

Thursday 19 May 2022

### **Catholic school staff set to take strike action**

More than 17,000 teachers and support staff in 540 Catholic diocesan schools throughout NSW and the ACT have voted overwhelmingly for the right to take protected industrial action in support of five key claims for their new enterprise agreement.

The IEU Executive has endorsed a full-day stop work on Friday 27 May. Rallies will be held throughout NSW and the ACT (see attached list).

“Taking protected industrial action is no small thing – we don’t take it lightly,” said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Mark Northam. “Teachers and support staff across both the government and non-government sectors are dedicated professionals pushed to breaking point. Schools have been running on goodwill, but it is rapidly evaporating.”

For the right to take protected action, IEU members participated in a formal balloting process complying with strict federal laws. It was run across all 11 Catholic dioceses by an external agent – and all 11 Catholic dioceses sent a strong message that it’s time for action.

“The sharply rising cost of living, lack of real wages growth, ever-increasing workloads and the pandemic have caused crippling staff shortages in Catholic schools – our members are exhausted and burnt out,” Northam said.

“Catholic school employers are following the NSW Government’s lead in limiting pay rises to 2.04%, a short-sighted approach that has resulted in the current staffing crisis. Teachers are leaving the profession and graduates are not entering it.”

The IEU has been negotiating a new enterprise agreement for its members in Catholic diocesan schools throughout NSW and the ACT since January, calling 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 (two more hours release from face-to-face teaching per week)
- End staff shortages.

“Teachers are totally exhausted, they can give no more,” said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch President Chris Wilkinson. “With the chronic shortage of casuals, teachers and support staff are being asked to take extra lessons and double classes on top of their teaching load, which takes away precious planning and preparation time. We urge employers to listen to teachers and support staff, hear our voices and pay us what we deserve.”

Northam said: “During the pandemic, parents and the community realised how vital teachers and support staff are, and just how much work they do. Now we urge employers to Hear Our Voice.”

### **Contacts**

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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**



# RALLY & MARCH FRIDAY 27 MAY

## **Sydney**

**10am** Sydney Town Hall square, George/Bathurst Streets (march to Polding House on Liverpool St)

## **Canberra**

**10am** Thoroughbred Park, Silks Room, Level 2  
1 Randwick Rd, Lyneham

## **Newcastle**

**10am** Wickham Park, cnr Maitland Rd & Albert St, Wickham (march to Catholic Schools Office on Hunter St)

## **Wollongong**

**10am** MacCabe Park, Burelli St  
(march to Catholic Education Office on Market St)

## **Bathurst**

**10am** The Bistro, Paddy's Hotel, Gilmour St, Kelso  
(march to Catholic Education Office on Gilmour St)

## **Dubbo**

**10.30am** Victoria Park Rotunda, Darling St  
(march to Catholic Education Office on Brisbane St)

## **Lennox Head**

**10am** Club Lennox,  
10 Stewart St, Lennox Head

## **Port Macquarie**

**9am** Westport Club  
25 Buller St, Port Macquarie

## **Tamworth**

**10am** West Tamworth Leagues Club,  
Ken Chillingworth Rm, 58 Phillip St, West Tamworth

## **Wagga Wagga**

**10.30am** Romano's Hotel, 81 Fitzmaurice St  
(march to Catholic Education Office on Tarcutta St)

**We'll have t-shirts waiting for you**



**Join us!** Only members can take protected action, so urge your non-member colleagues to join. New members can take protected action with you if they join before the stop work.

**[ieu.asn.au](http://ieu.asn.au) #HearOurVoice**