

Friday 11 November 2022

Catholic school staff to stop work on Tuesday 15 November

Staff in hundreds of Catholic schools throughout NSW and the ACT will stop work for one hour – from 8.30am to 9.30am – on Tuesday 15 November. Numerous others will stop for one hour [at different times](#). This is legally protected industrial action.

“Negotiations for a new enterprise agreement began in early February,” said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary Carol Matthews. “It is now November and employers are no closer to resolving pay issues.”

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch, which represents more than 32,000 teachers and support staff, has written to Catholic employers, most recently on 25 October, to express members’ frustration about the slow progress of negotiations. The employers have not responded.

Today the NSW Industrial Relations Commission handed down a decision to grant teachers in NSW government schools pay rises of just 2.29% in 2022 and 2.53% in 2023. Catholic employers have sat on their hands awaiting this decision – while they are not legally bound by it, they have long imposed the NSW Government’s wages policy on Catholic school teachers.

“The IEU condemns these derisory increases – they are not enough for IEU members nor for members of the NSW Teachers Federation,” Matthews said.

“Teachers’ salaries have been falling relative to other professions for more than a decade now and this year’s intensifying cost-of-living pressures only make matters worse. Salaries for support staff in Catholic schools are below those in government schools, yet Catholic employers are still dragging the chain on pay parity.”

Teachers and support staff have been pushed to breaking point not only by uncompetitive salaries but also by unmanageable workloads and the lingering pandemic.

The union is calling for practical action to reduce the unnecessary administrative burden on teachers to allow sufficient time for proper lesson planning.

“Our members are tired and frustrated with their employers’ failure to respect them by negotiating in a fair and timely manner – they won’t even discuss simple, sector-wide measures we know could mitigate workload pressure,” Matthews said.

“Teachers care deeply about their students and understand the inconvenience next week’s brief stopwork will cause. They are left with no option but to take action in an attempt to bring their employers to the negotiating table.

“Staff shortages are already severe, and with COVID rearing its ugly head again, a response from employers is more urgent than ever.”

Contacts

Carol Matthews, Acting Secretary, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch, 0418 272 902
Media: Monica Crouch, 0411 645 751 monica@ieu.asn.au

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 Carol Matthews, Acting Secretary, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch