

## Progress at last - Catholic systemic schools

Following 15 months of negotiations that have been stalled since late last year, the IEU is finally seeing progress in the bargaining for a new enterprise agreement for teachers and support staff in NSW and ACT Catholic systemic schools.

The IEU notified a bargaining dispute to the Fair Work Commission in February about the slow progress of the negotiations for a new Catholic Systemic Schools Enterprise Agreement. After two preliminary conferences before the Commission, our dispute was listed for conciliation before the Commission on Friday 17 March 2023.

*Left: The IEU team after negotiations at the Fair Work Commissions*

[More details P3](#)

### We support the 'yes' campaign

IEU members and organisers showed their support for a 'yes' vote in the forthcoming referendum for a Voice to Parliament at IEU Council on 18 March. Pictured are IEU Secretary Mark Northam, President Tina Ruello and Deputy Secretary Carol Matthews. See more p3.



### Let's put the industrial relations back into industrial relations

**Step 1** – Remove the arbitrarily imposed NSW salary cap.

**Step 2** – Empower the NSW Industrial Relations Commission to hear a special work value case for teachers.

**Step 3** – Implement the determinations reached and restore the teaching profession to its rightful place as a career of choice.

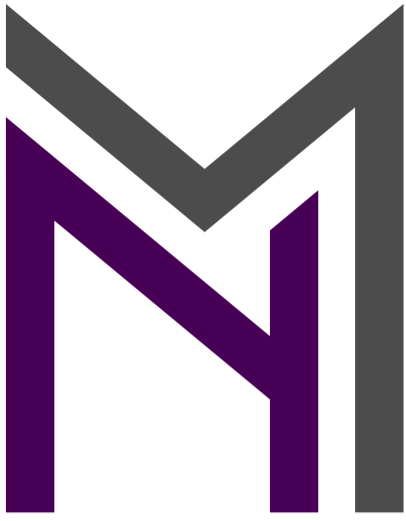
The notion that a salary cap is a useful device has been discredited. Indeed, a full bench of the Fair Work Commission (in awarding rail workers pay increases) indicated that the NSW State Government has no "logical basis for its public sector wages cap".

They ruled that Sydney Trains and NSW Trains failed to put forward "any rationale, let alone a persuasive one" for the limits (the cap) imposed under its 2022 wages policy.

The 'cap' has been a disaster for education and will take some years to remedy. It won't be a quick fix. Meaningful and independent industrial relations is the way forward.

**Mark Northam** Secretary





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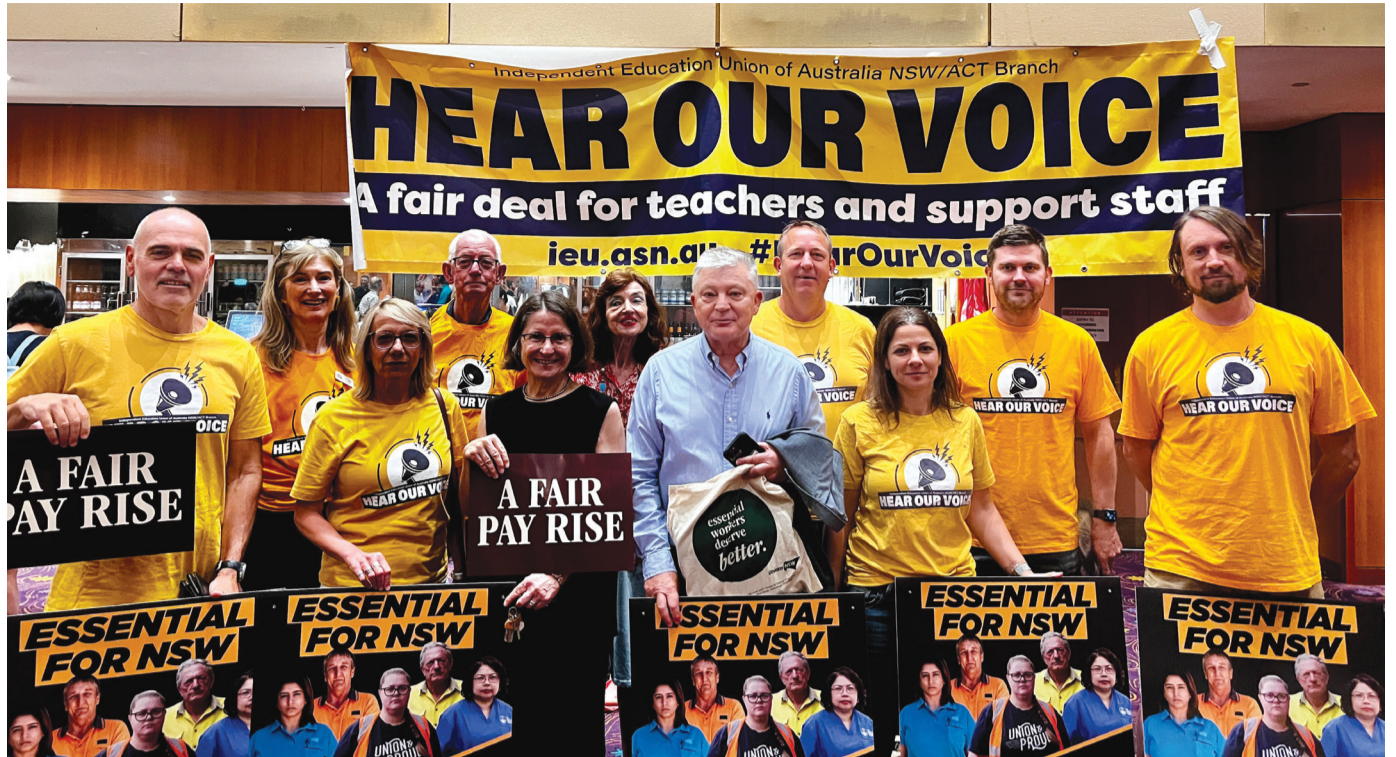
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*This publication was produced on the unceded lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the lands where we live, learn and work, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.*



# Essential Workers Campaign Barnstorm

## Save teachers from sinking into 'pedagogical quicksand'

**Union members representing essential workers from all walks of life gathered at Revesby Workers Club on Sunday, 19 March for a campaign barnstorm to voice their opposition to the Perrotet government.**

In the lead up to the election, the Essential Workers Campaign, spearheaded by Unions NSW, held a series of actions highlighting the way essential workers such as teachers, nurses, transport workers, early childhood educators, paramedics and many others have been short-changed by the NSW Liberal Government.

The Barnstorm was attended by a significant contingent of IEU members and organisers. Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey said essential workers had given their "utmost" during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Government had "patted them on the back with one hand while putting the other hand in their back pocket".

Many essential workers spoke at the meeting, including IEU President, Tina Ruello. Tina explained how Catholic employers had been relying on the artificially imposed NSW Liberal Government pay cap to avoid fair negotiations with Catholic teachers and support staff.

Tina said teachers, especially early career teachers, were exhausted and in danger of sliding into "pedagogical quicksand" of overwork and under pay.

"Our employer will not move on our pay and conditions until the public sector does.

Schools "may have a Catholic badge, but there is nothing charitable or merciful or just about our employer when it comes to paying teachers and support staff what we deserve and what we're worth.

"We are fighting our employer for every dollar. Thank God for our union, the IEU, which has won every pay and working conditions claim. I have 35 years of experience to vouch for that.

"Support staff have it tough in Catholic systemic schools. They perform the same level of work as their counterparts in state government schools. But they're paid less. Considerably.

"The situation in schools is past serious; it's dangerous. There is a teacher shortage. We have known this for years.

"Combining classes means a class of 30 now blows out to 60 or 70. This compromises duty of care. The teacher to student ratio is untenable. There are teachers standing in between classrooms where online learning is supposed to be happening.

"Early career teachers are called on out of goodwill – for the love of it – to take on extracurricular activities because there is no one left to take them. They soon realise that it is just not worth it. There is no extra pay or job security attached to debating or Duke of Edinburgh or dance troupe.

"Being a teacher is just too hard. The pay and conditions are poor.

"Young people are not signing up for education degrees and those that do, give up halfway. Those who do complete degrees, enter schools with enthusiasm and vision. Of those graduates, 50 per cent will leave within five years. I have witnessed this.

"Unsustainable workloads and administrative compliance and a freeze on wages all come together to ruin a great career and great profession."





# It's union business

**Mark Northam**  
Secretary



**A First Nations Voice is a historical step towards true reconciliation. The Voice will provide a simple, fair and unifying message.**

The IEU supports a 'yes' referendum outcome to enshrine a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution.

The Government's planned referendum, to be held later this year, provides an historic opportunity for the Australian community to embrace the true spirit of reconciliation.

Our First Nations people deserve to be heard and listened to on laws that directly impact them and their communities.

Our union has previously committed our support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart when it was developed in 2017. It's now time for the next step – a successful 'yes' referendum outcome needed to enshrine a constitutional voice.

Australian unions have a long tradition of fighting to support the rights of First Nations peoples.

The IEU has proudly stood in support of greater recognition and respect for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, within their workplaces and the broader community.

Unions believe in greater consultation, representation and inclusion. A First Nations Voice aligns with these core values and would provide a permanent line of communication and engagement between Indigenous people and the Government.

A set of principles for the Voice has been developed by the Referendum Working Group and clearly details how the Voice will operate within a simple and well-considered model.

The IEU represents many First Nations workers in schools, Indigenous community colleges, training institutions and early childhood education centres. These members, along with all Indigenous people, deserve a voice on proposed laws and policies that affect them.

For too long Parliament has imposed laws on Indigenous people without proper consultation. A Voice to Parliament is a common-sense and modest proposal.

The United States, New Zealand, Canada and many other nations have constitutional recognition of their Indigenous people. A mature and developed democracy such as Australia has no excuse to fail this long overdue change.

A Voice will help tackle discrimination and inequality. It will help refocus the collective effort needed to Close The Gap of disadvantage, including urgent action on failing education targets.

The IEU proudly commits to supporting our First Nations members and their communities by supporting the 'Yes' campaign.

The Voice is a body that will:

- provide independent advice to Parliament and Government
- be chosen by First Nations people based on the wishes of local communities
- be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- be empowering, community led, inclusive, respectful, culturally informed and gender balanced, and include youth
- be accountable and transparent, and
- work alongside existing organisations and traditional structures.

The Voice will not have a program delivery function, or a veto power.

### Support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart

At its AGM in October 2020 the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch passed the following motion:

"IEUA NSW/ACT Branch acknowledges the Uluru Statement from the Heart and supports a referendum for constitutional reforms to establish a First Nations voice enshrined in the constitution."

The Uluru statement takes hope and translates it into positive action, enshrining a First Nations' voice to Parliament and establishing a Makarrata Commission (meaning coming together after a struggle) to advise on agreement making and truth telling between governments and First Nations people.

### Teaching Resources

The Edmund Rice Centre has Uluru Statement from the Heart resources.

These two resource kits have been developed by the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education to assist schools and community groups to understand and raise awareness about the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

### Uluru Statement from the Heart Resource Kit for Teachers

The Resource Kit for Teachers is designed to assist teachers to introduce the Uluru Statement from the Heart to their students by raising awareness about its content and messages. It also provides information, resources, and creative activities for learning:

- background information about the uluru statement from the heart
- introductory activities and reflections for staff groups, or classes
- creative arts activities for individuals, groups or classes.

### Uluru Statement Discussion Resource Kit

The Discussion Resource Kit is designed to assist young adult and adult community groups to understand as well as raise awareness of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. It provides a series of articles, resources, and questions to stimulate group discussion.

You can download the documents from the links below: Uluru Statement from the Heart Resource Kit for Teachers ([https://assets.nationbuilder.com/erc/mailings/1089/attachments/original/Uluru\\_School\\_Resource.pdf?1664927211](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/erc/mailings/1089/attachments/original/Uluru_School_Resource.pdf?1664927211))

### Uluru Statement Discussion Resource Kit

([https://assets.nationbuilder.com/erc/pages/230/attachments/original/1664939999/Uluru\\_Discussion\\_Kit.pdf?1664939999](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/erc/pages/230/attachments/original/1664939999/Uluru_Discussion_Kit.pdf?1664939999))

It is hoped that these resource kits will act as a catalyst in developing education and raising awareness about what is meant by Voice to Parliament, Truth Telling and Treaty and to bring about justice and real reconciliation for First Nations People.

## Catholic systemic schools - productive discussions

**Carol Matthews**  
Deputy Secretary



**The IEU is pleased to be able to report that after 15 months of negotiations, we are making progress at last in the negotiations for a new Catholic Systemic Schools Enterprise Agreement.**

A dispute about the bargaining was notified by the IEU to the Fair Work Commission in February. Commissioner Ryan of the Commission conducted a conciliation of the parties on 17 March, in which the IEU was represented by barrister Leo Saunders. The union and the employers both considered these discussions were productive.

Representatives of CER and the dioceses responded to concerns raised by the union, including the following key issues.

### Length of enterprise agreement

The IEU is seeking an enterprise agreement (EA) with a shorter expiry date of 31 December 2023. This date is consistent with the end date of the award that applies to teachers in NSW government schools.

### Flow on of pay increases in government sector

Employers have committed to match percentage pay increases in NSW and ACT government teacher pay rates that might occur within the term of the EA. However, the IEU is seeking changes to make sure all types of increases that might occur before 31 December 2023 in government teacher rates (for example a lump sum payment or a flat dollar increase) are included. This would guarantee any increases that government teachers might receive if there is a change of government in NSW would flow to members in Catholic schools.

### Support staff pay

The IEU discussed in detail our concerns about the support staff pay offer. This includes the date of effect of increases, back pay, the rate for regional primary schools below 400 students and the translocation arrangements of senior administrative staff in larger schools.

### Teacher release

The IEU is seeking release time for 2023, 2024 and 2025 for teachers to become familiar with new curricula, in line with release being provided in NSW government schools. We are also seeking regular scheduled release for early career teachers and their mentors. In the ACT, we will seek to match improvements that have been offered as part of current negotiations relating to ACT Government teachers.

### Temporary employees

The IEU has sought further discussion

on the arrangements for temporary employees, including learning support staff on recurring fixed term contracts.

### Next steps

Following these productive discussions in the Commission, it was agreed that negotiations between the IEU and Catholic systemic employers would continue on three levels – central negotiations, negotiations about local diocesan issues and drafting discussions about the precise words of the EA. The IEU understands that detailed responses will be provided by employers to the IEU on these issues before the report back before the Commission on 6 April 2023.

In the meantime, members are encouraged to continue to wear yellow and liaise with their IEU Organiser for assistance in addressing workload problems at their school.



# Opening Canberra's new IEU office



A large gathering of IEU organisers, Executive and members celebrated the opening of the union's new office in Canberra recently. The IEU has a branch at Wattle Street in Sydney, as well as offices in Parramatta, Newcastle, Lismore and Canberra. The Lismore office is currently out of action due to damage from last year's major flooding (see p9) IEU Secretary Mark Northam, who participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony at Canberra, said members are welcome to visit IEU offices.



## School principals in need of support and resources

**Principals are the leaders of our schools, responsible for ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for students and teachers. However, in recent years, the demands and challenges facing school principals have increased significantly, leaving many feeling overwhelmed and unsupported. As a community, we must address the needs of principals in our schools to ensure they have the resources and support necessary to lead effectively.**

One of the biggest challenges facing school principals today is the increase in administrative tasks and paperwork. From student data management to compliance with state and federal regulations, principals are often bogged down with administrative work that takes them away from their primary focus – improving student outcomes. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges for principals, such as implementing safety protocols, addressing the mental health needs of students and staff, and managing the transition to remote learning.

To address these challenges, principals need access to resources and support that will help them manage their administrative workload and provide guidance on how to navigate the complexities of the education system. This includes training on data management, compliance, and communication, as well as access to technology tools that can streamline administrative tasks. Principals require professional development opportunities that will help them stay current with best practices in education and leadership.

In addition to administrative tasks, principals also need support in managing the diverse needs of their student population. This includes ensuring that students from all backgrounds are provided with a safe and supportive learning environment and that the unique needs of students with disabilities or mental health issues are addressed. Principals need access to resources and training on how to support these students, as well as support from school counsellors and mental health professionals.

Finally, principals need support in fostering a positive school culture that promotes student engagement and success. This includes creating a welcoming environment for families and community members, promoting student leadership opportunities, and providing a variety of extracurricular activities that meet the diverse interests of students. To achieve these goals, principals need access to resources and professional development that will help them create a positive school culture and engage with their community.

As a community, we must recognise the challenges facing our school principals and provide the resources and support necessary to help them succeed. By investing in our principals, we are investing in the success of our students and our schools. Let us work together to ensure that our principals have the tools they need to lead effectively and create a positive learning environment for all students.

**Lyn Caton** Principals' Organiser





Above: The IWD March in Newcastle. Left Newcastle MP Tim Crackanthorp, IEU Digital Journalist Katie Camarena and IEU Organiser Carlo Rendina at the march



## Don't force women to chose between poverty and violence

Unions NSW, along with other unions such as the IEU, is fighting for improvements to the Parenting Payment Single Allowance, so that women are not put in the situation where they have to choose between escaping domestic violence or living in poverty.

UTS Business School Professor Anne Summers recently released a report called *The Choice: Violence or Poverty* in which she outlines how, by encouraging women to leave abusive relationships, we are inadvertently consigning them to lives of poverty. Here is an extract from Dr Summers report:

"For decades now, and especially since 2011, when the federal government introduced its National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022, federal and state governments, as well as charitable organisations, the women's services sector and concerned individuals have condemned domestic violence and have encouraged women to leave such relationships.

"In doing so, all of us have – unwittingly – consigned many, if not most, of these women to lives of deprivation, if not outright poverty and misery. As Bruce Chapman and Matt Taylor have shown with their use of HILDA data to track the incomes of women who separate from violent partners, the drop in income can be as high as 45 per cent.

"Some women are never able to recover economically. Is this what we intend when we encourage women to leave violent relationships? This may not have been our intention, but we need to be fully aware that for far too many women this has been the outcome."

On 2 February, Unions NSW and its affiliates passed a resolution calling on the Federal Government, in relation to the Parenting Payment Single Allowance, to:

- change the eligibility rules so the payment is available to single parents until their youngest child reaches the age of 16, or where the youngest child attends school post 16 years, the payment should continue until the child completes high school
- Increase the rate so that it is equal to the age pension single rate, and
- change the indexation and benchmarking so the payment aligns with pension indexation.

Union NSW and affiliates further moved to establish a process to work with and support Dr Summers in her work to improve the payment made to single parents.

Find the report at <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2022-07/apo-nid318487.pdf>

# International Women's Day

**International Women's Day on 8 March celebrated the achievement of women across the world and the significant social, economic and political gains made by women. The day is also a call to action, as unions continue to fight for equality and a faster rate of change to create a safer and fairer world for women and girls.**

Seventy-two per cent of the IEU's 75,000 members are women. Our teachers and school support staff have a unique role to play in the education of girls and our collective commitment to deliver greater gender equality in education, in our workplaces and in the broader community.

While we will take time to celebrate the courage and determination of women who have changed history, IEU members will also strive to find ways to unite and mobilise for the urgent changes still needed if our community is to fully Embrace Equity.

The last 12 months have seen long-overdue changes to better support women and workplace equality. The federal Labor government, comprising a record number of women in cabinet and on the front bench, has delivered:

- paid family and domestic violence leave
- improved access to flexible work arrangements
- new laws to promote workplace gender equality and equal remuneration in all industries

- Respect@Work reforms that established new rights and protections to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination.

IEU members and activists continue to drive real change in their workplaces – winning improved wages and conditions in our female dominated industry, more secure jobs and safer workplaces.

The IEU will continue to be the voice of women leadership and change.

In 2023, the IEU attended both the Sydney and Newcastle rallies and marches. On Saturday 4 March, a small but mighty contingent of unionists, women and families took to the streets of Hamilton. This was followed a week later by a larger rally outside Sydney Town Hall before a loud and colourful march to Hyde Park. With St Mary's Cathedral as a backdrop, we heard from Penny Sharpe MLC, Jenny Leong MP, Maxine Sharkey from the NSW Teachers Federation, members of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, as well as Kate Lee from Union Aid Abroad APHEDA and Parisa Alvasi from Iranian Women's Solidarity.





# Professional Engagement Accreditation update

**NESA is now the Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA) for all teachers. While NESA is the final decision maker, as part of the process, principals will be required to attest as to whether or not the teacher has continued to maintain their practice against the Standards. Employers are required to develop policies which allow the principal to make their attestation.**

NESA's Maintenance of Teacher Accreditation Policy explicitly states: "The activities and practices that form the basis of this attestation will be comprised of processes that are in place in the school/ service and *will not generate additional requirements for the teacher*" (our emphasis).

The policy further states, while a teacher is required to meet all the Standards in order to maintain accreditation, "there is no requirement for a teacher to produce evidence for every Standard Descriptor through the professional activities and practices that form the basis of the maintenance of accreditation decision for Proficient Teachers".

This year, the IEU will focus on identifying where employers might seek to implement or continue processes which are not required by NESA for teachers to meet the requirements for accreditation at Proficient or maintenance of accreditation.

Where we identify unnecessary employer overlays, we will be challenging them in the first instance and then bringing them to the attention of NESA if we fail to obtain any movement from the employer. If this

applies to your workplace, please contact your organiser immediately.

## Accreditation at Proficient Teacher

NESA's new policy now streamlines this process and schools are no longer required to produce a final report unless they intend to recommend that the teacher has not met the requirements to attain proficient.

Teachers looking to attain proficient teacher status should:

- undertake the NESA Online Proficient Teacher Orientation Course within the first three months of commencing their teaching career
- speak with their principal and establish who will be their supervisor for the process. It is important they do this early in the process so that, in the event of issues arising, they can be addressed in a timely manner. The principal/supervisor has 28 days to address any concerns and provide feedback and support from the time they become aware of a performance issue.

Contact your organiser to obtain the IEU Proficient Teacher Handbook and Workbook.

## Professional Development

The IEU is keen to hear from members as to how much accredited PD is being conducted in schools since the changes to NESA's PD policy. If you would like to provide anecdotal feedback, please email [pd@ieu.asn.au](mailto:pd@ieu.asn.au) and advise if your school is providing more, less, or about the same

accredited PD as in previous years. If you are the person responsible for accrediting the PD, let us know the workload impact of this process on your role.

The IEU will be running a full suite of the Behaviour Management courses run by Dave Vinegrad in Semester 1 plus several other general courses which seek to upskill teachers in dealing with difficult situations – not always with students! The first two dates are:

## Remaining Semester 1 dates

- Thur 4 May Behaviour Matters 3: Making it Right
- Mon 15 May Behaviour Matters 4: Upholding the Right
- Mon 22 May Managing Difficult Conversations
- Wed 31 May Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviours
- Wed 14 June Thriving and Surviving as a Casual Teacher (ELECTIVE PD in NSW)

## Semester 2 dates

- Wed 26 April Behaviour Matters 3: Making it Right
- Thur 4 May Behaviour Matters 4: Upholding the Right
- Mon 31 July Behaviour Matters 1: Getting it Right
- Tue 8 Aug Behaviour Matters 2: Keeping it Right
- Wed 23 Aug Behaviour Matters 3: Making it Right
- Wed 6 Sep Behaviour Matters 4: Upholding the Right

- Mon 23 Oct Managing Difficult Conversations
- Tue 31 Oct Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviours
- Mon 13 Nov Thriving and Surviving as a Casual Teacher (ELECTIVE PD in NSW)

## NCCD Update

In 2020, the IEU embarked on a campaign to address the excessive workloads being generated by the NCCD evidence collection process in non-government schools. This led to the development of an NCCD Factsheet which came into full effect this year.

A follow up survey just completed indicates that:

- overall, the NCCD Evidence Factsheet has had a positive impact on workload reduction in schools
- it seems that, in schools where excessive or duplicative practices described by the NCCD Evidence Factsheet persist, diocesan authorities or school leadership teams appear to be the source of the workload.

While members have a strong sense that the IEU has been instrumental in bringing about positive reforms to the data collection process through the development and promotion of the NCCD Evidence Factsheet there is clearly still more work to be done.

**Pat Devery** Professional Engagement Coordinator

# MEMBERSHIP news

As we near the end of Term 1 here's a friendly reminder to ensure the contact details we have for you are correct. Our annual membership update is in full swing so you may have already updated your details with your workplace representative. If this is not the case or you wish to check yourself, please visit the link below and go to the Update your membership details tab.

<https://www.ieu.asn.au/login>

It is essential that we hold up to date contact information for you, so you stay connected with us regarding campaign information that relates to your sector, and you are eligible to vote in all union elections.

## Win a prize

If a Chapter Rep updates the details of five or more members in a chapter we are offering a power bank with a multi-device cord as an incentive. We have limited stocks, so get your update in to ensure you don't miss out.

The link to access your 2023 digital membership card will be emailed to you this month. If you do not receive the link in your inbox, please check your junk mail folder or contact [membership@ieu.asn.au](mailto:membership@ieu.asn.au)

We hope you have an enjoyable and relaxing break and fingers crossed the weather remembers it is now Autumn. We look forward to working with you in Term 2.

**Membership team**





# UPDATE

## Early Childhood Education & Care

### Who is going to staff new preschools?

The NSW Government said that they will create 100,000 new preschool places as part of their pre-kindergarten program. Five hundred preschools are to be delivered in the next four years. Their aim is to give all NSW children access to free, high-quality play-based preschool education in the year before they start school.

Sounds great, doesn't it? At least until you start to consider how on earth they are going to staff all these new preschools. We have been experiencing a shortage of early childhood teachers and educators for years, and this has only been exacerbated since COVID.

Directors are telling the IEU that they need to limit the number of children in attendance because they cannot maintain minimum ratios due to staff shortages, illness and attrition from the sector.

Preschools that used to have so many applicants for positions they could pick and choose who to interview are lucky to get one or two applications today. Directors are taking on multiple roles in the centre to cover absences.

Teachers and educators who turn up to work each day have more responsibilities and are working longer hours. Some are not having lunch breaks away from the children and many are completing even more documentation outside of work hours because they are missing their non-contact time, simply because preschools and long day care centres do not have the staff to cover this.

The increasing volume of paperwork is causing burnout. Critical reflections, Quality Improvement Plans, documentation to demonstrate how each of the National Quality Standards is being met in the centre, Reconciliation Action Plans, Transition to School Statements, minutes from each conversation held with a parent, permission forms, policies and more, is frustrating teachers and educators who understand the importance of focusing on their relationships and interactions with children and their families to facilitate young children's development.

Early childhood teacher graduates who are qualified from birth to eight or 12 are flocking to the school sector where they can earn \$12,000 a year more right off the bat or an additional 30 per cent a day as a casual teacher.

Experienced Proficient Teachers in schools are paid \$30,00 a year more. Then you add paid parental leave, pupil-free days for professional development and genuine opportunities for career progression and even those who love working with preschool-age children start to question their choice of workplace.

So will we end up with a whole lot of under-utilised new preschools because the NSW Government is focusing on facilities exclusively, to the detriment of the teachers and educators who turn these buildings into places of learning?

Lisa James Organiser



### Union at Early Years Summit

IEU member Janene Rox and Federal Secretary Christine Cooper attended the Federal Government's National Early Years Summit recently.

The IEU welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Early Years Summit at Parliament House as part of developing the Commonwealth Early Years Strategy.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Mark Northam said, "Janene Rox shared the stories and important work of thousands of IEU members. It's critical work and the insights of early childhood education professionals must be heard to repair early childhood education in Australia. Let's listen to the experts and get it right. We need a new direction that will benefit all - early childhood teachers, educators, children, and parents."

## Experienced Teacher Accreditation 2024 ISTAA Standards-Based Pathway

Teachers employed in AIS Schools, Hybrid Schools and in Catholic Independent Model A Schools ISTAA should be aware that applications for 2024 are open

To achieve Experienced Teacher accreditation, you need to apply to your school and the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority (ISTAA). Applications close Thursday 6 April 2023.

### Experienced Teacher salary

The IEU is committed to assisting every eligible member to achieve Experienced Teacher accreditation. During the last 15 years the union has been highly successful in assisting thousands of members to achieve Experienced Teacher accreditation and receive a Band 3 salary. Depending on the enterprise agreement that applies to teachers at your school, the pay rise if you are successful will be either \$4500 or \$15,000 per annum (the latter is in the case of Standards Model enterprise agreements).

### Changes to Experienced Teacher accreditation

The union has long pressed for improvements to the ISTAA process to make it more accessible for teachers. ISTAA has introduced some changes that will make the process slightly more flexible for teachers and supervisors. For example, from 2023 Testimonials and the Head of School Report have been replaced by the Principal Attestation. This covers 14 of the 37 descriptors and requires less paperwork.

### Evidence collection period:

**Monday 24 April 2023 to Wednesday 28 June 2024**

We are here to assist you to understand the process and prepare evidence and documentation. Group and individual workshops are available. Many teachers request significant support during the evidence collection period. It is important to start this process as early as possible after 24 April 2023.

### IEU only assists members

The IEU assists members with their applications on the understanding that they are continuing members or recently employed at an independent school. The union will not assist those who join specifically to access this service and who have been employed at the school for a considerable time without acquiring union membership. Membership should be current from at least 1 April 2023 to be eligible for the 2024 intake.



For IEU assistance with Experienced Teacher accreditation, please contact Elizabeth Finlay at the IEU: [elizabeth@ieu.asn.au](mailto:elizabeth@ieu.asn.au)

## Experienced Teacher ISTAA Accreditation

**Experienced Teacher Accreditation allows eligible teachers to be accredited by ISTAA at the level of Experienced Teacher. This applies to AIS Standards Based or Hybrid model schools as well as Catholic independent Model A schools.**

The IEU has worked with over one thousand members and all have been successful in achieving their accreditation and a higher salary scale.

While the process is time consuming and demanding, it delivers significant salary benefits. Teachers who are eligible to undertake the process but fail to apply remain on a lower salary scale. This greatly impacts their income over time.

The IEU can assist members understand the process and help them with the preparation of evidence and documentation. Members can attend meetings and have access to ongoing phone and online assistance. Members can submit evidence and receive detailed feedback.

The AIS have made some changes to the Experienced Teacher process. The dates for submission are from March 2023 to 28 June 2023 instead of submissions being due in September.

Applicants may submit any time between March and June and should receive a result within 12 weeks of submission.

### Changes for 2023/2024

Testimonials and Head of School Report have been replaced by the Principal Attestation to cover 14 descriptors. This requires less paperwork for supervisors. In

addition, five descriptors can be met by a classroom observation and a report written by the supervisor.

Nineteen descriptors can be satisfied by the Principal Attestation and the classroom observation with teachers to provide evidence for 18 descriptors.

Previously, a reference was able to satisfy four descriptors but this option is no longer available.

In 2022, Testimonials and the Head of School report met 14 descriptors plus the four from references giving a total of 17. Teachers had to provide evidence for 19 descriptors. The testimonials usually involved two classroom observations and a detailed report.

The level of support across schools remains inconsistent. Some schools have a well organised process and assist teachers with their accreditation. However, there are still schools that offer very limited support making it difficult for teachers trying to complete the process.

There are ongoing meetings between the AIS and the IEU with a view to securing improvements in the process. There is agreement in principle around the need to avoid duplication, allow for alternative types of verification and reduce the need for teachers to expand on self-explanatory content.

Elizabeth Finlay Professional Officer





## IEU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee Report

# Finding the heart of the nation

### The focus of the IEU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee this year has been the preparation of the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Respect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The three areas to be addressed in developing the Respect RAP are:

- our business (who we are and what we do)
- our RAP (our vision for reconciliation) and
- our partnerships (engagement with reconciliation).

Members of the committee had the opportunity to access a special webinar with Sydney Peace Prize winners Pat Anderson AO and Professor Megan Davis for a conversation about the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its three objectives: a Voice to Parliament, Treaty and Truth.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation to the Australian people to walk with First Nations People to create a better future. It is a gift: a strategic roadmap to peace, where all Australians can come together to realise our nation's true potential.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart has been the subject of some controversy recently.

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch supports the Uluru Statement as part of the Branch's commitment to the reconciliation process. Copies of the Statement hang proudly in our offices.

The IEU Council on 18 March passed a motion to actively campaign for a 'yes' vote in the upcoming referendum to give

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders a Voice to Parliament.

### The Committee supports this motion.

So why should members vote 'yes' in the referendum? The 1967 Referendum deleted discriminatory references to Aboriginal peoples but it failed to make the structural changes necessary to achieve Voice, Treaty, Truth.

The Voice to Parliament is a structural reform that will create an institutional relationship between governments and First Nations people that will compel the state to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when making decisions that will affect their lives and aspirations.

Treaty (Makarrata) is a process of agreement making and truth telling. Having a Voice to Parliament will ensure the negotiations will be positive and successful.

Truth – there is a need for people to know more about Australian and Aboriginal history. The lack of acknowledgement of a people's existence in a country's history has a major impact on their sense of identity and value within the community. It perpetuates discrimination and prejudice which further erodes the hope of our First Nations people. There is also an association with socio-economic disadvantage and subsequent higher rates of mental illness, physical illness, and incarceration.

Constitutional change of this kind could unite Australians around a sense of their shared history which for the first time in the Constitution would include the long habitation of the continent by First Nations People. The committee recommends that

all members of the NSW/ACT Branch accept the invitation to walk with First Nations people to create a better future, where all Australians can come together to realise our nation's true potential.

### Look out for IE magazine

Have a look at IE magazine, which you received with this issue of *Newsmonth*. There's a story called Lessons in Wiradjuri on p18. A primary school in Parkes is showing the way when it comes to teaching Wiradjuri, embedding the language throughout the school, even on the stairs (see above).

### Finding the Heart of the Nation

In this year of our nation on the cusp of great change, the IEU is offering a special giveaway, with a copy of Thomas Mayor's *Finding the Heart of the Nation* and the children's book *Finding Our Heart* on offer with every issue of *Newsmonth*.

In *Finding the Heart of the Nation*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander author Mayor gets behind the politics and legal speak to explain why the Uluru Statement from the Heart is an invitation to all Australians.

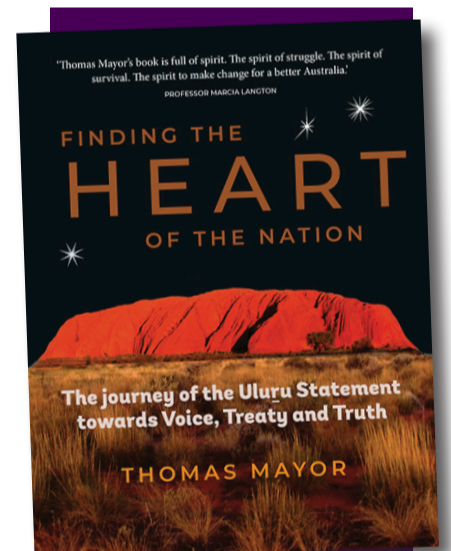
Australia is set to vote on a referendum to enshrine a First Nations voice in the constitution as a result of the 2022 federal election.

In this book, Thomas focuses on the stories of First Nations People, including some new voices, looking at the truth of our past and present, and hopes for a better future. Importantly, he shares with you – the Australian public – how we all have the power to make change. The campaign for Voice Treaty Truth, starting with a

referendum, is an opportunity to right some of the wrongs, give First Nations People a seat at the table, and to recognise that we are a nation with over 60,000 years of continuous culture.

Completing his writing just after the 2022 federal election, Thomas has included a new introduction and conclusion, as well as a call to action for all Australians. *Finding Our Heart* is a book about the Uluru Statement for young Australians. Watch and listen to Thomas Mayor reading the book here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEqbxdtSI3Q>

Jackie Groom Organiser



Check out giveaways P20





# New organisers bolster union's team



## Opportunity for everyone

**Three new union organisers fresh from teaching and keen to help their colleagues started working at the IEU in the new year.**

Peter Criticos has a long association with the IEU, serving as a Rep, on IEU Council and on the Executive. He came to the attention of the IEU's leadership as a Rep, achieving a density of 107 per cent union membership at his school, getting even casual teachers signed up.

He wants to continue in that vein as an organiser, creating strength through numbers in as many schools and centres as he can. His philosophy has evolved from the traditional days of strong union membership in the 1980s and 1970s, when his grandfather worked at BHP in Newcastle.

"Granddad hurt his back, and the union fought for his rights to make sure he got his workers comp," Peter said.

"Grandad was a Greek migrant, and he was always a staunch unionist from the moment he came to Australia in 1958."

His father lectures in business and is a loyal Labor supporter.

"The amalgam of staunch unionist and Labour supporter created Peter Criticos, the union organiser," he said.

He started teaching in 2016 in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley, as teacher, HSIE coordinator and learning support teacher.

Having had some bad times at school himself, a Greek boy growing up in Newcastle, he's passionate about making sure every kid has an opportunity to grow and be themselves, and to never be discouraged by school.

Peter said years of Liberal rule had damaged the reputation of unions around Australia, and he'd like to play a role in rebuilding trust. Peter will be based at the union's Parramatta office.

## Removing the hoops

**Luke Breen was a primary school teacher before starting with the union. He taught Years K-6 for 20 years, as well as taking up some leadership roles. His most recent school, All Saints Catholic College in Liverpool, presented some challenges with its diverse cohort.**

Luke said during his 20-year career, teaching had changed every single year, becoming more and more stressful and busy.

"Just something like organising an excursion has become so stressful, with all the hoops there are to jump through.

"Workload, bureaucracy, it's weighing teachers down, on top of the marking, the students, the parents."

Luke said he particularly wanted to use his time at the IEU to provide support for early career teachers. His own memory of being a first year out is that support was lacking.

"Many good young teachers are dropping out of the profession too early because they can earn more money with less stress at other work," Luke said.

"A tired teacher is an ineffective teacher," he said.

Luke would like his own two young children to have teachers in front of them that are operating at their best level.

He's looking forward to a dynamic and challenging time at the IEU, visiting many schools to offer what support he can.

Like Peter, Luke has a long history with the IEU as a Rep, Lansdowne Sub Branch President and member of IEU Council.

"The profession is at a crossroads, with so many leaving. As an experienced teacher, I understand this and want to provide the best support."



## A different route

**Josef Dabbs comes to the IEU from a more unusual route, but he is a former IEU Rep with 22 years' experience. When Josef graduated from university in the UK with a degree in French and German, he used his language skills to travel the world, teaching English in Turkey, London, Japan and finally Australia.**

After the Kobe earthquake in Japan, he and his wife moved to Australia to teach English as a Second Language and decided to make it their permanent home.

Following a stint overseas in London and Italy while he applied for permanent residency in Australia, Josef finally settled at Taylors College in Sydney, teaching on the University of Sydney Foundation Program, where he stayed for the next 22 years.

Helping overseas students prepare for high school and university study in Australia, Josef said his early years at the college were generally harmonious.

Josef became the rep as soon as he started at the college and said there was no significant tension between management and

staff and that teachers enjoyed pay and conditions that were superior to their high school equivalents.

"The only problem was we had to renew our enterprise agreement every three years," he said.

The college had a high density of union membership, which Josef attributes to good chapter meetings.

COVID-19, however, saw a steady decline in numbers, and after the end of job keeper and exhausting other leave entitlements, 50 staff were made redundant in a morning staff Zoom meeting.

At the IEU, Josef is on a steep learning curve, getting his head around the many different industrial instruments that apply across the non-government sector.

"I was very surprised to find so much difference between the Work Practices Agreements in the Catholic systemic schools," he said.

He looks forward to supporting teachers and support staff from all sectors to the best of his abilities.



# Lismore floods

**Upon the one-year anniversary of the devastating floods, Instructional Leader and IEU Rep Belinda Cahill of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish School, South Lismore, reflects on the past and the future.**

On the morning she spoke to *Newsmonth*, a storm hit the area, and she said the rain continues to be a constant reminder of the devastation people in the area faced.

“Our immediate response after the flood was to support our families and community. We were also focused on bringing our school community back together as quickly as possible, and returning to some sense of normality was our priority.

“For the first two weeks after the flood, the staff spent their time in gum boots and gloves. We knew how important it was to help our community, cleaning out houses and businesses. It was devastating. Seeing people’s lives and belongings being piled up in the gutter. Words can’t describe the emotion and impact that has on a community.

## Sticking together

“After two weeks, and looking at several potential school sites, we were blessed to be able to relocate to East Lismore, where we are now. We are so grateful for the generosity of St Carthages Parish to allow our parish school community to stay together and continue to focus on wellbeing and learning for our students at the Our Lady of Lourdes site.

“On the Saturday before we opened, we had a huge working bee at the new site. The parish school community gathered together in solidarity and we worked from sun-up to sun-down to get the site ready for our children. Without the support of families,

staff, students and members of the community, this small miracle would not have been achieved.

“Once we started back at school, there were challenges. We had counseling available for our teachers, families and children. Our Lady of Lourdes was an infant school, so it was quite small, and we have 240 children.

“Initially we made the best of a difficult situation, but we were squashed in. We had three classes combined in some rooms. We had no desks, no chairs, no pencils, nothing. That’s when the outpouring of love from families, businesses, members of the community, other schools and people donating anything they could came.

“We had people from all over the country, some driving for days, just to make sure our kids had what they needed. Donations of backpacks, books, pencil cases, shoes and lunch boxes came pouring in. We had a lot of love shown to

us and a lot of things given to us to ensure our children did not go without.

## Milk crates to chairs

“The ingenuity of our teachers and support staff was amazing. We had a teacher use milk crates from Woolworths and put yoga mats on them to turn them into chairs. The children loved it.

“Within a week of being in the new site, and nearly a month after the flood, every child had a book and a pencil, and most of the families had received everything they needed for the return to school.

“Twelve months on and we’re not back in our old site but we have achieved amazing things. We have three new demountable classrooms, beautiful turfed areas, new

technology and furniture and a new sensory/nature play area. We have created a new school.

“The teachers and support staff have been through a lot, some of them lost their own homes, but they made sure our children had the best chance to keep learning. Sacrifices were made and when we look back now, it’s hard to believe we have achieved so much in such a short period of time.

“We have 30 staff and a very small staff room. There really isn’t anywhere to sit and eat our lunch. Most of the teachers sit outside and watch the children play while they eat some lunch.”

“We’re just so thankful that we have been shown so much love, so much generosity. We’ve been able to stick together as a community and that is the most important thing.

“The buildings don’t define us. We’re a small school of excellence wherever we happen to be. Our goal for the future is to find a space

to establish a library so our children can start borrowing books again.

“This story is a celebration of the staff’s dedication and their willingness to do whatever it takes to enable our children to have the best learning opportunities. We are very proud of them all.”

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish School Principal and IEU member Michael Piccoli, said, “You never know what you are capable of achieving as a school, until you are forced to face situations that you never expected would happen. It takes a village to raise our children and the 2022 floods certainly showed us how important it is to stand together, look after each other and never lose sight of what is important.”

**Sue Osborne** Journalist

“We’re just so thankful that we have been shown so much love, so much generosity. We’ve been able to stick together as a community and that is the most important thing. The buildings don’t define us.”



## One year after the devastating Lismore floods, schools in the area are still facing an uncertain future.

*Left:* Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School South Lismore has temporarily moved up to the old site that was Our Lady of Lourdes in East Lismore. No decisions about the future location of this school have been made.

*Centre:* Trinity Catholic College Lismore lost both its campuses. It is looking unlikely that the school will ever operate on the site again. Since the floods they have temporarily relocated: Year 7-10 students and staff are at Southern Cross University, East Lismore and Years 11-12 to St John’s College, Woodlawn on the outskirts of Lismore.

*Right:* St Joseph’s Primary Woodburn’s future is also uncertain. Since March 2022 they have been operating in demountables in the grounds of the Catholic church in Evans Head.





# s – one year on



*Pictured above is Our Lady Help of Christians Parish School Lismore on its new grounds, rebuilt by the staff and community, and pictured below, the devastating floods that destroyed the school's previous premises just over a year ago.*





# Honours for Canberra principal

**For a lifetime's dedication to schools and associations that advance the cause of education, Michael Lee, Principal of St Mary MacKillop College in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese, was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the Australia Day Honours List.**

Michael started his career in Kildare College in the Latrobe Valley in Victoria in 1982 and remembers smoking a cigarette while doing parent/teacher interviews.

"I had no teacher training of any kind. A Brigidine nun hired me with a BA in History and Politics from ANU, and I was teaching Year 10 Typing, Religious Education and some Social Studies. I still can't type," he said.

His first principalship was Mount Carmel School, Yass in 1999. He has also worked for the Board of Studies at Wagga Wagga and as principal at Hennessy Catholic College, Young.

Michael said his lifetime involvement in professional associations was probably a big part of why he was nominated for an OAM.

He works with the English Teachers Association of NSW, the AIS, principals associations and not least the IEU.

"I wanted to be a better teacher in the classroom. I am a fan of professional learning about improving teacher practice. It was always about advocating for teachers and principals to have a shared conversation and to improve their skills. In the bush it can be more challenging.

"I've always found the union to be about much more than advocating for higher salaries. It's a place of shared interests based on experiences of classroom conditions and schools. It has provided me with many valuable insights as a school leader."

Michael represented his diocese at the IEU's Principals' Branch for several years.

"Schools are safer and more effective places than they were."

"I got to meet different types of principals from different types of schools. You got so many insights into what's going on in some dioceses and some sectors."

Michael said of teaching "there's been a couple of enormous changes. One has been the accent on teaching measured against the standard, which has obliged the profession to see itself in a much wider context. This has been good.

"You can more easily know what a teacher is and does and how their effectiveness can be supported," he said.

"The other change has been the accent on work, health and safety and child protection. Since the Royal Commission [into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse], we now have very clear guidelines.

"I think both have been extremely positive. Schools are safer and more effective places than they were."

Michael said principalship is can be stressful. "In a country town the minute you leave your front door you're working. I found

that really taxing in terms of the workload and the public face."

"There's administration that gets in the way of running a good school. That's pretty much a universal complaint."

Michael said the award was "unexpected and humbling".

"Every principal did an outstanding job leading their community through COVID. It was just such a complex, terrifying, into the unknown, situation - like being in a CS Lewis novel!

"We came through it because of good judgement, lots of support and community confidence and I think those things are readily found in good school leadership.

"My mother made the point about how many family events I have not been at because of work. The OAM is an honour for her and my family."



# Acute warning signs for principals' health, wellbeing and longevity

**The number of Australian school principals wanting to retire early or quit has tripled since 2019 with heavy workloads, lack of time and teacher shortages cited as major sources of stress for school leaders, an early look at new Australian Catholic University (ACU) research shows.**

Heavy workloads and a lack of time to focus on the core responsibilities of teaching and learning were the top two sources of stress recorded among almost 2500 principals surveyed in 2022, ACU's annual Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey, shows.

National teacher shortages ranked third – up from 12th compared with the 2021 survey results. Mental health issues among students and staff rounded out the top five sources of stress.

Principals were also concerned about the welfare of staff and students, with their top five concerns for staff being burnout, stress, anxiety, depression, and alcohol and/or drug use, while anxiety, school refusal, depression, stress, and self-harm were leading causes of concern for their students.

Offensive behaviours towards principals including physical and verbal abuse, specific impacts on health and wellbeing, types of work demands, and additional sources of stress will be also be released in the final report in March.

Figures compiled by ACU's Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) for

the latest annual survey reveal 65 principals planned to quit or retire early in 2022 – more than triple the number in 2019.

ACU Investigator and former principal Dr Paul Kidson said while the raw number was low, the numbers represented a substantial increase which pointed to a worrying trend supported by the other findings.

"It is a drastic increase when you look at the whole picture," Dr Kidson said.

"Principals' workloads, stress caused by issues including the national teacher shortage across public, Catholic, and independent schools, and demands outside the classroom have escalated to unsustainable levels.

"We are now seeing the cumulative impact of this on principals' health and wellbeing, and we are very concerned about the increasing steepness of those trends as they are heading in a very distressing direction.

"This data shows serious dashboard warning lights flashing all over the place. These are warning signs that we have not seen so acutely before, and we have almost 2500 people saying the same thing."

IPPE co-lead investigator and leading school wellbeing expert Associate Professor Theresa Dicke said the impact of wide-ranging stressors on school leaders, including ongoing teacher shortages, was becoming acute.

Heavy workloads and lack of time to focus on teaching and learning remained the top two sources of stress for principals in 2022. She said principals needed support to help

reverse the concerning trends detected by the survey.

"The fact that these stressors remain the same as in 2021 indicates the level of importance in addressing these concerns," she said. "We need to progress and implement effective solutions that support and empower principals in their vital roles.

"We have seen how education experts and political leaders can work collaboratively on solutions to the teacher shortage, and now we need to support our principals by heeding their serious and valid concerns."

World leading educational psychologist and co-lead investigator Professor Herb Marsh said the feedback to IPPE investigators was bleak, with principals sacrificing their long-term health and wellbeing for jobs that inflicted extreme stress.

Professor Marsh said not only were principals dealing with the stresses of the job, but also carried the burden of significant concerns about the health and wellbeing of staff and students.

"It is really important to highlight principals are doing a great job, but we have concerns about the rate of escalation and the cumulation of the issues, and it is reasonable to conclude that this is compounding the challenges for school leaders," Professor Marsh said.

"Our school leaders are clearly overburdened and struggling, the question remains how long can they keep going like this?"

"This data shows serious dashboard warning lights flashing all over the place. These are warning signs that we have not seen so acutely before."







Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey (second right) and IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Mark Northam (centre) are pictured above

# Union Pride – Strength in Diversity

**IEU Secretary Mark Northam and Organiser Pat Devery represented the IEU at Mardi Gras on 24 February. The Union Pride - Strength In Diversity float celebrated the 50th anniversary of pink bans.**

In 1973, the Builders Labourers Federation refused to work at Macquarie University after a gay student Jeremy Fisher, was expelled.

According to tradeshallsydney.wordpress.com, in June 1973, student and Gay Lib club treasurer Jeremy Fisher was expelled from a Church of England residential college at Macquarie University.

College head Alan Cole told him homosexuality was a perversion, and he had to agree to “be chaste” and accept treatment or he’d be out.

Fisher refused and took his case to the student union. They organised some on campus rallies and started calling their contacts across Sydney.

Buildings were being put up apace at Macquarie, including the residences that Fisher was staying at. The union had gone to its members and put the request for support to them.

The Builders Labourers Federation (BFL) voted that if Jeremy Fisher wasn’t reinstated then building would stop, not only at the college but on other sites at the university.

Jack Munday, NSW Secretary of the union and a member of the CPA Communist Party of Australia, explained that “the homosexual movement had come to the Builders Labourers and said, ‘you’re against the idea of workers not having a right, well it’s the same for students not having rights’.

“Because the students and workers had joined forces against the Vietnam War and anti-apartheid, there was already a sense of solidarity between students and trade unionists,” Munday said

“Not that every builders labourer was a galloping conservationist or women’s libber or even supporter of the rights of gays, but the union encouraged people from the various campaigns and liberation movements to address members about discrimination.”

## Present tense Fair Work Act changes

**In late 2022, the Albanese Labor government passed their proposed changes to the Fair Work Act in to law. These changes, styled the Secure Job, Better Pay Act, should greatly streamline the legal requirements around bargaining.**

It has been the case since the Fair Work Act first came into being in 2009 that employers and employees can bargain for an enterprise agreement, an industrial instrument which must contain better conditions overall than the prevailing award. In the post-secondary college sector, the industry award is the Educational Services (Post-Secondary Education) Award. Like all federal awards, this award is designed to provide a floor of working conditions in the sector, but overall those conditions are pretty basic.

Federal industrial law is premised on individual workplaces bargaining for an

enterprise agreement to sit above that award. Your union has negotiated several such agreements with private colleges, though it remains the case that many colleges use the award as their primary reference instrument.

The Fair Work Act contains provisions around so-called “good-faith bargaining”, under which an employer can be compelled to bargain, where it can be demonstrated that many employees want this to happen. While that looks fair enough on the surface, in practice it has proved to be difficult to demonstrate such support, especially in an industry so dominated by workers employed under insecure work arrangements, such as casual and short-term contracts. Furthermore, there has long been no requirement for anyone to ‘agree’ on anything, and so bargaining can often end up in a dead end.

The changes to the Act go some way to ameliorating these problems. One big reform is the expansion of multi-enterprise bargaining, such that the Fair Work Commission can now order individual employers in a similar line of work into supported bargaining. This could mean, for example, that separate colleges can be moved into a bargaining stream, with the aim of covering multiple colleges under the one multi-enterprise agreement.

Another welcome change is the expansion of access to arbitration for bargaining negotiations that have reached an impasse or otherwise intractable stage. This should help put an end to employer tactics of ‘hard bargaining’, where they just keep stonewalling negotiations while complying with the bare bones requirements of good faith bargaining.

Of course, these changes to the Act are still new, and many do not come into effect until later this year. Like all laws, these will then be tested through court actions by both unions and employers, which may open up further ways in which your union may seek benefits for our members. You can be sure that the IEU will be looking at these matters very closely.

To find out how bargaining laws (both existing and new) can be used at your workplace, contact your union, the IEU. In the meantime, the best way to get things started is to encourage your colleagues to join the IEU.

**Kendall Warren** Organiser





# If you haven't joined a union, it's time you paid to benefit from union deals

This article originally appeared in *The Conversation* on 22 January. It's by Economist and Director, Centre for Future Work, Australia Institute; Honorary Professor of Political Economy, University of Sydney Jim Stanford.

A long overdue public debate has started in Australia about "free riding" in industrial relations – when non-union members benefit from collective agreements negotiated by union members without contributing (through membership dues or other payments) to their negotiation and administration.

Several union leaders want rules to stop free riding. Without this, they argue, union membership will keep falling, imperilling collective bargaining.

The issue has been given impetus by the latest data on union membership rates. The proportion of employees belonging to a union is now a record low 12.5%. In the private sector it's just 8%.

## Australia's falling union membership

In the 1980s, more than half of the Australian workforce was unionised. Since then Australia has experienced the most dramatic deunionisation of any major industrial country.

That, at least in part, is by design. The Howard government passed laws in the late 1990s and 2000s prohibiting union preferences in hiring, bargaining fees or other structured supports for union membership.

But the idea workers can get something for nothing enjoying the benefits of collective bargaining, without contributing to its costs – ignores both economic theory and reality.

## The economics of free riding

Economists have long grappled with the problem of free riders in many areas of economic life.

The textbook case involves 'public goods' – things to which access cannot be limited to paying customers. Examples are clean air and water, infrastructure, policing and national defence.

With public goods, conventional market mechanisms (based on "rational" individual choice) do not work. If something is "free to all", there will be some people prepared to voluntarily contribute to its cost, and others that won't.

To address this market failure, economists endorse policy interventions that deliberately interfere with individual "choice". For government-provided public goods, this usually relies on compulsory contributions (taxes).

## Why pay when you get it for free?

Other industries and ventures also encounter free rider problems, and laws have evolved to address them.

For example, unit owners in a residential strata don't have 'free choice' to refuse monthly strata fees. They are required to contribute to the collective costs of running their shared building. The power of the strata to set and collect monthly fees is provided for in Australian law. If strata fees were voluntary, the whole system of strata ownership would collapse.

Nor can individual shareholders in a corporation choose to withhold their share of payments approved by the corporation's duly elected directors. These provisions are recognised and protected in law.

When it comes to collective bargaining, however, Australian law not only tolerates but effectively encourages free riding.

Under the *Fair Work Act*, any benefit or entitlement (from higher wages, to working conditions, to rostering systems) negotiated through enterprise bargaining must be equally available to all workers covered by an agreement.

A narrowly "rational" individual might understandably ask why they should join the union when they can get all the benefits of a union-negotiated contract anyway.

Left to individual "choice" in this context, it's not surprising union membership has fallen.

## How other nations deal with the problem

I have catalogued six distinct approaches used by other nations to address this market failure and establish a viable foundation for collective bargaining. All are founded on the presumption that collective bargaining is socially beneficial and should be encouraged.

One approach, informed by traditional conceptions of property rights, is to "close off" access to union-negotiated wages and benefits to dues-paying members only. Varieties of this strategy have been tried in the United States and in New Zealand.

This has generally not worked, however, because employers can still undermine unions by voluntarily offering equal improvements to non-members. It also damages worker solidarity, critical to any collective organisation.

Britain, Canada, India and Japan (among others) allow 'closed shop' or "'agency shop' arrangements. In any workplace that has been unionised (through some kind of majority decision, like a ballot or petition), all covered workers pay dues to reflect the benefits they receive from the collective agreement. In a closed shop they must join the union. In an agency shop they don't have to join the union but do have to pay the same fees.

The Philippines, South Africa and the US are among those with a modified agency shop system called "bargaining fees". Everyone covered by an enterprise agreement (which must be ratified by affected workers) contributes

something (usually less than full union dues) to the direct costs of negotiating and administering that agreement.

France and Brazil are among several countries that directly support collective negotiations with public subsidies. Like paying taxes for public goods, this approach directly allocates resources to fund a service (collective bargaining) deemed to be essential for a healthy labour market. New Zealand is taking a similar approach with its new Fair Pay Agreements (in effect since December 2022).

In Germany, Italy and many other European countries, collective bargaining is mandated by law, with employers above a certain size required to establish a workers council and cover the costs. Workers don't have to join the union but, with such a well-funded infrastructure, collective bargaining remains strong.

Workers gather on Place de la Republique, Paris, to demonstrate against proposed pension changes, Thursday, January 19, 2023.

In the Nordic countries and Belgium, extra support for collective bargaining is provided through union sponsorship of income support and social programs (like unemployment insurance and pensions). Workers are attracted to join their union to get better access to these services. This provides unions with resources and leverage for collective bargaining.

## Developing an Australian-made fix

So there is a wide choice of specific ways to fix the free rider problem in industrial relations.

In Australia, however, the right to free ride is fully protected, even celebrated. The result (as intended) has been the steady erosion of union membership. Australia is now quickly converging with the US as one of the least unionised nations in the OECD.

In December, the Albanese government passed its Secure Jobs, Better Pay bill, aimed at strengthening collective bargaining. If these reforms succeed in broadening collective bargaining coverage, the evidence suggests Australia's abysmal wage growth will pick up.

That alone should enhance workers' appreciation of the value of collective action, and indirectly strengthen the incentive for union membership.

Are you the subject of a child protection investigation/ disciplinary proceeding?

**Don't delay  
in contacting  
the IEU**

**The IEU represents the industrial and professional interests of its financial members working in non-government schools, colleges and early childhood centres in NSW and the ACT.**

This also applies when a member is notified by their employer that they are the subject of a child protection investigation or a disciplinary proceeding.

Additionally, the IEU offers support (subject to conditions) to financial members who seek advice and representation in relation to work-related criminal charges, through referral to the IEUA's solicitor or another qualified solicitor that offer legal services appropriate for your needs.

While confidentiality must be always maintained, members are not prevented from contacting their IEU

organiser to seek advice, support and representation during all stages of the investigation process that relates to the matter.

We urge members to 'not delay' in contacting your IEUA organiser on (02) 8202 8900 or the toll-free number 1800 467 943 (for country members).

Members are reminded that any information disclosed to the IEU that relates to their matter, is treated as strictly confidential. Further, the IEUA does not take any action relating to a member matter, without prior consultation and approval from the member.

**Russell Schokman** Policy Advisor





(from left) Office Manager Lee Black, Principal Leah Taylor, 30-year IEU membership badge recipient Susan Magyar and IEU Vice President ACT Angela McDonald at St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, Charnwood



IEU Rep Mark Smith and Organiser Tina Smith meet with Labor State member for Heathcote Mary Stuart at Bulli Senior Citizens centre to discuss concerns about teacher shortages, VET programs and casualisation



IEU Organiser Megan Bruce presents Christine Frost of Aspect Vern Barnett School with her 40-year IEU membership badge



Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey with IEU Secretary Mark Northam at the IEU's 2023 planning day

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Lisa, THF member



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# TEACHERS HEALTH

We're for teachers





## International visitors

International visitors came to the IEU recently. Andrene Bamford, President of the Educational Institute of Scotland and Laine Keeper, Research, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator of Education International, Brussels, Belgium, met with IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Mark Northam at the IEU's Sydney office to check out how things are done on the other side of the planet.

The pair were in Sydney to attend the Diversity in Education conference during World Pride.

# Hospo employer rips off staff

**Another example of wage theft has come before the Fair Work Commission, a warning to everyone, including school staff, about how far some employers will go to avoid paying fairly.**

*Workplace Express* reported on 2 February that the Fair Work Commission has referred hospitality company Mantle Group's HR manager to the Australian Federal Police for possible criminal prosecution after the tribunal found he provided false or misleading information about a substandard agreement that allowed the employer to ask workers to perform voluntary additional hours without penalty rates.

A full bench of the Commission accused the company of "deliberate manipulation of the statutory process of making enterprise agreements".

In 2021, Mantle Group subsidiary the Hot Wok Food Makers Pty Ltd moved workers from a zombie deal, the Staff Services Pty Ltd Certified Agreement, that enabled the company to avoid paying penalty rates to its workers for 22 years, to the Hot Wok Food Makers Pty Ltd workplace agreement, which won endorsement from Fair Work Commission Deputy President Amanda Mansini.

The bench found that the deputy president had "substantially relied" on the HR manager's "false or misleading" employer declaration when she approved the deal and warned "the process for considering applications for the approval of enterprise agreements would break down entirely if, in every case, the Commission was required to 'go behind' and investigate for itself the truth of the matters asserted in such declarations".

It found the deal had not been genuinely agreed by employees that would be covered by it.

The four employees that the HR manager listed as employees under the agreement, who had purportedly voted for

it, comprised two venue managers, an area manager and a payroll manager.

The bench confirmed that no classification in the Hot Wok agreement applied to these four employees and the agreement did not cover them.

The bench said Hot Wok's "selection of four relatively high-paid managers to 'make' the Hot Wok agreement was part of a deliberate manipulation of the statutory process for making enterprise agreements".

It highlighted that knowingly giving false or misleading information or knowingly producing a false or misleading document in support of an enterprise agreement application is an offence under the Criminal Code.

Federal Workplace Minister Tony Burke has said likened his industrial relations strategy to that of federal tax laws that are continually updated to close loopholes and protect public revenue (*Workplace Express* 6 February)

"This year, it's about closing the loopholes that some businesses use to undercut those arrangements," he told the Press Club recently.

He highlighted the recent Mantle Group case as a leading example of how employers "game" enterprise bargaining, while also providing "proof that closing loopholes will not simply be a job for this year, that some businesses have decided their entire business model will rely on finding the next loophole."

But the "principal loophole" that needs to be closed is to stop employers undercutting their employees' over-award payments under agreements by bringing in labour hire workers.

"You end up with the same workers doing the same job for technically different employers, and therefore for radically different rates of pay.

"The loophole needs to be closed. It'll be closed this year," he said.



## Supporting students on climate justice

**One struggle. One fight. On Friday 3 March, IEU joined Unions NSW and unionists representing many different sectors under the Workers for Climate Action banner. Together we marched to support students from Sydney and around the globe as they took strike action demand climate justice!**

At Sydney Town Hall, more than 2000 students, unionists, teachers, parents and grandparents gathered to listen to young people who addressed the rally. One by one they spoke about how we need community-led solutions to the climate crisis and how they will not settle for greenwashed climate commitments.

Climate justice is union business and we will continue stand with students and communities on the front lines of climate change.

## Proactive in pressing our claim with employers

**Bernadette Baker**  
Vice-President Systemic



**What an interesting time for employers and our union. The union leadership has been proactive in pressing our claims to the employers at the Fair Work Commission.**

Employers have not been engaged in trying to address the issues that have been put to them over the last 18 months.

Their delaying tactics demonstrates strongly that respect for the teachers and support staff in Catholic systemic schools are a low priority.

The season of Lent puts social justice to the fore, however, not for employers when it comes to staff in their schools.

What I want to emphasise is that the union leadership is implementing numerous strategies to press our employers to demonstrate their integrity for their employees.

However, we as members, can keep up our profile, pressure and actions in our workplace: wear your yellow shirt, make sure signs are up and visible, wear stickers and importantly have conversations about our claims. Together we are stronger.



# Sub Branch reports

**Sub Branch meetings are an opportunity for Chapter Reps and IEU members from each region to receive updates from union organisers. They're also a way for Reps and members to provide feedback to the union about what is happening on the ground in workplaces.**

There are 19 geographical sub branches across NSW and the ACT, plus our Principals' Sub Branch. Sub branches meet four times a year, usually in the first three or four weeks of each term. Each Sub Branch sends four or five delegates to quarterly union Council meetings.

Council is the union's decision-making body, bringing together about 90 member delegates from throughout NSW and the ACT. The IEU Executive of 22 members is elected every three years by members.

All Chapter Reps, and any IEU members who'd like to increase their union activism, are warmly invited to attend their Sub Branch meeting. Contact your Rep or your organiser if you'd like more information.

## South East Sub Branch

The South-East Sub Branch takes in schools, colleges and early childhood centres on the south coast of NSW, including Bega, Cooma, Milton, Ulladulla and Pambula.

"I wish to thank and commend all our union Reps, members, teachers and IEU organisers for their enthusiasm, hard work and commitment to their colleagues, the union, and their willingness to sacrifice for a better future for staff in schools," President Beth Worthy said.

"Apart from Term 1, the South East Sub Branch was fortunate in 2022 to hold our branch meetings in person.

"I thank our Reps who have done exceptionally well in communicating and helping our teachers during the last year.

"We are part of an incredibly professional community, and I appreciate the passion, hours and willingness to support student learning displayed by teachers and support staff, often to the detriment of their home life.

"I want to recognise those in the Catholic system who in 2022, have protested, campaigned, and sacrificed pay for the betterment of all.

"In our Sub Branch elections, the President, Deputy President and committee members were returned to office for 2023 with an addition of Jennie Marsh as the new Secretary.

"The IEU is thanked for the work put in to organise and run the Behaviour Management courses. They are fully booked and very much appreciated by members.

"Our chapter has expressed their appreciation for the support the IEU provides through these courses.

"It has been a privilege to be President of the South East Sub Branch and I give thanks for the opportunity that has been given to me."

**Beth Worthy** President

## South Coast Sub Branch

The South Coast Sub Branch takes in schools, colleges and early childhood centres in the Macarthur, Southern Highlands and Wollongong areas.

IEU Council meets in Sydney four times a year. Glenn Lowe and Kathy D' Souza described the experiences and insights being a part of IEU Council has given them. Both have been Council delegates for some years.

With attendance numbers at sub branch not as strong as pre-Covid, organisers asked Reps and members if they were in favour of a hybrid meeting model.

They voted in favour of having in-person and Zoom options available to enable wider participation and it was noted that for some Reps sub branch meetings represent a 100-150km round trip. The Zoom option will be offered from Term 2 sub branch meetings onwards, with IEU organisers seeking to re-engage all independent school sector Reps.

Reps wanted to know where the IEU plans to focus in 2023 and asked why the union is not planning more industrial action.

Reps said the union would not consider asking staff to lose another day's pay when the employer has not been present at the table for bargaining.

The floor agreed that there was an urgent need to inform South Coast Catholic systemic school members that their employer is not playing their part. Reps stated the information must be succinct and in the form of the 16-month timeline with dot points showing what hasn't been agreed to.

The Sub Branch positions are: President: Glenn Lowe, St Joseph's High School Albion Park, Vice President: Marco Cimino, Magdalene High School Narellan, Secretary: Terms 2-3 Christine Garrett, St Johns Primary School Dapto, Term 4 Beth Anderson, Youth Off the Streets Farmborough Heights. The committee is: Kathy D'Souza and Jodie Howard, Nazareth Primary School.

Sub Branch meetings will be held in the Macarthur region in Term 2 and in Wollongong in Terms 3-4, with Zoom options available.

**Valerie Jones** Organiser

## Northern Suburbs Sub Branch

The Northern Suburbs Sub Branch takes in schools, colleges and early childhood centres in the Chatswood, North Sydney, Roseville and Mosman areas.

The Sub Branch meeting was held at the North Sydney Hotel on Monday 20 February, welcoming Sue McKay as the new organiser for the Sydney Catholic Schools in the area.

Northern Suburbs is in something of a rebuilding phase having lost a number of long-standing reps due to retirement over the previous 12 months.

A hybrid (Zoom option) for meetings will also be available. Future meeting dates for Northern Suburbs Sub Branch, to be held at the North Sydney Hotel, are: Term 2: Tuesday 9 May, Term 3: Wednesday 26 July, Term 4: Tuesday 24 Oct.

The focus of Sub Branch for the remainder of 2023 will be to increase its participation levels and maintain the intensity of the current campaign for salary justice.

**Anna Luedi** President

## Central West Sub Branch

The Central West Sub Branch takes in schools, colleges and early childhood centres in Bathurst, Lithgow, Orange and Wilcannia-Forbes.

The Central West Sub Branch meeting was held in Forbes on Friday 24 February.

The meeting welcomed Donna Widdison, Organiser from the Parramatta Office who has replaced Ann-Maree McEwan, and Pat Devery, who has replaced Marilyn Jervis as Organiser for Wilcannia-Forbes.

Donna was elected as Returning Officer and the following were re-elected unopposed: President - Louise Hughes, St John's Senior College Dubbo, Deputy President - Peter Nunn, St Laurence's Primary School Forbes and Secretary - Nicole Downey, St Mary's Primary School Orange.

New school Reps were welcomed: Julian Stewart, James Sheahan Orange, Robert Kreuzberger, MacKillop College Bathurst and Renae Marjoram, MacKillop College Bathurst.

Discussion centred around the slow progress in the negotiations for a new Catholic Systemic Schools Enterprise Agreement and the failure of the Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst (CEDB) to negotiate in good faith for improvements to the Work Practices Agreement (WPA).

It also appears that the CEDB schools are not complying with Clause 31.1 of the current enterprise agreement in relation to 30 minutes uninterrupted meal break. Members would like advice on how this might be best addressed.

There was significant discussion around the need to repeal the artificial wage cap which has suppressed public sector wages and has had a flow on effect to the non-government school sector.

Sub Branch passed a motion to contact each of the candidates at the March state election for the seats of Dubbo and Barwon to establish if they would support legislation to scrap the cap. Members were advised of their position prior to the election.

**Pat Devery** Professional Engagement Coordinator

## Cumberland Sub Branch

The Cumberland Sub Branch includes schools, colleges and early childhood centres in Parramatta, Mt Druitt, Castle Hill, Marsden Park, Blacktown and nearby suburbs.

The Sub Branch met on 20 February at Club Blacktown, a new venue aimed at providing a more central location for our members and Reps. It was great to see new faces from different schools and sectors and engagement on all that is union.

As with all the first meetings of the year, there were numerous administrative matters to get through.

However, the focus was on members' issues halfway through Term 1. As usual workload was top of the agenda, exacerbated by teacher shortages and illness.

Reps shared stories of how their schools were responding to the problem, with some schools making matters worse while others offering solutions to mitigate workloads, such as pupil free days, cancellation of meetings, and days in lieu. All Reps were encouraged to review the practices at their schools, audit activities and demands and work with their chapters to minimise workload intensification.

The Sub Branch also received a request from the Labor candidate for Parramatta, Lord Mayor Donna Davis, wanting to meet our members to listen to their concerns and the issues they are experiencing in their schools.

Davis unpacked Labor's education policy, referring to the need to remove the wages cap, address shortages in schools, improve recruitment of graduates to the profession and the retention of experienced staff.

Our members appreciated her gesture, and their questions were precise and targeted, tapping straight into the heart of their issues: workloads, mental health, professional development and pay.

While she admitted that she doesn't have a background in education and does not have all the answers, she showed authentic empathy towards the concerns expressed by our teachers and support staff.

Congratulations to the Cumberland Sub Branch committee elected for 2023: President, Robert Paluzzano, Deputy President, Anthony Leons Downs, Secretary, Arietta Compton, Committee, Jennifer Tait/Blake Waters. Sub Branch meetings have been scheduled on Mondays for 15 May, 31 July and 6 November at Club Blacktown. Where Reps cannot attend, we encourage them to invite other members to attend to represent their chapters.

**Lubna Haddad** Organiser/Cumberland Sub Branch Convenor



**Lansdowne Sub Branch**

The Lansdowne Sub Branch takes in schools, colleges and early childhood centres in the Fairfield, Liverpool, Georges Hall, Campbelltown and Bankstown area.

New tedious proformas emerging in Sydney Catholic schools that require teachers to answer such questions as: ‘What capabilities and practices are evident in the performance of your role?’ and ‘How do you know, beyond self-reflection, that you have achieved elements of your role?’ And, to choose teacher standards aligned with two ‘SMART’ goals.

IEU to prosecute the removal of this superfluous documentation. There is overlap with NESAs requirements for maintenance of accreditation.

Formally brief introductory sessions with groups of parents are now developing into P&T style individual interviews in some schools. Teachers are being asked to schedule meetings with all parents. This is unnecessary additional workload that does not serve teaching and learning, but saps teacher energy and time at the beginning of the school year.

SCS failing to register PD that occurs during allocated PD days. Teachers missing out on registrable hours. School leadership needs assistance to register PD. Two hours of mandated training required to administer test as it is now online. Some schools not releasing teachers to undertake the training. IEU to ensure that teachers are released to undertake such requirements.

**James Jenkins-Flint** (IEU)

**James McFarlane** Branch President All Saints Catholic College Casula

**North West Sub Branch**

The North West Sub Branch includes schools, colleges and early childhood centres in Armidale, Tamworth and around the New England area.

The Branch AGM was held at Armidale Bowling Club on 24 February.

Several delegates reported that the start of the year felt more like a typical Term 4 given the

demands on everyone’s time. Despite this, some school managers seemed to think that they will get the best out of their exhausted staff by re-issuing Codes of Conduct while advising staff that they need to be ‘on time, on task and on budget’.

Concerns were raised about the provision of release time in Catholic systemic primary schools, including whether early career teachers were receiving their allocated release as prescribed in the Work Practices Agreement in their first and second year of teaching. Also, whether executive staff were receiving their allocated release or whether this was being surrendered to cover classes or provide support for other teachers.

Some secondary school chapters reported that their schools were increasing release time for teachers in an effort to address workload pressures as well as having teachers underload in order to cover staff absences. Such staffing efforts are to be applauded.

Questions were asked about support staff undertaking playground supervisions. The IEU does not oppose this and many of our members are happy to take on the extra work, but there are conditions and they are clearly articulated in the Catholic Systemic Schools Enterprise Agreement (Clause 13.1):

“Only general employees in the classroom and learning support services or school administrative services streams may be required to perform playground supervision, provided the employer has developed and implemented a playground supervision policy in consultation with the union. Such a policy must contain provisions that: (a) specify the levels of training to be provided to general employees (b) ensure appropriate levels of support and assistance, and (c) recognise that the introduction of playground supervision should not increase existing workloads of general employees without commensurate increases in their paid hours of work, unless playground supervision takes the place of another of the general employee’s tasks.”

Congratulations to the North West Sub Branch committee elected for 2023: President, Libby Lockwood, Deputy President Denise McHugh and

Secretary Fiona O’Neill. Additional committee members were: Judy Miller, Dale Cain, Kara Spicer and Teresa Boyd.

Our Sub Branch meetings have been scheduled as follows: Term 2: 12 May, Tamworth Hotel, Term 3: 28 July, Armidale Bowling Club, Term 4: 10 November, Tamworth Hotel. Where Reps cannot attend we encourage them to invite other members to attend to represent their chapters.

**David Towson** IEU Assistant Secretary  
North West Sub Branch Convenor

**Southern Suburbs Sub Branch**

The Southern Suburbs Sub Branch takes in schools, colleges and early childhood centres in Campsie, Kingsgrove, the Sutherland Shire and Cronulla.

Did it rain? Did it ever! It was practically biblical. The Zoom attendees at the Southern Sydney Sub Branch missed out on floating back home but along with their in-person colleagues were able to express their concerns regarding increasing workloads and additional demands.

Among the 16 Reps there were reports of increased expectations on members to attend open days, barbecues, meet and greets, and in one school a Friday cocktail evening.

Additional/excessive sport commitments and camp attendance has, however, had seen days in lieu being offered in some secondary schools to encourage voluntary participation.

Some schools reported successful ‘offsetting’ of additional hours requests. There were examples of open days being reclassified as twilight meetings and some schools having shorter or postponed meetings.

Schools experiencing restructure reported having extra open days. Meetings lengths and frequencies were a mixed bag across the sector. The representatives from AIS schools suggested that a focus on improving conditions might encourage greater union involvement.

**Josef Dabbs** Organiser



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# Super's back in the news



**Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers has announced some potential changes to our \$3.3 trillion, world-class superannuation system. He said, "So the fundamentals won't change – the tax concessionality will still be there, but we do need to consider whether we can afford the degree of tax concessionality for people who've got very big balances". Importantly, he has proposed a new definition for superannuation which goes to the core of our compulsory retirement savings system. It is, "The objective of superannuation is to preserve savings and deliver income for a dignified retirement, alongside government support, in an equitable and sustainable way".**

Let's look at the key words, "preservation", "equity", "sustainability" and "dignity".

"Preservation" means that super money is for one purpose only – retirement income! It is locked away until a worker reaches a certain age and meets certain criteria. It is not the government's money and not a slush fund for governments to use because they have not provided adequate, affordable housing for example.

It is not a slush fund for pandemic emergencies although there is a provision for the release of super if serious illness and/or financial hardship can be established by the applicant. Under the previous government this principle was breached when the LNP allowed the withdrawal of up to \$20,000 during the corona virus pandemic and their proposed desperate attempt to woo voters with a \$50,000 withdrawal for the purchase of property before the last election. Based on modelling of Industry Super Australia, a 30-year-old who took out \$20,000 during the pandemic would have up to \$80,000 less in retirement. The proposed definition will cement the idea of "preservation" into law and would serve to hinder any future governments from using super as their personal slush fund.

"Equity" is embedded in Aussie industrial law and goes to the principle of all superannuants being treated equally. Currently there is a glaring inequity based

on gender as women on average retire with a much lower retirement benefit than their male counterparts. Measures such as attaching super to paid maternity leave and equal pay for equal work would help fix this clearly inequitable arrangement. And is it equitable that a wealthy individual with a multi-million Self-Managed Super Fund (SMSF) should enjoy the same tax benefits that lower balances attract?

"Sustainability", like equity, aims to ensure that the Aussie retirement system can grow and last well into the future. And to do this it must provide tax incentives for individuals to save for their retirement, but at the same time ensure that superannuation is not being used for wealth building, tax avoidance and family legacies for the very wealthy. Building large inheritances is not the purpose of superannuation and if the tax arrangements tilt too much in this direction it can affect the sustainability of super in the future.

"Dignity" in retirement is something all workers aspire to. It goes to adequacy and security in knowing that after a lifetime of contribution to the workforce, society and super, the retirement balance is enough to produce an income to allow an individual or couple to live well. And as the super account is drawn down, government support is available via the age pension. A glorious retirement to you!

So the proposed structural reforms are reasonable, responsible and long-overdue. A three-million-dollar cap for tax concessions which should apply to each member of a married couple seems reasonable to me. Let's hope our world-class retirement system continues to grow and prosper along with its millions of members!

**Bernard O'Connor**  
(former Company Secretary NGS Super)

**ngs  
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### Assistant Secretary

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Parramatta: Level 2, 18-20 Ross Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 8202 8900

Newcastle: 8-14 Telford Street, Newcastle East NSW 2302 4926 9400

Lismore: Unit 4, Lismore Professional Centre, 103-105 Molesworth Street, Lismore NSW 2480 (temporarily closed due to flood damage, call the IEU on 8202 8900)

Canberra: Units 11 & 12, 3-5 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600 6120 1500



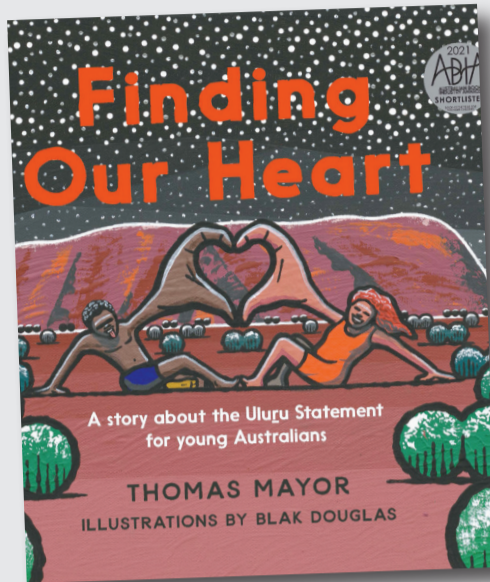
# Giveaways



## Our Members Be Unlimited

Author: Sam Wallman  
Publisher: Scribe Publications

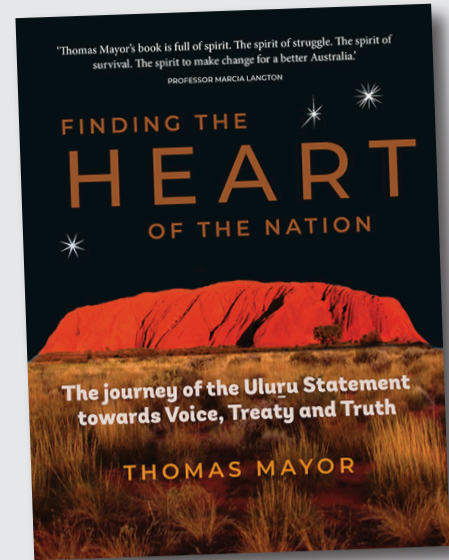
An original and visually powerful exploration of unionism. In our current political climate, people are looking for answers — and alternatives. The promise of unions is that their 'members be unlimited': that they don't belong to the rich, the powerful, or special interests, but to all workers. With a dynamic and distinctive art style, and writing that's both thoughtful and down to earth, *Our Members Be Unlimited* serves as an entry point for young people or those new to these notions of collective action, but also as an invigorating read to those already engaged in the struggle for better working conditions — and a better world.



## Finding Our Heart

Author Thomas Mayor  
Illustrator: Blak Douglas  
Publisher: Hardie Grant Books

"When we all came together at Uluru, we invited all Australian people to accept our voice and culture as a gift." Can you help us find the heart of the nation? A book for young people about understanding Australia's past, so we can have a shared future.



## Finding the Heart of the nation

Author Thomas Mayor  
Publisher: Hardie Grant Books  
This is a book for all Australians.

Since the Uluru Statement from the Heart was formed in 2017, Thomas Mayor has travelled around the country to promote its vision of a better future for Indigenous Australians. He's visited communities big and small, often with the Uluru Statement canvas rolled up in a tube under his arm.

Thomas believes that we will only find the heart of our nation when the First peoples – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders – are recognised with a representative Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

"Thomas's compelling work is full of Australian Indigenous voices that should be heard. Read this book, listen to them, and take action." – Danny Glover, actor and humanitarian.



Email entries to [giveaways@ieu.asn.au](mailto:giveaways@ieu.asn.au) with the title of the book you would like to receive in the subject line. Write your name, membership number and postal address in the body of your email. All entries must be received by 16 June 2023.

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