to commence bargaining for new **Model A Multi-Enterprise Agreements**.

Date of the meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Number For

Number Against

Any further comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please **email the motion** to the IEU office

(Attn: Tania): [ieu@ieu.asn.au](mailto:ieu@ieu.asn.au)

by **Wednesday 2 December 2020**.

