

ThePoint



Getting the deal done!

We did this together! Our collective campaigning got this deal done. IEU members, through your persistence, tenacity, creativity and solidarity, at last forced employers to recognise and take action to deal with the scourge of workload intensification and the need for ground-breaking measures to combat it.

Negotiations that led to the in-principle deal for Victorian Catholic schools were supported throughout by timely, tireless and enthusiastic campaigning efforts by IEU members across Victoria.

In early 2022, when a deal was already overdue and shortly after a draft Victorian Government Schools Agreement was finalised, hundreds of members sent in

'solidarity selfies' to create a photo petition for Catholic education employers. We wanted these employers to see the faces of the educators they were denying progress on salaries, conditions, and workloads. The cover of *The Point's* first edition for the year featured over 200 of those photos, a display of unity which would define the year's campaigning.

'No wins will be simply handed down to

IEU members,' we wrote then. 'There is still a lot of hard bargaining to be done before our Agreements will be ready for member approval. That turned out to be something of an understatement!

A snap teacher workload survey in March returned a remarkable 2000 submissions within just 24 hours, and found that amongst the most popular proposed solution to workload pressures

were time in lieu for additional attendance, reduced administration, reduced Scheduled Class Time, caps on meetings and greater autonomy over the work done in non-teaching time.

The second edition of *The Point* that year showcased the Report Card campaign, where members gave the employers represented by MACS a FAIL grade for their inaction on a deal.

Continued page 3



The Anna Stewart Memorial Project: training union women

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project is a women's leadership training and development program which encourages women to be active in their unions. Participants train at Trades Hall for one week and are placed with a union for a week. They learn campaigning and organising skills, union history, the workplace rights of delegates and Reps, and emerging issues for women at work. The next intake of the Project is 15-26 May 2023.

If you're interested in applying, email info@ieuvictas.org.au or call (03) 9254 1860.

A raffle for justice

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA, the global justice organisation of the Australian union movement, builds connections between people and across borders. APHEDA's on-the-ground assistance addresses the causes of inequality, not the symptoms.

The annual APHEDA raffle is now open. Prizes include the Specialized Turbo 3.0 e-bike from Omafiets, valued at \$4800; a \$1500 Good Food voucher to dine at some of Australia's best restaurants; and a \$500 online gift voucher for beloved independent bookshop Gleebooks. To support global justice and worker's rights, buy tickets at apheda.auraffles.com.au or call 1800 888 674.

Update your details now

If you have not yet checked the contact details we have for you, please login to Member Access now and check:

- Do we have you at your 2023 school?
- Are you on the correct fee category for 2023?
- Do we have your current email address?
- Are you taking any extended leave during 2023?
- Do you only want an e-copy of *The Point*?

Login with your member number and home postcode (unless you have previously changed your password)

UNIONS FOR YES MERCH



These t-shirts don't just say the right thing, they say it in style! Black, red, yellow, and even white garments which support the Yes for Voice referendum campaign. All proceeds from Unions For Yes merchandise will go towards our campaign for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament and recognition in the Constitution.

To order your clobber with cachet, go to: shop.australianunions.org.au

You can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders further by joining the First Nations Workers Alliance at: fnwa.org.au.

What's in The Point

Deals, not no deals

Fruitful summer of independent school bargaining Page 8

IR Bill set to pay off

How the new industrial relations landscape affects you Page 9

The first Indigenous 'Yes' vote

The long, proud struggle that won the 1967 referendum Page 11

The New Deal on workloads

Success stories from smart schools Page 13

Workplace mental health hazards

Work Shouldn't Hurt report exposes need for new rules Page 14

The relevance of St Paul

TLN chief's book about an educational 'changemaker' Page 15

Women and Equity

Legislation tackles the gender pay gap Page 16

ChatGPT: employer or destroyer?

New technology usually disrupts in unexpected ways Page 19

Contact us

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) @IEUVicTas

IEU INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION VICTORIA TASMANIA

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

T: (03) 9254 1860
F: (03) 9254 1865
FreeCall: 1800 622 889
E: info@ieuvictas.org.au
W: www.ieuvictas.org.au

CONTRIBUTIONS & LETTERS

from members are welcome and should be forwarded to: *The Point* PO Box 1320, South Melbourne 3205, or by email to: ThePoint@ieuvictas.org.au

MELBOURNE OFFICE:

120 Clarendon Street, Southbank 3006

HOBART OFFICE:

212 Liverpool Street, Hobart 7000

The Point is published by the Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania.

EDITORIAL CONTENT:

Responsibility for editorial comment is taken by D James, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank 3006. Views expressed in articles reflect those of the author and are not necessarily union policy.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

General Secretary:

Debra James

Deputy Secretary:

David Brear

President:

Mark Williams

Deputy President:

Teresa Huddy

Ordinary Members:

Alexandra Abela
Jason Blackburn
Adam Bremner
Marcus Corlett
Craig Hogan
Lisa Mason

Member Resident in Tasmania:

Ben Rheinberger

ES Members:

Andrea Hines
Christopher Mitchell

COUNCIL PRESIDENTS & DEPUTIES

Catholic Primary Council

President: Maree Shields
Deputy: Rachael Evans

Catholic Secondary Council

President: (Vacancy)
Deputy: Lauren Hall

Independent Council

President: (Vacancy)
Deputy: Zoe Skeggs

Tasmanian Council

President: John Waldock
Deputy: Kim Merhulik

Principals' Council

President: (Vacancy)
Deputy: Frances Matisi

Teacher retention starts with respect

Our members on the front line have been carrying the burden for far too long and at too high a price.



GENERAL SECRETARY
DEBRA JAMES

Our members work in the most important job: educating, inspiring, and developing students so they go out into the world eager to be engaged, curious, lifelong learners who contribute to whatever field they pursue. Education is so much more than ATARs and NAPLAN results. Our members shape the future.

Right now, the profession is in crisis. The teacher shortage that has been building over recent years cannot be remedied swiftly; it will require a long-term commitment by governments, regulators, universities, employers, the profession itself and its unions.

The problem has multiple contributing factors but solving it starts with genuine respect for and understanding of the work of our educators. Educators need to be trusted to do their jobs as professionals. They don't need to be micromanaged or treated as if they were students needing to be organised by others. Their salary should properly reflect the value and importance of the work they do and the overwhelming responsibility that comes with it.

Intense workloads, dealing with difficult students, dealing with difficult parents, increased accountability, implementation of new policies, adherence to those policies and the 'checking off' that accompanies these policies – the constant demand to do more is leading to teacher burn out. It's now hard to keep going as a teacher and even those who love their jobs are retiring or simply moving out of the profession. Many teachers are also quitting in their first five years.

So, we've got experienced teachers leaving, newish teachers leaving and far too many students doing their initial teacher education leaving before

the end of their courses. COVID obviously made things very difficult, but these problems were building up before the pandemic and there is no sign yet of light at the end of the tunnel.

For Australia to provide high quality education, we need well-resourced schools staffed with empowered, trusted, well-remunerated people, working in environments where they are given the time to do their job effectively and maximise the experience for their students. Those who lead and control the profession need to give serious consideration to ways to attract and retain our education workforce. It starts with the government and flows through every layer of regulation and governance. Every single school employer can do their bit to retain the staff they have.

It starts with recognising all the work they do, then ensuring there is enough time to do it and properly recognising that time. Employers, and their representatives at school level, need to start dealing with the issues facing the profession on the ground. Teachers and education support staff need their leaders to listen to them and act on what they're being told. They need leaders with the courage to act; leaders with the courage to be open to and make change; leaders who trust them, leaders who really care about their wellbeing. They don't need leaders who set out to squeeze every drop out of their staff, who don't listen, and don't genuinely consult. That said, heads of schools also need to be supported by their employers so they can be effective, empowering, and inspiring leaders.

The IEU will not stop speaking out for our members and fighting for the recognition they deserve and the support they so desperately need for the future of their profession.

Experts weigh in on teacher numbers

The extent of the teacher shortage facing Australian education was recognised by the establishment of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan in 2022.

It recommended strengthening initial teacher education, keeping the teachers we have, elevating the profession, and better understanding future teacher workforce needs.

Monash University's Fiona Longmuir says of those priorities, improving teachers' working conditions and encouraging positive and respectful public perceptions of teaching are the most important.

'The expectations of teachers' performance have increased over time as schools increase their reliance on standardised tests. Teaching has become more time-consuming, and more physically and emotionally demanding, while the pay and social rewards are often perceived as unsatisfactory.'

Professor of Education at University of Sydney, Anthony Welch told the *Courier Mail* that state governments regularly promise to relieve the administrative burden on teachers, 'but they are the ones who created the problem with the endless demands for detailed performance data'.

Like Deb James, he believes that any solution must start with respect.

'If we want our teachers to get the best results and produce the bright inquiring minds that will lead the next generation, we need to select high quality entrants into the profession, pay them well, and relieve the admin burden.'

ACU Executive Dean of Education and Arts, Professor Mary Ryan, said fast-tracking teaching students through university courses 'risks longevity in the profession'.

'We don't want to see graduates enter the profession only to leave shortly after due to being under-prepared and feeling unsupported for what is complex work,' Professor Ryan said.

PeopleBench, school workforce improvement company, says retention strategies are as important as recruitment.

'Until schools become amazing places to work, the sector will continue to experience dwindling supply over the medium and long horizon.'

Getting the deal done! *(continued from front page)*

And the stark messages from IEU members surely gave them pause: 'Teachers need to be treated with more respect. Value the skills, knowledge, and experiences of staff with real actionable promises.'

The campaign intensity increased mid-year, with members in schools all over the state taking actions which generated extensive media attention, particularly in regional area.

The key Melbourne-based event of the campaign was a strongly attended rally in August at James Goold House, Catholic education headquarters in East Melbourne, which featured powerful speeches from members fed up with ridiculous workloads. Teacher Maree Shields said she was 'running on empty' and was all present were deeply moved by her admission that doing her job properly left her with 'nothing in her tank' for her family.

Video of the heartfelt words of Maree and fellow IEU Rep Rebecca Long were highlighted on our campaign website and shared widely on social media.

The James Goold House rally also featured the first appearance by the 'MACS Truck' – a mobile billboard with

unmissable pro-deal slogans which visited several significant Catholic education sites, including the National Catholic Education Conference in September.

Equally effective were the cheeky social media messages of many enterprising IEU members: the Conference's twitter feed was bombarded with hilarious, exasperated reminders that the wages and conditions of teachers had to be a priority, not an afterthought, for Catholic education. The Conference theme 'The Future is Listening' inspired some particularly good material!

This was the way of the campaign – many people, on many fronts, in many different media, building cumulative pressure.

By this stage, determined members were creating so much media attention that the usual *In the News* section in *The Point* was doubled in size. From Wodonga to Bendigo, Ballarat to Shepparton, the campaign was given significant coverage across all forms of media.

Meanwhile, a draft deal had been reached in the Sale diocese and put to an employee ballot, in which the IEU-negotiated workload improvements were resoundingly backed in a positive

vote announced on 18 August. So now Government schools and one chunk of Victorian Catholics had a deal – but progress across the rest of the Catholic sector remained frustratingly and inexplicably slow.

Cue the *No More Freebies* campaign!

NMF called on all affected members from the start of Term 4 to refuse to perform any work beyond that which was legally required of them.

Initially, it targeted 'extra' work taken for granted by employers, such as answering emails, attending events, or consulting with parents after work hours. Other members and sub-branches conducted rallies outside school before the school day, staged communal walkouts at the end of the work day, organised petitions, wrote messages to parents, established campaign working groups, banned written feedback and enforced strict adherence to meeting time lengths.

Some enthusiastic adherents, finally experiencing sane working conditions, claimed they planned to keep the spirit of *No More Freebies* alive forever!

When progress on a deal was

announced at year's end, it was due to members across the state taking action on all these many fronts.

It took IEU General Secretary Deb James and Rep Heather Macardy addressing the Senate Committee Hearing into the *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill*, revealing the toll of drawn-out negotiations on education staff.

It took letters to parents and principals and media organisations.

It took meetings, rallies in freezing winter rainstorms, walk-ins, walk-outs, talkback calls, social media posts and conversations and questions...

At long last, we got there. We won a deal which addressed all of our key concerns – and we won this as a result of the sum of all these efforts.

The efforts of you, the members – the union!

Head to pages 12 and 13 for more details of the in-principle Victorian Catholic deal.



Farewell, Denis Matson, and thank you!

There are great unionists, and there are union legends. Recently retired IEU Industrial Officer Denis Matson is comfortably ensconced in the latter category.

Most members would know Denis' industrial acumen from *The Point*. Until the end of 2022, he penned the informative and essential *Know Your Rights* column and the infamously scathing and witty *Hall of Shame* column at the end of each year.

For many union members wronged by an employer, in several industries, over several decades, Denis was a skilful, fearless, and relentless advocate.

For employer opponents, he was a formidable and uncompromising combatant.

And for the IEU, he was a game-changer.

General Secretary Deb James says when Denis came to the union in 2009, he 'lifted our game' industrially.

'He said 'let's have a crack' when it was hard... he gave us confidence to take on more matters on behalf of members.'

Deb said when Denis started working for the IEU, some snobby employers, dismissive of the 'blue collar' advocate, got a rude shock.

'Denis couldn't bear employers who took advantage of employees,' Deb says. 'He was driven by a sense of justice and fairness. He's dogged and just never gives up.'

Amongst Denis' many wins for the IEU was a spectacular success in a major dispute against the Australian International Academy over the abuse of fixed-term contracts, which is still chuckled over by legal eagles. His work in bargaining in Tasmania after the union merger was also notable. Throughout his tenure, the union racked up excellent results for members as a result of his commitment and determination.

IEU Assistant Secretary Simon

Schmidt was at the time the Organiser responsible for AIA, and recalls many hours in various courtrooms agog at the extraordinary twists and turns in the case – and watching Denis take it all in his stride. 'The employer went to the most extraordinary (and expensive) lengths to deny their misuse of fixed-term contracts. A matter that should have been settled in weeks became an epic battle which dragged on for many years. Anybody without Denis' unmatched determination would have thrown in the towel at so many points.

But his stubbornness matched that of the employers – and he calmly convinced all of us that we couldn't give up, that our members were worth the fight, and that this was our opportunity to set a precedent for all workers on precarious employment contracts. And he was right!

Simon says that he only hopes that Denis will find the time in his busy retirement to write a book about this extraordinary (and occasionally very entertaining) case.

Assistant Secretary Cara Maxworthy said Denis had a 'profound effect' on her during her time on the union's Committee of Management and as a new Organiser, and had a 'remarkable' impact on the IEU and its members. Another colleague admits there's a 'there's a certain enjoyment one gets from reading a strongly worded letter or email to a naughty employer that Denis has crafted'.

'I think there are a lot of bad employers out there who were absolutely, and deservedly, terrified of him. Having Denis in your corner as a member would have

been very reassuring.'

Despite being 'intimidating to naughty employers', Denis showed 'tremendous patience' with rookie Organisers, helping develop their skills and an understanding of the industrial aspects of their work.

The same IEU staffer also notes that Denis had, 'without a doubt, the best shirt game in the entire organisation'

Despite his sartorial splendour, employers discovered that Denis was as 'tenacious in his defence of members' workplace rights' as any shop steward in overalls.

Another colleague recalled a case in which a teacher lost her job after applying for her seventh successive fixed-term contract. Attempting to up the ante with the employer, the Organiser said, 'You have to understand that our Industrial Officer Denis Matson would rather go to Fair Work than the footy'.

Denis was asked if he wanted that line left out of the Organiser's evidence.

'Denis thought for a second and then said 'No, leave it in.'

The Organiser says this response still makes him laugh. The teacher won the case, applied for and won an ongoing job, and is still at the school many years later. And the school in question now has a memorandum of understanding with the IEU which ensures no other employees can be kept on fixed-term contracts unfairly.

Another Organiser says Denis was a very good communicator with members, explaining with 'care and attention to detail the specifics of their case and their options'.

'He was logical and matter-of-fact with members... and they always knew exactly what the possible outcomes of proceeding with their matter would be.'

Denis offered some tips for his IEU colleagues in his final internal email. He started by writing: 'A good official has empathy and passion.'

Those words describe Denis Matson's work for the IEU.

TASMANIAN CATHOLIC BARGAINING

Progress, and hope

After an extremely frustrating 2022, the outlook for bargaining in Tasmanian Catholic education is looking much rosier this year.

Following recent staffing changes within the Catholic Education Tasmania employer bargaining ranks, there has been a much more productive tone to discussions this year.

The more constructive relationship has extended beyond the bargaining table. Disputes over Tim Tams appear to be a thing of the past, as do other more serious attempts by employers to hinder the legitimate work of IEU Organisers supporting and representing members. Another important example is the recent

settlement of a dispute over the rejection of Communicable Diseases Leave for IEU members who had contracted COVID. As a result of that settlement, CET agreed to review all rejected COVID-related Communicable Diseases Leave applications.

Already, there is real progress in negotiations around workload alleviation measures, salaries for support staff, and parental leave provisions. The AEU Tasmania is campaigning hard for improved outcomes in government schools, and we are liaising with them to ensure

that our two unions can work together as far as possible to improve working conditions in schools across Tasmania.

While things are looking up, it is more important than ever that we continue to build the union's strength.

That's where members in Tasmanian Catholic schools come in. We need you to discuss the issues in your workplace with your colleagues and encourage them to join your union.

Our primary leverage in Agreement negotiations is strength in numbers. We're

making real progress at the bargaining table at last, but to get the best outcome for staff in Tasmanian Catholic education we need to be able to show that we are strong and united.

New faces bring expertise and enthusiasm

To better serve the union's growing membership, three new Organisers joined the ranks at the start of 2023. Not only do they refresh the organisation with new ideas, but as recent teachers they also bring immediate knowledge of the issues facing members.



New organiser **Jack Bock** served as an IEU Rep for six years, most of his time at Catholic Regional College, Sydenham, where he recruited 40 members to create a vibrant sub-branch.

He made the transition to union work 'to advocate for the rights and conditions of education workers by empowering them to confront injustice and strive for a workplace that is free of discrimination'.

He believes unions and their members 'can make schools better places for staff to work and for students to learn'.

Jack feels he can help bring millennial workers into the union, having begun his role as a Rep with the induction of new student teachers.

'This gave me the opportunity to discuss the importance of unionism with the next generation of teachers. Shoutout to the three student teachers I had over the years too! Make sure you've all renewed your IEU membership!'

Jack participated fully in the Victorian Catholic campaign last year, organising report cards, petitions, and a walk-out, and making his voice heard at the major rally at Catholic education headquarters.

He's been one of the first in and last out of the office early in his tenure, keen to pick up everything he needs to best serve members. As a self-described geek, he's thriving on the 'ritual' of the daily lunchtime office quiz. And he says he's thriving on being able to eat when he pleases, not just at recess!

Karen Bailey joined the union as a university student and has been a member throughout her 18 years of teaching in independent, Catholic, and tertiary campuses. A Rep during the Mowbray Colleges collapse, she felt 'extremely well supported' by the union during this trying time, and it made a big impression.

'The Union organisers were there for us from beginning to end, and kept checking in weeks, months, even years later,' she recalls. 'The union gave members the strength and tools to come together as one.'

That support sparked her interest in working for the union. However, Karen believes unionism is in her blood; her great-great grandfather was the president of the Australian Workers Union, during the famous shearers strike. Karen was recently appointed to the IEU Council, which further spurred her desire to work for the union.

'I've seen the workload in schools increase every year, with little to no give in the other direction. Working together with members to support the line between work/life balance and striving for equity in the workplace is something I'm very passionate about.'

Karen says she came to work for the IEU to 'help give people the tools they need to empower members in schools and stand with them while they show their strength'.

Since starting with the union, the biggest surprise for Karen has been the huge variation in conditions from school to school.

'I'm also surprised at how many school staff aren't members! You insure your house, car, why not your livelihood?'

Like Karen, **Heather Macardy** was deeply affected by an early experience, in her case the 2012 IEU teacher's strike, which occurred in her second year as a teacher. She was one of only five people out of 40 staff at her school who joined that action, and at the rally on the steps of parliament, she found herself on stage in front of a huge crowd alongside General Secretary Deb James.

Heather was inspired by the 'passion and power' of the speakers that day as they discussed the rights of staff and she knew then she'd always be committed to union-based activism.

Heather's passion for education is 'the driver' behind her change of job.

'Becoming an Organiser allows me to represent and support staff in schools, which then helps them to support their students.'

'I am acutely aware of how incredibly hard staff work in schools, and this gives me the determination to help advance and represent members' interests, improve working conditions, and ensure our members' voices are well represented so they feel they are heard and supported.'

Heather says she feels 'absolutely privileged and lucky' to be working for, and with IEU members.

'When visiting schools over the last few weeks, I felt such a deep sense of pride when going through the new proposed Catholic Agreement knowing that working for the IEU is allowing me to be part of something bigger, that we will always work towards achieving better outcomes for educators and staff in schools.'

A deal that will work



DEPUTY SECRETARY
DAVID BREAR

Members in Victorian Catholic schools, other than those in the Sale diocese, should be voting on a new Agreement sometime late in Term 1 or early Term 2, and most schools are well underway in implementing some of the new provisions negotiated as part of the deal.

To begin with, scheduled class time reduces by 1 hour in 2023 and a further half-hour in 2024. In secondary schools, this is a 7.5% reduction which gives teachers back valuable time to concentrate on preparation and assessment and other core work.

When you factor in the abolition of extras by 2025, teachers in secondary schools will have almost 2 hours more a week to decide for themselves the work that needs to get done.

Primary teachers too are freed up by an hour and a half a week, which means schools are going to need to find ways for specialists to cover parts of the curriculum currently being taught by classroom teachers.

This reduction of scheduled class time is long overdue. When I first picked up the chalk (yes we used chalk) back in 1989, a full load was 20 hours a week in a secondary school and up around 24 hours in primary – but the job was completely different to what it is now. There was no NCCD, or email or PSGs. The admin and compliance burden on teachers was nothing like it is today.

Given all these workload burdens, something just had to be done to give teachers time – and also to make sure that this new time wasn't gobbled up by the stacking-on of ever more employer-directed tasks, which would have totally defeated the purpose of reducing scheduled class time.

This is where the '30 + 8 model' comes in, as finally there is a cap on what teachers can be directed to do during their working week. Add the new time in lieu provisions and we have a suite of workload improvements which together should really make a difference to teachers in Catholic schools.

We know that there will be implementation issues around all of this and that some employers will and are looking for loopholes. They do this to their own detriment.

Employers have committed in negotiations that some of the steps schools are taking such as 'shaving' down the lengths of periods are temporary measures which will be reversed as schools adjust. They know that practices like these ultimately only damage student outcomes, which is not acceptable, especially in today's competitive school marketplace.

Of course the implementation of the new Agreement would have been considerably easier if the Catholic employers got their act together more quickly last year as they did in the Sale diocese. Working through changes mid-year always had potential to be messy.

The fact that many schools have already implemented the full changes though proves it can be done. We know that at a school level, primarily through Consultative Committees, more work will need to be done to lock in the changes and that's where improved consultative provisions are so important.

IEU staff are flat out visiting schools explaining this new deal to members and at the same time continuing their work in independent schools and of course in Tassie, where negotiations on a new Catholic schools' Agreement continue.

None of these improvements which are so valuable to our profession could have been achieved without our union. IEU members have been saying for a long time that workload improvements were badly needed and that schools would continue losing staff until this was properly addressed.

There's still plenty to do but this Agreement is a huge step in the right direction.

EPIC issues escalate

On Wednesday, 25 January, the IEU was informed that staff pay at East Preston Islamic College was being withheld due to a dispute between the former and current board of directors.

The union contacted senior school members and forwarded a letter of demand to the principal and current Board regarding this unlawful withholding of monies.

By Monday 30 January, the Islamic Co-Ordinating Council of Victoria had received 54 requests for financial hardship loans from staff members whose fortnightly salary, due Thursday 26 January, had not been paid.

The *Herald Sun* reported that the amount owing could have been as much as \$300,000, while *The Age* quoted IEU Deputy Secretary David Brear as saying: 'Alienating your own staff at a time of acute teacher shortage seems a reckless strategy to me, and the IEU is also concerned as to whether funds that should be spent on student needs are instead being squandered on lawyer's fees.'

'This refusal to pay hard working staff is being used to gain leverage by one side over the other. It's hardly a positive way to start the school year as the staff look forward to welcoming back students, not knowing when they will next be paid.'

'Our members just want to do the job they love at the school they love – but not surprisingly they expect to get paid to do so.'

To help force resolution of the issue, IEU filed an urgent dispute at the Fair Work Commission, and also initiated action in the Federal Court.

It is unacceptable for staff to be deprived of their wages for any reason. Worker's wages are sacrosanct, and the union will not hesitate to take similar action in the future.

The pressure of the legal actions and the media attention led to a successful resolution within a week, with all outstanding monies owed paid to staff.

However, that wasn't the end of the turmoil at the school.

In late February, after the recently-appointed acting principal and vice-principal were stood down with little explanation, teachers, parents, and students held a rally outside the school.

Over 100 teachers and support staff at EPIC signed a petition calling for the reinstatement of the previous principal. Parents were warned they could be suspended or face 'serious consequences' if they protested. Later, there were threats of expulsion, and concerning confrontations at the school gate.

The following Monday, the school gates were locked and guarded by security personnel.

David Brear called for stability to return immediately, reminding the powerbrokers involved that 'none of this is the fault of students, families or hard-working staff'.

'As we did to recover unpaid wages in January, we will not hesitate to take legal action if required to protect our members.'

Brear told *The Age* EPIC had built

a 'well-deserved reputation as a good school that plays an important community role'.

It was the first Islamic school in Victoria to protect and improve staff employment conditions through a union-negotiated Agreement, and for many years had been a stable and well-managed institution – which makes the recent upheaval all the more distressing.

As we go to press, the IEU has been holding on-site meetings to discuss the situation and support members, and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority is reviewing the school's governance. The IEU is working closely with VRQA as this unfortunate and volatile situation develops, and we will keep members updated.

Students, parents, and staff working at the school are unwitting victims of political and religious schisms beyond their control. No employee should be subjected to this ordeal, and no student's education should be interrupted.

IEU members have been collateral damage in this fracas and the union will continue to protect their rights and work with authorities to ensure appropriate governance returns to East Preston Islamic College.

Herald Sun

East Preston Islamic College staff left without pay as rift between school operators deepens

More than 100 staff at East Preston Islamic College have had two weeks' pay withheld due to a serious rift between the school's operators.

Independent Education Union deputy general secretary David Brear said lengthy discussions have been held with the board member who is refusing to release the money.

The IEU has filed an urgent dispute at the Fair Work Commission which is due to go to conciliation next Monday and will also initiate action in the Federal Court.

"Alienating your own staff at a time of acute teacher shortage seems a reckless strategy to me, and the IEU is also concerned as to whether funds that should be spent on student needs are instead being squandered on lawyer's fees," Mr Brear said.

"This refusal to pay hard working staff is being used to gain leverage by one side over the other. It's hardly a positive way to start the school year as the staff look forward to welcoming back students, not knowing when they will next be paid."

"Our members just want to do the job they love at the school they love – but not surprisingly they expect to get paid to do so."

THE AGE

A matter of principal: Parents, students rally as school board ousts two leaders in three weeks

The Victorian schools regulator has launched a review of an Islamic college in Preston after it was engulfed in governance woes and its principal and vice principal were stood down with little explanation.

Independent Education Union deputy secretary David Brear said the issues at the school were deeply concerning.

"While it is still unclear how the governance structure has so badly failed the school, what is clear is that none of this is the fault of students, families or hard-working staff, and it is essential for their sake that stability is returned immediately," Brear said.

"As we did to recover unpaid wages in January, we will not hesitate to take legal action if required to protect our members."

Brear said EPIC had built a well-deserved reputation as a good school that plays an important community role, and was the first Islamic school in Victoria to protect and improve staff employment conditions through a union-negotiated agreement.



Religious discrimination proposals flawed

This recommendation resulted from an inquiry initiated last year by the new federal Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus which effectively asked the ALRC to advise it as to how to end such discrimination.

The IEU supports the removal of these exemptions which have enabled a small minority of intolerant employers to relentlessly bully and dismiss hundreds of IEU members over many decades. This discriminatory conduct included the dismissal of LGBTIQ+ members, those who were living apart from their partners, members who used non-approved methods of IVF and others who simply sought a dialogue with their church over its religious teachings and moral values.

The IEU agrees with three academics

who wrote for *The Conversation* who described the removal of those exemptions as 'sensible, clear, and necessary'.

'They cut through the noise that has surrounded these issues for many years. They appropriately protect both the rights of LGBTQ kids and teachers to be treated with dignity and respect, and of religious schools to maintain their connection to faith.'

However, the effect and integrity of these proposed changes is threatened by other recommendations made by the ALRC.

The Government also requested advice from the ALRC on changes that would ensure that religious schools could preference staff of their own religion so that they 'can continue to build communities of faith'.

And, worryingly, some of the ALRC's

responses would yet again allow non-government schools to discriminate against IEU members.

Most contentiously, the ALRC suggested that the Government should examine creating new laws which would allow employers to discipline and dismiss employees who 'actively undermine the ethos of the (religious educational) institution'.

In its submission to the ALRC, the IEU strongly opposed this position because it would effectively remove the protections for IEU members the government said it wishes to put in place with the exemption changes.

There are obviously unfair aspects to this deeply flawed proposal. Firstly, an ethos is to be specific to a school and therefore can be unmoored from or even at odds with the

school's faith base.

Secondly, there is no requirement for a school ethos to be reasonable or even lawful. In fact, the more unreasonable, narrow, and intrusive the school's ethos is the more likely that members could be dismissed without intentionally breaching the school's ethos.

Australia's leading anti-discrimination experts, academics, and the ACTU are stridently critical of this element of the ALRC's proposal.

In their submission, the Australian Discrimination Law Experts Group (ADELG) writes: 'To the extent that any organisation has an 'ethos', existing employment law provides mechanisms for ensuring that employees uphold such ethos. There is no need to specifically include this term in



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Getting Paid

Recently, there have been high-profile instances of education workers being underpaid or paid late.

Many staff in Victorian Catholic schools have over recent months seen payroll systems struggle to cope with the implementation of salary improvements and allowances won in their new Agreement – unfortunately in many cases this led to significant pay delays, with cascading effects for those who have bill, rent or mortgage payments synchronised with their normal pay days.

In a more extreme recent example, certain parties involved in a Board dispute at the East Preston Islamic College took the extraordinary step of halting a normal January pay run, leaving over 100 staff in immense uncertainty until the IEU's legal actions resolved the matter the following week.

At the height of the pandemic, some institutions tried to pass costs on to staff. Again the IEU was able to successfully fight this. In just two of many examples, nearly \$200,000 in backpay was won for nine IEU members at the Australian National College of English, and hundreds of stood-down staff across a number of high-fee schools were reinstated and backpaid following IEU legal action.

While most of us would notice very quickly if our pay didn't turn up when expected, superannuation can be easier to overlook. Unfortunately, we have seen too many times that when a school (or any business) is struggling financially, timely superannuation payments are often the first to go – and ultimately if a business

does fail, this can leave employees thousands of dollars out of pocket and with a real fight on their hands to get their legitimate entitlements.

While the law is very clear that employees must be paid correctly and in a timely manner, the examples above show that it is important to be vigilant and to know your rights and entitlements.

What to do if your pay is not on time or if you suspect your pay is incorrect

If you don't receive your pay on time, we suggest speaking directly with your employer to see what the issue is and why you weren't paid. Most of the time, the employer should be able to rectify this quickly. If, however, you make attempts to speak with your employer but to no avail, or it is obvious that your employer will not pay you, then contact the union.

Usually, the union will first contact your employer directly to try and resolve the matter, however, if the matter is serious then the union can bring a dispute at the Fair Work Commission or in some cases, apply to a court to enforce payment of wages as a contractual entitlement under the Fair Work Act.

The courts have found that underpaying an employee under an employment contract will give rise to a contravention of the civil remedy provision because an employee will not

be paid in full for the performance of work at least monthly.

A failure for the employer to pay wages on time may amount to a breach of any of the following provisions of the Fair Work Act:

- contravention of the National Employment Standards
- contravention of a Modern Award
- contravening an Enterprise Agreement
- failure to pay an employee in full for work performed at least monthly
- failure to make and keep employee records
- failure to provide pay slips.

Once a payment is made, always check your payslips, which your employer is required by law to provide to you within one working day of paying you. If you believe that you've been underpaid and the payslip does not make it clear how the underpayment has occurred, make inquiries with your employer, and if that fails, contact the union for further advice. We will make inquiries with your employer on your behalf and advise you on whether we consider there is an underpayment.

The union will almost always be able to resolve these matters directly with the employer in a prompt manner, however, it is prudent to schedule your direct debits to occur several days after you expect your pay in case it isn't deposited on time by your employer.

The rules behind employee payments

Employees must be paid money for their work – meaning that they cannot be 'paid in-kind' (for example, with goods such as food). The right to payment stems from the employment contract, however, the entitlement to the method and frequency of payment is governed by the Fair Work Act and relevant Awards.

If there is an Enterprise Agreement that has different provisions on this entitlement, or is silent, then employees must be paid at least monthly (the Fair Work Act applies by default).

Where an employer fails to pay you on time, you are technically underpaid and may be able to bring a claim for underpayment and for a breach of the Fair Work Act, Award or Enterprise Agreement.

The most important take-away?

Know what you are entitled to, check your payslips and your superannuation payments, and don't wait to raise the issue if you believe something has gone wrong.

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) released a consultation paper in January this year which recommended the removal of the exceptions from anti-discrimination law which have allowed religious schools to discriminate against students and IEU members because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status or pregnancy.

the proposals; its potential breadth could privilege religious educational institutions above all other employers'.

ADELG points out that there is not, nor has there ever been a reference to the term 'ethos' in any of Australia's 13 federal, state or territory discrimination laws; the term has no meaning or history in Australian discrimination legislation; Australian discrimination case law has never considered its meaning or scope; and it doesn't appear in the international human rights treaties underpinning Commonwealth discrimination law.

'We see no reason to import a concept of such nebulous nature into our laws... Doing so runs the risk of unintended consequences, particularly the possibility of creating a much broader right to

preference or terminate employment than currently exists under Australian law.'

ADELG says determining the meaning of 'ethos' would be confusing for 'those seeking to comply with the law and those seeking to enforce it and resolve complaints'.

This would 'undermine the overall clarity of the proposed reforms and, again, add to the complexity of laws that were intended to be accessible'.

Under such a law, what rights would parents, teachers and students have – each with their own individual right to freedom of religion and belief – to determine the ever-evolving religious ethos of their educational institution? These communities may – and often do – disagree as to the ethos they attach to their religion, or

religious educational institution.

The ALRC is expected to provide its final report to the Attorney-General by 21 April 2023. The IEU encourages all members to keep informed about this hugely important piece of legislation.

The IEU calls for federal legislation that:

- Protects all employees from discrimination, in line with Australia's human rights undertakings
- Removes the special exemptions that allow religious institutions to discriminate
- Provides clearer parameters for the use of any 'employee preference' as they relate to the religion of an employee in a faith-based school
- Consolidates existing federal legislation to provide for discrimination protections as part of a single, broad-based, federal human rights regimen
- Introduces a positive duty on organisations to eliminate discrimination
- Empowers the Fair Work Commission as a free and impartial discrimination resolution service.

Opportunity now exists for the federal government to deliver equality to all workplaces and ensure protection from discrimination regardless of occupation or place of work.

INDEPENDENT BARGAINING

Hitting the ground running

If the start of the year is anything to go by, 2023 will be a huge year in bargaining and for achieving great outcomes in Agreements across the independent sector.

The union had six Agreements in independent schools approved in the Fair Work Commission in late December and early January, and we now have a total of 135 IEU-negotiated Agreements in effect across Victorian and Tasmanian independent schools and education providers. We are currently bargaining in 29 schools and about to commence bargaining in another 9.

Our team are working through the latest legislative changes, analysing DET and Catholic outcomes, comparing wins in other independent school bargains and collaborating with members to ensure bargaining outcomes are competitive and address member needs.



Approved

Following seven months of bargaining the **Kingswood College** Agreement was approved, yielding a 3 per cent increase to salaries and allowances per annum, a reduction in teachers' scheduled class time to mirror government schools, 18 weeks' paid parental leave for the primary carer, and superannuation paid for 22 weeks' of leave, increased Family and Domestic Violence Leave, increased redundancy provisions and two training days per annum for the IEU Rep.

The approved **King David School** Agreement saw the successful consolidation of two separate Agreements into one that covers all employees. Collaborative bargaining settled on 20 weeks' paid parental leave with superannuation on an additional 26 weeks, 3 per cent salary and allowances increase per year, a reduction in full-time hours for general staff from the standard 38 hours to 37.5 hours, no deduction of Annual Leave during school shut-down periods for ELC Assistants, and a \$100 per night camp allowance plus a rest day following a camp.

The **Bacchus Marsh Grammar** Agreement achieved strengthened consultation committee provisions including one hour of release time per term for CC work, family and domestic violence leave up to 20 paid days, 16 weeks paid parental leave and 20 days secondary carer's leave, five days pre-natal leave in addition to personal leave, an excessive heat clause to support staff working outside on days reaching above 35 degrees, and a wages increase to maintain a consistent premium of 5 per cent above the government teachers scale.

Bargaining at **Mt Scopus** saw scheduled class time reduced to 17.5 hours in the secondary sector and 20 in the primary, pay increases of 4 per cent in 2022, and 3 per cent in 2023 and 2024, 16 weeks paid parental leave, more regular consultative committee meetings and a single Agreement to cover all staff.

The **Bialik College** Agreement maintained their historical 4 per cent premium above government rates for teachers and assistants, increases to camp and meal allowances, expansion of infectious diseases leave to include any notifiable disease, meeting limits, and the right to disconnect from emails when away from the workplace.

At the table

After a strong No vote, bargaining will recommence for the Anglican Schools Commission Victorian Agreement covering **Cathedral College** and **Cobram Anglican Grammar** with a focus on improving workload reduction measures.

Xavier College bargaining continues into its sixth month with very slow progress. At each meeting, employer bargaining representatives introduce a new 'expert' to give their advice on bargaining and specified claims. These 'experts' are raising random comparisons to derail honest attempts to compare our claim to those in like schools. They have proposed we accept an increase to current face-to-face loads for some primary teachers and accept an additional meeting enabling the school to administer 20 mandated hours of professional practice, the purpose of which is to 'support the re-coding of teachers VIT requirements'. Staff representatives remain firm and aligned. This will be a protracted negotiation and Xavier have indicated that no pay rise will be offered until agreement has been reached.

Agreements

Victoria

28 Approved 2022

5 Approved 2023

27 At the table

1 At the table for the first time

Tasmania

6 Approved 2022

3 Approved 2023

3 At the table

At the end of 2022, **Billanook College** management were unwilling to accept important elements of the members' claim and bargaining stalled. Staff were unhappy with an unequal approach to pay – senior teachers were offered the smallest percentage above state sector wages of all other teachers – and the school refused any movement around reasonable caps on maximum class sizes.

The school took their offer to a vote, and members and other staff rejected the proposal with a 61 per cent 'NO' Vote. When bargaining resumed in the new year the school agreed to all teaching staff earning no less than 3.5 per cent above state wages for the length of the four-year agreement. The school also agreed to reduce the cap on maximum class sizes from 28. The bargaining team's broad consultation was a defining factor in winning these improvements. The new improved deal will be put to a vote as we go to print.

In the first bargaining meeting at **North-Eastern Montessori School** the staff Log of Claims was delivered. After the Log was tabled and wage comparisons were discussed, the school fast-tracked an immediate pay increase. A school proposal to introduce applications and interviews prior to pay increments at the top of the scale has not been well received by the bargaining representatives and will be taken to members for more discussion and a vote.

At the **Knox School** bargaining continues with slow progress. Contentious issues include scheduled class times and salary increases.

Trinity Grammar School employer bargaining representatives are resisting a comprehensive Agreement, just one of the challenges facing our employee representative team there.

The bargaining process at **Tintern Grammar** is nearing completion and Reps are awaiting an improved pay offer from school.

At **Shelford Girls' Grammar School** bargaining resumes mid-February where the employer representatives will respond to the employee Log of Claims.

Drafting has been completed at **Aitken College** and an Agreement will be put out to vote soon.

After starting bargaining in July last year, **St Leonard's College** employee representatives are unsatisfied with progress regarding workload improvements and will be contemplating a 'No' vote if agreement on specific claims cannot be gained.

Bargaining continues for the **Lutheran Education** (Victorian Schools)

Multi Enterprise Agreement. Whilst proposed improvements have been made on redundancy payments, parental leave entitlements, family violence leave entitlements and camp allowance, there is not yet any progress on workload improvements. Survey results showed that workloads had increased significantly over the past 3 years and reducing workloads is the most important claim for staff. We will continue to advocate strongly for the inclusion of workload improvements within the Agreement.



Negotiations continue at **Launceston Church Grammar** for an Agreement covering teachers, while they have concluded for general staff and management will put the final proposal to staff shortly.

At **St Michael's Collegiate** in Hobart, the school ran a vote to delay formalising the Agreement for 12 months for both teachers and general staff. However, some improvements will be accessible prior to the new Agreement being ratified. These include a 5.6 per cent pay increase and improvements to parental leave and domestic violence leave. Provisionally registered teachers may miss out on the full increase but will be back paid if successful in gaining their full registration during 2023 school year. The school will also review the general staff classification structure during the next year with this to be included in the new agreement in 2024.

Bargaining has nearly concluded at **Tarremah Steiner** with a final meeting required to review a draft of the Agreement. Salary increases for staff have already been delivered for the year.

Big improvements to industrial and employment laws – what to know



Changes to industrial and employment law were on the agenda at the last federal election, and the new government has delivered on its promises.

The raft of changes to the Fair Work Act are a giant step in the right direction to improving the working conditions of our members, and the IEU welcomes these changes.

The laws establish new expert panels within the Fair Work Commission to provide advice when changes to modern awards related to **pay equity** and the care and community sector are considered. These panels will also be involved when the Commission decides whether to make an equal remuneration order, a legal ruling that requires an employer to provide equal pay to employees who perform work of equal or comparable value, regardless of gender.

This is a great step in the ensuring pay equity and the gender pay gap is addressed.

There are also **stronger protections for employees on unpaid parental leave** who wish to extend their leave by a further 12 months, and for those who desire flexible working arrangements. The employer will now be required to give more detailed written responses for any refusal, and an employee

may be able to bring a dispute if the request is refused. This is the first time that employees have been able to bring disputes in these matters.

As these entitlements are normally accessed by women, this is a major step towards ensuring that women have equal and fair participation in the workplace.

Another important change is a prohibition on **pay secrecy** in the workplace and in contracts of employment. The latter means employees will be free to talk about how much they are paid with other employees, providing them with more bargaining power during pay negotiations.

The **enterprise bargaining system** has also been improved, with more rights for unions to act as bargaining representatives, and an enhanced ability to hold employers accountable for when they are dragging their feet or not bargaining in good faith. Collective bargaining will be easier, meaning workers and their unions will have greater leverage in negotiations. Modelling from the Centre for Future Work concluded most workers should be better off by over \$1400 a year as

a result. The ability to collectively bargain is a proven solution to reducing the pay gap, so again women should gain benefits.

Particularly importantly for many IEU members, **multi-employer bargaining rights** have been greatly improved. IEU members in Victorian Catholic education have for a long time been denied the right to take protected industrial action when bargaining – this loophole has been closed, and from mid-2023 we will have the same rights as all other workers to withdraw labour or take other forms of industrial action when negotiating a new Agreement.

These improvements will go a long way towards levelling the playing field in all our Agreement negotiations.

Some of these changes have already commenced, and others begin throughout this year. If you believe that there's a workplace issue which now arises because of these changes, get in touch with your union for some advice.

Snapshot: Other important IR changes

Gender equity

There are new protected attributes in Australian workplaces: breastfeeding, gender identity, and intersex status. Employers are now prohibited from discriminating against employees based on these attributes in relation to hiring, promotion, or other employment decisions.

Sexual harassment

The Fair Work Act introduces an express prohibition on sexual harassment in connection with work.

This protection applies to all workers, including employees, contractors, work experience students, and volunteers. Employers will be liable for sexual harassment committed by an employee or agent in connection with work, unless they can prove that they took all reasonable steps to prevent the harassment. A person who experiences sexual harassment in connection with work will be able

to pursue civil proceedings if the matter cannot be resolved through the Fair Work Commission.

Fairer negotiations

A change to the Fair Work Act addresses a loophole that allowed employers to threaten to terminate Enterprise Agreements to undermine the bargaining power of employees. The Bill will close that loophole and bring back fairness to the bargaining process.

Fixed-term contracts/job security

This Bill finally places restrictions on the use of fixed-term contracts, which are often used by employers to avoid providing job security. The Act limits the use of fixed-term contracts for the same role to two consecutive contracts or a maximum duration of two years, subject to certain exceptions. The Act also includes an anti-avoidance

provision to prevent employers from creating circumstances to get around the rules.

Flexible work

The Act now requires employers to meet with employees to discuss requests for flexible work arrangements and to consider alternative working arrangements before refusing a request. This is designed to promote greater work-life balance and help employees better manage their personal and professional responsibilities.

BOOT

The Better Off Over All Test has been simplified and the Fair Work Commission now has the power to make changes to an Agreement without requiring employees to vote on it again. It is expected these changes will make approving an agreement simpler, faster, and less prone to administrative errors.

Key changes

7 December 2022

- Changing the objectives in the Fair Work Act to include promoting:
 - job security
 - gender equality.
- Prohibiting pay secrecy.
- New protected attributes under the Fair Work Act:
 - breastfeeding
 - gender identity
 - intersex status.
- Sexual harassment – Employers now must take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate workplace sexual harassment, victimisation, and sex discrimination as far as possible.

7 Jan 2023

- Job advertisements can't include pay rates or workplace conditions that undercut employees' minimum entitlements, even if the ad was posted prior to this date.

1 February 2023

- All employees (including part-time and casual employees) are entitled to 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave in each 12-month period. The entitlement is upfront and applies to workers employed by businesses with more than 15 employees.

6 March 2023

- Positive obligation on employers to prevent sexual harassment against all workers in connection with work.
- Creation of two expert panels at the Fair Work Commission to focus on pay equity and the care and community sector.

6 June 2023

- Changes to extending unpaid parental leave, including giving the Fair Work Commission the power to deal with disputes.
- Flexible work – employees who are pregnant or those experiencing family and domestic violence will now be able to access flexible working arrangements.
- Increased access to multi-employer bargaining in workplaces where the majority of employees want a multi-employer Agreement.

7 June 2023

- Employers who have employees covered by '**zombie agreements**' need to let those employees know, in writing prior to 7 June 2023, that the agreement will be terminating on 7 December 2023.

1 July 2023

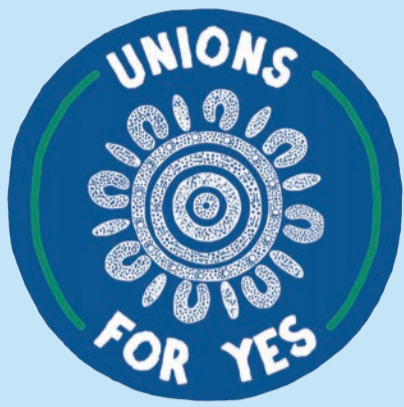
- Small claims: the cap for recovering unpaid entitlements increases from \$20,000 to \$100,000.

1 August

- All employees (including part-time and casual employees) are entitled to 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave in each 12-month period. The entitlement is upfront and applies to workers employed by businesses with fewer than 15 employees.

6 December 2023

- Fixed-term contracts: will be limited to two years, and the FWC will have the power to deal with disputes.
- Prohibition on fixed-term contracts in certain circumstances. Where exceptions apply and employers engage employees on new fixed-term contracts, a Fixed Term Contract Information Statement must be provided to such employees.



The Yes vote on a Voice to Parliament is union business

The union movement affirmed its support for the Yes vote in the upcoming Voice to Parliament referendum in the Unions for Yes campaign launch, an online event with over 1000 participants held on 22 February.

The ACTU's Indigenous Officer Lara Watson introduced ACTU President Michelle O'Neil, Secretary Sally McManus and Maritime Union of Australia Rep and Uluru Statement from the Heart signatory Thomas Mayo at the culmination of days of campaign planning in Melbourne.

The words shared online were forthright and direct because the messages were simple.

Michelle O'Neil: 'The Voice is simply about giving indigenous people a chance to have a say on laws that pertain to them.'

Sally McManus: 'We're supporting the Yes vote because we were asked by our Indigenous friends to do that.'

Thomas Mayo: 'It's about recognition and it's about having a voice.'

McManus said the union movement has a crucial role to play in the campaign for a Yes vote, because 'we're by far the largest people's movement in the country and by far the most effective campaigners.'

'This is our generation's time to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Indigenous comrades. They are asking us to walk alongside them to achieve this; it goes to our values of solidarity and equality and believing in a better life for everyone in Australia.'

She reiterated that the consensus reached in the Uluru Statement From The Heart was 'really clearly saying one single thing – they want to have a say when the government is making decisions about them.'

McManus compared this call to employees expecting to be informed properly when a boss made decisions affecting their working conditions.

Mayo, a Torres Strait Islander man born on Larrakia country in Darwin, outlined the union movement's support for Indigenous Australians, stretching back to the first Aboriginal advocacy groups at the start of the 20th century.

McManus said Australia is the only country in the world that doesn't have a treaty with its First Nations people.

'There's a proud history of unionists standing with us many times throughout history... this is union business; it has been for a long time.'

He said the lessons of having all their previous efforts ignored by governments went into the formulation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the basis of the push for a Voice to Parliament. Unions were one of the first groups to support the Uluru Statement and they have an 'absolutely vital' role to play in achieving a Yes vote and 'justice yet to be gained'.

McManus said Australia is the only country in the world that doesn't have a treaty with its First Nations people.

The Voice, apart from being an important step in its own right, is the first step in a carefully considered process to achieve that treaty.

McManus said it was time to officially recognise and celebrate the 65,000 years of continuous Indigenous culture on the lands now known as Australia.

'I am just incredibly humbled to live

on the country where a culture has existed for so long – I can't imagine something that lasts 300 years, let alone that long. What a human triumph!

'That a group of people could maintain a culture for so long... I am so humbled and so proud it's part of Australia and who we are.'

'It's something for all of us to be so proud of and embrace.'

TAKE ACTION

The ACTU is calling on unionists – and all Australians who support the Yes vote – to talk to people in their 'circle of influence' – family, friends and especially work colleagues – to garner support.

'Write down your circle of influence, list the names and have conversations with them. Your job is to win the votes of those people. If any of them say Yes with enthusiasm, turn them into a message carrier who tries to influence their circle of influence.'

'Well organised groups of thousands of people can have a huge influence.'

Voice FAQs

ACTU Indigenous Officer Lara Watson and Lorena Allam, Indigenous affairs editor, *The Guardian Australia*, answer the questions about the Voice to Parliament most asked by Australians (and unionists).

What is the Voice to Parliament?

LA The Voice would advise the Australian parliament and government on matters relating to the social, spiritual, and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Parliament and government would be obliged to consult it on matters that overwhelmingly relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, such as native title, employment, housing, the community development program, the NDIS, or heritage protection.

The Voice would be able to table formal advice in parliament, and a parliamentary

committee would consider that advice. It would not deliver services, manage government funding, be a clearing house for research, or mediate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

LW The Voice to Parliament would be purely advisory, and it would not have power of veto over government decisions.

What do you say to people who say there are prominent indigenous leaders opposed to the Voice?

LW Why do Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people have to agree or disagree as a collective? We are just as diverse as any

other group. We all want the same thing: a better life, a fair go, and recognition as the oldest living culture, that we never ceded country and that we are a sovereign people. Some of us have just chosen a different path to get the same outcome.

How would the Voice work in practice and what kind of impact would it have on decision-making in Canberra?

LW It's just like unions come EBA time; you have your elected leaders, they consult with their members, they get a log of claims and negotiations

begin. We want a seat at the table when governments are making decisions for us, we don't want to keep getting penalised for government decisions that don't address the issues we have.

What role can unionists play to support the Voice to Parliament?

LW Unions have a pivotal role to play in the success of this campaign, we know our workplaces and we know how to organise. Our members show up and they turn out, we have a proud history of supporting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples and we have answered their call to action to vote Yes.



VOICE HISTORY

Australia's previous Indigenous rights referendum

Australia's 1967 referendum is often misunderstood.

It returned the biggest YES vote in Australian history – over 90 per cent of Australians supported the two changes related to Indigenous people. That's notable given the poor record of referendums – only eight out of 44 referendums have been carried, and there's been no successful constitutional change since 1977.

Contrary to popular opinion, the 1967 referendum was not about voting rights – it simply removed two important lines in the constitution so Indigenous people had the right to be included in Australia's population (census) figures and the federal Government had the right to make laws for Indigenous Australians.

Those changes were significant.

Firstly, states had implemented laws which led to the dispossession, oppression, and alienation of Indigenous people. Their policies led to the removal of children from Indigenous families, creating the shameful Stolen Generations catastrophe.

The referendum, and the focus on Indigenous rights it brought was meant to prevent state governments from enacting policies and laws targeting Aboriginal communities.

Secondly, the vote indicated that non-Indigenous Australians didn't want to live in an apartheid nation.

Non-profit organisation Australians Together says the referendum was a 'significant moment in Australia where racism, as it was embedded into laws, was rejected by the population'.

Long road to referendum

There were calls for federal control of Aboriginal welfare as far back as the first decades following Federation. In

the 1936, pioneering activist William Cooper wrote to the prime minister pleading that 'all Aboriginal interests be absolutely federalised'.

In January 1938, The Day of Mourning held during the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet included a call for Commonwealth Government control of all Aboriginal affairs, and the granting of full citizenship to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 1944, a referendum failed which included a proposal for the Commonwealth Government to make laws concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

After World War II, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could apply to become citizens, but only if they renounced their Aboriginality.

Internationally, discrimination based on race was becoming increasingly unacceptable and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* from the United Nations in 1948 set a benchmark for civil liberties.

The Aborigines Progressive Association and the Australian Aborigines' League kept up pressure for reform and in 1957, the campaign to change the constitution through a referendum was launched at the Sydney Town Hall. A year later, the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement (later renamed FCAATSI to include Torres Strait Islander People) was established.

Protests at Warburton Ranges (1957), the Yirrkala Bark Petitions (1963), the Freedom Ride (1965) and the Wave Hill walk-off that began in 1966, gained media attention for Indigenous rights.

In the 1960s, FCAATSI met with politicians, and activists went on speaking

tours and promoted petitions.

When the federal government proposed repealing only section 51, (state control of laws) or section 127 (recognition in the census), protests were swiftly convened – activists demanded both.

On Census Day, 30 June 1966, activists distributed leaflets which appealed to people to write to their local member of parliament to support the repeal of both sections.

Campaigners eventually gathered 100,000 signatures by setting up in the streets of all capital cities and country towns, even waiting 'outside the gates of footy matches and churches'.

Finally, after another FCAATSI petition was presented, early in 1967, the government included both sections in the final referendum proposal.

Support for the 'Yes' vote was broad – major media outlets supported it, as did both sides of politics. Supporters put leaflets in letterboxes, held rallies and organised meetings.

The 'Yes' campaign pitched for 'human rights, fairness and justice', and appealed to notions of Australia's self-image and international standing.

And the Australian people resoundingly supported this.

Legacy of 1967

'In terms of its practical significance, perhaps the main achievement of the Referendum was to raise the expectations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people regarding Aboriginal rights and welfare,' the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies concludes.

'The referendum signalled a general shift in the way that Australian governments approached Indigenous

issues, away from assimilationist policies towards policies based around self-determination, reconciliation and, more recently, 'closing the gap'.

Poet Aunty Oodgeroo Noonuccal (also known as Kath Walker), who was integral to the campaign said, 'the real victory was the spirit of hope and optimism which affected blacks all over Australia. We had won something ... we were visible, hopeful, and vocal'.

But Australians Together points out that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people felt the vote 'had little to do with them or the problems encountered in everyday life'.

Some, like activist Charles Perkins, felt that it was 'more significant for non-Aboriginal people' and was effectively a test to see 'if non-Indigenous people were really interested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's welfare and rights'.

There may have been a shift in white opinion, but the vote 'didn't materially improve conditions or redress the problems stemming from the past... it did little to alter the everyday racism and discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people'.

With the upcoming referendum for the Voice to Parliament Australians again have an opportunity to vote in support of progress in Indigenous rights.

This referendum is neither the beginning nor the end of this long journey, but it is an important step along the way.



What specific powers would the Voice have and how would they be implemented?

LW Because the Voice to Parliament would be purely advisory, some Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples don't support it – they feel we should have the capacity to make decisions on policies and laws made for us. I think it will only be powerless if we let it. People power is the strongest power we have.

Who would be part of the Voice and how would they be selected?

LW The referendum is setting up a foundation that can't be taken off us, so we are not starting from scratch every time a new government is elected. Once we win the Yes vote the government's referendum working group chaired by Minister Linda Burney will establish what the Voice will look like.

LA The Indigenous voice co-design report (which was the result of 18 months' worth of consultation with 9,478 people and organisations, including 115 community consultations in 67 locations, 2,978

submissions, 1,127 surveys, 124 stakeholder meetings and 13 webinars) recommended the national voice have 24 members, with gender balance structurally guaranteed.

The base model proposes two members from each state, the Northern Territory, ACT and Torres Strait. A further five members would represent remote areas due to their unique needs – one member each from the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales. An additional member would represent the significant population of Torres Strait Islanders living on the mainland.

Members would serve four-year terms, with half the membership determined every two years. There would be a limit of two consecutive terms for each member.

Two co-chairs of a different gender to one another would be selected by the members of the voice every two years.



VICTORIAN CATHOLIC BARGAINING

What's the big Deal?

'This is the most significant change to workloads I've seen.'

So said an experienced teacher about the IEU's in-principle Agreement in Victorian Catholic education.

And despite all the detail and technicalities of the deal, which arrived after such long and arduous negotiations, that is the most important thing to remember – it's all about tackling workloads and improving our working lives.

All staff will soon be asked to vote to approve this new Agreement, so it's important to understand what's in it. This will also be key to ensuring that it is implemented correctly. IEU Organisers have been hitting the road as never before this term, going through the proposal with as many Reps, principals, and members as possible.

Below are some of the key things to know about this deal – for more detail head to the IEU website, where there are fact sheets, frequently asked questions, explainer videos and more.

Workload improvements:

- **Scheduled Class Time** reductions of 1 hour in 2023 and a further half-hour in 2024 – the biggest reductions to SCT in decades
- **Limits to before- and after-school meetings** of two hours per week (no more than one hour per day)
- **Annual extras allocation reduced** to 10 hours this year, 5 hours in 2024, then eliminated in 2025
- **Regulation of teacher working hours** through the '30 plus 8 model', providing

teachers with more control over their time

- **Time in lieu** for employer-directed work outside the 38 hour week
- **Commitments to better manage workloads**, deal more efficiently with administrative burdens and limit spread-of-hours for part-time staff.

Leave and conditions:

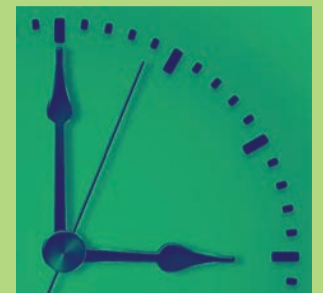
- **'Special Leave'**: one day of personal leave to be used for other purposes
- **Stronger consultation**, and better-trained, better-empowered Consultative Committees
- **Paid parental leave** increasing from 14 to 16 weeks
- **Paid partner leave** increasing from 1 to 4 weeks
- **Eligibility for paid parental leave** after 3 terms (down from 4)
- **Superannuation & recognition of service** for 12 months parental leave
- **Paid pre-natal leave** for pregnant employees and partners
- **Paid Kinship and Foster Care Leave**
- **Paid Family & Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Survivors Support leave**
- **Casual employees eligible for Long Service Leave**
- **Improved redundancy payments**
- **Commitment to endeavour to limit 'spread of hours'** for part-timers
- **Accident Make-Up Pay** extended from 26 to 39 weeks for staff injured at work.

The Bottom Line

This deal:

- Achieves an historic shift in the way the work of teachers is regulated and valued, introducing a hugely important new model for managing workloads
- Reduces Scheduled Class Time for teachers
- Ensures that teachers and Education Support Staff have access to time in lieu for directed out-of-hours work
- Improves Education Support staff classification structures and salaries
- Introduces big improvements to parental leave provisions and tackles the gender pay gap
- Puts a brake on spread of hours for part-time staff
- Maintains pay parity with Victorian government schools
- Strengthens workplace consultation
- Introduces and strengthens a range of other important conditions.

We endorse this deal, and believe that if implemented correctly it will significantly improve the working lives of our members in Victorian Catholic education. We encourage you to vote Yes to this Agreement, to explain the benefits to your colleagues – and of course to invite them to join you in your union!



Track your TiL!

While ultimately it is your employer's responsibility to keep records of the accrual and acquittal of time in lieu, we **STRONGLY** recommend that members also keep their own records from the start of the 2023 school year of ALL structured employer-directed work undertaken outside of normal school hours. The IEU is developing tools to assist members with this – but for the time being, simple notes of times and activities in your diary or electronic calendar will suffice.

What's in the deal for Education Support Staff?

Many improvements apply to all staff working in Catholic education – from improved parental leave to the commitments to reduce the spread of hours of part-time employees.

There are also specific changes that Education Support Staff members should be aware of. Particularly notable are the changes to the lower levels of the classification scale. It's been a long time since the work of an aide or LSO has been comparable to that of a 'parent helper': expectations, qualifications, and professionalism have all increased immensely, and the new classification structure recognises this.

Everyone employed in the old Levels 1 and 2 have been translated into a new Level 2, with substantially higher maximum pay points. So, for example, Level 1 ES who in 2021 were on a five-step incremental scale ranging from \$47,461 to \$55,374 (full-time, working term-weeks only) have been translated to an eight-step incremental scale currently ranging from \$53,833 to \$68,943 (with further increases to come).

All levels of the Education Support Staff structure who have not directly benefited from this restructure are entitled to the same 1% annual 'position allowance' payment as teachers.

Time in lieu is not a new entitlement for Education Support Staff, who have never been subject to the vague 'reasonable additional

hours' clauses that apply to teachers. However, ES members have frequently reported finding it hard or intimidating to claim time in lieu or overtime, and in many cases staff have found themselves doing extra unpaid hours here or there just to get their job done, or being unwilling volunteers at school events or camps. The introduction of time in lieu for the majority of the school workforce is the opportunity to change that, and to ensure that systems and expectations are set to ensure that ES staff are paid for every hour they work. The IEU will be actively working with Reps and members to ensure that this is the case.

Also particularly relevant to many ES members are increases to various allowances, including medical support and tool allowances. We have also won a clearer clause obliging employers to provide the tools required to perform work – in many cases this should include equipment such as laptop computers.

Still got questions?

Watch our comprehensive explainer videos and find salary tables, details of improvements to workloads and conditions, a detailed Frequently Asked Questions document and much more.



ieu.news/VCA23

The New Deal on workloads: success stories

Many schools have fully embraced workload measures from the proposed Victorian Catholic Agreement, and their example proves how beneficial the changes can be for staff and students.



St Joseph's College Echuca made the move to reduce scheduled class time from the beginning of the 2023 school year. Teachers now have fewer lessons to prepare for and more time in which to do their preparation within the school day. After thorough consultation with staff last year, the school was able to plan for the accrual of time in lieu, which was then in operation from the start of this year. As part of that process, the school made an enlightened move to a 38-hour week prior to the new Agreement being finalised.

Other schools which got on board with the new arrangements covered the gamut of the Victorian Catholic sector, from Edmund Rice schools to Mercy Education.

Our Ladies Mercy College, Heidelberg, **Emmanuel College**, Warrnambool, **St Kevin's College** in Toorak, and **Genazzano Kew** all provided face-to-face teaching time reductions, made no timetable changes, made a commitment to provide TIL from the start of the year – and promised no 'shaving' of period lengths to achieve reduced scheduled class times.

The Organiser dealing with these schools says they have all successfully appointed new staff to their schools to meet the workload changes and have begun to 'work through' the 30+8 model.

'Staff in these schools are really happy about these results,' he reports. 'OLMC report that staff now want to stay at the school because the school offers conditions that meet the intention of the

workload reductions. Staff are finding beneficial arrangements with workload compared to last year.'

Staff at Emmanuel College will immediately access some time in lieu in Term 1 to alleviate stress when camps take place.

At OLMC, the principal is allowing staff to utilise flexible work arrangements to work at home. This may extend to some meetings if practical.

It is not surprising that schools experiencing such harmonious transitions to the new regime were proactive in starting constructive discussions with IEU Organisers, Reps and members early. Principals who took this positive approach were happy to have strong IEU sub-branches put forward a 'logical case' which made the work of teachers more manageable.

At **Killester College**, Springvale, the full-time teaching load has been reduced from 48 periods out of 60 a fortnight to 44. As a result, most teaching staff have dropped an entire class from their load. This is a huge reduction in associated work for secondary teachers; dropping a class of 25 students means 25 fewer assessments, 25 fewer families to communicate with, and 25 fewer reports to deliver.

It also reduces the number of individual learning plans and welfare concerns teachers must manage. Our Organiser at Killester says, 'This is how

the reduction in SCT was designed to work in secondary schools'.

'It might seem an expensive move, but in the long run, the costs saved from the logistics of changing the timetable two years in a row will be more than worth it.'

'It also allows the College to demonstrate their appreciation for their hard-working teaching staff and marks the school as an employer of choice for 2023 in a competitive market. This approach already looks vindicated because they haven't had concerns with staffing their school despite the teacher shortage.'

'This isn't a case of a wealthy school making it look easy – this is a relatively low-fee school catering to a very diverse student population. The changes at Killester were achieved through good management, good consultation with staff, and a leadership team committed to working constructively with the IEU. If more Catholic schools in Victoria operated this way, I'd be out of a job!'

The changes have also been embraced in primary schools.

At **St Francis Xavier Primary School**, Ballarat East, our Organiser reports that the newly appointed Principal and our Rep have been 'very proactive' in implementing changes to support staff through this transitional period, and accommodate TIL effectively. 'The school had a real sense of community. The new principal has been keen to listen to staff as they adapt to the new Agreement'.

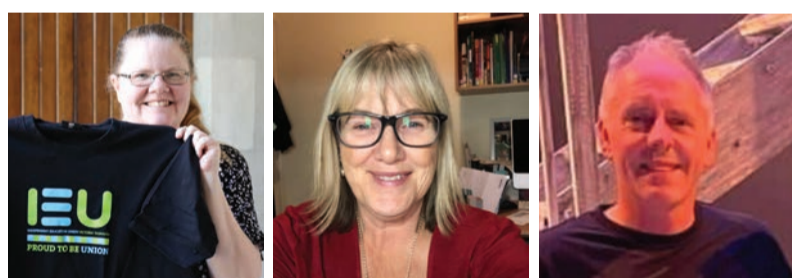
At **St Bernard's Primary School**, Bacchus Marsh, Organisers met with leadership and staff and found that changes to hours had already been smoothly implemented and that the Deputy Principal was taking the initiative to focus on how to support staff through the implementation of time in lieu.

'They had a keen focus on working with staff and the Consultative Committee to develop a clear way forward suiting all parties. Staff were keen to ask clarifying questions, and were also positive about the Deputy Principal's determination to ensure the Agreement would be implemented properly'.

These schools should be commended for their genuine, proactive and consultative efforts to effectively implement the workload-busting elements of the in-principle deal.

The IEU will continue to work with Reps, members and leaders in every school to ensure that this deal delivers on its promise.

If you have concerns about implementation in your school, or have a good-news story to share about the early days of the workload changes, please contact your Organiser or the IEU office.



Reps on the deal

Hear from the experts on the ground. Pam Harrison, Loreto College Ballarat; Fiona Wright, Avila College, Mount Waverley; and Geoff Martin, Mount Clear College discuss new workload arrangements, and the new school year.

What workload measure in the proposed Agreement means the most for you and why?

PH There are two areas related to workload measures in the proposed Agreement that genuinely excite me. The first is greater autonomy for teachers. The proposed measures which acknowledge and respect the dedication, professionalism and experience of teachers genuinely raise the possibility of teachers having greater capacity to use their time appropriately and have their decisions and activities supported. The other measure is time in lieu. This is ground breaking! For so long teachers have sacrificed family and personal time without recompense and sometimes even acknowledgement. This provision in the new proposed Agreement will allow teachers to regain some time to use as they see fit. This is appropriate and long overdue for teachers, who are hardworking, highly qualified professionals.

FW The reduction in scheduled class time has been a significant acknowledgment of the workload issues of teachers. This job has changed over the years and the administrative demands have increased dramatically. By reducing SCT, teachers have won back some of the time they have lost on all this administration – including compliance modules.

GM I think the reduction of face-to-face teaching allows teachers extra time to attend to all the many facets of preparation, assessment, reporting and communication with families. It provides recognition that much careful planning and preparation is required outside of the classroom in order for the classroom to operate effectively.

What is the best thing that has occurred for you in Term 1 at your school?

PH Our school has a larger number of new staff than usual, and it's been great to see their enthusiasm for school life at Loreto and the good 'vibes' they sense from students and existing staff. Coupled with this positivity from incoming staff, many staff members who've come from non-Catholic schools have already expressed their intention to join the Union. There is a real sense at our school of the Union being a useful and positive collective to be a part of.

FW Being able to have whole school events again – the Opening School Mass and the High Achievers Assembly.

GM With COVID restrictions lifted, it has been lovely to have parents and families attend events at school again. Our opening school Mass and welcome BBQ night was a great success and an opportunity for staff, students, and families to come together.

What is the most positive reaction you've had from a colleague to the new workload arrangements?

PH The responses I have had have been largely positive about the proposed workload alterations, in principle. However, there are concerns about how the changes will be implemented within schools that will determine the long-term benefits for both staff and students.

FW Lots of loud clapping when it was announced that we would no longer have any extras in 2025!

GM The introduction of TIL for approved school activities.



OHS

Work Shouldn't Hurt report exposes mental hazards

Work Shouldn't Hurt is an annual, longitudinal survey first conducted by the ACTU Centre for Health and Safety in 2021 which aims to track worker's experience of health and safety in their workplace.

The survey records demographic data about respondents as well as information about workplace injuries and worker engagement in safety and workplace hazards. IEU members across Australia participated in the survey, adding to a grim picture of failure in preventing injuries caused by work.

Not surprisingly, mental health issues surpass physical ailments in the results of the survey. Of the 28% of workers who sustained at least one injury or ailment due to work in the 12 months before the survey, 7% reported a physical injury and 17% a mental health issue (4% of workers experienced both).

The report says, 'Millions of workers are suffering mental health issues as a result of their work, and a high proportion of them are not seeking help due to the fear of negative consequences'.

Results from IEU members within the survey indicate that they were regularly exposed to:

- Bullying at work (19%)
- Stress at work (41%)
- Unfair practices by management (25%)
- Changes at work that are poorly managed (32%)

Sadly, 58% of IEU member respondents said their employer does not put as much importance on workplace mental health hazards as they do on physical hazards.

That's why upcoming laws governing mental health in the workplace are so important.

New psychosocial regulations

Recommendations made following a national review of Australia's Health and Safety laws are leading to new legislation in each state dealing specifically with

hazards to psychological health at work.

In January this year Tasmania introduced a new Code of Practice for managing psychosocial hazards in the workplace. The code sets out the legal duties for workplaces to prevent psychosocial hazards from causing injury and to effectively manage any injury which does occur.

In Victoria new regulations expected to be introduced later this year will place a legal obligation on employers to control psychosocial hazards in the workplace and take steps to prevent psychological injuries from occurring.

Employers will be required to document their plans for preventing psychological injury and to report incidents or complaints related to aggression, violence, bullying, and sexual harassment to WorkSafe twice a year.

The new regulations aim to ensure employers are proactive in identifying and addressing potential psychological hazards in the workplace and take steps to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for their employees.

Watch out for more information about these new laws in coming editions of *The Point*.

Snapshot of Work Shouldn't Hurt survey

- Women are affected more by workplace injuries and mental health concerns than men, due to their over-representation in insecure, low-paid industries.
- Over a quarter of workers (27%) who reported an injury said they needed time off but didn't take it. The reasons for not taking time off suggest that many workers, especially those involved in caring or educating, are working whilst injured or feeling unwell.

- One in four workers reported witnessing bullying in the last 12 months.
- Education and health workers were the most likely to report being exposed to traumatic events and aggressive clients and violence at work.

Of IEU respondents, 38% say their Health and Safety Rep (HSR) was not elected by workers, and a further 20% say they don't know whether or not their HSR was elected.

In Victoria new regulations expected to be introduced later this year will place a legal obligation on employers to control psychosocial hazards in the workplace and take steps to prevent psychological injuries from occurring.

This is critically important. Each group of workers (Designated Work Group) has the right to elect *at least one* Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and a Deputy HSR if they chose. **An HSR cannot be appointed by the employer.**

An elected HSR is entitled by law to:

- attend approved training during paid time
- have access to information the employer has about any OHS issue
- be consulted by the employer about OHS issues prior to information being

sent to employees or decisions made about the resolution of OHS issues

- inspect any part of a workplace
- take photographs/measurements/sketches/recordings at any part of a workplace
- accompany a WorkSafe Inspector visiting the workplace
- seek the assistance of any person.

If your workplace does not have an HSR or you think they haven't been properly elected by the Designated Work Group within the last three years, speak to your IEU rep and IEU Organiser to get this corrected. Penalties apply to employers who refuse to allow the proper establishment of Designated Work Groups and the election of HSRs. It is also an offence for employers to mistreat an employee because they raise a concern about health or safety.

To read the full *Work Shouldn't Hurt* report, visit australianunions.org.au.

OHS
TRAINING

HSR Initial OHS Training Course

Five day course for Health and Safety Reps

- 14, 15, 20, 21, 22 March, 9:00am to 5:00pm
- 5, 6, 7, 20, 21 June, 9:00am to 5:00pm
- 18, 19, 20 October and 2, 3 November, 9:00am to 5:00pm

HSR Refresher OHS Training Course

Work-related Violence

- Tuesday 9 May, 9:00am to 5:00pm

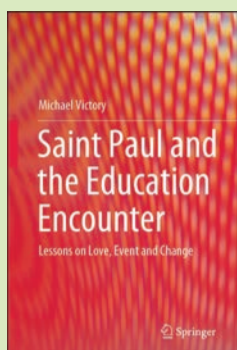
Work-related Stress

- Wednesday 19 July, 9:00am to 5:00pm

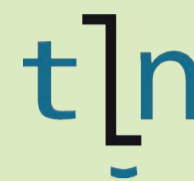
For further
information
and registration
details head to:

www.ieuvictas.org.au/all-events-training





IEU membership and Saint Paul the changemaker



Teacher Learning Network

IEU member and Executive Officer of the Teacher Learning Network, Dr Michael Victory, has just had his first education book published.

S*aint Paul and the Education Encounter: Lessons on Love, Event and Change* examines the impact of Paul, and his relevance to today's educators.

The Point asked Michael about his journey as an IEU member from classroom teacher to author.

Michael, when did your IEU membership commence?

I joined the IEU in my first year as a graduate teacher in western NSW, St Joseph's in Broken Hill. The union Rep had the membership form on my desk on the first day and asked me for the signed form every day until I got myself organised to fill it in.

I joined IEU Victoria Tasmania (back then it was known as the Staff Association of Catholic Secondary Schools) in 1988 when I moved to Victoria. From 1995 through to 2000, I worked for the IEU as the union training officer and Organiser for the Sale diocese. After a break, I returned to my IEU membership in 2006, when I took on the role as the Executive Officer of the TLN.

What is your role at TLN?

The TLN is owned by the IEU and the Victorian AEU, and we bring professional development to union members in schools and early childhood centres, and attract teachers and ES staff to the unions through professional development. The TLN coordinates the IEU Learning Hub for IEU members in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia.

Another key part of my role is editing the TLN Journal and publications. Many IEU members will know the TLN journal as a reader, and some as a contributor. Many IEU members will have purchased books published by TLN Press; *And Gladly Teach* by Glen Pearsall is our best seller.

The journal is my favourite part of the job. I am an English teacher by training, so the opportunity to write, edit and publish articles and books on education is a privilege.

So that brings us to your own publication, how did it come about?

The book is the result of my thesis. I commenced PhD studies in 2011, studying part-time while managing the TLN. It took me until 2019 to complete the PhD and then another three years working with publishers to finalise the book. Like everything else, the process was affected by COVID.

The book was finally published at the start of this year, by Springer Nature, an academic publisher. (It won't be on the shelf at your local bookshop however...).

What led you to the PhD in the first place?

I was conscious that many new teacher graduates were starting work with Masters degrees. If I was leading an organisation focused on supporting those teachers in their professional development then I needed to be researching and writing about teacher education; a PhD gave me that focus.

It's really exciting that so many teachers now see the value in undertaking research and working toward the completion of a thesis. I know there are many IEU members who have completed or are currently progressing through their PhD. We use many of those teachers as presenters in the IEU Learning Hub courses (look for courses by Dr. Jane Wenlock, Abbey Boyer and Steven Kolber). As a teacher you don't have to have a PhD, but it is fantastic modelling for your students that you are continuing

your own research and learning and are prepared to put your ideas out into the education community.

Back to the book – why Saint Paul?

All my teaching was in Catholic schools and a large part of it was teaching Religious Education, so there was always an interest in that field of study. Paul was an influential but also deeply flawed changemaker – the world is different because of him, and that made him of interest to me. He was what I believe teachers can be – they can change the world through the work they do with children and students.

What is the connection with your IEU membership?

Paul brought people together in communities for a higher purpose. He created communities where people came together as learners and as equals to create a better world in which people could live and work. Doesn't that sound like what we try to do as unionists? Yes, we also fight for better pay and conditions, but we do it together, so people can live better lives.

So, should IEU members read the book?

The book is marketed to universities and is priced and written accordingly. If teachers read it selectively then they may find ideas in the book that affirm their current approach, and possibly challenge them to think about why they do what they do. It is not a step-by-step guide for the classroom.

However, I can send IEU members a pdf of the book, free of charge. Email me at: Mvictory@tln.org.au

What's next?

IEU members will see St Paul's influence on the articles I write for each edition of *The Point* this year and in the Learning Hub courses – learning communities, relationships, and reflection. If you have never logged in – take five minutes and go to: www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars

TLN partnership offers learning opportunities for IEU members

In partnership with the Teacher Learning Network, the IEU is proud to offer a comprehensive, free professional development webinar program via the IEU Learning Hub.

Our member-only webinars are offered live and on-demand and cover a wide range of relevant topics. This year's line-up alternates between professional development sessions which enhance your career prospects and webinars which enhance practical classroom skills.

Upcoming highlights of the PD stream include **Introduction to Education Leadership**, Tuesday 18 April, designed for teachers who are aspiring to, or have just been appointed to their first leadership role. The program will cover the transition

from being a teacher to taking on a formal leadership role, ideas for building a team culture, and setting goals for yourself and the team you are leading.

On Wednesday, 19 April, **De-escalating Disruptive Behaviours** offers teachers and education support staff invaluable advice and ideas around the growing problem of unruly behaviour in the classroom. The session will offer preventative strategies and methods that can be used in the heat of the moment, including the use of assertive dialogue to avoid undue aggression or anxiety.

Later in the year, the Learning Hub offers opportunities to learn more about dealing supporting students with Dyslexia; supporting the learning of students who have experienced trauma; supporting LGBTIQ+ students; and setting appropriate boundaries.

Professional sessions of note include understanding budgets; leading effective meetings; tuition on the Google suite of products and; taking care of your voice; and, at the end of the year, application writing.

Learning Hub webinar topics are chosen to address the needs and demands of

modern teachers, and the flexible delivery options mean busy educators can access them at their leisure.

To access all the above and more, go to: www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars

WOMEN AND EQUITY

Legislation tackles the gender pay gap

The federal government has introduced a Bill that would require businesses with over 100 workers to individually and publicly report the gender pay gap in their business to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

The ACTU has welcomed the proposed law 'as a positive step to ensure greater transparency and accountability by businesses regarding their gender pay gaps.'

The Australian Council of Trade Unions President Michele O'Neil said despite equal pay being a right enshrined in law 'persistent structural and cultural issues in workplaces have contributed to a gender pay gap in favour of men in every single industry across our economy – including female-dominated industries such as education and health care.'

Industry lobby group Australian Industry (Ai) Group opposed the legislation, claiming, 'pay transparency does not address the causes of the gender pay gap.'

But *Forbes* writer Lynne Marie Finn says, 'salary transparency benefits all workers, but it is especially important for women, as they experience the largest wage gap.'

'Wage gaps and pay inequity have been found to be reduced in organizations that utilize salary transparency. In fact, the gender pay gap could be reduced by 40%

with broad pay transparency.'

The World Economic Forum says of the USA: 'Salary transparency laws are sweeping the nation...'

'Pay transparency is powerful. It provides the knowledge and proof for workers to spot when pay discrimination is occurring.'

Such rules require employers to post salaries on job listings and prohibit them from penalising applicants who don't provide their wage history.

Finn says pay gaps often begin at the start of a woman's career and then 'compound over the years' with employers offering salaries based on a candidate's previous pay.

'Laws preventing employers from

asking job candidates for their salary histories are also becoming more common. These laws help to keep past pay inequalities from compounding over the course of someone's career. They support the position that compensation should be based on the job duties and experience level, regardless of the candidate's salary history or gender.'

Wharton management professor Matthew Bidwell says this type of 'individualised' pay, rather than paying what the job is worth, has become the norm in recent years.

ABC business reporter Daniel Ziffer predicted the exposure of gender gaps in pay would be 'excruciating' for many employers.

Australian Unions wrote that the legislation 'sets a precedent for greater pay transparency and sends a powerful message to Australian companies: hiding the pay gap between men and women is no longer acceptable.'

'Currently, the average Australian woman has to work an extra 61 days a year to earn the same pay as the average Australian man. The gender pay gap

currently sits at 14.1 per cent, with women on average earning a staggering \$263.90 less than men per week.

'For too long, individual companies with significant gender pay gaps have been able to evade scrutiny and avoid having to address problems within their workplaces that have led to women workers being undervalued.'

'Pay transparency is powerful. It provides the knowledge and proof for workers to spot when pay discrimination is occurring.'

'When you can see that you're not being paid fairly, having that data freely available means that you and your colleagues can back yourselves when negotiating for pay rises and fair wages.'

Reporting to the WGEA on the gender pay gap will begin in 2024, bolstering the information already collected by the Agency on workforce gender breakdown. Larger independent schools (with over 100 staff) and systemic employers in our sector will be required to provide data. We welcome the greater transparency this will provide around gender pay equity issues in education.

Events and opportunities

The union movement has a busy and productive 2023 planned as we make real progress in improving the lives of our women and gender diverse members.

International Women's Day

The first major event on the calendar is International Women's Day (IWD) on 8 March. This year we again march with regional Trades and Labour Councils and the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) to mark the day. Together, we can show employers, governments, and the media that women are speaking up and demanding change. You can find information about the various events on our website here www.ieuvictas.org.au/all-events-training

If your workplace ran an event for IWD 2023 please send us some pictures and a brief summary which we can use in our publications – email us at info@ieuvictas.org.au

In addition, VTHC are running a Women's Rights at Work (WRAW) Festival from 8 – 22 March. There are events at Trades Hall in Carlton and online on a range of key gender equity issues including Women and Superannuation, Reproductive Leave (see the article opposite) and Women as Health and Safety reps. Check out the calendar here: www.weareunion.org.au/wraw23

Anna Stewart Memorial Project

If you are interested in finding out more about this two-week internship designed to encourage women to step up as leaders and encourage greater participation in our union you can contact us directly at info@ieuvictas.org.au

There's some more details on page 2 of this edition.

Bargaining

We are continuing to bargain in independent schools for Enterprise Agreements which include clauses that improve the lives of working women and close the gender pay gap. Examples of some recent wins in Agreements:

- Superannuation paid on unpaid parental leave
- Increased paid parental leave entitlements for primary and secondary carers
- Limits on fixed-term contracts
- Better part-time arrangements including limits on spread of hours/days
- Clauses which commit to working to eliminate gendered violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

WRAW Chats

WRAW Chats have been an important tool in organising union women since they were launched in 2016. We have used WRAW chats with IEU women to develop a feminist agenda for change in their workplaces. We will be working with VTHC on the launch of new WRAW Chat materials and rolling these out in schools to help women to take action for safety, respect, and equality. To get assistance with running a WRAW chat in your workplace contact your Organiser or call the office on 9254 1860.





SUMMER INTERN

Alexandria Somiris: My experience at the IEU & AEU

A few years ago while working as an ELICOS teacher I became an IEU Rep, which ignited my passion to be more involved in union activities.

So, when I was accepted into the Union Summer program I was excited, especially knowing that I would be working with the IEU and the AEU. It would mean not only seeing how the IEU works, but also see their strong relationship with the AEU.

I had two amazing mentors from my two unions who were really supportive and provided me with opportunities to go on school visits, attend meetings and planning with Organisers, and participate in other union work. Both mentors checked in to see how I was doing with the workload and to see how my project was going.

Looking at how the IEU and the AEU work has helped me to understand better how unions empower people. One of the many things I've learnt is that building trust among members is central to keeping momentum going within a workplace. While gaining trust requires a lot of work and patience, the payoff is huge when workplaces

are able to strike a just and fair deal with their employers.

One of the many things I've learnt is that building trust among members is central to keeping momentum going within a workplace.

I also learned that good communication skills are essential to clearly convey the workplace's goals, and the steps required to achieve them. This helps keep the union strong in the face of obstacles.

Finally, changing my perspective on what a union is and what they do has helped me think of the union as a toolbox that provides resources to help members solve their workplace issues, rather than just as a service that members pay for without any

expectation of involvement or effort.

A major highlight was an online workshop which taught unionists the importance of semantics and being mindful of the language to use when speaking to members and talking about the union. That event and my experiences during the program underlined that a union is the workers and unions staff are resources that members can access for extra support – it is up to members to put in the hard work to protect and enhance their work conditions.

The fight for Reproductive Leave

Reproductive health is a workplace issue, and at long last it is starting to be recognised in Australia and in other countries.

Personal and sick leave entitlements are not always sufficient to allow women to manage menstruation, menopause, IVF treatments and other reproductive health care needs. This is why unions are now campaigning for reproductive leave and other supports to be included in workplace Agreements.

If we want to achieve gender equality and end the gender pay gap we need to win better rights for women and end the stigma around reproductive health.

Do other countries already do this?

The Spanish government recently announced plans to legislate a menstrual and menopause leave policy which would give people up to three days of paid leave per month. This would make Spain the first European country with such a policy.

South Korea has a strictly enforced policy where workers can take one day of leave per month as menstrual leave. In 2021, a court in South Korea fined an airline for refusing to allow flight

attendants to take menstrual leave. The company's argument was that the workers had not provided proof of menstruation. The court found that was an infringement 'upon privacy and human rights' and fined them.

Japan was an early adopter of menstrual leave in 1947. Employees who are having 'especially difficult' periods are allowed to take time off although it is not specified how long or how frequently.

In 2003 Indonesia also legislated a policy which entitles employees to two days paid menstrual leave per month.

What about Australia?

Several unions have successfully campaigned to get reproductive leave clauses into enterprise agreements including the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) and The Police Association of Victoria (TPAV). We now have model clauses we can work towards including in other Enterprise Agreements.

For far too long, women have suffered the burden of these conditions without

adequate support at work. They have found themselves 'pushing through' and working when they are unwell, exhausting their sick leave or suffering financially when they need to withdraw from the workplace.

It is time to fix this through continued advocacy and support for relevant legislative changes.

UNION SHOPPER

Union Shopper is a 100% union-owned organisation that utilises the collective bargaining power of Australian unions to provide great benefits and savings to members.

MAJOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Electrical & whitegoods
- Motor vehicles & accessories
- Computers, cameras & office equipment
- Insurance & professional services
- Travel & accommodation
- Leisure & entertainment
- Gifts & shopping
- Food & drink
- House & garden
- Personal, health & beauty
- Sports, fitness & hobbies

HEAD TO THE UNION SHOPPER WEBSITE AND START SAVING TODAY:

<https://unionshopper.com.au/union/ieu-vic-tas/>

An IEU member shares a Member's Benefit savings tip!

'In search of a new microwave oven (and a bargain), I logged on to Union Shopper, and found a replacement that was \$60 cheaper than retail. A fridge? \$200 cheaper than anything else I could find.

'At a time when most of us need to stretch every dollar, Union Shopper has never made more sense. Did you know, for example, that IEU members get a 4 per cent discount on all groceries from Coles and Woolworths, and 5 per cent from Dan Murphy's...?'

What would a 4 per cent reduction of your annual grocery bill amount to?

Well, on a weekly spend of \$50, your annual saving is \$100; at \$100 per week it's an annual saving of \$200 and at \$300, you'd be more than \$600 ahead.

Throw in discounted dining and cheap movie tickets, and combined with private health insurance savings through Teacher's Health - you'll find your IEU membership can more than pay for itself through savings alone!

Head to: www.ieuvictas.org.au/discounts-and-offers

Hold the phone - the right to disconnect is not so simple

Surely the right to disconnect after work is a given for education staff.

Workers in schools are overworked, stressed, and exhausted. That's why so many are leaving the profession and a teacher shortage is biting. Pandemic lockdowns created the expectation that they are always 'on call' for bosses and parents, exacerbating workload intensification that was already out of control.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus says it is essential that working people be able to disconnect; 'if we don't have clear boundaries separating work and the rest of our lives, we end up performing even more unpaid work and damage our mental health'.

Members of the European Parliament have called for the right to disconnect to be a fundamental right, saying the 'always on' culture increases the risk of burnout, anxiety, and depression. Under their model, staff members would not be contacted outside their working hours, except in an emergency.

Already, six European nations have right to disconnect laws.

And the Greens want one in Australia this year.

We should support them, right?
Maybe, but it's a complex issue.

Researchers at the University of Sussex in the UK who examined 'right to disconnect' rules found workers who were banned from checking emails after work felt more stressed than when they were allowed to do so.

Emma Russell, lead researcher of the study said, 'people need to deal with email in the way that suits their personality and their goal priorities in order to feel like they are adequately managing their workload'.

Marcus Butts, a management professor at Southern Methodist University, says after-hours connectivity can be beneficial.

'Being able to attend to after-work emails after the kids go to bed allows you to set up for the next day,' he says, likening it to 'parking downhill'.

A *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial insisted 'vulnerable workers might feel frightened of adverse consequences if they ignore a notification'.

'While it might help to write the broad principles into workplace agreements, this is such a complicated area that employers and employees will still have to show flexibility in working out the details.'

Rigid rules might not account for employee preferences. Employees who are ambitious or feel a sense of responsibility to

their employer will always go the extra mile and respond to an email.

'They know that a quick email after hours can save a lot more work the next day.'

'Some employees may be willing to trade off accessibility outside of work hours in exchange for fewer days in the office or more choice in their hours of work.'

Good intentions alone don't reduce workloads. No employer or school boss says that they want their teachers to be overloaded - but most are, and workload demands continue to worsen.

That's why we need unions.

Australian Unions reported on teachers in the ACT who were expected to respond to late night emails from students and parents and were 'bombarded' with calls when on sick leave.

But thanks to unionists taking collective action and leveraging their united bargaining power, teachers at some schools now conduct 'walk-arounds at 5:30pm' to ensure that staff have left for the day. Another school issued an all-staff direction not to communicate out of hours about work matters, except in the case of an emergency.

'If a school has a strong and active union presence, the right (to disconnect)

is well-enforced.'

It is also well enforced for Victoria Police employees since their union negotiated right to disconnect provisions in 2021. Managers now have to 'respect leave and rest days and avoid contacting officers outside work hours, unless in an emergency or to check on their welfare'.

Victoria Police Association of Victoria Secretary Wayne Gatt told ABC News, 'it's really important that as much as possible... we introduce some barriers so our members can wind down, so they can return to normal'.

Gatt could be describing burnt out teachers.

Digital disconnection rules are not a silver bullet for the problem of overworked education staff, and they only work if they are made with the input of employees, informed by the expertise of the union movement.

2023 YOUTH SUMMIT

INVITING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

An opportunity for students to voice their ideas around diversity, inclusion and community cohesion to politicians, leaders and the community.

Tuesday 18 July 2023
University of Melbourne, Parkville

To register your school's interest in participating, contact Andrea Hogg on **0493 024 228** or andrea@togetherforhumanity.org.au

Or visit togetherforhumanity.org.au and complete an online Expression of Interest form.



Together
For Humanity



Asia Education Foundation

Together For Humanity programs are supported by the Australian Government Department of Education through the Connected Youth and Communities initiative.



ChatGPT: destroyer or employer?

The advent of Artificial Intelligence ChatGPT cannot be ignored by educators. But it is not a cause for panic.

When AI ChatGPT launched in December 2022, it was immediately obvious that it threatened any education system based on written assessments. An epidemic of cheating was predicted.

Former Google Vice President Hugh Williams told *Education HQ* ChatGPT 'could herald a revolution in education comparable to the invention of the internet'.

The Queensland, New South Wales, Victorian and Tasmanian departments of education announced they would block students from accessing the chatbot.

'I think students are going to find a way to use it, even if you try and block them on the school network,' said Williams. 'And I think as a profession, teachers and education departments are going to ultimately need to embrace this and figure out how to get students to use it in the right way, understand it, and adapt the way they teach and the way they run their schools to incorporate this kind of technology.'

A necessary shake-up of assessment

There are educational experts who welcome ChatGPT, saying it will banish the outmoded reliance on written responses

to questions, which they consider a major shortcoming of modern education.

The Age commentator Adam Voigt, a former principal, insisted that despite the 'panicked reaction among the teaching fraternity' to ChatGPT, the advent of AI technology was not an 'existential threat to the role of teachers' though it will 'fundamentally change the way we educate'.

'Finally, we may have crossed a point of no return, unable to justify trudging the tired path of delivering a lecture at school, setting a task, collecting the task, marking the task and returning a grade that has so slowed our educational progress.'

Academic Dan Dixon says, 'AI is to prose what a calculator is to maths', and assessment processes are currently given priority over learning.

'Students are reduced to an essay, and an essay to a grade.'

Forbes senior contributor Peter Greene says the teaching of writing too often requires students to follow a set format. A common example is the 'five paragraph essay', consisting of main ideas, supporting ideas, and conclusion.

'Teachers end up grading students not on the quality of their end product, but

on how well they followed the teacher-required algorithm.'

Media analyst Ben Thompson suggest the real skill in future homework assignments will be in verifying the (often faulty) answers an AI system churns out, so students learn how to be 'a verifier and an editor, instead of a regurgitator'.

In a University of NSW round-panel discussion academics from four disciplines agreed that AI will be a 'fantastic personal tutor', its infinite patience and consistency would be a boon for people with autism and it could 'level the playing field' for people with disabilities.

Arts, Design & Architecture Professor Cath Ellis said because AI can't feel, and doesn't have emotion, its use will force us to value 'the things that are truly human'.

Law & Justice Professor Lyria Bennett Moses said ChatGPT would be useful for simple tasks in minor matters where the information was repeated. But AI has no creativity. 'No AI would have written the Mabo decision... it took creativity to say... we need to fundamentally rethink this matter'.

Artificial Intelligence like ChatGPT, based on previous information, has no ability to 'go beyond what came previously'.

But it will, like other previous disruptive

technologies, change the way we work. It's up to us to adapt and use it to help us teach the tech-savvy kids in our classrooms.

ChatGPT's top three ways to help teachers (according to ChatGPT)

- 1. Automating Grading:** ChatGPT can grade student writing assignments by providing automated feedback on grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- 2. Lesson Planning:** ChatGPT can provide ideas, resources, and suggestions for activities.
- 3. Content Creation:** ChatGPT can help teachers generate writing prompts, discussion questions, and quizzes.

The full text of this article can be read in the upcoming edition of IE, your national educational journal.

NGS Super is the Best of the Best.

Delivering value today that's there for tomorrow.

The results are in. NGS Super has been judged *Money* magazine's 2023 Best Value Balanced Super Product.

NGS Super is committed to providing simple, high-quality products that deliver value to members.

Join a value for money fund that will take care of you today and tomorrow.

ngs
Super



Find out more at ngssuper.com.au/moneymag

1300 133 177

CASUAL RELIEF TEACHERS

Pay improvements for CRTs

From 7 November 2022, Catholic schools in Victoria outside the Diocese of Sale moved to a CRT rate of \$423.23 per day.

This is over \$18 per day more than what a CRT receives in a Victorian Government school. The daily rate will be adjusted in accordance with Fair Work Commission on 1 July each year for the life of the Agreement.

Many independent schools in Victoria are paying a similar daily rate. These rises in CRT rates have come about due to the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* salary increases that took effect on 1 July 2022.

Professional Development

Professional Development can be difficult for CRTs to access because of their changeable work schedules, so the IEU offers flexible access to PD through its Learning Hub. All webinars offered live are also available On Demand, meaning you can glean your nuggets of wisdom from expert education experts whenever it suits you.

For more information go to: www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars

IEU LEARNING HUB

Member-only Professional Development

The program for 2023 has launched, featuring webinars for teachers, education support staff, and those seeking to develop leadership skills. As always, all Learning Hub webinars are available only to IEU members, and best of all, are **FREE!**

Check out the program at
www.ieuvictas.org.au/webinars



CAREER CORNER

Resigned to a better outcome

Over the past 16 months, many school employees made the decision to resign. Whether early or overdue, in many cases these exits were brought on by the exhaustion of shouldering the burden of COVID lockdowns, then being forced to 'flip the switch' back into full-time, in-person teaching.

Some of those who returned to their existing job this year might be feeling a tinge of regret and wondering if there could be some better work or life opportunities further afield.

So, what can be done about if you want to move on, and what are the consequences?

Notice period

Firstly, it's important to know how much notice you should provide if you intend to resign. For most teachers this is seven weeks and for general staff it is two to four weeks depending on the length of service. You may be able to provide a lesser period of notice without any penalty, but this depends on your Agreement – so seek advice from the IEU.

Recently, some schools have attempted to refuse or postpone a resignation because of staffing shortages. Unfortunately for them, indentured servitude is illegal, and nobody can come to your home, drag you out of bed and force you to work! It's important to know that you have the right to resign your employment. If you wish to resign effective immediately you can do so; however, there may be some downside and there are certainly some factors worth taking into consideration before taking the plunge.

Don't quit in anger!

We do see this from time to time – after a bad meeting, a horrendous interaction with a parent, a poorly-judged comment from a colleague or simply a very long week, an employee fires off a resignation email while their blood is still boiling. DON'T! Once sent, an email like this can be very hard to un-send.

Take the time you need to cool off, speak to family or friends, and get advice from your union. It may well be that resignation is the best option – on the other hand it may be that there is a better way to fix the problem, or the possibility of the IEU negotiating on your behalf for a better way to leave.

Job prospects

It seems you can't go a week without reading about staff shortages in the education sector, so it's unlikely that you'd struggle to find alternative employment. However, it may be best, given the current cost of living pressures, to update your CV and investigate a few job opportunities prior to leaving your current school.

Referees

If you've left your previous school in the lurch, you may not be guaranteed of a shiny, positive reference from your

principal. There are a few strategies here:

- If you are comfortable doing so, speak honestly to your soon-to-be-ex-employer and try to leave on good terms. While you may have caused some short-term inconvenience, most principals will recognise that there are a range of genuine career, family, or personal reasons for deciding to leave a job at short notice. (Odds are they may have done something similar at some point!)
- Get alternative referees, preferably as high up the food chain as possible. A prospective employer may ask why you haven't listed your previous Principal so be prepared for that question.
- Put their name down anyway and hope that the new school is desperate enough for your skills and experience that they won't pay too much attention to you leaving on less than stellar terms.
- Start off at a new school in a short-term or casual capacity and slowly build up a bank of more recent referees.

Long service leave and personal (sick) leave

Unless you are moving within a system covered by a single Agreement (such as between Catholic schools), where all accrued entitlements follow you, personal leave is a 'use it or lose it' proposition,

whereas long service leave (LSL) is yours after a certain number of years of continuous employment (in most cases seven), regardless of the circumstances of your departure. It may be worth attempting to negotiate to take your LSL as leave, even at short notice, rather than having it paid out – generally this is financially advantageous, but if it doesn't suit you or cannot be negotiated then your balance must be paid out as a lump sum.

Finally, it's important to recognise the toll on physical and emotional health of continuous dispute with an employer.

One of our lifetime members recently resigned after 24 years at the same school because she was given an unreasonable timetable and the school was not prepared to accommodate any of her suggestions.

The school has lost a valued, respected, and experienced leader in her field, but the member knows she has made the right decision to leave an employer who no longer values what she brings. They will struggle to replace her, but the gap will be of their own doing.

Life is too short and precious to spend in an unhappy work situation; back yourself to go and find a better school!

GRADUATE TEACHERS

Welcome to your new career

Congratulations and a warm welcome to your new profession, your school, and, of course, your union!

We know that starting out amid workload concerns and teacher shortages can take a toll on early career teachers. That's why we urge you to monitor your wellbeing in the workplace as you start out in your early years of teaching. And make sure you check in with your union. The IEU is here to assist, support, and advise you.

Here's a checklist to keep in mind as you travel along this challenging, but immensely rewarding journey:

Get to know your Union

- Find out who your school-based union representative ('Rep') is and have a chat. Find out when the next sub-branch meeting is and get involved early. Your union comrades will be a huge source of support.
- Get in touch with your union Organiser, the officer employed by the IEU (i.e., YOU!) who looks after the members at your school and acts as your direct liaison and support for

industrial matters. When they visit your school, introduce yourself. We are so excited to meet you!

- Find out who your Health and Safety Rep (HSR) is – they report hazards and risks to your health and safety at work, important at any stage in your career, but particularly when you are new and building your confidence (learning the ropes?).
- If there's no IEU Rep or HSR in your school, you could consider stepping up yourself! It may seem like a big ask in your first year, but we will support you every step of the way – call us to talk it through.

Double-check your entitlements

- Your contract, which outlines your conditions of employment, is a legally binding document. It's important to be aware of all its clauses, particularly provisions designed to support graduate teachers.
- If you've been placed on a fixed-

term contract, touch base with your Organiser, who can ensure its validity.

- Make sure you have details of your face-to-face teaching hours and days, your time fraction, and any other details specific to your employment. Keep a record of all correspondence relating to your duties.

Professional learning

- Your union provides high quality live and on-demand Professional Learning webinars that you can access via your Member Access and the IEU Learning Hub (check our website for details)
- Find out if your school offers PD opportunities.

VIT requirements

- Victorian grads - make sure to attend a VIT Provisionally Registered Teachers seminar (seek release from your principal if needed). These seminars are incredibly helpful offering a detailed explanation of the process of becoming

fully registered.

- IEU staff attend these sessions, so it's a good opportunity to meet us and ask questions. Grab some merch while you're there!

Make sure you get inducted

- Employers are responsible for ensuring you are fully inducted and are familiar with their policies and procedures. Protect yourself and request to be inducted if you haven't been already – you reduce the risk of falling foul of a policy if you know exactly how your school regulates their operation.
- Check whether you've been assigned a reduced face-to-face teaching load and a mentor. these are crucial supports in your first year. Contact us if this isn't happening.

The first year in teaching can be challenging, so please don't hesitate to reach out to your union for support. Good luck and all the best!



Nancy, Teachers Health member

Great value health cover to support you in and out of the classroom

Our health and wellbeing support helps over **370,000** education staff and their families navigate life's ups and downs.

So why not see what we can do for you?

TEACHERS HEALTH

We're for teachers



To compare our cover scan the QR code or call **1300 764 288**



NATIONAL IEU ROUND UP

NT: Top end removes discrimination exemptions

Late last year, the Queensland / Northern Territory branch of the IEU welcomed the removal of religious discrimination exemptions from the Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act.

Branch Secretary Terry Burke said the reforms would 'foster inclusion and protect vulnerable staff and students'.

'Our union commends the NT parliament for passing these reforms and listening to the voice of IEU members who advocated for the removal of discrimination exemptions for religious schools,' Burke said.

'The new laws will provide greater protection to vulnerable community members, including the LGBTQI+ community, and are long overdue.'

'We know faith-based schools are more than capable of operating in the absence of these exemptions – the vast majority of them already do so.'

The changes are timely given the current consideration of religious discrimination laws by Federal Parliament. Burke hopes such reforms will proceed elsewhere, including Queensland.

'The Northern Territory has led the way on this issue and the rest of the country should be prioritising the urgent passing

of laws to remove anti-discrimination exemptions to ensure faith-based organisations and schools operate in line with community expectations,' he said.

NSW/ACT

The IEU NSW/ACT continues negotiations with Catholic Employment Relations (CER) for a new Enterprise Agreement (EA) after rejecting CER's December 2022 response to the IEU's claims for improved pay and conditions for teachers and support staff in Catholic systemic schools. The IEU has advised CER that its offer still falls short, and that some dioceses are not meeting good faith bargaining requirements. CER has also not agreed to the IEU's claim for pay increases for support staff in line with rates applying in government schools.

The union has encouraged its branches to explore workload alleviation measures at school level that are reminiscent of the IEU 2022 *No More Freebies* campaign in Victoria. After staging large-scale

industrial action last year, members are being encouraged to keep taking protected action such as displaying slogans or insignia, providing information about the campaign, wearing *Hear Our Voice* yellow t-shirts, using IEU screen savers, and inserting the *Hear Our Voice* slogans into their work email.

South Australia

IEU Organisers in South Australia will be working with Catholic school Reps throughout 2023 to keep track of how schools reduce scheduled class time (SCT).

The IEU agreed to a Catholic employer proposal to reduce SCT by a minimum of 40 hours a year. The reductions are covered by a new entitlement in the Enterprise Agreement called School Directed Non-Contact Time (SDNCT). The time freed up can be used for personal development, report writing, pupil-free days, and faculty planning.

However, the union is concerned that the new regime may be complex and



that some teachers may not see a full 40-hour reduction. Part-timers and staff who do not work the full year could be particularly vulnerable because SCT reductions may be planned for times when they aren't working.

To ensure an even reduction, the union suggests that schools simply set maximum SCT at one hour less when calculating full loads.

NATIONAL UNION ROUND UP

Community Rally Against Sexual Harassment

The Retail and Fast Food Workers Union (RAFFWU) has helped organise a Community Rally Against Sexual Harassment outside McDonald's Traralgon, a huge action which attracted mainstream media coverage.

Workers had previously walked off the job to protest against the fast-food giant's dismissive handling of several serious complaints of workplace sexual harassment which left several staff members 'distressed and upset'.

RAFFWU secretary Josh Cullinan said the walk-off was a 'landmark action' and the workers involved should be congratulated 'for taking that action to protect themselves and their colleagues.'

Members from the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council, CFMMEU, AMWU, RTBU and the CPSU stood with the workers to show them 'when workers' rights are under attack we stand up and fight back united'.

'The young workers of McDonald's heard loud and clear that workers will support them and believe them,' RAFFWU posted.

Shift manager Sarah Hudson told *The Age* that after being informed of an alleged incident, she called police after struggling to get hold of management. A senior McDonald's manager then 'berated' her for calling police.

In a letter sent the day after the incident, a senior manager described Hudson's actions in closing the store without permission as 'serious misconduct'. Hudson was threatened with

the termination of her employment if she discussed the incident with anyone other than a lawyer or counsellor.

'I was personally crushed because what I'd done was what I'd thought was the correct thing to do, I'd called the police,' Hudson said.

Cullinan said there had been five complaints documented to the union from employees of the store.

The union is currently investigating legal action on behalf of its members.

Mining union calls for energy transition authority

The CFMMEU's mining and energy division is calling for the establishment of an energy transition authority by the end of the year to help workers affected by the phasing out of coal mining and coal-fired power generation.

Division General President Tony Maher said in a speech that while the federal government has started the 'profound economic restructuring' necessary to reduce emissions, 'there is a critical element missing'.

'That is – support for the workers who are most imminently and profoundly affected by decarbonisation.'

Maher said his union had called for a

federal Energy Transition Authority for years, but it is now an even more 'necessary and urgent reform' given the speed at which coal fire power stations are being closed. He said the authority needs to be established this year 'or it will be too late'.

The Greens proposed a National Energy Transition Authority Bill last September. When it was announced, Greens spokesperson Senator Penny Allman-Payne said their proposed body would work with 'communities, workers, unions, energy companies and governments at all levels to plan the pipeline of clean energy projects and ensure a bright future for former coal workers and regional communities'.

However, Maher warns against buying into the 'fairy-tale' that coal workers will 'magically transition into 'green jobs'.

His version of the authority would work co-operatively with state and regional transition authorities to develop local plans and create a 'realistic vision for the future'.

'Just as the Federal Government has concluded it can't rely on heavy industry to voluntarily reduce emissions, we also can't rely on employers to voluntarily employ, transfer or otherwise support workers affected by inevitable structural economic change.'

He says such a body is 'every bit as



important as investing in shoring up the grid, developing new technologies and assisting businesses and industries to adapt'.

'The choice is to invest in a systematic and fair transition with decent jobs, new industries and compensation – or abandon regions to intergenerational unemployment, poverty and dysfunction.'

UNION AID ABROAD/APHEDA

Myanmar needs democracy now!

Wednesday 1 February marked two years since the Myanmar military junta seized power in a coup. Its rule has been marked by extreme repression, with 2,800 people murdered by the military and over 17,400 unlawfully arrested for political reasons.

Trade unions have been declared illegal and unionists have been targeted for arrest. The majority of the country's 54 million people continue to resist military rule through the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA is working with the Australian-based group Myanmar Campaign Network to support the reinstatement of democratic civilian rule in Myanmar. The network is made up of human rights organisations, international aid organisations, Myanmar diaspora organisations, trade unions and faith-based organisations.

The need for sanctions

The Myanmar diaspora around the world is united in calling for sanctions against the military junta, its military-owned entities, and senior military leaders.

In February, the Australian government announced it would introduce targeted sanctions on top

military generals and their business interests. When the sanctions were announced, ACTU President Michele O'Neil said, 'This is a welcome first step, and we call on the Government to expand sanctions to cover all entities doing business with and providing profit to the junta.'

The United States, European Union and United Kingdom have introduced sanctions on the junta's vast business interests, with military conglomerates Myanmar Economic Corporation and Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd and their subsidiaries being subject to asset freezes.

State-owned enterprises in the lucrative extractive and natural resource sectors have been sanctioned as their accounts are currently under junta control.

Sham national elections

Under increasing international pressure, the military announced they

would hold national elections later this year. However, new laws have placed huge hurdles in front of political parties seeking to register. Along with the jailing of opposition leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi, it's clear the elections are simply a means for the junta to dampen international criticism.

Myanmar Campaign Network Campaign Manager Tasneem Roc said, 'The junta's proposed elections in 2023 are a mockery of the democratic process. The people of Myanmar have already voted, and the will of the people has been repressed.'

Stand with the people of Myanmar

International solidarity increases pressure on the military junta. Here are some steps you can take to be part of the movement for democracy in Myanmar

1. Talk about Myanmar issues with your friends, family, and co-workers. Organise a lunchtime briefing with your co-workers and ask the



- Myanmar Campaign Network to provide a speaker. contact@myanmarcampaignnetwork.org
2. Email your federal MP and foreign minister Penny Wong and let them know you support the introduction of further sanctions on Myanmar. Go to: <https://myanmarcampaignnetwork.org/> for more information.
 3. Follow the Myanmar Campaign Network on social media for the most up-to-date news and campaign information.

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA is the global justice organisation of the Australian trade union movement. To get involved or become a monthly donor, please visit www.apheda.org.au/join.

INTERNATIONAL ROUND UP

Polish solidarity for jailed Belarussian unionists

The Polish trade union NSZZ 'Solidarność' has sent postcards to the embassy of the Republic of Belarus featuring the faces of imprisoned Belarussian trade unionists, demanding their release.

The Poles say the leaders and activists of the Belarussian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) are 'heroes of the struggle for an independent trade union movement in Belarus'.

The postcard messages read: 'Dear Mr Ambassador! Unionists are not terrorists, and the right to a lawful strike to protect labour and civil rights is not subversive. These are basic human rights for which the NSZZ 'Solidarność' fought. We demand the release of Belarussian trade union leaders, an end to repression and respect for the right to trade union activity!'

The campaign was reported by the Solidarnast Association, which was founded by trade union leaders and activists from Belarus who were forced to leave the country after the 'liquidation and repression of democratic trade unions'.

Solidarnast says until August 2020, pressure on trade unionists in Belarus was limited to dismissal or administrative arrests.

'At the beginning of 2021, with the growth of terror in Belarus, the pressure on trade unions intensified significantly. Trade unionists began to discover wiretaps and hidden video cameras in their offices. Trade union headquarters were searched under any pretext. Equipment was confiscated and

office furniture destroyed.'

It says there are now more than 1440 political prisoners in Belarus, and more than 30 trade union activists who are imprisoned and serving long sentences in Belarussian prisons and labour camps.

'Enough is Enough': Canadian union lays groundwork for 'major escalation'

Local labour councils in the populous eastern Canadian province of Ontario are preparing a major campaign in their upcoming summer. The Ontario Federation of Labour's *Enough is Enough* campaign is based on last year's labour union actions in the United Kingdom, which led to some of the largest organised public sector strikes in the UK more than a decade.

Ontarians facing skyrocketing inflation, wage suppression, and a crumbling public health care system are being asked by the union 'Are You Fed Up?'

'Fed up with the rich getting richer, while workers struggle to get by?

'We are, too. And we're done waiting.

'We're taking action in communities across Ontario. Because enough is enough.'

The OFL represents 54 unions with more than one million members.

'It's the working class that seems to be

hit with these high-interest rates and hit with the cost of groceries and housing and so on and yet workers have not received pay increases that even come close to the cost of living,' said OFL president Patty Coates.

'It's clear to us that people are ready to demand better. And I think that's the realisation – that they have to stand up and speak up or nothing will change.'

The *Enough is Enough* campaign demands: real wage increases; schools and health care kept in public hands; affordable groceries, gas, and basic goods; rent control and affordable housing; and 'make the banks and corporations pay'.

The OFL introduced a six-month road map up to a mass mobilisation on Saturday, 3 June.

Supporters are discussing 'the possibility of a province-wide general strike and the steps and mass support necessary to achieve such an action'.

Mass union protests defy president in Tunisia

Thousands of members of Tunisia's powerful UGTT trade union have taken to the streets of eight cities to protest against President Kais Saied's policies, amid fears of basic rights being crushed.



The protests followed heavy criticism of the recent arrests of several anti-government figures including politicians, a journalist, two judges and a senior UGTT official.

Those arrests aised fears of a wider crackdown on dissent.

Protesters carried national flags and banners with slogans including 'Stop the attack on union freedoms' and 'Cowardly Saied, the union is not afraid.'

A rally in the capital, Tunis, is planned for early March.

Esther Lynch, from the European Trade Union Confederation, conveyed a message of support from 45 million European trade unionists and called for the immediate release of detained union officials, Reuters reported.

Recently, police launched an investigation into 15 transport union officials, detaining one.

The UGTT has more than a million members and has shut the country down during strikes. It says the government is 'trying to stifle freedoms of expression in a bid to deflect attention from the country's economic woes'.

In 2021, Saied shut down parliament, seizing most powers and moving to rule by decree.

IEU LEARNING HUB



**TUESDAY
18 APRIL**
10:00am to 1:00pm

**Introduction
to Education
Leadership**

IEU LEARNING HUB



**WEDNESDAY
19 APRIL**
10:00am to 1:00pm

**Women in leadership
- The experience of
women in middle
leadership**

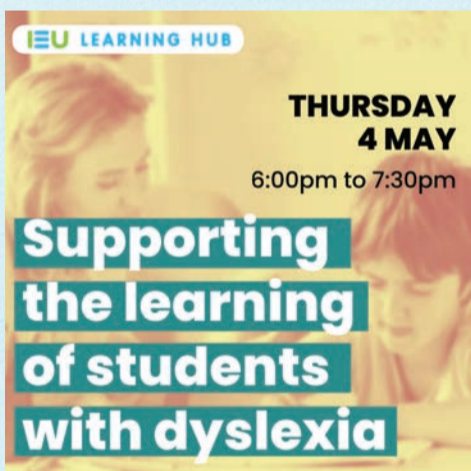
IEU LEARNING HUB



**Setting
appropriate
boundaries**

**WEDNESDAY
19 APRIL**
11:30am to 12:30pm

IEU LEARNING HUB



**THURSDAY
4 MAY**
6:00pm to 7:30pm

**Supporting
the learning
of students
with dyslexia**

Coming up at the IEU

Wednesday 8 March

- Level 1 Rep Training
- International Women's Day rally - Melbourne + Hobart
- Women's Rights At Work (WRAW) Festival (until 22 March)

Thursday 9 March

- [PD Webinar](#) - Relationships - classroom routines for success (primary)

Tuesday 14 March

- HSR Initial OHS Training Course (also, 15, 20, 21, 22 March)

Thursday 23 March

- Level 2 Rep Training

Sunday 2 April

- Palm Sunday Walk for Refugees in Melbourne

Tuesday 18 April

- [PD Webinar](#) - Introduction to Education Leadership
- [PD Webinar](#) - Leadership - building and maintaining an effective team

Wednesday 19 April

- [PD Webinar](#) - De-escalating disruptive behaviours
- [PD Webinar](#) - Women in leadership - understanding the research about what works
- [PD Webinar](#) - Setting appropriate boundaries

- [PD Webinar](#) - Supporting sensory heightened students
- [PD Webinar](#) - Managing challenging conversations as a leader

Thursday 20 April

- [PD Webinar](#) - Differentiation for students with a learning disability

Thursday 4 May

- [PD Webinar](#) - Supporting the learning of students with Dyslexia

Tuesday 9 May

- HSR Refresher OHS Training Course - Work-related Violence

Thursday 11 May

- [PD Webinar](#) - Supporting the learning of students who have experienced trauma
- [PD Webinar](#) - Supporting LGBTQ+ students
- [PD Webinar](#) - Relationships - managing the learning of students with anxiety

Monday 15 May

- Anna Stewart Memorial Project (until 26 May)

Events and training updated regularly. To find out more and register head to www.ieuvictas.org.au/all-events-training

UNION QUIZ

1. Name the three categories described by the 888 union system.
2. What year was the *first* national paid parental leave scheme introduced in Australia?
3. What country has the highest union density?
4. Under the '30 + 8 Model', what two categories of activity fall within the '30'?
5. In what year did the IEU Tasmania join VIEU to form the IEU Victoria Tasmania?
6. Who is the Federal Minister for Education?
BONUS POINT: name either the Victorian or Tasmanian Education Minister.
7. Complete this line from the union anthem *Solidarity Forever*: 'For the union ...'
8. According to a recent Trades Hall poll, what percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people back a Voice to Parliament. **A.** 40 per cent **B.** 65 per cent **C.** 80 per cent
9. What do the following abbreviations stand for? **A.** T.I.L. **B.** SCT **C.** ACTU
10. How many current Agreements has the IEU negotiated for members in Victorian and Tasmanian independent schools? **A.** 21 **B.** 52 **C.** 135 **D.** 65

PICTURE THIS

Why did these people look so unhappy in 2022?



- A.** Their wallpaper was too angry
- B.** They wanted faster movement on a deal in Catholic Education
- C.** They're union negotiators - they always look like this

CALL OUT

Members who would like to draft the next UNION QUIZ for publication in the next edition of *The Point*, please send your submissions to: thepoint@ieuvictas.org.au

ANSWERS: 1. Work, Recreation, Rest 2. 2011 3. Iceland 92% 4. Scheduled Class Time and teacher-directed work 5. 2011 6. Jason Clare (Federal), Natalie Hutchins (Vic), Roger Jaensch (Tas) 7. '... makes us strong' 8. (c) 80 per cent 9. (a) Time In Lieu (b) Scheduled Class Time (c) Australian Council of Trade Unions 10. 135 PICTURE THIS ANSWER: (b) - but actually we'll accept (a) and (c) as well!