

NewsExtra

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Bargaining progress in Catholic systemic schools

The IEU commenced formal bargaining for a new enterprise agreement (EA) for teachers and general employees in the 10 NSW and ACT Catholic dioceses (excluding Broken Bay) in November 2024.

Our claim

Our claim includes:

- pay increases – no less than the increases applying to corresponding employees in NSW and ACT government schools and not less than the rate of inflation
- release – an additional two hours release from face-to-face teaching time for primary and secondary teachers. We also seek extra release time for those in coordinator and leadership positions.
- improved parental leave, including:
 - superannuation on paid parental leave
 - more flexible timing for the partner to take paid parental leave after the initial primary carer has returned to work or study – that is, leave can be taken within two years rather than 12 months from the date of birth
 - the more beneficial parental leave policy adopted by the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn should be included in the enterprise agreement for that diocese
- improved long service leave and personal/carer's leave for general employees
- reduction of workload – priorities include addressing out-of-hours work (both scheduled events and professional duties related to classroom teaching), catering for diverse student needs, data collection and compliance, meetings and professional development, extras in secondary schools, and class sizes
- the right to disconnect, and
- delegates' rights – insertion of a clause to recognise the newly legislated delegates' rights.

The union is also seeking to expand the scope of the enterprise agreements to include staff who are not covered by the current enterprise agreement.

Teachers' pay

Teachers employed in NSW government schools reached agreement in late 2024 on a three-year award with increases of 3% in October 2024, October 2025 and October 2026. Catholic dioceses will match the term of the agreement and the increases in NSW. Salaries for teachers employed in the ACT are agreed until the end of 2025, in line with the ACT government school arrangements. The IEU expects that the rates after 2025 will match rates agreed for teachers in ACT government schools.

Pay for general employees

Under the current EA dioceses are required to match increases received by support staff in NSW government schools. This applies to Catholic schools in both NSW and the ACT. Late last year, all dioceses paid an increase of 4% backdated to July 2024, in line with the 2024 NSW public sector pay rise. Dioceses have not yet indicated their position for pay rises in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

Progress in bargaining

We have had seven formal bargaining meetings with representatives of the dioceses. The IEU is waiting for a response on key aspects of our claim, and we hope to hear back later this week. Employers have not yet responded to our claim for additional release time nor our parental leave claim. Improved long service leave and personal/carer's leave for general employees have been discussed but not agreed.

The IEU expects that a new clause on delegates' rights will be part of the EA.

Consistent with our claim, we are seeking to strengthen existing provisions in Work Practices Agreements (WPAs). Current clauses refer to responding to emails out-of-hours – we wish to match the newly legislated right to disconnect which applies to *all* forms of communication. This clause, if agreed, is likely to be included in WPAs rather than the EA.

Workload improvements

The IEU has also sought to match workload improvements for teachers consistent with the 2024 NSW government school settlement. These are:

- briefings (and any other before and after school meetings) to be included within the 10 hours of meetings per term, and
- at least four of eight pupil-free days provided from 2025 to 2027 are to be teacher directed (that is, used by teachers for their own or collaborative planning or preparation, as a form of additional release).

Employers are considering these claims.

The IEU will raise other claims directly with individual dioceses as part of WPA negotiations, including measures to address workload. These include additional release for teachers in coordinator and leadership positions and a cap on additional meetings for this group. It is also clear that catering for students with diverse needs is a major driver of workload and workplace stress. The IEU is calling for employers to implement concrete measures to address this issue.

Next steps

The IEU received a draft EA on 12 March. We will review this and expect to receive a detailed response to our claims in the next week. No timeline has been agreed for a vote on the EA and finalisation of WPAs.

Share this with your colleagues and encourage them to [join the union](#).

