

NewsExtra

October 2020

URGENT

Enterprise Agreement Bargaining Update

The union sent out at the end of last term an Enterprise Agreement Bargaining Update explaining recent developments in bargaining for the new 2021 enterprise agreements for teachers and support staff in over 200 independent schools. Your current multi-enterprise agreement (MEA) expires in January 2021 and all parties expected that new agreements would be made well before February 2021, when the next pay rise is due. Your school has appointed the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) as its bargaining representative for these negotiations.

What has happened?

The union was advised in September by the AIS that schools did not want to make new enterprise agreements for 2021 and that pay rises in 2021, if any, would be determined on a school-by-school discretionary basis. The AIS has suggested that IEU Reps would need to discuss with their school Principal/Head the proposed increase for staff in their school. At the same time, the AIS has claimed that "AISNSW member schools are overwhelmingly supportive of the MEA structure and the intention is to preserve the structure moving forward".

Since then, some schools have announced varying pay rises for 2021.

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.

The AIS is the bargaining representative for over 200 schools. However, it has advised it will not meet with the union until November and does not know what pay rises schools will offer. It has not responded to the union's claims (provided in March 2020) for new enterprise agreements and schools are not proposing to make new enterprise agreements to apply next year.

This abandonment of central negotiations across independent schools is unprecedented and has not occurred in the period since awards in independent schools were first established by the union in 1970. Even when schools tried to bypass the union in 2006, because of member support, the union quickly got central negotiations back on foot and we reached a sector-wide settlement for those enterprise agreements.

Why are schools taking this position?

Schools are claiming their position is a response to COVID-19, economic uncertainty and recent changes in funding disadvantaging a minority of schools. They say this makes it impossible to make a common pay offer across the sector.

However, the AIS is making NO pay offer at all. Many schools are not facing enrolment issues and most schools are not disadvantaged by the recent government funding change (called DMI, direct measure of income). Overall, the government states the new funding mechanism will deliver more funding to non-government schools (\$3.4 billion extra over 2020-2029) – not less. Government funding is anticipated to be indexed by at least 3% in 2021 and all schools are quarantined from a negative impact from DMI until 2022. The government is also providing independent schools with an additional \$1.3 billion in the Choice and Affordability Fund over 2020-2029 to assist in the transition to the new DMI funding – payments commenced in July this year.

Note that staff in other non-government schools will get pay rises in 2021. Teachers in Christian schools have been offered pay rises of 2.3% and staff in Catholic schools will receive pay rises of 2.28%.

And, of course, the workload and pressures on teachers and other staff in independent schools are constantly increasing.

The IEU claim

For full details of the IEU claim please see the IEU website.

As a first step towards meeting these claims, we are asking all independent schools to commit to a pay increase of 2.5% for teachers and support staff in 2021, either payable in full from February, or in two instalments in February and July.

In the meantime, the existing MEAs will continue to apply with 2020 rates of pay and current conditions.

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 Chapter motion back to the union no later than the end of Week 3 of Term 4 (**Friday 30 October 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). We would like representatives of the Chapter to meet with your Principal/Head to discuss 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>



Authorised by Mark Northam, Secretary, Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch
The Briscoe Building 485 – 501 Wattle St Ultimo NSW 2007
P 02 8202 8900 E ieu@ieu.asn.au | www.ieu.asn.au

CHAPTER MOTION

The _____ Chapter of the IEU supports the IEU claim as set out in this NewsExtra and as previously endorsed by IEU members.

Further, the Chapter calls for an immediate commitment by this school to pay rises of 2.5% in 2021.

Date of the meeting: _____

Number For

Number Against

Any further comments: _____

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

(Attn: Zuzana): ieu@ieu.asn.au

by Friday 30 October 2020

