

# Vale John Quessey

## IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary 2012-2019



*Clockwise from top left: With ACTU President Michele O'Neil; addressing a rally in 2017 for better wages and conditions for teachers; presenting the Teachers are Teachers early childhood teacher campaign to NSW Labor's then shadow Education Minister Carmel Tebbutt; and receiving a Unions NSW scroll of honour in 2020 with, from left, Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey, Unions NSW President Judith Kiejda and then Opposition Leader, now Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese*

### The IEU is deeply saddened by the passing of former Secretary John Quessey on Sunday 10 December.

John joined the Independent Teachers Association (now the NSW/ACT Branch of the IEUA) as a student member in 1975. He was a teacher at St Pius X Chatswood from 1976 to 1994, where he taught English, history, art and general studies and was also a subject coordinator and year coordinator.

John's concerns for the rights and professional interests of teachers led him to a deep interest in the union and its policies. Alongside his teaching career, he became a Chapter Rep, Chapter Chairperson then President of the union's Northern Suburbs sub branch from 1984 to 1987.

John became a member of the union's Executive in 1987. He was Vice President Non-Systemic from 1987 to 1989 and President from 1989 to 1994.

In 1995, John joined the union's staff as an Organiser, becoming Assistant Secretary in 2004. In 2012 he became Secretary of the NSW/ACT Branch until 2019.

During his tenure as Secretary, John led highly successful campaigns for pay rises and improved working conditions in the Catholic systemic sector in 2013-14 and 2017-18, with the latter taking out the ACTU's Campaign of the Year Award 2018. He spearheaded the 2012 "Teachers are Teachers" campaign for pay parity for university-trained early childhood teachers

with primary school teachers which, which was finally resolved with considerable success in 2022. He had a keen interest in professional issues affecting the everyday lives of teachers and supported the expansion of the union's professional development program for members.

John was Federal President of the national union from 2014 to 2019, and a member of the Unions NSW Finance and Governance Committee.

Most recently he was appointed to the Board of NGS Super in 2020 as a Trustee Director and remained on the Board until 2023, following earlier periods during which he had also been a board member.

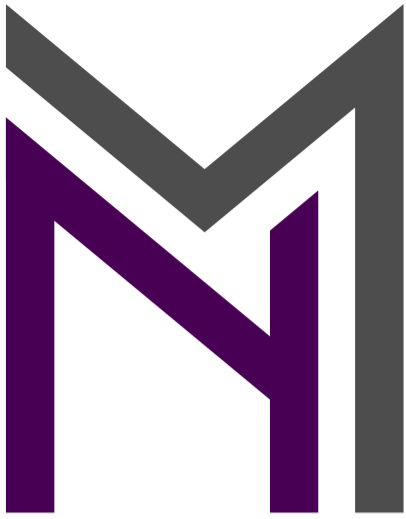
John was a keen theatregoer with an

abiding love of Shakespeare, he appreciated a fine wine and loved to cook and entertain at home. He enjoyed contributing to union publications and was known for his rousing speeches. John was also handy with the tools, rebuilding a weekender in the mountains as well as renovating the family home.

The second of nine children, John was born in Sydney on 26 December 1954. He is survived by his wife Magda, children Alexis and Josh, and five grandchildren.

The IEU appreciates John's legacy to both the union and the profession. We extend heartfelt condolences to John's family, friends and loved ones.





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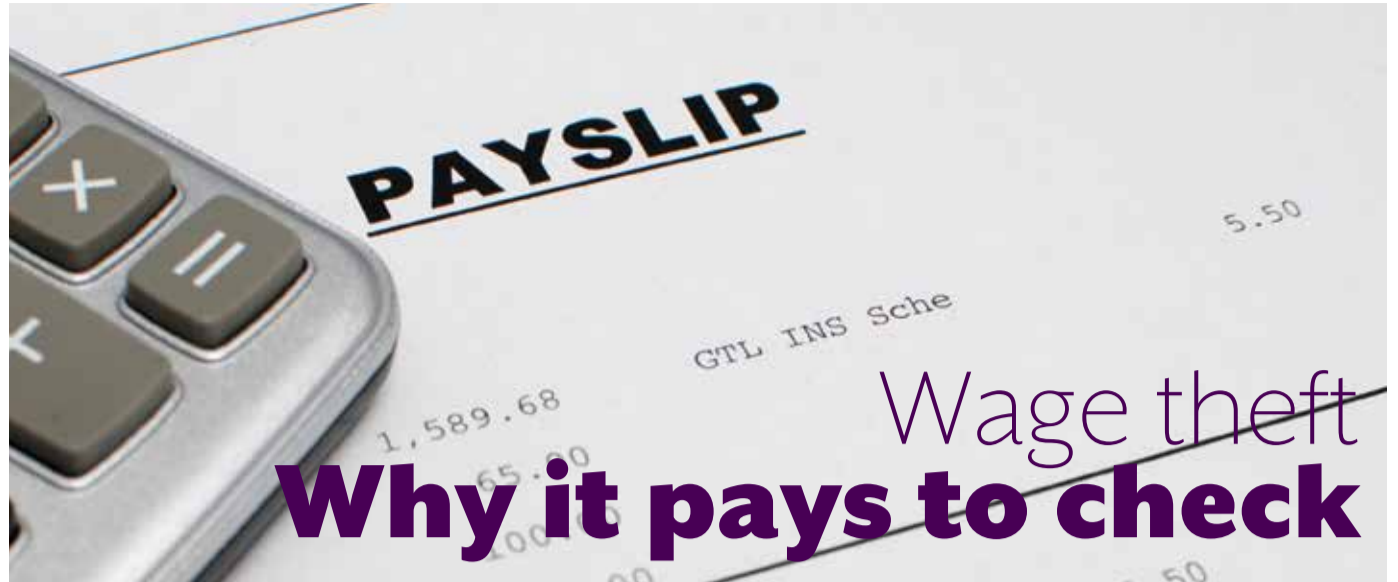
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# Wage theft Why it pays to check

**Amanda Hioe**

Industrial Coordinator



**What do Celebrity chef George Calombaris, 7 Eleven, Caltex, Pizza Hut, Domino's, and Red Rooster all have in common? They are just some of the prominent Australian businesses that have been entangled in cases of wage theft.**

Pay-related problems are pervasive nationwide, affecting both large and small employers, and schools are no exception.

Each year, the IEU recovers about \$2 million in underpayment for its members.

Despite the rise of sophisticated software and systems, payroll issues are still quite common. These problems typically stem from administrative or clerical errors and can manifest as:

- overpayments: where an employee receives more than they are entitled to under the relevant contract or applicable industrial instrument (such as an award or enterprise agreement)
- underpayments: where an employee receives less than their entitlements pursuant to a contract or applicable industrial instrument (such as an award or enterprise agreement).

### Underpayment

Instances of underpayment often arise from errors such as incorrect classifications, failure to recognise prior service, or inaccuracies in the commencement date leading to miscalculations of leave entitlements.

Identifying these issues can be challenging, requiring a thorough analysis of the employee's work history and a

comprehensive understanding of the relevant industrial instrument. The IEU encourages members to consult with their IEU organiser if they suspect discrepancies in their pay.

The time limit for the recovery of owed funds is six years from the date the money was due.

### Overpayment

Overpayments may be the result of human errors such as inaccurate data entry, misapplication of leave, or duplicate payment of allowances.

When employers, or even former employers, discover overpayments, they typically notify the employee and seek to recover the overpaid monies.

As with underpayments, the time limit for the recovery of owed funds is six years from the date the money was due.

In cases where a genuine mistake by the employer results in overpayment, the employer has the right to recover the funds from current or former employees.

Typically, the employer initiates this process by issuing a letter to the employee, detailing the alleged overpayment. If the employee refuses to repay, the employer can pursue legal avenues to recover the funds.

Most enterprise agreements made with the IEU outline specific steps for an employer to follow in the process of recovering overpayments. Generally, the process of recovery will involve the following steps:

1. An employer is obliged to investigate the alleged overpayment.
2. The employer must notify the employee of the overpayment and provide evidence derived from their investigation.

3. The employee then verifies the alleged overpayment (including confirming the amount in question).

4. If the employee agrees that there is an overpayment, the employee and employer establish an agreement for the employee to repay the monies owed.

The IEU plays a pivotal role in verifying allegations of overpayments. In some instances, the IEU has found that the reported overpayment did not occur. In other cases, the IEU has identified discrepancies in the alleged amount of overpayment.

### Deductions

Where an overpayment has been established, the employer cannot simply deduct the monies from the employee's pay. The *Fair Work Act* imposes a strict requirement for the employer to obtain the employee's authorisation to deduct monies from their wages. Failure to secure such authorisation would constitute a breach of the Act, exposing the employer to significant penalties.

### Always check and ask for help

To avoid any of the above, it is always advisable to check your pay and payslips regularly. If you receive a notification from your employer that you have been overpaid, you should always ask for evidence and confirm that the overpayment is correct. As an IEU member, you can get help from your organiser.

## Teachers and support staff at St Lucy's reject insulting pay offer

**IEU members at St Lucy's School in Wahroonga are feeling undervalued and underwhelmed by the recent pay proposal presented to them by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS).**

The employer is proposing to move its staff off the now expired Model C Catholic independent schools agreement and onto a single enterprise agreement through the AIS.

What does this mean? Teachers and support staff would not only be paid far below their colleagues in Catholic systemic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay (where St Lucy's is located) but the pay would also be substantially lower than the agreed-upon rates in Model C Catholic independent schools.

Whatever way you look at this offer, it is insulting. It neither reflects nor rewards the complex nature of work for both teachers and support staff at this school which educates and supports primary school and high school students with disabilities.

Teachers and support staff at St Lucy's School operate within more intricate and challenging environments

compared to other institutions within the Model C system or the Catholic Schools Broken Bay diocese and it is simply unacceptable that staff should be worse off under the new proposal.

IEU members at St Lucy's feel disappointed and undervalued. "There is only so much love we can give," one member said. "At the end of the day, we cannot pay our mortgage with love."

IEU members at St Lucy's have unanimously passed a Chapter Motion demanding a pay structure that reflects the reality of its members' hard work and dedication – not one that undervalues them and fails to take into account cost-of-living pressures and industry standards in similar workplaces.

The Chapter is requesting that the current offer be reviewed and an updated offer be put to the union urgently, with Model C pay and conditions as a bare minimum.

**Katie Camarena** Journalist

# Pay rises all round

**Carol Matthews**  
Secretary



**As 2023 draws to a close, the IEU has achieved improved pay and conditions for many members.**

## Catholic systemic schools enterprise agreement

After our long Hear Our Voice campaign, which included joint industrial action with the NSW Teachers Federation, the IEU has finally achieved a new enterprise agreement for more than 25,000 teachers and support staff employed in 600 NSW and ACT Catholic systemic schools.

The agreement will apply to employees in all dioceses except Broken Bay (who are covered by a separate agreement) and will be in place until October 2024.

Benefits include:

- Teacher salary increases in NSW of between 8% and 12% from October 2023
- Teacher salary increases in the ACT from August 2023 with members receiving increases of 11%-19% between 2023 and 2025
- General employee salary increases of at least 6.5% and up to 20% over 12 months
- Improved parental leave for both mothers and their partners.

Members in the ACT also received significantly improved paid parental leave from 14 weeks to 24 weeks for primary carers from January 2024. The enterprise agreement was overwhelmingly endorsed in a 90% yes vote of employees in mid-November and NSW dioceses generally paid the teacher

pay increases in November, backdated to October. In the ACT pay rises were paid from August this year. All support staff should also have received the back pay by November.

While the IEU is proud of its achievements in these negotiations, we will continue to work with members, employers, and governments to address the workload issues which have contributed to the ongoing staff shortages across the profession. Focus areas will include streamlining compliance measures and reporting, simplifying teacher registration and reducing extra-curricular activities. Improved support for early career teachers and their mentors is also important.

## Broken Bay Diocese

Both teachers and support staff received an 8% pay rise in Broken Bay from October 2023 as a result of the provision in the Broken Bay Enterprise Agreement committing the Diocese to match increases for teachers in other NSW dioceses for both teachers and support staff in Broken Bay. This meant that, in addition to pay rises effective from January, support staff received an 8% increase in October rather than the 4% increase in July received by support staff in other dioceses. Teachers and principals will remain on salaries 1.5% higher than those applying in other NSW dioceses.

## Catholic independent schools

The union has been campaigning for pay rises for teachers and support staff in around 35 Catholic independent schools, divided into three groups known as Model A, Model B and Model C. IEU was reluctant to settle new enterprise agreements for teachers until the NSW

Government and Catholic systemic settlement for teachers was known and we were also seeking to match the increases achieved by support staff in Catholic systemic schools.

## Our strategy proved correct

In November this year we finally received satisfactory offers from employers who flowed on the improvements achieved by members in Catholic systemic schools.

Although the settlement was slightly different for each group, in each case there is a substantial increase in teacher pay and the traditional premium in relation to government teacher pay rates has been maintained.

Support staff will also receive significant annual increases, with many classifications receiving extra top-up back pay to reflect the increases in support staff rates in Catholic systemic schools.

The IEU understands most, if not all, Catholic independent schools have already paid these agreed increases to staff. We expect schools will ask staff to vote on the new enterprise agreements early in Term 1.

## Christian schools

The IEU reached agreement with a group of about 20 NSW Christian schools represented by the Association of Independent Schools to flow on the NSW Department/Catholic systemic teacher pay rates from February 2024.

Staff endorsed the new multi-enterprise agreements for teachers and support staff in mid-November. Teachers will receive increases of 8-12% from February. Negotiations are continuing with Christian schools represented by Christian Schools Australia.

## Secure Jobs Better Pay

### Fixing the rules of fixed-term contracts

**Over the past 12 months, the Federal Labor Government has initiated a series of workplace reforms aimed improving pay and job security for working people.**

The first tranche of these new laws, known as the Secure Jobs Better Pay Amendment, passed Parliament in 2022.

The changes include new rules designed to restrict the use of fixed-term contracts, and these came into effect on 6 December 2023.

#### What is a fixed-term contract?

Fixed-term contracts are contracts of employment covering a set time period with a specific end date. At the expiry date of the contract, the employment comes to an end.

In the education sector, fixed-term contracts are used when engaging temporary employees or temporary teachers.

#### What are the new rules?

Many IEU enterprise agreements typically impose restrictions on the use of temporary or fixed-term contracts for teachers. However, the introduction of the new laws mean these limitations are expanded to all employees, both in teaching and non-teaching roles, and across all sectors.

The amendments apply only in relation to new fixed-term contracts issued after 6 December 2023. The new rules prohibit ongoing use of fixed-term contracts when engaging employees by specifying certain conditions that must be met, including:

- the total period of employment under a fixed-term contract cannot be longer two years
- any fixed-term contract cannot have a term that offers an extension or renewal that is longer than two years
- the fixed-term contract cannot be extended or renewed for more than once
- if entering a new contract, it cannot be for the same or substantially similar role as previous contracts over the past two years
- when issuing fixed-term contracts, the employer must provide a Fixed Term Contract Information Statement.

#### Exceptions to the new rules

The newly enacted laws recognise the potential necessity of genuine fixed-term contracts under certain circumstances. Consequently, there are exceptions to the new rules. Restrictions on fixed-term contracts do not apply in the following situations:

- the employee earns above the high-income threshold (currently, the high income threshold is set at \$167,500);
- positions that are subject to specific government funding that exceeds more than two years but is unlikely to continue
- the employee is employed to replace another employee on leave or secondment
- the employee is employed for a specific task that requires specialised skills
- the employee is engaged under training arrangements
- the employee is employed for essential work during a peak demand period or emergency circumstances.

Based on these exceptions, the new rules on fixed-term contracts will not apply to school principals.

It is unlikely these rules will apply to promotion positions, as there is an underlying ongoing teaching contract in such cases.

#### Effect of the new rules

If an employer breaches the new rules and an exception does not apply to the fixed-term contract, the expiry date of the contract will have no effect. The contract does not terminate.

Workers are the clear winners from these new provisions introduced by the Secure Job, Better Pay Amendment. However, since these provisions are relatively new, it will take some time to see how they are implemented in practice.

If you have any concerns about how these provisions apply to your employment, please contact your Union Organiser.

## Making progress for principals

**Following the unprecedented pay rise the IEU and its members achieved in 2023, principals received an 8% increase to their salaries also backdated to the first pay period on or after 9 October. The union is also negotiating for the three enterprise agreements for Catholic systemic principals.**

As these negotiations are well under way, we anticipate voting for our principal members in early 2024. Here is the current state of play:

### 1. NSW and ACT Catholic Systemic Schools Principals Enterprise Agreement 2023:

This is the main agreement covering principals in nine dioceses (excluding Sydney Catholic Schools and the Broken Bay diocese). The IEU has reviewed the draft agreement and we look forward to finalising it in early 2024. Improvements achieved in the agreement applying to Catholic systemic school teachers and support staff will be passed on to principals (such as improvements in paid parental leave including access to paid parental leave for the non-initial primary care giver), along with amendments to the Fair Work Act arising from the Secure Jobs Better Pay Amendment. This agreement will also formalise the 8% pay increase to ensure these increases are enforceable. The proposed enterprise agreement is a 12-month agreement with a nominal expiry date of 9 October 2024.

### 2. Principals (Archdiocese of Sydney) Enterprise Agreement 2023:

This agreement applies to principals employed in Sydney Catholic Schools and largely reflects the main agreement (above) with some differences that apply to principals in this diocese only. The union is awaiting the draft agreement and anticipates it will settle soon after the main agreement. This is also a one-year agreement with the same nominal expiry date.

### 3. Catholic Schools Broken Bay Principals Enterprise Agreement 2023:

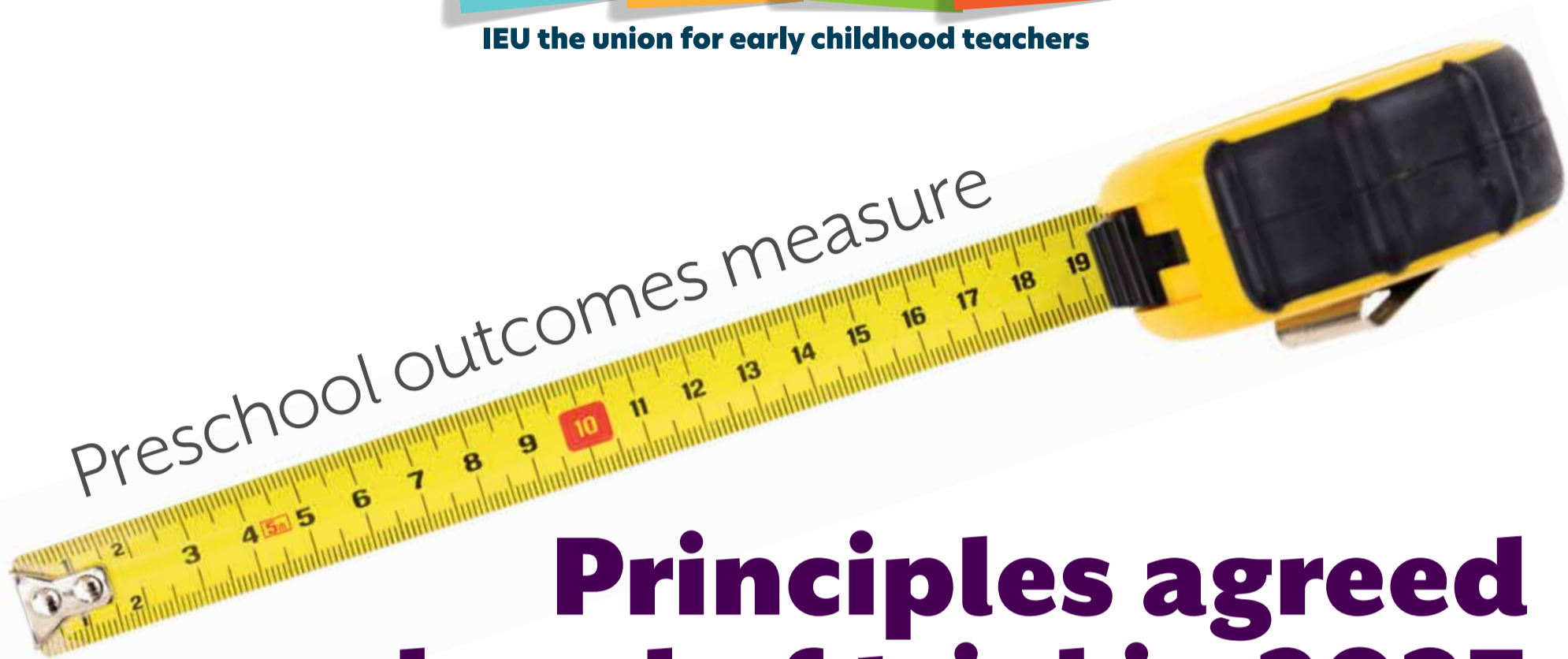
The union has met regularly with this diocese throughout Term 4, and the diocese will provide a complete draft agreement to the union by the diocese by 14 December 2023. This proposed enterprise agreement will be a two-year agreement and introduce some new provisions that apply specifically in this diocese. All staff (principals, teachers and support staff) in this diocese received a 1.5% pay rise in mid-2023, followed by an 8% pay rise in October.

Lyn Caton Principals' Organiser





**IEU the union for early childhood teachers**



# Principles agreed ahead of trial in 2025

**The IEU recently took part in a consultation regarding the Preschool Outcomes Measure, which is a key reform under the Preschool Reform Agreement. It will be trialled nationally in 2025.**

The following principles were agreed by state and territory Education Ministers:

- data collected will not be tied to funding or performance reporting
- data will be held at state and territory level but not at a national level
- all jurisdictions will be provided with an opportunity to collaborate to shape the new learning progressions and National Assessment Tool (NAT)
- implementation will support each jurisdiction's choice to use existing age-appropriate formative assessment tools or to adopt the NAT
- services will be strongly encouraged, but not mandated, to use the new outcomes measure
- learning progressions will be aligned with existing benchmarks of quality preschool
- learning progressions will be inclusive to ensure they are suitable for use with First Nations children, children of all abilities and from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

#### National Assessment Tool

This is designed to consider/determine a child's learning and development

against the agreed learning progressions. Professional development and support material will be developed to assist in the use of the National Assessment Tool (NAT) by teachers and educators. Learning progressions will initially be developed in two areas:

1. Executive function, which includes working memory, flexible thinking, self-control and mental processes that enable planning, focusing of attention, remembering instructions and multi-tasking.
2. Oral language and literacy, including the use of language in a range of modes of communication such as listening, talking, writing and reading.

Here's how the NAT fits into the planning cycle:

1. observation
2. NAT
3. plan for each child
4. child learns/develops
5. back to observation.

#### Consultation

In 2024, consultation will be held with teachers, educators, early childhood education and care (ECEC) providers, ECEC representative bodies and an expert advisory group.

Consultations will also be sought with First Nations people, culturally and

linguistically diverse groups, and regional and remote communities to develop the new national learning progressions and tool.

Consultation opportunities open in late 2023. To register your interest in participating, email: [PreschoolOutcomesMeasure@education.gov.au](mailto:PreschoolOutcomesMeasure@education.gov.au)

#### Trial begins

In 2025, the trial of the NAT begins. This will include professional development, a one-off funding contribution, including backfilling to complete assessments for learning, and project management cost for administration.

In summary, the NAT will not be tied to funding, performance reporting or assessment of teacher or centre quality and it is voluntary.

Further, states and territories can use a different tool if they choose, so any data collected will not measure the same tool nor the same outcomes. The NAT is expected to fit in with what teachers and educators are already required to do under the NQF, but requires training and documentation to implement. It will be inclusive so it can be used with all children, including those with additional needs and those from First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

#### Issue of concern

The consultants did not seem receptive to

an emphasis on developmental milestones, such as expecting that children two years of age should have a vocabulary of 50-200 words (in their home language) or they may need a referral for speech therapy and/or a developmental assessment.

Being 'a confident and capable learner' and 'expressing their needs confidently' is different for a child of three with a developmental delay compared with a typically developing five-year-old child.

How will these differences be captured? We are concerned the tool will be too open-ended and flexible, so that when used by various jurisdictions with completely different assessment tools, it will not work for its intended purpose – assessing preschool learning outcomes.

We are concerned that a change of federal government could lead to the Preschool Outcomes Measure being mandated and/or used to justify funding. After all, this is what happened with the Transition to School Statements in NSW..

**Lisa James** Organiser

## More than 100 independent schools gallop ahead in pay increases

**Following the teacher pay rises achieved by the IEU in our Hear Our Voice campaign in Catholic systemic schools and the teacher pay rises achieved by the NSW Teachers Federation in NSW government schools from Term 4, pressure has mounted on independent schools to offer additional pay rises to staff.**

Schools represented by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) are covered by multi-enterprise agreements (MEAs) negotiated in 2021 and concluding in January 2025. The AIS rejected an approach by the union earlier this year to negotiate sector-wide increases in light of the prevailing high inflation. Only a small number of schools agreed to limited pay

rises, many paid in the form of lump sum payments.

However, since the substantial teacher pay increases from October, more than 100 independent schools so far have acknowledged that to stay competitive and retain and recruit staff, they must pay above the MEA rates.

For details of the increases being paid

by schools, see our website: [ieu.asn.au](http://ieu.asn.au)

Many schools are yet to come to the table to recognise and reward their staff.

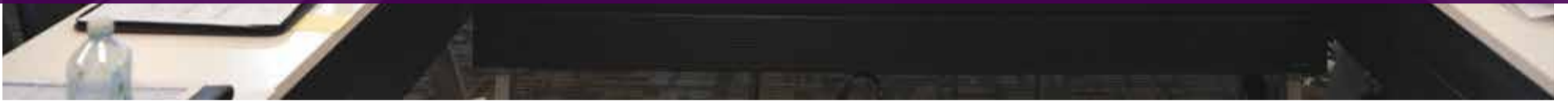
If your school is one of them, please contact your IEU Organiser in early 2024 so we can start the conversation with the school's leadership.

**Lubna Haddad** IEU Organiser





# Early career teachers learn their rights



“There’s no point sitting on the sideline complaining. I want to make sure I’m part of the solution”

The IEU’s inaugural early career teacher event on Friday 27 October provided a welcome opportunity for recent graduates to network with each other and union organisers.

The event was conceived to allow the 20 participants to explore the role of the union in schools: how the union can help them, and how they can support the union.

Topics discussed included ‘what shocked and surprised you when you started teaching’, ‘what you wished you knew before you started teaching’ and ‘your rights at work’.

As well as the Friday event, participants attended a dinner and the union’s AGM on Saturday.



**Clancy Potts, The Anglican School, Googong**

Clancy started a law degree straight from school, even though he “always wanted to be a teacher”.

“I got some advice that being a teacher was ‘a waste’.”

But Clancy knew in his heart of hearts that teaching was for him, so he disregarded that advice, switched to education, and hasn’t looked back since.

“I can make a difference in a day that someone else might not make in their whole career. I can now say that the advice that teaching is a ‘waste’ is disgusting.

“It’s become my passion to help students who may be facing challenges. To be able to assist alleviate that burden, that’s not a waste, that’s life changing.”

Canberra is the closest large city to his school, but it is in NSW, so Clancy said it is awkward to access professional development. Coming to the IEU event was a good way to connect with people from urban areas and compare notes.



**Courtney Smith, Arden Anglican School, Epping**

Courtney has wasted no time committing to unionism, she is already the IEU Rep for her school.

“There’s no point sitting on the sideline complaining. I want to make sure I’m part of the solution,” she said.

Courtney studied zoology at university and wanted to work in conservation. However, this is a difficult field to get into, and after doing some summer camps she realised she could work with teenagers.

She said teaching biology is different from what she learnt in her degree, and all her free time goes into preparing and making decisions about school.

“I’m reading the textbook the night before I teach it to the kids. There is a lot of mental fatigue for a new teacher, and a lot of admin on top of teaching.”

Courtney said she is pleased the union is advocating for more mentoring and support for early career teachers.

“I understand there is discussion about all new teachers starting on a .8 or a .6 load. That would be a great idea.”



**Adam Wagner, Trinity Catholic College, Lismore**

After 10 years in engineering, Adam decided to be true to himself, and switch to teaching.

“I think I got into engineering for the wrong reasons. I did a degree in science, and it seemed like a good idea at the time,” Adam said.

“But I was always drawn into teaching roles at my firms. I started thinking about what I really valued in life when COVID hit, and I decided to pull the trigger and retrain.

“I’m maths, science and physics trained but I’m teaching maths – that’s where the need is, and I love it. Making maths enjoyable for the typical student is great.

“Linking maths to real world situations, showing a student who wants to be a tradie how Pythagoras’ Theorem can be used on the construction site – I really enjoy that.

“On the other hand, I enjoy pushing the highly academic students to achieve their best too.”

Coming from a traditional union family, Adam attended the event to educate himself about the IEU’s role in schools.

“It’s nice to be among like-minded people and to realise you are not alone.”

The start of Adam’s career has been complicated because Trinity is operating out of the grounds of Southern Cross University following the extreme flooding experienced in Lismore last year, an extra challenge for an early career teacher.

“it’s been interesting,” he said.

**Sue Osborne** Journalist





## A woman a week: Vigil honours victims of domestic violence

As Sydney commuters rushed through Martin Place on the morning of 28 November, they were met by a confronting sight. Fifty-two empty pairs of women's shoes were scattered throughout the urban plaza — each pair representing one woman or girl killed every week in Australia in an act of domestic or family violence.

The installation was part of the Empty Shoes vigil, organised by Lou's Place, a crisis centre in Redfern, to raise awareness and honour victims. The vigil was one of many events held worldwide to coincide with the UN's '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence' campaign.

As the vigil got underway, organisers made the solemn announcement that 54 women had already been murdered this year. They needed to adjust the number that morning, after news broke that yet another woman had been killed in Australia.

Guest speaker, author and award-winning investigative journalist Jess Hill told the crowd that during just 10 days in October, six women had been killed in Australia in acts of domestic homicide.

"Some of them will be remembered. Others have barely been reported on," said Hill, the presenter of the SBS series *See What You Made Me Do*, based on her book of the same name.

"In their names, in the names of their children, their family and their friends, I stand here shoulder to shoulder with all of you," Hill said.

She told attendees it will take courage, fortitude, and innovation to address

a crisis that impacts every corner of Australian life.

"We need people to understand that, yes, this does happen to people you know, probably within your own family," she said. "This is the most corrosive social issue of our time, and it will take all of us working together to end it."

After the crowd applauded, Australian Female Country Vocalist of the Year, Amber Lawrence, took the stage.

Accompanied by singers from the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Lawrence gave a deeply moving rendition of *This is Me*.

"When the sharpest words wanna cut me down. I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown 'em out," Lawrence sang.

"I am brave, I am bruised, I am who I'm meant to be, this is me."

Despite the rain, the vigil drew a substantial crowd, including IEU officers Patrick Devery, Valerie Jones, Kate Damo and Deputy Secretary David Towson, pictured.

Jones, the Co-Convenor of the IEU's Women and Equity Committee, felt it was important the union attend the event.

"For all the things that we are, most importantly we're a union where social justice is critical and where the rights of women must be upheld," Jones said.

"We wanted to show our solidarity and support and our respect for the women who have lost their lives in NSW and across Australia in 2023 to date."

Lucy Meyer Journalist

"This is the most corrosive social issue of our time."



## Protesting placement poverty outside parliament

On a rainy afternoon in Sydney, university students assembled outside Parliament House to protest unpaid placements.

"There have been days when I just haven't eaten because I had to get to placement," said Master of Education student Callum Ward, as he addressed the rally.

The crowd responded with cries of "Shame! Shame!"

Protesters were joined by officers from the IEU, who stood alongside members of Students Against Placement Poverty (SAPP), a national grassroots collective who hosted the November 28 rally.

SAPP has members in degree programs including Education, Nursing, and Social Work.

The group is campaigning for university placements to be paid.

Speakers at the rally shared stories of hardship and desperation, with students struggling to complete their degrees and unpaid placements while making ends meet during a cost-of-living crisis.

Ward, 22, questioned why people accept that apprentices need to be paid for their labour but don't take issue with student teachers, social workers and nurses working for free while on placement.

"I'm fed up with being told this is just the way it is and if I can't handle it, I shouldn't be a teacher," Ward said.

The Macquarie University student said he has seen too many teaching students drop out at a time when teachers are desperately needed.

"As it stands, one in five permanent teachers in NSW quit within the first five years. That is a depressing statistic, but combine that with the fact that 50 per cent of Education students drop out before the end of their degree,"

he said.

"We are losing these amazing people who would make amazing teachers before they even step into the classroom."

Officers from the NSW/ACT branch of the IEU attended the rally to show their support for the students' cause.

"Given the teacher shortage crisis, we should be doing all we can to make sure as many students as possible get through their teaching degrees," IEU Deputy Secretary David Towson said.

"Having unpaid placements puts pressure on the most vulnerable people, often single mothers, who cannot afford not to earn an income and complete their teaching degree."

"We need these people to be in our schools."

Lucy Meyer Journalist

"I'm fed up with being told that this is just the way it is and if I can't handle it, I shouldn't be a teacher."





## Professional and community support sustains 40-year career

**A strong community that values its preschool and its university-trained teachers has sustained Kathy Toirkens during her 40 years at Braidwood Preschool in the Southern Tablelands.**

Kathy is also celebrating 40 years with the IEU, and she has appreciated having the union to back her up throughout her career.

Having younger cousins growing up, Kathy felt the draw of early childhood education as a school student. She went to Mitchell College of Advanced Education (now Charles Sturt University) at Bathurst to train as a teacher and started at Braidwood as a new graduate.

"I came from a small country town near Mudgee, so I was comfortable going to another small country town like Braidwood," Kathy said.

"Braidwood has a strong community spirit. They employed me and two other graduate teachers before me, so the parents and community valued trained teachers long before it was in the regulations," she said.

"It's just coming up to 50 years since the preschool was formed. The parents decided they wanted a preschool, so they

got together, raised money, gained grants, bought land and built a preschool.

"I think that shows how much the community values early childhood education. They continue to support the preschool with fundraising now.

"During the past few years my second-generation children started coming. You

emergent curriculum, more learning through play, more child-led or child-supported learning and programming.

"I think the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards are good documents. I think coming together with national regulations was a positive thing.

"In a preschool in a small country town, it can be isolating, but organisations like the IEU, Early Childhood Australia and Community Connections Solutions Australia are important to provide advice and professional development."

Kathy reflected on why she has been a continuous member of the IEU for 40 years: "I believe in the power of collective action and because I was employed by a committee of volunteer parents, I always wanted someone with professional guidance to have my back".

"The IEU also provided invaluable assistance and expertise setting up enterprise agreements for teachers at Braidwood Preschool, after the modern award came in with deplorable wage rates and conditions for early childhood teachers."

Kathy has worked as a teacher, educational leader and teacher/director, but she is now winding down with a two-day a week teacher position. She also enjoys looking after her 18-month-old grandson Ollie one day a week.

**Sue Osborne** Journalist

**"I believe in the power of collective action and because I was employed by a committee of volunteer parents, I always wanted someone to have my back".**

know the parents reflect positively on their preschool experience and want the same experience for their child."

Regarding changes in the profession over the years, regulations jump out.

"When I started there was not much at all. For programming, the themes were set out for the whole term, if not the whole year, with developmental checklists used to document the children's progress.

"There's been a move to a more

"Although having said that, I thought the first NSW curriculum framework was very good too."

Kathy is also supportive of the relatively recent accreditation requirement for early childhood teachers to undertake ongoing professional development.

"I'm a lifelong learner. I've always been willing to seek out professional development, so that's not really anything new for me.

## Committee keeps up with trends in early childhood education sector

**IEU's Early Childhood Education and Care Committee held one of its regular meetings on 24 November. The committee is comprised of practising teachers who advise the union on trends and problems they are encountering in their day-to-day working lives in preschools and long day care centres.**

Discussions at this meeting focused on the supported bargaining campaign (getting a better deal for teachers by negotiating with a group of employers), increasing workloads and the need for more support for children with additional needs.



**Back row: Natalie Leeson, Amy Martin, Megan Parkes, Michelle Thompson (IEU Vice President Early Childhood Education and Care), Elizabeth Price, and Jody Fowler. Front row: Phillipa Maher, Jane Courtney and Melinda Gambley**



## Guest speaker held military to account

**Members of the Early Childhood Education and Care Committee, along with IEU Organisers Kate Damo and Tina Smith, attended the HESTA Sydney Union Dinner in November.**

Unions with members in early childhood education, aged care and community work, (all covered by HESTA) are invited to the event.

Guest speaker was Rabia Siddique, a human rights lawyer. Having survived a

hostage crisis in Iraq, Rabia garnered global attention for making the British military accountable for silencing her about her ordeal and role in releasing captured special forces soldiers.

Standing up for justice in the face of public ridicule, Rabia's brave action in suing the British Government for sexism and racism became a catalyst for policy change to ensure a fairer workplace for women and cultural minorities in the British military.





# Where to from here: Reflections on the Voice with Aunty Mary Atkinson



**The evening of 14 October was a gut-wrenching one for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. While polling suggested a majority of Australian voters were unlikely to support the referendum for a Voice to Parliament, few pundits predicted such an overwhelming**

**defeat. Aunty Mary Atkinson, a Wiradjuri elder, was crushed. She tells of her sadness, and her hopes.**

"It really did devastate me," said Atkinson, education advocate and cultural practitioner, who campaigned for the 'yes' vote. She needed that first week of silence after the referendum to just breathe and listen. It was a time for First Nations people to take care of each other, said Atkinson, who is a founding member the IEU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.

The outcome left Atkinson questioning her purpose. She spends much of her time working to develop cultural awareness in schools as the Aboriginal Community Liaison Coordinator for the Catholic Education Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

Over 70 per cent of people in the Riverina region voted 'no'. When she heard the result, Atkinson began to doubt herself. She couldn't help but wonder if she was doing the right thing. Was she talking to people who wanted to listen? Atkinson wasn't sure anymore.

The educator went to a local school to run a professional development program and shared what she was feeling. She told attendees that her heart was heavy. They gave Atkinson a big hug, she recalls, and told her: "We are with you." It made her feel a little lighter.

## Mourning what could have been

The referendum has been a lot for the Elder to process. First Nations communities, she said, are tired of feeling they need to "keep going, keep going, keep going. How many times can you be knocked down?"

As a grandmother to 14 and a great-grandmother to two, Atkinson worries what the world will be like for the generations after her. She has seen her grandparents, her parents, herself, and now her children waging the same battles. "I don't want that for my grandchildren," she said. "I was hoping we'd be able to find a way forward."

First Nations communities are in dire straits, she said. Atkinson points to the staggeringly high incarceration rate

of Indigenous people in Australia. According to the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Aboriginal people accounted for more than 30 per cent of people in custody in September 2023.

The Voice was an opportunity to enshrine representation in the constitution, something that "can't be taken away with the stroke of a pen". Atkinson has seen that happen too many times. A new government comes in, abolishes existing programs, and goes back to the drawing board.

Reflecting on the loss of the referendum, Atkinson understands you can't get people to join you if they don't feel comfortable doing so. But Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people "haven't been comfortable for a very long time in this country", she said.

As heartbreaking as the result was, heartbreak is nothing new to Indigenous people, she said. "With that trauma, we also have resilience," she said. "We are resilient people."

**“Even though we were disappointed in the result, we had a lot of people who walked with us.”**

## The path ahead

In the wake of the referendum, it's difficult to know what the next steps are. No matter what, any efforts need to be led by First Nations people, Atkinson said. "As I always say, 'nothing for us without us'."

Much has been written about the viability of a treaty. "I don't think we'll ever see a treaty in my lifetime," said Atkinson. She believes that if Australians weren't ready for the Voice, they're not ready for a treaty, at least not

federally. Atkinson thinks treaties could be signed on a state-by-state basis, with Victoria taking the lead.

She sees truth-telling as the way forward. What's needed now, she said, is "deep listening and the sharing of our stories". The nation needs to have some tough conversations.

It's important for non-Indigenous Australians to listen and understand what Indigenous people have experienced and continue to face. She mentions the education system as an example. Until 1972, Aboriginal students in NSW could still be turned away from school under the Exclusion on Demand policy, enabling white parents to request the removal of Aboriginal students from the school.

"It's not about naming, blaming or shaming," Atkinson said, "it's just telling some truths about Australia's Black history."

## The importance of education

It may be up to the next generation to lead the way. That's why education is so important, said Atkinson. She believes Aboriginal Education Workers play a vital role in schools. "They're the face and they're the voice for community in much of our schools," she said.

Aboriginal Education Workers can advise on what can be shared and what is private to First Nations people. They can also "help the teaching staff and schools to deliver the local content of our cultural ways in a culturally safe environment", she said.

It's a challenging time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our schools, said Atkinson. Allies can offer support and kindness. "Put the hand out, and say, 'I'm here for if you want to talk or listen' and wait until the people are ready." Some people may not want to talk, she said, and that's OK.

## To those who walked beside her

Atkinson knows that many people around the country fought for the Voice. "We can take heart in that," she said. People came together, volunteered and worked hard. "Even though we were disappointed in the result, we had a lot of people who walked with us."

Atkinson is proud of the role the IEU played. "Unions help people who are struggling," she said. She saw first-hand how hard the union worked to get the vote over the line.

No matter what lies ahead for First Nations people in Australia, Atkinson said "the passion and the fire is not going to stop".

**Lucy Meyer** Journalist



# 2024 First Nations culturally and historically important dates

## January

1 Jan 1994	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)</i> commenced
25 Jan 2014	Adam Goodes named Australian of the Year
26 Jan 1838	Waterloo Creek massacre (Kamilaroi people, NSW)
26 Jan 1938	William Cooper organises Day of Mourning
26 Jan 1972	Aboriginal Tent Embassy established in Canberra
26 Jan 1988	Bicentennial Protest – 40,000 march in Sydney
26 Jan	Survival Day, Invasion Day, Australia Day, Yabun Festival

## February

5 Feb 1972	Tent Embassy Petition to Parliament
12 Feb 1965	Freedom Ride bus leaves Sydney
13 Feb 2008	National Apology to the Stolen Generations
14 Feb 2004	TJ Hickey dies sparking Redfern riots
26 Feb 1968	Lional Rose wins World Bantamweight Title

## March

21 Mar	National Close the Gap Day (3rd Thursday of March)
21 Mar	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
21 Mar 1829	Aboriginal warrior Windradyne dies (Bathurst, NSW)

## April

1 Apr 1897	Aboriginal resistance leader Jandamarra killed (WA)
15 Apr 1991	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody final report
17 Apr 1816	Appin Massacre of men, women and children (Dharawal people)

## May

1 May 1838	Slaughterhouse Creek massacre (Kamilaroi people)
24 May 2020	Destruction of Juukan Gorge rock shelters by Rio Tinto
26 May 1997	<i>Bringing them home</i> report tabled in Federal Parliament
26 May	National Sorry Day
26 May 2017	Uluru Statement from the Heart issued
27 May 1967	Referendum
27 May – 3 Jun	National Reconciliation Week
28 May 2000	Reconciliation Walk over Harbour Bridge (250,000 attend)
29 May 1992	Torres Strait Flag Islander launched

## June

3 Jun	Mabo Day (High Court Mabo Decision 1992)
5 Jun 1831	Resistance warrior Tarenorerer (Walyer) dies (Tas)
10 Jun 1838	Myall Creek Massacre
10 Jun 1957	Palm Island Strike
11 Jun 1975	<i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i> enacted
12 Jun 1988	Burunga Statement presented to Prime Minister Hawke

## July

1 Jul	The Coming of the Light festival (Torres Strait Islands)
2 Jul 1971	Evonne Goolagong-Cawley wins Wimbledon
2-9 Jul 2024	NAIDOC Week
9 Jul 1971	Aboriginal flag first flown in Adelaide

## August

4 Aug	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
9 Aug	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
14 & 28 Aug 1963	Yirrkala Bark Petitions presented to Parliament
14 Aug – 18 Oct 1928	Coniston Massacre on Warlpiri/Anmatyerr/Kaytetye lands
15 Aug 1971	Neville Bonner becomes first Aboriginal Member of Parliament
16 Aug 1975	Return of Gurindji land to the traditional owners (NT)
23 Aug 1966	Wave Hill Walk-Off (Gurindji Strike)

## September

4 Sep	Indigenous Literacy Day 2024
13 Sep 2007	Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
25 Sep 2000	Cathy Freeman wins gold in 400m
28 Sep 1983	John Pat dies in custody, prompting campaign for 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

## October

14 Oct 2023	Voice to Parliament referendum
26 Oct 1985	Uluru-Kata Tjuta title deeds returned to the Anangu people
28 Oct 1834	Pinjarra Massacre (WA)
31 Oct 1975	Proclamation of the <i>Racial Discrimination Act</i>

## November

19 Nov 2004	Cameron Doomadgee dies in custody (Palm Island)
28 Nov 2023	Senator Pat Dodson ("Father of Reconciliation") retires from Parliament

## December

1 Dec 1976	Sir Douglas Ralph Nicholls appointed Governor of South Australia
4 Dec 2000	Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Final Report released
10 Dec 1992	Redfern Park Speech delivered by Prime Minister Paul Keating
16 Dec 1976	Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act passed
23 Dec 1996	High Court handed down <i>Wik Peoples v Queensland</i> decision



### Background art

Kalisha Buchanan has lived in Lismore, Ballina, Taree and Wollongong. Kalisha's artwork is titled "Self Centred" as she likes to 'describe who I am through my art.' It is a Dreamtime Story of the Seven Sisters. How every star we see at night became who they are. And how to travel to every star.



“A government department admitting when it’s wrong is a really important part of a democratic process.”

NESA’s work in relation to teacher workload

Independent Education Union (IEU) Annual  
Saturday 28 October 2023

# NESA tackles teacher workload

**Workload is one of the biggest issues teachers face. Can the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) help lighten their load? CEO Paul Martin thinks it can.**

Recently, NESA introduced several significant reforms aimed at reducing teacher workload, but Martin acknowledges that there is still work to be done.

As the keynote speaker for the IEU’s AGM in October, Martin acknowledged that NESA played a role in contributing to teacher workload issues.

He believes it’s important teachers know that NESA has heard them. When the education authority crafts policies that create additional work for teachers, “we need to recognise what our place is in that and change the policies”.

NESA is built around stakeholder consultation, he said. “And I think a government department admitting when it’s wrong is a really important part of a democratic process.”

## Ministerial direction

NSW Education Minister and Deputy Premier Prue Car has provided NESA with a clear directive, Martin said. Anything the government body does must not increase workload.

“We need to simplify any policies we have that either create unnecessary work, or that can be used to create unnecessary work,” Martin said.

While he acknowledges NESA can and will do more to decrease the burden, he said the organisation isn’t always at fault.

“Sometimes, an employer or a teacher or a supervisor within the school interprets NESA’s requirements in ways that add workload,” he said.

NESA can help by being clear about requirements and by making sure those requirements are focused and specific.

Asked about other opportunities to reduce teacher workload, Martin said NESA intends to address professional learning issues by simplifying the process to become a Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT).

School registrations can sometimes create extra work for teachers, but Martin said NESA has “tried to simplify that already”.

Reducing workload isn’t just about removing requirements, it’s also about supporting teachers. For example, Martin believes syllabuses must have an assessment and that assessment materials should be appropriate. “And we can help with that, too,” he said.

## Expectations and assistance

State and federal governments have recognised the need to reduce teacher workload. Recently, the NSW Government released a Statement of Expectations, welcomed by the IEU.

The statement focuses on reducing teacher workload and sets out what the government expects from NESA. While governments now see the need for teachers to do less, the message hasn’t necessarily reached every school.

NESA can assist by communicating clearly, to avoid requirements being misinterpreted. One step NESA could take is setting a maximum rather than a minimum standard of compliance. “It’ll be a point of discussion,” Martin said.

The union has heard from many early childhood teachers who are struggling to gain proficiency. Many work in small

centres where they may not have a senior member of staff who can fulfill the role of supervisor.

It’s an important issue, Martin said. “I think we need to do more to assist the teachers who are feeling isolated in those environments to be supported.” NESA will be working to address accreditation and proficiency for early childhood teachers in 2024.

## Professional development

Another concern for many members is the hurdles teachers face when looking to complete accredited PD. NESA has already addressed the union’s elective PD concerns, but Martin acknowledges there are still problem areas. He said there is a wealth of PD providers, but teachers need to be trusted to identify PD, and NESA needs to recognise as many kinds as possible.

“The union welcomes NESA as the teacher accrediting authority,” IEU NSW/ACT Branch Deputy Secretary David Towson said.

“It means it’s a fairer and more consistent application of the standards of proficiency that will be applied across schools.”

Martin stresses NESA is working towards consistency not uniformity. He sees it as another workload issue. “We’ll be able to reduce workload because we’ll be clear about the expectations and then we’ll be consistent about what standards are being reached.”

Towson said: “Progress on workload issues has been made and we’ll continue to address it on behalf of members.”

# IEUA SPEAKS For a fair workplace, union reps must be protected

**IEU Reps appeared before the Senate inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill in November to share their experiences as union delegates.**

Union delegates or representatives (reps) are at the centre of fair and efficient workplaces; collective bargaining would fall apart without them. These unpaid, volunteer roles need and deserve basic rights and protections.

Long-serving IEU Reps Abbey, a Catholic high school teacher, and Eugene, a Catholic school teacher/coordinator, appeared at the inquiry to speak about how their roles underpin cooperative workplaces and what delegates need to support their workmates effectively.

Abbey and Eugene are part of a 2000-strong nationwide network of IEU Reps made up of teachers, learning aides, librarians, lab techs, early childhood professionals, school leaders and services staff. Members volunteer for these unpaid roles on behalf of colleagues and their workplace.

Workplace laws have changed dramatically in recent years with the continued decentralisation of much of the system to the enterprise level; however, the rights and protections for delegates haven’t kept pace with these changes.

While the IEU has negotiated delegates’ rights in many schools, such rights aren’t available in most Australian workplaces.

This is why we need the Closing Loopholes Bill to guarantee the rights of delegates to

undertake their role, access union training and liaise with employees and management to help solve local problems.

The system would grind to a halt if not for delegates working alongside staff and management. They play a role in:

- helping negotiate and implement collective agreements to get wages moving and improve workplace efficiencies
- consulting on proposed changes and how they will impact staff and work operations – listening to workers leads to better decision making, staff wellbeing and job satisfaction
- identifying and talking with management where there are cases of incorrect pay or workplace problems so they can be

resolved at the local level to avoid costly legal disputes, and

- participating in consultative committees and other management-employee forums to foster open communication and shared strategies to challenges such as staffing or workload.

We expect so much of workplace delegates, all they ask in return are modest changes to help them make workplaces fairer and prevent employee exploitation.

Note: *The Closing Loopholes Bill* passed Parliament on 7 December, with more reforms to be introduced in 2024.

**IEU Speaks is the voice of the Federal IEU, representing 75,000 teachers, principals and support staff across Australia.**



# Professional Engagement

## Finishing your first year of teaching?

### Are you planning to achieve accreditation at proficient teacher level? Next year is when you should be looking to finalise your proficient teacher application.

Now that you've had two full cycles of assessing and reporting, the professional work you have completed in Term 4, along with 2024 programming you've developed, should be used to form the basis of your evidence to annotate and submit next year.

Keep your eye out for IEU information sessions on accreditation in early 2024 and contact your organiser to obtain the IEU's Accreditation at Proficient Teacher Handbook and Workbook.

### Maintenance of accreditation update

A reminder to members that it can take up to 28 days for NESAs to decide on your maintenance of accreditation submission. If you require a decision to secure employment for next year, you are advised to submit immediately.

Members are reminded that they only need to work one day as a casual or part-time employee in the five-year maintenance period to qualify for an extended seven-year maintenance of accreditation period.

### Leave of absence

If you are planning on taking a break from teaching for a period of six months to five years, you should consider taking a leave of absence. Teachers with any level of accreditation can take a leave of absence.

A leave of absence may suit someone who needs a break due to illness/misadventure, taking parental leave, travel, or working in a different industry.

While on a leave of absence you do not have to undertake PD and your name will not appear on the NSW public register of teachers. You will not be eligible to teach in a NSW school. The \$100 fee is still applicable, however you may qualify for a fee waiver.

### Non-practising teacher category

NESA has introduced a non-practising accreditation category that may be of interest to members accredited at Proficient or higher in NSW who are no longer working in a school or service.

This might include non-school based roles in an education sector office, non-service based roles in an early childhood employer office, education union employees, NESAs employees, early intervention, inclusion support and university lecturers.

Non-practising teachers will remain on the NSW public register of teachers, however, they will not be required to undertake ongoing professional development and will not be eligible to teach in a NSW school. The \$100 fee will continue to apply.

### Pat Devery

Professional Engagement Coordinator

## HSC markers award and prac supervision allowance increases

In recent weeks, the IEU and the NSW Teachers Federation have reached agreements for the HSC markers award with the NSW Government and for the Professional Experience Supervision Agreement with universities.

The HSC award will increase by 4% on the 2022 rate and the professional experience agreement will increase by 4% on the 2023 rate. This is in line with the

increases to allowances achieved in the recent teacher salary negotiations in the Catholic systemic and government school sectors.

Following IEU discussions with the Council of Deans of Education it was decided to extend the current agreement, with the inclusion of the new rates, as how practicums and initial teacher education will be delivered in the future

is currently being re-imagined in the Australian Universities Accord, due out soon.

Teachers who are supervising practicum (prac) students are reminded they need to apply for the allowance at the conclusion of the prac. Where a student teacher is working with more than one supervisor, it is possible to split the allowance payment.

There is also a separate allowance available for the person who is responsible for organising the prac placement program in the school.

For more information, please contact your organiser or call us on 8202 8900.

### Pat Devery

Professional Engagement Coordinator

## Present tense State of the sector

This year ends with the international student market in fine shape, a far cry from the dark days of 2020 and 2021.

According to English Australia figures, year-to-date ELICOS commencements were up by more than 166 per cent, and overall enrolments increased by 232 per cent. Colombia is still a huge growth area, with increases of more than 500 per cent (or 16,454 students), while numbers of students from Brazil rose by 147 per cent. Numbers from China and Thailand also showed large growth.

There were signs this post-pandemic growth might be slowing, however, with visa applications edging down slightly.

The huge increase in students has not been without its problems though, not least in the housing sector, as thousands of international students join locals for dwindling housing stocks in Australia's major cities.

This, along with quality concerns about some VET colleges, has led the government to introduce additional (and long overdue) governance requirements, which will hopefully allow the nation to keep enjoying the benefits of our long-running international student programs, while mitigating exploitation.

### Real unions versus fake unions

In recent years, established trade unions such as the IEU have had to contend with competition from would-be alternative unions. Members and other workers in the sector should be extremely wary of any such organisations.

The IEU is a genuine and legally constituted trade union and, as such, it is formally registered and subject to the regulations of the *Fair Work Act*, giving it standing to appear before the Fair Work Commission (FWC) and legal protection to act on behalf of any member in the sector.

The IEU, like all unions, publishes detailed and audited statements, and we only ever act in the best interests of our members.

By contrast, fake unions are just that, organisations set up under the banner of a 'union' but not subject to the same regulatory requirements. Typically, these fake unions are registered companies, often run for profit, and so there are huge questions about where their true interests lie. Such organisations do not have any legal right of entry to workplaces, nor can they represent their members in tribunals such as the FWC.

Many fake unions got started during the pandemic, and they were often fronts for groups that opposed vaccination. Closer inspection found several had links to the conservative side of politics, and that they often made extravagant promises to potential members (such as overturning vaccine mandates), promises they were never able to fulfill. In short, these organisations would happily take the money from their 'members', but only offer a fraction of the services that IEU members enjoy.

Should you become aware of any such outfit operating in your workplace, we urge you to get in touch with your genuine union, the IEU, and let us know.

### Season's greetings

This will be the final edition of Present Tense for 2023, but we'll be back better than ever in 2024. The IEU wishes all members a wonderful festive season, and all the best for the coming year.

Kendall Warren Organiser





## School Strike 4 Climate: Out of the classroom and onto the streets

**On 17 November, the IEU marched alongside students in Sydney calling for urgent action on climate change.**

As another summer of bushfires looms, thousands of school students across the country called for an end to new coal, gas and oil projects.

Hundreds marched to Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek's Redfern office, where they held a 'teach-in' and told the government to do more.

Three climate scientists provided students around Australia with a pre-signed 'climate doctor's certificate'. The note, which students could access online, included a recommendation that students "take a sick day to protest for a sick planet".

School Strike 4 Climate is an international youth-led movement that originated in Sweden, taking its inspiration from climate activist Greta Thunberg, who began skipping school to protest in favour of climate action in 2018 at the age of 16.

The IEU spoke to students from independent schools in Sydney about why they decided to attend this year's rally.

"I just want the government to hear young voices standing against that decisions that fund coal projects," said a Year 10 student from a Catholic boys' school.

He stood alongside two classmates, one of whom shared his fears for the future. "We saw something in class, by 2100, there might be a global food shortage and half the population might not be able to eat. So I think it's really scary to think about what future generations will go through."

Two Year 10 students from a co-ed independent school have been coming to climate marches since they were in Year 6. They'd like to see bigger crowds attending.

They brought along a classmate attending his first climate rally. He'd like to see the government take concrete steps.

"I think the safeguard mechanism should be expanded to include all sectors of the

economy," said the student. While he feels that a carbon price won't be politically viable, "the next best thing is extending the safeguard mechanism to be harsher, bigger penalties, and also allow less emissions".

Many school students spoke enthusiastically about teachers covering climate change in the classroom. They believe such lessons are too infrequent and they would like more in-depth education on environmental issues.

The IEU is proud to support school students striking for the climate. "As a union, we have a responsibility not only to improve working lives, but also make the world a better place," said IEU Industrial Coordinator Amanda Hioe, who attended the rally. "We stand for the cause, and we stand with our youth."

**Lucy Meyer** Journalist

## MEMBERSHIP news

**Congratulations, you've survived 2023 and the holidays will soon be here.**

As is our usual practice we will send all members a renewal notice for 2024 in November 2023. We appreciate that you are busy, and your inboxes are overflowing, but please take the time to read the renewal notice to ensure you are not overcharged. Don't forget if you pay in full before 5 February 2024, you'll receive a one-month discount.

If any of the changes below apply to you in 2024, we need you to let us know (your employer and/or chapter Rep will not do this for you):

- changing employer, workplace, or address
- taking leave, including unpaid leave, parental or long service
- changing your workload, and
- wanting to move to alternate payment method.

If your workload is changing in 2024, if you are taking any type of leave or changing employers, we need to know (again, your employer or Rep doesn't advise us). Please return the renewal or contact us directly at [membership@ieu.asn.au](mailto:membership@ieu.asn.au) or call us on 8202 8900 – press 1.

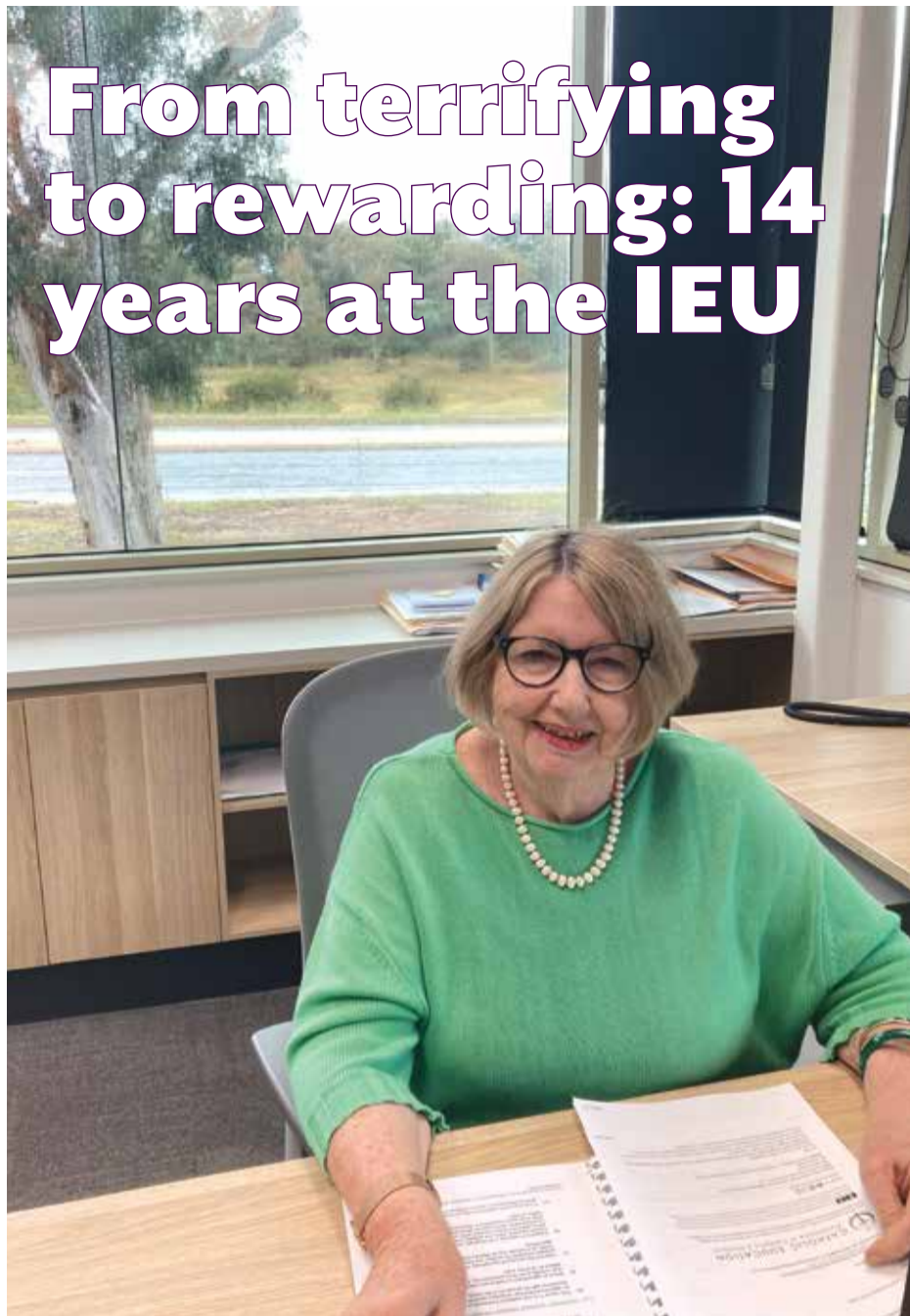
The IEU Executive has endorsed a 4% increase in subscriptions in 2024. This will take effect from 1 January 2024. This adjustment is less than the current inflation rate and equates to an additional \$20.10 per year for our top support staff rate, \$31.70 per year for top teacher rate and \$34.80 per year for principals, assistant principals, and those in promotion positions.

Operating costs are rising and to ensure we can keep offering you the best quality service, advice, and representation on all issues, including but not limited to wages campaigns and industrial issues affecting your employment and working conditions, we are forced to increase our fees.

Best wishes for the holidays,

Membership Team





# From terrifying to rewarding: 14 years at the IEU

**After 14 rewarding years as an IEU Organiser, I am soon to become a retiree, which means I'll be able to access even more benefits that my union and the greater union movement have afforded me.**

I stayed working with the union much longer than anticipated. My first experience of leading a rally terrified me to the extent that I planned to be elsewhere when that agreement came due for renewal.

In the end, my favourite day was organising and leading the industrial action for the *Hear Our Voice* campaign.

Spreading the good news of significant pay rises to my ACT and south-east NSW Catholic systemic schools has been an extremely rewarding experience.

Seeing Reps and chapters in independent and Christian schools seeking meetings with principals to request interim or higher pay increases is also impressive.

The next step is to address workloads.

Teachers work incredibly hard at school and at home, even when on leave.

A day at school for both teachers and support staff is busy, intense, demanding and often noisy.

Teachers are expected to be experts in differentiating the curriculum, in methods of teaching and learning, and in managing extreme behaviours.

It has been a privilege to work for an organisation with great leaders and exceptional teams who carry out various roles within the Branch.

Except for not liking Mondays, I have enjoyed and been challenged by all aspects of my work.

School visits, advising and supporting members, bargaining with employers, and involvement with teacher registration authorities and other unions are just some of the ways I've filled my days.

**Berna Simpson** Organiser

## A final word from Pam Smith

**Many members may have come across Pam Smith in her 28 years with the IEU, during which she wore many hats, including Assistant Secretary, Principals' Convenor and Women and Equity Committee Convenor. Here is an abridged version of her farewell speech at the IEU's AGM on 28 October.**

"Being part of the IEU family and the wider union family is such a significant part of my life and has given me many wonderful opportunities to support our members, to contribute to union campaigns and to be active for social justice, equity and inclusion.

Over the years we have seen the expansion of both employer and legislated paid parental leave, access to more flexible work arrangements, and a greater recognition of the need for fair, safe and inclusive workplaces, free from harassment and discrimination.

Prior to becoming an IEU officer in 1995, I was involved in the then IEU Women in Education Committee and attended Women's Conferences. From my first day at the IEU, Dick [Shearman, former IEU Secretary] asked me to be convenor of the Committee and since then it has been an enormous privilege to work with IEU women members and their allies, with other unions in NSW and nationally and indeed internationally.

This union has a long and strong record of support for First Nations issues, including for the Gomeroi in the Pilliga/Narrabri

area and of course in the campaign for a 'yes' vote for the Voice. A sad result in the referendum but the values of 'yes' will endure and we will continue to work with and walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve a better future.

It has been a pleasure to be a member of the IEU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee and I wish the committee well for the future.

Supporting our principal members individually and collectively has also been a highlight of my union role and I take this opportunity to acknowledge our principal members in their leadership at school, system and community levels.

The diverse and expanding role of principals has been especially highlighted by the challenges of COVID, by extreme weather events such as floods and bushfires, staff shortages, increasing compliance expectations, and also the complex economic and social pressures facing many families and communities.

It has been a pleasure during the past couple of weeks to meet via Zoom with principal members in each diocese about the enterprise agreements and there are more of these meetings to come.

I joined the union on my first day in a Catholic school and that membership has been ongoing and central to who I am and what I do. I look forward to continuing to being part of the wonderful IEU family and to being of support in any way. IEU now and forever!"



## What a year!

**Tina Ruello**  
President



**Good tidings to all. The end of the year is upon us. It has been extraordinary. The word on everyone's lips is yes. Yes, to the end of a hard-working year, to the demands placed upon us by our schools, to the difficult circumstances within classrooms and without and to righting the imbalance of family and work.**

The most considerable yes was from teachers and support staff working at Catholic systemic schools, (excluding Broken Bay Diocese, which led the way forward), who voted resoundingly yes to their enterprise agreement: 99% yes.

Finally, the drawn-out, seemingly interminable, negotiations reached a reasonable resolution. I thank members in this sector for their persistence, patience, collectivism and for doing it tough.

The union also recommended voting:

- yes, to the multi-enterprise agreements (MEA) in Model A schools, where improvement to pay rises are noted, along with shorter agreements
- yes, to Model B schools MEAs where significant pay increases are promised for teachers and key support staff, with improvements to parental leave
- yes, to Model C MEAs, where revised improvements to support staff classifications, pay increases and better parental leave entitlements, and
- yes, reluctantly, to AIS Christian schools MEAs.

A summary of a year of negotiating challenges.

If only global challenges could be settled with collective consciousness, conference, and discussion. In the light of the macro, the micro was achieved with relative ease.

Thank you for your commitment to the union, to each other, and to making things better.

Best wishes for a happy and enjoyable holiday. May your homes be filled with joy, hope and love.





30-year IEU member Martina Cooper from Waverley College celebrates with IEU Reps David Parnell and Cath Stewart



Christine Curran is acknowledged by fellow members at Calrossy Anglican School, Tamworth, for her 40 years of continuous IEU membership



Congratulations to 40-year IEU member Jennifer Gabbe of St Martha's Primary Catholic School Strathfield



Barbara Saville is acknowledged by fellow members at Queenwood School, Mosman, for her 40 years of continuous IEU membership



Rep Mark Fuller, 30-year IEU member, St John the Evangelist Catholic High School Nowra, surrounded by chapter members



Mary Hudd of St Paul's Primary School, Camden, receives her 40-year IEU membership certificate from IEU Rep Lisa Alvaro



Judith Clarke of Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Preschool celebrates her 40 years of IEU membership



Linda Reneman of St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Lane Cove, celebrates her 30 years of IEU membership with colleagues



Sophie Willis (IEU Rep) with Pietta Phillips, 40-year IEU member from St John the Evangelist Catholic High School, Nowra



40-year IEU member Anna Jaklic of St Pius Primary School, Unanderra.

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# Why is insurance attached to my super account?

**In the beginning there was no super for teachers and support staff. Then by a political miracle and a vision based on fairness, compulsory super was established for lucky NGS Super members. The initial employer contribution was a whopping 3% in 1988 when the fund was established via a trust deed. I say 'lucky' because this event was four years ahead of universal compulsory super, which became law in 1992. This early inception happened thanks to the work of the IEU and the goodwill of the Catholic and independent schools employer groups.**

As you may imagine, super was much simpler back then. Once the deed was signed and the trustee was established, rights and duties for the board followed for the benefit of the beneficiaries of the trust fund, the NGS super members.

Fundamental to the duties of the trustee was a fiduciary duty to look after the best interests of the members and their dependants. This included the prudential oversight of investments, the overall sound administration of the fund and the provision of life insurance (death cover) for members.

At the time of inception both the investment options and the insurance products were simple. Death and total and permanent disability (TPD) insurance was automatically applied to eligible member accounts at a cost of \$1 per week with death payments reducing annually to age 65.

It is widely acknowledged that the provision of insurance via industry super funds helped to address the chronic under-insurance crisis Australia faced. So, death and TPD insurance were considered to be a genuine benefit for members who most likely did not have any other insurance.

No underwriting was required and no medical evidence was needed to make things easy for eligible members. The two added bonuses were that members' premiums were taken from their super accounts, not their take-home salary, and industry funds could negotiate discounted premiums due to the large size of their memberships (group life insurance).

The insurer took the bet that the bulk of the teachers and support staff were healthy and default insurance was applied to their accounts without medical information being required.

In the very early days, only death/TPD insurance was available. Total and permanent disability insurance provided eligible members with a lump sum payment. And the conditions for eligibility for TPD were basically that the seriously ill or injured applicant would never be able to

work again in any capacity. The idea behind the payment was to assist the applicant with home adjustments, medical bills or any other expense the ill or injured member may have after leaving regular employment.

I recall receiving my first member statement as a young teacher with two small children, and I was pleased to see the substantial death cover which was then a new benefit from the super fund. The premiums were low. Much later, as a fund employee, I could see how death cover (which is now usually called life cover) assisted thousands of families through very difficult times. The insured component plus the remaining account balance is paid to the dependants of a deceased member in times of financial stress and sadness.

Income protection was automatically added to eligible members' accounts around 2001. This was another substantial benefit for members in the case of temporary illness or accident. IP insurance provides eligible members with the peace of mind to know that if they suffer an accident or illness (and the stats say most Australians will during their lifetime), they will have most of their salary paid by the insurer for up to two years.

Payments are monthly based on the medical condition of the claimant and are calculated at 80% of pre-disability salary plus 10% in super.

Your insurance is there for a very good reason and it is possible to dial up and increase your cover (subject to the insurer's acceptance) or to cancel it completely. If you do decide to cancel your insurance, and you change your mind to have it reinstated, you will have to reapply with medical evidence as acceptance is not automatic. It is decided by the insurer.

Just as super has become a huge and complex investment vehicle to grow and protect members' retirement savings, insurance has been an adjunct within super to provide extra security for members and their dependants along the path to a glorious retirement. And it is very important to understand your insurance cover to ensure that it suits your situation in life.

Best wishes for the holidays!

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



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## IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Executive

### Secretary

Carol Matthews  
Eora Nation

### Deputy Secretary

David Towson  
Eora Nation

### Assistant Secretary

Lyn Caton  
Dharug Nation

### Assistant Secretary

Position vacant

### President

Tina Ruello  
Catherine McAuley Westmead  
Dharug Nation

### Deputy President

Libby Lockwood  
St Joseph's Primary School West Tamworth  
Kamilaroi Nation

### Vice President Non Systemic

Helen Templeton  
St Scholastica's College Glebe  
Eora Nation

### Vice President Systemic

Position vacant

### Vice President ECS

Michelle Thompson  
Shore Preparatory School  
Early Learning Centre Northbridge  
Eora Nation

### Vice President Support Staff

Kylie Booth-Martinez  
Assumption Catholic Primary School  
and St Stanislaus College Bathurst  
Wiradjuri Nation

### Vice President ACT

Angela McDonald  
St Thomas Aquinas Primary School  
Charnwood  
Ngunnawal Nation

### Financial Officers

Denise McHugh  
NESA Liaison Officer  
Kamilaroi Nation

Suzanne Penson  
MacKillop College Port Macquarie  
Birpai Nation

### General Executive Members

Christine Wilkinson  
St Joseph's Catholic College East Gosford  
Darkinjung Nation

Sarah Gardiner  
St Paul's Catholic College Booragul  
Awabakal Nation

Anna Luedi  
Marist Catholic College North Shore  
Eora Nation

Glenn Lowe  
St Joseph's Catholic High School  
Albion Park  
Dharawal Nation

Liz Heggart  
Penola Catholic College Emu Plains  
Dharug Nation

Peter Moore  
Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer  
Tharawal Nation

Simon Goss  
Wiradjuri Nation

Nicole Downey  
St Mary's Catholic Primary School Orange  
Wiradjuri Nation

Amanda Wood  
St Aloysius Primary School Chisholm  
Awabakal Nation



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### Our locations

Sydney: 485-501 Wattle Street, Ultimo NSW 2007 8202 8900

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

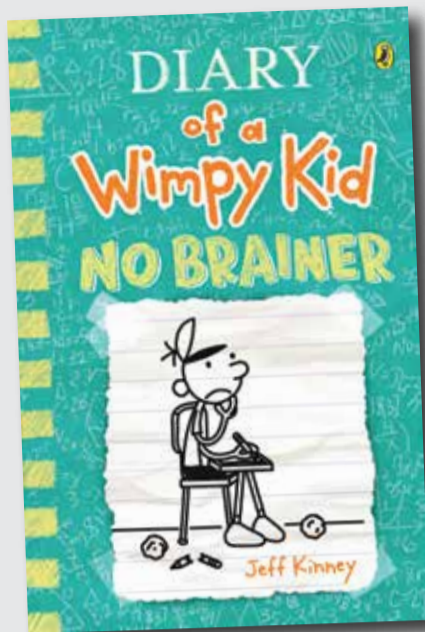


## Alice-Miranda and the Christmas Party

Author: Jacqueline Harvey

Publisher: Penguin

Join Alice-Miranda in a delightful Christmas adventure. Christmas is almost here, and Alice-Miranda and her closest friends are celebrating early at Highton Hall. But it's not all gingerbread, parties and present shopping. There are mysteries to be solved! Why are Christmas decorations disappearing and local stores empty of festive treats? What long-kept family secret does Alice-Miranda discover? More importantly, what will she do about it?

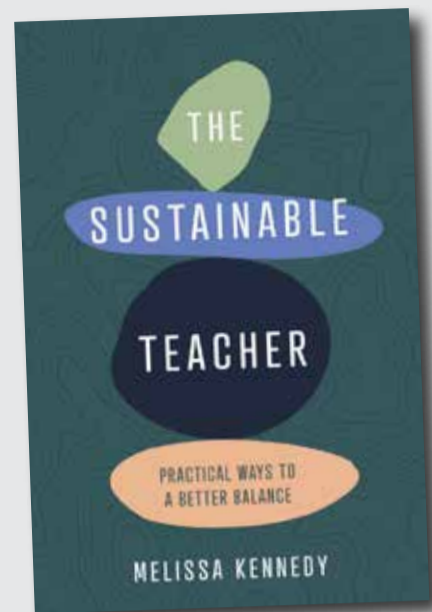


## Diary of a Wimpy Kid No Brainer

Author and illustrator: Jeff Kinney

Publisher: Penguin

In No Brainer, book 18 of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series from #1 international bestselling author Jeff Kinney, it's up to Greg to save his crumbling school before it's shuttered for good. Up until now, middle school hasn't exactly been a joyride for Greg Heffley. So when the town threatens to close the crumbling building, he's not too broken up about it. But when Greg realises this means he's going to be sent to a different school than his best friend, Rowley Jefferson, he changes his tune. Can Greg and his classmates save their school before it's shuttered for good? Or is this the start of a whole new chapter for Greg?



## The Sustainable Teacher: Practical Ways to a Better Balance

Author: Melissa Kennedy

Publisher: Amba Press

Teaching is a profession that includes moments of joy, fulfillment and deep engagement, but challenges and demands within the educational world can often lead to burnout.

The Sustainable Teacher is recommended for readers who want to transform their approach to teaching through growth and self-empowerment. Teachers at all career stages will find inspiration to navigate their teaching journey with more energy, enthusiasm and resilience.



To enter the draw, send an email 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 29 January 2024.

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