



# news month

The newspaper of the Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch  
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## COMMUNITY PRESCHOOLS PUSH FOR FAIR PAY RAMPS UP

**Hundreds of IEU members rallied across the state to demand the NSW government provide funding for fair pay in community preschools in its June budget.**

Sydney's Martin Place became a sea of pink on 6 May as IEU members rallied to call on the NSW government to fund pay rises for community preschool teachers and educators.

IEU members travelled from as far as the Riverina, Hunter Valley, Wollongong and Newcastle to attend the rally held near NSW Parliament House.

Dressed in bright pink Start Strong, Pay Fair campaign t-shirts, members sent a resounding message to the NSW government to take their demands for fair pay seriously.

"Preschool teaching: Lowest wages are just the beginning ..." read one sign, styled like a Bunnings advertisement. Another read: "We educate, we care, we deserve to be paid fair." Yet another read: "We educate the future. Fund the present."

Rallies in Lismore and Coffs Harbour also attracted hundreds of IEU members, parents and supporters determined to ramp up

pressure on the NSW government in the lead-up to the June budget.

### Gender-based undervaluation

The IEU has been calling on the NSW government for almost two years to fund pay rises that properly value the work of preschool staff.

*Continued on pages 10-11*



## Classroom behaviour Union welcomes more support for teachers

**David Towson**  
Acting Secretary



**The IEU supports plans to improve initial teacher education and invest more in professional development in a bid to address unruly behaviour in classrooms.**

The plans are part of the federal government's response to a Senate inquiry into increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms.

Classroom disruption can impede student learning, contribute to lost teaching time and make it difficult for students to concentrate. It also takes a toll on teachers, leading to a loss of job satisfaction, increased stress and, at times, burnout.

### Federal government response

As part of its response to the Senate inquiry, the federal government also agreed to improve the quality of practical experience for teachers.

The federal government agreed in principle that states and territory governments should provide schools with greater access to psychologists, social workers and behaviour specialists to better identify and manage disruptive behaviour.

It also agreed in principle to introduce a "behaviour curriculum" for students to understand their school's expectations.

The Senate inquiry suggested disruptive classrooms were contributing to lower student achievement, pointing to international surveys

that found Australia ranked below-average in classroom orderliness.

However, the report was not without its critics. Greens education spokeswoman Senator Penny Allman-Payne said it "provided no solutions to the systemic social and economic problems that lead to student disengagement".

"So-called 'disruption' in the classroom is the inevitable endpoint of declining material conditions and decades of underinvestment in health, education and other public social services and social supports," she said.

### Complex socio-economic issues

In recent chapter and sub branch meetings I have attended, members report intensifying

behavioural issues in the classroom, with teachers and support staff responding to diverse learning needs and student wellbeing issues.

This complexity is driven by broader social and economic pressures, and it is being felt most acutely in schools.

There are growing numbers of students with additional needs.

Data from the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority shows 1,125,502 school students (27% of total enrolments) received an educational adjustment due to disability in 2025. This compares to 25.7% in 2023 and 18% in 2015.

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# Work health and safety Why effective mechanisms are essential

Suzanne Penson  
President



## Does your school have a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) or a Health and Safety Committee (HSC)? If not, it would be worth electing them formally.

Schools are busy and demanding workplaces with competing priorities and pressures that over time may affect physical and mental health, wellbeing and workplace safety.

An HSR is an elected member of staff who represents their colleagues about workplace health and safety matters. The role is not about unnecessary bureaucracy but a powerful way to protect yourself and your colleagues.

Once elected, an HSR is entitled to comprehensive training during working hours. They become a recognised and trusted voice who can identify, report and resolve work health and safety concerns with school leadership. The aim is to ensure that workplace health and safety is a focus of everyday school life.

### Important role

The IEU recognises the important role of HSCs and HSRs in schools, noting that workplaces with trained HSRs are often better at identifying concerns early and supporting safer working environments.

All staff can raise issues with their HSR, contribute ideas and participate in discussions about workplace safety and wellbeing.

An HSR may identify hazards or systems of work that might otherwise go unnoticed or become part of the accepted norm. This may include

workload pressures, psychosocial risks, inadequate facilities, fatigue or issues arising during demanding periods such as reporting, camps or staffing shortages.

Many work health and safety risks are easier to address when they are raised early.

SafeWork NSW's *Managing the risk of fatigue at work – Code of Practice* recognises that fatigue is more than simply feeling tired. It can affect concentration, communication, judgement and emotional regulation.

School staff can find themselves working long hours, leading to a risk of fatigue, which is just as hazardous as the more obvious trips, slips and falls.

### Consultation is crucial

SafeWork NSW emphasises that consultation is an important part of workplace health and safety. Meaningful consultation involves employers listening to staff and considering their experiences when workplace health and safety decisions are being made.

An HSR can support this process by representing staff perspectives, identifying potential hazards and requesting health and safety measures are implemented before an incident occurs. Healthy schools rely on healthy staff.

Electing an HSR or HSC is a formal process. They then become a practical support that assists schools identify risks, encourage consultation and contribute to safer and more sustainable workplaces for everyone.

Contact your IEU organiser for further information.

## Workload

# Teachers need time for report writing

Denise McHugh  
Deputy President



## Report writing is important. It is one of the ways we communicate with families about student progress, growth and areas for development.

Done well, report writing requires careful thought, professional judgement and a deep understanding of each student as an individual.

The expectation is not just to complete reports, but to write meaningful, personalised comments for every student, often within tight timeframes and increasingly standardised formats.

Teachers are asked to balance authenticity with consistency, individual insight with system requirements.

While report writing is predictable and cyclical, it can still be overwhelming. It is

meticulous work. It is also time intensive.

Alongside writing reports, the rest of the job of a teacher does not stop.

Classes still need to be taught, lessons planned, students supported and the daily demands of school life continue as usual.

### Increasing demands

Over time, report writing has become more complex. Templates, data alignment, outcomes, moderation, layers of review – each addition may seem reasonable in isolation. Together, they create a workload that is increasingly difficult to sustain.

Report writing is challenging because it doesn't come with a dedicated allowance of time.

So teachers do what they always do. They make it work. They stay back. They take it home. They care about getting it right. But care should not be the system's safety net.

If we are serious about high-quality

reporting, we must be equally serious about workloads.

### Collective voice counts

This is where our collective voice matters.

The IEU consistently raises workloads as a central issue. This is not complaining – it is a professional concern about sustainability, quality and the future of teaching.

Report writing is a clear example of where expectations and conditions are out of balance.

The union continues to call on school employers to engage with staff, listen to their experience and commit to genuine, dedicated time for teachers to write student reports.

When excessive workloads are addressed, it is not just teachers who benefit, but students and families as well.

# Why workplace flexibility is a win for all

Liz Heggart

Vice President Catholic Systemic Dioceses



## A recent post on the Australian Association for Research in Education's (AARE) website entitled *Heavy hours: What we know now about why women leave teaching shines a light on the ever-growing pressures on working mothers, particularly in schools.*

This is why the union pushes for workplace flexibility for all members.

When unions won parental leave for both the initial and non-initial primary caregiver, it was a major progressive step for working families.

### State of play

Women comprise about 78% of the teaching workforce, according to a 2025 report by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership.

At the same time, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that while caregiving responsibilities are becoming more shared, women still do most of this unpaid work.

The AARE report tells us that "the structure of teaching work continues to assume an 'ideal worker' who is unencumbered by caring responsibilities, able to work long and inflexible hours, and be available beyond the school day".

The stark contrast between this unspoken expectation and the reality for teachers with

children is why we are seeing more experienced women teachers leaving the profession.

Women should not have to compromise on career progression because of caring responsibilities. Nor should they feel pressured to return to full-time work before they're ready.

### Flexibility clause is crucial

While the community may see teaching as a family-friendly job, many women with children find it challenging to juggle their work responsibilities with family commitments.

This is why the right to request flexible working arrangements under the National Employment Standards is vital.

This was reinforced by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) in a decision last year.

After a period of parental leave, an IEU member had asked to return to her Coordinator role three days a week on a temporary basis because of her childcare arrangements.

The employer refused this request and advised the member that, if she wished to work part-time, she could only return to a part-time teacher role.

The FWC initially found in favour of the employer, but then the Full Bench of the FWC overturned it on the basis that the employer had not considered the consequences for the employee of refusing her request. This is required by the *Fair Work Act*.

This decision makes clear that the employer must properly consider the impact on employees, usually women, in refusing an application for flexible work.

### Supporting members

The union is committed to supporting members in making requests for flexible work arrangements.

The union notes some schools have applied the flexible work request clause inconsistently.

If you need advice about making a request for a flexible work arrangement, or responding to an employer's decision that may not accommodate your caring responsibilities, contact your IEU organiser.

Non-initial primary caregivers can also request flexible work – this is one way of rebalancing caring responsibilities within families.

### Looking ahead

There is still more work to be done. Memes abound on social media advising women to "work as if you don't have kids and parent as if you don't work".

The teaching profession as a whole suffers when employers fail to recognise the needs of working parents.

If we look after teachers who have caring responsibilities, everyone will benefit.

# Teachers' voices

## Union meets decision makers

**Carol Matthews**  
Secretary



**The IEU joined other unions on 22 April for a meeting with NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe at Parliament House.**

At the meeting of union secretaries, Sharpe outlined the NSW government's climate agenda, noting that the state's commitments are now embedded in the *Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023*.

She reiterated the legislated targets: a 50 per cent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2030; a 70 per cent reduction by 2035; and net zero by 2050.

### Energy transition

Sharpe also highlighted the role of the independent Net Zero Commission, established to monitor and report on progress and to provide expert advice on the state's transition.

Sharpe said the state government intends to release a comprehensive Net Zero Plan by the end of the year. This plan is expected to outline strategies across major sectors, including waste, transport, manufacturing and energy, reflecting the scale of the economic and social transformation required.

Union secretaries used the meeting to raise practical considerations for workers and communities. They discussed the support needed for industries undergoing rapid change, the importance of planning for workforce transitions and the need for government

policies that ensure no community is left behind.

Suggestions ranged from targeted training programs to investment in regional job creation, all aimed at ensuring the transition to a low emissions economy is both fair and effective.

### Key issues affecting teachers

IEU representatives also met with NSW Shadow Education Minister Mark Speakman on 22 April to discuss the Liberal Party's approach to key issues affecting teachers.

The union emphasised ongoing concerns about workload, the administrative burden on teachers and the impact of excessive compliance requirements.

The union also raised the issue of exemptions in NSW anti-discrimination law that enable non-government educational authorities to discriminate on a broad range of attributes including gender, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity and marital status. The union has recently reaffirmed its long-running campaign to have these exemptions scrapped.

The union noted these exemptions are broader than those in other states and at the federal level and asked that the Opposition consider supporting their removal. The NSW Law Reform Commission is currently reviewing the *Anti-Discrimination Act*.

Across both meetings, the union's aim was clear: to ensure the voices of teachers and school staff are heard as major policy decisions take shape, whether in climate change and energy transition planning or education reform.

# STOP PRESS

## Annual wage decision delivered

**The Fair Work Commission (FWC) handed down its annual wage review decision on 2 June, increasing minimum award pay rates by 4.75% from 1 July.**

This decision applies to about 20 per cent of all employees in Australia who are on modern awards, or about 2.8 million low-paid workers.

This decision is of critical importance to IEU members who are covered by modern awards. The awards set minimum industry pay rates.

There is also a small cohort of about 100,000 working people who are not covered by an award or an enterprise agreement who are paid the minimum wage. The FWC increased this by 5.97% to \$26.44 per hour (up from \$24.95), or \$1004.90 per week (up from \$948), based on a full-time 38-hour week.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus said: "This is a positive real wage increase, and it will provide some buffer against the worst impacts of the Trump war."

### Paid parental leave

This decision also benefits members who will access the federal government's paid parental leave scheme, which is paid at the rate of the minimum wage.

As above, this means the federal government's paid parental leave scheme will increase from \$948.10 a week to \$1004.90 a week. From 1 July, this scheme will also expand from 24 weeks to 26 weeks.

The federal government pays superannuation on top of this scheme.

### Union agreements better than awards

Strong IEU membership ensures the vast majority of members are covered by union-negotiated agreements that provide higher salaries and better conditions.

### Upcoming gains

IEU members will receive the following gains from 1 July:

- superannuation must be paid on pay day (not quarterly)
- 3% pay rise for support staff in Catholic systemic schools (excluding the Broken Bay diocese, where support staff will receive a 3% pay rise in October).

For more details, see the next edition of *Newsmonth*, out in July.

## Right to disconnect

# Practical measures matter

**Patrick Devery**  
Assistant Secretary



**The IEU is calling for the right to disconnect to be strengthened and normalised across non-government schools.**

The legislation is in place, and there are simple ways that members can ensure its protections are embedded in day-to-day practice. This makes it much harder for any future government or employer to weaken or wind back the new right.

### Staff deserve genuine downtime

The right to disconnect was introduced as part of the Closing Loopholes legislation in 2024.

The reforms recognised what IEU members have known for years: work should not be allowed to spill endlessly into home life. Teachers and support staff deserve genuine downtime, free from the pressure of constant emails, notifications and after-hours demands.

While many employers publicly support the legislation, there is still work to do to ensure the right to disconnect is embedded in workplace practice rather than remaining simply a statement of good intentions.

A growing number of schools now configure email systems so that messages sent outside normal working hours automatically generate a response such as:

*"Thank you for your email. Please note staff are not expected to check or respond to emails outside regular working hours. Your message has been received and will be attended to as soon as practicable during business hours."*

Other schools use similar wording that reinforces healthy work-life balance. Automated replies make it clear that school staff are not expected to monitor emails in their own time.

This is a positive and practical step forward. It sends an important message

to parents, students, staff and the broader community that schools are not 24-hour customer service centres.

The IEU encourages members to raise this issue with principals and employers and request their school adopt a similar system if one is not already in place.

### Scheduling matters

Members are reporting another encouraging shift in workplace culture.

Colleagues – particularly in leadership positions – are including disclaimers at the bottom of after-hours emails, especially on weekends.

These messages usually acknowledge that the email has been sent outside normal hours and that no response is expected until staff return to work.

While this is preferable to the implied expectation that staff are always available, it does not fully solve the problem.

Teachers may see these emails while checking their phones and spend the rest of the evening or weekend worrying about what they've just read.

A solution for school leaders is to make greater use of the scheduled-send function in most email applications, so emails only arrive during working hours. This simple change can reduce stress and help create healthier workplace boundaries.

### Protecting the reform

The right to disconnect is an important cultural and industrial shift – but will only remain meaningful if it is implemented and defended.

The IEU believes these protections should be firmly embedded in both workplace practice and community expectations so they cannot easily be weakened or wound back in the future.

Small practical measures, such as automatic email replies and scheduled sending, are helping to build that culture now.

Changing legislation matters. Changing workplace habits matters just as much.

# Sub branch meetings

## Shaping the union's agenda

**Therese Fitzgibbon**  
Assistant Secretary



**Many members may not know much about IEU sub branch meetings, which take place each term. Here are five reasons to come along to your local sub branch meeting.**

### 1. Sub branches help shape union priorities

Sub branch meetings are an important way the union identifies where to focus its time, energy and resources.

We rely on workplace reps and members to tell us what matters most in their schools, and the challenges having the greatest impact on members.

I attended many sub branch meetings in Term 2, where reps and members raised increasing workload expectations, poor student behaviour, gender-based harassment, and work health and safety issues.

These discussions keep reps and IEU staff connected and focused on the priorities of members.

### 2. Stay informed about what is happening in your sector

Sub branch meetings are a great way to keep up to date with the latest workplace, industrial and professional issues affecting education staff.

Reps can find out about matters that are important to chapters, such as campaigns or bargaining, as well as feedback on government and employer initiatives that impact your work.

Hearing about issues or disputes in other schools can also provide practical strategies and new approaches to workplace challenges.

### 3. Connect with other reps and members

Union reps may sometimes feel like they're alone. Meeting other reps who share an interest in workplace rights and union activity provides an important opportunity to share experiences and exchange ideas.

The connections formed through sub branch meetings help build confidence and strengthen the collective voice of members across schools and sectors.

Reps value the camaraderie and support that exists at sub branch meetings.

### 4. Sub branch delegates to IEU Council

Sub branches elect delegates to Council to represent members in their geographical area. Council is the IEU's ultimate governing and decision-making body.

It is pleasing to note that in the Council elections that have just concluded, the representation of sub branches at Council is strong. We congratulate all new and returning delegates and look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meeting in June.

### 5. Spend time with colleagues in a relaxed environment

Joining colleagues for a meal gives reps and members the opportunity to continue conversations, build connections and discuss issues relevant to their workplaces in a more informal setting.

These conversations are often where valuable ideas are shared and lasting networks are formed.

### Greater participation welcome

The union welcomed more reps and members attending sub branch meetings this term.

It is particularly pleasing to see strong representation from all sectors of the union, including Catholic systemic schools, Catholic independent schools, independent schools, Christian schools, early childhood education and student members.

We continue to see the benefits that arise when reps and members come together, support each other, and share ideas and experiences across the union.

Look out for your local sub branch meeting in Term 3. Meeting dates can be found on our website. We hope to see you there.

### More information

Read Term 2 sub branch reports: pages 16-18



**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.



## 2026 federal budget **Vital support for essential workers**

**The 2026 federal budget delivered timely support to IEU members and their families dealing with cost-of-living pressures and soaring housing costs.**

However, it offers few new commitments for a continued program of education reform.

Our union will continue to campaign for the additional resources and support needed to underpin high-quality education in every school and early childhood education service.

### **Focus on housing costs**

The budget rightly focused on housing affordability, introducing new housing and tax measures aimed at restoring fairness.

Teachers, support staff and the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce are at the centre of this generational challenge, often unable to live and work in their local community.

While IEU members continue to win wage increases across the country, prices are rising faster.

Essential workers are being locked out of home ownership or squeezed by high rents. It will take a graduate teacher more than 20 years just to save for a 20% house deposit.

This is why the IEU is part of a national union campaign for fair and secure housing. The budget measures mark an important step towards rebalancing fairness in the housing system.

### **Missed reform opportunities**

The ECEC Worker Retention Payment, which supports higher wages for around 200,000 workers, is due to expire this year, yet the budget failed to confirm the funding needed to continue the program.

This is now an incredibly urgent priority for the sector. The payments must be extended to maintain workforce stability and support high-quality early education.

The budget also missed an opportunity to build on the education reforms and positive changes introduced over the past four years by the Albanese Labor government.

For years, the IEU campaigned for paid student teacher practicums and the introduction of payments in 2024 were groundbreaking, but they need to be increased.

The regional and remote HELP debt relief, championed by IEU members in a recent parliamentary review, should be expanded to support more teachers in more regional locations.

School employers have primary responsibility for managing teacher workload, yet the federal government can play a stronger leadership role.

Practical measures under the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan should be revisited and updated to ensure a consistent national effort to address the most pressing problem in school workplaces.

**Brad Hayes** IEUA Federal Secretary

## **NCCD compliance** Employers must correct wrong advice

**The IEU has serious concerns with correspondence issued by non-government school employers claiming that new Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) compliance requirements have been introduced.**

The compliance obligations for the 2026 NCCD census are unchanged.

### **Employer advice wrong**

Advice circulated by employers across multiple schools and jurisdictions incorrectly asserts that the federal Education Department has implemented changes to NCCD evidentiary requirements.

These communications claim the changes are effective immediately and will increase staff workloads.

The employer advice is misleading and incorrect. It has caused concern among members already managing significant workload demands.

Following discussions with senior officials from the Education Department, the IEU confirms there are no changes to compliance or evidentiary requirements for the 2026 NCCD.

In response to our concerns, the Education Department has unequivocally stated: "There are no changes to evidentiary obligations for the 2026 NCCD."

While school funding integrity reforms were announced in the federal budget, these measures are still under development and will not affect requirements for this year's NCCD Census.

Employers must urgently review any misleading NCCD advice and provide clarification to schools to address any misunderstandings. Clear and accurate communication is essential to ensure staff are not subjected to unnecessary additional workload or anxiety.

**"There are no changes to evidentiary obligations for the 2026 NCCD."**

*Federal Education Department*

### **Union advocacy**

The IEU has undertaken sustained NCCD advocacy with governments and employers in recent years, including collaboration with the federal Education Department to develop the NCCD Evidence Requirements Fact Sheet.

This initiative clarified NCCD-related work demands to eliminate excessive tasks imposed on teachers and school leaders. This vital work will continue as we strengthen workload protections for our members.

The IEU will keep members informed of further developments to reduce excessive NCCD work demands, with significant representations

currently underway between our union and key policy makers.

Any member experiencing pressure to undertake work beyond current NCCD requirements should contact the IEU for immediate advice and support.

**Brad Hayes** IEUA Federal Secretary

## **NCCD evidence requirements** Federal budget addresses workload issues

**The IEU continues to engage with the federal Education Department following the release of the jointly developed Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) Evidence Requirements Fact Sheet in 2021.**

The union consistently raises persistent NCCD-related workload issues that impact core teaching responsibilities. In particular, collaboration on an updated Fact Sheet is progressing, with the aim of releasing the revised NCCD Evidence Requirements Fact Sheet before the end of 2026.

### **New budget measures**

This year's federal budget, delivered on 12 May, contained measures related to the NCCD that aim to improve policy guidance and integrity in school funding.

These measures create an opportunity to review the evidentiary requirements that have expanded over time into workloads that are unsustainable in many schools.

The Education Department has confirmed that teachers should continue to use professional judgement – working with students and families and based on evidence – to determine reasonable adjustments that support students with disability.

The 15 May meeting in Canberra between the IEU and the Education Department covered feedback from IEU members and concerns about excessive documentation requirements.

The meeting also discussed the proportionality of evidence of adjustments – that is, the principle that schools should not collect unnecessary or disproportionate evidence.

### **Addressing teacher workloads**

As part of new budget measures, the Education Department confirmed there will be improvements in data collection and consistency as well as development of supporting resources.

The opportunity to meaningfully address teacher workloads through the review is a priority shared by the Education Department.

Joint monthly meetings will be held as part of ongoing consultation with the IEU as the review progresses toward completion later this year.

The release of the updated NCCD Evidence Fact Sheet will depend on the review's outcome. The union will keep members informed as the joint meetings commence.

**Veronica Yewdall** Assistant Federal Secretary

### **At a glance**

- Additional government funding is provided for students with disability based on evidence collected under the NCCD.
- The NCCD Evidence Requirements Fact Sheet provides guidance to schools to streamline data collection while ensuring essential evidence is available.
- The IEU developed the NCCD Fact Sheet jointly with the federal Education Department in 2021.
- Advocacy on persistent workload issues related to the NCCD is ongoing and will include consultation on reforms arising from the federal budget measure related to the NCCD.

# Model A: Vote YES

## Strong gains in new agreements

**The union has secured strong gains in pay and conditions for members in Catholic Independent Model A schools after negotiating new multi-enterprise agreements (MEAs) for teachers and support staff.**

Voting on the agreements was underway as *Newsmonth* went to press. Members will be updated on the results of the ballots as soon as they become known.

The agreements will deliver pay rises and allowance increases of 10.5% over the next three years, as well as improvements to parental leave and workload transparency. Support staff will also gain better conditions.

Teachers and support staff are set to receive the following pay rises:

- 3.75% pay increase from February 2026
- 3.5% pay increase from February 2027
- 3.25% pay increase from February 2028.

The first increase of 3.75% will be backpaid to February 2026 once the MEAs are approved by the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

### Wins for all

In addition to the pay increases, the union negotiated improved conditions.

Both teachers and support staff will receive 12 weeks of paid non-initial primary carer's leave, superannuation on paid parental leave and two days of paid cultural and ceremonial leave for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees.

Other major wins in this bargaining round for teachers and support staff include:

### Teachers

- a unique but competitive six-step classification structure, including two additional steps in Band 2, while retaining the existing Band 3 classification arrangements
- earlier progression to Band 3 once eligibility criteria are met, rather than having to wait until the following February
- a workload transparency clause requiring schools to advise teachers of workload expectations on appointment and from time to time
- retention of 14 weeks of paid parental leave exclusive of non-term time for teachers thanks to the continued pressure of members
- a new Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher allowance recognising teachers with higher levels of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) accreditation.

### Support staff

- coverage of the MEA broadened to include counsellors and psychologists
- alignment of the personal leave evidence requirements with teachers, making the requirements fairer and less onerous
- retention of competitive pay rates and classification structures compared to other sectors.

If members vote in favour of the MEAs, they will be submitted to the FWC for formal approval. Once approved, the new pay rates, entitlements and conditions will take effect, and many members will also receive back pay.

The union could only achieve these wins with the active engagement and support of members throughout the bargaining process. We are always stronger together.

We congratulate our members in Model A schools for their strength and solidarity that will lead to strong improvements in pay and conditions.

**Nadia Gubbay-Nemes** Industrial officer



## Models B and C

### Consultations begin

**IEU organisers will begin visiting Catholic Independent Model B and Model C schools to consult with members ahead of negotiations for new enterprise agreements.**

These visits will help ensure that members' priorities for better pay and conditions are fully represented when bargaining begins.

Employees covered by an enterprise agreement must be better off overall than they would be under the relevant award.

This means that an agreement negotiated by the union consistently delivers better conditions and entitlements for employees.

To find out more about the bargaining process, contact your rep or organiser.

### Model B schools

- Chevalier College, Burradoo
- Oakhill College, Castle Hill
- Rosebank College, Five Dock
- St Augustine's College, Brookvale
- St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong
- St Patrick's College, Campbelltown
- St Gregory's College, Campbelltown
- Christian Brothers' High School, Lewisham
- Edmund Rice College, West Wollongong
- Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre, Pambula
- St Dominic's College, Penrith
- St Edmund's College, Wahroonga
- St Edward's College, East Gosford
- St Gabriel's School, Castle Hill
- St Laurence Flexible Learning Centre, Broadmeadow
- St Marys Flexible Learning Centre, St Marys
- St Patrick's College, Strathfield
- St Pius X College, Chatswood
- Waverley College, Waverley
- Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre, Towradgi

### Model C schools

- Dunlea Centre, Engadine
- Holy Saviour School, Greenacre
- Maronite College of the Holy Family, Harris Park
- Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes
- St Charbel's College, Punchbowl
- St Maroun's College, Marrickville
- St Paul's International College, Moss Vale
- The John Berne School, Lewisham
- Trinity Catholic College, Lismore



Above and right, mourners place tributes to loved ones who have lost their lives at work. Top right, NSW Premier Chris Minns addresses the ceremony; bottom right, mourners lay flowers.



## International Day of Mourning 2026

**On International Workers Memorial Day, the IEU joined calls to better protect working people through stronger workplace safety measures.**

On 28 April, the IEU attended the annual International Day of Mourning ceremony in Sydney alongside the NSW Premier, other unions and the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives at work or because of a work-related illness.

Data from Safe Work Australia shows there were 180 workplace fatalities in 2025, compared with 188 in 2024.

### Lives changed forever

Linda Moussa, a former teacher and IEU member, lost her husband, Iremar Da Silva, when he fell on a residential construction site in 2016.

"The day Iremar didn't come home changed our lives forever," Linda said at the ceremony.

"We were shocked, and then we were consumed with grief and uncertainty.

"There are no words for the pain of losing someone you love so deeply, someone you thought you'd be with for the rest of your life, but there are other consequences too," she said.

"Our son couldn't finish his HSC. I had to leave my teaching job to handle the aftermath of the incident."

Linda said her husband died in a preventable accident.

"Workplace safety needs to be a priority, and it has to be consistent," she said.

"Small safety breaches can snowball into bigger problems. Everything needs to be addressed, no matter how small it seems."

### Union workplaces safer

NSW Premier Chris Minns paid respects to two miners, Patrick Ambrose McMullen and Holly Clarke, who lost their lives at work in Cobar in 2025.

"Every workplace death is a tragedy," he said.

Despite great progress in safety, Minns said, "there are still millions of people in our country doing arduous, sometimes dangerous, and often difficult work".

He acknowledged the role of unions in advocating for safety.

"The truth is, the most effective defence we have against workplace accidents is a trade union that has a worker's back and that puts safety over profits – and more importantly, that has the power to step in when something unsafe is happening," he said.

### More work to be done

Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey said all workers have a right to come home safely, and all families have the right for their loved ones to return home.

"We must not forget today that most, if not all, workplace deaths and illnesses are preventable," Morey said.

"The support of all political parties is required to ensure and continue improving workplace safety in NSW.

"Workplace safety has to be bigger than politics and the drive for profits.

"We continue to work with government and call on all political parties to be brave and support reforms which improve safety."

## Present tense

# Union wins

### Agreements deliver pay rises for members

**The IEU advocates for better pay and conditions for members in the post-secondary and English-language college (ELICOS) sector, with a strong focus on negotiating enterprise agreements.**

These agreements must deliver pay and conditions that exceed those set out in the underlying award.

#### Taylor's College

Teachers at Taylor's College in May voted in favour of a union-negotiated agreement.

The new agreement provides for pay rises of 3% in July 2025 and again in July 2026, as well as an improved disputes provision.

#### WSU The College

The union is close to finalising negotiations with WSU The College, with the employer putting forward a pay offer that members are likely to accept.

The new agreement is likely to include a pay rise of 3.25% backdated to July 2025.

It will also provide annual 3.5% pay rises from July 2026 to July 2029.

#### Other negotiations

The union has begun negotiations with WSU The College's subsidiary, International College. Negotiations will also begin soon with UNSW College.

Enterprise agreements must include provisions that are superior to the award.

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

To find out more how this might work at your college, contact the IEU.

#### Award increases

Many employees in the post-secondary sector are employed under the Educational Services (Post-Secondary Education) Award.

Pay rates set by awards are adjusted in line with the annual wage review conducted by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) and take effect on 1 July.

The FWC on 2 June announced a 4.75% increase to the minimum award wage.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported an annual inflation rate of 4.2% in April, down from 4.6% in March.

Union-negotiated agreements deliver pay and conditions that exceed those set out in the modern award, which sets minimum salary and conditions.

#### Freeze on new courses

The federal government in May announced a 12-month freeze on new private vocational education and training (VET) and English-language (ELICOS) providers offering courses to international students.

The freeze does not affect government schools, TAFE and Australia's major public universities or providers already approved to teach international students.

International Education Assistant Minister Julian Hill said the pause on new courses was designed to protect Australia's reputation as a provider of high-quality education.

"[It] will allow the government to address integrity concerns about new market entrants and over-saturation in the international VET and ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) sectors," he told the ABC.

The 12-month freeze follows the imposition of caps on the number of students and hikes in visa fees.

**Kendall Warren** Organiser

## May Day Unionists rally to celebrate hard-won rights

**May Day recognises the history of working people organising and fighting to achieve a better way of life that includes decent pay and working conditions.**

Every year, May Day stands as a powerful reminder of the hard-won rights we now enjoy, such as the eight-hour work day, fair wages and safer working conditions – all achieved through collective action and solidarity.

IEU members joined May Day events this year in Newcastle, Canberra and Wollongong as well as a Family Fun Day in Parramatta on 3 May.

#### Newcastle

IEU members joined unionists and supporters at the May Day Parade and Solidarity Carnival in Newcastle on 3 May.

Australian Council of Trade Unions president Michele O'Neil told the crowd that May Day was a call to action to never give up the fight for workers' rights.

"We've never had a gift from the bosses," she said. "Every single time we've advanced workers' rights, it's because we stood together and fought for them."

O'Neil also reminded the crowd of the

challenges working people face. These include unpaid overtime, insufficient pay rises and an unfair tax system that favours the wealthy.

"We're fighting for a four-day week in a whole lot of industries and sectors," she said. "For five weeks annual leave so workers actually get proper time off to recover, for flexible shifts and for roster justice."

#### Canberra

Canberra's May Day rally drew a strong crowd and delivered a clear, united message: ACT government workers deserve a pay rise.

Union members from across the movement gathered in the sunshine, marching together in a powerful display of collective action.

The rally had real energy and solidarity, with a focus on supporting public sector workers and valuing the people who keep the ACT running.

As UnionsACT president and Community and Public Sector Union ACT Regional Secretary Maddy Northam put it, "the government needs to stop faffing about and give workers a pay offer that keeps up with the cost of living".

The IEU stood in solidarity with Australian

Education Union members, who finalised their vote in a Protected Action Ballot Order on May Day.

In a show of unity, teaching staff and school assistants in ACT government schools voted overwhelmingly in support of industrial action.

#### Wollongong

More than 500 people attended Wollongong's May Day rally on 1 May to hear guest speaker, former Maritime Union of Australia national secretary Paddy Crumlin, deliver an impassioned address on the importance of unionism in pursuing peace in a world shaped by the greed of an elite few.

IEU organiser Emily Cranney also spoke at the rally, highlighting the IEU's Start Strong, Pay Fair campaign for pay rises in community preschools.

When she detailed the stark pay disparities between preschool teachers and primary school teachers, and the NSW government's continued inaction on boosting funding for the community preschool sector, the crowd erupted in a loud and unified call of "Shame!"



IEU members and friends join the May Day rally in Newcastle on 3 May.

## Reconciliation Week Time to listen to the truth

**Australia does not suffer from a lack of truth-telling about the devastating impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.**

From 19th-century newspaper accounts of massacres to royal commissions into deaths in custody and the stolen generations, the "truth of this country has been told and told and told again", said Blake Alan Cansdale (pictured).

"Truth is not hiding from Australia, rather Australia has been hiding from the truth."

#### The Great Australian Silence

A lawyer and national director of advocacy group ANTAR, Cansdale delivered the keynote speech as part of *Truth-listening: Readyng Australia for truth* held at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) during Reconciliation Week in May.

This failure to listen to the truth being repeatedly told was identified more than 50 years ago by anthropologist W E H Stanner, who coined the term "The Great Australian Silence".

"He did not mean that no truth had ever been told in Australia's black history," Cansdale said.

"We have conveniently developed a collective amnesia in respect of our recognition of the blood, sweat and tears that it took to build the contemporary Australian nation.

"The Great Australian Silence is not benign, nor is it accidental. It is violent, it is deliberate, and it is a silence of a country that's decided time and again that the comfortability of its own self-image matters more than affording truth, justice and equity to its people."

#### Truth-listening

Cansdale said breaking this silence requires "truth-listening", which means more than polite head nodding.

"It certainly can't be about the passive absorption of words without taking on the emotional underpinnings of those words," he said.

"Truth-listening is less about receiving the written or spoken word. It's more about how we store, how we reflect on and how we ultimately use truth to influence our behaviors and our actions."

Cansdale said too few Australians were prepared to "engage in genuine truth because it comes with conditions and it requires something of the listener".

"It often costs them something too," he said.

However, Cansdale said this seemed like a small price to pay given the "benefits that have flowed to non-Indigenous Australians from the business of dispossession".

Cansdale said truth-listening required, as

Professor Robynne Quiggin AO said, "non-Indigenous people to be open to complexity and uncertainty, and to accept discomfort as a norm".

Cansdale also distinguished between allies, who "matter immensely" but whose support has a ceiling, and accomplices who are prepared to "get their hands dirty".

"They're in it for the long haul, regardless of the personal or professional cost," he said.

#### Supporting teachers

Cansdale's speech was followed by a panel discussion featuring UTS Chancellor and Reconciliation Australia co-chairman Michael Rose, UTS industry professor Lorena Allam and UTS history professor Anna Clark.

Clark, who created the *Hey History!* podcast for primary schools, said an idea had developed that history should exclusively instil national pride and "uncomfortable stories should be curated out of children's education".

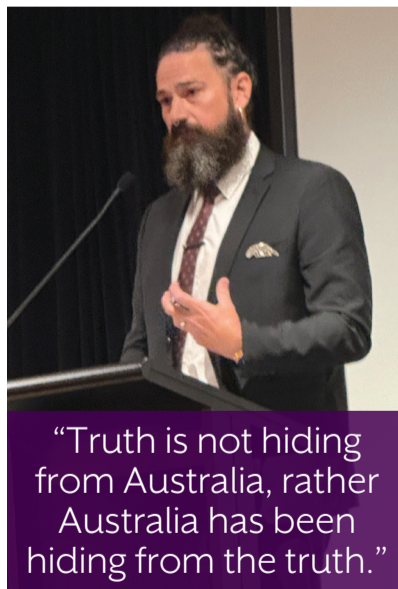
"You can feel proud to be Australian and understand that history is difficult, and it has uncomfortable truths," she said. "Kids absolutely get that."

"I think the key is how do we help teachers feel strong and confident enough to teach that difficult history?"

Clark said teachers were crucial to the concept of truth-listening.

Since it was not possible to have an Indigenous person in every classroom, she encouraged teachers to embrace their role in teaching the truth of Australian history.

"You might be afraid that you'll say the wrong thing or you might not use the right words, and you might be sort of muddling your way through," she said. "But the alternative is silence."





Aspect teachers and teacher aides met with the IEU in Wagga Wagga to amplify their call for fair pay for teacher aides.

## Respect@Aspect

### Fighting for better pay and conditions

**The union is pushing for better pay and conditions for members employed by Aspect, who continue to raise serious work health and safety concerns.**

Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia) is a large autism-specific services provider.

It operates schools across NSW as well as employing staff to work in satellite classes attached to government and non-government schools.

#### Unfair pay

IEU members employed as Aspect teacher aides say their work is both challenging and deeply rewarding. But they are frustrated by unfair pay and serious safety issues as IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary David Towson explained in a letter to Aspect in May.

“Our members are still frustrated by the significant pay disparity between aides employed at Aspect and aides working in schools operated by the NSW government and Catholic school employers,” he said.

“They do not accept that the benefits of salary packaging compensate for this disparity.”

Under the Independent Schools NSW (Professional and Operational Staff) Multi-Enterprise Agreement (MEA), Aspect teacher aides are paid about 14% less than their counterparts in NSW government schools and Catholic systemic schools.

The annual full-time rate for an Aspect teacher aide is about \$10,000 less than the full-time rate for their counterparts in Catholic systemic and government schools.

Towson said teacher aides appreciate they receive a higher personal leave entitlement than the MEA stipulates.

“They are also aware that support staff in Catholic and NSW public schools have access to 15 days sick leave so we do not accept this as a factor in defending the wage disparity between the sectors,” he said.

“Our members have requested that we continue to advocate for higher and fairer rates of pay.”

“Our members are still frustrated by the significant pay disparity.”

#### Classification levels

Towson noted in his letter that Aspect will consult with teacher aides in 2026 to address classification levels.

He said the union is seeking to clarify Aspect’s position on the payment of higher duties to employees who undertake this responsibility for less than a day, for example two hours RFF.

“Members hold a strong view that all hours of higher duties should be paid,” he said.

“Members are concerned that reclassifying a limited number of qualified and experienced teacher aides into senior roles will not address concerns equitably.”

#### Work health and safety

Aspect has committed to taking its work health and safety (WHS) responsibilities seriously.

Towson said the employer had also confirmed that teacher aides are not required to complete incident reports or perform other duties in non-term time.

“Members continue to raise WHS concerns with the IEU, and we seek further discussion with Aspect in addressing these concerns,” he said.

#### Consultative committee

Towson welcomed the formation of a teacher aide consultative committee and the employer’s invitation to the union to engage with this committee.

“It is positive to note that the employer will work with our members to address their ongoing concerns,” he said.

Early Education and Care Commission

# Union seat at table crucial

**Federal Education Minister Jason Clare and Early Childhood Education Minister Jess Walsh in May said the Albanese government will work with state and territory governments to consider establishing a new national Early Education and Care Commission.**

“A commission could help ensure early learning services are located where families need them most, while supporting strong standards across the sector,” Walsh said.

“It’s important we get this right – and that’s why we’ll be consulting with the sector and other stakeholders on the best way forward.”

This proposal aligns with recommendations from the Productivity Commission’s 2024 inquiry into universal early childhood education and care, many of which the government has already begun implementing.

The federal government will also examine the role of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority in the design of any future commission.

#### Sector faces challenges

The challenges the early childhood sector is facing are well known.

Workforce shortages, pay inequity, barriers to accessing training and excessive workloads continue to place enormous pressure on teachers and educators.

Recent revelations of serious failures in child safety have been devastating for the overwhelming majority of dedicated professionals in the sector and have underscored the urgent need for a coordinated national approach.

The consideration of the commission presents an important opportunity to refocus efforts on better supporting and prioritising non-profit community services.

#### Meaningful consultation required

High-quality early childhood education is increasingly incompatible with profit-driven models, which too often fail to meet regulatory standards or provide the wages and conditions necessary for a stable, skilled workforce. The effectiveness of any national body will depend on meaningful consultation with those who work directly with children every day.

It must also prioritise reducing duplication and excessive compliance workloads, while lifting public recognition of the early childhood profession and affirming the status of early childhood employees as highly skilled professionals.

The announcement commits to broad consultation with the sector, including unions. The IEU looks forward to engaging constructively in this process to ensure any future commission strengthens the workforce and delivers safe, high-quality education and care for all children.

**Brad Hayes** IEUA Federal Secretary

## Inquiry urges NSW government to fund preschool pay rises

**A NSW parliamentary inquiry has recommended that the state government fully fund community preschools to deliver fair pay and conditions for teachers and educators.**

The NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care report said the state government should work with the IEU, employer group Community Early Learning Australia and the United Workers Union to “address workforce attraction and retention challenges”.

The inquiry also recommended the NSW government introduce pay parity for early childhood teachers and educators with school teachers “as a matter of priority”.

#### Funding boost crucial

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary David Towson said the report, tabled in the NSW Parliament in May, stated what the union and its members already know.

“A funding boost for community preschools is urgently needed so teachers and educators are paid fairly for providing high-quality education to children aged 3-to-5,” he said.

IEU preschool teacher members and officials gave evidence at the inquiry in August and September last year about serious staffing shortages that put children at risk.

Teachers and educators are leaving the sector at unprecedented rates due to stress and burnout arising from excessive workloads.

“Our members have been campaigning for two years now – they have rallied twice in Sydney and regional centres calling on

the NSW government to solve this crisis with increased funding,” Towson said.

“There is a systemic, gender-based undervaluation of this highly feminised workforce. To start addressing this, community preschool staff need a 15% pay rise.”

The inquiry’s report reinforces the Fair Work Commission’s recommendation in February this year that the NSW government review and increase funding for community preschools to improve pay and conditions for teachers and educators.

“The industrial umpire has spoken, and now the Parliament has too,” Towson said.

“We urge the NSW government to listen to both recommendations for increased funding to fix acute staff shortages caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community preschools.”

Towson spoke to media including ABC Sydney about the inquiry report, which backed the union’s long-running campaign for pay rises for community preschool teachers and educators.

“Ninety-five per cent of teachers and educators are female, and the gender disparity in the pay rates here, it’s dreadful,” he said. “It should’ve been addressed a long time ago.”

#### Safety must come first

Pay rises for community preschool teachers and educators was one of several recommendations contained in the inquiry’s report, which was scathing about the sector’s safety failures and poor regulation.

See also pages 1, 10-11.

2026 IEU Environment Conference

# Wild Learning

at Taronga Zoo



**When** Friday 7 August 2026, 9am to 3pm  
**Where** Taronga Zoo, Sydney  
**Cost** Members \$100 / Non-members \$150 (includes morning tea and lunch from Kalico Indigenous Catering)

Join fellow IEU members at Taronga Zoo for a day of Wild Learning.

This event is a unique and engaging professional learning experience that will help you get your students outdoors and reconnecting purposefully with nature.

Discover ways to nurture curiosity, critical thinking, creativity and care for the natural world through meaningful, student-centred learning.

Whether you are an early childhood, primary or secondary teacher, Wild Learning offers meaningful ideas you can take back to your classroom.

**Book today! Strictly limited to 50 participants. Scan the QR code below.**

## Highlights

- Explore nature journaling, enrichment design, real-world problem solving, practical methods for guiding students to collect, sort, record and analyse real data, and fostering a deeper understanding of innovation in the natural world.
- Learn practical strategies to inspire students to think like designers, scientists, and conservation problem-solvers.
- Build your confidence in outdoor learning to empower students to appreciate, understand and protect the natural world.
- Gain knowledge, strategies and classroom resources to guide students in designing solutions that support animal behaviour, welfare and wellbeing.
- Leave equipped with fieldwork methods, classroom activities, and the knowledge to help students collect and interpret data that connects them deeply to the natural world.

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

Scan here  
to book



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Continued from page 1

## Classroom behaviour

Union welcomes more support for teachers



Managing disruptive behaviour can be challenging. Classroom management is one of the most demanding parts of a teacher's job, especially for those in the early stages of their career.

The need to respond to a complex combination of behavioural, cultural, language, medical and learning needs adds more time pressure on teaching the curriculum.

When staff are not provided with adequate support, classroom complexity adds to workload pressures. It contributes to burnout and ongoing workforce retention challenges.

Strict disciplinary practices such as suspension or expulsion can also create unintended negative consequences for students.

These exclusionary approaches tend to be used disproportionately with boys, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability, and young people living in out-of-home care.

### Adequate staffing essential

The IEU has consistently called for more support for school staff to help manage growing classroom complexity and challenging student behaviours.

Teachers and support staff are deeply committed to student success, but without adequate staffing, specialist support, time and training, current demands are unsustainable.

Disciplinary issues are exacerbated by large class sizes and staff shortages. This makes it harder for teachers to maintain consistent behaviour management and provide individual attention to students.

As behaviour problems rise, teachers face heavier workloads through extra supervision, documentation, parent communication and follow-up interventions.

This is why the IEU has successfully campaigned for class size protections in many Work Practices Agreements. But there is still more to be done.

### Must not add to workload

Additional classroom behaviour tools will be welcome in many schools given the impact of disruptive behaviour on both students and teachers.

But new resources or initiatives must be mindful of unintended consequences on workload.

Preparation tasks, data collection requirements or professional development needed to implement new programs must be accompanied by additional release time and other necessary supports for teachers.

Employers and policy makers must take every opportunity to stem the creep of administrative tasks that detract from quality teaching time.

## What members need

The union is calling for more resources to support school staff to manage growing classroom complexity.

### Support staff and teaching assistants

- fair classification and pay – accurate role classifications and wage levels that properly recognise the work value of staff supporting students with additional learning needs
- additional paid hours – guaranteed extra paid hours for part-time and term-time assistants to attend classes and activities involving students with identified support needs
- health care allowances – payment of allowances when staff are required to support students with documented health care plans
- ongoing professional development – access to high-quality, continuous training focused on learning, wellbeing and inclusion.

### Teachers and school leaders

- targeted resources and funding – guaranteed funding to ensure adequate release time and access to specialist psychological and behavioural support
- recognition of co-ordination roles – formal acknowledgement, including additional remuneration and release time, for inclusive education and learning support co-ordination
- smaller class sizes – reduced class sizes where students have identified learning or support needs
- clear safety procedures – collaboratively developed and consistently enforced protocols for staff working with students who exhibit challenging or complex behaviours.



Mawgan Davis, right, marks 10 years of membership with rep Bruce Macdonald at Nowra Anglican College.

# UNION SNAPS



Joanne McLeod celebrates 20 years of membership with rep Ali Lidbetter at Nowra Anglican College.



Katherine Clynych, centre, marks 20 years of IEU membership with IEU Deputy President Denise McHugh, left, and organiser Sue McKay.



Joe Russo celebrates 30 years of IEU membership with rep Gemma Baldwin at St Ursula's College in Kingsgrove.



Hannah Mathew with her 10-year membership certificate at Christ Church Gladesville Preschool.



Andrew Barrs celebrates 30 years of IEU membership with rep Tanya Besic at St Francis Catholic College, Edmondson Park.



Toni McCrae, left, and Janette McFadden, right, each celebrate 30 years of IEU membership with rep Jenny Allen at St Carthage's Primary School in Lismore.



Celebrating membership milestones, from left, Kelly Farr (30 years), Murray Deeps (40 years), and Cheryl Winkler (40 years) at Holy Family Catholic Primary School in Skennars Head.



Kim O'Kane marks 20 years of IEU membership at St Aidan's Catholic Primary School in Maroubra.



Loretta Iffland, left, celebrates 20 years of IEU membership, and Robyn Kelly celebrates 30 years at St Vincent's College in Ashfield.



Fabian Byers, left, celebrates a proud 40 years of IEU membership with rep Keith Smith at St Scholastica's College in Glebe.



Celebrating membership milestones at Brigidine College in St Ives, from left, co-rep Natalie Duffy, Victoria Boyd (10 years), co-rep Sue Gibson, and Joshua Holmes (30 years).



Members mark milestones, Sean Batman (20 years) and Sharee Hughes (10 years) at Corpus Christi Catholic High School in Oak Flats.



Rep Matthew West marks 10 years of IEU membership with organiser Emily Cranney at Nowra Christian School.



Mandy Board, left, and Helen Clarke each celebrate 30 years of IEU membership at James Sheahan Catholic High School in Orange.

# START STRONG PAY FAIR



**Shannon Cronulla Preschool**  
 "I'm here today to fight for our rights in terms of saving our community preschools and to receive the equal pay that we deserve."

**Gillian Gurrinbai Community Preschool Lake Macquarie**  
 "I'm here today to represent IEU members in community preschools to get fair pay for equal work."



**Jacki Orana Community Preschool, Wallsend**  
 "We're here to let the government know that preschool teachers need to be paid fairly."

**Kirsty Gurrinbai Community Preschool, Lake Macquarie**  
 "I'm here today to get fair pay for all the educators and teachers in the sector."



**Leah Merriwa Preschool and Activity Centre**  
 "We're here today for pay parity to bring us in line with teachers and educators in NSW public schools and to ask for fairness for the kids and our future."

**Sonya Kurri Kurri & District Preschool, Kurri Kurri**  
 "I'm proud to be here today - we need to be recognised for the important work we do for children in all ages, stages and places of learning."



**Sue Orana Community Preschool, Wallsend**  
 "We're here to support and celebrate educators and teachers and to get them a better rate of pay. We deserve it."

**Tiffany Musswellbrook Preschool Kindergarten**  
 "I am here to fight for a fair pay rise for our teachers."



This page: Members and supporters rally in Martin Place on 6 May; and Hunter Valley members get set to board the bus to attend the Sydney rally.



## COMMUNITY PRESCHOOLS PUSH FOR FAIR PAY RAMPS UP

"There is a systemic, gender-based undervaluation of this highly feminised workforce," said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary David Towson.

"To start addressing this, community preschool staff need a 15% pay rise."

Staff in community preschools earn up to 30% less a year than their counterparts in schools with similar qualifications and roles, and 15% less than their colleagues in long day care centres.

In February this year, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) recommended that the NSW government review and boost funding for community preschools to lift pay and conditions for teachers and educators.

"The umpire has spoken - we urge the NSW government to listen to the FWC's recommendation for increased funding to fix acute staff shortages caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community preschools," Towson said.

### NSW MPs speak out

Politicians from across the political spectrum also spoke at the Sydney rally.

Upper House Greens MP Abigail Boyd told the crowd that community preschool staff were chronically underpaid because the workforce is overwhelmingly female.

"This is driving a workforce crisis that threatens this vital sector," she said. "The Fair Work Commission has said the NSW government needs to fund a pay rise for these early childhood workers, but the government continues to refuse to budge."

Independent MP for Barwon Roy Butler said there were 31 community preschools in his vast electorate that covers almost half the state.

"These grassroots institutions provide care, education and a sense of community for children, giving them a great start in life," he said.

"Unfortunately, these preschools are under threat because the government has raised the pay of staff in government schools but refuses to fund a pay rise for preschool staff."

Shadow Early Education Minister Felicity Wilson said the government must address gender pay inequity in community preschools.

"We need to see our community preschools supported and invested in to ensure that they can be retained into the future," she said. "I'm so disappointed that the government's not listening."

Wilson later questioned Education Minister Prue Car during Question Time in the NSW Parliament, asking when the state government intended to increase funding for community preschools.

Car said the NSW government was "looking at" the funding of community preschools following the Fair Work Commission's recommendation in February.

She said community preschool teachers and educators "deserve a pay rise".

However, Car claimed that a lot of community preschools "have the ability right now to give this pay rise" - contrary to the findings of the FWC.

# START STRONG PAY FAIR



Above, members and supporters rally on 6 May in Coffs Harbour; and below, in Lismore.



## Loud and proud in Coffs Harbour and Lismore

More than 100 IEU members, parents and supporters braved wet weather to march through the Coffs Harbour city centre as part of the Start Strong Pay Fair campaign.

IEU member Kerrie Stichbury, a teacher at Toormina Community Preschool, told 7News the low pay had forced some staff to leave the sector.

Nationals leader and Coffs Harbour MP Gurmesh Singh on Facebook offered support for the campaign for pay rises for community preschool staff.

"I want them to know I stand with them," he said. "You teach, you care, and you deserve to be paid fairly."

An estimated 200 IEU members, parents and supporters also marched in Lismore on 6 May.

Byron Bay Preschool director Bridget Isichei told the Lismore App the NSW government needed to increase funding for community preschools to pay fair wages.

"Community preschool teachers are paid less than their counterparts in public preschools and long daycare settings," she said. "It's urgent that the NSW government increase funding to support community preschools to pay their teachers and educators fairly."

## More in the media

The rallies received extensive coverage on radio, television and in print. Acting Secretary David Towson told ABC Sydney the NSW

government needs to provide funding for pay rises for a workforce that is predominantly women. He said the pay disparity made it difficult for many early childhood centres to attract and retain staff who could earn more elsewhere.

**"It's urgent that the NSW government increase funding to support community preschools to pay their teachers and educators fairly."**

"We would much rather be delivering the best quality preschool care that we possibly can, rather than having to fight for every cent that we deserve."

East Maitland Preschool director Jodie Cox told 2NUR FM that community preschools faced an uncertain future if the NSW government did not boost funding.

"We're finding that preschools are starting to have to cut their budgets and are operating at a deficit," she said. "So, they're having to charge families more and more fees as well."

IEU members told moving stories to the media about how the long-term gender undervaluation of their work had led to staffing shortages and threatened the viability of their centres.

Donna Worner, a teacher at Kapooka Early Childhood Centre near Wagga Wagga, drove five hours to rally in Martin Place.

Donna told *The Daily Telegraph* that problems with attracting and retaining staff were becoming increasingly difficult in rural and remote areas.

"Early childhood educators are just absolutely fed up with being paid so poorly and they are sick of having to come out and do this," she said.

## Dianne

**Aberdare Preschool, Cessnock**

"We're here to advocate for fair pay in community preschools, the same as the 100 new government preschools are going to get. Chris Minns, you need to cough up!"



## Lisa Bryant

**Consultant, Central Coast**

"I'm here because I've been fighting for preschool teachers to get proper wages for the past 30 years. It's not fair that they earn up to 30% less than their colleagues in schools. Early education is the most important part of education. We need to treat our teachers as important as they are."



## Jessica

**Paterson Valley Community Preschool, Hunter Valley**

"I'm here to support educators and teachers from all around NSW to fight for fair pay."



## Meredith

**Gumnut Preschool, Bowral**

"I'm here because I believe that professional teachers should be paid professional wages."



## Kerrie

**Toormina Community Preschool**

"We don't get a fair deal. It's a really hard job. You bring your heart to the job every day. It's emotionally and physically draining, but you do it because you love it. But we should be paid fairly."



## Lisa

**Nana Glen Preschool**

"One of my main reasons I'm here is for fair funding for preschools and especially in rural areas. All families deserve to have access to high-quality early childhood education and care."



## Sarah

**Urunga Community Preschool**

"I'm here today to campaign for fair pay and conditions for community preschools. We are completely not-for-profit. Teachers like me with university degrees are paid 30% less than school teachers."



## Sonya

**Urunga Community Preschool**

"We need fair pay and we need it now so we can continue providing a quality service, quality education, quality nurturing, quality care for our children and our community."



# SPOTLIGHT ON REPS

IEU reps from schools affiliated with The Anglican Schools Corporation joined us for reps training. They discussed ways of building strong chapters to increase bargaining power for all members.

## Jess Castleden

St Luke's Grammar School, Bayview

**Jess Castleden is a Year 6 teacher at St Luke's Grammar School's junior campus in Bayview.**

Jess previously taught many of the children in Year 3, which had helped her to build a good rapport with parents.

Jess said student behaviour and managing parents' expectations are among the challenges she faces.

However, she said the school provides strong support through a restorative behaviour management approach, with a clear focus on practices that guide positive relationships.

Jess said parent-teacher meetings could extend into the evening, with preparation required during personal time.

School camps were another example of time creep, with teachers receiving a small nominal allowance for a day that could start as early as 6am and extend until 2am.

"You might be supporting a wide range of student needs across the day," she said. "It's heaps of responsibility."

Jess retrained as a teacher after working as a travel agent and running her own business for 20 years.

"I absolutely love teaching," she said. "I think there are so many benefits."

"I worked from 7am to 10pm every day when I was running my own business. I never switched off."

An IEU member since 2025, Jess likened joining the union to taking out travel insurance.

"If you're going to be a teacher and you have this opportunity to be part of a union to support you, why wouldn't you?" she said.

Jess put up her hand to be the union rep at her school after the former rep – a close friend – indicated she was moving overseas.

Jess said she hopes to learn more about the agreements that cover her colleagues so she can provide them with helpful advice.

Outside of school, Jess is an "Uber Mum" whose weekends are filled with driving five children to school.

"We go to the beach, we surf, we go bike riding," she said. "It's just all outdoorsy stuff."



## Vicki McGrath

Penrith Anglican College, Orchard Hills

**Vicki McGrath is a co-rep at Penrith Anglican College, a pre-K to Year 12 school with about 1100 students and 130 staff, in Sydney's west.**

Vicki teaches Year 4, and shares repping duties with colleague Anil Thomas, who teaches in the secondary school.

Now in her 30th year of teaching, Vicki has been an IEU member from the beginning of her teaching career.

"The rep at my first school cornered me on my first day on the job and said 'you need to join the union' – and so I did," she said.

"I never questioned why or thought about the cost – I figured if someone with her experience was telling me that being in the union was important, then it was something I should do.

"It was my best decision ever – because when you need them, you need them. It's peace of mind."

Vicki says the biggest challenge in her profession is workload.

"I'd like to see programs shared more widely, so we're not all reinventing the wheel constantly," she said.

"If we could all work together collaboratively, we could really focus more on the students and less on the paperwork."

Vicki and her co-rep Anil work closely together. "I send him off to the IEU Council meetings (although I am about to join him as a delegate for the Penrith-Blue Mountains Sub Branch), and I do the hardcore stuff at work," she said.

"I am very prolific in emailing our members and strongly encouraging (some might say hounding) people to come to a chapter meeting."

"At the start of every year we run a meeting for everyone on staff who would like to learn more about the union and what it does. I tell everyone 'you wouldn't buy a house or car and not take out insurance, so why would you come to a school without the union having your back?'"

"It's not just about pay rises, it's about support. If somebody comes to me with a question, I ask them first, 'Are you in the union? You should join the union'."

Vicki likes to recharge her batteries on a good cruise. Her favourite has been her Alaskan cruise.

"The scenery and the quaint little villages and having orcas swimming beside the boat – it was so magical," she said.

"I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

A busy mum, Vicki said the best thing about cruising is "I don't have to think about shopping, cleaning, cooking, ironing. The biggest issue I have is choosing from the menu."



## Louise McNerney

Claremont College, Randwick

**Louise McNerney is the rep at Claremont College in Randwick, where she is a learning enrichment teacher. Claremont is a small primary school with about 255 students and 24 staff.**

A teacher for more than 20 years and an IEU member for over a decade, Louise works with students experiencing learning disabilities, as well as students who are gifted.

"I love the banter and the humour from them, and the growth that I see from kindy to Year 6," she said.

"I see them from their starting point to where you send them off to high school. It's a pretty special job."

Louise grew up in Durban, South Africa, and lived in London for a decade.

"My dad's from north-east England, from ship builders and factory workers, and my mum's side were all house builders and painters," she said.

"That worker mentality is strong in my bones." For Louise, becoming a rep "just felt like a natural process to follow".

Louise said IEU membership has provided her with great peace of mind and, as a rep, she aims to normalise union support.

"You would insure your car, and your house," she said. "You also insure your rights as a worker."

Louise came to the IEU's reps training day so she could learn more. "I'm joining with some

other reps from our schools to see what struggles we have in common," she said.

Their biggest struggle is a familiar one to many IEU members: workload.

"Primary school teachers can sometimes fall into the trap of taking on more and more because the role is so broad," Louise said.

"Supporting students and contributing to the school community is central to why many of us do this work, so it can be difficult to know where the boundaries are or when it's OK to say no."

"I think it's important to normalise conversations about workload and wellbeing, and to recognise that teachers need support too in order to do their jobs sustainably."

Outside of work, Louise loves running, and is thrilled her six-year-old son has started joining her in middle-distance and trail running, taking a keen interest in tracking his progress in mum's and dad's Garmin app.



## Benjamin Pearce

Mamre Anglican School, Kemps Creek

**Benjamin Pearce is a music teacher at Mamre Anglican School, a co-educational pre-K to Year 12 school in Kemps Creek.**

A former Mamre student, Benjamin teaches both primary and secondary school students.

Benjamin said the school had long been "quite sports-focused", but a new creative arts facility has just opened.

The new facilities have had a positive impact on students' enthusiasm for music although there are some "whose focus is definitely outside the classroom".

An IEU member since 2022, Benjamin said he joined the union "primarily, I guess, for my own protection".

During negotiations for a new enterprise agreement, Benjamin said he came to realise that the union and the issues it fights for are "bigger than just me".

"Every time I come to an event such as reps training, it gives me a greater understanding of why the union is important," he said.

Benjamin said his primary goal as a rep is to encourage his colleagues to join the union ahead of negotiations for a new enterprise agreement (EA).

He also wants to ensure the employer is held accountable to the terms of current agreements.

Benjamin attended a training session for reps from schools covered by The Anglican Schools Corporation, which included a discussion of issues common to many school staff.

Benjamin singled out heavy workloads as a concern for both teachers and support staff.

"We've got a solution for teachers in our workplace agreement that's not necessarily complied with fully yet," he said.

"But I think support staff across a lot of the schools are getting hammered and there are not a lot of protections in their agreements in terms of being overworked."

Outside of school, Benjamin plays the trumpet with the Penrith Symphony Orchestra.

He and his wife are also avid gamers: "We both play a lot of rocket league, which is car football."



## Reps training

**Are you a newly elected rep or has it been some time since you last did 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.

To attend this training, you need to be officially recorded as a rep on the IEU database (check

with your IEU organiser or call us on 8202 8900).

We urge newly elected reps or reps who have not attended training in the previous 12 months to register.

We also offer advanced training for experienced reps looking to strengthen their skills in building strong chapters.

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.

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

### Foundation reps training

Fri 24 July	Canberra	IEU office	Phipps Close, Deakin
Fri 31 Jul	Tamworth	Tamworth Hotel	Marius Street, Tamworth
Tue 8 Sep	Wollongong	IEU office	Lowden Square, Wollongong
Fri 30 Oct	Sydney	IEU office	Wattle Street, Ultimo

### Advanced reps training

Fri 14 Aug	Orange	Orange Ex-Services' Club	Anson Street, Orange
Wed 9 Sep	Sydney	IEU office	Wattle Street, Ultimo
Fri 11 Sep	Newcastle	IEU office	Telford Street, Newcastle East
Thu 17 Sep	Wollongong	IEU office	Lowden Square, Wollongong
Fri 18 Sep	Sydney	IEU office	Wattle Street, Ultimo



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# MEET OUR MEMBERS

## Jody Fowler Planning the magic



**Jody Fowler describes her unique role as the “coordinator of the collaboration”, writes Tania Yardley.**

An inclusion support teacher at Birralee Preschool in Lane Cove, Jody works with families, teachers and support services to meet the specific needs of children.

Jody said bringing children who need additional support into mainstream preschools benefits not only them, but also their peers who learn and play alongside them.

“I think it’s really important for the majority of children to be able to come and experience this environment and have great role models around them,” she said.

### Supporting teachers

Jody’s day-to-day role is to gather resources and get parents and teachers communicating and problem solving.

This may include coordinating occupational therapists, speech therapists, and psychologists.

It can also involve educating parents, helping them gain skills to help their child with self-regulation, impulse control and socialising.

While some children come to Birralee with diagnosed conditions, others present behaviours at preschool that indicate a need for extra support. “A big part of our role is helping families

to identify when there are particular challenges for children, whether that means getting some support or getting a diagnosis of some kind,” she said.

While her role may be to gather the information and come up with a plan for the child, Jody said it is the classroom teachers who “do the magic”.

“I just help them to reflect on their roles and give them ideas about what they can do,” she said.

Unusually, the board at Birralee Preschool created an inclusion support teacher position 25 years ago. With four classes, the preschool is relatively large, allowing costs to be shared across more families.

The centre receives no external funding for the inclusion support role, and Jody recognises that many community preschools simply could not sustain such a position.

### Covid babies

Jody said the number of children needing inclusion support services has been steadily increasing over the years.

“We are better at identifying things and recognising differing individual needs, but I also see more challenges coming up for more children,” she said.

The rise of so-called ‘Covid babies’ has also contributed to a greater need for specialised support.

Depending on their age in lockdown, many children were now presenting with a range of developmental challenges, Jody said.

“Children were not outside as much as they could have been. That can have some impacts on gross motor skills, which then feeds down into their fine motor skills as well,” she said.

“Also, language development, because they’re not being exposed to as much language as they would have been.”

For older children that could mean missing out on simple things like “learning to say hello to the shopkeeper”, she said.

### Union’s advocacy

An IEU member since 2016, Jody joined the union for support should challenging situations arise at work.

Jody said she values the union’s advocacy for improved pay and conditions in her sector.

“For community-based preschools in NSW, better funding will support pay for the teachers,” she said.

## Tony Stone Solidarity and support

**Joining the union more than 40 years ago was a “no-brainer” for this award-winning teacher, writes Andrew Taylor.**

Tony Stone felt surprised and “sort of humbled” when he found out he would be receiving an award from the Professional Teachers’ Council NSW.

“I think there were probably other candidates who’ve done more, but for anyone in teaching, it’s great to get a bit of recognition,” he said.

Tony received an outstanding professional service award for volunteer work with the Legal Studies Association of NSW (LSA) as well as his contribution to students and the teaching profession.

A senior HSC marker and teacher at St Francis Xavier’s College in Hamilton, Tony joined the association more than two decades ago when he began teaching legal studies.

Tony became a presenter and organised guest speakers for the state conference, with guests including high-profile barrister Mark Tedeschi and former head of the NSW Drug Court, Roger Dive.

In addition, he is one of the organisers of the LSA Newcastle student lecture day and he presents online HSC revision lectures to students in rural NSW.

### “Best thing I did”

Tony studied economics at university and initially worked in entry-level jobs in the coal industry around Newcastle.

“I didn’t find any of that very thrilling,” he said. “I thought about doing a DipEd, which was the best thing I did.”

“And when I did a teacher placement, I realised I really liked what I was doing.”

Tony spent three years teaching at St Joseph’s Catholic College in Aberdeen before joining St Francis Xavier’s College in 1987.

He also spent 12 months teaching in a school in a disadvantaged part of Liverpool in north-west England, which he said was a deeply rewarding experience.

Tony taught geography and economics before an opportunity arose to teach legal studies.

“I took it on and just loved it,” he said. “I’ve never looked back. There’s always more to learn, and I found the kids got really engaged with good resources.”

Tony said most of his students enjoy learning about criminal law “and there’s also a lot who enjoy learning about rights and obligations and things like that”.

“There’s a lot in legal studies that resonates with everyday life.”

### Joining union a “no-brainer”

Tony has witnessed many changes in the profession during his four-decade career, including greater expectations on teachers to cater for students with additional needs.

School leaders sometimes fail to realise the amount of additional work teachers do to ensure the needs of these students are properly supported.

“There’s a lot of scrutiny from parents and if they don’t think you’re doing the right thing by the kids, they certainly will say something about it,” he said.

An IEU member since 1985, Tony said joining the union was a “no-brainer”.

“It’s about solidarity, supporting each other and ensuring the conditions you work under are fair,” he said.

“I’ve always appreciated the union being there safeguarding everyone’s rights.”

Outside of work, Tony is an enthusiastic golfer. He also has two grandchildren who keep him busy.

“I’ve been helping my daughters do a bit of renovating,” he said. “I find painting walls, believe it or not, quite relaxing.”



# AROUND THE GLOBE

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



Credit: Angel Faz, created for No ICE in the Cup.

**Unions and human rights organisations have warned the 2026 FIFA World Cup must not come at the cost of workers' rights, migrant communities and human decency.**

#### Football fever

Between January 2025 and March 2026, more than 167,800 people were arrested by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in 11 American cities hosting World Cup matches, which begin in June.

The arrests are part of a broader immigration crackdown that human rights groups say involves widespread abuses.

Yet FIFA president Gianni Infantino last year awarded the inaugural FIFA Peace Prize to United States President Donald Trump.

Internationally, the United States has not been a proponent of peace under Trump, launching airstrikes against Venezuela and Iran as well as threatening to invade Greenland and retake control of the Panama Canal.

The current United States military build-up in the Middle East is said to be the largest since the Iraq War.

Are these actions at home and abroad worthy of a peace prize?

The world, and even senior FIFA officials, think not. *The Guardian* reports growing embarrassment within FIFA ranks over Donald Trump's peace prize.

#### When communities come together, ICE melts

A belief that the World Cup should be a safe and secure event for all to enjoy prompted athletes, artists, lawyers, veterans and community groups to form the "No ICE in the Cup" campaign.

The campaign calls on FIFA, football's international governing body, to ensure ICE agents are kept away from World Cup stadiums, fan zones and surrounding events.

Human Rights Watch is also urging FIFA to pressure the United States government to suspend immigration raids linked to World Cup events.

It argues the presence of ICE operations will stop migrant communities from safely participating in one of the world's biggest sporting events.

These concerns are not unfounded. Migrant workers are central to major sporting events such as the World Cup.

They build stadiums, prepare venues, clean facilities, transport visitors, serve food and keep events running smoothly. Yet they often face exploitation, unsafe conditions and intimidation.

#### Unions warn FIFA

Unions including the global union representing food, hotel and catering workers, the IUF, have called on FIFA, host committees and employers affiliated with the World Cup to act responsibly.

Unions have demanded safe working conditions, freedom of association, trade union rights, protection from exploitation and trafficking, and working environments free from coercion and intimidation.

Unions also called on FIFA to demand that ICE and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) play no role at host stadiums, fan fests or other World Cup-related events.

While major sporting events promote unity and inclusion, unionists and educators should ask who feels safe and included at the World Cup?

As football fever builds, keep an eye out for the "No ICE in the Cup" campaign and thank the unions that are on the ground making sure the event remains a safe and inclusive space for everyone – fans, workers and athletes alike.

**More information:** [noiceinthecup.us](http://noiceinthecup.us)

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# Time capsule: 1996



## Teachers finally unite, on a street corner

By JOHN HUXLEY  
It almost didn't happen, but history was eventually made at the junction of Market and Elizabeth streets yesterday when striking teachers from the rival government and Catholic systems came together in an unprecedented, unshakable alliance.

Hands were shaken, fraternal greetings exchanged and, shoulder to shoulder, some 12,000 members of the NSW Teachers Federation and the Independent Education Union (IEU) marched on Parliament House in support of their 12 per cent pay claim.

Perhaps not quite what Karl Marx had in mind when he talked about class war. But, as federation president Denis Fitzgerald said, education workers of the world were united. At least temporarily.

Moments earlier it had looked as though the two groups might miss each other. "While the IEU organisers, Neale Dawson, led the crocodile of Catholics slowly to the top of Market Street where they had been meeting, the government forces, coming from Prince Alfred Park, were still a few hundred metres away."

"Speed up, speed up," shouted Mr Dawson urgently down the mobile phone to his state-school counterpart, as police asked him to keep the marchers moving. At last, contact was made and Dawson was able to joke, "It's a little bit of a crisis, as the Teachers Federation and the Independent Education Union after the announcement of the Budget."

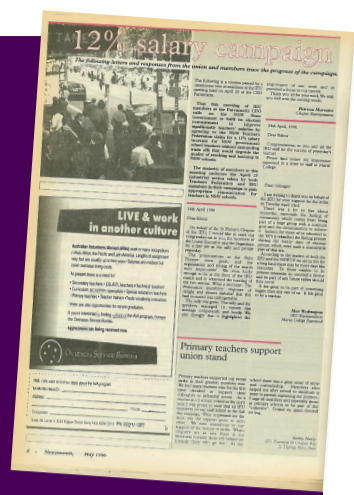
This meeting calls upon the IEU and the NSWTF to continue this campaign in defence of educational standards and in defence of the status of the profession for as long as it takes to achieve the goals of the campaign.

Unless this Government resolves this matter fairly and expeditiously it will be irreparably damaged in the view of the teaching profession.

Once they have been herded in the right direction and told to



Hands shaken, fraternal greetings exchanged... 12,000 members of the two teachers unions march shoulder to shoulder to Parliament House yesterday. Photograph by ROBERT PEARCE



Far left and above, from the Newsmonth archives, 1996.

Centre, Teachers from the IEU and the NSW Teachers Federation joined forces for a 12,000-strong march on NSW Parliament on 23 April 1996, calling for a 12% pay rise. (credit: Sydney Morning Herald)

The next time teachers from both unions marched together was on 30 June 2022.

### IEU members mobilised across the state in 1996, with a major salaries campaign and historic joint industrial action with the NSW Teachers Federation.

The year also delivered record membership growth, with 3301 new members boosting the Branch to a then all-time high of 18,479. Of those who joined in 1996, 301 remain members today and will receive their 30-year membership award this year.

### Members endorse the claim

The IEU Council endorsed a joint claim with the NSW Teachers Federation for a 12% salary increase for teachers, without any trade-offs to working conditions. IEU chapters in more than 450 Catholic systemic and independent schools passed motions backing the campaign.

The NSW government had offered a 6% pay increase over two years (the offer was later increased to 4% + 3.1% in 1997) tied to "productivity offsets" to fund the increases.

IEU members joined the campaign to win appropriate pay rises and resist attempts by government and employers to expect teachers to do more with fewer resources. There would be no trade-offs.

"This is a day that the teaching profession in a united fashion stood up like never before," said NSW Teachers Federation president Denis Fitzgerald in a joint IEU-Teachers Federation statement.

"This is an historic step up and points out the critical importance of raising the salaries and status of teachers in our society and in our culture."

### Historic joint action

A joint stop-work and rally was endorsed by both unions for 23 April. All diocesan schools (except Wagga Wagga) and 25 Catholic independent schools joined the stop-work action.

More than 10,000 teachers from NSW Catholic and government schools along with TAFE teachers marched in Sydney's CBD. Joint rallies were also held in Dubbo and Tamworth.

A Sky Channel stop-work link up was held on 10 May attracting 23,000 teachers who attended 250 venues across the state to consider the next steps in the campaign.

Denis Fitzgerald moved a motion, seconded by IEU General Secretary Dick Shearman for further action in pursuit of a 12% pay increase with no trade-offs.

The NSW government and the Federation eventually agreed on pay rises of 6% in 1996 (followed by annual increases of 4%, 3% and 3%).

However, Catholic employers appeared to renege on a 1993 undertaking for pay parity with government school teachers.

The Catholic Industrial Office advised the union on 9 September that salaries were now a matter to negotiate with each diocese.

### The win

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle announced on 11 September it would honour pay parity with government school teachers, with Armidale and Wollongong following the next day. This left the remaining outliers, including the Sydney dioceses, in an increasingly bitter dispute with their staff.

However, an in-principle agreement was reached on regulating workloads with the Sydney Archdiocese and Parramatta Diocese.

These were the forerunners to Work Practices Agreements that the IEU has since negotiated with all dioceses (except for Wilcannia-Forbes).

### Unions stand against racism

Shearman and Fitzgerald in a joint statement expressed concern that students from disadvantaged, migrant or Aboriginal backgrounds might be subject to abuse following remarks by the newly elected Queensland Independent MP Pauline Hanson.

The union leaders described Hanson's comments as the antithesis of what teachers strive to build for society.

Teachers "have helped construct a more inclusive community that understands and appreciates diversity in thinking and in our culture", they said.

Hanson and her campaigners "stand diametrically opposed to all of this".

### Attack on workers

John Howard was elected prime minister on 11 March 1996, defeating Paul Keating and ending more than 12 years of federal Labor government.

The new Coalition government moved quickly to legislate new industrial relations laws.

Vice President of the ACT Branch, Frank Mahanay, attended a 25,000 strong rally on 19 August to denounce the Bill outside Parliament House.

Mahanay reported: "David de Carvalho of the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission roundly condemned the Bill because he said it fails to protect the rights of workers. It elevates the employer into a powerful position whilst the employee is left weak and vulnerable."

Nonetheless, the *Workplace Relations Act* was passed with support from the Australian Democrats. It came into effect on 1 January 1997.

The legislation restricted union activity and introduced Australian Workplace Agreements which could override collective agreements.

### Equal rights before the law

The IEU called for an overhaul of NSW anti-discrimination law (see below).

### Winning ways

The Manly Warringah Sea Eagles won the 1996 ARL grand final, while North Melbourne won the AFL premiership.

*Braveheart* won the 1996 best picture Oscar, with the movie's director Mel Gibson also winning an Oscar.

The 1996 Booker Prize was won by Graham Swift for his novel *Last Orders*.

Nick Cave and Kylie Minogue won song of the year at the 1996 ARIA Music Awards for *Where the Wild Roses Grow*.

The 1996 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta for their work towards ending conflict in East Timor.

David Towson Acting Secretary



## From the archives Discrimination out of step

### The first issue of Newsmonth in 1996 delved into a topic that remains contentious three decades later.

In 1996, the union called for the removal of exemptions from the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*, that allow non-government schools to discriminate against employees based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or pregnancy.

Organiser Pam Smith, who later became an assistant secretary, wrote "these exemptions are out of step with current community expectations".

A later issue of *Newsmonth* reported on a resolution from IEU Council seeking removal of the exemptions "to ensure greater human rights protection for staff employed by non-government educational authorities".

Pam also detailed examples of discrimination faced by members, many related to pregnancy, and one case where a male teacher asked for paternity leave and was told to "take his career seriously".

### Joint campaign

A joint campaign between the IEU and NSW Teachers Federation also featured in the pages of *Newsmonth* in 1996, with a rally and then a Sky Channel event.

Both salaries and respect were at stake. A letter from NSW Labor MP Joe Tripodi was read aloud at the rally and reportedly "enraged the crowd". He blamed teachers for the "public perception that schools are Australia's last sheltered workshops."

Marching teachers from both unions chanted "12%, no trade-offs," in reference to the NSW government's demand for greater productivity in exchange for pay rises.

IEU General Secretary Dick Shearman said there was "an unholy alliance between the state government and NSW Catholic bishops" aimed at keeping teachers' salaries low.

Shearman defended teachers' strike action at the Sky Channel event on 10 May: "If we want our students to believe in their right and responsibility to be active agents of change, then surely we must first claim that right for ourselves."

### Travel opportunities

The pages of *Newsmonth* were also filled with exciting travel opportunities, with three members taking part in exchanges with teachers from South Africa, only a few years after the end of apartheid.

A pastoral program from O'Connor Catholic College in Armidale was also highlighted. 'Strive to Survive' focused on alcohol and drink driving, with a harm minimisation approach.

The story appeared alongside a photo of three students smiling at the camera while another demonstrated pouring drinks. The caption read: 'Year 10 students learning to pour standard drinks.'

The November issue of *Newsmonth* invited members with "an interest in internet technology" to help the union develop an IEU internet site. A union's work is never done.

# Sub Branch reports

Term 2 | 2026

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 way for reps and members to provide feedback to the union about what's happening on the ground in their workplaces. The meetings are also an opportunity for reps and members from each region to hear updates from IEU organisers.

Each sub branch sends four to six delegates to quarterly IEU Council meetings. Council is the union's decision-making body, bringing together about 115 member delegates from throughout NSW and the ACT.

The IEU Executive of 22 members is elected every three years by members.

All reps and any IEU members who would like to develop their union activism are warmly invited to attend their region's sub branch meeting.

Contact your rep or organiser if you would like more information.



Central Coast Sub Branch meeting

## Central Coast

The Central Coast Sub Branch includes Gosford, Erina, Green Point, Lake Munmorah, Tuggerah, Wyong and surrounds.

The Central Coast Sub Branch meeting was held at Ourimbah RSL on 7 May.

Primary and secondary school teachers and support staff reps attended from a variety of sectors and were joined by IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Assistant Secretary Therese Fitzgibbon and Organiser Charles Wheeler.

We talked about school issues first followed by a wider discussion of union news.

Concerns raised during the meeting included a part-time principal, disruption to teaching caused by construction of a new building, growing class sizes, discrimination based on disability and workload burnout.

It was great to also hear reps swapping member recruitment strategies and how they run chapter meetings.

After a break for dinner, Therese and Charles provided an update on issues including the NSW government's proposal to ban parents if they threaten or abuse students and staff and the IEU Council's motion calling for the scrapping of religious exemptions to anti-discrimination laws.

The next sub branch meeting will be at 4.30pm on 6 August at the Ourimbah RSL. All are welcome.

Charles Wheeler Organiser



Central Metropolitan Sub Branch meeting

## Central Metropolitan

The Central Metropolitan Sub Branch includes central Sydney, Sydney's inner-western suburbs and Rhodes, Concord and Meadowbank.

The Central Metropolitan Sub Branch meeting was held on 30 April at the IEU office in Ultimo.

There was lively discussion at the meeting, which welcomed new MLC School rep Hannah Smith.

We also welcomed new IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Assistant Secretary Therese Fitzgibbon. Her passion and enthusiasm certainly helped set the tone of the evening.

A primary focus of the meeting was the proposed law to ban threatening or abusive parents. This prompted discussion about what constitutes "unreasonable behaviour" in school settings – particularly concerning online communication – and the new powers available to principals to protect students and staff.

The meeting also discussed the cost-of-living adjustment clause in Catholic systemic enterprise agreements. It considered the potential to include a similar clause in other agreements as inflation and declining real wage growth continue to impact teachers in the Sydney metropolitan region. Of course, decent pay rises are always the first preference.

The meeting also addressed workload transparency, the right to disconnect law and the IEU's stance on the state's outdated anti-discrimination law.

This latter topic generated strong support for the union campaign to reform a law that currently permits discrimination against members on the grounds of gender, disability, sexuality and marital status.

The evening concluded with a shared meal and informal networking.

The next sub branch meeting will be at 5pm on 30 July at the Burwood RSL.

Michelle Mella Sub Branch President

## Central West

The Central West Sub Branch includes Dubbo, Bathurst, Orange and Lithgow, as well as Cowra, Mudgee, Parkes, Forbes, Grenfell and Wilcannia.

The Central West Sub Branch met in Orange on 1 May. It was a well-attended meeting with members representing schools across the Bathurst and Wilcannia-Forbes Dioceses.

Of particular concern for members are ongoing workload demands and employees' right to disconnect.

Members were highly engaged with strategies aimed at limiting excessive electronic communication outside of working hours.

Examples of schools setting up automatic out-of-office replies for staff and principals, with clear expectations around response times, were well received. It was agreed that such strategies are more effective when initiated by the employer rather than leaving individuals to make the decision.

The ongoing imposition of compliance modules (SALTs) on teacher preparation time was again discussed.

Key issues include the timing of module release, the limited time provided to complete modules, the lack of a clear rollout process, and the increasing imposition on teacher planning time.

The sub branch committed to reviewing issues across both dioceses to seek clarity around expectations and adherence to Clause 11.3(b) of the enterprise agreement. This clause states that professional development required by the employer must be offered within designated school time.

The next sub branch meeting will be on 31 July in Dubbo.

Donna Widdison Organiser

## Cumberland

The Cumberland Sub Branch includes Parramatta, Mt Druitt, Castle Hill, Marsden Park, Blacktown and nearby surrounds.

The Cumberland Sub Branch meeting was held on 4 May at the IEU office in Parramatta. The meeting was attended by reps from Catholic systemic, Catholic independent, and independent schools.

A key area of discussion was the *School Community Safety Bill* and the impact of unreasonable and harmful parent behaviour on members in schools. Members discussed the importance of ensuring that teachers and support staff can work in a safe workplace. The Bill was viewed as a positive move to support members and strengthen expectations around safe and respectful conduct in school communities.

Members also discussed payday superannuation, which will commence on 1 July. This was welcomed as positive news for members. Upcoming professional development opportunities for members were also discussed.

The meeting welcomed Timothy Martin as the new sub branch president. The next sub branch meeting will be held on 10 August at the IEU office in Parramatta.

Luke Breen Organiser



Hunter Valley Sub Branch meeting

## Hunter Valley

The Hunter Valley Sub Branch includes Newcastle, Maitland, Singleton, Scone, Taree and surrounds.

The Hunter Valley Sub Branch met on 4 May at the Blackbutt Hotel in New Lambton.

Thirty members attended from a broad cross-section of sectors, including a student member.

The following concerns were raised revolving around external and employer-imposed workload:

- Allied health evaluations requiring up to 200 questions per child, to be completed by the teacher in one sitting, without additional resourcing
- Catholic systemic: teachers spoke about the time-consuming "goal setting, reflection, evaluation" process known as PPhD. Teachers are being advised by school leaders to just "tick-and-flick" and use AI
- Pivot program: teachers reported no suitable evaluation or support
- Excessive community and parental engagement requirements; examples include 7am Mother's Day breakfasts and the twice-a-term requirement at one school for teachers to compose 30-photo PowerPoints of individual students to send to parents using the teacher's own phone
- Compliance in excess of NESA requirements: diocese-imposed programming, templates and administrative requirements
- A mandated centralised reporting system that did not work and was taken down two weeks before teachers were to commence report writing.

Organisers will seek support from all Catholic systemic chapters before raising these issues with the Director of Catholic Schools.

Holy Spirit Abermain/Kurri Kurri reported that after IEU chapter-employer consultation they won extra administrative support to help sustain the school's amalgamation.

Carlo Rendina Organiser

## Ku-ring-gai

The Ku-ring-gai Sub Branch covers Sydney's north shore, including Hornsby, Wahroonga, Waitara, Warrawee, Thornleigh, Pymble, Turramurra, Berowra and Asquith.

The Ku-ring-gai Sub Branch held its meeting on 11 May at Hornsby RSL.

Regulars were joined by new faces with members from independent, Adventist and both primary and secondary Catholic systemic schools.

The meeting kicked off with members sharing updates about their own schools and sectors. There was considerable discussion about excessive workloads and burnout. Members took the opportunity to share and compare what is working well at their workplace and what is not.

Incidents in nearby schools were a focus in discussions on workplace safety and the pending *School Community Safety Bill*. Members also discussed how the right to disconnect operates in their schools.

Ku-ring-gai Sub Branch meets at 4.45pm at Hornsby RSL on a Monday afternoon in the first half of each term. Remaining 2026 dates are 10 August and 2 November. All are welcome!

Charles Wheeler Organiser

## Lansdowne

The Lansdowne Sub Branch includes Lakemba to Liverpool, as well as Bankstown, Fairfield and Auburn.

The Lansdowne Sub Branch met on 7 May at Fairfield RSL for its second gathering of the year. Eighteen reps from a variety of schools and four IEU officials attended.

Workload concerns and the increased frequency of parent-teacher events were the major topics of discussion, with many reps providing insights into the situation in their chapter.

The different expectations between schools – including schools within the same Catholic diocese – were noted.

The sub branch celebrated 40 years of union membership for longstanding IEU Council member Bernadette Hawthorne.

Following the meeting, members enjoyed dinner with their colleagues at a Vietnamese restaurant within the RSL.

We look forward to seeing everyone again at our next meeting in Term 3. Reps from schools who have not attended a meeting are always welcome to join.

Aidan Anderson Organiser

## Metropolitan East

The Metropolitan East Sub Branch covers Sydney's eastern suburbs, including Bondi, Waverley and Bellevue Hill.

The Metropolitan East Sub Branch met on 6 May at Juniors Kingsford.

The proposed ban on aggressive and threatening parents, legislative changes, payday super, improvements in government paid parental leave and Catholic systemic pay increases were among issues discussed at the meeting.

Reps also shared stories from the front line including the importance of high membership density in schools, SALT training requirements and some school matters (thankfully nothing too serious).

After the meeting, reps enjoyed dinner at the club bistro and we aim to do this after each meeting. We invite all reps and any interested members to come along next time for dinner and a good discussion about union matters: Wednesday 5 August at Juniors Kingsford, 4.30pm.

**Kendall Warren** Organiser

## Mid North Coast

The Mid North Coast Sub Branch includes Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Port Macquarie, Bellingen, Nambucca Heads and surrounds.

The Mid North Coast Sub Branch met on 1 May at Nambucca RSL.

All reps on this occasion came from the Catholic systemic sector, leading to a discussion that centred largely on the issues affecting that sector: workload and NCCD documentation.

The sub branch raised serious concerns about the duplication of student information across five separate levels: parent-teacher interviews, personalised planning meetings, semester reports, Compass profiles and individual student profiles.

The sub branch noted that schools differ markedly in what they believe is required under the NCCD, and there is little clarity about how the accompanying funding is allocated and spent.

Ongoing questions remain about the practice in the diocese and its consistency with advice from the federal Education Department.

The organiser is working with the sub branch to develop a chapter motion to address this duplication, with further motions to be circulated to individual chapters. (See also page 4.)

The sub branch also discussed work health and safety concerns across the diocese, including difficulties accessing the "MySafety Portal". This has led to a lack of clarity about reporting hazards or injuries. Members also highlighted a need for risk assessments to support staff safety.

**Sean van der Heide** Organiser



**Monaro Sub Branch meeting**

## Monaro

The Monaro Sub Branch covers Canberra and the ACT.

The Monaro Sub Branch met at the IEU's Canberra office on 30 April, with ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) chief executive Lyndall Read joining as guest speaker.

Members appreciated the opportunity to hear directly from the TQI (the ACT equivalent of the NSW Education Standards Authority) about teacher registration, professional learning, retiree registration and upcoming legislative changes.

Lyndall also outlined the TQI's efforts to reduce unnecessary duplication, improve flexibility where possible and make the registration framework clearer for teachers.

The discussion prompted useful questions from members about professional learning hours, part-time teachers, early childhood teachers, staff returning from leave and the process for moving from provisional to full registration.

There was discussion about 'permit to teach' teachers including support, workload and how the current registration framework applies to them.

Issues affecting members employed by Catholic Education Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) were also raised at the meeting, including proposed changes to phone systems.

There was also discussion about the re-established CECG Consultative Committee and the plan for workload to be a key focus, following last term's member survey.

**Tahlia Bruce** Organiser



**North Coast Sub Branch meeting**

## North Coast

The North Coast Sub Branch covers Lismore, Tweed Heads, Kingscliff, Pottsville, Murwillumbah, Mullumbimby, Kyogle, Ballina, Lismore, Casino, Coraki, Woodburn, Yamba and Maclean.

The North Coast Sub Branch met on 13 May at Ballina Indoor Sports Complex.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary David Towson attended the meeting along with industrial officer Carolyn Moore and organiser Richard Ryan.

It was a well-attended meeting and the sub branch welcomed a new rep to her first meeting.

The following issues were discussed:

- Members in Catholic systemic schools report that assistant principals have had their teaching loads increased. This is adding to their work and creating extra administration for some teachers around behaviour management.
- A lack of timely communication is causing issues for some members.
- Cycles of Improvement continues to frustrate members and is seen by many as a waste of time.
- Morning briefings are growing in length in some schools, while others have scrapped them and simply send an email to staff.
- SALT training is mandatory and much of it is required to be done in personal time. Some schools use that time as credit for time off in the last two days at the end of the year.
- The bus interchange in Lismore is still a work health and safety issue for staff on bus duty.
- Some schools require teachers to do fire extinguisher training in their own time.
- E-bike storage has been an issue for some members.
- A lack of policy regarding unsafe weather conditions for cross country carnivals is an issue for one independent school.

**Richard Ryan** Organiser



**North West Sub Branch meeting**

## North West

The North West Sub Branch covers the New England region including Armidale, Tamworth, Gunnedah, Tenterfield, Inverell, Moree and Narrabri.

The North West Sub Branch met on 1 May at the Armidale City Bowling Club, and enjoyed a meal together afterwards.

The meeting discussed new legislation taking effect on 1 July that mandates super be paid at the same time as wages – a shift anticipated to bring real, practical benefits.

The sub branch welcomed the *School Community Safety Bill* currently before parliament that empowers principals to ban aggressive or threatening parents and carers.

The sub branch also discussed the IEU's campaign to scrap exemptions in the NSW anti-discrimination law that allow non-government school employers to discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, marital status and sexuality.

IEU members are at risk of discrimination that is unlawful in other workplaces, and it is outrageous that these exemptions have not been scrapped.

The sub branch also urged reps to sign up for a reps' training session on 31 July. More registrations are needed to hold the training scheduled in Tamworth. However, the location could be changed to Armidale if that proves more convenient.

**Sue McKay** Organiser

## Northern Beaches

The Northern Beaches Sub Branch includes Manly, Dee Why, Collaroy, Narrabeen, Terrey Hills, Warriewood and surrounds.

The Northern Beaches Sub Branch was delighted to welcome both experienced and new representatives to its meeting on 28 April at Dee Why RSL.

Participation and engagement in the sub branch continues to grow, and it was encouraging to see reps actively engaging and representing the views of their chapters. Reps from Catholic systemic schools and independent schools attended the meeting.

As always, members enjoyed sharing a meal together, catching up on workplace issues and speaking with fellow union reps. The sub branch also welcomed IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews to the meeting.

Key topics for discussion included work health and safety concerns and the increasing prevalence of poor student behaviour.

Reps reported incidents where student behaviour has resulted in members feeling unsafe at work. The union is pursuing these concerns and advocates strongly for improved workplace safety measures for staff.

The meeting also focused on workload transparency and staffing issues in independent schools.

Reps from Catholic systemic schools raised concerns about large class sizes and delays by the employer in providing support.

Concerns were also raised about mandatory training, such as child protection training, being required to be completed outside of school hours.

**Therese Fitzgibbon** Assistant Secretary

## Northern Suburbs

The Northern Suburbs Sub Branch covers Artarmon, Chatswood, Cremorne, Gladesville, Gordon, Hunters Hill, Kirribilli, Lane Cove, Lindfield, Milsons Point, Mosman, North Sydney, Roseville, Ryde, St Ives, St Leonards, Willoughby and Woolwich.

The Northern Suburbs Sub Branch met at The Orchard Hotel in Chatswood on 5 May.

Discussion began with updates on Catholic independent Model A schools bargaining. Reps from the sector report members are inclined to accept the proposed agreement to secure long overdue pay rises and back pay. Concerns were raised about the increasing cost of living in Sydney, with wage growth lagging behind inflation.

Members discussed several school-specific matters, including concerns about new contract language in Catholic Schools Broken Bay that allows staff to be moved between schools.

One rep discussed concerns about delegates rights – the rep has been prevented from using staff email lists for this purpose.

The meeting also discussed the workload transparency clause in the *Independent Schools (Teachers) Multi-Enterprise Agreement*.

Reps shared experiences of schools claiming compliance while making information difficult to locate or fragmented across multiple documents and websites. Members were encouraged to provide organisers with any school statements or policies relating to this.

There was also discussion about the proposed parental ban, the IEU's campaign to scrap exemptions in NSW anti-discrimination law, the introduction of payday super from July 2026 and increases to the federal paid parental leave scheme.

The meeting concluded with an invitation for reps to attend the June IEU Council meeting as observers.

**Caroline Brehaut** Sub Branch President



**Penrith/Blue Mountains Sub Branch meeting**

## Penrith/Blue Mountains

The Penrith/Blue Mountains Sub Branch covers Penrith to Glenbrook, Katoomba and Blackheath.

Our Term 2 sub branch meeting was held on a Thursday afternoon, which allowed some different members to attend who normally are not available on a Wednesday.

The sub branch welcomed Assistant Secretary Therese Fitzgibbon and organiser Peter Criticos as well as new Council delegate Vicki McGrath.

The meeting discussed the cost-of-living adjustment clause in Catholic systemic enterprise agreements as well as the *School Community Safety Bill*, which is currently being debated in the NSW Parliament.

The meeting welcomed new laws empowering principals to ban abusive and threatening parents. The sub branch last year passed a motion about abusive parents, which was endorsed by Council.

The meeting also discussed exemptions to the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act* that allow employers to discriminate on many different grounds. Members are appalled that these exemptions still exist and support the union's ongoing campaign to scrap them.

The meeting also welcomed the IEU federal branch's involvement in the Housing Affordability Summit to be held in Canberra.

Members who can only afford to live a great distance from work or still live with their parents because of affordability issues are encouraged to get in touch with their organiser.

The sub branch also welcomed the positive outcome for a conditionally accredited teacher whose Statement of Service was initially rejected after moving schools. The union intervened, and the member received substantial back pay. Thank you to the organisers for securing this result.

**Liz Heggart** Sub Branch President

## Principals

The Principals Sub Branch met online via Zoom on 18 May.

A key theme in the meeting was the increasing complexity of the principal's role. The IEU provided updates on bargaining developments in Model A schools and ongoing concerns around workload transparency requirements in some independent schools.

There was also discussion around recent legislative and industrial matters affecting schools, including the proposed *Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026*, workplace safety matters, right to disconnect provisions and anti-discrimination advocacy.

Some principals raised concerns around communication processes, policies requiring updating and operational changes to teaching and learning structures within their systems.

Some principals also expressed concerns about mandatory compliance training requirements, particularly the timeframes in which training is expected to be completed. Discussion included how some schools are approaching after-hours communication expectations as part of broader right to disconnect conversations.

The meeting highlighted upcoming professional development opportunities for principals, including the 25 June information session, Understanding the Role of the Rep. Further sessions will continue throughout the year, and principal feedback will help shape future professional learning.

We hope to see more principals join us at the next meeting on 17 August via Zoom.

**Christina Ellul** Organiser



### Riverina

The Riverina Sub Branch covers Albury, Griffith, Hay, Leeton, Thurgoona, Wagga Wagga and West Wyalong.

The Riverina Sub Branch meeting on 15 May in Albury showed the strength of proactive union activity and the power of members working together to create positive change across our region.

The sub branch offered congratulations to newly confirmed office holders and delegates.

All six Riverina Council positions are now filled, which is a fantastic sign of member engagement and leadership. Members are encouraged to step forward as observers, reinforcing our culture of participation and representation.

At the meeting, members discussed concerns about reading intervention and inclusion and diverse learning support programs across schools.

Following member feedback, the IEU is conducting a targeted survey to ensure members' experiences directly inform discussions with Catholic Education Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

This reflects proactive unionism in action – identifying issues early, gathering evidence and ensuring members' voices shape future decisions.

Aspect campaign activity showed Riverina as the best-supported region, demonstrating our commitment to standing with members and strengthening workplaces. (See page 4.)

The sub branch also discussed strong wins secured through union action including payday superannuation payments from 1 July and improvements to paid parental leave.

These achievements remind us that strong workplaces are built through visible, active members. Riverina continues to show that when we organise, participate and speak up together, we deliver meaningful outcomes for members.

**Terri-Anne Scott** Sub Branch Secretary

### South Coast

The South Coast Sub Branch covers the Macarthur region, the Southern Highlands, Wollongong and the Illawarra region and the northern end of the Shoalhaven region.

The South Coast Sub Branch meeting on 13 May at the IEU's Wollongong office addressed a range of industrial issues in Catholic systemic, independent and Christian schools.

Key concerns included inconsistencies in sick leave documentation requirements, increasing workloads, and inequitable practices such as twilight meetings, unpaid attendance for support staff and lack of consultation on scheduling.

Variability in the implementation of Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was also noted, particularly regarding resourcing and staff responsibilities.

Workplace rights issues were highlighted, including inadequate break times and excessive meeting loads in Christian schools.

The union encourages members to advocate on issues such as the right to disconnect, compliance training expectations and workload transparency.

Members continue to enjoy our new meeting venue at the Wollongong IEU office. We encourage all South Coast reps to come along to a meeting this year to connect with fellow reps and build union strength in our schools and region.

**Emily Cranney** Organiser

### South East

The South East Sub Branch covers Yass, Young, Broulee, Bega, Goulburn, Tumut, Pambula, Googong, Batehaven, Cooma, Queanbeyan and Batlow.

The South East Sub Branch met on 1 May at the Statesman Hotel in Curtin, ACT. Discussion across chapters brought a mix of practical concerns and familiar frustrations to the table.

Entitlements to release from face-to-face (RFF) time while on school camps or attending school events were a hot topic and are inconsistently delivered across schools.

The absence of any formal camp allowance for teachers continues to be a sticking point, regularly resurfacing as an issue members want addressed.

Workplace expectations also sparked debate, particularly around staff conduct during non-teaching time. Questions around smoking during breaks highlighted the tension between individual rights and the broader reputation of the school.

Workload pressures feature strongly, especially regarding under-recognised roles such as Sports Coordinators, where inconsistent support and time allocations remain an ongoing issue.

Meanwhile, confusion over mismatched subject hour requirements between the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and Catholic Education is creating challenges for timetabling, leaving schools to navigate competing expectations. The next meeting will be on 31 July at the Statesman Hotel in Curtin.

**Angela McDonald** Organiser

### Southern Suburbs

The Southern Suburbs Sub Branch covers the St George area and the Sutherland Shire.

At the Southern Suburbs Sub Branch meeting on 5 May at Tradies Gympie, members expressed ongoing concern about the lack of genuine consultation underpinning key workplace decisions.

Concern had previously been expressed about work intensification because of migration of content to a new technology provider.

This meeting also discussed calendar changes such as moving meetings scheduled for the Anzac Day public holiday to the following day without consulting staff.

There were broader frustrations about workload and expectations around time in lieu remain unclear and inconsistently applied.

Members note that additional commitments – open days, camps, twilights and weekend masses – regularly extend beyond standard hours yet are rarely compensated in a systematic or predictable way. The sub branch agreed this should be presented in the log of claims for the next bargaining round.

What was described as “meeting creep” was also raised. Induction processes for new staff are viewed as excessive. Some schools are running an extra hour a week of mandatory meetings, which also apply to experienced teachers transitioning between schools.

Concerns also extend to class sizes, particularly in primary schools, where the nominal and desired cap of 30 students (outlined in clause 6.1 of the Primary Work Practices Agreement) is seen as difficult to uphold in practice, given enrolment pressures. The support provided to manage these conditions was described as inconsistent and often reactive.

Members also report safety is not always given sufficient consideration in laboratory and VET settings.

**Josef Dabbs** Organiser

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## Federal budget and super

Why super remains one of Australia's best investments

**With every federal budget comes speculation about major superannuation changes. This year, however, the outlook is reassuring.**

### The biggest change: higher tax on super balances above \$3 million

The key reform is the introduction of Division 296 tax. From 1 July 2026, individuals with more than \$3 million in super may pay additional tax on earnings linked to the amount above that threshold.

For the majority of Australians, this change will have little or no direct effect.

### Contribution caps are increasing

From 1 July 2026, contribution caps will rise:

- Concessional cap: \$30,000 to \$32,500
- Non-concessional cap: \$120,000 to \$130,000

This allows Australians to contribute more into the lower-tax super environment, creating greater opportunities for salary sacrifice and long-term wealth accumulation.

### Payday super is coming

Super contributions will increasingly be paid at the same time as wages, rather than quarterly.

### Budget changes to property investing may increase the relative appeal of super

Proposed reforms to property investing include:

- limiting negative gearing to new builds from 1 July 2027
- removing the ability to offset losses on established properties against income
- replacing the 50% capital gains tax discount with an indexation model
- grandfathering existing investments.

These changes may shift investment behaviour.

Super continues to offer:

- concessional earnings
- tax-effective retirement income
- diversified investment exposure.

### Super is still extremely tax effective

For most Australians:

- investment earnings are taxed at up to 15%
- retirement income streams can be tax free within limits.

Compared with marginal tax rates above 45%, super remains highly tax efficient.

### The real power of super: long-term compounding

Super's strength lies in combining regular contributions, lower tax, diversification and decades of compounding. Over time, this can significantly grow retirement savings.

### How NGS Advice can help you understand your options

The Budget highlights the importance of a clear long-term plan. NGS Advice can support you with contributions, investments, insurance and retirement strategies.

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Parramatta: Level 2, 18-20 Ross Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 P 8202 8900

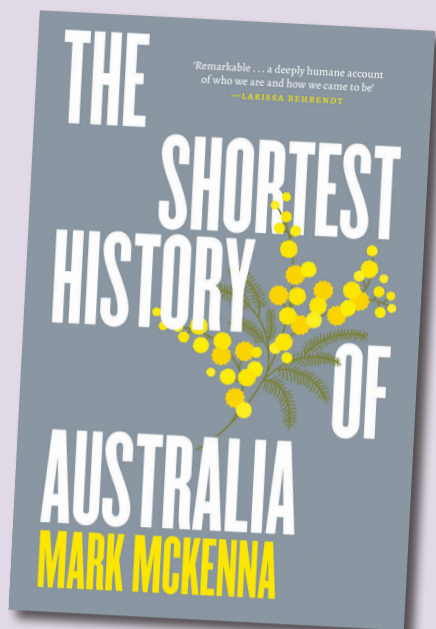
Newcastle: 8-14 Telford Street, Newcastle East NSW 2302 P 4926 9400

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

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

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

# Giveaways



## The shortest history of Australia

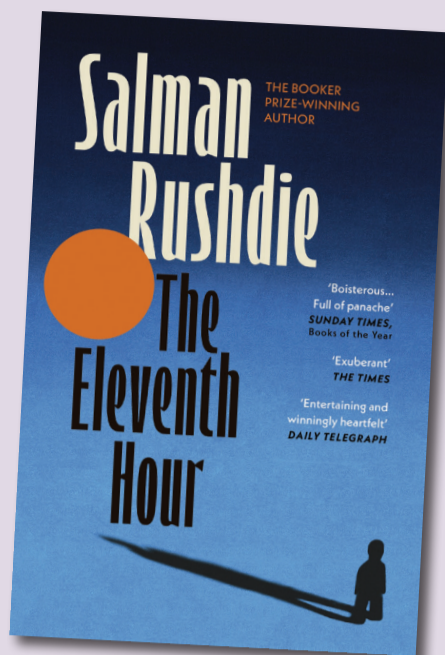
Author: Mark McKenna

Publisher: Black Inc.

In *The Shortest History of Australia*, Mark McKenna offers a compelling new version of our national story.

This is a modern Australia permeated by First Nations history; a multicultural society with an island mindset; a continent of epic beauty and extreme natural events; a country obsessed by war abroad but blind to its founding war at home; and a thriving nation-state still to realise its political independence.

McKenna's wise and humane history reveals the surprising in the familiar and reframes the past so we can see the present more clearly.



## The eleventh hour

Author: Salman Rushdie

Publisher: Penguin Random House

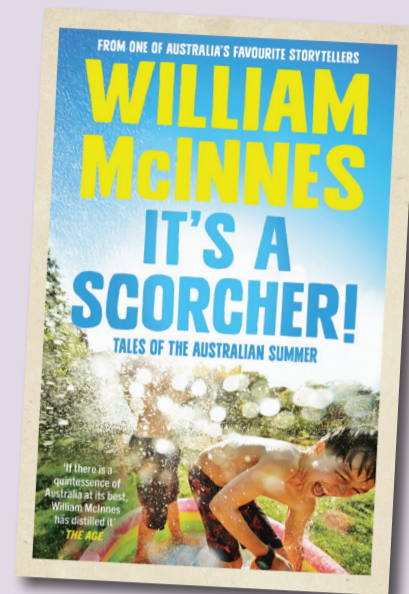
This collection of short stories by Salman Rushdie transports readers from Bombay neighbourhoods to English universities.

Two quarrelsome old men in Chennai, India, experience private tragedy against the backdrop of national calamity.

Revisiting the Bombay neighbourhood of *Midnight's Children*, a magical musician is unhappily married to a multibillionaire.

In an English university college, an undead academic asks a lonely student to avenge his former tormentor.

These five short stories move between the three countries that Rushdie has called home – India, England and America – and explore what it means to approach the eleventh hour of life.



## It's a scorcher! Tales of the Australian summer

Author: William McInnes

Publisher: Hachette

Bestselling author and acclaimed actor William McInnes returns with a collection of stories about those roasting hot months that make an Australian summer.

In this collection of nostalgic stories that will make you laugh and cry, McInnes recalls moments in time and memories of summers past.

He takes us back to the energy-sapping heat of Redcliffe in the 1960s and 70s, ruminates on budgie smugglers, remembers holiday road trips that went on forever and epic Boxing Day Tests that stopped fans in their tracks.

This is a book about the Australia we are and the Australia we were – and the magic of those boiling-hot days when you wake up and know it's going to be a scorcher.



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 14 July 2026.

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