

NewsExtra

23 February 2024

AIS Standards Model Schools

The Association of Independent Schools (AIS) refused to bargain centrally with the IEU concerning pay increases in 2023 because the teacher and support staff multi-enterprise agreements (MEAs) negotiated with the union in 2021 do not expire until 31 January 2025. These MEAs were negotiated in the period when inflation was much lower than now, the public sector pay cap limited pay rises for NSW government teachers to 2.5% including superannuation, and schools were recovering from the disruption of COVID. Bargaining rights for employees were also much more limited than those existing under the current *Fair Work Act* provisions.

Unprecedented pay increases for staff in public and Catholic systemic schools in 2023

As a result of a new award applying to NSW government schools and a new Catholic systemic enterprise agreement made in Term 4 2023, teachers in NSW government and Catholic systemic schools who have Proficient accreditation now progress automatically to \$122,000. This is an increase of 8% from the previous top rate of \$113,000.

Support staff in Catholic systemic schools also saw big pay increases in 2023 with a senior administrative employee now receiving over \$100,000 (unaveraged and discounted for term breaks) a year and an experienced learning support assistant being paid over \$88,000 (unaveraged).

Over 40 Catholic independent schools agreed in late 2023 to match the NSW government rates (plus the traditional premium above paid in these schools) for teachers and flow on the support staff increases.

The IEU also reached agreement with nearly 25 Christian schools, represented by the AIS, to match the NSW government teacher pay rises from February 2024 with improved parental leave and natural disaster leave for both teachers and support staff.

These increases took effect in a 2023 wages environment very different from that in previous years.

Teacher Standards Model pay rates are now lower than government pay rates

Following the pay increases in NSW government and Catholic systemic schools in Term 4 2023, some independent schools agreed to extra administrative pay increases above the MEA rates. However, the additional increases were often quite small, and many schools did not increase pay rates at all.

Fair MEA pay rates remain crucial for members in all schools.

A comparison of teachers' salaries under the Standards Model MEA with the rates applying to NSW government and Catholic systemic teachers shows MEA salaries are lower at a number of points of the pay scale (see the table on the next page). The disparity is worst for more experienced Band 2 teachers. And the Band 3 Experienced Teacher rate is only just above the top step for Proficient teachers in NSW government and Catholic systemic schools. So much for the traditional premium of around 7% that used to be enjoyed by teachers in Standards schools!

Comparison of Teacher Salaries under Standards Model MEA with NSW Government & Catholic Systemic Schools

Classification	Current rates Standards Model 1 Feb 2024	NSW Government and Catholic systemic rates October 2023		Difference (\$)
Band 1	86,607	Step 1	85,000	1,607
	86,607 (2 nd year)	Step 2	91,413	-4,806
Band 2 (Proficient)	107,461	Step 3 (Proficient)	95,317	12,144
	107,461	Step 4 (Proficient)	99,220	8,241
	107,461	Step 5 (Proficient)	106,131	1,330
	107,461	Step 6 (Proficient)	114,115	-6,654
	107,461	Step 7 (Proficient)	122,100	-14,639
Band 3 Experienced Teacher (ISTAA)	122,705	No equivalent		
Band 3 + Professional Excellence	132,373	Highly Accomplished Teacher	129,948	2425

What's happening in 2024?

The IEU anticipates bargaining for new MEAs will commence in the first half of this year. It will be essential that in bargaining for new MEAs we ensure that rates of pay for teachers are substantially increased to maintain the traditional premium in pay for teachers in independent schools. This will inevitably involve consideration of whether the existing teacher pay structure is fit for purpose.

We also need to examine support staff pay rates – the current rates are clearly below those now in place in NSW government and Catholic systemic schools. For example, the top rate in a Catholic primary school for administrative staff is currently over \$100,000 whereas the top rate in an AIS school under the MEA is \$94,000. A similar disparity exists for school assistants and other support staff classifications.

And of course, conditions such as paid parental leave for both parents must be improved.

What you can do

Please call a Chapter meeting at your school and invite your IEU Organiser to attend and:

1. Invite all members and non-members to attend. Discuss this NewsExtra.
2. Elect a Rep and a Chapter Committee – it helps to spread the word if you have a union team at your school, preferably involving both teachers and support staff.
3. Encourage your colleagues who have not yet joined the IEU to do so. [Click here to join.](#)

Under recent legislation passed by the federal Labor government, union delegates have the right to reasonably communicate with union members and employees eligible to be members. **This makes crystal clear your right to talk union business at work.**

