

# news month

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Independent Education Union  
of Australia NSW/ACT Branch  
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## 2026 First Nations Calendar

To download:  
[bit.ly/first-nations-calendar](https://bit.ly/first-nations-calendar)  
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# New year, new pay rises

## Members secure strong gains and better conditions

**Carol Matthews**  
Secretary



**Many IEU members will see the rewards of their campaigning and hard work in 2026. These are just some of the wins the union has delivered for members.**

### Catholic systemic schools

Two enterprise agreements (EAs) covering 10 Catholic dioceses were approved by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) in December 2025, locking in pay rises and improved conditions.

There is an EA for teachers and general employees employed by Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) and one for teachers and general employees employed in the other nine dioceses (not including Broken Bay). The new EAs expire in October 2027.

Members have already received pay rises due under the EAs for 2024 and 2025:

- NSW teachers gained a 3% increase from the first pay period on or after 9 October 2025 with a further increase of 3% due in October 2026.
- ACT teachers gained a pay rise of about 3% in August 2025 and will receive 3.5% in August 2026.
- general employees in NSW and the ACT gained a pay increase of 3% from July 2025 with 3% to come from July 2026.

More flexible parental leave for the non-initial primary carer of a child will apply for babies born or adopted on or after the commencement date of the EAs.

Twelve weeks paid parental leave can now be taken 24 months after the birth or adoption of a child – not just in the 12 months following the birth or adoption (the 12 weeks entitlement as a primary carer comes in addition to two weeks around the time of birth or adoption).

Superannuation must now also be paid on employer-provided parental leave.

Cultural and ceremonial leave for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees also commences under the new EAs.

Trade trainers are included in the EAs from 27 January 2026. Trade trainers are employed in some dioceses to teach vocational education or training at a school or trade training centre but are not fully qualified teachers.

If you are a trade trainer, don't hesitate to contact the IEU to check your new classification and pay rate.

### Read and download your agreement

- Nine Catholic dioceses
- Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese

**Broken Bay Diocese:** Teachers and general employees employed in Broken Bay are covered by an EA approved by the Fair Work Commission in January 2025.

Under this EA, all employees received a 3.5% pay rise from the first pay period on or after 1 October 2025, with a 3% increase to be paid from October 2026.

Employees in Broken Bay are also entitled to superannuation on paid parental leave and a more flexible approach to the timing of the 12 weeks non-initial primary carer parental leave.

### Read and download your agreement

- Catholic Schools Broken Bay Diocese

### Independent schools

After a long campaign in 2024, the FWC approved new multi-enterprise agreements (MEA) in early 2025 for independent schools represented by the Association of Independent Schools (now Independent Schools NSW) in both NSW and the ACT.

Most pay rates in the MEAs will increase by 4.5% from the first full pay period on or after 1 February 2026.

For teachers employed at their current school prior to the 2025 school year, translocation tables in the new MEA (setting out the transition from the old MEA) will determine the increase.

**“We’re committed to making sure members receive the full benefit of improved pay and conditions the union negotiates.”**

Under some translocation tables, a few pay rates may increase by less than 4.5% (for example, Proficient teachers with one or two years at Proficient level, transitioning from the old Standards model). But those teachers, if working full time, will also receive increases due to incremental progression. Other rates may increase by more than 4.5%.

All professional and administrative staff will receive increases of at least 4.5%, and NSW classroom support services employees and curriculum/resources services employees receive pay rises of 5% from February.

The union also won improvements in paid parental leave including:

- the 14 weeks of paid parental leave will count as service for the purposes of salary progression and leave accrual
- male employees who are the initial primary caregiver immediately after birth or adoption will now be entitled to 14 weeks paid parental leave (previously, the leave was defined as maternity leave and available to mothers only).

At the time of birth or adoption of a child, an employee who is not the initial primary caregiver will be entitled to two weeks of paid parental leave. If that person becomes the primary caregiver within 12 months of the birth or adoption, they are also now entitled to an additional 12 weeks paid parental leave.

**Workload transparency:** This was a key win of the union's Now's the Time campaign.

Under the Teachers MEA, employers must provide teachers with the following information:

- the usual number of face-to-face teaching hours per week or per cycle for a full-time teacher
- the general requirements in relation to extracurricular activities
- any reduction in face-to-face teaching hours for teachers in leadership 1 and 2 positions.

This clause imposes obligations that employers must follow.

### Read and download your agreement

- Teachers MEA
- NSW Professional and Administrative Staff MEA
- ACT Professional and Administrative Staff MEA

### NSW Christian Schools

After a protracted bargaining process, new MEAs for teachers and general staff in almost 40 NSW Christian schools were approved by the FWC in January.

The MEAs are in place until March 2027 and replace agreements that expired in late 2023. Approval of the MEAs means pay increases and improved conditions negotiated by the union since the expiry of the previous MEAs are now legally enforceable.

A key improved condition is that the number of weeks of New Parent Bonus payments (which top up the government Paid Parental Leave scheme payments to your normal salary) will increase to match the increase in the number of weeks of the government payments. From July 2026, the payment will be made for 26 weeks.

The MEAs also contain delegates' rights provisions and the right to disconnect.

For teachers, the pay rises under the MEA between 2024 and March 2027 total 17.5%, including a 1.5% pay rise in October this year.

From July 2026, there will be a change to the teacher classification scale that means it will take less time to reach the top step – this will benefit less experienced teachers who are not at the top of the scale.

General staff will receive pay rises of at least 15% over the three years of the MEA, including a 4% increase in February this year.

### Read and download your agreement

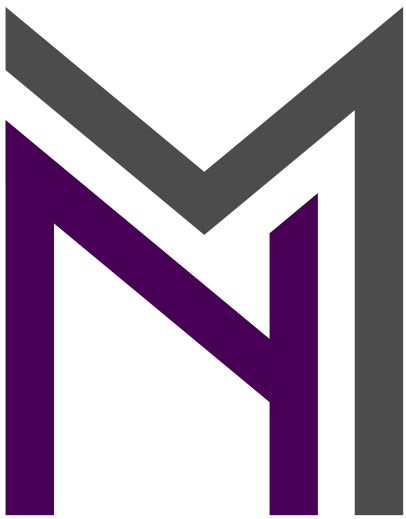
- Christian Schools NSW MEA

### Our focus in 2026

Addressing teacher workload is a key priority for 2026. We're committed to making sure members receive the full benefit of improved pay and conditions that the union negotiates. For Catholic systemic school members, this includes new entitlements under your Work Practices Agreements.

We will continue bargaining for groups of members for whom enterprise agreements were not finalised at the end of 2025.

Your support for this work will be crucial in achieving success. We are always stronger together.



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## Join us



## Follow us



*Newsmonth* is published eight times a year (two issues per term) by the Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch.

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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.*

# Why care, balance and standing collectively count

Suzanne Penson  
President



**With the school holidays having come to a close, many members have returned to their roles with a familiar mix of anticipation and reflection.**

This time of year is a reminder that school holidays are not simply a pleasant pause in the calendar, but a necessary part of sustaining the people who make our schools work.

The value of school holidays is often underestimated. They provide essential time for rest and recovery after a demanding year, space to attend to health, time with family and friends, and an opportunity to reset mentally before the pace of the school term resumes.

For many teachers and professional, operational and support staff, these breaks are what make long and fulfilling careers in education possible. They are a safeguard against burnout and a cornerstone of professional sustainability.

### Career reflected in leadership

My own union journey has been shaped by this understanding of care, balance and collective responsibility. I became a member of the IEU in my first year of teaching and, the following year, took on the role of IEU representative at Hennessy Catholic College in Young. Since then, I have served as sub branch secretary and president of the South East Sub Branch and the Mid North Coast Sub Branch. I'm currently President of the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch.

I'm a teacher/librarian at MacKillop College, Port Macquarie. I've been an information technology coordinator during the federal government's Digital Education Revolution program, a year coordinator and a teacher. These roles have given me a broad perspective on how schools operate as complex systems, and how vital communication, collaboration and advocacy are to the wellbeing of staff and students alike.

My teacher/librarian role offers a unique lens on union leadership. Positioned at the intersection of curriculum, technology, student learning and staff support, it requires listening carefully, seeing the bigger picture, and responding thoughtfully to competing demands. These are the same skills that underpin effective union representation.

### Thanks to much-loved organiser

I was fortunate early in my involvement with the IEU to be guided and encouraged by organiser Jackie Groom, whose mentorship supported me to become an active and confident union member.

As Jackie retires, we acknowledge her extraordinary contribution. Her deep compassion, combined with a dogged determination to stand up for what is right, is an enduring example of principled unionism. We will miss her.

As we move into this new school year, let us carry forward the lessons of the holiday period: that rest matters; that sustainable work matters; and that our collective voice matters.

Strong schools depend on respected professionals who are supported, heard and valued and that is what our union continues to stand for.

# Collective strength in action

Denise McHugh  
Deputy President



**One of the quiet strengths of a union publication like *Newsmonth* is that it reminds us, month after month, that progress doesn't arrive by accident. It is built. Carefully. Collectively. And often through persistence.**

This edition is a powerful snapshot of this.

### Union wins

Across multiple sectors, IEU members are seeing tangible outcomes from sustained union advocacy. The finalisation and Fair Work Commission (FWC) approval of Catholic systemic and Christian Schools Australia enterprise agreements is no small achievement.

These agreements reflect thousands of conversations, consultations and bargaining meetings – all culminating in improved conditions and greater certainty for teachers and support staff.

For many members in independent schools (affiliated to Independent Schools NSW), the 1 February pay rises are another reminder that

when we bargain together, results follow. The interim pay increases secured for Sydney Adventist teachers, and the recovery of \$19,000 in back pay for a support staff member, reinforce something essential: the union doesn't just negotiate in theory, it acts when members need support.

These wins matter not only because of the dollars involved, but because they affirm a core principle of unionism.

Fairness at work should not depend on how loud your voice is as an individual, but on the collective strength behind you.

### School staff on the frontline

This edition also reflects the broader role unions play beyond industrial matters. The union's response to the Bondi terror attack acknowledges that schools do not operate in isolation from society.

Teachers and support staff are often on the frontline of difficult conversations, community anxiety and student wellbeing. It is appropriate – and necessary – that the union advocates for safety, care and evidence-based responses. There is also strong interest in the Start Strong Pay Fair campaign. Should the FWC make a

recommendation, it could shape the future of early childhood education in a very real way. The IEU's continued pressure reflects what members have long known: early learning is skilled, professional work – and it deserves professional pay.

### Members are at the heart of our union

Alongside these major issues, *Newsmonth* also celebrates something equally important: people. Rep profiles, member milestones, union snaps and sub branch activity remind us that the union is not an office or a logo – it is members in schools and services across NSW and the ACT, doing the daily work of education.

A sincere congratulations to the *Newsmonth* publication team and contributors, whose work ensures members stay informed, connected and visible across the union.

So, whether you're reading about enterprise agreements, professional development opportunities or a colleague marking 10, 20, 30 or 40 years in the sector, the message is the same: none of this happens alone.

Progress is collective, and it's still moving forward.

# Mandatory training: Claim your time

Liz Heggart  
Vice President Systemic



**Title of play:** More stuff, different year

**Cast:** NSW and ACT school teachers and support staff

**Setting:** A school on a hot summer's day

**Act 1, Scene 1**

[A staffroom in the late afternoon. The faint sounds of a coffee machine and whirring fans can be heard. Staff are hunched over their desks. A sense of frustration fills the room. Teacher looks up from a laptop.]

**Teacher:** "Is it just me, or does this training say the same thing every year?"

[Support staff also looks up from screen. Turns to teacher.]

**Support staff:** "Every year. Different slides. Same quiz at the end."

**Teacher:** "I miss the days when professional learning felt manageable."

**Support staff:** "At this point, it's a rush to tick the box before tomorrow."

**Teacher:** "Same time next year?"

**Support staff:** "Wouldn't miss it."

[Pause. The tapping of computers resumes.]

[LIGHTS FADE]

Sound familiar? For many members in Catholic systemic schools, the start of the 2026 school year involved considerable mandatory training but not enough time allocated to complete it. Combined with meetings on school goals, curriculum changes and vision formation, there was little opportunity for meaningful preparation.

Don't get me wrong. The topics covered in mandatory training are essential, including child protection, CPR, work health and safety and disability standards. Policies, codes of conduct and other compliance measures must also be read and understood. This is all vital information we need in the course of our work to help protect students and staff.

However, the increasing use of online systems means new courses can be pushed out at any time, sometimes without clear communication about expectations or adequate time allowed. As a result, staff may feel they are engaged in a continual cycle of mandatory compliance tasks.

It is important to remember that our union-negotiated enterprise agreement provides clear protections. Clause 11.3(b) states:

*Professional development that is a requirement of the Employer, excluding external study, must be offered within designated school time.*

We need to ensure our mandatory training is scheduled appropriately – allowing us the time required to complete it so our core business of teaching and learning does not suffer and employers meet their obligations.

If members in your school consider they are being asked to do professional development outside designated school time without the appropriate time off in lieu, call a chapter meeting to discuss the issue. You may then wish to approach the principal with your concerns. Contact your organiser if you need advice on doing this.

If the matter cannot be resolved at school level, the union can then assist in enforcing the enterprise agreement. Again, contact your organiser to discuss.

Greater respect for staff time will strengthen our schools and support better outcomes all round. Less bureaucracy, more trust.



# Strategic planning

## The power of “unlearning”

**Lyn Caton**  
Assistant Secretary



**Principals are leading in an environment shaped by rapid policy shifts, evolving technologies, workforce pressures and heightened community expectations.**

Strategic planning remains essential, but the strategies that served schools well in the past may not always meet the demands of the present.

Increasingly, effective leadership requires not just learning new approaches but unlearning old ones.

### An open mind

Unlearning is not about discarding experience or professional wisdom. Rather, it involves consciously questioning assumptions, routine, and inherited practices that may no longer serve students, staff or school communities.

For principals, this can mean letting go of rigid planning cycles, compliance-driven thinking, or “we’ve always done it this way” approaches and instead adopting a beginner mindset – one grounded in curiosity, reflection and openness.

A beginner mindset invites principals to ask fresh questions. What do our students need now? How can staff expertise be better trusted and distributed? What practices genuinely support wellbeing, inclusion and sustainable workloads?

Strategic planning becomes less about fixed outcomes and more about adaptive direction-setting, informed by lived experience and ongoing dialogue.

### Supporting principals

The IEU has a critical role in enabling principals to lead this work with confidence and integrity.

By advocating manageable workloads, protected planning time and realistic accountability frameworks, the union helps create the conditions in which strategic reflection and unlearning are genuinely possible.

It also supports principals through targeted professional learning, peer networks, and forums that encourage collaborative problem-solving rather than compliance-driven solutions.

Importantly, the IEU’s voice in enterprise bargaining and policy discussions challenges outdated system expectations, reinforcing adaptive leadership, professional trust and wellbeing as essential foundations for sustainable school improvement in 2026 and beyond.

## Workload transparency

Teachers in independent schools have a right to clarity

**Amanda Hioe**  
Assistant Secretary



**In Catholic systemic and government schools, teacher workloads are generally better regulated.**

These sectors operate with clearer system-wide parameters about face-to-face teaching hours, start and finishing times, duties and other professional expectations.

For Catholic systemic schools, these expectations are governed in Work Practices Agreements negotiated by the union with each diocesan employer.

### Uncertainty about workload

In contrast, independent schools have long lacked workload transparency. It is not uncommon for many independent school teachers to be uncertain about what their workloads entail, including whether they are working comparable face-to-face teaching hours with colleagues in the same school.

This lack of clarity has contributed to an excessive increase in teacher workload demands.

### Obligation on employers

One of the important gains secured through the IEU’s Now’s the Time campaign is the workload transparency clause, which imposes an obligation on the employer to inform teachers on their expectations regarding:

- the usual number of face-to-face teaching hours per week or per cycle for a full-time teacher

- the general requirements in relation to extra-curricular activities
- any reduction in face-to-face teaching hours for teachers in Leadership 1 and 2 positions.

This is a significant step forward. However, to fully benefit from this clause, we must ensure that it is implemented and enforced as needed.

### Enforcing your right to clarity

The start of the school year is an ideal time for schools to meet this obligation.

As timetables are finalised and teaching begins, teachers should be clearly informed about their teaching load and any additional expectations outside of face-to-face teaching.

If this has not happened in your school, we encourage you to speak to your organiser.

Workload transparency strengthens our collective ability to push back against increasing workload demands and to insist that workloads are fair and reasonable.

The enforcement of this newly won right forms a crucial part of our campaign this year. If you work in an independent school and are unclear about workload expectations, please contact your organiser for advice and support.

Together, we can continue to improve the working lives of our teachers.



Working people protest against WorkChoices in their thousands in 2005.

## The advice they ignored

How WorkChoices undermined workers’ rights

**David Towson**  
Deputy Secretary



**Every New Year’s Day, the National Archives of Australia (NAA) unseals Cabinet records that have reached what is known as the open period – usually 20 years after they were created – giving insight into past political decisions.**

This year’s release of Cabinet papers and decisions from 2005 provided a revealing glimpse into John Howard’s fourth term as prime minister.

### Howard government ignored experts

The records showed the Howard government ignored explicit recommendations from then Defence Minister Robert Hill and Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer not to send Australian special forces back into Afghanistan.

Concerns were also raised by Treasury and the Finance department about the absence of any exit plan from the conflict. Australian forces would only leave Afghanistan in August 2021.

The records also show Downer and Environment Minister Ian Campbell advised the Cabinet that Australia stood to bear some of the worst impacts of climate change and concerted international action was an imperative. The Howard government decided not to endorse the Kyoto Protocol.

### Warnings about WorkChoices

Perhaps of most interest in the Cabinet papers released this year, at least to union members, is the advice the Howard government received regarding its proposed industrial relations reforms, which later came to be known as WorkChoices.

The WorkChoices legislation would remove unfair dismissal protections for tens of thousands of Australian workers. It would remove the no-disadvantage test from industrial law, which required workers to be no worse off under any new enterprise agreement than under the relevant award or legislation.

WorkChoices would strip union power and restrict the rights of workers to take industrial action. It also promoted the primacy of individual employment contracts over collective agreements.

The Office of Regulation Review raised concerns about the potential impacts of the legislation and questioned the government’s assumptions

that individual contracts would boost national productivity. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet also raised concerns with the legislation.

Undaunted, Prime Minister John Howard and Workplace Relations Minister Kevin Andrews proceeded with their Bill. With a majority in both houses of parliament, the Coalition government did not need the support of minor parties to pass the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005*, which came into effect on 27 March 2006.

### Unions campaign

The ACTU had already launched its *Your Rights at Work* campaign in 2005 after the intent and detail of the proposed legislation became known. The passage of the legislation further galvanised the union movement.

Countless real-life stories of workers having their pay cut could not be dismissed as union propaganda. National productivity dropped following the introduction of the legislation. While unemployment also dropped, thousands of workers lamented the loss of workplace rights and conditions and their increased vulnerability.

The *Your Rights at Work* campaign has been acknowledged as playing a significant part in the Howard government’s defeat in the 2007 election.

University of NSW associate professor David Lee was the NAA’s Cabinet historian for the release of 2002 to 2005 records. He said Howard’s emphatic 2004 election win led his government to embark on far-reaching “but controversial industrial relations laws that echoed [Prime Minister Stanley Melbourne] Bruce’s failed industrial relations reforms of 1929”.

“Labor Party and trade union campaigns beginning in 1929 and 2005 led to the eventual fall of long-standing conservative governments, and of two prime ministers (Bruce and Howard), both of whom lost their own seats,” Lee said.

As unionists, we can never become complacent, because certain interests will always seek to diminish or dismantle our hard-won rights – there are still industrial rights taken away by WorkChoices that have not been fully restored to all workers by subsequent law reforms.

If you are unsure about your local politician’s attitude towards industrial relations, please consider asking them and remind them of the importance of workers’ rights to you, your family and your colleagues.





Floral tributes at Bondi in December 2025.

# Unions stand together at Bondi

On 17 December, the IEU stood with the union movement in Bondi to lay flowers in honour of the lives lost on 14 December in the terror attack at Bondi Beach. The IEU extends our heartfelt solidarity to our members in the Jewish community and all those impacted by this horrific act of terror. The IEU, together with the broader union movement, stands for unity and peace.



Representatives of the Australian union movement at the Bondi memorial.



IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews lays a floral tribute at Bondi.

## Antisemitism Education Taskforce

### Review of curriculums in schools and preschools

The federal government has ordered a review of early childhood education and the national school curriculum as part of efforts to tackle antisemitism.

The Antisemitism Education Taskforce ordered the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to provide advice on potential changes to the Australian Curriculum and Early Years Learning Framework to combat antisemitism.

The taskforce also asked federal education agencies to consider additional educational resources and teacher professional learning to combat antisemitism at its first meeting in Sydney on 19 December.

At their second meeting on 3 February, taskforce members also endorsed a proposed online Social Cohesion Hub of resources for ECEC staff and parents with the first phase focused on antisemitism scheduled for June 2026.

#### Strengthen social cohesion

The taskforce was established by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese following the deadly terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025.

It is chaired by David Gonski AC and includes representatives from the federal government, state governments and education departments, universities, the National Catholic Education Commission, the Australian Council of Jewish Schools and other federal education agencies.

Taskforce members noted the vital role of early childhood education, schools and universities in shaping values, according to the federal Education Department's website.

"The taskforce discussed its overarching purpose to provide advice on how the Australian education system can help to prevent, tackle and properly respond to antisemitism," the website said.

"It is also seeking ideas for combatting and preventing antisemitism and hate in educational settings to strengthen social cohesion."

#### Reforms to teacher training

Federal Education Minister Jason Clare in January told ABC News Breakfast the taskforce had been set up for 12 months and would soon begin making recommendations about reforms to the university regulator, teacher training and the curriculum.

"The curriculum already has in it a lot of information about the Holocaust," Clare said. "But there's more that we can add to it about the evils of antisemitism and Australian values, and more that we can do to give the university regulator the sort of powers they need to act where universities don't."

The taskforce is also examining ways to address antisemitism and all forms of racism on university campuses.

We note that the taskforce has been expanded since its inception. The IEU believes the voice of teachers should be included through union representation.

#### More information

[education.gov.au/antisemitism-education-taskforce](https://education.gov.au/antisemitism-education-taskforce)

## STRONGER TOGETHER

### Union joins pledge for peace and harmony

The union has joined other community organisations in pledging support for Jewish Australians and reaffirming commitment to peace and harmony.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews signed on to the statement developed by Multicultural NSW in collaboration with the NSW Jewish community following the terror attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December.

"The IEU extends our heartfelt solidarity to our members in the Jewish community and all those impacted by this horrific act of terror," Matthews said.

"The IEU, together with the broader union movement, opposes antisemitism and all forms of racism. We stand for unity and peace."

NSW Multiculturalism Minister Steve Kamper said: "In the wake of this horrific attack, it is more important than ever that the Jewish community in NSW knows they do not stand alone."

Titled *We are stronger together*, the statement reads:

In the wake of the unspeakable attack on our Jewish community at Bondi Beach, we come together across cultural, linguistic and religious differences to make a unified pledge:

We collectively mourn for victims and their families and pledge our support and solidarity for the Jewish community in NSW.

We pledge to stand up and stand united against antisemitism, racism and hate and to support all victims of racism, hate and religious intolerance.

We pledge to protect and promote the rights and responsibilities of all the people of NSW in a cohesive and multicultural society.

We pledge to work in unity across cultural, linguistic and religious differences to uphold our democratic values and freedoms.

We are stronger together.

**More information:** [nsw.gov.au/ministerial-releases/community-leaders-asked-to-pledge-their-support-to-our-jewish-community](https://nsw.gov.au/ministerial-releases/community-leaders-asked-to-pledge-their-support-to-our-jewish-community)



## Union condemns Bondi Beach terror attack

The IEU released this statement to the media on 15 December 2025

The union condemns the horrific terror attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December and the devastating loss of so many lives.

The IEU joins with the Australian union movement in condemning antisemitism and all acts of violence and hatred that take lives, harm people, and make people feel threatened and unsafe.

"Our hearts go out to our members, to teachers, support staff, students, and the broader Jewish community impacted by this shocking antisemitic

attack," said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

"We offer our condolences to all those directly impacted and their loved ones.

"We acknowledge the exceptional courage of all first responders, both emergency services workers and civilians whose actions prevented even more loss of life.

"Together with the broader union movement, the IEU stands with the Jewish community in Australia. We express our deep sorrow and

heartbreak at this abhorrent attack targeting people gathered to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah.

"We extend our condolences to the entire Jewish community in Australia at this time of national tragedy."

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their workplace and in their community.

The IEU opposes all forms of violence, hatred, bigotry and racism. It is not who we are and our core value of solidarity must unite us. We are always stronger together.



# Union wins over \$19,000 back pay for member

**The union has secured back pay for a senior administrative staff member employed by the Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst (CEDB).**

The union achieved a major win for the member, recovering more than \$19,000 in back pay.

The member was employed in a regional Catholic systemic primary school with an enrolment of between 300 and 400 students.

Under the old 2020 Catholic Systemic Schools Enterprise Agreement (EA), regional dioceses such as Bathurst could classify the senior member of the administrative staff as Level 5 in a school of less than 400 students, even though the same position would be classified as Level 6 in all primary schools in metropolitan dioceses.

In negotiations with the 10 Catholic dioceses (not including Broken Bay) during 2022 and 2023, the IEU sought pay rises for support staff to reflect increases for support staff in government schools in 2019. The IEU claims

included increases for senior administrative staff in regional dioceses.

An agreement was finally reached in mid-2023, with all 10 dioceses signing an Interim Settlement Agreement. As part of the settlement, most staff who had previously been classified as Level 5 in regional dioceses had to be reclassified as Level 6A, with back pay from January 2023. This settlement was also incorporated into the 2023 Catholic Systemic Schools EA, made in December 2023.

**Classification counts**

This reclassification was not applied to our member, who received back pay in August 2023 because of pay rises, but did not realise she should also have received back pay from the reclassification.

When she became aware of this in late 2024, she queried her classification and whether she would receive back pay to January 2023. Her pay

level was corrected in October 2024 with the assistance of the union, but the employer still refused her request for back pay.

After months of discussions, the union notified a dispute to the Fair Work Commission in October 2025.

**Back pay confirmed**

After receiving extensive witness evidence and submissions filed by the union in support of our member, CEDB agreed to back pay the member for the period between January 2023 and October 2024 when her classification was fixed.

CEDB also agreed to conduct a review of other former Level 5 employees who may have been similarly underpaid.

**Are you entitled to back pay?**

The union considers most dioceses applied the reclassifications from the 2023 settlement correctly.

However, if you are a senior administrative employee in a school of 100-400 students in a regional diocese, you may wish to check that you were back paid and classified as Level 6A from January 2023. If in doubt, contact the union.

We are stronger together. Join the IEU now to ensure you receive every cent you’ve earned.

**Liam Crisanti** Industrial Officer

**Other Bathurst news**

Long service leave: Union fights unfair decision

Long service leave: Employer backs down after union pressure



## Teenage boys feel pressure to act tough, study finds

“The IEU has called for urgent action by employers to combat increasing rates of violence and harassment of women teachers, principals and support staff.”

**More than half of Australian teenage boys feel pressured to live up to stereotypical masculine norms about acting manly, while 10 per cent believe an adolescent male should use violence to get respect if necessary.**

A survey of 1400 adolescents aged 14-to-18 years found teenagers overwhelmingly believe there is pressure on boys to appear strong, confident and tough – and not show fear or emotion.

The *Adolescent Man Box* study, conducted by Jesuit Social Services (JSS), also found a small but concerning proportion of teenage boys hold aggressive and controlling attitudes.

“These same boys are also more likely to drink, gamble, get into physical fights, view pornography with violent and non-consensual acts, and experience poor mental health,” the executive director of JSS’s Men’s Project, Matt Tyler, said. “They’re also more likely to be victims of violence themselves.”

The 2025 survey asked teenagers in Australia about their attitudes towards 27 “rules” grouped in four categories: constant

effort to be manly; emotional restriction; heterosexism; and social teasing.

The survey found most boys appeared to recognise the value of emotional connection and empathy, but almost half of them agreed they should never act like a girl or be thought of as gay.

Thirty-eight per cent of boys agreed that “Teenage boys should try to appear manly in almost all situations” compared to 14 per cent of girls.

Girls generally did not endorse old-fashioned masculine values – contrary to the fallacy promoted by online influencers such as Andrew Tate.

“Girls don’t want you showing up with this bravado and acting like this big dog: they want you showing up as yourself,” Tyler told *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

The survey’s recommendations include investing in professional development for teachers, violence prevention campaigns, and workplace flexibility to enable time for parents to bond with their children.

The IEU has called for urgent action by employers to combat increasing rates of violence and harassment of women teachers, principals and support staff by students, many of them teenage boys.

Queensland University of Technology sociology professor Michael Flood said there were a range of initiatives seeking to engage boys and young men, but “we are not doing anywhere near enough to shift entrenched masculine cultures of sexism and stoicism”.

“We must build gender-equitable approaches to masculinity into school curriculums, parenting programs, and initiatives in sports, workplaces and online media,” he said in *The Conversation*.

**More information**

Read the study: The adolescent man box

## Membership renewal What you need to know

**Welcome to 2026, we hope you enjoyed a restful break. In 2025, more than 3500 teachers and professional, administrative and support staff joined the IEU or reactivated their membership.**

To those members who have already renewed your membership, thank you for your ongoing support. To all our new members, a warm welcome.

**Individual update**

If you have not yet renewed because you cannot locate the original email, please let us know via [membership@ieu.asn.au](mailto:membership@ieu.asn.au). We are happy to resend.

Alternatively, you can call us to update: 8202 8900 – press 1, we are here until 5pm daily.

You can also renew online: <https://www.ieu.asn.au/member-portal/>. We will email membership cards to all current members in February. If you don’t see the email, please check your junk/spam folder.

You will need to delete your 2025 card from the digital wallet on your phone before downloading your 2026 card. When you receive our email in February, please follow the link to access your new card.

**Chapter update**

We’ll email reps in February with our annual request to update us on your chapter – so we ask all individual members to check in with your chapter rep to confirm the details we have for you are correct.

Updating your information with us ensures you are attached to the correct chapter, that you’re paying the relevant membership rate, and have access to all union benefits available to you, including voting rights.

We look forward to assisting you in 2026.

**Membership Team**

## Sub branch meetings Your voice matters

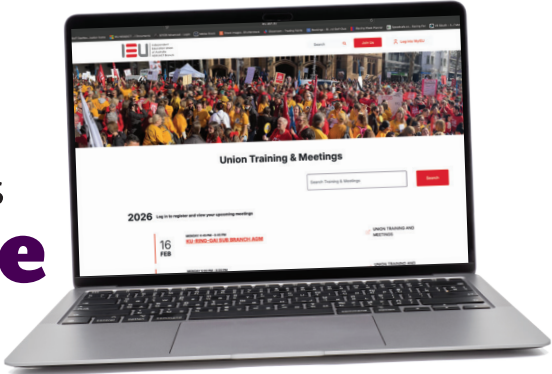
**The IEU has 19 geographical sub branches across NSW and the ACT, plus the Principals’ Sub Branch.**

Sub branches meet four times a year, usually in the first three or four weeks of each term.

Sub branch meetings are a vital way for union reps and members from various schools to come together once a term to discuss key workplace issues, share insights and stay informed about union campaigns and developments.

The meetings provide a supportive and collaborative environment where you have the opportunity to:

- represent and advocate for your chapter on important workplace matters
- stay up to date on industrial changes, negotiations, and union initiatives



- connect with teachers and professional and support staff from other schools in your region and build a strong support network.

Sub branches will hold their annual general meetings throughout February.

Is your chapter represented? All reps are warmly invited to attend, and you can bring another member with you to observe.

See dates and details at the link below or contact your organiser for more information.

**Check dates and register:** [ieu.asn.au/training-and-meetings/](https://ieu.asn.au/training-and-meetings/)



# Sydney Adventist teachers win interim pay rise

The IEU has secured a significant pay rise for teachers employed by the Greater Sydney Seventh-day Adventist Conference, as it continues to fight for better pay and conditions.

The employer in December agreed to an interim 5% increase to base salary rates from 26 January 2026 after teachers followed the union’s recommendation and voted no to a new enterprise agreement (EA) that offered inferior salaries and conditions.

The employer also said it would resume working on a new EA during Term 1 of 2026.

This followed a unanimous vote of IEU members in the six metropolitan Sydney schools that comprise the Conference calling for an interim pay rise for teachers and prompt resumption of negotiations for an improved agreement.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews said members wanted the bargaining process to restart as soon as possible in the new school year.

Matthews also outlined the key concerns with the proposed Teachers Enterprise Agreement 2026 – 2028 that was resoundingly rejected by members last year:

### 1. Salary uncertainty in 2028

The Conference did not agree to include a pay-protection clause that would ensure salaries remained competitive in 2028, leaving open the risk that salaries would again fall behind other sectors in that year.

### 2. Salary progression

Other employers, including the Association of Independent Schools (now Independent Schools NSW), Christian Schools Australia and North NSW Seventh-day Adventists have moved to a seven-step salary scale. The Conference chose to retain the current 11-step model. Early to mid-career teachers would take much longer to reach higher pay levels compared to their peers elsewhere.

### 3. Long service leave

The Conference did not agree to include a five-year threshold for accessing long service leave consistent with other sectors. Under the proposed agreement teachers could not access or be paid out long service leave until after 10 years of service.

### 4. Workplace Framework

The Conference had proposed removing the clause that incorporates the Workplace Framework into the EA. The Framework sets out policies on matters such as face-to-face hours, release time, meetings, and class sizes. Removing the Framework from the agreement would turn it into a set of guidelines rather than an enforceable document.

**More information:** Adventist teachers say ‘NO’ to inferior EA

# School leaders face alarming surge in violence

New research shows a surge in violence and harassment against school principals, prompting calls for a national summit on school violence to develop work health and safety strategies to address concerns.

The study, led by Monash University, found more than half of school principals surveyed had experienced physical violence, verbal abuse, gendered violence and sexual harassment at work.

### Attacks on women principals more likely

Researchers found women school leaders face disproportionate levels of harassment and gendered violence, echoing previous research that women principals were more likely to be the victims of attacks by students or parents.

School leaders also experienced stalking, harassment, aggression and online bullying from parents, according to the *Invisible labour: Principals’ emotional labour in volatile times* project, which documented the toll of rising violence on principals’ health and wellbeing.

One principal said they “had a recurring dream that I was shot in the head” after dealing with aggressive parents. School leaders also described checking when driving that they were not being followed by parents.

The report found a lack of support for principals handling violent or traumatic incidents in their school community. Principals were supporting staff, students and parents, but there was no one to support them.

While the study focused on the experiences of public school principals, its findings reflect the annual Principals Health and Wellbeing report by the Australian Catholic University (ACU), which highlights rising stress, violence, and threats against principals.

Principals also face an increase in critical incidents, including violent threats, mental health crises, suicide

attempts, and medical emergencies, according to 2024 ACU research.

### Urgent reforms needed

Besides a national summit on school safety, the report recommends the full funding of public schools, better protection from occupational violence and mental health support for school leaders.

The report also calls for stronger protections for principals, including clearer role expectations, independent supervision and a coordinated national response to school violence.

“Schools should not be violent places,” lead researcher Professor Jane Wilkinson told *The Daily Telegraph*.

All school staff are entitled to a safe workplace. If you are experiencing threats or attacks, we urge you to contact the IEU.

### More information

- Read the full report: The escalation of violence in schools and its repercussions for principals’ emotional labour, 2026, Monash University; Jane Wilkinson, Lucas Walsh, Christine Grice, Fiona Longmuir, Philippa Chandler, Amanda Keddie, Tim Delany
- Anti-bullying rapid review: What teachers need
- IEU media release: Calling for action on violence and harassment in schools
- Respect for teachers: IEU calls for action

“Violence in schools is neither inevitable nor acceptable.”



# NESA called

## Have you updated your login?

**NESA access is changing. We urge you to update your details now. NESA will introduce a new login system, NESA Identity (NESA ID) in early 2026.**

This change aims to improve account security and will affect how teachers access eTAMS and NESA Learning.

Since July 2025, NESA has encouraged teachers to update their email address and mobile number in eTAMS. These details are essential for NESA to create a secure NESA ID on a teacher’s behalf.

### What teachers need to know

Under the new system, teachers will log in using their email address instead of their six-digit account number.

When NESA ID goes live, teachers who have already updated their details will simply need to:

- create a new password, and
- set up two-step verification when prompted.

NESA reports that about 25 per cent of targeted teachers have

already updated their details, allowing a NESA ID to be created for them automatically.

### Avoid delay

If your details are not up-to-date, your email address or mobile number will not have a NESA ID created automatically. In these cases, teachers will need to complete the setup to regain access to eTAMS once the new system is introduced.

To avoid delays, teachers are strongly encouraged to update details now: <https://etams.nesa.nsw.edu.au/>

NESA will issue a final reminder through NESA News before the rollout and will notify teachers when eTAMS and NESA Learning will be offline for the system update.

### More information

Members who have questions about the transition can contact NESA directly at: [contactus@nesa.nsw.edu.au](mailto:contactus@nesa.nsw.edu.au)

The IEU will continue to monitor the rollout and keep members informed.





# Professional development

# Join us for PD in 2026

The IEU offers members various professional learning opportunities so you can stay informed about current developments in education and the latest workplace negotiations.

We've got more great professional development coming up in 2026. Check out these courses and register your interest via our website: [ieu.asn.au/pd-and-events/](http://ieu.asn.au/pd-and-events/)

**Christina Ellul**  
Professional Engagement Lead

## 18 February

### Starting well: The basics of inclusion

**Inclusion is central to effective teaching and is embedded in our legal, professional and ethical responsibilities.**

Understanding how to implement inclusive practices from the outset helps teachers work more confidently, manage diverse learner needs proactively, and maintain positive learning environments. A strong foundation early on supports sustainable practice throughout the year.

#### Setting up for all students to succeed

This 1.5-hour online session gives education professionals a clear, practical foundation for building an inclusive practice from day one.

We'll unpack what inclusion truly means, explore the legal and professional responsibilities teachers hold and introduce the multi-tiered system of support as a simple, supportive framework for understanding and managing these.

From there, we dive straight into the "how": everyday routines and rituals that promote belonging, practical strategies for designing inclusive learning environments, and easy-to-apply teaching approaches that support diverse learners – all without adding to your workload.

You'll take part in interactive reflection moments that help you personalise your learning and leave with actionable, ready-to-use steps you can implement immediately in your classroom.

This course is perfect for education professionals who want to start well and stay well when it comes to inclusive practices.

#### Details

Date: Wednesday 18 February, 4pm–5:30pm

Where: Online via Zoom

Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Audience: Ideal for teachers and support staff working in primary settings.

Standards: This course addresses Standards 4 and 6 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and provides 1 hour and 30 minutes of professional development for NSW teachers maintaining at proficient teacher level.

#### More details and register for Zoom link:

[ieu.asn.au/pd-and-events](http://ieu.asn.au/pd-and-events) or contact us at [pd@ieu.asn.au](mailto:pd@ieu.asn.au)

## 24 February

### My accreditation, my career – Part 1

**This course is specifically designed for first-year teachers and the supervisors and mentors who support them.**

If you have just commenced your teaching career, or you're planning to finalise your accreditation this year, this course will equip you with the knowledge you need to approach your accreditation journey with clarity and confidence.

This session focuses on your induction process, your first few weeks in the classroom, and what your accreditation journey might look like, including establishing a realistic, achievable accreditation plan.

#### Why it matters

Accreditation is more than a requirement – it's the foundation of your professional identity as a teacher.

Understanding the process early helps you feel confident, organised and in control.

A strong start to the accreditation journey sets you up for long-term success, supports your wellbeing, and builds the professional habits that will carry you through your career.

#### Details

Date: Tuesday 24 February, 4:30pm–5pm

Where: Online via Zoom

Duration: 30 minutes

Who it's for: Early career teachers, first-year teachers and supervisors/mentors supporting beginning teachers.

#### More details and register for Zoom link:

[ieu.asn.au/pd-and-events](http://ieu.asn.au/pd-and-events) or contact us at [pd@ieu.asn.au](mailto:pd@ieu.asn.au)

# 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](http://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

**“This course is engaging and practical – it gave me real tools I could use straight away. The sessions were engaging, highly relevant, and full of insights into how to lead people, not just manage them. This course will genuinely change how you lead your team.”**

Michelle Mella, IEU member, Presbyterian Ladies' College, Croydon

#### Two-day course: When and where

Tuesday 3 March 2026, 9am to 4pm, IEU head office, Wattle Street, Ultimo

Wednesday 4 March 2026, 9am to 4pm, IEU head office, 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](http://www.ieu.asn.au/events)

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







## Reps' checklist 2026

# How to make a flying start

Welcome to the 2026 school year. If you're a rep at your school, here are a few things to keep moving or keep on the radar.

### Update us on your chapter

So the union can stay in touch with all members, we urge reps to ensure your chapter information is up to date with the IEU office.

The IEU's membership team will shortly send out a chapter update list asking you to let us know about:

- any members from last year who have moved to another school, and
- any existing members who are new to your school this year not included on the current list.

Accurate contact information is vital. Ask members to check the IEU has their correct email address, as this is one of the IEU's main forms of communication.

The IEU also needs accurate information about each teacher's accreditation level, as this allows us to assist you more effectively at each career stage.

### Hold a chapter meeting

If you haven't done so already, now's the time to arrange a chapter meeting to start the new year.

Invite all members of staff – this encourages non-members to join and ensure salaries and working conditions keep improving. Contact your IEU organiser and invite them to join you for the meeting.

Perhaps make it a morning or afternoon tea, or another social event. Your organiser can bring membership forms.

Let your principal know that the organiser will be on site and would be happy to meet with them.

### Conduct chapter elections

The first meeting of the year is the time for the chapter to reconfirm your position as the elected rep, or you may decide to bring someone new into the role.

Regardless of who is elected, you are required to formally notify your employer (or the principal) so you can access your delegate's rights. Your organiser can provide you with a pro forma letter for this purpose.

### What makes an effective rep?

The most effective reps are enthusiastic about unionism. Key sectors of the IEU membership (Catholic systemic, independent schools (AIS), Christian schools) have had successful campaigns and bargaining

outcomes in the past year that have led to strong pay rises for teachers and support staff.

Discuss these in your chapter meeting and remind everyone that these wins were only achieved through members acting together.

Hold regular meetings and keep your chapter informed. Encourage members to be active and engaged.

Keep in regular contact with your IEU organiser.

Familiarise yourself with the agreement that covers the staff in your school and, in the case of Catholic systemic reps, your Work Practices Agreement as well.

Never be afraid to seek guidance from your organiser.

Most importantly, encourage your colleagues to join their union. Extend a warm and friendly invitation in person, so they know the human face of their union. It's always a good idea to do this at the start of the school year, especially as a way of welcoming beginning teachers.

### Share the load

Consider starting a chapter committee, so everyone has a role in building the union at your school and ensuring its continuity.

Invite well-respected and/or long-standing members of staff who might be interested in chairing a meeting. You may have a highly organised member of staff – consider asking them to take on the role of chapter secretary.

By doing this, you will create a sense of energy and encourage greater participation.

### Keep your noticeboard current

Finally, make sure your organiser's details and the contact details of the union office are readily accessible for all members.

This is most effectively done through an IEU noticeboard. Many of our industrial agreements provide for a dedicated space to be allocated to IEU chapter notices. Talk to your organiser to find out what you can do.

Congratulations on taking on the important role of chapter rep. You'll find it rewarding, and we look forward to seeing you at one of our reps' training days around the state in coming months.

Don't miss our Resources page, with downloadable posters, flyers and information sheets.

**Pat Devery** Organiser

# Hate speech has no place in NSW schools

## The IEU welcomes the statement from the NSW government about amending Codes of Conduct to ensure all schools are free from hate speech.

All NSW school staff, including principals and school leaders, will have strengthened Codes of Conduct that explicitly ban hate speech under reforms announced by the Minns government.

"The vast majority of schools already have guidelines preventing hate speech, but these new requirements will make it crystal clear that hate speech based on race or religion is not acceptable," said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

"We don't anticipate teachers will be impeded in classroom discussions by the new requirements, which are based on the prohibition of hate speech in the *Crimes Act*.

"However, we are seeking further information from NESA to ensure these requirements do not limit freedom of speech for school staff both at work and outside of work."

The changes take effect immediately and apply across more than 3000 government and non-government schools in NSW, tightening the rules governing the conduct of all school staff.

"We'll be sharing these changes with our members in upcoming meetings and communications," Matthews said.

"Together with the broader union movement, the IEU opposes all forms of violence, hatred, bigotry and racism. It is not who we are.

"We reject hate speech that makes people feel threatened and unsafe. We are always stronger together."



# SPOTLIGHT ON REPS

IEU reps share how they're building strong chapters. Strong chapters make for a strong union and therefore greater bargaining power for all members.

## David McPherson

Casino Christian School, Casino

**David McPherson brings a wealth of experience and organisational skills to the role of union rep at Casino Christian School.**

"I've been there for 21 years," he said. "I know the school inside and out from kindergarten all the way through to Year 12."

David teaches PDHPE, Maths, Physical Activity and Sports Studies, and Bible Studies at the K-12 school.

He is also the sports coordinator, which David said is rewarding but time-consuming and involves working before and after school as well as weekends.

"You build good relationships with students and that helps with behaviour management," he said. "But it can mean giving up a lot of time outside of school hours on camps, excursions and sports events."

David said there can be high expectations on staff to participate in extracurricular activities that encroach on their personal time.

He wants to ensure workloads are equitable rather than falling heavily on some staff "because they have a big heart".

"In this role, hopefully I can help the school look after its employees better," he said. "In our school, I feel like they do want to look after us but there's also a massive job to do."

An IEU member since 2023, David joined the union after a colleague said: "You've got car insurance, you got home insurance, so why wouldn't you have work insurance?"

**"In our school, they do want to look after us but there's also a massive job to do."**

The "insurance" provided by union membership is invaluable for teachers who must grapple with the various demands of parents, students and the community as well as their employer.

"When you're with the union, you feel like you've got someone there who's got your back," he said. Outside of school, David is involved with his church, plays touch footy, watches the Rabbitohs and Swans, referees football and coaches his daughter's soccer team.

"I've coached them for six years and seen them slowly move from having no idea in the under eights to winning their grand final," he said.



## Pru Dubokovich

Southern Highlands Christian School, Bowral

**Pru Dubokovich is a primary school teacher who is also qualified to teach HSC Studies of Religion, at Southern Highlands Christian School in Bowral.**

She has taught at the Prep-Year 12 school for a decade, which she also attended as a high school student.

Some of her former teachers are now colleagues, although Pru said she regards them as friends.

"It's a lovely connection and a really special way to reconnect back into the school," she said.

An IEU member since 2018, Pru was encouraged to join the union early in her career by a friend who told her: "I wouldn't put my foot in the school grounds without being a union member."

Pru said union membership provided security "if anything ever happens, you know you're protected, and you've got someone who's on your side".

Pru agreed to be a co-rep at the school late last year because, she said, "my 'work wife' said yes".

"We work well together, but we're both very new to the job," she said. "We're both learning

how to do our best to support our colleagues."

Pru said she wants to help her colleagues maintain their enthusiasm for teaching.

"I love my school very much and I love my career," she said. "I want to make sure we're always doing as much as we can to do the best job that we're here to do. You wouldn't teach if you didn't love it."

Pru said the reps training day had helped her better understand the role of union rep as well as arming her with vital knowledge about members' rights under enterprise agreements.

Outside of work, Pru is a singer and plays the piano, sharing her passion for music with her husband and three daughters.

"Feeling supported at school makes it easier to come home with the energy and patience to support my family too," she said.



**"You wouldn't teach if you didn't love it."**

## Paul Waddell

St Columba's Catholic College, Springwood

**Paul Waddell wants to support early career teachers and help them avoid burnout in his new role as a rep at St Columba's Catholic College in Springwood in the Blue Mountains.**

The school, which was originally built as a seminary more than 100 years ago, is in a scenic location, surrounded by national park.

"A couple of my kids are young teachers," Paul said. "So I really have a passion for our younger colleagues to make sure they feel supported and protected."

Paul is one of three reps at the school, which has a strong chapter thanks to high union density. A five-member chapter committee also supports the work of reps in supporting members.

"It's a great opportunity," he said. "We've only had a single rep for the last 10 years, and it's just too much work for one individual."

One challenge the members at Paul's school face is the creep of extracurricular activities into their personal time.

Paul said there is a subtle expectation that teachers and support staff will do unpaid overtime to organise and run activities and events outside of normal school hours.

"There are a lot of staff who do activities such as musicals and performances," he said. "They do it because they are generous and passionate."

An IEU member since 2020, Paul grew up in a strong union family and even handed out How to Vote flyers for Gough Whitlam.

Besides teaching, Paul is a retired runner who used to run ultra-marathons in Australia and overseas.

"Now it's just walking the dog and enjoying the beautiful landscape," he said.



## Darko Stipic

Marcellin College, Randwick

**Darko Stipic brings more than two decades of teaching experience to the role of union rep at Marcellin College in Randwick.**

An English teacher, Darko said he was happy to support and stand up for his colleagues.

He also wants to empower his colleagues with the confidence to discuss issues directly with school leaders "knowing they are in the right".

"If an instruction comes from above, it does not mean that it's a law," Darko said. "It does not negate their rights."

Darko said increasingly complex workloads and administrative red tape were ongoing challenges for members, robbing them of time to prepare lessons and engage with students.

"When I started, I walked into a classroom with a marker and a duster," he said. "Now we come in with computers, we're marking rolls and recording things, keeping up with NESA obligations and on it goes."

"I'd say it's micromanaging rather than trusting us as teachers to know what we're doing in the

classroom," he added.

An IEU member since 2012, Darko said joining the union was necessary to protect rights. "Unless you're willing to engage with our employers on an individual basis on every single matter, the only way to really get anything positive is to have a strong, united front," he said.

Outside of school, Darko said playing soccer is the only activity "that actually makes me relax". "It's 90 minutes when I don't think about anything else in the world except that little ball running around on the field," he said. "I just wish I could do it more than once a week."



**"The only way to really get anything positive is to have a strong, united front."**

# Reps' training

**Are you a newly elected rep or has it been some time since you last had any union training?**

- If so, register for reps training now to gain:
- an understanding of your rights and responsibilities as a rep
  - strategies for running a successful chapter and for growing membership
  - useful skills for supporting members
  - an understanding of the current industrial landscape
  - an overview of where you derive your entitlements.

Only members who are recorded as a rep on the IEU database are invited to attend this training. Preference

will be given to newly elected reps or reps who have not attended training in the previous 12 months.

IEU reps are entitled to reasonable access to paid time during normal working hours for training relating to their role as a union delegate. Please contact the IEU if you experience any issues with accessing your leave entitlements.

**Find out more and register**

Don't miss out. Places fill fast, so register now and secure your spot: [ieu.asn.au/training-and-meetings](http://ieu.asn.au/training-and-meetings)

For more information, contact your school's IEU organiser or email [repstraining@ieu.asn.au](mailto:repstraining@ieu.asn.au).

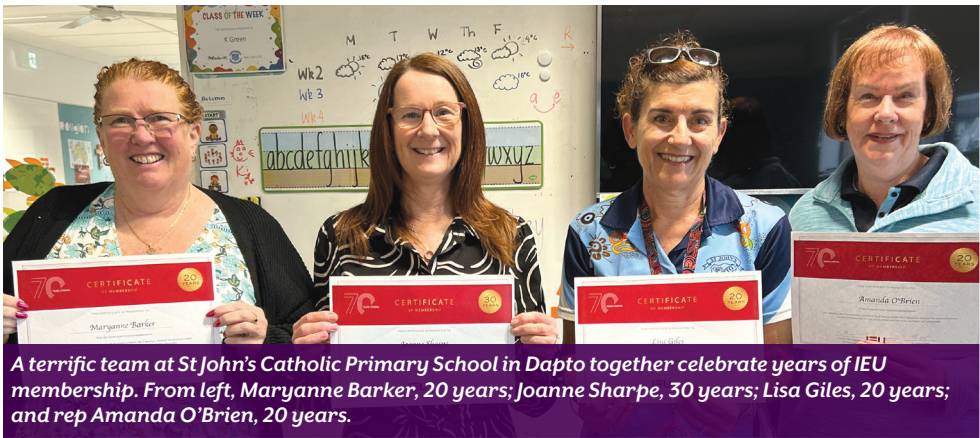
<b>Fri 6 Mar</b>	Sydney	IEU office	Wattle St, Ultimo
<b>Tue 10 Mar</b>	Penrith	Penrith RSL Club	Penrith
<b>Wed 11 Mar</b>	Northern Suburbs and Northern Beaches	Killara Golf Club	Killara
<b>Thu 12 Mar</b>	Sydney	IEU office	Wattle St, Ultimo
<b>Wed 25 Mar</b>	Canberra	IEU office	Phipps Close, Deakin
<b>Thu 26 Mar</b>	Wollongong	IEU office	Lowden Square, Wollongong
<b>Fri 27 Mar</b>	Anglican Schools Corp	IEU office	Wattle St, Ultimo



with Professional Development and Reps Training

**[www.ieu.asn.au](http://www.ieu.asn.au)**





A terrific team at St John's Catholic Primary School in Dapto together celebrate years of IEU membership. From left, Maryanne Barker, 20 years; Joanne Sharpe, 30 years; Lisa Giles, 20 years; and rep Amanda O'Brien, 20 years.



Members at St John Vianney's Primary School in Waramanga ACT celebrate a combined 160 years of IEU membership. Back row, from left: Leah Malpas, 10 years; principal Peter Rodda, 30 years; Wayne Young, 10 years; Laura Matchett, 10 years; Anna Kain, 30 years; Mary Dietz-Mullamphy, 10 years. Front row, from left: rep Karen Stilling, 30 years; and Nina De Rosa, 30 years.

# UNION SNAPS



Principal Sandra Darley from St Francis Xavier College in Florey ACT celebrates 30 years of IEU membership.



Celebrating membership milestones at Danebank Anglican School for Girls in Hurstville. From left, Jocelyn Hartley, 40 years; Michael Wotton rep; Daniela Clark, 40 years; and Kerrie Banfield, 30 years.



Denise Atkins from Xavier Catholic College in North Albury, marks 30 years of IEU membership.



Chris Blenkinsopp, centre, marks 30 years of IEU membership with reps David Parnell and Cath Stewart at Waverley College.



Mark Fitzpatrick, right, from Chevalier College in Burradoo celebrates a fabulous 40 years of IEU membership, with rep Louise Glase.



Members from St Michael's Primary School Kaleen ACT celebrate 10 years of IEU membership. From left, Cherie Kelly, Jessica Hallahan and Emily O'Rourke.



Members from St Thomas Aquinas Primary in Charnwood ACT mark membership milestones. From left, Katrina McClintock, 10 years; and Lee Black, 20 years.



Members from St Bede's Primary School in Braidwood mark IEU membership milestones. From left, Bridget Bradley, 10 years; and Susan Anderson, 20 years.



Celebrating together at St Matthew's Primary School in Page ACT. From left, Domenica Laria (10 years), with rep Kerrie Buckler (20 years).



Member Angela Luchetti, left, with her 30-year certificate and rep Narelle McFarlane with her 20-year certificate at Holy Spirit Primary School in Nicholls ACT.



# National Workforce Forum

## Wasted opportunity to address challenges

**The importance of teacher voice in policymaking affecting the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector was once again highlighted at the National Workforce Forum held in Sydney in November 2025.**

ECEC Organiser Lisa James and Assistant Federal Secretary Veronica Yewdall attended the two-day meeting hosted by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

### Teacher voice vital

The forum is a key part of the Shaping Our Future strategy to address staffing challenges in the ECEC sector and build a sustainable, skilled workforce.

However, there was a disappointing lack of teachers and educators at the forum.

Many participants said the forum was a great opportunity to collaborate across the sector.

But data from ACECQA shows no or limited progress in many aspects of professional recognition, attraction and retention, leadership and capability, wellbeing, and qualifications and career pathways.

"Some of these indicators, such as job satisfaction, are expected to plummet after the shocking and distressing incidents that came to light in 2025," Lisa said.

### Staffing ratios

Veronica joined other speakers in raising concerns about the failure to address staffing ratios in response to the child safety crisis.

"So long as current ratios are maintained, one staff member can be left alone with a child or group of children," Veronica said. "This must be addressed urgently in the National Regulations to protect children, teachers and educators."

Concerns were also raised that the workforce strategy is not resourced adequately.

The IEU pointed out that improvements to wages and staff retention were a result of the 15% pay rise funded by the ECEC Worker Retention Payment negotiated between unions and the Albanese government – not the strategy.

A government representative suggested the workforce shortage could be solved by paying mothers to stay at home, so children under three do not need to attend ECEC. The union does not believe this contributes to the strategy's aim to build a sustainable, skilled workforce.

### Poor quality of training

The IEU also voiced its concerns about ACECQA's failure to address poor quality training for ECEC teachers.

Training is still falling short at some registered training organisations and universities that offer short, substandard courses. Too many graduates lack the skills required to deliver high-quality early childhood education.

### Lisa James Organiser

#### Goodstart members: Check your non-contact time

The union is concerned that some members in Goodstart centres are not receiving the correct amount of non-contact time.

"It appears that even though the funds have been allocated, some centre managers are not rostering teachers and senior educators to receive adequate non-contact time," organiser Lisa James said.

IEU members in Goodstart centres should contact their organiser if they are not receiving the appropriate number of non-contact hours.

## 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 15% pay increase
- 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](mailto:ececwrp@ieu.asn.au)

## Mandatory national child safety training

**From 27 February, people working in the following roles in the early childhood education and care sector must complete mandatory national child safety training:**

- persons with management or control
- nominated supervisors
- persons in day-to-day charge
- family day care educators
- other staff, volunteers and students.

There will be foundation and advanced training modules. The foundation training modules will be available on the federal government's online learning platform for the ECEC sector from 27 February. Advanced modules will be available in July 2026. This training is free.

**More information:** [bit.ly/4r0B3om](https://bit.ly/4r0B3om)

## Review of the NSW Working with Children Check system

**The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian invites the community to have their say on the review of legislation that underpins the Working with Children Check (WWCC).**

The review is designed to ensure the WWCC legislation continues to protect children and young people, while remaining clear, fair and effective.

The review may lead to:

- changes in how key terms are defined
- who may require a WWCC
- how decisions are made.

**More information on completing a survey and/or making a submission:** [bit.ly/45QZiwU](https://bit.ly/45QZiwU)

# TOP TIPS

## For new early childhood teachers

**Congratulations on your new career as an early childhood teacher. Here are our top tips for getting the most out of your new job – and remember, the IEU is here to assist.**

### Start at the beginning

When you begin work, your employer should give you a contract that confirms your employment.

This contract may be called a letter of offer, letter of appointment, contract of employment, conditions of employment or employment letter.

The contract typically outlines the position you accepted, whether it is ongoing or temporary, your teaching load, working hours, days to be worked and rate of pay.

It is always a good idea to read your contract of employment closely before you sign it.

If you are a union member, you can always contact the union for advice or ask for a review of your contract.

### Is the letter of appointment binding?

Generally, a letter of appointment is a legally enforceable contractual agreement to employ an early childhood teacher based on the terms contained in the letter.

The letter of appointment or contract of employment sits alongside other instruments that underpin an employee's rights, including the National Employment Standards (NES), enterprise agreements or modern awards.

The terms contained in your letter of appointment cannot be less than what is provided for in the NES, your applicable enterprise agreement or an applicable modern award.

### Do I need a new employment letter every year?

Early childhood teachers who are employed on an ongoing basis do not have to be issued with a new letter of appointment each year.

If you are asked to sign a new letter of appointment, seek advice from your union organiser in case there are elements in the new contract that change your conditions of employment.

If you are employed on a temporary or fixed contract, it may be necessary for you to receive a new letter of appointment upon new re-engagement.

There are strict rules about appointing a teacher on a temporary basis, so make sure you understand why you are appointed on a temporary basis. Generally, employers can only appoint teachers to a temporary position for a maximum period of 12 months.

You may wish to speak to your union organiser if you have concerns about those reasons.

### What if your employer wants to change your conditions?

Generally, employers cannot unilaterally vary the terms of employment without your agreement.

Your employer cannot change any of your conditions of employment that would be inconsistent with an enterprise agreement or applicable modern award.

It is important that if you receive a new letter of appointment, you talk to your union organiser to check whether the employer is: (a) seeking to change your conditions of employment, and (b) whether they are permitted to do so.

### More information

If you have specific concerns or would like to know more about the support the IEU provides:

- call us: 8202 8900
- visit us: [ieu.asn.au](https://ieu.asn.au)
- email us: [ecec@ieu.asn.au](mailto:ecec@ieu.asn.au)



# Support staff essential to educational success

**New guidelines released by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) underscore the crucial role of professional, administrative and support staff in enhancing student outcomes and reducing teacher workload.**

*Guidelines for the Optimal Deployment of Teaching Assistants in Australian Classrooms* follow an extensive research and consultation process undertaken since their announcement in the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

The guidelines outline strategies for school leaders to maximise the impact of teaching assistants.

These include adopting a school-wide approach to deployment, establishing clear role expectations, creating regular opportunities for collaboration, ensuring access to professional learning, implementing evidence-based interventions and promoting a shared understanding of teaching and learning approaches.

The guidelines also seek to enable teachers to focus on their core work by identifying administrative, operational and supervisory tasks that can be undertaken by teaching assistants.

In the development phase of the guidelines, the IEU held two forums for teachers and support staff, enabling direct feedback to AITSL on the challenges teachers and assistants face.

Members emphasised the vital role of teaching assistants in supporting students with complex needs and in reducing teacher workload by taking on administrative tasks that pull teachers away from core tasks.

Feedback from the IEU forums included detailed descriptions of the barriers to effective collaboration between assistants and teachers, including the absence of school-wide strategies and dedicated meeting time to develop and evaluate student plans.

The lack of regular professional development for teaching assistants was also highlighted as critically important.

The guidelines note that effective implementation can be supported through industrial frameworks.

The IEU has negotiated many collective agreements that provide for such collaboration, as well as additional supervisory duties and professional learning proposed in the guidelines.

These rely on employer buy-in and must include genuine consultation with teachers and teaching assistants on the most efficient allocation of time and funds in each school's context.

The guidelines emphasise the potential benefits of effectively utilising teaching assistants – a principle long championed by IEU members. The guidelines will help renew focus on the vital role of teaching assistants and encourage a review of the changes needed to reduce teacher workload.

Such improvements are essential for enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring every student receives a world-class education.

**Brad Hayes** Federal Secretary

## Teacher safety New data shows rising school violence

**Education workers are experiencing escalating workplace health risks coupled with a lack of baseline staff wellbeing and safety.**

The crisis of classroom violence and challenging and complex behaviours are highlighted in the latest education report by the Tasmanian government.

Teachers' compensation claims for psychological harm have risen by 26 per cent since 2023, with a 60 per cent increase in psychological injury claims in the same period. Rising physical injuries left 70 per cent of affected staff unable to return to work within the same 12-month period.

Challenging student behaviours driven by societal and health factors are causing injury and burnout for teachers as well as poor educational outcomes. Numerous inquiries and reviews have confirmed that underachieving students are disproportionately found in under-resourced schools.

The federal Labor government's commitment to fully fund public schools is essential, but the phased model, running from 2026-2034, means many schools are years away from their full entitlement.

Governments and employers must collaborate with school staff and their union to address the underlying factors affecting employee wellbeing, teacher workloads and staff-student ratios. Building a resilient workforce requires a co-ordinated and proactive approach.

The Mitchell Institute's report *Achieving Better and Fairer Schools: The case for full-service school models in Australia* presents convincing evidence that 'full-service school' models can deliver major engagement, wellbeing and academic improvement by putting equity and wellbeing centre stage.

International research similarly shows significant social and economic returns. Workload impacts on teachers can be offset by engaging dedicated full-time coordinators and specialists.

The IEU supports the Australian Education Union's call for the federal government to begin establishing full-service public schools with priority given to the most disadvantaged communities. The IEU also supports implementation of the school refusal report and additional funding for the inclusive education transition plan.

Workplace wellbeing and truly inclusive education rely on long-term social and economic reforms by governments. These reforms must target community health, affordable housing, family safety, anti-poverty initiatives and broader measures to address wealth inequality.

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**Brad Hayes** Federal Secretary



## Climate transition essential for students' future

**Schools are becoming increasingly dangerous workplaces, with two-thirds of Australian schools now classified as high climate risk.**

Staff and students are already feeling the impacts, from heat stress and 'eco-distress' to sheltering communities during disasters and, in some cases, relocating entire schools.

The UN Environment Programme warns that within a decade, global temperatures are likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This is a critical threshold to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

Australia's first Climate Risk Assessment reinforces this urgency, confirming that extreme weather events and climate-related deaths will become far more frequent.

Following the government's revised climate targets, the IEU joins other unions in urging stronger emissions reduction commitments. The Australian Council of Trade Union's climate action plan outlines a comprehensive program of regulatory reforms, including critical updates to work health and safety laws.

IEU members have been at the forefront of strengthening climate protections at work.

Many member bargaining campaigns have secured paid natural disaster leave to help staff manage extreme weather events. These workplace rights should be extended across all education sectors.

Governments and employers must play their part by implementing policies and programs that deliver a just transition, including:

- paid time for training on the transition to electrification, decarbonisation and new climate focused curriculum
- increased funding for mental health professionals to support students and young people
- low-emission transport options for school and student transport needs
- expanded cycling infrastructure and education to promote active travel
- government-led reviews of thermal efficiency targets and compliance in school heating, cooling, lighting and digital infrastructure
- more green spaces and nature access in schools and early childhood settings, including pilots for dedicated nature pedagogy leaders
- updated policies and procedures for extreme weather responses.

Unions, governments and employers must work together to deliver a just and urgent climate transition that protects every worker, student and community. The clock's ticking. Let's get it right.

**Brad Hayes** Federal Secretary

**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.







“Being part of the union is the only way teachers and support staff are going to achieve fair and just pay and conditions.”

# Farewell Jackie Groom: Fighting for fairness

**Organiser and former teacher Jackie Groom retired in January after a decades-long involvement with the IEU. She reflects on a lifetime in education.**

Jackie Groom’s connection with the union began in 1963 – her first year of teaching – when she was invited to a meeting at De La Salle College in Kingsgrove.

The meeting had been called to revive the Assistant Masters’ Association, as numbers had dwindled to about 20 members.

“It was at this meeting that I began my journey with the union we now know as the NSW/ACT Branch of the IEUA,” Jackie said.

As women and lay teachers in Catholic schools joined, the union changed its name to the Assistant Masters’ and Mistresses’ Association (AMMA) and “the history of our union began”, Jackie said.

After a break from teaching and the union to start a family – at a time when parental leave didn’t exist – Jackie resumed her career at Sacred Heart Central School in Cootamundra.

She had answered a job advertisement in The Catholic Weekly offering wages commensurate with government school teachers, which meant she was paid more than her colleagues.

“I contacted the first General Secretary of the union, John Nicholson, who flew to Cootamundra and chaired the first meeting of AMMA in the Canberra–Goulburn Diocese, with teachers from Harden and Cootamundra in attendance,” she said.

“I had invited other teachers to attend, but they declined, fearing reprisal.”

**Strong union delivers**

Jackie left teaching in 1974 after a disagreement with a principal. The union, then known as the Independent Teachers Association, pursued an unfair dismissal case on her behalf.

“Although I was not reinstated, the Commissioner noted that the employer representatives ‘were not witnesses to the truth’,” she said.

A series of jobs in manufacturing, hospitality and health reinforced Jackie’s belief that a strong union leads to better pay and conditions.

She returned to teaching in the 1980s, became a school rep and was elected to the IEU Executive (the IEU’s governing body of 22 elected members).

Jackie said teacher workloads increased in the late 1980s with new curricula and greater demands for programming and administrative work.

“As a coordinator, I raised staff concerns with the school chapter, which directed me to take them to the employer,” she said. “Although sympathetic, the employer responded by offering stress-management courses.”

Decades later, the union continues to fight to reduce heavy workloads, including a recent breakthrough in independent schools, where new agreements include a workload transparency clause.

In 1993, Jackie joined the IEU as an organiser and has been based in the union’s Canberra office.

“I’ve enjoyed my role as an organiser,” she said. “Being part of the union is the only way teachers and support staff are going to achieve fair and just pay and conditions.”

“Has the employer ever offered better salaries and conditions voluntarily? ‘No’.”

**Union wins**

Jackie has witnessed strong advances in pay and conditions for school staff since she began teaching in 1963 as well as stronger

protections for union members legislated by the federal Labor government in 2022.

The union has also doubled its membership since she began working as an organiser, extending its reach across NSW and the ACT.

Jackie says the role of an organiser – recruiting members, supporting reps and assisting individual members – remains pretty much the same, but the balance between different tasks has changed over the past three decades.

Jackie said she was looking forward to the next chapter in her life and time to engage in creative pursuits, travel and social activities with family and friends.

She expressed gratitude for the support and friendship of colleagues during her career as an organiser.

“I am particularly grateful for the support and friendship of reps and members in the schools that it has been my privilege to organise and support,” she said.

“You have given generously of your time and spirit in support of the union’s efforts to improve salaries and working conditions.”

The IEU salutes you, Jackie. We will miss you.

## Present tense Enterprise bargaining update in the ELICOS sector

**Your union is actively bargaining for better pay and conditions for members in the post-secondary sector.**

**UTS College**

In January, the IEU agreed with UTS College on a new enterprise agreement (EA) that will provide salary increases of 3% a year until 2029.

Providers such as UTS College that are catering to international students have had big downturns in enrolments following the post-pandemic boom. An agreement that maintains pay around the current inflation rate is quite an achievement.

The IEU chapter at UTS College has long been strong and active, and this has paid off with a decent outcome. Voting for the new EA should take place in February, and members are encouraged to vote Yes.

**Taylors College**

Taylors College also has a strong IEU presence, and negotiations for a new EA have been ongoing for the past 18 months.

In this instance, the employer was seeking significant concessions relating to non-term teaching time, which members were unwilling to grant.

After a long battle of wills, the employer finally agreed to give up these claims, so the status quo will remain.

The union has also won improvements in disputes procedures, which should give members an extra layer of security if the employer seeks to introduce changes outside of the agreement.

The new EA provides an annual salary increase of 3%, maintaining Taylors College as one of the highest-paying employers in the sector.

At the time of writing, the union was still working through the finer details, with the aim of putting forward a two-year agreement for a vote in March.

**Navitas Skilled Futures**

Navitas Skilled Futures is one of the private companies that run migrant English programs

on behalf of the federal government. Progress on negotiating a new EA has been slow, largely because the federal government keeps moving the goalposts on the future of these programs.

The most recent advice is that existing contracts will remain in place until 2026.

In the meantime, the IEU and Navitas have agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding as an interim measure, which maintains existing conditions and benefits, and facilitated pay rises of 3% from July 2025 and 2.5% from July 2026.

The IEU and the employer have also agreed to recommence formal negotiations in the middle of the year, or sooner, if the federal government provides greater clarity about the future of the Adult Migrant English Program.

**Other negotiations**

The IEU is currently negotiating with WSU The College, in conjunction with the National Tertiary Education Union.

These negotiations are at an early stage, but the aim is for a new EA to be ready to vote on by the middle of the year.

Negotiations for a new EA at UNSW College should commence in the coming months.

**Better off under union agreements**

The *Fair Work Act* includes provisions relating to “good faith bargaining”, under which an employer can be compelled to bargain when it can be demonstrated that a majority of employees (or section of employees, such as teachers) want this to happen.

Employees working under an EA must be better off overall than the underpinning award, so employees are always better off under an agreement. To find out how that might work at your college, contact the IEU.

**Kendall Warren** Organiser



# AROUND THE GLOBE

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



Protests erupt in Iran in early January.  
Credit: Fars News Agency AFP

## Iran

### Nationwide uprisings and union solidarity

In January 2026, nationwide protests in Iran escalated. Sparked by a worsening economic crisis, corruption and the killing of civilians, demonstrations have grown to include demands for greater freedom and democracy.

The Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Associations (CCITTA) said in a statement: "What is unfolding today in the streets, squares, and neighbourhoods of Iran is the cry of anger and suffering of a people whose bones have for years been crushed under the weight of poverty, discrimination, humiliation, injustice, and the neglect of their demands."

Education International (EI) has been documenting the arrest and imprisonment of teacher unionists in Iran for many years, while repeatedly condemning the Iranian government's intensifying crackdown on trade union activists.

In January, dozens of teachers were arrested or killed during the crackdown, including two CCITTA members.

The IEU signed a joint statement supporting the people of Iran and condemning violence, repression, and the persecution of activists, women, students, and trade unionists.

This collective statement affirms the union movement's commitment to standing with Iranian educators and communities in their fight for dignity, equality and justice. It calls for an end to state violence and the protection of fundamental human and union rights.



Teachers on the streets in Minnesota in December 2025.  
Credit: SEIU Local 26

## United States

### Teachers mobilise for students and vulnerable families

Unions and community organisations across the United States are taking unprecedented action in response to the escalation of federal immigration enforcement in Minnesota and neighbouring states.

Tens of thousands of workers, students and union members participated in a widespread labour shutdown opposing the heavy-handed federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations and demanding the removal of ICE agents from local communities.

At a local level, teachers and education support personnel are mobilising to protect students and immigrant families. Unions are producing resources for educators to support immigrant youth under threat of deportation.

The St Paul Federation of Educators has trained 400 people to volunteer on school patrol and held workshops for immigrant parents on how to keep their children safe in case they are detained or deported.

Teachers are going above and beyond to protect their students, including waiting at bus stops to walk students home.

As school attendance declines, schools are sending food to families too afraid to leave their homes.

Members and officials of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) are working together to protect students and keep ICE agents out of schools.

"We cannot and will not be silent," NEA president Becky

Pringle said. "As educators, we have a moral and professional responsibility to keep all students safe, no matter where they were born or who they are, both in school and in their communities."

"Federal terror has no place in public education or in a democracy."

As an affiliate of EI, the IEU stands with teachers and school staff in the United States as they work to protect immigrant families.

## Myanmar

### Five years of resistance

The first day of February marks five years since the military coup that robbed the people of Myanmar of their freedom and democracy.

Workers, communities and young people inside Myanmar and in exile around the world have never stopped organising and resisting military rule.

In Australia, unions have stood with the people of Myanmar through the Myanmar Campaign Network and Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA.

We call on the Australian government to cut off the military junta's economic lifelines through sanctions on banks, mining companies and other key revenue sources.

Sign the petition: [bit.ly/mcnpetition](https://bit.ly/mcnpetition)



ACTU  
Australian Council of Trade Unions

MYANMAR  
CAMPAIGN  
NETWORK

Union Aid Abroad APHEDA  
The global justice organisation of the Australian union movement

# Workers compensation Unions disappointed by reforms

## Changes to the workers compensation system passed by the NSW Parliament on 4 February will make it harder for employees suffering psychological injuries to get the support they need.

Access to weekly payments beyond 130 weeks (2.5 years) and lump sum compensation will be tightened for workers suffering psychological injuries.

Weekly payments for employees with psychological injuries will now generally cut out at 2.5 years (130 weeks) – not the limit of 5 years (260 weeks) that previously applied for both physical and psychological injuries.

Lump sum payments will also be more difficult to access. Workers will have to meet a much higher Whole Person Impairment (WPI) test for psychological injuries.

By 2029, a worker will have to prove a WPI of 28%, compared with the current figure of 15% to be entitled to a lump sum payment.

### Teachers and support staff affected

IEU members know the risk of psychological injury is not an abstract policy issue – it is a daily reality for many teachers and support staff.

Heavy workloads, staff shortages, student behavioural complexity, critical incidents, parental conflict and relentless administrative demands have driven an alarming rise in levels of stress, burnout, anxiety and trauma.

Evidence shows that a psychologically injured worker with a WPI above 21 per cent has no capacity to work.

Raising the threshold means excluding seriously unwell teachers and school staff from ongoing support when they are least able to return to the classroom.

Despite this, the IEU acknowledges the inclusion of a new Return to Work Intensive Support Program in the final amendments.

This program may provide an additional 12 months of income and medical support for workers after weekly payments cease.

### Reduce psychological hazards

While safety nets are vital, evidence shows that the focus must shift to prevention.

The NSW government and school employers need to do more to reduce psychological hazards, including:

- reducing teacher workloads
- improving staffing levels
- providing better student behaviour supports
- implementing genuine psychosocial risk management, and
- instigating stronger protections against harassment and violence.

### Digital Work Systems Bill

The NSW Parliament is also debating a bill requiring employers to ensure that any digital system – algorithms, AI, automated

rostering, workload platforms or performance monitoring tools – do not risk workers' health and safety.

The Digital Work Systems Bill contains vital safeguards for teachers and support staff given digital platforms increasingly shape lesson planning and reporting, data collection, student monitoring, performance tracking and administrative workload.

The Bill would require employers to consider whether digital systems create discriminatory outcomes, unreasonable workloads or excessive surveillance – issues raised repeatedly by school staff.

Importantly, it would also give WHS entry permit holders the right to inspect digital work systems when investigating suspected breaches. This is a crucial tool for unions representing teachers and school staff.

The IEU will continue to scrutinise the implementation of industrial changes while campaigning vigorously for the passage of digital safety protections in an era of algorithm-driven management and digital intensification of work.

Lyn Caton Assistant Secretary



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

Lismore: Unit 4, Lismore Professional Centre, 103-105 Molesworth Street,  
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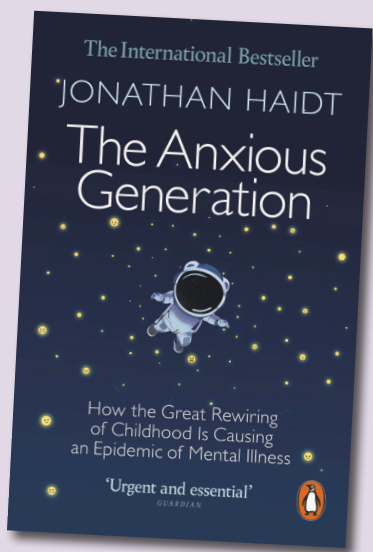
\*Investment performance is net of tax and investment expense, for the year ending 31 Dec 2025. View our investment performance table for other time periods. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. This is general information only and may not be right for you, read the PDS, FSG and TMD at [ngssuper.com.au](http://ngssuper.com.au). Issued by NGS Super Pty Limited AFSL 233 154



BM-1119



# Giveaways



## The anxious generation

Author: Jonathan Haidt

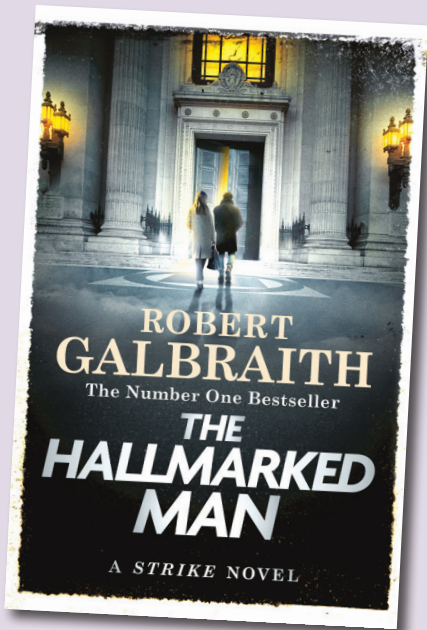
Publisher: Penguin Books Australia

In *The Anxious Generation*, Jonathan Haidt explores the dramatic transformation of childhood in a few short years.

As teens traded in flip-phones for smartphones packed with social media apps, time online soared, including time spent comparing oneself to a vast pool of others. Time engaging face-to-face with friends and family has plummeted, and so has mental health.

This profound shift has taken place against a backdrop of declining childhood freedom and free play, as parents over-supervise every aspect of their children's lives offline, depriving them of the experiences they need to become strong and self-governing adults.

Haidt makes a compelling argument that the loss of play-based childhood and its replacement with a phone-based childhood that is not suitable for human development is the source of increased mental distress among teenagers.



## The hallmarked man

Author: Robert Galbraith

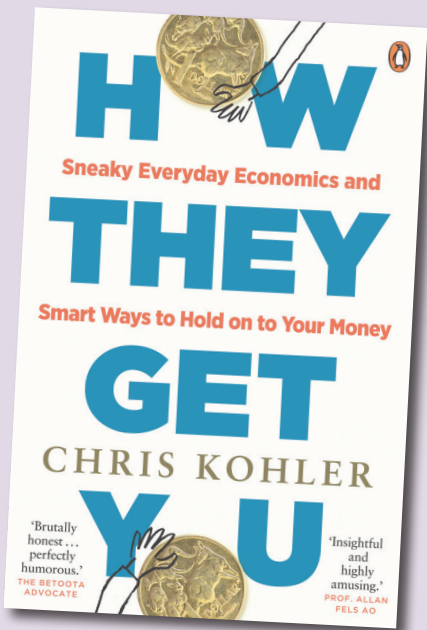
Publisher: Hachette Australia

A dismembered corpse is discovered in the vault of a silver shop. The police initially believe it to be that of a convicted armed robber – but not everyone agrees.

One of them is Decima Mullins, who calls on the help of private detective Cormoran Strike as she is certain the body in the silver vault is her boyfriend.

The more Strike and his business partner Robin Ellacott delve into the case, the more labyrinthine it gets. The silver shop is no ordinary one: it's located beside Freemasons' Hall and specialises in Masonic silverware.

*The Hallmarked Man* is the latest in the bestselling series, featuring Cormoran Strike, written by Robert Galbraith, a pseudonym of Harry Potter author J K Rowling.



## How they get you

Author: Chris Kohler

Publisher: Penguin Books Australia

Have you ever felt like your wallet has a slow leak you can't find?

In *How they get you*, journalist Chris Kohler takes you through the rigged carnival of modern life, where the games are broken, the prizes are fake and somehow, you're paying \$28 to park near the entrance.

From loyalty schemes to late fees, gift cards to sneaky supermarkets, Kohler pulls back the curtain on how the systems work and how to outsmart them.

Written for anyone who has ever looked at their bank account and thought, "I swear I didn't buy anything", this is the ultimate handbook to understanding how the game is played – and how you don't have to lose every single time.



To go in the draw, email entries to [giveaways@ieu.asn.au](mailto: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 10 March 2026.

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