

NewsExtra

13 March 2024

AIS NSW Schools Support Staff Rates Too Low

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

Unprecedented pay increases for staff in Catholic schools in 2023

Support staff in Catholic systemic schools were granted big pay increases in 2023 with a senior administrative employee now receiving over \$100,000 a year (“unaveraged” and discounted for term breaks) and an experienced learning support assistant being paid over \$88,000 (unaveraged). These increases were the result of an IEU industrial campaign to match pay rises awarded to support staff in NSW government schools in 2019.

Over 40 Catholic independent schools agreed in late 2023 to flow on the support staff increases.

NSW independent schools pay rates much lower than NSW Catholic systemic pay rates

A comparison of support staff pay rates under the *Independent Schools NSW (Support and Operational Staff) MEA* with the rates applying to NSW Catholic systemic and government schools shows staff are paid below their comparator at all points of the pay scale. Some examples are set out below:

NSW Independent Schools			NSW Catholic Systemic			Difference
Classification	Level	Current Rate of Pay	Classification	Level	Current Rate of Pay	
School Assistants	3	76,741	Classroom and Learning Support Services	4.4	88,852	-12,111
	4	80,635		5	88,852	-8,217
Clerical Officer Level 2	2.3	73,702	School Administrative Services Level 4	4.2	77,489	-3,787
	2.4	74,471		4.3	83,515	-9,044
Senior Clerical Officer Level 3	3.1	78,726	School Administrative Services Level 5	5	88,852	-10,126
	3.2	80,234			88,852	-8,618
	3.3	81,741			88,852	-7,111
Administrator Level 4	4.1	92,329	School Administrative Services Level 6	6B	102,160	-9,831
	4.2	94,282			102,160	-7,878
Maintenance - Qualified	2(b)	64,342	School Operational Services	3.3	68,461	-4,119
Maintenance - Supervisor	3	67,209		4.4	88,852	-21,643

Note: All rates of pay in the table above are based on ‘unaveraged’ support staff rates of pay.

Wellbeing Staff (psychologists) pay rates significantly lower than NSW government pay rates

A comparison of Wellbeing Staff (psychologists) pay rates under the MEA with the rates applying to NSW government schools shows psychologists are paid significantly below their comparator at all points of the pay scale. The substantial differences in pay are highlighted in the table below:

NSW Independent Schools		NSW Department of Education			Difference
Wellbeing Staff - Psychologists		School Psychologists			
No equivalent		SP 1	Provisional Registration	95,317	
4.1	82,152	SP 2	General Registration (GR)	99,220	-17,068
4.2	83,317	SP 3	GR + 2 years	106,131	-22,814
4.3	87,585	SP 4	GR + 3 years	114,115	-26,530
4.4	92,924	SP 5	GR + 4 years	140,502	-47,578
4.5	98,270			140,502	-42,232
4.6	103,610			140,502	-36,892
4.7	108,948			140,502	-31,554
No equivalent		School Psychologist Advanced Certification		151,742	

What's happening in 2024?

The first bargaining meeting between the AIS and the IEU for new MEAs will be on 27 March 2024. We must ensure that rates of pay for support staff, psychologists and other professional staff are substantially increased to keep up with the rising cost of living and to ensure pay rates are competitive with those paid in other schools.

And of course, conditions such as paid parental leave for primary care givers and their partners must be improved.

What you can do

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

1. Bring this NewsExtra to the attention of all support staff, whether they are IEU members or not.
2. Invite all support staff members and non-members to attend a Chapter meeting to discuss support staff pay rates in independent schools.
3. If you do not have a Union Rep, 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. You can have a specific Union Rep just for support staff.
4. All members should encourage their 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.**

