

# NewsExtra

6 February 2024

## Vote YES – Model A MEAs

Following a protracted period of bargaining, the Model A schools multi-enterprise agreements (MEAs) have been finalised by agreement between schools and the IEU. Schools have recently distributed the proposed MEAs for teachers and support staff to consider before a formal vote of employees is conducted. The new MEAs will have a nominal expiry date of 31 December 2025.

### Pay increases

The percentage pay rises achieved are as follows:

Teachers	Support staff
2% to be backdated to October 2023	additional increases for Levels 4C, 5 and 6 backdated to July 2023
5% February 2024	5% January 2024*
5% February 2025	5% January 2025

*\*additional increases to apply to general operational staff and maintenance and outdoor staff*

Teachers will continue to be paid at a premium compared to NSW Government and Catholic systemic teachers – see the table below:

Classification	Current rates Model A	Proposed Model A rates October 2023	Proposed Model A rates February 2024	NSW Government and Catholic systemic rates October 2023	
Band 1	85,158	86,861	91,204	Step 1	85,000
				Step 2	91,413
Band 2.1	105,663	107,776	113,165	Step 3 (Proficient)	95,317
	105,663	107,776	113,165	Step 4 (Proficient)	99,220
	105,663	107,776	113,165	Step 5 (Proficient)	106,131
	105,663	107,776	113,165	Step 6 (Proficient)	114,115
Band 2.2	N/A	N/A	122,100	Step 7 (Proficient)	122,100
Band 3	120,652	123,065	129,218	N/A	-

Eligible teachers on Band 2 will have access to a new step after completing four years on Band 2.1. The additional step (called Band 2.2) will take effect from February 2024 with a salary of \$122,100 (inclusive of the February 2024 general increase).

Most support staff will receive pay rises of 5% in January 2024 and 2025 and support staff on Level 4C, Level 5 and Level 6 will receive additional increases which are backdated to July 2023. However, instead of the 2024 increase of 5%, maintenance and outdoor staff will receive an increase in 2024 of 9% and general operational staff will receive an increase in 2024 of 13%.

### New personal/carer's leave accrual

From 1 January 2025, teachers will receive a one-off entitlement to 15 days of personal leave. The one-off entitlement recognises that employees will then accrue 15 days of personal/carer's leave per year (reduced from 25 days). However, the cap on accumulation of untaken personal/carer's leave will no longer apply and all existing leave is preserved. For support staff, the current cap on the amount of leave which can be accrued will not apply from 2024. Evidence requirements for absences on personal leave will now be less stringent.

## Improved parental leave

For teachers and support staff on averaged rates of pay, the non-term time that falls within the period of 14 weeks of paid parental leave will no longer count as part of the 14 weeks. In effect, these employees will receive an additional two weeks of paid parental leave.

Any personal/carer's leave taken in the four weeks prior to the expected date of birth will no longer be deducted from the 14 weeks of paid parental leave entitlement.

Additionally, the partner of the birthing parent will be entitled to two weeks of paid concurrent parental leave. This leave will not be deducted from the employee's personal/carer's leave.

## New paid emergency disaster leave

Teachers and support staff will now have access to two days of paid emergency disaster leave in each calendar year. The leave is available to those who are unable to attend work due to a declared natural disaster.

## Access to arbitration

Under the proposed MEAs, teachers and support staff will be able to refer unresolved disputes with their employer to the Fair Work Commission to be "arbitrated" (decided) by the Commission. This means disputes are likely to be resolved more quickly, as schools will be aware that if the matter is not agreed, then the Fair Work Commission can make a ruling to resolve the matter.

## Improved entitlements under the *Fair Work Act*

In addition to the changes outlined above, the proposed MEAs reflect improved entitlements employees now enjoy because of recent changes to the *Fair Work Act* made by the federal Labor government. The changes include:

- greater rights for employees to request flexible work arrangements
- entitlement to paid family and domestic violence leave
- access to compassionate leave in cases of miscarriage or stillbirth
- limitations on fixed term (temporary) contracts
- new entitlements for employees to convert from casual to ongoing employment (casual conversion)
- employer must pay all outstanding wages and leave payments no later than seven days from the date of termination of employment.

## Vote YES for your MEA

The IEU understands schools will put the proposed MEAs to a vote by employees covered by the MEA in the period **Tuesday 13 February to Friday 16 February**. The MEA must be endorsed in the vote of employees and then endorsed by the Fair Work Commission, in order to be legally binding. Please vote YES and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

