



NSW ACT Independent Education Union

IEUA (NSW/ACT Branch)
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ULTIMO NSW 2007

1 October 2024

Attn: Heidi Campbell
Christian Schools Australia

MANUKA ACT 2603

Via Email: _____

CM: 73/24

Dear Heidi

RE: BARGAINING IN NSW AND ACT CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

As you are aware, the union has been actively bargaining with Catholic Schools Australia (CSA) for the replacement of multi-enterprise agreements in NSW and ACT Christian schools. These negotiations have been ongoing since at least September 2023 for NSW Christian schools and November 2023 for ACT Christian schools.

To our disappointment, we have recently been informed by our members in at least some schools that they have received correspondence from their employers, directing them to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to secure increased remuneration and improved conditions, effective from 1 July 2024. These letters have been issued without prior notification to the union and appear to undermine the bargaining process.

In particular, regarding NSW Christian schools, our most recent correspondence with CSA indicated that bargaining representatives had agreed to suspend negotiations pending the outcome of developments in NSW government schools. However, the MOU issued to teaching staff includes a proposed salary increase of 3.5% in October 2025 that has never been tabled for discussion with the union.

The union has serious concerns regarding CSA's unilateral action, which may be in breach of the good faith bargaining principles. We are therefore seeking an urgent meeting with CSA to address these concerns and to ensure that the bargaining process for these schools progresses appropriately. We have advised members not to sign the MOU until after the issues have been canvassed in our meeting.

For your reference, we have attached summaries of the outstanding issues in negotiations for both NSW (Annexure A) and ACT (Annexure B) Christian schools.

Please be advised that the union reserves its right to refer bargaining disputes to the Fair Work Commission if necessary.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Yours sincerely

CAROL MATTHEWS

Secretary

cc Andrew Kent

Annexure A – NSW Christian Schools Teaching Staff and General Staff MEAs

NSW Christian Schools Teaching Staff MEA 2023

The terms that have been agreed:

- A three-year agreement with proposed nominal expiry on 31 December 2026
- Two salary increases in 2024 (4% in February 2024, 7% in October 2024) on current pay under the existing classification structure
- The restructuring of classifications to the 7-step model aligning with NSW governments which will be effective from 1 July 2026
- Extension of the New Parent Bonus in line with Federal Government Paid Parental Leave:
 - Up to 22 weeks from 1 July 2024
 - Up to 24 weeks from 1 July 2025
 - Up to 26 weeks from 1 July 2026
- Up to two weeks of paid 'Concurrent Parental Leave' (paid partner leave) taken after 1 July 2024 will not be deducted from the non-primary carer's (usually the father) personal/carers leave balance

The outstanding issues relate to the proposed salary offers for 2025 and 2026. On 19 February 2024, CSA put an offer of no increase in 2025 and 3% in February 2026. The IEU rejected this offer and in response, CSA made a subsequent offer of 1.5% in October 2025 and a further 1.5% from February 2026. The pay issue remains unresolved, and no further offer has been made by CSA pending an outcome in NSW government schools.

In August 2024, the IEU communicated to CSA that we would agree to suspend bargaining as an interim measure provided that agreed improvements will be passed on to teachers. We understand that the suspension to bargaining was agreed to, and members are receiving those improvements.

NSW Christian Schools General Staff MEA 2023

We have reached an in-principle agreement on the basis of the following:

- 4% wage increase backdated to 1 February 2024, and further 4% increases applying from 1 February 2025 and 1 February 2026, so 12% over the life of the agreement
 - an increase in personal / carer's leave from 10 days to 15 days per year, fully cumulative
 - New Parent Bonus to increase in line with the Federal Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme
- Commencement of agreement – bonus payment up to 20 weeks
 - 1 July 2024 – bonus payment for up to 22 weeks
 - 1 July 2025 – bonus payment for up to 24 weeks
 - 1 July 2026 – bonus payment for up to 26 weeks
- Provision of 2 weeks paid parental leave for the non-primary care giver will no longer be deducted from the available personal leave balance.

In February 2024, the IEU received a copy of the draft MEA for review. On 14 June 2024, the IEU provided our feedback on the draft MEA and included the new delegate's rights and right to disconnect provisions. The CSA did not express any real concerns about the changes. The IEU anticipated that this MEA would be moving to the voting process and sought confirmation of the voting dates.

On 12 September 2024, we received correspondence from CSA indicating that we will be provided with an update the following week once the schools have had time to consider the new worker retention payment under the *Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Accounts) Bill 2024*.

Annexure B – ACT Christian Schools

- In November 2023, CSA made the following commitment:

“...continuing commitment to pay teachers above the ACT Directorate teaching rates for the term of this agreement, with a 1.75% margin through the majority of the salary steps and a margin of 2.5% at the top salary step...”

- In December 2023, CSA provided a draft of the proposed *Teachers Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2023 (MEA)*. The IEU formally responded on 2 January 2024, addressing concerns regarding the proposed pay offer.
- On 15 March 2024, the IEU again wrote to CSA outlining that ACT Christian teachers would receive lower remuneration than ACT Government teachers in total earnings for 2024 and 2025. Consequently, the IEU proposed a counter-offer to align pay increases with those of the ACT Government in December 2024 and 2025. Additionally, the IEU requested the removal of provisions in Clauses 5.1(c) and 5.2(h), which expand on provisions permitting termination of employment based on faith and values.

Outstanding Issue

CSA's current pay offer does not maintain the existing premium and falls short of the ACT Government's pay increases scheduled for December 2024 and 2025. In addition to this, Brindabella Christian College has not been included as part of CSA's proposal for improvements and enhancements for employees, although they were part of the bargaining.

IEU Proposal

The IEU recommends a way forward with the following proposal:

- CSA agrees to incorporate the pay increases for December 2024 and 2025 to match ACT Government rates at each salary step – proposal outlined below.
- The parties finalise an MEA for ACT Christian teachers based on the IEU's proposal for pay.
- The parties commence bargaining for a new MEA for General Staff.

CSA's Proposed Offer

Band	Step	Current Salary \$	Annual salary 1 July 2023 (3.0%) \$	New Classification as of 1 July 2024	Annual salary 1 July 2024 \$	Annual salary 1 July 2025 \$
One	1	79,517	81,903	NC1	87,761	91,067
	2	83,618	86,127			
	3	87,710	90,341	NC2	96,265	99,740
	4	92,036	94,797			
Two	5	97,563	100,490	NC3	100,518	104,079
	6	101,733	104,785	NC4	104,770	108,417
	7	105,903	109,080	NC5	109,022	112,754
Three	8	110,619	113,938	NC6	116,107	119,982

	9	118,383	121,934	NC7	123,196	127,213
				NC8	125,924	130,008
Four – Highly Accomplished /Lead		125,122	128,876	Highly Accomplished / Lead	132,742	136,724

IEU Proposal

Band	Step	New Classification as of 1 July 2024	Annual salary 1 July 2024 \$	Annual salary 1 December 2024 \$	Annual salary 1 July 2025 \$	Annual salary 1 December 2025 \$
One	1	NC1	87,761	88,615	91,067	91,396
	2					
	3	NC2	96,265	97,055	99,740	100,006
	4					
Two	5	NC3	100,518	101,278	104,079	104,314
	6	NC4	104,770	105,498	108,417	108,619
	7	NC5	109,022	109,719	112,754	112,924
Three	8	NC6	116,107	116,755	119,982	120,101
	9	NC7	123,196	123,788	127,213	127,276
		NC8	125,924	125,924	130,008	130,008
Four – Highly Accomplished /Lead		Highly Accomplished / Lead	132,742		136,724	