

2025 ENVIRONMENT GRANTS



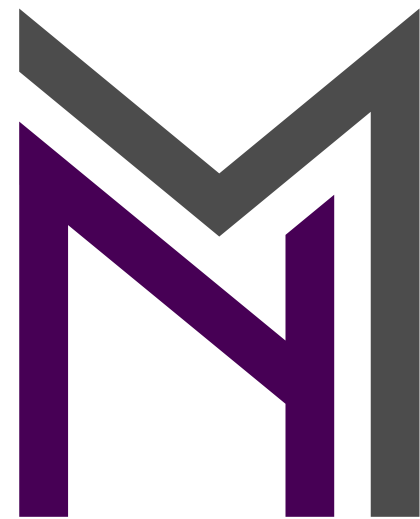
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See page 13 for details

news month

The newspaper of the Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch
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Catholic systemic schools Union locks in pay rises, better conditions

Carol Matthews
Secretary



The IEU has been bargaining since October 2024 for new enterprise agreements (EAs) for teachers and general employees in 10 NSW and ACT Catholic dioceses.

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) is joining the meetings with the other dioceses but will make a separate agreement based on the main EA.

Broken Bay Diocese has its own EA and Work Practices Agreement (WPA), finalised in 2024.

The EAs will be in force until 9 October 2027, in line with the NSW state award applying to teachers in government schools.

The union has also commenced bargaining for EAs for principals employed in the 10 dioceses (not including Broken Bay).

Voting on EAs is conducted by employers – all employees covered by an EA are entitled to vote.

The IEU expects that the EAs for teachers and general employees will be voted on in September, with the vote on the Principals EAs (see page 2) likely to be shortly afterwards.

Pay increases for NSW teachers

Pay rises for NSW teachers will reflect the increases paid in NSW government schools:

- 3% October 2024 (already paid)
- 3% October 2025
- 3% October 2026.

Pay increases for ACT teachers

Pay rises for ACT teachers will be as follows:

- about 3% August 2025 (increases to align with ACT government pay scale, but paid earlier, and in current EA)
- 3.5% August 2026.

The increase for ACT teachers in 2027 will be the subject of further negotiations when the outcome for teachers in ACT Education Directorate schools is known, as the current EA for teachers in government schools does not expire until March 2026.

Pay rises for NSW and ACT general employees

These increases will match increases for support staff in NSW government schools:

- 4% July 2024 (already paid)
- 3% July 2025 (paid by some dioceses already, but otherwise will be back-dated and paid when the EA commences)
- 3% July 2026.

The 2027 increase (expected from July that year) will be the subject of further negotiations in 2027.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

The IEU has proposed a clause under “No Extra Claims” requiring parties to engage in discussions for a one-off, non-cumulative COLA payment if the Consumer Price Index (CPI) exceeds 4.5% during the life of the agreement – in line with arrangements for teachers and general employees in NSW government schools. Employers are currently considering this proposal.

Improved conditions

The following improved conditions have been agreed:

- Superannuation will be paid on parental leave paid by the employer (this is in addition to payment of super by the federal government from July 2025 on government-funded paid parental leave).
- The non-initial primary caregiver (usually the father) will now be able to take parental leave to be the primary carer

of a newborn child within 24 months of birth, rather than the current time limit of 12 months from the date of birth. This will apply in relation to children born after the commencement of the EA.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and ceremonial leave: employees identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander will be eligible to access up to three days paid leave each year for cultural and ceremonial purposes.

Delegates’ rights, reflecting the new entitlements for union reps under the *Fair Work Act*, will also be included.

Trade trainers

Trade trainers have been included under the EA for the first time. A trade trainer is employed to teach vocational education and training at a school or trade skills centre, but is not a fully qualified school teacher.

A trade trainer usually has a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and a relevant trade qualification.

Next steps

As soon as the drafting of the EA is finalised, dioceses will send out a copy of the EA and explanatory materials. A vote of employees covered by the EA will then be conducted by the employers. We expect that this will occur in September.

We congratulate members for their strength in numbers that has led to pay rises and better conditions.

“We congratulate members for their strength in numbers that has led to pay rises and better conditions.”



Union win: NextSense staff stand strong for great gains

IEU members at NextSense School for children with hearing or vision loss have achieved a strong win, gaining pay rises and better conditions in a new agreement, with union membership doubling at the school during the campaign.

The broader NextSense organisation, formerly known as the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, includes a preschool and primary school at Macquarie Park, as well as specialist

teachers across mainstream independent schools.

NextSense also employs research staff and allied health practitioners. Since 2021, these employees have been covered by the NextSense enterprise agreement, while teachers and support staff in the organisation’s schools and preschools were covered by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) NSW Multi-Enterprise agreements.

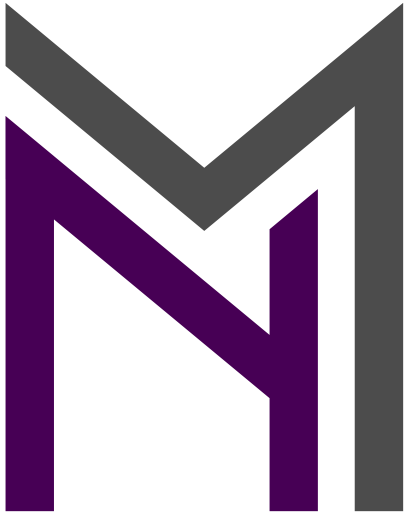
In 2024, the NextSense employer sought to integrate all education staff, including teachers and support staff, into the main enterprise agreement.

If all education employees were incorporated into this agreement, IEU members would have lost the guarantee of pay and conditions commensurate with their colleagues in NSW government schools or the broader NSW non-government education sector.

Members take action

The members met, formed a log of claims and elected a chapter committee. They focused on carrying across conditions from their previous AIS agreements, codifying workplace practices, and ensuring pay and other conditions kept pace with teachers and support staff in other sectors.

Continued on page 5



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This publication was produced on the unceded lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Union win: Parental leave dispute

The Fair Work Commission in late July handed down a recommendation in favour of an IEU member about interpretation of the new right for a non-initial primary caregiver (usually the father) to take 12 weeks paid parental leave.

This new right is in the new multi-enterprise agreement (MEA) for teachers in independent schools, finalised earlier this year. The agreement applies to schools represented by employer group the Association of Independent Schools (AIS).

Although the decision is a recommendation and not legally binding, the union expects schools will follow the Commission's approach in interpreting the new entitlement.

The new parental leave entitlement

Under Clause 19.3 of the Independent Schools (Teachers) Cooperative Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2025 (CMEA), an employee (usually the father) is entitled to paid parental leave to be the primary carer of a child within 12 months of the birth after the initial carer (usually the mother) has taken leave.

Similar provisions are included in the Professional and Operational Staff multi-enterprise agreement.

FWC rejects school's interpretation

The dispute concerned an IEU member who applied for leave as the non-initial primary caregiver in April this year, after the new MEA had commenced.

“Members who were previously denied paid leave may now be entitled to it.”

The school denied his request for 12 weeks of paid leave under the new CMEA, arguing that a transitional clause excluded him from the new

entitlement because he had taken two weeks concurrent parental leave under the old MEA at the time of the child's birth.

The FWC rejected this view, confirming that our member's earlier leave was a separate, completed period and did not prevent him from accessing the new entitlement.

What this means for IEU members

This decision confirms that under the 2025 multi-enterprise agreement, teachers who become the primary caregiver within 12 months of their child's birth are eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave, even if they had previously taken a short period of concurrent leave.

This means members who were previously denied paid leave may now be entitled to it.

We urge you to let any members who may be affected know about this outcome.

If any member was previously denied access to the leave, we invite you to call your organiser to discuss accessing this entitlement.

Liam Crisanti Industrial Officer

Catholic Systemic Schools Principals EAs Pay rises confirmed, as talks continue over wellbeing

Lyn Caton
Assistant Secretary



Negotiations continue between the IEU, Catholic Employment Relations and Catholic systemic school employers over three enterprise agreements (EA) for principals in this sector.

In meetings conducted over recent weeks, talks have been constructive, with consensus reached on several items, while other matters remain under active consideration or dispute.

Pay rises confirmed

Agreement has been reached on a three-year EA term and employers have confirmed pay increases will flow to principals in line with wage rises for teachers and support staff in their schools.

However, the union is still advocating for improvements to key conditions affecting principal wellbeing, with further discussions scheduled in Term 3 with individual diocesan directors.

The IEU is calling for superannuation on the full duration of paid parental leave, a fairer approach to workers compensation top-ups and greater consistency in vehicle allowances.

Progress includes employer openness to standardising travel reimbursements and including a cultural and ceremonial leave clause.

Sticking points

Access to child protection records remains a critical sticking point.

The union insists that principals must be able to view documentation relevant to investigations concerning them, highlighting legal and wellbeing concerns.

While employers await advice from the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG), the union maintains pressure to preserve and expand current protections.

Meal breaks and long service leave flexibility were raised, with the union proposing the removal of the two-week minimum threshold for blocks of long service leave.

Employers acknowledge the importance of wellbeing but are cautious about enshrining such provisions in the EA.

Simplifying salary bands

Discussions on the classification structure are focused on simplifying the banded salary system, ensuring workload equity in smaller schools within Bands 1 to 3, and resolving anomalies such as salary reductions for principals who move between schools.

A proposal to introduce a new band for schools with more than 1800 enrolments and a K-12 school allowance is under review, with the union gathering supporting data.

The issue of tenure continues to be a point of divergence and will necessitate ongoing dialogue.

The IEU will continue consultations with dioceses and principal members in the coming weeks, push for industrial clarity on unresolved matters and prepare updated communications for members.

These negotiations remain a critical opportunity to strengthen conditions for school leaders across the sector.

Reasons to join your union

A partner in your teaching career

Amanda Hioe
Assistant Secretary



Since 1992, union membership in Australia had steadily declined but, pleasingly, it has risen in recent years: from 2022 to 2024, almost 200,000 people joined a union, figures from the ABS show.

And while the education sector boasts one of the highest union densities, we still have great potential for growth.

From my experience as an industrial officer with the IEU for more than a decade, I've seen firsthand the critical role the union plays at every stage of a teacher's career.

Support for graduate and beginning teachers

Starting out as a teacher, whether straight from university or transitioning from another career, can be overwhelming. The union offers vital support during this phase.

Our officers regularly assist new teachers by reviewing and advising on employment contracts (or letters of appointment).

I've seen numerous cases where graduate teachers mistakenly believed they were being offered ongoing roles, only to discover their

contracts were for a fixed term. The union provided advice before the member signed – meaning we could intervene and correct the contracts to reflect the agreed terms.

Standing with experienced teachers

As your career progresses, you may face challenges through no fault of your own.

For example, your employer may notify you of a restructure, leading to a possible redundancy. The IEU guides and represent members through the consultation process and, when possible, assists in securing redeployment opportunities.

We also support members dealing with complaints from students or parents that could escalate into disciplinary proceedings.

Whether it's attending meetings, responding to allegations, or advising on your rights, the IEU is with you at every step.

In rare but serious situations such as dismissal, we work to protect your rights, including pursuing unfair dismissal claims or exploring other possible avenues.

Guidance in approaching retirement

For members nearing retirement, the IEU is a valuable resource.

You may have accumulated significant leave

entitlements, and understanding how to best utilise them can be complex. We can help you navigate this process to ensure you make the most of your entitlements as you transition out of the workforce.

Championing fair pay and conditions

Beyond individual support, the union plays a crucial role in improving collective pay and working conditions.

Through enterprise bargaining, we negotiate better salaries and improvements to working conditions such as leave entitlements.

The IEU is the bargaining representative for employees covered by enterprise agreements (EAs) – these EAs are only as strong as the membership behind them.

Collective power

There's no shortage of reasons to join the IEU.

Whether you're a new teacher, a mid-career educator or preparing for retirement, the union advocates for you. If you know a colleague who isn't yet a member, encourage them to join. We are stronger together.

Not a member? Join today: ieu.asn.au/why-join-us



In the media IEU calls for higher standards in early education and OSHC



Child safety standards that apply in schools must also be enforced in the early education and OSHC sectors.

That was the key message of IEU NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews in an interview broadcast on ABC News on 1 August.

Matthews told reporter Jessica Kidd it was astonishing that all staff in the early childhood education and outside school hours care (OSHC) sectors were not currently required to be trained in child safety and reportable conduct.

"In a school, it is absolutely commonplace that the school, every year, will conduct child safety training, reportable conduct training and record that the staff have completed their training," she said.

"As I understand it, in the early childhood sector, there is a requirement for one staff member only to be trained in this way."

Matthews was interviewed as part of a story about former NSW Police probationary constable David James who has been charged with producing child abuse material featuring young children at six childcare centres.

News of the alleged offences prompted calls to upgrade child protection training for all staff

working in OSHC and follow shocking reports of abuse and mistreatment of young children in mainly for-profit services.

It also follows new laws passed by federal parliament in July that would cut government funding from providers repeatedly failing safety requirements (see page 9).

Matthews was also interviewed about safety breaches in the sector on ABC Radio Sydney on 1 August, telling Mornings host Kathryn Robinson the IEU supported refusing funding to substandard services as a first step to improving child safety.

"It provides a stick, you might say, to concentrate the minds of private providers. There's no doubt about that," she said.

However, Matthews said the practical problem facing parents if a centre closes due to the removal of public funding "will make the government reluctant to exercise that power".

Matthews also explained to ABC Radio Sydney listeners what further action is required to embed a child safety culture in the early childhood education and OSHC sectors – including mandatory safety training for all staff and more funding for preschools to address the chronic staffing crisis.



David Towson
Deputy Secretary



There was a time, in the very recent past, when numerous school employees might attend end-of-year school social functions not knowing whether they should be saying, "see you next year" or "goodbye".

An offer of successive temporary contracts year-on-year was not uncommon for many employees, especially teacher's aides and other support staff.

Workers adversely impacted by insecure work were disproportionately female.

Why secure work matters

The union movement has been campaigning for secure work for decades.

It is critical for working people to have a consistent and predictable income to provide them with financial stability, reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing.

During the first term of the Albanese government, the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022* was passed.

Among other things, this legislation placed limits on the use of fixed-term (temporary) contracts. It promoted job security.

From 6 December 2023, new rules applied for engaging employees on fixed-term contracts and how these contracts can be used.

A fixed-term contract cannot be for longer than two years. This includes an extension or renewal of the initial contract.

A fixed-term contract cannot be renewed more than once. While there are some exceptions around to whom these rules apply, these reforms have seen thousands of workers across the country move from insecure work into permanent employment.

IEU takes action

The IEU recently became aware of several support staff employed by Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) who were still on rolling fixed-term contracts.

The IEU contacted the diocese and in recent discussions it was established that 97 employees on temporary contracts had an entitlement to permanency.

Revised contracts are now being issued. A further 49 employees who did not have an

entitlement to permanency (as they had not yet worked for two years), have been offered permanent contracts by CSBB.

CSBB also advised the IEU that other staff on temporary contracts are having their contracts reviewed to determine eligibility for conversion to permanency.

Over the past three months, CSBB has also consulted with the IEU on the restructuring of Coordinator positions in five secondary schools in line with Clause 18.10 of the Broken Bay Enterprise Agreement 2024.

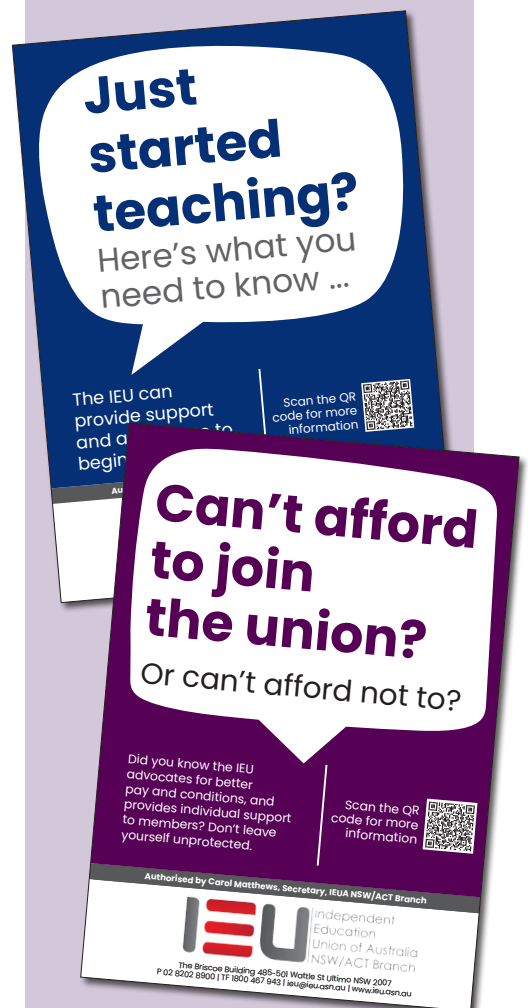
Until now, these level two and level three Coordinators would theoretically need to reapply for their leadership positions every three years or so.

This process has seen dozens of Coordinators being offered permanent contracts across the diocese, ordinarily with improved salaries.

Consultation with the diocese has just commenced in respect of MacKillop Catholic College, Warnervale.

Reps and members should encourage colleagues on temporary contracts to contact the IEU.

Member resources



For fact sheets on your rights and responsibilities, resources for reps, recruitment posters for noticeboards, women and equity material and calendars. visit: www.ieu.asn.au/resources See also page 17.



March for Humanity

The IEU was proud to join the historic march across the Harbour Bridge on Sunday 3 August.

As teachers, support staff and unionists, we embody and uphold the values of justice, equality and human rights. This is why IEU members, staff and friends marched.

We stand with teachers, students and families in Gaza who are facing unimaginable hardship and now a starvation crisis.

The IEU supports a ceasefire, for aid to flow and the return of all hostages.

Brindabella Christian College

End of sorry saga

A report to creditors has uncovered poor governance and mismanagement at Brindabella Christian College, including hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on a robot dog and overseas trip.

The report, by administrators from Deloitte, detailed how the Canberra school made questionable decisions, such as spending \$460,000 on a robot dog and a trip to the United States, yet failed to pay teachers and school staff on time.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews said members at the school will be "disappointed but not surprised to see the extent of mismanagement and poor governance outlined in the report".

"I think at the time, our members were really upset and frustrated about the way the school was being managed, but I'm sure they didn't understand the full extent of the problem," Matthews told ABC Radio Canberra.

Clearly insolvent

The administrators found the company behind the school, Brindabella Christian Education Limited, was insolvent from at least January 2021, and company directors may have breached their duties under the *Corporations Act* on multiple occasions.

The report noted the trip to the United States to secure the purchase of the robot dog included three days at the Kentucky Derby and took place "at a point when the company was subject to significant financial distress".

"These costs were incurred at a time when the company was clearly insolvent and had accrued \$2.1 million in unpaid SGC [Super Guarantee payments]," the report said.

The administrators also said political donations of \$30,000 to the Liberal party between 2021 and 2024 breached regulations prohibiting registered

charities from supporting political parties.

The report also raised concerns about the school's invoicing process, where an 11 per cent discount was given for early fee payments "without proper recognition of this in the Company's accounts".

"There are real questions about the practice that developed of encouraging parents to pay fees in advance at a discount and then showing that in the year in which they were received, even though there would be a liability to provide the education in the following year," Matthews told ABC Radio Canberra.

Creditors to be repaid

Brindabella was placed in voluntary administration in March owing millions of dollars after the IEU took the school to the Fair Work Commission over unpaid wages and superannuation.

In April, Deloitte announced the school would be taken over by education provider Christian Community Ministries (CCM), which paid \$30 million for the school.

Despite the mismanagement uncovered by the administrators, it is anticipated that creditors will be repaid in full.

Matthews said the union hoped the transfer of ownership of the school to CCM would allow members to focus on educating and caring for students without worrying about whether their wages and entitlements are paid in full and on time.

"The union acknowledges the loyalty of members to the school during this difficult period," Matthews said.

"The union is sure that members will be very relieved that the school is now on a more stable footing under the ownership of CCM."

"Members will be disappointed but not surprised to see the extent of mismanagement."

Anti-Bullying Review

IEU members share views at roundtable

Dealing with aggressive parents generated vigorous discussion among teachers at a roundtable in Canberra held as part of the federal government's Anti-Bullying Rapid Review.

IEU rep MJ Logan said many participants at the forum agreed parental behaviour was an area that needed to be addressed by the rapid review, co-chaired by Dr Charlotte Keating and Dr Jo Robinson.

MJ and fellow union rep Kathryn MacDonald attended roundtable discussions held in Canberra along with IEU organisers Angela McDonald and Tahlia Bruce.

The IEU's submission to the review said adequate school resourcing, specialist staffing and sustainable working conditions were crucial for a meaningful and lasting response to bullying.

IEUA Federal Secretary Brad Hayes said bullying, violence, sexual harassment and emotional abuse were serious health and safety issues for school staff as well as students.

Best practice approaches

The meetings are keen to hear from teachers about current procedures and best practice approaches to address bullying in schools.

MJ, the leader of learning at St Clare's College in Griffith, discussed how her school had changed its pastoral care structure.

"This has seen a rise in mentorship among students and the development of stronger positive relationships with and among students and staff," she said.

Other participants at the roundtable

discussed the merits of students having one teacher for core subjects and pastoral care, MJ said.

Kathryn, a teacher at St John the Apostle Primary School in Florey, said inviting Year 6 students to assist with playground duty had proven helpful at her school.

"They wear vests, check in with us at the start of duty and refer incidences on to us during duty," she said.

Kathryn also brought to the roundtable her experience as a parent of a child bullied at school and the subsequent psycho-social harm it caused. She said all members of a school community – staff, students and parents – could benefit from training about types of bullying and its impact.

Risks posed by parents

IEU organiser Tahlia Bruce said inconsistent definitions and processes across systems, underreporting due to lack of trust or knowledge, online bullying and student-to-staff bullying were among other issues discussed at the roundtable.

"We highlighted the inconsistent approaches to bullying across Catholic and independent schools, the absence of clear procedural safeguards for staff experiencing bullying and the risks posed when parents become combative," she said.

The IEU also raised concerns around workload and funding as well as ongoing staffing shortages.

"Our members also had a lot of good stories to tell around programs that were working successfully and positive change they've noticed as a result," she said.

Union win: **NextSense staff stand strong for great gains**



IEU members at NextSense celebrate their win with IEU organisers.

They also made a claim to have their expertise recognised in working with children who are deaf, hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision.

Bargaining began in September 2024 and, after some 10 months and at least as many bargaining meetings, the new agreement has been finalised with important wins for members, including:

- Big pay increases for teachers and professional and operational staff in line with those gained by members in independent schools earlier this year. (These pay rises depend upon classification and experience, full details here: ieu.asn.au/nows-the-time-campaign).
- Back pay to July 2024
- Accomplished teacher allowance of \$4970
- Special education allowance
- Improvements to parental leave:
 - super to be paid on paid parental leave
 - paid parental leave counts as service for career progression and leave accrual
 - six weeks non-primary caregiver leave within first 24 months.

One of the biggest breakthroughs was the employer agreeing to negotiate a Work Practices Agreement.

While such agreements, which provide clarity around day-to-day matters such as face-to-face teaching hours and meetings, are common in Catholic systemic schools, they are still rare in independent schools.



Bargaining committee member Rebekah Power, rep Tahlee Simpson, lead teacher Lou de Beuzeville.

A few words from the rep and members

Reps from the school took seats at the bargaining table alongside IEU officials, school leadership and the employer to represent members at the school.

Rep Tahlee Simpson said: “We couldn’t have done it without the wonderful team we work with, everybody coming together, our amazing leadership, and obviously our union members.”

“We’ve had a great win in our new enterprise agreement through the bargaining process, and we’ve really appreciated the support of the union and how hard they’ve worked to support us to get a really fantastic result,” said teacher and committee member Rebekah Power.

“We’ve had incredible pay rises and improvement to our working conditions, and we’ve doubled our union membership since November.”

Lead teacher Lou de Beuzeville said: “We’ve really had great collaborative relationships developing between the members, union officials and our leadership.”

The three extended a warm shout-out to committee member Aji Kathir who was working offsite when the IEU visited.

“The elected reps were fierce advocates for the interests of all the education employees at NextSense,” said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

“We congratulate all our NextSense members for staying the course and achieving these gains, and we warmly welcome all the new members who joined during the course of the bargaining.”

Workers compensation **Proposed changes will exacerbate harm**

Planned reforms to the NSW workers compensation system would cut support to severely injured workers while failing to curb predatory insurers, a state parliamentary inquiry has been told.

The NSW government wants to make it much more difficult for employees suffering psychological injuries to get support.

To receive long-term support, a worker would need to suffer a whole person impairment (WPI) rating of 31 per cent – rather than the current figure of 15 per cent. New provisions would also limit the ability of workers to claim lump-sum payments.

The IEU has joined other unions in strongly opposing the government’s proposed changes, which will punish teachers and support staff, as well as staff in the care and community sectors.

Even worse, the changes will not reduce or prevent workplace psychological injuries.

Exacerbate harm

Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey told the inquiry in July that the government’s proposed reforms would exacerbate harm caused by insurance practices that “choke the NSW workers compensation system of funds, delay treatment, ignore complaints and hinder return to work”.

“Instead of dealing with this area of waste and harm, the Bill instead seeks savings by limiting compensable psychological injuries and raising the whole person impairment

threshold to 31 per cent, forcing severely injured workers off the scheme and cost shifting to other service providers,” Morey said.

Morey said the NSW government should instead focus on reforming insurance practices to save money while promoting early intervention and return to work.

Most submissions to the inquiry, chaired by Upper House Greens MP Abigail Boyd, oppose the proposed workers compensation reforms, arguing the government needs to address the causes of psychological injury – not limit the ability of working people to make claims.

Unions NSW in its submission said legal fees and investigations cost \$332 million a year yet “achieve virtually nothing for workers or the scheme’s sustainability”.

Workers injured 100 years ago had greater rights

NSW Bar Association Common Law chairman David Hooke said workers injured a century ago would have “substantially superior rights” than a worker under reforms proposed by the NSW government.

“By introducing new time limits and threshold requirements, as I’ve said, a worker injured 100 years ago will have had substantially superior rights compared with a worker who seeks support under this proposed remake of the scheme,” Hooke told the inquiry.

“This will devastate those who have already been profoundly disabled by psychological injuries.

“It will make it harder for injured people to return to work, and it will shift significant costs onto an already overburdened public health system.”

The NSW Secondary Principals’ Council is also opposed to the government’s Bill, which it said failed to address the underlying causes of workplace injury such as threats of violence and physical assault.

“Rather than addressing the conditions that lead to injury, such as poor system design, chronic underfunding, and critical staffing shortages, this Bill changes eligibility rules in ways that risk excluding genuinely injured workers,” the council said in its submission.

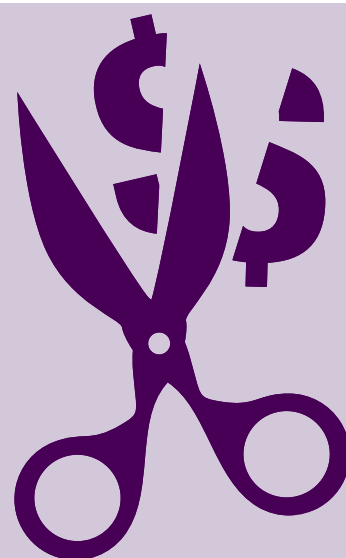
Prevent injuries and trauma

The parliamentary inquiry into the NSW government’s workers compensation reforms is ongoing. The union movement is campaigning against the Bill in its current form and arguing for amendments.

The IEU agrees that the current workers compensation system needs reform to ensure it adequately serves the needs of working people in NSW.

But the government should begin by addressing poor claims management, unnecessary delays and excessive bureaucracy to rein in costs instead of attacking injured workers.

The focus should be on preventing injuries and trauma and returning injured workers back to work sooner.



The NSW government and employers need to do more about eliminating hazards such as workplace violence, sexual harassment, excessive workloads and poor support from supervisors and management.

Take action

Sign the petition calling on MPs to honour pledges to support injured workers launched by Unions NSW: actionnetwork.org/petitions/honour-your-pledge-to-support-injured-workers.

Contact your NSW MP and ask them to stop the NSW government cutting access to mental health services for injured workers:

- Email: actionnetwork.org/letters/fix-the-workers-comp-system-the-right-way
- Call: actionnetwork.org/forms/call-your-mp-stop-the-workers-comp-cuts

Obituary

Mary Howard

The IEU pays tribute to much-loved member, staunch unionist, social activist, teacher and friend to many, Mary Howard, who passed away on 26 July.

Mary was a dedicated and inspirational teacher who began her career in the Diocese of Armidale before relocating to the NSW North Coast. She began teaching at Xavier Catholic College, Skennars Head, in 2002, and quickly took on the role of IEU rep.

Mary was a spiritual person who lived a faith-filled, reflective life. Her gentle, encouraging spirit inspired those around her, and she was loved and respected by students and colleagues alike.

Mary's strong sense of social justice, her belief in the power of the collective, and the high level of esteem in which she was held by her colleagues, led her to become active within the IEU's North Coast Sub Branch.

She attended sub branch meetings to represent her school, was elected to the committee in 2004, and was sub branch secretary for many years.

Mary also represented the North Coast Sub Branch on the IEU Council – the governing and decision-making body of the

NSW/ACT Branch of the IEU, which brings together up to 115 members.

First attending Council as an observer in 2007, Mary was elected a member of Council in 2009, a role she remained in until March 2025.

As Mary moved into school leadership roles, she mentored and nurtured other members to take on the role of rep.

Mary was imaginative, innovative and a gifted musician. She was active in her local St Francis Xavier Parish and a lead in the music ministry.

Mary carried her characteristic intellect, dignity, strength and will to fight for justice and fairness throughout her life.

IEU members, students, colleagues, family, friends and the local community were all enriched by Mary's dedication, kindness and support. She will be missed very much.

Dearly loved wife of Dominic, much loved mother and mother-in-law of Amy and Andre; Jack and Ella; Harry; Bill and Odile; grandmother of Bowie, Rufus and Luca.

The IEU salutes you, Mary. Rest in peace.



Mary Howard, centre, with IEU Council members Kath Egan, left, and Jennifer Allen at the IEU's AGM dinner in October 2023.



Mary Howard addresses a joint stop-work rally of the IEU and NSW Teachers Federation in Tweed Heads on 30 June 2022.

Schools Tree Day: Caring for Country



Students at St Patrick's Primary School in Lochinvar have cultivated several native gardens as part of Schools Tree Day.



St Patrick's Primary School in Lochinvar is the envy of many gardeners thanks to the efforts of students.

Schools Tree Day has been marked at the school in the Hunter Valley over the past three years, with students planting and caring for several native gardens.

But the annual tree planting event, part of Planet Ark's National Tree Day, has a far greater meaning for the school's Indigenous students.

Aboriginal Education Teacher and IEU member Chris Devorsine said the day, celebrated this year on 25 July, provides students with an opportunity to help combat the impact of climate change.

"If we look after Country, Country looks after us and a simple way to do this is to plant trees and local flora," he said.

Planting trees provides students with an opportunity to look after the environment in a practical and hands-on manner.

"This also gives them a sense of responsibility, pride in self

and re-connection opportunities with aspects of their culture," Chris said. "Our projects are very visible and for all our school community to enjoy."

The students' efforts have led to the creation of a bush tucker garden, native bee garden, native bird garden with nesting boxes and a Remembrance Day garden as well as other beautification projects at the school.

Chris said the tree planting provides learning experiences that align with Catholic social teaching principles.

"Schools Tree Day is about human dignity, allowing us to look after place, culture and people," he said.

"It is about solidarity, where we as 'beings' belonging to the human family can look after our common home and all creatures within."

"It is about participation in the hope of creating a better world based on climate improvement and survival of all species."

Chris' role involves looking after the school's 74 Indigenous

students alongside Aboriginal Education Worker and Dhungatti woman Eliza O'Neil.

Their work includes assisting students in literacy and mathematics and offering support for teachers to embed Aboriginal perspectives in their classroom and curriculum.

"We also offer cultural lessons, driven by rich Indigenous literature and cultural knowledge shared first-hand by Eliza," he said.

An IEU member since 2006, Chris joined for a sense of security and the provision of a common voice to deal with matters and decisions affecting teachers.

"Over the years, I've been happy to have that support and feel that in all cases our concerns are genuinely addressed and negotiated," he said.

New report

Overwork driving teacher shortage crisis

One-third of teachers and school leaders do not know if they want to remain in the profession until retirement, as a new report reveals one-quarter of teachers are working more than 60 hours a week.

Full-time teachers working far more than 38 hours a week is one of the major findings of the latest Australian Teacher Workforce Data report.

The report, released in June by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), presents findings on national trends in demographics, education roles, employment conditions, workplace issues and career intentions.

The report is designed to inform policy development on issues affecting the teacher workforce and is based on the Australian Teacher Workforce Survey of more than 50,000 respondents in 2023.

Overwork and work intensification

Overwork remains the major issue driving the workforce attraction and retention crisis.

Full-time teachers reported working far more than 38 hours per week during school terms: 19 per cent of respondents worked 45-49 hours; 26 per cent worked 50-54 hours; 12 per cent worked 55-59 hours; and 26 per cent worked more than 60 hours per week.

Primary and secondary teachers were found to be spending 15-21 hours per week in marking, administration and general teamwork.

Associate Professor Joel Windle from the University of South Australia's Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion said more reforms were needed to attract and retain high-quality teachers.

"Teachers are most dissatisfied with tasks that are imposed from above and which appear to have little meaning beyond meeting administrative requirements," he told *The Educator Online*.

Highly experienced workforce

The teaching workforce is highly experienced and increasingly mature. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of teachers have more than a decade of classroom experience.

Senior leaders with 10-to-29 years' experience increased from 57 per cent in 2019 to 63 per cent in 2023.

Career succession planning for mid-career teachers was generally well-supported and, at the other end of the spectrum, it was reported that early-career teacher numbers are returning to pre-COVID levels.

Employment conditions

Teacher employment conditions are largely stable, with 69 per cent of teachers and leaders on ongoing contracts in 2023, and the majority (70 per cent) on ongoing or fixed-term contracts with full-time hours.

However, only 48 per cent of early career teachers were employed in an ongoing capacity, with higher proportions on short fixed-term (24 per cent) or casual (19 per cent) contracts.

Relatively high proportions of early career teachers (81 per cent), as well as the teacher workforce in remote/very remote locations (85 per cent), were employed to work full-time hours.

“Full-time teachers reported working far more than 38 hours per week.”

Attraction and retention

The report shows there is a pressing need to reduce teacher workloads to sustainable levels, better support teacher wellbeing and improve career-development pathways.

It found 35 per cent of teachers and school leaders are unsure about staying in the profession until retirement, with teachers aged 30-49 most likely to plan to leave before retirement.

Almost half (49 per cent) of teachers under 30 are uncertain about their career plans.

Associate Professor Windle said workload was the primary factor leading teachers to leave the profession, but a lack of autonomy was another source of dissatisfaction.

"Teachers enjoy face-to-face teaching and building positive relationships with students," he said.

"Centralised mandates to follow a narrow set of teaching methods, often on the basis of a fragile evidence base, undermine teachers' ability to be responsive to their own students.

"Ultimately, top-down recipes undermine and underestimate teacher professionalism."

IEU speaks: The IEU has a federal union that represents, advocates for and acts on behalf of all 75,000 IEU members throughout Australia in matters of education policy, industrial relations and workplace laws.



Workforce survey Early career teachers denied crucial support

Almost half of early career teachers in Australia do not receive a formal induction in the first two years of working, and even fewer are provided with mentoring.

The Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) report found just 55 per cent of early career teachers with up to five years' experience received a formal induction in 2023 – compared with 61 per cent in 2019.

Why induction programs matter

A fundamental support for early career teachers is to provide them with a comprehensive induction.

"During a formal induction, early career teachers build on knowledge and experiences from their initial teacher education program, helping to develop their practice," the report said.

"Formal induction is important because it can introduce early career teachers to the school community, working culture and teaching environment, as well as provide support to enhance their pedagogy, hone their professional identity and successfully manage the challenges of their role."

The ATWD collates survey responses from higher education providers, teacher regulatory authorities and teachers across sectors on topics of crucial importance to the national teacher workforce.

The National Trends: Teacher Workforce Data 2025 identifies the characteristics of the teacher workforce and trends in demographics, employment conditions and specific workforce experiences.

Mentoring most useful

Among the issues identified as crucial for workforce sustainability are the prevalence, or otherwise, of mentoring and induction programs for early career teachers.

Teaching is highly complex, requiring a proficient selection of strategies and deployment of skills, often while dealing with demanding classroom or playground situations and responding to students with diverse needs.

When early career teachers commence their duties in front of a class, their capacity to acquire experience is limited by the need to respond appropriately to students from the first lesson.

Regular and structured access to experienced mentors and a genuine induction program can provide meaningful support while early career teachers gain experience, thus avoiding unnecessary burnout or other detrimental effects.

The report also revealed which induction activity early career teachers found the most useful (as a proportion of those who had received it), with mentoring (55 per cent) rated highest, followed by a reduction in face-to-face teaching time (51 per cent).

The opportunity to observe experienced teachers (32 per cent) and an orientation program (24 per cent) were ranked next most useful, with the remaining activities all less useful (3-12 per cent).

"A focus for induction programs, therefore, may be to increase the number of early career teachers receiving mentoring and allocating time for them to observe experienced teachers," the report said.

Induction improvements essential

However, the report shows that access to induction and mentoring varies widely.

For many teachers, the experience of induction has been superficial and limited, lacking the structure and regularity needed for steady development of skills.

For early career teachers in either their first two years, or in years three to five of their career, the report found the only specific activities more than half took part in were an orientation program (77-78 per cent) and mentoring (66 per cent).

"It is possible that high work hours among the wider workforce, including leaders, and long hours spent on non-teaching duties have led to induction activities being deprioritised," the report said.

"It may be that fewer induction activities can be offered in schools than in previous years."

Teachers working in early childhood services are confronted by additional challenges resulting from complexities in the sector.

In its report, National Early Career Teacher Mentoring and Induction Support, the Australian Education Research Organisation recommended funding to ensure new teachers and their mentors have allocated time, expectations are clarified and professional development programs for mentors are established.

The IEU will continue to advocate for effective mentoring programs, including release time, professional development and remuneration for mentors, as integral elements of national policy that should be enshrined in industrial agreements.



Working conditions in early childhood education and care

Service quality depends on staff wellbeing

A new study finds a strong link between better workforce conditions and high-quality early childhood education.

A unionised workplace is also more likely to have an enterprise agreement (EA) with above-award conditions such as non-contact time for documentation and higher rates of pay.

Ongoing safety breaches and substandard training show the value of universal access to early childhood education and care will not be achieved unless service quality is prioritised.

This requires a skilled, stable and well-resourced workforce.

Working conditions

Early childhood thinktank The Front Project set out to investigate the link between high-quality services and staffing conditions in *The Hidden Lever: How pay and conditions support child outcomes in low SES early childhood education and care services*.

“We were particularly interested in how educator working conditions relate to service quality, especially in communities where children stand to benefit most,” said The Front Project’s strategic policy manager Martel Menz.

Menz said the report identifies a “clear gap” in public policy dialogue.

“Conditions like planning and assessment time, professional development and paid leave are often invisible to policymakers, even though they are fundamental to both workforce wellbeing and educational outcomes,” she said.

Where early learning matters

Menz looked at more than 350 services in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in Australia, known as Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) 1 communities.

“These settings are where quality early learning matters most, and where it’s often hardest to achieve,” she said.

“All of these services are also rated Exceeding or Excellent under the National Quality Standard (NQS).”

A sample of 45 enterprise and multi-employer agreements were

examined for entitlements such as non-contact time, professional development, leave provisions and allowances specific to regional and remote areas.

“This allowed us to compare high-quality services’ conditions to those relying on the awards and to understand how better conditions show up in children’s experiences,” Menz said.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows 62 per cent of staff in the sector are covered by an award, 30 per cent are employed under EAs and 8 per cent have individual arrangements.

“These services provide better working conditions, and the benefits flow directly to children through more stable, supported and effective educators.”

However, Menz’s study found 66 per cent of staff in the highest-quality SEIFA 1 services were covered by EAs.

“These services provide better working conditions, and the benefits flow directly to children through more stable, supported and effective educators,” she said.

Children thrive when educators supported

Menz said better conditions give teachers and staff the time, stability and professional support to deliver high-quality early learning in the following ways:

- Adequate planning time enables reflective practice, curriculum development and intentional teaching tailored to children’s needs.
- Access to professional development and mentoring ensures staff can stay current with evidence-based approaches and continually improve their practice.
- Secure employment, fair wages and adequate leave entitlements allow educators to be present, avoid burnout, and build strong, lasting relationships with children and families.

Menz said the study confirms what teachers and staff have long known: services that invest in workplace conditions are the same ones achieving the highest NQS quality ratings.

Other factors such as respect for the profession and a culture of collaboration are also vital to attracting and retaining high-quality staff.

In a submission to the NSW Upper House inquiry into the sector, the IEU notes better pay and conditions are key to improving the quality of early childhood education and solving the staffing crisis.

The IEU has negotiated improved pay and conditions in EAs at services operated by KU, SDN, Uniting and Goodstart.

Menz’s research also offers strong evidence for encouraging not-for-profit providers, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

“Data shows they are more likely to establish services in underserved communities, hire staff under EBAs with stronger workplace conditions, and achieve higher quality ratings,” she said.

Menz said better workplace conditions are not only about the wellbeing of staff, but also children’s safety, which has emerged as a serious issue following revelations of abuse and mistreatment of young children mainly in for-profit services.

“Better conditions won’t fix everything, but when educators are overworked, unsupported, or constantly changing, risks to children increase,” Menz said.

“By contrast, services that support their staff to learn, reflect, and improve are more likely to provide safe, nurturing environments.”



Meet the team of three working to get long day care teachers and educators onto new agreements so they can receive a 15% pay rise.

Julian Thomas, Emily Cokely and Alice Whittlesea (pictured) form the early childhood education and care Worker Retention Payment team (ECEC WRP).

This government-funded project followed the IEU working with the United Workers Union, Australian Education Union and the federal Labor government to improve pay for teachers and educators in the sector. It’s a strong union win.

Emily and Julian are focused on visiting services and talking to both staff and employers about the funding and how the employer can apply.

Historic agreement

“We’re working to help services and, most importantly, employees, access the worker retention payments that are available,” Emily said. “The funding is available – it’s a 15% increase over the next two years.”

Julian commented on the process: “Sometimes it takes a bit of persistence. What works well is when you can take a more traditional union approach, where you get on to someone who is a workplace leader, who is talking to their colleagues about it and agitating.”

Alice offers industrial support, helping employers with the nuts and bolts of the application process, including the technical aspects of signing on to a “compliant industrial instrument”, preferably the historic new multi-enterprise agreement agreed by unions and the government.

“I hope to get as many employees and employers onto the multi-enterprise agreement as possible,” Alice said. “That’s the easiest and most efficient way for them to access the payment.”

Much-needed change

The Worker Retention Payment, which aims to help services retain good staff, is the start of much-needed change in the sector.

Emily said employers should take advantage of the funding “to pay your staff in line with what is now becoming the industry standard”.

However, Julian said some services are inclined to put the funding application in the too-hard basket: “I’m encountering services who are lost in a quagmire of information.”

The team’s mission is to help employees press for the funding and for employers to manage the application process.

Here to help

The trio are all passionate about their work. Emily, who previously worked in the childcare sector, said: “Unless you’ve worked in childcare or in teaching, it can be hard to understand the intensity of the day-to-day work and what a day in the life looks like.”

“I’m making sure employees know their rights in the workplace and are getting paid accurately for their work,” Alice said.

There is still time for your service to apply. Call the IEU, meet with your colleagues, find out more, apply pressure. Get the pay rise you deserve. For more information, scan the QR code at right.

Tania Yardley Contributor

Long day care teachers and educators

Join the new agreement for a

15%

pay rise

Unions, the federal Labor government and employers have worked together to make a new multi-enterprise agreement with 15% pay rises funded by the government.

Is your centre part of this historic deal? It's not too late.

If your centre joins the new agreement, you'll get:

- a 10% pay increase (backdated to 2 December 2024 if your centre joins the MEA and applies for funding by 30 September)
- another 5% increase from 1 December 2025
- paid release to mentor early career teachers, and
- paid leave to attend union training.

Find out how we can help you get a 15% pay rise.
Call the IEU on 8202 8900 or email ececwrp@ieu.asn.au



Scan to find out more



IEU the union for early childhood teachers

New research Overworked and underpaid

A new study into the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector has found teachers and educators are working an unacceptable number of unpaid hours.

The research, conducted by the University of Sydney, also found ECEC staff have so many additional duties that it takes away from their primary role of supervising and educating children.

It confirms feedback provided by IEU members and included by the union in a submission to the NSW Upper House inquiry into the sector.

The findings clearly demonstrate the inevitable impacts of unsustainable workloads and excessive documentation on the core work of early childhood teachers and educators.

Against the backdrop of horrifying failures to ensure child safety in the sector, the issue of diversion from critical time spent interacting with children is of great concern.

Robbed of meaningful time

The research found early childhood staff are spending less than a third of their day in focused, uninterrupted time with the children in their care.

Two-thirds of survey respondents reported that workload demands consume time that would otherwise be spent in meaningful interactions with children.

Lead researcher Dr Erin Harper told the ABC: "Over 70 per cent of our educators say that they are working unpaid hours every single week and for those educators, they're reporting an average of nine unpaid hours each week – we end up with massive burnout."

The research follows revelations about safety breaches at mainly for-profit centres and allegations of child sexual abuse by a worker in Victoria.

It also identified factors that have been raised by IEU members and pursued by the union in advocacy with federal bodies, including:

- contact and non-contact workloads that are unsustainable

- unpaid work hours undertaken to cope with excessive documentation
- distractions and interruptions that negatively impact teacher capacity to be fully present in their interactions with children
- the need for a review of the National Assessment and Ratings system to evaluate detrimental effects on dedicated contact time for early childhood teachers.

When combined with other factors such as low wages, inadequate access to professional development and insufficient support for children with high learning and support needs, it is clear that prompt and far-reaching change in the sector is essential.

Addressing workload issues

In 2024, the IEU approached the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to clarify the documentation requirements necessary to comply with the assessment and ratings process, a known driver of work intensification.

The result of that engagement was a collaboration between ACECQA and the union on a set of four fact sheets that provide specific advice to early childhood education workers and providers in both school age care and early childhood.

The Educational Program Documentation Information Sheets confirm the evidence requirements necessary to satisfy the assessment and ratings process, without producing excessive or duplicative documentation.

Ongoing advocacy

The IEU will continue to advocate for positive changes in the ECEC sector that allow teachers and educators to focus on their core work and ensure both child safety and high-quality early childhood education.

Child safety: **Cut funding from substandard providers**

The IEU welcomes legislation passed by federal parliament in late July that would cut government funding from providers repeatedly failing safety requirements.

"The IEU supports blocking federal funding from providers that do not prioritise child safety and those that put profits ahead of the children they care for," said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

"This is the first step towards building a much stronger child safety culture and restoring confidence in the sector."

Federal Education Minister Jason Clare promised he would use the new powers to strip funding from below-standard centres as soon as possible.

"My department is working right now with states and territories on a priority list of providers to bring action against," he told *Guardian Australia*.

Other safety measures needed

The union welcomes a further package of reforms to boost child safety that will be the focus of a meeting of education ministers in August.

"Staff in the sector need mandatory training in their obligations and the assurance of a safe mechanism for making a report when they are legally required to do so," Matthews said.

The union also calls for providers to undertake compulsory training to ensure a child-safe environment.

The union welcomes plans for a nationwide register of early childhood educators and seeks clarification of what this register would mean for degree-qualified teachers who are already required to be registered under state laws.

Staffing ratios and CCTV

The IEU calls for a clampdown on centres that manipulate staffing ratios to avoid their legal

obligations of ensuring adequate supervision and prevent safety breaches.

"While CCTV has its place, it is no magic bullet – for example, it cannot be installed in baby-change rooms and bathrooms. And it is no substitute for building a strong culture of child safety with well-trained, properly paid staff," Matthews said.

"CCTV is no substitute for building a strong culture of child safety."

A separate meeting of federal and state attorneys general will also be held in August to discuss reforming the Working with Children Check system (WWCC).

"We call for greater national coordination of the sector, including reforms to the Working with Children Check system and a searchable national register of WWCC holders," Matthews said.

Federal Attorney General Michelle Rowland said

different states and territories had inconsistent schemes covering eligibility and reportable conduct.

"They do not talk to each other and there is no system of national oversight or real-time monitoring," she told federal parliament in July.

"We need meaningful change and we need it urgently. It's time to stop predators exploiting cracks in the hodgepodge of separate systems around the country."

New regulations must not reduce quality

The union is also concerned about reports from members that time is taken away from core duties of educating and caring for children by ancillary tasks such as cleaning and paperwork.

"Regulations must enhance the delivery of early childhood education and care, not reduce its quality," Matthews said.

"Real reform means fixing acute workforce shortages through better wages, manageable workloads, and comprehensive training in child safety and protection."

CHILD SAFETY

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Michelle Thompson

Vice President Early Childhood Services



The union welcomes moves by the federal and NSW governments to strengthen child safety following shocking reports of abuse and mistreatment of young children in mainly for-profit centres.

The focus on strong safety practices is long overdue, so are the many resources and communications sent out by the Education Department.

However, the question remains whether appropriate practices are in action in centres on a day-to-day basis.

Disturbing practices of for-profit providers

Reports of for-profit childcare giant Affinity instructing staff to consider "reputation damage" before notifying police about child safety allegations are disturbing.

Another for-profit provider G8 Education threatened staff with "disciplinary action" for speaking to the media about safety concerns, reported *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Policies, procedures, regulations and laws will not create a child safe culture if they are not put into practice in centres, or

divert staff away from their core duties of educating and caring for children.

Difficult questions

The latest revelations raise questions about the commitment of for-profit providers to child safety:

- Are all staff at these centres supported in putting child safety policies and practices into place?
- Do staff feel supported asking their Director or Nominated Supervisor for assistance if legally required staffing ratios have not been met?
- Do staff feel confident they will be supported and listened to if they raise concerns over another staff member's work performance?
- Are staff aware of their rights and who they can contact for help or concerns with what might be happening in their workplace?

Empowering staff

We need to be united in advocating for the safety of children in our care as well as staff working in these settings.

Teachers and educators in early childhood education and care need to feel empowered to speak up if they see or hear

something that may not be quite right and aware of people they can contact for help.

Children's safety is everyone's business, so is providing a safe work environment where staff feel supported.

Children should come before profit.

Working with children

The union welcomes the reforms announced by NSW Premier Chris Minns to strengthen the Working with Children Check system by giving the independent child safety regulator – the Office of the Children's Guardian – responsibility for reviewing WWCC decisions.

Currently, even people with serious convictions – including for sexual assault – can appeal a WWCC refusal to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The union also supports a searchable national register of WWCC holders and other initiatives to integrate WWCC systems and close information gaps that offenders may exploit by moving interstate.

The union is seeking further information from the NSW government about the impact of a national register on degree-qualified teachers who are already required to be registered under state laws.



20-year member Mercedes Garcia, right, with rep Kathie D'Souza from Nazareth Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour.



Clare Burnett, left, receives her 10-year certificate from rep Jennifer McMasters at Holy Cross Primary School, Glenwood.



Pina Grima receives her certificate for 20 years of IEU membership from rep Luke Campbell at Our Lady of the Angels Primary School, Rouse Hill.



Stephen Cauchi, left, celebrates 30 years of IEU membership with rep Luke Campbell at Our Lady of the Angels Primary School in Rouse Hill.



Troy Loudon, of St Mary's Primary, Rydalmere, marks 10 years of IEU membership with organiser Lubna Haddad, left, and rep Michelle Dennis.



20-year member Toni Aspromonte, right, with rep Kathie D'Souza from Nazareth Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour.



Celebrating member milestones at St Michael's Primary, Baulkham Hills. From left, Philippa Cox (10 years), Andrew Baker (20 years), Vaughan Knight (10 years), rep Mirijana Loncar.



Erina Lavercombe, centre, receives her 20-year certificate from reps Jennifer McMasters, left, and Natalie Fogg, at Holy Cross Primary School, Glenwood.



Margaret Stone, left, and Rita Mizzi from St Bernadette's Primary School in Lalor Park with their 10-year certificates.



Mabellynn Buenaventura from St Bernadette's Primary School in Lalor Park with her 10-year membership certificate.



Joanne Topalovic, rep and support staff member at St Bernadette's Primary School in Lalor Park, marks 10 years as an IEU member.



Vesna Jurcevic receives her certificate for 10 years of IEU membership from rep Luke Campbell at Our Lady of the Angels Primary School in Rouse Hill.



Rosalie Merchant, left, from Nagle College, Blacktown, celebrates 30 years of IEU membership with organiser Lubna Haddad.



Pauline Pittas, centre, receives her 10-year certificate from reps Jennifer McMasters, left, and Natalie Fogg, at Holy Cross Primary School, Glenwood.



Lee Hurst of St Angela's Primary School in Castle Hill with his 10-year certificate.



Grace McGirr, right, receives her 40-year gift from fellow member Eleni Challinor at St John's College in Woodlawn.



Zelinda Brown, of Trinity Catholic College in Lismore, celebrates 40 years of IEU membership with fellow member Tony Flood.



From left, Patrick Sibbald, Anthony Prasad and Cheryl Godfrey of Nagle College, Blacktown, celebrate 20 years of IEU membership.



From left, Michaela Fiumara, Luisa Tavella and Virginia Salafia of St Joseph's Primary School, Leeton, celebrate 20 years' membership.



Tracee Cinello, left, at St Patrick's Primary School Lochinvar, celebrates 40 years of IEU membership with organiser Raelene Maxworthy.



Lisa Clements receives her 10-year certificate from rep Natalie Fogg, at Holy Cross Primary School, Glenwood.



Dionne Villiers, left, receives her 10-year certificate from rep Jennifer McMasters at Holy Cross Primary School, Glenwood.



From left, organiser Lubna Haddad with Juvy Reczek, Praveena Krishnan and Jane Pace from Nagle College, Blacktown, each marking 10 years of IEU membership.



Annie Daley from Radford College in the ACT, with her 10-year certificate.



Celebrating membership milestones at Marian Catholic College in Griffith. From left, rep Ivan Mason, 10 years; Tori McIntosh, 30 years; Louisa Patten, 10 years; Lee Summerville, 10 years; Clare Mitchell, 30 years.



Rebekah Brown, left, and Rebecca Stevenson, right, receive 10-year certificates from rep Kate MacDonald at St John the Apostle Primary School, Florey, ACT.

Leading in the middle Practical support for school leaders

Middle leadership roles in schools – those heading departments, year levels or pastoral teams – are complex and demanding. Leaders are expected to support their staff, manage change, and maintain morale, all while carrying their own teaching load.

Recognising this, the IEU has engaged Michael Elphick and Associates to deliver a two-day practical workshop designed to support middle leaders and principals.

Practical strategies

“This program isn’t about theory,” Elphick said. “It’s about empowering school leaders with practical strategies they can apply immediately, whether they’re coaching a struggling colleague, navigating conflict or leading through change.”

The course draws on evidence-based frameworks including Situational Leadership, Herzberg’s Motivation Theory, and the DiSC behavioural model (dominance, influence, steadiness, conscientiousness) to equip participants with the tools to lead with empathy, clarity and confidence.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews said supporting members in these roles has a ripple effect across the whole school.

“Middle leaders and principals play a crucial role in forming the culture of a school,” Matthews said. “We are keen to support our middle leaders and principals because we know this will have a positive impact on the working lives of our broader membership.”

Strengthening capacity

The importance of strengthening leadership capability in schools has also been reinforced by national research bodies.

The Productivity Commission has consistently flagged management capacity as a major constraint across industries,

including education. It recognises the role of middle leaders in driving school improvement and emphasises the need for targeted professional learning.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has also recently released the Australian Professional Standards for Middle Leaders, a clear sign of the growing recognition of this leadership tier.

These standards highlight the need for ongoing development in areas such as leading teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building productive relationships.

Real-world application

This workshop will align with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, Middle Leaders, and Principals. It offers practical guidance in navigating the messy, human side of school leadership.

The course provides actionable frameworks for dealing with common leadership dilemmas. From difficult conversations to fostering team cohesion, the course offers strategies grounded in real-world application.

“We need to invest in school leaders who are already on the ground making a difference,” says Matthews said. “This workshop is about helping those leaders to thrive.”

The two-day course is ideal for current and aspiring middle and senior leaders in schools, including heads of department, year coordinators, and assistant principals. Whether you’re newly appointed or a seasoned leader seeking fresh approaches, this workshop will offer valuable tools and renewed confidence.

For more information and to register, see below.

Pat Devery Professional Engagement Coordinator

New courses

Transforming difficult conversations

Shifting from avoidance to alignment

Difficult conversations cannot be avoided – they shape trust, morale and collaboration in every school and centre.

This practical new online PD with Sarah Moore aims to support all IEU members, including early childhood teachers, primary and secondary teachers, leaders and support staff, to approach these conversations with confidence.

Grounded in the neuroscience of trust and Conversational Intelligence®, the session provides practical tools to strengthen professional relationships, foster respectful workplaces and navigate sensitive issues clearly and constructively.

Information and registration

Main session: Tuesday 9 September, 3.30pm to 5pm

Follow-up: Tuesday 23 September, 3.30pm to 4.15pm

More details and register: www.ieu.asn.au/events

Regulation

Theory and practice

Supporting student engagement starts with understanding regulation, both for learners and for ourselves as educators.

This 90-minute online PD, exclusive to IEU members, is presented by Chey Clinton and Olivia Kearney of The Culture Collective (www.theculturecollective.com.au).

The session explores the five domains of regulation: biological, emotional, cognitive, social and prosocial – and the stressors that impact them.

Through practical strategies, reflection tasks and discussion, participants will strengthen their ability to manage classroom wellbeing, support self-regulation and respond proactively to challenging behaviour.

Information and registration

Date: Tuesday 15 October, 3.30pm to 5pm

More details and register: www.ieu.asn.au/events

Adaptive leadership in schools

The leadership course every school leader needs

As a leader have you ever thought:

- I want to support my staff, but I don’t know what’s going on underneath.
- Why won’t they just do their job?
- I’m constantly putting out fires – I need strategies, not theory
- Why did that work for one teacher, but it didn’t work for another?
- I need practical ways to guide my staff, not micromanage.
- I want to grow as a leader, but I rarely get time to step back and reflect.

Presented by Michael Elphick and Associates (michaelalphick.com.au), this practical, two-day workshop is designed for middle and senior school leaders who would like to build stronger, more motivated teams.

Using Situational Leadership, Herzberg’s Motivation Theory, and the DiSC behavioural model, this PD will help you better understand your team and yourself.

From coaching struggling teachers to lifting team morale, this program is for anyone managing the messy, human side of leadership.

You’ll walk away with clear, evidence-based frameworks to help you lead with empathy, manage different personalities, and respond constructively to burnout, resistance and change fatigue. If you lead people, this course is for you.

Who it’s for

- Principals
- Assistant Principals
- Year Coordinators and Middle Leaders
- Lead Teachers and Stage Coordinators
- Staff managing teams, leading programs, or coaching colleagues
- Teachers with leadership potential or aspiring to leadership roles

Two-day course: When and where

Tuesday 21 October, 9am to 4pm IEU training room, Wattle Street, Ultimo

Wednesday 22 October, 9am to 4pm IEU training room, Wattle Street, Ultimo

Cost

\$1150 members

\$1350 non-members

This course addresses the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, Middle Leaders, and Principals and provides 12 hours of professional development for teachers maintaining accreditation at proficient, highly accomplished or lead.

More details and register: www.ieu.asn.au/events

Login to register and the IEU will invoice you or your school.



Creating a buzz

Union grants enhance student learning

Every year the IEU invites members at schools, colleges and early childhood centres to apply for grants, sponsored by Teachers Mutual Bank, to develop sustainability initiatives. TMB and the IEU have a proud history of funding education projects focused on sustainability.

Past grant-winning projects include habitat and biodiversity conservation, tree-planting, composting and vegetable gardens, water and energy saving initiatives, waste and recycling. Grants have also been awarded to projects that draw on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections to land, community and the local environment. Applications for this year's environment grants are now open until 10 October. This month, we meet another recipient of a 2024 Environment Grant to find out how they used the grant to implement their sustainability project.

Native Bees in Schools Stingless Bees, Hive and Annual Flowers

A saint's determination to live her life "doing the little things really well" prompted St Therese Catholic Parish Primary School in West Wollongong to apply for an environment grant to create a home for native bees.

Visual Arts teacher Susane McGoldrick said the Native Bees in

Schools project, which received a \$2500 grant last year, was based on the belief that authentic environmental education should be hands-on, deeply connected to nature and promote sustainable lifestyles.

"By introducing a stingless beehive, we have deepened students' ecological awareness and empowered them to take action," she said. "With this grant we have set up the program with the purchase of the bees, hives and annual flowers for the bees to pollinate."

The grant enabled the school to run the Sydney stingless bee school program, which provides children with the opportunity to safely learn and experience the social behaviours of bees.

It also enables school children to develop an awareness of the impact of humans on the environment and the interdependence of living things.

Enhance learning

An IEU member since 2020, McGoldrick said the beehive project enhanced learning by allowing students to closely observe and study behaviours in a bee colony.

"Through this program students explore the importance of biodiversity and the impact of human actions on ecosystems," she said.

McGoldrick said the presence of the bees offered opportunities

for inquiry and reflection, "encouraging students to see themselves as caretakers of creation".

The hive has been installed in the grounds of the school, close to existing garden beds. Students have been introduced to the bees, learning about their behaviour, life cycles and environmental significance.

"One key challenge has been ensuring the hive is placed in an optimal location for both the bees and student access for observation," McGoldrick said.

"There has been learning with how interconnected our garden systems are."

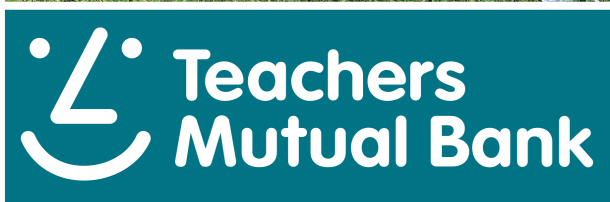
McGoldrick also described "a wonderful discovery" about the calming effect that observing the bees has had on some students, which she said showed the benefits of the project on wellbeing and mindfulness.

"Our beehive is a living classroom and a reminder of our call to ecological stewardship," she said.

"As the hive thrives, so too does the school's commitment to fostering a community of sustainability, reflection and care for our environment."



Students at St Therese Catholic Parish Primary School in West Wollongong are creating a home for native bees.



2025 ENVIRONMENT GRANTS



Bring your sustainability initiatives to life! The IEU and Teachers Mutual Bank are offering a minimum of six grants valued at up to \$3000 each.

We invite members to apply for our 2025 environment grants, proudly sponsored by Teachers Mutual Bank (TMB).

TMB and the IEU have a strong history of funding education initiatives that kickstart sustainability projects.

Applications open: Monday 21 July 2025
Applications close: Friday 10 October 2025

Winners will be contacted on Tuesday 21 October 2025, with a formal announcement at the IEU AGM in Sydney on Saturday 25 October.

To apply, scan the QR code below and fill out the form.

For more information, email: environment@ieu.asn.au



SCAN THE QR CODE
TO APPLY NOW



MEET OUR MEMBERS

Gabie Madden: Devoted and enthusiastic

Early career teacher Gabie Madden is dedicated to the wellbeing of students, writes Andrew Taylor.

Every Wednesday morning at St Joseph's College in Lochinvar, Gabie Madden invites students to sit down for a hearty breakfast.

An HSIE teacher at the Hunter Valley school, Gabie said the Breakfast Club provides a welcoming, safe space where students can start the day with a healthy meal.

"For many students, this helps reduce stress and anxiety related to hunger or feeling isolated," she said. "It sets a positive tone for their learning day ahead, especially before they go and run around at sport."

Devoted and enthusiastic

The wellbeing program is one of the tasks at the school undertaken by Gabie, who received an early career teaching award at this year's Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Emmaus Awards.

Gabie said it was "really humbling" to win the award and an "encouragement to keep learning and growing".

"I know I still have so much to develop, but this recognition gives me a little reassurance that the effort I'm putting into my teaching and relationships with students is having a positive impact," she said.

The award judges described Gabie as a devoted and enthusiastic teacher whose "professionalism and maturity surpass her age".

"Gabie is highly regarded by her colleagues and frequently approached for assistance and collaborative teaching," the judges said.

"Her dedication to holistic education is evident in her leadership roles within the College's social justice efforts, including Socktober, Caritas and Bake Sales."

The judges also noted her significant role in the school's spiritual life by co-leading retreats

and formation days: "Additionally, her coaching of netball teams underscores her commitment to fostering student engagement and growth."

Welcoming and supportive

Gabie's commitment to student wellbeing also led to her appointment in 2024 to lead the school's wellbeing and transition program – a role in which she helped 31 new students join the school.

"It was such a privilege to build those initial relationships and help new students and their families feel like valued members of our community from day one," she said.

Gabie also manages Queen Talk, which provides a forum for female students to discuss the challenges they face.

"These sessions promote empowerment, resilience and a strong sense of community," she said.

Gabie teaches business studies, commerce and religion to students in Years 9 to 12 at St Joseph's, which she said has a strong sense of community.

"You can feel it the moment you walk through the gates," she said. "The relationships between staff and students are genuine, and it's a really welcoming and supportive environment to be part of."

Collective voice

An IEU member since 2022, Gabie said she joined the union "because I really value the idea of being part of a wider professional network that advocates for teachers and supports our rights and wellbeing in the workplace".

Gabie comes from a family of teachers and was especially inspired by her grandfather, Dennis, who was a primary school principal.

"I feel strongly about contributing to a school environment that supports not just academic



Teacher Gabie Madden, left, and Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Director of Schools Jacqueline Wilkinson.

"I really value the idea of being part of a wider professional network that advocates for teachers."

development, but spiritual and moral growth as well," she said.

Early career teachers face a wide range of challenges – managing workload while building confidence and refining their teaching practice.

"In our first years, we're often given a full-time load, expected to meet the demands of various stakeholders, and required to complete our

NESA proficient accreditation, all at once," Gabie said.

Gabie said the union was a vital source of support, helping early career teachers understand their workplace rights and responsibilities, which "provides clarity and reassurance during what can be a very intense period of professional growth".

Liam Bleakley: Promising young teacher



Teacher Liam Bleakley with his father Tim at the Emmaus Awards.

Early career teacher Liam Bleakley relishes the opportunity to connect with students, writes Andrew Taylor.

Teaching is a tradition in Liam Bleakley's family. His father, Tim, is a primary school principal. His mother, Joanne, was an early childhood educator before becoming a TAFE teacher and later joining the Department of Education. Liam's brothers, Justin and James, both teach in primary schools.

Yet Liam was adamant he would never follow in his parents' footsteps – until a teacher inspired a change of heart and love of geography.

"School wasn't exactly my cup of tea," Liam said. "I wasn't a straight-A student by any means."

Liam said he now has a passion for geography, which he teaches alongside history, legal studies and business studies.

"I also love the idea of being a teacher and having an impact on people's lives and yeah, I became another teacher in the family," he said.

"You can see the difference you're making."

Remarkable potential

An HSIE teacher at St Francis Xavier's College in Hamilton, Liam was one of three early career teachers recognised at this year's Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Emmaus Awards.

The award's judges said Liam was a deserving winner of the prize: "Since starting his career in 2021, Liam has demonstrated remarkable potential and influence in teaching and leadership."

The judges also said Liam had built strong connections with students through his "patience, professionalism, and profound understanding of adolescent wellbeing".

"He is a valued colleague, a positive male role model, and a committed educator with exceptional talent. Liam represents a promising young teacher."

Making a difference

Liam said he felt privileged to play a part in his students' lives. As the leader of Year 12 wellbeing, he helps students make choices about what to do after they finish school.

"You get to connect genuinely with students," he said. "They

don't have to show their appreciation, but you can see the difference you're making."

Liam added: "We don't go into teaching to be thanked. It's just really cool to see the sort of positive impact you can have on students."

Beyond the classroom, Liam has stepped into relieving leadership roles in administration, wellbeing and pedagogy. The latter role involved assisting colleagues with using technology such as digital whiteboards as well as teaching methods for younger students.

Liam has also gone above and beyond teaching duties by participating in retreats, which he said is a "really great way to get to know students".

"I think better learning can take place because you've developed a relationship with students."

Reassurance and support

An IEU member since 2022, Liam comes from a proud union family. When Liam asked his father, who joined the IEU in 1989, about signing up to the union, his advice was simple: "Mate, jump on it."

Liam said the union provides reassurance, support and "gives me the confidence to be a better teacher".

While Liam loves teaching, he is clear-eyed about the challenges posed by burgeoning workloads, staffing shortages and the risk of burnout from overwork.

"You feel you have a duty to the students," he said. "That is rewarding but also a bit of a curse. I want to make sure every lesson is up to scratch and every single meeting with a student is productive."

An avid sportsman, Liam is deeply involved in the school's sports program, playing cricket and the rugby codes. He was also part of the teachers' relay team in swimming and athletics.

"The teachers won the swimming side of things, but the running, I didn't think the bones held up on the teachers," he said.

Christian Bell: Experience of a lifetime



Christian Bell is one of three teachers selected to accompany students on a tour of South Korea and Singapore, writes Andrew Taylor.

Leading a group of high school students on a tour of the demilitarised zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, is not for the faint-hearted.

But the opportunity proved irresistible for Christian Bell, an IEU member and Head of HSIE (History, Geography and Aboriginal Studies) at Christian Brothers' High School Lewisham.

"I'm really looking forward to visiting some of the battlefield sites of the Korean War and, depending on the advice at the time, areas of South Korea near the demilitarised zone," he said.

Christian is one of three teachers who will accompany 20 NSW secondary school students on a 12-day tour of South Korea and Singapore in September and October as part of the 2025 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship.

"I was fortunate to have incredible teachers who helped me build a deep love of history."

Sites on the itinerary include the Memorial Hall for the Incheon Landing Operation, National Museum of Korea, UN First Battle Memorial and Imjingak Park in the DMZ area.

The tour is designed to help students better understand the history of Australians who served during the Korean War.

They will also travel to Singapore and visit sites such as Changi Prison relating to the history of World War Two.

Invaluable experience

Joining the tour is an obvious choice for Christian given his interest in Australia's military history and its impact on national identity.

"The opportunity to visit South Korea and Singapore with a study tour just seemed like an invaluable experience," he said. "I was very lucky to get through the process and be selected."

Christian is deep in preparation for the study tour alongside other participants and staff from the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs.

"We've been having meetings to go through the itinerary in greater detail and talk logistics, the aims of the tour and management of students," he said.

Christian has previously been on school tours to visit rural communities in NSW, Timor-Leste and Israel. He also conducts amateur archaeological digs for his ancient history students to deepen their understanding and interest in the subject.

Deep love of history

Christian has been a teacher for more than a decade and remains enthusiastic about the career he set his heart on as a teenager.

"I knew from about 15 years of age that I wanted to be a teacher," he said. "I was fortunate to have incredible teachers who helped me build a deep love of history."

Christian said he appreciates the opportunity to play a positive role in the lives of his students.

"Watching them as they grow into young men and women who are thoughtful, kind and open to learning is just so satisfying," he said.

"Getting to work with colleagues who are passionate and dedicated is also incredibly rewarding."

Speaking up and solidarity

An IEU member since 2016, Christian was encouraged to join the union by colleagues at his first school who were fantastic mentors and engaging teachers.

"They were all strong advocates of the union," he said. "They emphasised the importance of speaking up for colleagues and standing in solidarity with people."

He said union principles are closely aligned with the values he seeks to share as a humanities teacher.

"I think it's a no-brainer, and that's why I advocate for newer and younger teachers to join as well," he said.

Christian said teaching can be challenging but "the trick is really just focusing on what drives us to do this work we love".

"My own young children help ground me in terms of recognising what's important," he said.

"It's important to engage with the challenges of teaching, to find ways of managing them, but also to push past that and recognise that our jobs are really special."

Karen McKay: It's an honour

Karen McKay was shocked to learn her name was on the King's Birthday Honours List, writes Andrew Taylor.

When Karen McKay was told she would receive an award in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours List, she felt a little overwhelmed and embarrassed.

"Initially I thought it was someone having a joke with me," she said. "I am sure there are many people more deserving than me."

An IEU member for more than four decades, Karen was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for outstanding service to early childhood education.

Karen said she accepted the award on behalf of the staff, children and families she has worked with at St Joseph's Early Childhood Service in Laurieton on the NSW Mid North Coast "and my undervalued colleagues in the profession".

Several generations

Karen taught up to three generations from the same families during her long tenure as director of St Joseph's.

"I was part of the teaching staff for many years and only moved to a non-teaching role when the service's operational needs became too great to fulfil the role of teacher and manager," she said.

In the early days, children attended the community preschool for two days a week before they went to primary school. Some three-year-olds would also attend for half a day.

"We were a newer service without too many resources," Karen said. "We made do with what we had – and 'free' was one of our favourite words. Parents worked hard to manage and run the centre and fundraised to keep it going."

"Paperwork was done by hand and as a state-funded community preschool we struggled to make funds last until the next cheque arrived."

St Joseph's now operates as a long day care centre and preschool for 64 children from six weeks to school age.

"From the start of my career to the finish, the nature of children and families has changed radically," she said. "The centre worked hard to ensure we were providing a service that catered as best we could to those needs."

Union membership vital

Karen joined the IEU in 1983 on the recommendation of a colleague and has participated in many union actions over the past four decades, including the Unite for Change campaign for pay rises in community preschools.

"I believe union membership is even more important today," she said. "For all my time we advocated for better wages for the profession. I believe that issue has still not been adequately resolved."

Karen also said she believed respect for the profession is lower today than when she began teaching in 1979.

However, Karen said it was rewarding to watch children and families grow – both educationally and as part of the local community.

She said students from her first years at St Joseph's are now nearing 50 years old.

"I still run into some of them and have taught many of their children and even grandchildren as they continue to support the service," she said.

New adventures

Karen said the most challenging aspect of the job involved bureaucracy rather than children.

"Too often policies and funding are determined by those who do not have any lived experience with the folk whose lives their decisions affect," she said.

Karen expressed gratitude for the support of long-time IEU rep and former IEU Vice President Early Childhood Services Gabe Connell – "her advocacy made a difference" – as well as the parish and her family "who allowed me the space to bring St Joseph's into so much of their life".

Karen keeps in touch with colleagues since her retirement from St Joseph's in 2024 but is busy these days running around after grandchildren and volunteer gardening at the aged care facility where her father lives. She also works part-time in customer service.

"I do lots of short courses on relevant subjects like Egyptian Mathematics, and I holiday with my husband," she said.

"I realised early in my retirement that it was not good to be at home, and I needed to find something that provided social contact with the rest of the world."



Time capsule: 2015

In 2015, former US President Barack Obama still occupied the White House. The Lodge in Canberra, however, had new tenants after Malcolm Turnbull successfully challenged Tony Abbott for the prime ministership after the Abbott-led government recorded 30 consecutive losses in Newspoll.

The ‘fixer’, Christopher Pyne, was the federal education minister, while his NSW counterpart was Adrian Piccoli.

Rosie Batty was named Australian of the Year and the Times Person of the Year was German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Long negotiations bear fruit

The IEU was in protracted negotiations with the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (CCER) – now Catholic Employment Relations (CER) – for new Catholic systemic agreements.

The previous year CCER had decided, without consulting the union, to redraft its own enterprise agreement, stripping out promotion positions, uninterrupted lunch breaks and other entitlements for both teachers and support staff.

Members were bewildered at the lack of respect their employers had shown towards their employees. As industrial action appeared likely, 991 new members joined the IEU in May 2015.

Ultimately, member solidarity triumphed, and the IEU was able to recommend a substantially improved agreement to members after 14 long months of negotiations.

A total of 3097 members joined the IEU in 2015 – many are still members today. If you are one of them and have not yet received your 10-year anniversary certificate, please contact the union.

Induction and mentoring

The union hosted the Securing our Future conference, which called on employers to ensure that induction and mentoring provisions be included as entitlements in industrial instruments.

The union again called on the major political parties in NSW to review the blanket exemptions to the *Anti-Discrimination Act*. It was a busy year for conferences, with the IEU also hosting an environment conference, an activist conference, an early childhood conference and a support staff conference.

The then General Secretary, John Quessy, raised the union’s concerns about the *Border Force Act*, introduced in 2015.

The law forbade workers, including teachers, in Australia’s immigration detention centres from revealing or reporting any information they came across in the course of their work under the threat of two years’ jail.

This contradicted the legal requirement for teachers to mandatorily report reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect.

Members win battle over long service leave

The Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese declared long service leave in short blocks of less than 15 days would not be approved.

The Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese covers more than half of the state, which is about the size of Germany. Travelling distances are vast. Attending family functions or members taking their own children to diocesan sporting competitions often necessitated applications for one-day or two-day blocks of long service leave.

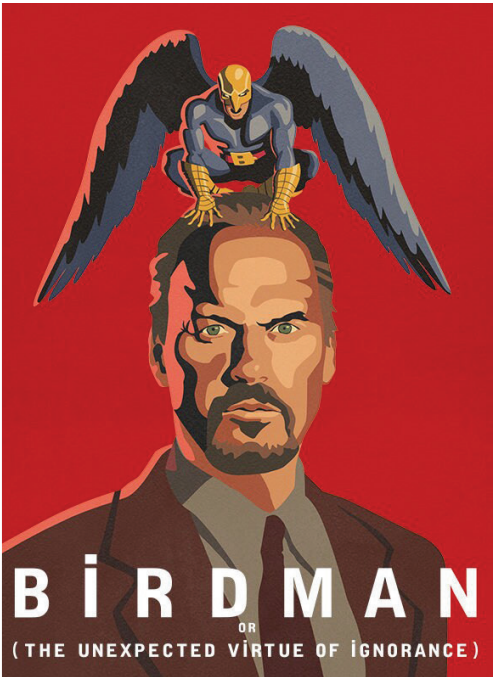
A member-led grassroots campaign ensued. Sixteen of the 18 schools in the diocese unanimously endorsed a motion against the employer’s directive.

The IEU Council passed a resolution in support of their colleagues out west. IEU members sent postcards to the Wilcannia-Forbes director of schools, calling on his office to reconsider the decision and let members use their LSL entitlement as employees in other dioceses could.

Local media, such as the *Daily Liberal*, ABC Broken Hill, *Parkes Champion Post* and *Nyngan Observer* took up the story. The diocese relented and restored the flexibility for members to access leave as they deserved.



Then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull with German Chancellor Angela Merkel; Birdman won Best Picture in the 2015 Academy Awards.



Rosie Batty was Australian of the Year in 2015 for campaigning against family and domestic violence.



The North Queensland Cowboys won the 2015 NRL premiership.

Abbott fails to limit access to paid parental leave

Tony Abbott proposed limiting access to the new government-funded paid parental leave scheme for those employees – usually in strongly unionised workplaces – who had paid parental leave as part of their existing employee entitlements.

Then federal treasurer Joe Hockey went so far as to portray working women who received both entitlements as “double dippers” and “rorters”.

Employer-based parental leave has been negotiated over many years as an industrial provision, often with forgone salary or other conditions as part of the bargaining process. The union movement fought off this threat.

Home and Away triumphs again

Currents by Tame Impala won the ARIA Album of the Year, while Conrad Sewell’s *Start Again* won ARIA’s song of the year. The song *Hoops* by The Rubens topped Triple J’s Hottest 100 list.

In TV-land, Carrie Bickmore, co-host of Network Ten’s *The Project* won the Gold Logie, while *Home and Away* won the most popular drama program (again) and was inducted into the Logie’s Hall of Fame.

In cinema, *Birdman* won the 2015 Academy award for best picture; Eddie Redmayne won best actor for *The Theory of Everything*; and Julianne Moore won best actress for *Still Alice*.

The North Queensland Cowboys defeated the Brisbane Broncos with a thrilling golden-point field goal from Johnathan Thurston to win the club’s first grand final.

Hawthorn took out the AFL premiership with a much more comfortable win against the West Coast Eagles.

David Towson Deputy Secretary



From the archives: Members held strong

Prolonged negotiations for a new Catholic systemic enterprise agreement were a major topic in *Newsmonth* in the first half of 2015.

“At midday on Friday 24 April, after more than 380 days of, at times, bitter dispute with Catholic employers, a significant development occurred that encouraged the union to suspend industrial action planned for the following Tuesday,” wrote General Secretary John Quessy.

Following the threat of a full day of industrial action, employers finally came to the table with a much better deal.

This was the turning point that led to the finalisation of a new Catholic Systemic Schools EA after more than a year of talks.

Quessy went on to detail the reasons for the protracted negotiations: “The

dispute commenced on 7 April 2014 when CCER hand delivered the draft of a totally unacceptable enterprise agreement (EA).”

In that initial document, Catholic employers “largely rewrote every clause and every condition to suit them”, Quessy wrote.

In June 2015, *Newsmonth* reported that the union could finally recommend a ‘yes’ vote and members were congratulated for their resolve.

“Your persistence has won the day,” Quessy wrote.

“For more than 12 months, members have made their opposition clear, first by voting overwhelmingly in a series of protected action ballots, the largest number of such ballots on a single issue since the Fair Work laws were established.

“On behalf of the officers and Executive, I want to thank and congratulate members on the stand

they have taken and their unwavering tenacity. We can confidently recommend a ‘yes’ vote in the upcoming ballot.”

Negotiations for the Catholic Systemic Schools EA took 14 months to conclude.

However, other issues remained unresolved in 2015. The headline on the cover of the March issue of *Newsmonth* read “IEU calls for end to anti-discrimination exemptions”.

“These exemptions reflect a bygone era and require review to reflect a more contemporary understanding of workplace justice and human rights,” Quessy wrote.

Ten years later, the NSW Law Reform Commission is seeking feedback for a review of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)*, which allows exemptions to anti-discrimination law for religious institutions, including schools. The IEU is making a submission to this review.

Union resources

For more resources, including recruitment posters, fact sheets on rights and responsibilities, resources for reps, women and equity resources, and calendars, visit: www.ieu.asn.au/resources

Can't afford to join the union?

Or can't afford not to?

Did you know the IEU advocates for better pay and conditions, and provides individual support to members? Don't leave yourself unprotected.

Scan the QR code for more information



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



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Can't afford to join the union? Or can't afford not to ...

Did you know the IEU advocates for better pay and conditions, and provides individual support to members?

Don't leave yourself unprotected. And remember, union fees are tax deductible.

Find out why joining the union is something you can't put off.

How does union membership lead to better pay?

Unions provide employees with a collective voice in negotiations, which leads to greater bargaining power.

When unions negotiate on behalf of all employees, the playing field is levelled, allowing the union to negotiate better outcomes.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, union members have median weekly earnings that are 18.6% higher than the earnings of non-members (as of 2024).

What industrial protections does the union offer?

The IEU offers its members a comprehensive range of industrial protections should workplace issues arise. This includes assistance with a wide range of disputes, grievances, complaints, allegations and health and safety issues.

Can the union assist with professional matters?

Yes, the union employs specialist staff to assist with professional matters such as accreditation (including proficient and higher levels), as well as offering professional development.

The union holds positions on the board of NESA (NSW) and TQJ (ACT), as well as engaging regularly with federal and state governments to ensure teachers have a collective voice on professional matters.

How can joining the union assist with workload?

The IEU can negotiate better working conditions when membership is high.

Just as with salaries, it is difficult to get improvements when employees act individually rather than as a group.

Unions enable employees to have a collective voice, making it difficult for employers to ignore.

Schools with higher union membership are generally able to negotiate better working conditions. Together we are stronger.

Find out more Scan the QR code at left.

Just started teaching? Here's what you need to know ...

So, you've just landed your first teaching job. Congratulations, you've taken your first steps into a rewarding profession.

While starting a new job is exciting, it can also be overwhelming, and there may be things you're unsure about.

The IEU is here to answer your questions and to provide support and assistance as you navigate your new career.

Why should I join the union?

Joining your union is the most important thing you can do when you start teaching. In doing so you join tens of thousands of your non-government school colleagues who together ensure teachers have a strong professional and industrial voice. When teachers and support staff stand together, we are strong.

The union employs experienced organisers and industrial officers to assist you if complaints or allegations are made, or if you are simply feeling overwhelmed and need support.

- In addition, IEU members have access to:
- expert support for beginning teachers
 - reduced membership rates – and remember, union fees are tax deductible
 - advice and guidance on pay, contracts, entitlements and other working conditions
 - protection, advocacy and representation if things go wrong

- professional development and support to grow your skills and confidence
- organisers and school-based reps to answer questions and help you along the way.

Am I entitled to additional support as a beginning teacher?

Many employers provide support to beginning teachers via additional release, appointing a mentor, or additional professional learning opportunities. Some schools have release defined in their enterprise agreement.

In some schools, this is less clearly defined, and the IEU can assist beginning teachers to discuss appropriate supports with your employer. If you are not receiving support as a beginning teacher, talk to your rep or colleagues about what help is available. If you still have questions or need support, talk to your IEU rep or organiser.

Can the union assist me with my accreditation?

The union employs specialist staff who can assist teachers experiencing difficulties with accreditation or NESA. Contact the union if you require assistance or have questions about the process.

Find out more Scan the QR code at right.

Just started teaching?

Here's what you need to know ...

The IEU can provide support and assistance to beginning teachers.

Scan the QR code for more information



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



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AROUND THE GLOBE

Around the Globe brings you international news about injustices and workers' rights. If injustice exists anywhere, it exists everywhere.



IEFS alumni young farmers have established an ecotourism initiative at Ermera.



Community leader Lourenco Pereira.



IEFS farmers and union leaders at a farm.



Community and union leaders with IEFS alumni.



"We can't buy happiness. But we can buy happiness through coffee."

IEUA supports farmers' unions in Timor-Leste

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA has supported Timor-Leste farmers to organise and advocate for their rights since 2016.

By establishing and strengthening unions, farmers gain access to land, develop sustainable farming techniques and build collective power.

The IEU has proudly supported the project since 2016 alongside the Australian NGO Cooperation Program, United Workers Union, CoPower and members of APHEDA.

Timor-Leste has one of the youngest populations in the world – more than 60 per cent of the population is under the age of 25.

Many young people are lured away from their communities for work in the capital Dili or overseas.

Young Timorese come to Australia as seasonal workers to work on farms. APHEDA's partner organisations – Instituto Edukasaun Popular (IEP), Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI) and Uniaun Agrikultores Ermera (UNAER) – want to reverse this trend.

One of the ways they are doing this is by training farmers and building their knowledge in a school run "by peasant farmers, for peasant farmers".

A school for farmers

On a recent personal visit to Timor, IEU digital manager Katie Camarena met community leaders and alumni from the Solidarity Economy Institute (IEFS).

"With UNAER, the school is bringing marginalised young people and providing education for them to build their knowledge of sustainable farming practices and agro-ecology," said one community leader.

"We didn't have access to university due to financial constraints. But now we are learning farming techniques and focusing on nature. We are committed to bringing this knowledge back to our communities," a student said.

The popular education school supports students through a Community Bachelor's Degree program, which aims to inspire young people to stay in rural areas and help develop their communities. IEFS's goal is to ensure future farmer leaders are well prepared and networked across the country.

Fighting social injustice through solidarity

Leaders of IEP, KSI and UNAER spoke passionately about their work strengthening farmers' unions, while farmers discussed the challenges of growing coffee and the chain of exploitation in the current market.

"Before we joined UNAER, we lived with uncertainty," farmer and community leader Lourenco Pereira said.

"But now we have formed a cooperative. Divided we are weak but together, farmers are stronger. We must continue to network and build our strength and solidarity so we can fight against those who exploit."

Lourenco said local companies buy coffee at low prices and sell at a high price, excluding farmers from making a profit.

These companies spread misinformation about the true price of coffee to deceive farmers, who find themselves victims of exploitation.

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA is supporting farmers in Timor Leste to respond to injustice in the coffee supply chain.

The "Supporting and strengthening rural farmers' organisations in Timor-Leste" project assisted farmers to establish the Solidarity Economy Federation – a network of 14 farmers' cooperatives representing 368 coffee-growing households.

The federation focuses on building and training cooperatives to ensure quality coffee processing for fair-trade export to Australia and Japan. It empowers coffee farmers through ethical trade, social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

Keep the change: Unionists building ethical supply chains

Over the past few years, Australian and Timorese unionists have set up the Keep the Change initiative via Earthworker to establish a progressive coffee distribution network.

The aim is to sell coffee to Australians for a just price with conditions of sale that give Timorese coffee growers more effective and collective control over their incomes.

This initiative aims to bypass the for-profit monopoly supply chains that dominate the current market.

Are you a member of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA?
APHEDA is the global justice organisation of the Australian union movement. Join now: apheda.org.au/join

Present tense

IEU wins pay rises for ELICOS members

The IEU consistently advocates for improvements for members, most notably through the negotiation of enterprise agreements.

These agreements must provide for pay and conditions superior to the underpinning award, and members are encouraged to approach the union to see how this might be utilised in their workplace.

Agreements update

The IEU has recently settled long-running negotiations at UoW College (the pathways college of Wollongong University), with pay increases of 3% in 2025 (backdated to January), 2.75% in 2026 and 2.75% in 2027.

An inflation protection mechanism in the latter two years means pay may go as high as

3.5% in either year should the inflation rate go higher than the agreed 2.75%.

The union is also negotiating at Navitas Skilled Futures, which runs migrant English programs for the federal government. Negotiations are almost settled, with the parties close, but not quite there, on pay.

Talks are continuing at Taylors College (with a probable pay deal of 3% per annum) and WSU The College (where bargaining is still at an early stage).

Bargaining will start at both UTS College and UNSW College later this year.

State of the industry

Recent figures from English Australia, the national peak body for the English language sector of international education, suggest that

student numbers and visa approvals have greatly declined in comparison to 2024.

ELICOS has seen the most notable change, with numbers down 37 per cent on 2024, and 32 per cent down on the pre-pandemic years before 2020.

Student visa applications, which indicate future trends, are down 47 per cent on last year. However, there is hope on the horizon, with the federal government in August announcing an increase of 25,000 student visas offered in 2026 to a total of 295,000.

"International education is an incredibly important export industry for Australia but we need to manage its growth so it's sustainable," federal Education Minister Jason Clare said.

"International education doesn't just make us money, it makes us friends."

International students under attack

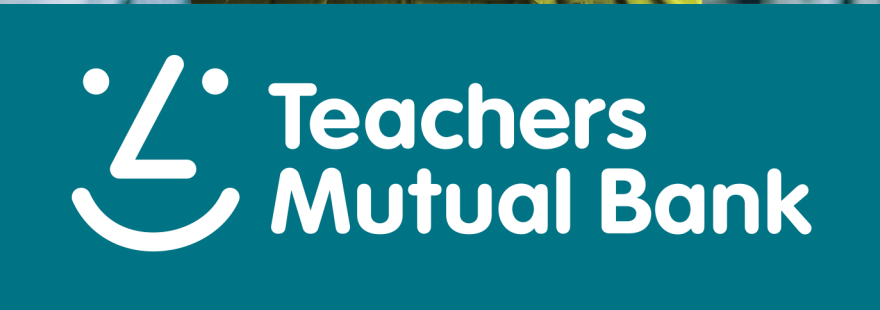
In the United States, the Trump Administration is actively targeting international students, often with horrific scenes of people being taken off the streets and taken into detention.

Donald Trump's hostility to migrants and non-Americans is by now well-established, and so international students will no doubt need to think carefully before applying to study in the US.

Britain is also getting tougher in this area, with a range of restrictions on international students leading to a 40 per cent drop in visa applications in 2025.

Kendall Warren Organiser

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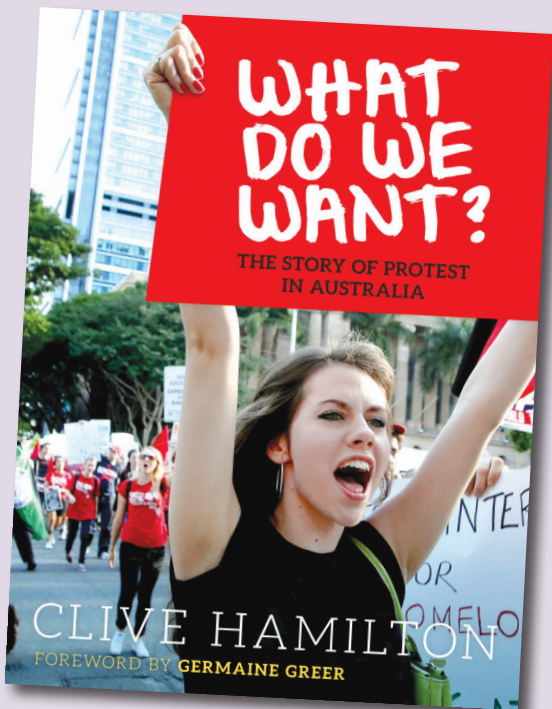
Newcastle: 8-14 Telford Street, Newcastle East NSW 2302 P 4926 9400

Wollongong: 1 Lowden Square, Wollongong NSW 2500 P 8202 8900

Lismore: Unit 4, Lismore Professional Centre, 103-105 Molesworth Street,
Lismore NSW 2480 P 6623 4700

Canberra: Units 11 & 12, 3-5 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600 P 6120 1500

Giveaways



What do we want? The story of protest in Australia

Author: Clive Hamilton
Publisher: NLA Publishing

Clive Hamilton explores the colourful, enthralling and stirring forms of protest used in the big social movements that define modern Australia in *What do we want? The story of protest in Australia*.

Hamilton's book includes chapters on the peace movement, women's liberation, Indigenous rights, gay rights and the environmental movement, and examines how these movements have confronted the ugliness in Australian society and caused epoch-defining shifts in social attitudes.



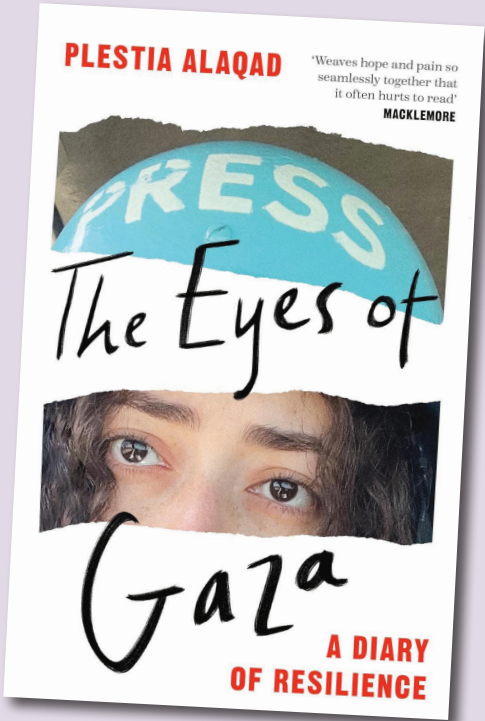
Zadie Ma and the dog who chased the moon

Author: Gabrielle Wang
Publisher: Penguin Random House

Zadie's dearest wish is to have a dog of her own and so she starts to write the story of a poor unwanted dog called Jupiter, who's just waiting to be rescued by a loving girl like Zadie.

One morning when she's supposed to be minding the family shop for her mother, Zadie sets off to look for Jupiter. The scene that unfolds isn't quite the same as in her story, but she does find a real dog, and his name is Jupiter.

A series of unlucky events means that Zadie can't write the happy ending she dreams of for her story, and now she may lose her beloved Jupiter forever. Can Zadie's most important story of all finally come true?



The eyes of Gaza: A diary of resilience

Author: Plestia Alaqa
Publisher: Macmillan

The Eyes of Gaza offers an intimate glimpse through the eyes of 22-year-old Palestinian journalist Plestia Alaqa, capturing the experience of living through the first 45 days of the 2023 genocide in Gaza.

Writing in the style of diary extracts, Plestia illustrates the horrors of her experience while also showing the indomitable spirit and humanity of the people of Gaza.

This book seeks to compel a community into solidarity, a nation into transformation and the wider world into a pursuit for peace.

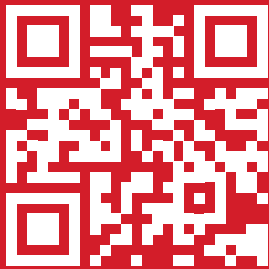


To go in the draw, email entries to giveaways@ieu.asn.au with the title of the book you would like to receive in the subject line. Write your name, membership number and postal address in the body of your email. All entries must be received by 8 September 2025.

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