

NewsExtra

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Bargaining update: ACT Professional and Operational Staff

Since May this year, the IEU has been bargaining with the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) for new cooperative multi-enterprise agreements (MEAs) for professional and operational staff (PAOS) working in more than 250 independent schools across NSW and the ACT. There will be two separate MEAs, one for NSW, and another for the ACT. Both are quite separate to the Teachers MEA.

Where are we up to with the PAOS MEAs?

We are working towards reaching agreement with the AIS. Unlike the Teachers MEA, we are hopeful that the outstanding issues can be settled and therefore the two PAOS MEAs can be finalised in 2024 or in early 2025.

Why isn't the union seeking the single interest bargaining stream for the PAOS MEAs?

We remain optimistic that the proposed PAOS MEAs will achieve improvements for our members, and therefore do not feel that it is necessary at this stage to move to the single interest bargaining stream.

We are seeking to change bargaining for the Teachers MEA to the new single interest bargaining stream. This is because we consider we have reached an impasse in bargaining for the Teachers MEA. The outstanding issues in bargaining for teachers are not the same as the remaining bargaining issues for PAOS.

What have we secured in bargaining for PAOS MEAs?

The offer so far includes:

- increases of at least 3% in 2025 (it varies between classifications), 3.5% in 2026 and 3% in 2027
- an improved classification structure based on employee competencies, experience and qualifications and introduction of incremental steps for some classifications
- inclusion of employees in occupations and roles who currently do not have access to the benefits provided by an enterprise agreement
- 14 weeks of paid parental leave for both the initial primary carer and non-initial primary carer while they are accessing parental leave.

Modernising the classification structure and expanding coverage

The range of occupations to be covered under the proposed MEAs has been expanded beyond the coverage of the current MEAs. For example, employees in the instructional services stream such as sports assistants, sports coaches and instrumental music tutors (not paid on an individual fee basis), and those under the professional stream, such as human resource managers, will be covered under the proposed MEAs.

Almost all employees, other than teachers, in independent schools will now be covered by the MEAs.

Both the IEU and the AIS have sought changes to the current classifications. These classification issues and movement to the new classifications are not yet agreed for the NSW and ACT PAOS MEAs. More information about the proposed rates and classifications will be provided when there is a clearer agreement between the IEU and AIS.

What are the outstanding issues?

There are a few outstanding matters that need to be resolved through bargaining including:

- pay rates for some specific classifications eg learning assistants (teacher aides), clerical/administrative staff, wellbeing staff, ICT staff and managers, maintenance/operational staff (supervisors)
- the drafting of the revised classification structure
- paid parental leave for employees on averaged rates to be exclusive of non-term weeks or paid at the unaveraged rate of pay
- application of junior rates of pay to young adults employed as School Assistants
- payment of leadership allowances to employees in leadership roles in preschools and childcare services
- ensuring professional rates of pay for psychologists in line with pay in other school sectors.

Next steps

Our strength in bargaining is closely tied to our strength in membership. Stand strong with the IEU on this campaign:

- **Stay informed:** stay updated with NewsExtras and follow our campaign, [click here](#).
- **Spread the word:** discuss our campaign with your colleagues and if you know of a non-member, please encourage them to join the IEU. [Click here to join](#).

We are stronger together, so join us to fight for better pay and working conditions.

