

Monday 3 March 2025

### **Unpaid wages: Union takes Brindabella Christian College to task in Fair Work Commission**

The union representing staff in non-government schools demanded Brindabella Christian College fix its unpaid wages debacle before the industrial umpire this afternoon.

To date, 53 staff at the K-12 school in Canberra have not been paid, 10 days after the last scheduled pay period on 21 February, leaving them worried about bills, rent and mortgages.

“We had no choice but to take Brindabella to the Fair Work Commission to try to compel the school to pay its staff in full and on time,” said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

In the hearing at the FWC in Canberra today, the school said it was seeking an alternative funding source and expects to know if this will be available by Wednesday 5 March. Should the school achieve this funding, it said unpaid staff would receive back pay and all staff would be paid in full going forward.

“This still doesn’t provide staff with any certainty,” Matthews said. “Should the school not secure this funding, it has not committed to ensuring wages will be met.”

The union and the employer will reconvene in the FWC this Friday 7 March at 2.30pm.

The school has agreed to the IEU’s request to inform the union when wages have been paid.

“Staff are still in shock that they haven’t been paid 10 days after their pay date,” Matthews said. “The situation at Brindabella has only gone from bad to worse.”

At the FWC, the union also raised questions about leave balances and incorrect payslips. The school has committed to reviewing the leave balances of all employees in coming months after blaming its payroll system for not correctly calculating entitlements.

The union continues to advise members at the school to turn up for work.

Brindabella’s financial mess has prompted the federal government to scrutinise the school’s finances and operations. The ATO launched an action in the Federal Court in February over an \$8 million tax debt incurred by the school.

Brindabella has almost 1200 students and about 200 staff at its two campuses. Tuition fees in 2025 range from \$10,575 a year for K-4 and \$15,400 for Years 9-12.

“Brindabella continues to blame others for its financial mess, but this is no way to run a school,” Matthews said. “Our message is simple: pay staff accurately and on time.”

#### **Contacts**

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*The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.*

**Authorised by Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary**