



26 August 2024

New right to disconnect laws apply for IEU members from today

Right to disconnect laws that commence operation today are another clear example of the difference union membership makes for thousands of education workers across the country.

This important new workplace right follows extensive union campaigns in support of the [Closing Loopholes Bill #2](#) introduced by the federal Labor government earlier this year, and builds on a 2 year reform program that has delivered much fairer Australian workplaces.

The current teacher recruitment and retention crisis is directly linked to unsustainable workloads and career burnout. A legislated right to disconnect from work is another valuable tool for IEU members seeking to push back ever creeping work intrusions into their precious home and family time.

The right to refuse work related contact outside normal hours complements similar protections won by the IEU in Western Australia and Queensland through their collective bargaining action last year.

IEU members have been at the forefront of debates on the right to disconnect laws – [sharing their powerful stories](#) in Parliament about the need for change. Employer directions, parental queries and student contact often encroach on personal time well outside the school day.

The school visit today by [Industrial Relations Minister Murray Watt with IEU teacher and support staff](#) members in the ACT highlights the importance of these new laws for school staff. The changes have kickstarted discussions between school employers and members on how to lead a major cultural shift in work expectations within our school communities.

In addition to the right to disconnect changes, IEU members are leading a multi-pronged fightback against workloads. From [new collective agreements](#) that bring greater balance to work duties, through to national outcomes that embed [workload impact tests](#) and [streamline the onerous compliance tasks](#) being imposed on teachers and school leaders.

Like all workers, school staff need a break from work and deserve much needed down time.

A right to disconnect can help turn the tide for teachers, drowning under unrelenting workloads.