

NewsExtra

February 2022

Catholic Systemic Schools EA 2022

The main enterprise agreement (EA) that applies to employees in Catholic systemic schools in NSW and the ACT expired on 31 December 2021. Our claim for the new enterprise agreement, as endorsed by members last year, is as follows:

Expansion of coverage of the EA

All staff employed in schools should have enterprise agreement protection – that includes staff in early learning centres and out of school hours care (OSHC) attached to schools, counsellors, boarding house staff and business managers employed in schools.

Pay rises

The union is seeking a 10-15 percent pay rise over two years for all members in line with the claim by the NSW Teachers Federation on behalf of teachers in NSW government schools. The increase that will be paid by dioceses of 2.04 percent was not agreed by the union and is not enough. Note that teachers in the ACT have traditionally received the same pay rises as teachers in ACT government schools, so they will not receive the 2.04 percent increase and the settlement in the ACT may be different from that in NSW.

Parental leave

Parental leave conditions in Catholic systemic schools should match those applying in NSW government schools, including the new model of an additional 12 weeks of paid parental leave for the father/partner to be the primary carer, to be taken in the 12 months following the birth, provided the mother is not taking parental leave at the same time. In the case of concurrent parental leave, where the employee (usually the father) is taking leave at the same time as the primary carer (the mother), the leave should be increased to two weeks rather than two weeks of which one week is deducted from personal/carer's leave.

Specific teacher issues

Teacher shortages

More effective strategies need to be developed to deal with teacher shortages in both metropolitan and regional areas. In order to attract and retain teachers, it is essential that there is greater job security for casual and temporary teachers and that workload issues are addressed. Rural incentives need to be increased to match those in the public sector. Casual teacher pay rates should no longer be capped at Band 2 (Proficient) Level 1.

Professional time to do the job

The union has been calling for some years for a reduced teaching load to provide teachers more time to plan, prepare and consult with colleagues. Release time should be increased for both primary and secondary teachers by at least two hours each week.

Let teachers teach

Tasks that do not support teaching and learning outcomes should be removed from teachers' work. IEU Officers are raising these issues in negotiations with dioceses.

Promotions positions

Rates of pay and conditions of all promotions positions should be protected in enterprise agreements. Release for Coordinators should be increased and there should be a cap on meeting times for Coordinators.

Specific support staff issues

Support staff pay parity

Support staff in the school administrative services and classroom and learning support services streams in Catholic systemic schools are paid less than employees in corresponding classifications in NSW government schools. This disparity must be fixed now.

Support staff conditions

Support staff have a lower rate of accrual of long service leave after 10 years than teachers. The union has consistently sought that this be increased, and we will need the strong support of members to achieve this.

Staff who are experienced in a similar position in a government or other non-government school should not start on the lowest pay step for the classification.

Improved job security for special needs and learning support assistants

Many staff still have ongoing temporary appointments despite years of employment.

Next steps

After a slow start, dioceses finally agreed to meet with the union on 2 February to commence negotiations. At this meeting, the union went through our claim in detail and the reasons for it. Notices of employee representational rights should be issued by dioceses to employees in coming days, signalling the formal start of bargaining.

If we are to be successful in this claim, it is crucial that we have maximum member support and an IEU Rep in every school to facilitate communications with members. All IEU members are encouraged to approach any colleagues in their workplace who have not yet joined the union. Members in IEU Chapters where there is no Rep are encouraged to meet to elect a Rep. The IEU Organiser for your school would be happy to attend (in person or by Zoom) and assist this process and discuss the union's claim.

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

