

Wednesday 5 June 2024

Staff in Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Schools Office to stop work on Thursday

INDUSTRIAL ACTION Thursday 6 June: Media are invited to attend

- **Date** Thursday 6 June
- **Place** Wickham Park (near the overhead bridge into Hunter Street)
- **Time** 3.30pm Assemble and rally
4.00pm March to Catholic Schools Office on Hunter Street

Staff in the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) are stopping work for one hour from 3.30pm on Thursday 6 June, after talks with their employer, the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (Diocese), failed to reach agreement on salaries.

CSO staff support the delivery of teaching and learning in Catholic systemic schools across the Diocese. They include administrative and support staff but majority of them are education officers (who are qualified teachers) and school-based psychologists and counsellors.

Staff employed under the CSO Staff Enterprise Agreement have long received the same pay increases as teachers and support staff in Catholic systemic schools, including a decade of just 2.5% due to a direct correlation with the public sector wage cap.

But now the Diocese has refused to pass on the 8% increase paid to school teachers in October 2023 after a hard-fought campaign. The Diocese has offered just 3%.

“The employer’s failure to match pay rises in CSO schools is a disappointing departure from the long-accepted practice of employees in the CSO receiving the same increases as teachers working in schools,” said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Assistant Secretary Amanda Hioe.

Salaries for school-based psychologists and counsellors have fallen far behind the salaries of psychologists working in NSW government schools, meaning the Diocese will struggle to retain this critical resource.

In the Protected Action Ballot released by the independent balloting agent on 24 May, an unequivocal 99 per cent of IEU members in the CSO voted in favour of taking stop work action.

“The strong results show IEU members are united in calling for the same increases as their colleagues in schools – they are taking this action to achieve a just outcome for their salaries and conditions,” Hioe said.

“Employers heard the voice of teachers last year. Now it’s time for them to hear the voice of the CSO staff too.”

Contacts

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The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.

Authorised by Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary