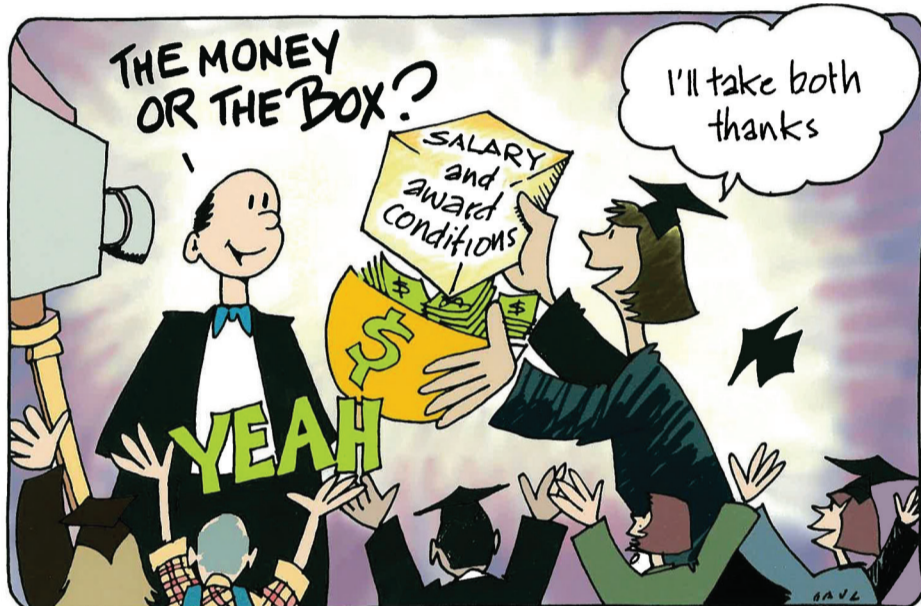




A bit of history repeating: **The money or the box?**



Amanda Hioe
Assistant Secretary

In 2006, teachers in independent schools faced a dilemma: to take the money or the box – higher pay or improved conditions.

Eighteen years later, the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AIS) has presented the same conundrum to teachers in a video it released in early December.

But this is a false dilemma. Teachers deserve both fair pay and transparent working conditions, and it's time to move beyond this spurious dichotomy.

The fallacy of the 'money versus box' conundrum

The so-called "choice" between the money and the box oversimplifies a much more complex issue. Behind this metaphor lies a significant challenge: streamlining nine disparate industrial instruments into a single multi-enterprise agreement (MEA).

The IEU and the AIS – representing 244 independent schools across NSW and the ACT – are tasked with the challenge of reconciling different pay rates, classification structures and working conditions into one instrument.

This task requires transitional arrangements to ensure all teachers are treated fairly as they transition into a 7-steps (or 8-steps in the ACT) classification pay structure.

For the IEU, as the bargaining representative for employees, the goal is clear: to protect our members and ensure no teacher is left worse off in the process, either in pay or in working conditions.

Key issues in bargaining

The IEU has identified three key critical issues with the AIS's proposal:

1. Pay disparity

Experienced Proficient teachers employed in an independent school are being paid less than newly hired teachers with the same level of experience coming into the same school.

2. Workload transparency

Employers have resisted including a clause that requires them to outline workload expectations for the teaching staff in their school. This is particularly important for part-time teachers, who need clarity to ensure their duties align fairly with their full-time equivalent (FTE) load.

3. Special education allowances

The special education allowance, traditionally provided to teachers in schools for special purposes (SSPs), has been reduced or removed. This is particularly disturbing when we know that government schools continue to pay this allowance for teachers working in SSPs.

What is 'the money'?

The AIS claims the pay offer for teachers in independent schools is generous, but the IEU argues the problem isn't the overall pay rates but the inequity within the transitional arrangements.

Let's look at an example to highlight this problem. Under the proposed MEA, a Proficient teacher with six years of teaching experience would earn \$120,962 in February 2025. However, a newly hired teacher with identical experience would earn \$127,281.

The question is not about whether we want the money. The question is: is that fair? The stakes for teachers lie with the

employers' reluctance to provide back pay if the current AIS offer isn't accepted immediately. Again, it begs the question: Is that fair?

The suggestion that teachers would prioritise money above all else is not only simplistic – it's deeply insulting to the profession. For teachers, this isn't just about securing higher pay, it's about ensuring fairness across the board. It is about equity!

What is 'the box'?

The contents of "the box" remain unclear to us. What is evident, however, is that the proposed MEA in its current form is not acceptable to the IEU or its members for the reasons outlined above.

To push for the respect that teachers deserve, we need to change the rules of bargaining. The only way we can send this message to the AIS is by members signing the IEU petition for single interest bargaining.

Fairness and transparency: the real endgame

Ultimately, the choice between the money and the box is a false one. Teachers are not asking for one or the other – they're asking for fairness, equity and transparency in their pay and workload expectations.

This debate isn't about greed; it's about respect for the teaching profession. We need to stand together and be heard.

If you know a colleague working in an independent school who is not yet a member of the union, encourage them to join. We can only be stronger together!

Pay rises for members in Catholic systemic schools

Carol Matthews
Secretary

Most members in NSW Catholic systemic schools will have received pay rises in the last few weeks of Term 4. A few dioceses will pay the increases at the end of December or early January.

Bargaining with the 10 dioceses

The IEU has been negotiating with 10 dioceses (all except Broken Bay, which has negotiated separately) for new enterprise agreements to replace the existing agreements applying to teachers, support staff and principals.

Pay rises

The dioceses have agreed that teachers and

principals in NSW Catholic schools will receive the 3% increase gained by their counterparts in NSW government schools, backdated to the first pay period on or after 9 October 2024.

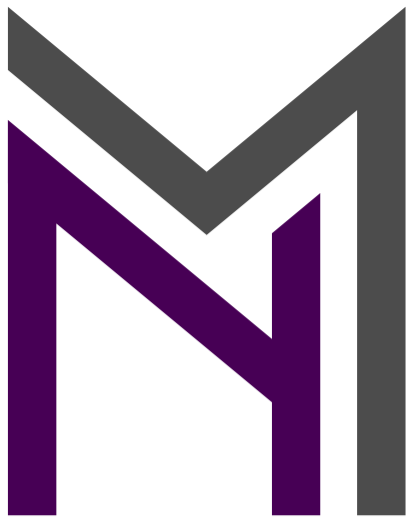
Teachers in ACT schools received pay rises in August this year.

General employees in both NSW and the ACT have received in recent weeks a 4% pay rise backdated to July, reflecting the pay

increase for support staff in NSW government schools.

The union expects that the new enterprise agreements will be in place for three years, until October 2027, in line with the term of the award applying to NSW government teachers.

The NSW government settlement included pay rises of 3% in each of October 2024, October 2025 and October 2026. The deal



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This publication was produced on the unceded lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We've made a difference this year

Glenn Lowe
President



It's truly been a positive year for our union, marked by significant strides in numerous sectors, all of which have been achieved through the collective hard work and unwavering dedication of our members and staff.

From the classrooms to the administrative offices, every effort has contributed to the gains we've seen across the education sector.

Whether it's improvements in wages, glacial improvement to working conditions, or improvements to the accreditation process, our collective strength and commitment to the cause has made a tangible difference for educators and support staff alike.

These victories are a testament to what can be achieved when we stand united, advocating for the rights of workers and pushing for progress at every level.

Looking ahead to 2025, there is much hope and anticipation for continued growth and advancement within our union.

The work done this year has laid a solid foundation, and with continued dedication and solidarity, we aim to build upon that momentum.

A key priority will be ensuring that work-life balance becomes a central focus for all members, as we know that a healthier balance between professional responsibilities and personal wellbeing is crucial to sustaining long-term success in education.

As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to each of you. The commitment you've shown throughout 2024 has been nothing short of inspiring.

I hope you all find time to relax, recharge, and enjoy a well-deserved break with your family and friends. You've earned it. Let's look forward to another year of progress and continued success as we work together to build an even stronger and more supportive union for all.

Merry Christmas, and here's to a bigger and better 2025!

Glenn Lowe President

URGENTLY NEEDED

Principals' critical incidents Research reveals urgent need for support

Lyn Caton
Assistant Secretary



Principals, together with their leadership teams, are grappling with an alarming rise in critical incidents, including violent threats, mental health crises, suicide attempts, and medical emergencies, according to new research from the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

More than 80 per cent of principals surveyed reported experiencing such incidents, with many describing them as "high" or "extreme" in severity.

The Understanding Critical Incidents: Empowering Australian School Leaders report, led by ACU's Associate Professor Theresa Dicke, and published in November 2024, highlights the profound toll these events take on principals' mental health and resilience.

The study surveyed 351 principals nationwide, finding that 57 per cent felt unprepared to handle critical incidents, while 67 per cent reported cumulative trauma from dealing with multiple crises.

"This research paints a concerning picture of the increasing frequency and severity of critical incidents in schools," said Associate Professor Dicke. "School leaders are calling for urgent systemic changes to provide the support they need."

Survey findings speak volumes

The study's findings are stark:

- More than half (50.4 per cent) of principals have faced two or more critical incidents.
- Security threats were the most common incidents (21.2 per cent), followed by mental health crises (12.3 per cent) and suicide threats or attempts (10.8 per cent).
- Principals in Tasmania and Western Australia reported the highest incidence of severe cases.
- Principals frequently cited feeling unsupported, burned out and underprepared for these challenges.

Fellow researcher Dr Paul Kidson noted that underlying factors such as parental abuse, social media pressures, and community attitudes exacerbated the problem. While 42.3 per cent of principals reported coping "very well" or "extremely well", this resilience often masked the long-term impacts of inadequate support systems.

Taking action

Key recommendations from the report include:

- Developing a standardised incident response, including a Parent Charter.
- Enhancing psychological and post-incident support for principals.

- Providing better training and communication with emergency services.
- Allowing principals time off without stigma after traumatic incidents.

The report also advocates for state and territory governments to act on these findings, particularly in hotspots such as Tasmania, where up to 72.3 per cent of incidents were rated as "high" or "extreme" in severity.

One principal member captured the gravity of the situation: "I'm 11 years into principalship ... I won't make 20." This sentiment underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms to safeguard the wellbeing of school leaders and the broader school community.

In response to concerns raised at the IEU Council meeting in August, members passed a unanimous motion in support of a campaign to address the problem: Violence and harassment in schools – members call on employers to take action (*Newsmonth* #7).

The union has since contacted employers and meetings have been scheduled to discuss the issue. A comprehensive report detailing the data, resources, and processes available will be presented to IEU Council early in 2025.

'Tis the season to be ... appreciated

Liz Heggart
Vice President Systemic



As this is the last *Newsmonth* of the year I thought it fitting to write something light-hearted and joyful.

Considering the negotiations for our new enterprise agreement are in their early stages and there isn't much to report so far, I thought a festive spin might be fun.

Now, lately we have been hearing a bit about how AI can assist with reducing our workloads so, full disclosure and in this spirit, I decided to enlist the help of ChatGPT in writing an acrostic poem using the word ADVENT (and being a science and maths teacher, creativity with words does not always come easy).

Some of you may think this simplistic or the idea even a bit tacky but I think that we can all enjoy a touch of frivolity after another year of unrelenting pressures and stresses.

So here is 'my' poem to help you reflect on the break that awaits you to hopefully give you a reprieve from the everyday grind. I think the sentiment is accurate and gives us food for thought on how we can approach the time we have over Christmas and through January. A touch clichéd, possibly, but I like the overall message nonetheless.

*Always take time to rest and recharge,
Deep breaths and quiet moments – don't overcharge.
Venture outdoors, let nature renew,
Enjoy simple joys, in all that you do.
Nurture your spirit, let worries fade,
Then return refreshed, with a heart unafraid.*

At a time of year when we are bombarded with the messages of hope, peace, joy and love, let us take a moment to remember that this time of year can be quite difficult for some of us. Along with whatever end-of-year expectations are thrust upon us from our workplaces, many of us have additional worries and sadness. Be kind to yourself and know that you don't have to be happy and cheerful all the time.

To finish, I want to thank all of the members in Catholic systemic schools and workplaces for your continued commitment to the union this year and for your tireless efforts to constantly help each other and your students. I truly wish that continuing negotiations next year bring us the much-needed relief in our workloads.

continued from page 1

Pay rises for members in Catholic systemic schools

also included a taxable \$1000 cost-of-living adjustment, plus superannuation, if inflation exceeds 4.5% in the year to the March quarter, for each year.

Release time

The union has been seeking a reduction in face-to-face teaching time of two hours per week. This has not been agreed in NSW government schools.

However, the NSW government has agreed to eight additional pupil-free days for each year from 2025 until 2027. Four days will be at the start of Term 1, two days at the start of Term 2, one day at the start of Term 3 and one day at the start of Term 4. Four of these days must be reserved to allow teachers to do their own or collaborative planning and preparation, as a measure to address teacher workload.

We have requested that dioceses match these additional days. If this does not occur, additional release must be provided in another form. Dioceses must also move to guarantee regular additional timetabled release time – in many cases schools currently have the flexibility to provide this, but it is at the principal's discretion.

Workload

The IEU Council has identified key workload issues members face:

- out-of-hours work (both scheduled events and professional duties related to classroom teaching)
- diverse student needs
- data collection and compliance
- meetings and professional development
- extras, and
- class sizes.

The union survey of members at the end of Term 3 identified the same problems. These issues will be addressed in direct negotiations with individual dioceses. The IEU is committed to reducing workload, both in discussions with dioceses and also at the individual school level.

Parental leave

The IEU claim includes the payment of superannuation on paid parental leave. This claim seeks to address the gender pay gap that exists between men and women and is aligned with the federal government's announcement that it will pay superannuation on government paid parental leave from 1 July 2025.

We are also seeking more flexibility in parental leave for the non-initial primary carer (usually the father) who undertakes the role of primary carer when the initial primary carer (usually the mother) returns to work or study within 24 months (not only 12 months).

This more flexible time period applies in NSW and ACT government schools.

Other claims

Other claims of the union are set out below.

The IEU has also sought an improvement in long service leave for general employees. Access to long service leave (including half pay and short blocks) should also be consistent with the practice for teachers.

The IEU seeks to incorporate existing email clauses in work practice agreements and the new legal right to disconnect provisions as part of the enterprise agreement.

Legally, the new enterprise agreement must include a delegates' rights clause, which refers to the new rights under the *Fair Work Act* for union representatives in the workplace.

Finally, we are seeking to broaden the coverage of the enterprise agreement to

include employees who work in schools but are not currently covered by an enterprise agreement. These groups include counsellors and other pastoral care staff employed in schools, trade trainers, early childhood education and care and before-and-after-school-care employees, music tutors and business managers.

Employer response

The 10 dioceses have proposed some changes to the *NSW and ACT Catholic Schools Enterprise Agreement* which they consider would make it easier to understand. The IEU does not oppose simplification, provided members' rights are protected.

Employers have not yet responded to the union's key claims.

Next steps

Negotiations are continuing in December, and we hope sufficient progress will be made to allow a new three-year enterprise agreement to be made in Term 1.

We will consult with members early in Term 1 on developments.



David Towson
Deputy Secretary



The IEU and Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) have, over the past four months, been negotiating a new enterprise agreement (EA) for teachers and support staff in about 45 schools.

This new EA would replace the one-year agreement negotiated in 2023 that saw teachers and support staff gain historic pay increases, with members in this diocese paid more than those in the other dioceses across NSW and the ACT.

Release time

During the last round of bargaining, teachers in Broken Bay also secured release time, known as "collaborative coaching time" of one hour per week per teacher. This has not been secured in other dioceses.

As negotiations commenced and as CSBB advised staff about its strategic direction, members were understandably concerned with some of their employer's proposals that appeared to remove safeguards around workloads.

These concerns were justified when CSBB suggested removing release for Year 12 teachers in term four and deleting any reference to the 10-hour per term limit on meeting times.

CSBB also proposed reducing release time for teacher librarians from a ratio of 3:1 to 5:1.

Time to vote

The union has now reached a position where we can recommend a YES vote to our members employed in the 45 schools of the Broken Bay Diocese. This recommendation is based on the following positive outcomes:

- Members have gained pay increases of 13% over four years, meaning Broken Bay teachers and support staff are the highest paid in the nation among Catholic systemic and government schools.
- Members will receive pay rises of 3.5%, 3.5%, 3% and 3% over the next four years (excluding the increase in superannuation); the pay rises take effect from 1 October each year, with the first being backdated to 1 October 2024.
- By 1 October 2025, teachers' pay will be 2.5% above NSW government schools and other Catholic systemic rates, and support staff pay will be markedly above the corresponding rates in government schools.
- The pay protection clause guarantees that teacher pay rates will remain above those in NSW government schools by at least 1.5%.
- Safeguards have been retained around working conditions such as the release for Year 12 teachers and reference to the 10-hour per term limit on meeting times.
- Significant improvements to parental leave entitlements.
- Additional in-class support for kindergarten teachers.
- Additional staff development (pupil-free) days.
- An allowance of \$100 per night for teachers for overnight camps.

All of these improvements will be communicated to members via email as we recommend a YES vote. At the same time, it is only fair and proper to acknowledge that many of our claims were not achieved.

Work intensification

In developing the IEU claim, members in the Broken Bay Diocese responded in considerable numbers to the union's survey on workload intensification. Top responses included the need to reduce class sizes and provide teachers with more release from

face-to-face teaching time, as well as support for working with students with diverse needs.

Increased call support for large class sizes in kindergarten, while welcome, is no substitute for smaller class sizes where teachers can give appropriate attention to all students, including those with special learning needs. Regrettably, the diocese refused to countenance any reduction in class sizes.

Similarly, the diocese refused to provide improved weekly scheduled release from face-to-face time for teachers. The diocese claimed collaborative coaching time and pupil-free days currently exceed release entitlements in both government schools and schools in other Catholic dioceses.

We were disappointed not to win ceremonial leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff when such leave is now an entitlement under some other Catholic systemic school EAs.

Still stronger together

Notwithstanding these challenges, the proposed EA strengthens the union's role, allowing for greater collaboration with CSBB to hold them accountable on key issues such as workload concerns; student behaviour management; accommodating diverse learning needs; and workplace safety. Of course, these issues are often inter-related.

We will rise to these challenges through working collectively and by having strong and active IEU chapters in each of the diocese's 45 schools.

At the time of writing, the voting period for the new EA was scheduled for 10 to 12 December. We will advise members of the voting outcome as it comes to hand. The union acknowledges our reps and members who have participated in the process, including in the IEU's survey and through union meetings.

Wishing all members a happy and well-deserved summer holiday break.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

What do you think about a social media ban for under-16s?

The Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 was passed in the federal parliament on Friday, 29 November, banning the use of social media by under-16s.

Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, X and others are all banned. The bill places the onus on the social media giants and not young people or their parents to stop under-16s from having social media accounts. Systemic breaches will see platforms face fines up to \$49.5 million.

"Social media is doing harm to our kids," said Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in a media release announcing the ban on 29 November. "We've called time on it. We want our kids to have a childhood and parents to know we have their backs."

We asked you to share with us on social media (of course!) what you thought of this ban.

I doubt it could be enforced. Young people access gambling apps despite those platforms having 18+ legal requirements. Parents need to be trained to help their children understand the significance and impact of inappropriate use of social media platforms instead of it being a 'school' problem.

Is this the response that was given when speed limits were introduced? Do we just allow any speed or is it a good idea to set limits? While I'm sure we have all gone over the limit at times as this law is also difficult to enforce, we know it's 'the rules' and will face the consequences if caught.

There will be many parents who see this assistance as a positive because it takes the onus off them saying 'no'. I don't understand people who say, 'it's not enough' – surely it's a step in the right direction?

This is so needed and so important. Social media causes so many problems for young people, and the harm outweighs the benefit.

Not a country in the world has been able to ban social media. Our kids are tech savvy and if they want to use it they will. The ban also neglects the vital role that social media plays in the lives of young disabled, queer and marginalised youth in small communities who find a tribe and a sense of belonging online before they can physically travel to safe spaces.

I think it's a good idea in theory, but I am worried about how it will look in practice. I also suspect a lot of parents will allow children to have social media anyway. I think parents need to be more involved in knowing what their kids are doing online – maybe this will help.

I think it is short-sighted and almost impossible to enforce. A blanket ban is not actually protecting kids, it is just delaying it and setting 16-year-olds free online without any 'training wheels'. Policy can't replace parenting.

Social media



Communication skills for support staff

Beth Berghan wants to teach you how to raise your voice – not in volume but in impact.

Get your arguments across more effectively, plan for challenging conversations, think about your messaging and how to frame it.

A life and business success coach, Berghan started her career as a high school Home Economics and Textiles teacher before moving into TAFE, where she provided education for unemployed people.

She had several different roles in the TAFE sector, becoming a faculty manager, but as it came under financial pressure from the Queensland Government, she decided to move into business, finally using her psychology degree to set up her own coaching program.

Berghan said her program would teach support staff members to not only tackle the hard conversations but improve their self-talk.

She hopes her coaching will help members

develop personal as well as professional relationships.

Participants will gain practical strategies for navigating difficult conversations, managing emotions, and using their voice to ensure they are heard – both in their schools and within the broader educational community.

There will be advice on improving communication with teachers, parents and students, and contributing to meetings more effectively.

Key topics covered are:

Empowering communication strategies: Participants will learn various communication styles, focusing on assertive techniques to advocate for their needs and manage challenging situations confidently.

Navigating tricky conversations: This segment focuses on planning and framing conversations to improve clarity, manage emotions, and achieve desired outcomes while minimising misunderstandings.

Strengthening workplace communication:

This topic provides tools for fostering positive communication with colleagues, administrators, and teachers, with a focus on site-specific roles such as front office, classroom support, and supervisory duties.

Collaborative approaches to student support: Support staff play a crucial role in supporting student needs. This module covers how to communicate observations, provide insights, and offer support suggestions to teachers effectively.

The course will include a one-hour online interactive session, with a repeat session available. Emphasising practical applications, each session is designed to ensure participants leave with skills that directly enhance their daily work environment.

The one-hour, online course will run at 10am, Friday 31 January and be repeated at 2pm, Monday 3 February. Details and bookings: ieu.asn.au/events



Vigil for violence against women



Empty shoes representing women who have been killed by domestic violence at the Unite Against Violence Vigil in Martin Place on 26 November.



On 26 November roses were laid at Martin Place in Sydney in a ceremonial tribute to the women killed in domestic violence homicides in Australia this year.

The tribute was part of a vigil called Unite Against Violence: No More Empty Shoes, which was hosted by Lou's Place, a community-based refuge for women in crisis. The IEU attended the event for the second year in a row.

The vigil was a time to gather and remember those taken too soon and to demand meaningful action on the national crisis of violence against women.

An art installation featured empty shoes, with

each pair dedicated to a woman — named or unknown — who has been killed in the last 12 months in Australia. It was a powerful sight that many commuters stopped to take in on their way through Martin Place.

The event was held the day after the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Speakers included the CEO of Domestic Violence NSW Delia Donovan, Youth Advocate and Educator Daniel Principe, and Survivor and Counsellor Darryl Gardiner.

Singer, survivor and award-winning performer Melinda Schneider performed two deeply

moving songs, including *Courageous*, which she introduced by sharing that she is a survivor of three abusive relationships.

After attendees applauded Schneider's performance, the Chair of Lou's Place returned to the stage and said: "Thank you all, Unite Against Violence: No More Empty Shoes". While pumping her fist, she left the crowd with a clear directive, "now go and fix it".

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence:

- call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800respect.org.au

- One-on-one yarning opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter: 13YARN 13 92 76

For legal information:

- Family Violence Law Help: familyviolencelaw.gov.au
- Women's Legal Services Australia: www.wlsa.org.au

In an emergency, call 000.

Lucy Meyer Journalist



16 FACTS FOR 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

25 NOVEMBER THROUGH TO 10 DECEMBER

1. The 2023 theme is *Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls*.
2. In Australia, almost one woman per week dies at the hands of a current or former partner.
3. Police across Australia deal with 264,000+ domestic violence matters each year (or one every two minutes).
4. Women are at increased risk of experiencing violence from an intimate partner during pregnancy.
5. In Australia, intimate partner violence is the greatest health risk factor for women aged 25-44.
6. Women with disability in Australia are twice as likely to have experienced sexual violence over their lifetime than women without disability.
7. Globally, more than five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family.
8. There is no space where women and girls are free from violence – at home, on the streets, at work, at school, and even online.
9. In Australia, young women between 18-24 experience higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.
10. Violence negatively affects women's physical and mental health and wellbeing at all stages of life.
11. 38% of women have experienced online violence.
12. In Australia, domestic or family violence is the single largest driver of homelessness for women.
13. More than one in three women experience gender-based violence during their lifetime.
14. Globally, the estimated cost of violence against women is US\$1.5 trillion.
15. Less than 40% of women who experience violence seek help.
16. Violence against women and girls remains one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world.

IEUA NSW/ACT is proud to support 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The global campaign runs annually from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November to International Human Rights Day on 10 December.

Celebrating women in unions



From left, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews; IEU President from 2001 to 2022 Christine Wilkinson; IEU President from 2022 to 2024 Tina Ruello; and former Assistant Secretary and convenor of the IEU Women and Equity Committee Pam Smith in 2022.

Two of the union's most influential female voices, both marking 40 years of membership this year, reflect on the role women have played in the IEU and the broader Australian union movement.

Women have long been critical to union victories but according to IEU member and former Assistant Secretary Pam Smith, "the story of men in the union movement" has dominated the narrative.

"I would say it's easy to overlook the role that women have played," said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews, the first woman to hold the role.

Both Smith and Matthews have been a part of the vital work of women in unions since they joined the IEU in 1984.

Driving change

Matthews remembers how different things were for women unionists 40 years ago. It was not a "particularly friendly environment for women to be active", there weren't many women, and it was difficult for them to gain leadership positions, she said.

"I think early on, the union movement was very much a blokes' club," said Matthews. But over time, she's seen an important shift take place, with more women occupying leadership positions. "So, I think that sort of blokes' club has really changed," she said.

To Matthews, having both a female President (Michele O'Neil) and Secretary (Sally McManus) at the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) signifies how far unions have come.

Matthews credits women's caucuses in unions with helping to drive change. "So those caucuses certainly supported progressive women to be more prominent within their unions, but also to organise across the union movement, and they were quite successful," she said.

For women in unions today, it's empowering to learn about

those who paved the way, and to understand the history of women in campaigning, said Smith. Women unionists have been busy, she said, whether that be in broader union campaigns or working on issues that specifically impact them – such as equal pay, parental leave, sexual harassment at work, plus paid family and domestic violence leave.

"I think we need to remain vigilant in encouraging potential women who can be leaders to take up those roles."

Members matter

Matthews and Smith agree that it's important to recognise the rank-and-file women who have contributed so much. It's the reps, the members in workplaces, chapter reps, sub branch delegates, delegates to council and the many other women who help make the union what it is. "They're the heart and soul of what we do and who we are," Smith said.

Women in the majority

While the IEU, or the Assistant Masters' Association as it was known, started out in 1954 as a union for male teachers in independent schools, at the time of writing, the NSW/ACT Branch has almost 78 per cent female membership, and three of the four senior full-time leadership positions are held by women.

And it's not just in the IEU that women now form the majority. People often picture a unionist "as a blue-collar male worker", said Smith. "Whereas the reality is statistically, unionists are women, they're nurses, they're teachers."

And those numbers can make a difference. Smith has seen how powerful it can be when a group of women members come together to act collectively in a school.

When one woman asked for flexible work arrangements after returning from parental leave, the principal in a Catholic school wouldn't budge, but when she had the support of a group of women, her chapter and her union, "then attitudes did change very rapidly".

What's changed and what's stayed the same

With the IEU celebrating its 70th year, it's the perfect time to reflect on how important women have been to its growth. But despite how much has been achieved, Matthews cautioned that it's important to remember that women still have hurdles to climb. Smith cited insecure work and the gender pay gap as critical industrial issues moving forward.

While women unionists today don't experience the same levels of discrimination that they once did, Matthews said, it's still harder for them to "be successful in those senior leadership roles". She attributes this to factors including societal expectations of women's family responsibilities coupled with the demands of such roles, as well as perceptions of what makes a good leader.

"So, I think we need to remain vigilant in encouraging potential women who can be leaders to take up those roles," said Matthews.

"Because even though there isn't the overt discrimination and prejudice that certainly existed in the union movement in NSW in the 1980s, there are still barriers to women becoming more active in their unions, and in particular in senior roles."

Lucy Meyer Journalist

IEU Speaks **IEU gender and equity wins**

Gender and equity reforms, driven by union campaigns in 2024, will benefit over 50,000 women workers who make up 72% of IEU members. Rights to fairer working conditions and gender safety, and reforms to build a sustainable and equitable teacher workforce, have been historic achievements this year.

Union members made it happen! Multi-employer bargaining and ECEC wage justice

Union campaigns delivered multi-employer bargaining to feminised sectors like early childhood education. Collective bargaining through the federal government's fairer laws, and 15% pay rise for long day care workers, recognises a previously undervalued but essential workforce.

Successful and growing unions driven by feminised industries

Further improvements to pay and conditions in feminised industries is directly linked to the growth and success of our largest unions. Feminised occupations and industries are the future of the Australian union movement. A union member in 2024 is an IEU member – a female, white collar, tertiary qualified professional.

Gender pay gap finally begins to narrow

Improved working rights and federal government wage reforms have helped cut the gender pay gap to its lowest level on record. November's WGEA gender equality scorecard shows good progress and unions are committed to abolishing gender pay inequality for good.

Domestic violence initiatives and funding

The IEU was one of the first to secure paid domestic and family violence leave through bargaining. These wins, combined with federal government emergency support payments, will save lives.

Supporting women and girls' safety in schools

Our union called for governments and employers to act urgently to end the gendered harassment of women teachers, and implement the important recommendations of the recent Sexual Harassment of Teachers (SHoT) Report.

Super paid on parental leave

The government's plan to pay superannuation on government funded parental leave will help reduce the retirement pay gap that relegates

many women to poverty after work.

Right to disconnect from work

New right to disconnect laws followed union campaigns for the Closing the Loopholes Bill. A right to disconnect is particularly valuable for IEU's members as women workers, already overburdened at work, continue to also carry the majority of family and caring responsibilities.

Brad Hayes IEUA Federal Secretary



Federal Employment and Workplace Relations Minister Murray Watt addresses the media with, from left, IEU Secretary Carol Matthews, United Workers Union National President Jo Schofield, CELA CEO Michele Carnegie, G8 Education CEO Pejman Okhovat, back row, and union members.



IEU member Fiona Black, second from right, director at Koala Childcare Centre – Sutherland Hospital, Caringbah, presents Minister Murray Watt with an artwork from her students; with, from left, Jo Schofield, Uwu; Community Child Care Association Executive Director Julie Price, CELA CEO Michele Carnegie, and IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

Long day care pay rises

Minister stands with members

The IEU joined federal Employment and Workplace Relations Minister Murray Watt for a press conference on 4 December to mark the formal signing of the agreement paving the way for 15% pay rises for thousands of long day care teachers.

The media event was held outside the Fair Work Commission in Sydney, where the agreement, which covers teachers and educators with 63 employers, has now been lodged.

This agreement is the first of its kind under new workplace laws passed by the Labor government in 2022 as part of the *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Act*.

Under the Modern Award, an experienced teacher in a long day care centre is currently paid \$93,000 a year. The new top rate after the 15% increase will be more than \$107,000. It is a vital step towards closing the gender pay gap.

Wages rising again

"This is a very special day for early childhood educators and daycare centre operators right across Australia," Minister Watt said.

"For many years now, early childhood educators in our country have been grossly undervalued and not paid the money they deserve for the very important work they do for our children, for our communities, for families and for our economy.

"What today's agreement means is that at least 12,000 early childhood educators and teachers right across the country working for over 60 different employers in daycare centres and other establishments from this month will be receiving a 10% pay rise with another 5% pay rise to come next December.

"It's really pleasing to see this as an example of Australians' wages rising again so that they can

deal with some of the cost-of-living pressures."

The Minister noted that because pay rates in the sector have fallen so far behind, teachers and educators were "leaving in droves" to take up work in other fields. He said the pay rises are also good for the long day care sector and the community as a whole as teachers and educators will now be able to afford to stay in the profession they love.

"I really congratulate everyone who's been part of this agreement," Minister Watt said, adding the pay rises are a mark of respect "for the really important work that they perform".

Fair pay for vital work

IEU Secretary Carol Matthews said: "Today we're seeing the ground-breaking outcome of unions, the federal government and a group of employers working together to lift pay and

conditions across the long day care sector.

"The education and care of our youngest children is important and indispensable work," Matthews said. "These long overdue increases better reflect the crucial work of university-qualified early childhood teachers in laying the vital foundations for our children's development and lifelong learning."

IEU member Fiona Black, who is a director at Koala Childcare Centre – Sutherland Hospital, Caringbah, presented the Minister with a special artwork from her young students. "We asked some of our children to draw a picture of their teachers because we were going to an important meeting about ensuring educators can be paid well for all the work they do," Fiona said.

Monica Crouch Journalist

Taking our preschool pay rise campaign to NSW MPs

Ambassadors for the IEU's Unite for Change campaign for better pay for teachers in community-based preschools have taken their message to NSW politicians, advocating for IEU members.

Cronulla Preschool director Janene Rox spoke with Opposition Leader Mark Speakman at a "community cabinet" afternoon tea in Miranda on 18 November.

At the event, Janene also advocated for the campaign in conversations with other members of the shadow cabinet including Shadow Minister for Finance and Sport Eleni Petinos, Shadow Minister for Families, Communities, Disabilities and Youth

Natasha McLaren-Jones, and Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education Justin Clancy. Janene said they were all very receptive.

On 28 November, NSW Member for the Upper Hunter Dave Layzell visited Muswellbrook Preschool. IEU member Raelee Smith organised the visit to brief Layzell on the Unite for Change campaign.

Raelee is an educational leader at Muswellbrook Preschool. It was a successful visit, with Layzell promising to raise the matter in a meeting with Shadow Education Minister Sarah Mitchell.

The IEU's Unite for Change campaign addresses the long-

term undervaluing of teachers in the community preschool sector. Preschools are struggling to attract staff, especially in regional areas.

The union is seeking pay rises of 25% and filed a game-changing application with the Fair Work Commission in July, supported by Community Early Learning Australia (CELA).

Negotiations are under way with employers and the NSW government to fund pay rises that properly value the work of community preschool teachers.

Sue Osborne Journalist



Janene Rox, IEU member and director at Cronulla Preschool, meets with NSW Opposition Leader Mark Speakman.



From left, Dave Layzell, MP for Upper Hunter; Tracey Marsden; Vice President Muswellbrook Preschool Management Committee; Leah Folpp IEU member and director of Merriwa Preschool; Kelly Constable, IEU member and director Muswellbrook Preschool; Raelee Smith, IEU member, Unite for Change ambassador and educational leader at Muswellbrook Preschool.

SPOTLIGHT ON REPS

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

Jacob Betts

St Francis Xavier College, Florey

Jacob Betts is the Science Coordinator at St Francis Xavier College, Florey, in the ACT, where he also teaches human biology. He's been the IEU rep at the school for more than two years.

Unions run in Jacob's blood. His father was Neville Betts, former organiser and Assistant Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union. On Neville's passing in 2021, Labor MP David Smith, member for Bean in the ACT, paid tribute to him in Parliament: "Neville was the ETU organiser on the Parliament House site during its construction. He was loved by delegates, members and officials across the Labor movement."

Jacob is proud of this family history. "My father was a union delegate for 30-something years, and an organiser, and he became Assistant Secretary of the ETU. So for me, being a rep aligns really well with how I was brought up. When I became a member, Dad messaged me and said, 'welcome brother'. And I'm like, 'my father just called me brother'."

Strengthening the chapter at his school is front of Jacob's mind. "That's something we're working on at the moment - I've started by recruiting more reps, and now we're all starting to work on membership," he said.

"It's really about educating people to know what we've accomplished so far as a union. Like, even my old man used to say the same thing about unions in general - you know, we didn't have overtime or paid maternity leave, and because we might live in a more comfortable time now, we can tend to forget where we've come from and how important the union movement is. So, yeah, it's in my blood."

"That 70th anniversary issue of *Newsmonth* which has the spread of IEU history, I think is really powerful, and I can't wait to whack it up on the notice board."

Jacob has a simple reason for having joined the IEU. "I'm a union member because I care about workers - that's about it, really," he said.

"Unions, to me, really represent the working class, and we're encompassing a lot of the middle class now too - we're the heart and soul of most industries. Without us, everything collapses, and we get disadvantaged. So we need to look after each other."



Mercedes Goss

St Patrick's Parish School, Albury

Mercedes Goss teaches Year 5 at St Patrick's Parish School, Albury, where she's also the Religious Education Coordinator. Mercedes has been a teacher for 34 years, and a rep for 33 of them.

"I like that I can actually advocate on behalf of my staff as well as advocate on behalf of my region," Mercedes says.

"You've got to have a voice. And that voice is important because in Albury we're south of even the 'New South' in New South Wales, and sometimes we can feel a little bit distant. We have regional issues as well as the bigger picture issues, and we've got to have a voice to be able to express all those issues."

Mercedes keeps the St Pat's chapter strong by always approaching new teachers and inviting them to join the IEU. "We try and get our younger teachers on board, of course, and we talk through what the issues are," she said. "We try to be quite specific and intentional about how important it is to be a union member and how the union supports us in our profession."

Being a union member has been important to Mercedes throughout her career. "It's a deeply ingrained part of my profession and my vocation as a teacher to be a union member," she said.

"We do things together, and we have a collective ideology about how important our job is and how important it is to support one another in what we do."

Mercedes is proudly union. "I love being a union member," she said. "I've been a union member for a long time, and I've stood beside a lot of great union people in that time. Our union is strong because of the individuals who stand together and support us."



Katrina Easton

Rosary Park Catholic School, Branxton

Katrina Easton is a rep at Rosary Park Catholic School, a primary school at Branxton in the Hunter Valley region, where she is an Aboriginal Education Teacher. This is Katrina's third year as a rep and her fifth as an IEU member.

"I'm a union member because unions look after their people, and history shows that we have better outcomes if we're unionists," Katrina said.

Looking after people is the reason Katrina became a rep. "For a while I was filling lots of roles at my school, and I think I was the 'middle person' that everyone saw, and they'd come to me and say, 'This is what I've got a problem about', and I felt like I needed to advocate," Katrina said.

Membership is strong at Rosary Park, where most of the staff are IEU members. "When there's examples of when I've had to step in and be supportive of chapter members, they see what the union can do," Katrina said. "We have a really good organiser, and she works with a lot of staff as well. I think when teachers are burnt out, feeling backed is what they most want."

If Katrina could change one thing for her profession this year it would be workloads. "There are a lot of expectations outside of standard teaching hours," she said.

Data collection is another issue Katrina would like to see either eased or better managed.

"What are we using this data for if we don't use it to change our programs?" she said.

"We don't know how to analyse it so we don't know what it really means, and we're finding that all of the specialist teachers - learning support, EALD [English as another language or dialect], Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - we actually don't get to sit as a team with the teachers and look at what the data actually means for our programming and for our students. We're pushed to get all this data, but we don't get to see enough of the insights."



Laura Proctor

Casimir Catholic College, Marrickville

For Laura Proctor, sharing the role of rep has brought many benefits. "It's been really nice to have someone to just chat about things to, you know," she said.

"Do we need to take this further and talk to the members here, or is this something that we can figure out between ourselves and the person that's making the inquiry? I think it's been good to have two people."

The science teacher was happy to step up to the role of rep when her colleagues put her forward. "I'm passionate about trying to support new staff and just trying to make sure that it's a positive working environment, and solutions based."

"I think that we all have a part to play having a positive culture and enjoyable place to work, solving problems, just making sure that everyone feels that they're being looked after."

For Laura, workload is the key issue impacting members in her chapter. Everyone has noticed the gradual creep in the workload over the

last 10 years, she said. It's increased bit by bit to the point where "it's pretty much impossible to do everything we've been asked to do," she said.

"And, you know, teachers are deciding how to prioritise those things, and I think inexperienced staff find it hard to prioritise. And yeah, I think it's something that I would like us to talk about going forward."

Laura, who is in her first year as a rep, has been a member of the IEU since she first started teaching. "I just think it's an absolute necessity that everyone joins so that we can make sure that we're represented and that we have an opportunity to negotiate for our work lives".



Debbie Cassar

St Christopher's Catholic Primary School, Panania

Debbie Cassar is the rep at St Christopher's Catholic Primary School in Panania, in Sydney's southern suburbs, where she teaches Year 1.

"It's an important job that needed to be done," Debbie said of her decision to put up her hand for the rep role. "In the current education climate, we need to stand up for ourselves and make sure our voices are heard because teachers can be overworked, underpaid and underappreciated."

Reducing workloads and smaller class sizes are hot topics at Debbie's school. "No matter what research they choose to show us, I think class size is definitely a big factor in teacher workload," she said.

Debbie has a secret weapon for strengthening the union at her school. "I give out lollies at

our chapter meetings," she laughed. "But it's mostly word of mouth - I encourage people to come along. We're lucky, we have friendly staff, everyone's lovely, and I think word of mouth really works."

Debbie finds both her work and being a rep interesting and rewarding. "I've learned a lot on the job, and I'm still learning," she said.

An IEU member for 19 years, Debbie joined the union when she first started teaching. "There's power in numbers and it's important to make sure we have a fair and equitable workplace and that our voices are heard," she said.



Joseph Clark

International Grammar School, Ultimo

Joseph Clark's first degree was in politics. When he became a teacher, he began helping his friends out with "understanding contracts and looking at the MEAs and explaining situations to them," Joseph said.

With the multi-enterprise agreement (MEA) in independent schools coming up this year, Joseph thought: "I'm going to be getting annoyed about these things anyway, so I might as well do it as part of my position".

Joseph has been a rep for just over a year, and when he speaks to his colleagues about the union, he explains that the rights they now have are negotiated and that the profession is changing.

With teachers having to do more online and the creep of administrative tasks, there's a risk of losing good people, he said. If we "leave it up to employers, even if they have the best intentions, we know what teaching is like," he said. Teachers will keep being asked to do more "and the only people who are going to stand up for us is organised labour".

When it comes to the MEA for independent schools, Joseph is especially focused on workloads and school-based standards. Members in his chapter are concerned about salaries and "they've been really disappointed in the offers from the AIS," he said. "When people speak of how much teachers are valued" there's a disconnect because teachers aren't shown "that you're financially valued".

"So, I think tangible change is something that I'd really like to see as the negotiations continue. I think even if you can't spell out every single requirement on the teacher, there's got to be some room for negotiation and acceptance that the role has changed. And in terms of salary, I think with everything that's asked of us, we need to be moving up with that."



Monique Magri

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Cabramatta

Monique Magri teaches at the primary school she attended as a child. The music and art teacher started there after she graduated, over two decades ago, and now works alongside her year 2 and year 6 teachers. It's such "a lovely community", she said. "And so when I saw the job advertised, I really wanted to work in that environment."

She now gives back to her community as a union rep. Monique's desire to have a family motivated her to become an IEU member. "I knew that I would need to take maternity leave. I just wanted to be supported. So that's my main reason for joining the IEU."

When it came time for Monique to go on maternity leave, she found the support she

needed from the IEU "So it was very beneficial to be part of the union at that point," Monique said.

These days, workload is a focus for her chapter, she said. "I feel like the Catholic system is doing a lot for the students, which is really, really wonderful." While she sees those benefits for students, staff "are very busy". That's something she wants to see addressed because "workload is a big problem".



Keith Smith

St Scholastica's College, Glebe

For Keith Smith, joining the IEU was the natural thing to do. He grew up in the north of England, an area he said is very unionised and leans left. So being a member of a union, "that's just a continuation of those values and those principles over the years", said Keith.

The teacher at St Scholastica's College became a union rep a year and a half ago because he felt a sense of responsibility. "As I say, I've always been active. I've always been a vociferous member of the staff in terms of union issues."

Keith came along to a reps' training session at IEU's Sydney office to meet other reps, learn new things and find out what's happening in other schools.

At his chapter, working conditions are at the top of his list of concerns. "I think that of course

that ties into pay. But, I think there are work practices issues around face-to-face, around meetings, around entitlements, and I think we can see that at the moment, there's a lot of people leaving the profession."

To Keith, staff retention is the "number one job of any school".

"And I think a strong union with clear work practices really benefits staff retention." It's a message he's passed on to senior leadership — that a strong union chapter makes for "a better school".



Noel Neilson

Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School, Middle Cove

Noel Neilson is the rep at Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School, where he is a maintenance and groundskeeper across three campuses – preschool, infants and secondary school – for a total of about 400 students.

When it came to electing a rep at his school, "I just put my hand up," said Noel, who's been the rep now for two-and-a-half years and an IEU member for 15 years.

"I've always been a union member, in the building trade or whatever else," he said.

This year, Noel said he'd like to see success in the campaign for single-interest bargaining for the multi-enterprise agreement covering members at his school, as this gives them more

rights in the process of negotiating for better pay and conditions.

"Being around all three campuses, I ask the teachers, if they're interested, please vote – I'm trying to get as many teachers as we have to vote, and it's working," Noel said. It certainly is working: the members at Glenaeon have said yes to single-interest bargaining.

"Glenaeon is a great school to work at – all the kids, and the respect, I love it," Noel said.



Mitchell Flack

Delaney College, Granville

When Mitchell Flack came to an IEU reps training session in November, it was a busy time in the term. With exams, marking reports, and more, "it's good to sort of, I suppose, re-centre myself as a union rep and focus on what's coming with the next award negotiations in my diocese," said Mitchell.

The young teacher became the rep for Delaney College six months ago and went to the training session to gain a deeper understanding of the role. "I'm obviously still learning, and want to support my chapter, as much as I can, so I'm just here to learn the ropes."

Mitchell joined the union three years ago because of the impact of Covid, during which he observed "the stresses being placed on teachers", said Mitchell.

"I saw the lead up to the last award negotiations, and believed in what changes the union was trying to push for and wanted to be part of that voice."

As a rep, the key issues he'd like to see addressed are workload and the transparency of communication.

The training session proved useful, and Mitchell was glad he went. "A lot of thinking today, a lot to bring back to the members of my school."



Adrian Nicks of John XXIII, Stanhope Gardens, receives his 20-year membership certificate from organiser Lubna Haddad.



Director Jacinta Perry of Kangaroo Valley Preschool, Sholahaven, left, receives her 20-year membership certificate with organiser Tina Smith.



Principal John Farrell of St Mary and St Joseph Primary School, Maroubra Bay, receives his 40-year membership gift.



Above left, organiser Lubna Haddad, left, presents Leanne Vella with her 20-year membership certificate; above right, Lubna presents Tracy Hunt with her 20-year membership certificate, both at Our Lady of the Angels Primary School, Rouse Hill.



Natalie Guerlin, right, of St Michael's Primary School, Baulkham Hills receives her 20-year membership certificate from organiser Lubna Haddad



Marie Orehek, left, of St Michael's Primary School, Baulkham Hills receives her 10-year membership certificate from organiser Lubna Haddad.



Keiraville Community Preschool teacher Kristie Field, centre, receives her 10-year membership certificate, with Unite for Change ambassador Margaret Gleeson, left, and organiser Tina Smith.



James Hunt (centre) receives his 40-year membership gift at Waverley College (middle) with reps David Parnell (left) and Cath Stewart.



New rep Narelle McFarlane presents previous rep Seamus Farrell with his 30-year membership certificate at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, Nicholls, ACT.



Rosa-Bourke, left, receives her 30-year membership certificate at St Michael's Primary School, Daceyville, from rep Sarah Lopes.



Anne Derrett, Rachel Brook and Denise O'Reilly celebrate membership milestones at St John Vianney's Primary School, Blacktown.



Former rep of 20 years Mark Smith, right, of Holy Spirit College, Bellambi, receives his 40-year membership gift with current rep Jordan Timpano.



Karen Gallagher, Leigh Laxton and Emma Rolleston of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Bulli with their 10-year membership certificates.



40-year member Stephen Peters, right, of John Therry Catholic College, Rosemeadow, receives his membership gift from organiser David Whitcombe.



From left to right, Natalie Woodridge (10 years), Kara Gabbett (10 years) and Stephen Boulus (20 years) are recognised at Gilroy College, Castle Hill.



Corinne Smith, left, of Northholm Grammar School, Arcadia receives her 10-year certificate from organiser Lubna Haddad.



Jodie Howard, left, celebrates 20 years' membership with 10-year member Sylvia Johnston-Zammit, of Nazareth Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour, with organiser Tina Smith.



Melinda Gambley of Clunes Preschool receives her 20-year membership certificate.



Principal Tony (Anthony) Hughes of Christ the King Catholic Primary School, North Rocks, receives his 40-year membership gift.



Luke O'Reilly of St Raphael's Catholic Primary School, Cowra, right, receives his 20-year membership certificate from rep Ben Thomson.



Mary Colagrossi of St Joseph's Primary School, Enfield, receives her 40-year membership gift from principals organiser Lyn Caton.



Vanessa Fisher of St Edward's Catholic Primary School, Canowindra, receives her 40-year membership gift from organiser Pat Devery.



Organiser Tina Smith, left, presents Michele Hendricks with her 10-year certificate at St Mary's Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Milton.



Steve Clifford receives his 30-year membership certificate, and 40-year member Jennifer Dillon receives her membership gift at John Bosco Primary School, Engadine.



From left, 20-year members Dominique Meredith, David Holt and Karen Healey of John Therry Catholic College, Rosemeadow, receive their certificates.



Catherine Young, right, of Moruya Preschool, receives her 40-year membership gift from organiser Tina Smith.



Kelly Tartinton with her 10-year membership certificate at Bulli Community Preschool



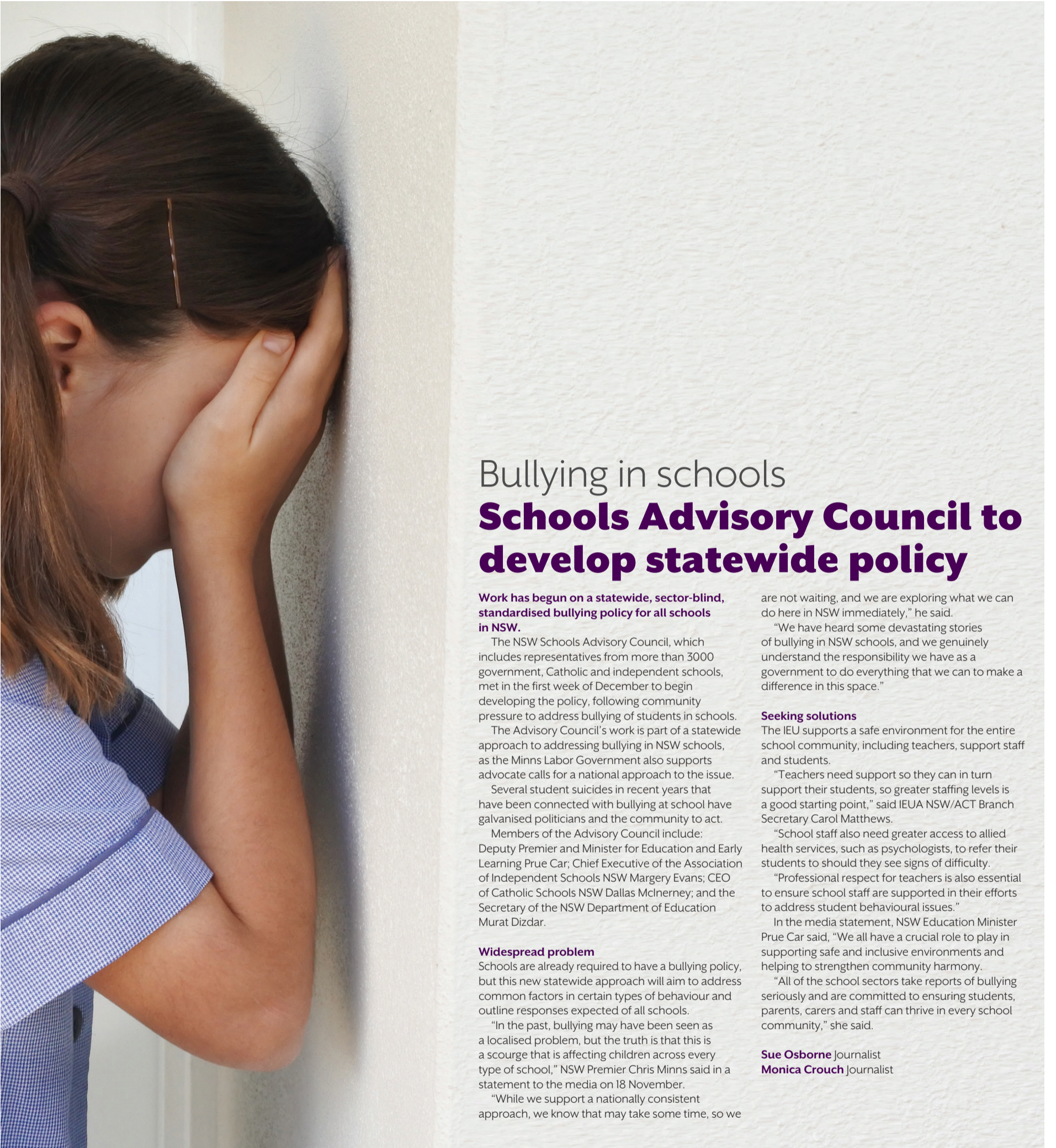
Christine Forner, right, celebrates 30 years of IEU membership with Hills Grammar School rep Helen Laidler.



40-year member Paula Light, right, with 20-year member Anna Ryan at Sacred Heart Primary School, Matraville.



Rep Eva Delaney, left, of St Andrews Primary School, Marayong, receives her 10-year membership certificate from organiser Lubna Haddad.



Bullying in schools

Schools Advisory Council to develop statewide policy

Work has begun on a statewide, sector-blind, standardised bullying policy for all schools in NSW.

The NSW Schools Advisory Council, which includes representatives from more than 3000 government, Catholic and independent schools, met in the first week of December to begin developing the policy, following community pressure to address bullying of students in schools.

The Advisory Council's work is part of a statewide approach to addressing bullying in NSW schools, as the Minns Labor Government also supports advocate calls for a national approach to the issue.

Several student suicides in recent years that have been connected with bullying at school have galvanised politicians and the community to act.

Members of the Advisory Council include: Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning Prue Car; Chief Executive of the Association of Independent Schools NSW Margery Evans; CEO of Catholic Schools NSW Dallas McInerney; and the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education Murat Dizdar.

Widespread problem

Schools are already required to have a bullying policy, but this new statewide approach will aim to address common factors in certain types of behaviour and outline responses expected of all schools.

"In the past, bullying may have been seen as a localised problem, but the truth is that this is a scourge that is affecting children across every type of school," NSW Premier Chris Minns said in a statement to the media on 18 November.

"While we support a nationally consistent approach, we know that may take some time, so we

are not waiting, and we are exploring what we can do here in NSW immediately," he said.

"We have heard some devastating stories of bullying in NSW schools, and we genuinely understand the responsibility we have as a government to do everything that we can to make a difference in this space."

Seeking solutions

The IEU supports a safe environment for the entire school community, including teachers, support staff and students.

"Teachers need support so they can in turn support their students, so greater staffing levels is a good starting point," said IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

"School staff also need greater access to allied health services, such as psychologists, to refer their students to should they see signs of difficulty.

"Professional respect for teachers is also essential to ensure school staff are supported in their efforts to address student behavioural issues."

In the media statement, NSW Education Minister Prue Car said, "We all have a crucial role to play in supporting safe and inclusive environments and helping to strengthen community harmony.

"All of the school sectors take reports of bullying seriously and are committed to ensuring students, parents, carers and staff can thrive in every school community," she said.

Sue Osborne Journalist

Monica Crouch Journalist

IEU Speaks **Steps forward, opportunities missed**

Federal parliament passed the *Better and Fairer Schools (Funding Reform) Act* on 26 November 2024 following years of research and consultation with the education sector.

These laws, and accompanying bilateral agreements, aim to reduce educational inequality and student disadvantage.

Unfortunately, the funding reforms are also a missed opportunity to resolve long-standing funding shortfalls or compel meaningful employer action on excessive teacher workloads.

While the federal government is to be commended for increasing their investment in education, the new funding arrangements simply don't go far enough.

Most public schools will still fall short of full funding. A core IEU value is that funding must centre on student need.

Needs-based funding is the cornerstone of an equitable system - it's vital to close achievement gaps for students from diverse backgrounds.

The work of our members and schools in the non-government sector must be complemented by a world class public education system that is accessible to all children in all communities.

While the federal government has increased their contribution from 20% of the Schooling Resource Standard to 22.5%, this still fails to deliver full funding for most Australia's public schools.

Employers must be held to account

The government is to be commended for applying a workload impact assessment to the reform agenda to ensure overworked school staff are not burdened by even more administrative tasks.

While the new arrangements acknowledge teacher workload and staff wellbeing, they fail to require specific and enforceable workload interventions at the school or system level.

Employers must genuinely engage with IEU members on workload. Simply acknowledging the problem or offering vague

reports on existing (and often inadequate) workload responses isn't enough.

Reforms need to mandate specific new workload measures supported by a stricter reporting regime. Employers should be held to account by having to demonstrate workload reductions in their schools.

The funding arrangements rightly target three primary objectives:

- equity and excellence in education
- student wellbeing for learning and engagement, and
- a strong and sustainable workforce.

Without concrete workload reduction outcomes for teachers and school leaders, and full funding for all schools, these worthy objectives may well be doomed to fail.

Brad Hayes IEUA Federal Secretary

Safeguarding our workforce

Andrew Dane
Vice President ACT



At our most recent meeting, the Monaro Sub Branch in the ACT welcomed a guest speaker from Worksafe ACT who spoke about health and safety representatives (HSRs) in schools and the structure of a health and safety committee.

I have been attempting to get this structure up and running at my school and this term we have managed to break into work groups and elect HSRs for each group. We look forward to our HSRs receiving training, and to experiencing their first health and safety committee in the new year.

You may wonder why I am so keen for this, and the simple answer is, 'agency'. There are far too many aspects of our working lives where we have no agency, where our voice isn't heard.

The HSR structure allows workers to speak about the way their safety is maintained. In a world where we are still coming to grips with workplace issues such as psychosocial harm, having a robust

HSR network in a workplace has the potential to deal with issues sooner and more effectively.

We are seeing far too many teachers leaving the profession and many of these say that the working conditions just became 'too much'. In the ACT (like everywhere else) we are feeling the pinch of the teacher shortage, and it is important that we safeguard the workers that remain from being unreasonably burdened by the shortfall of staff.

The union provides a voice for workers and the excellent work that is currently underway regarding multi-enterprise agreements in NSW and ACT, are one way to ensure that our conditions safeguard our longevity in the workplace. Perhaps having active HSRs is another way of protecting our future, by protecting our staff from harm.

With Advent upon us and Christmas rapidly approaching, I'd like to wish you all a joyful season, a much-needed rest and recharge, and a fantastic New Year.

Andrew Dane Vice President ACT

Free assessment literacy courses

The IEU is offering four courses in assessment literacy for teachers with Professor Jim Tognolini (USYD) free for IEU members.

The courses are designed to empower teachers with the foundational skills necessary to create high-quality assessment tasks, allowing them to make informed decisions about student learning based on visible and reliable evidence. The timetable is as follows:

- foundations of assessment literacy for teachers: Monday, 17 February 2025, 3.30-5pm
- creating consistent and effective assessment rubrics: Monday, 7 April 2025, 3.30-5pm
- achieving fairness and validity in assessments: Monday, 16 June 2025, 3.30-5pm, and
- achieving consistent and comparable judgements across the school: Monday, 23 June 2025, 3.30-5pm.

Professor Tognolini is a highly respected international expert in educational assessment. He regularly advises and delivers workshops for international, national, and state educational agencies. His work in advancing evidence-informed assessment practices is trusted by school leaders and educators globally.

Free PD for support staff members

The one-hour, online course, Effective Strategies for Workplace Success, Strengthening Communication Skills for Support Staff will run on:

- Friday 31 January, 10-11am, and
- Monday 3 February, 2pm-3pm – repeat of above course

Start the 2025 school year with professional development that will provide you with practical training aimed at strengthening your communication and conflict resolution skills.

Facilitated by leadership and communication expert, Beth Berghan, participants will explore a range of scenarios directly related to their roles, including:

- strengthening communication between in-class support staff and classroom teachers
- dealing with frustrated parents in the front office
- handling student conflict, and
- contributing effectively to school operation discussions.

To register: ieu.asn.au/events



Save the date 2025

Reps training for 2025

Have you joined us for a reps' training day?

Come along to learn about your rights at work and how to build a strong chapter. It's also a great way to meet reps from other schools. Remember you have access to union training during normal working hours but you will still need to follow your school's procedures for taking this leave.

To register: ieu.asn.au/events

Metropolitan

Wednesday 19 February, IEU Ultimo Office

Friday 28 February, IEU Ultimo Office

South Coast

Thursday 6 March, Wollongong City Diggers Club

North Coast

Monday 10 March, Lismore Workers Club

Mid-North Coast

Wednesday 12 March, The Westport Club, Port Macquarie

Hunter Valley

Friday 14 March, Noah's on the Beach, Newcastle

Riverina

Wednesday 26 March, Griffith Ex Services Club

Monaro and South East

Friday 28 March, Quality Inn Dickson, ACT

Central Coast

Tuesday 1 April, Gosford Golf Club

Lansdowne, Cumberland, Penrith, Blue Mountains

Thursday 3 April, Penrith RSL

North West

Friday 2 May, Tamworth Hotel

Central West

Friday 30 May, Dubbo RSL Club

We invite reps who have not attended a training session in the past 18 months to attend.

IEU Speaks Parliament delivers for members

The final week of parliament in 2024 secured important reforms benefiting thousands of IEU members.

These new laws will help safeguard a more sustainable teacher workforce and support quality education in our schools and early childhood education.

The federal government's move to slash student debt is important to the long-term plan to boost teacher attraction and retention.

Combined with groundbreaking government funding of a 15% payrise for early childhood education workers, the parliament has delivered long-overdue reforms that will ultimately benefit students, teachers and quality education.

New supports for next generation

The IEU has long campaigned for greater support of our student and graduate teachers.

This is a critical part of a broader strategy to increase the recruitment and retention of new teachers.

Early career teachers stand to benefit by around \$4800 when the full HECS cuts become operational in 2025.

These latest reforms follow other federal supports announced for new teachers this year:

- financial support payments to student teachers undertaking their practicum placements
- a reduction in the 7.1% indexation spike in HECS payments in 2023 that far exceeded wage increases for early career teachers during the same period
- guidelines to help deliver more comprehensive induction programs for new teachers, and
- high-quality professional experience for students undertaking their school-based practicums.

Wage justice for long day care

New legislation to fund a 15% wage increase for long-day care workers is the culmination of an 18-month campaign by unions to deliver a historic wage outcome for these

essential workers. Union members made this happen using the nation's first supported bargaining agreement.

Fairer bargaining laws now empower unions to extend our collective bargaining success to areas of the workforce left behind under the old system.

Supported bargaining is underway in other early childhood areas to address the huge pay gaps that plague the sector.

The government is to be commended for backing the union campaign in long day care. The wage funding will bring much needed respect and recognition of our amazing early childhood workers.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Your renewal for 2025 membership was emailed to you in early December. If we do not have an email contact for you the renewal was posted.

If there are no changes for you in 2025 and your payment is automatic (payroll deductions, automatic credit card, direct debit) you do not need to return the renewal.

If you have changes for 2025, complete the renewal and return to the IEU as your employer will not advise us of any personal or professional changes on your behalf.

Changes include:

- contact details – address, email or mobile
- leave – long service, parental leave, leave without pay
- workload changes – increase or decrease in days/hours or moving to a promotion position
- changing workplace
- becoming a casual employee, and retiring.

Automatic payments (payroll deductions, automatic credit card, direct debit) will continue at the current rate if we are not advised to cease or change them.

Manual payments (credit card, Bpay) – complete the renewal process or phone membership directly on 8202 8900 – press 1 to update.

Annual discount rate - we do offer a discount rate to members who renew with the annual fee before Monday 3 February 2025.

Resign membership in 2025 – if you do not want to continue with us in 2025, we need notice in writing. Email: membership@ieu.asn.au

Wishing you all an enjoyable and restful break and we look forward to assisting you in 2025.

Present Tense **Legislation bombshell**

The talk of 2024 was the federal government's proposed changes to arrangements for international students, and it was understood that the Coalition would back the enabling legislation when it came before the Senate.

It was a major shock, then, when the Coalition flagged in November that it would not support the legislation after all.

This is not due to some change of heart from the conservative side of politics.

Like Labor, they are of the view that immigration numbers into Australia are too high, and that the simplest way to reduce these numbers is by cutting back on the biggest cohort – namely, international students.

The more likely reason for the Coalition position is that Opposition Leader Peter Dutton has seen the success of Donald Trump in the US in opposing a bipartisan immigration bill, allowing him to keep the immigration issue alive for the election.

Given that Trump ended up winning the election, Dutton may well be hoping that his tactics might pay off here when Australia goes to the polls early next year.

However, the defeat of the legislation does not mean that much has changed. Up until now the government has been relying on more obscure regulations, in particular, Ministerial Directive 107, a regulation that the proposed legislation would have repealed.

This directive has seen visa approvals limited, along with other bureaucratic manoeuvring to cut overall numbers, but it is a less transparent mechanism than clear legislation.

Despite the apparent defeat of the proposed legislation, the push to cut student numbers remains a bipartisan position, and the sector should continue to brace for a difficult 2025.

Agreements round-up

Your union continues to be active in seeking improved pay and conditions for members in the post-secondary sector, and in 2024, the IEU signed off on new enterprise agreements at UTS College, Navitas Skilled Futures, and Taylors College.

These agreements saw teachers in those colleges achieve annual pay rises of around 4%, along with improvements to other conditions, while holding the line on existing benefits. In 2025, bargaining will get moving at WSU The College, Taylors College, Navitas Skilled Futures, UOW College, and UNSW College.

Enterprise agreements provide better pay and conditions than the award. The *Fair Work Act* includes provisions for 'good faith bargaining', under which an employer can be compelled to start bargaining where it can be demonstrated that most employees (or group of employees, such as teachers), want that to happen. To find out how this might work at your college, contact your union, the IEU.

Season's greetings

This will be the last Present Tense for 2024, but we'll be back better than ever in the new year. We wish our members in the post-secondary sector all the best for the holiday season. Remember that the best holidays are union-won holidays – which is all of them!

Help us to push for further improvements in your workplace by maintaining your membership and by encouraging your colleagues to join the IEU.

Kendall Warren Organiser



Taryn, Teachers Health and union member

Congratulations to IEUA NSW/ACT on 70 years of championing teachers and support staff

Teachers Health is proud to be the health insurance for IEU NSW/ACT members. Speaking of milestones, Teachers Health is also celebrating our 70-year anniversary of helping care for its members and their families.

TEACHERS HEALTH
For members, for 70 years
SINCE 1954



To discover our story and how we support you, scan the QR code

teachershealth.com.au

2025 First Nations culturally & historically important dates

January

- 1 Jan 1994 Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) commenced
- 25 Jan 2014 Adam Goodes named Australian of the Year
- 26 Jan 1838 Waterloo Creek massacre (Kamilaroi people, NSW)
- 26 Jan 1938 William Cooper organises Day of Mourning
- 26 Jan 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy established in Canberra
- 26 Jan 1988 Bicentennial Protest – 40,000 march in Sydney
- 26 Jan Survival Day, Invasion Day, Australia Day, Yabun Festival

February

- 5 Feb 1972 Tent Embassy Petition to Parliament
- 12 Feb 1965 Freedom Ride bus leaves Sydney
- 13 Feb 2008 Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations
- 14 Feb 2004 TJ Hickey dies sparking Redfern riots
- 26 Feb 1968 Lionel Rose wins World Bantamweight Title

March

- 20 Mar National Close the Gap Day (3rd Thursday of March)
- 21 Mar International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 21 Mar 1829 Aboriginal warrior Windradyne dies (Bathurst, NSW)

April

- 1 Apr 1897 Aboriginal resistance leader Jandamarra killed (WA)
- 5 Apr 1997 Bringing them home report launched
- 15 Apr 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody final report
- 17 Apr 1816 Appin Massacre of men, women and children (Dharawal people)

May

- 1 May 1838 Slaughterhouse Creek massacre (Kamilaroi people)
- 1 May 1946 Anniversary of the Pilbara Strike
- 24 May 2020 Destruction of Juukan Gorge rock shelters by Rio Tinto
- 26 May 1997 Bringing them home report tabled in Federal Parliament
- 26 May National Sorry Day
- 26 May 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart issued
- 27 May 1967 Referendum on Indigenous recognition in the Australian constitution
- 27 May – 3 Jun National Reconciliation Week
- 28 May 2000 Reconciliation Walk over Harbour Bridge (250,000 attend)
- 29 May 1992 Torres Strait Islander flag launched

June

- 3 Jun Mabo Day (High Court Mabo Decision 1992)
- 5 Jun 1831 Resistance warrior Tarenorerer (Walyer) dies (Tas)
- 10 Jun 1838 Myall Creek Massacre
- 10 Jun 1957 Palm Island Strike
- 11 Jun 1975 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) enacted
- 12 Jun 1988 Burunga Statement presented to Prime Minister Bob Hawke

July

- 1 Jul The Coming of the Light festival (Torres Strait Islands)
- 2 Jul 1971 Evonne Goolagong-Cawley wins Wimbledon
- 6-13 Jul NAIDOC Week 2025
- 9 Jul 1971 Aboriginal flag first flown in Adelaide

August

- 4 Aug National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
- 9 Aug International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- 14 & 28 Aug 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petitions presented to Parliament
- 14 Aug – 18 Oct 1928 Coniston Massacre on Warlpiri/Anmatyerr/Kaytetye lands
- 15 Aug 1971 Neville Bonner becomes first Aboriginal person in Parliament
- 16 Aug 1975 Return of Gurindji land to the traditional owners (NT)
- 23 Aug 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off (Gurindji Strike)
- 25 Aug 1994 Prime Minister Paul Keating officially recognises South Sea Islanders as a distinct cultural group.

September

- 3 Sep Indigenous Literacy Day
- 13 Sep 2007 Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- 16 Sep 1963 Indigenous activists and their allies persuaded the ACTU to adopt a policy supporting equal pay for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers
- 25 Sep 2000 Cathy Freeman wins gold in the 400m final at the Sydney Olympic Games.

October

- 14 Oct 2023 Voice to Parliament referendum
- 26 Oct 1985 Uluru-Kata Tjuta title deeds returned to the Anangu people
- 28 Oct 1834 Pinjarra Massacre (WA)
- 31 Oct 1975 Proclamation of the Racial Discrimination Act

November

- 19 Nov 2004 Cameron Doomadgee dies in custody (Palm Island)
- 28 Nov 2023 Senator Pat Dodson ("Father of Reconciliation") retires from Parliament

December

- 1 Dec 1976 Sir Douglas Ralph Nicholls appointed Governor of South Australia
- 4 Dec 2000 Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Final Report released
- 10 Dec 1992 Redfern Park Speech delivered by Prime Minister Paul Keating
- 16 Dec 1976 Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act passed
- 23 Dec 1996 High Court handed down Wik Peoples v Queensland decision



Artwork credit: **Women Dreaming**

This painting is about women hunting. They are hunting for bush foods. Women are hunting around the waterholes, so they can look for witchety grubs, bush berries, bush onions and bush plums. Painting: April Campbell Language: Anmatyerr Community: Ti Tree Date: 5/11/2018

Sub Branch reports

The IEU has 19 geographical sub branches across NSW and the ACT, plus the Principals' sub branch. Sub branches meet four times a year, usually in the first three or four weeks of each term.

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

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

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

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

Contact your rep or organiser if you'd like more information.

Central Coast

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

The sub branch met on Thursday 7 November at Ourimbah RSL. Representatives from Catholic systemic and Christian schools were in attendance.

The IEU is in negotiations with Catholic Schools Broken Bay. Members in these schools currently enjoy an additional one hour per week release from face-to-face teaching in both secondary and primary schools.

The meeting noted additional release from face-to-face teaching has been part of the IEU's claims since 2020 but it wasn't achieved until 2023 in Broken Bay and hasn't yet spread to other dioceses.

The meeting further discussed the tension in negotiations between greater flexibility sought by the employer at the expense of entitlements and conditions set out in the Work Practices Agreement. At the time of the meeting, a positive resolution to the negotiations was still anticipated.

Christian schools have received an administrative assurance from their employers of pay rises in 2025 and 2026 despite not having an enterprise agreement in place yet. Negotiations have resumed between the IEU and Christian Schools Australia (CSA).

Reps are reporting on some good initiatives taking place in schools regarding student social behaviour and phone management practices.

Jim Hall Organiser



Members at the Central Met and Met East combined Sub Branch meeting.

Central Metropolitan and Metropolitan East

The Central Metropolitan Sub Branch includes central Sydney, Sydney's inner-west suburbs and Rhodes, Concord and Meadowbank. The Metropolitan East Sub Branch covers the eastern suburbs of Sydney, including Bondi, Waverley and Bellevue Hill.

Reps from the Central Metropolitan and Metropolitan East sub branches gathered in a combined meeting for Term 4 on Thursday 14 November at the IEU office in Ultimo.

The approach of this meeting was to offer reps a relaxed and convivial atmosphere to see out what has been a long year, with food and drink provided.

Reps enjoyed updates on the ongoing Association of Independent Schools (AIS) multi-enterprise agreement (MEA) campaign, the likely outcomes for Catholic systemic schools, and a preview of 2025.

IEU Secretary Carol Matthews joined us and was able to provide more detail on the AIS campaign, in particular, which was greatly appreciated by members.

The AGMs for both sub branches in February 2025 will be held separately, but more combined meetings are planned for later in the year.

Kendall Warren Organiser

Central West

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

The Catholic diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes is the largest in NSW, covering more than half of the state.

The Central West Sub Branch met on 15 November in Bathurst, providing a fantastic opportunity for members to come together and celebrate our collective achievements.

Assistant Secretary and Principals' Organiser Lyn Caton provided valuable insights into the AIS campaign and the importance of active chapters in each school. Over the course of the year, the sub branch has welcomed a growing number of new reps from independent schools, and this has provided invaluable opportunities to network with colleagues across the sector.

We thank all our chapter reps and Council delegates who continue to advocate on behalf of members across such a vast group of schools. We look forward to continuing to work with you all in 2025 to build on the gains made this year.

The 2025 AGM will be held on Friday 14 February in Forbes.

We look forward to seeing you all in 2025 and wish you all a very restful break.

Donna Widdison, Pat Devery Organisers

Cumberland

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

The Cumberland Sub Branch had its last meeting for 2024 at the IEU's Parramatta office. This was followed by a well-earned dinner at the Royal Oak.

Reps from Catholic systemic, the ELICOS sector and independent schools attended and shared updates for their sector.

Issues at The College at Western Sydney University were raised concerning casual teacher and support staff contracts, and the restructure that has been taken place in 2024.

At a school level, the usual issues were raised; namely new procedures for programming and compliance, especially in collecting student samples. We referred reps to the NESA fact sheet and advised them to keep that at the forefront of their process to ensure they are not wasting time on busy-work that is not required.

The other culprit was the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) and, as is still the case in many schools irrespective of sector, the demands placed on teachers and support staff are superfluous and not required for

funding or compliance. We also referred reps to the fact sheet that the IEU worked on with Department of Education.

The highlight of the evening was the excitement around the independent schools campaign and how many schools are getting past the post.

Reps reported on how the AIS have been visiting their schools, providing volumes of misinformation to dissuade teachers from signing the Single Interest Bargaining petition.

It was heartening to hear that the members, and potential members have been so well informed by reps and the union that those visits have fallen flat. In some schools, they even had the opposite effect, increasing petition signatures.

With the Catholic systemic claim put to dioceses this term as well, among others, bargaining for the union is going to be even busier and the role of reps in schools even more crucial. I thank all reps and fellow Cumberland organisers for their tireless work and look forward to working with all next year.

The next meeting is Monday 24 February 2025.

Lubna Haddad Organiser



Members at the Hunter Valley Sub Branch meeting.

Hunter Valley

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

The Hunter Valley Sub Branch meeting was held on Monday 25 November. Thirty-eight members from Aspect, Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), Christian, independent and Catholic systemic schools attended.

They discussed issues including long service leave and kindergarten aides permanency, concerns with lack of consultation and transparency in the transitions at Mayfield and Kurri-Abermain schools, a diocesan ad hoc unorganised online training request and PAOS reclassification access in independent schools.

Members also heard updates on CSA, Catholic Employment Relations (CER) and AIS negotiations.

The 2025 Hunter Valley Sub Branch AGM will be at the Blackbutt Hotel, New Lambton on Monday 17 February. All members are encouraged to attend and consider taking an active role.

Long term Newcastle Organiser Therese Fitzgibbon will be moving to work out of the Sydney office next year and was attending her last of almost one hundred sub branch meetings.

Deputy Secretary David Towson and reps stood as one to thank Therese for her tireless work, dedication and commitment to the members of the mighty Hunter Valley Sub Branch.

Carlo Rendina Organiser

Ku-ring-gai

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

The Ku-ring-gai Sub Branch met for its Term 4 meeting on Monday 28 October. Reps and members met with IEU Organisers Charles Wheeler and James Jenkins-Flint, to discuss branch, sub branch and local issues before sharing a meal together.

Attendees were a mix of Catholic systemic, independent, primary and secondary teachers and professional and operational staff.

With bargaining at pivotal points with both AIS and Catholic Schools Broken Bay, there was plenty to discuss, and members were able to exchange notes and stories about their respective campaigns.

Spiralling workloads and deteriorating conditions are clearly common across both sectors and members agreed that addressing these must be at the forefront of all negotiations.

Ku-ring-gai Sub Branch meets in the Bistro at Hornsby RSL at 4:30pm on Mondays in Week 3 of each term.

Charles Wheeler Organiser

Lansdowne

The Lansdowne Sub Branch covers Lakemba to Liverpool including Bankstown, Fairfield and Auburn.

The Lansdowne Sub Branch met on Thursday 14 November at Fairfield RSL for its final gathering of the year. Fourteen reps from a variety of schools and three IEU officials attended.

The ongoing campaign in independent schools was one of the major topics of discussion, with several reps providing insights on the situation in their chapter and asking questions regarding the way forward.

The commencement of bargaining in Catholic systemic schools was the other major focus, including discussion of the IEU's claim for improved pay and conditions for teachers and support staff.

Following the meeting, members enjoyed dinner with their colleagues at an Italian restaurant.

We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2025, and we hope you have a wonderful Christmas.

Aidan Anderson Organiser



Members at the Mid North Coast Sub Branch meeting.

Mid North Coast

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

The Mid North Coast Sub Branch meeting on Friday 22 November was a fantastic opportunity to come together and celebrate our collective achievements.

We were delighted to welcome AIS member Dearnie Beadle to her first meeting. Her enthusiasm was matched by the sub branch's excitement, highlighting the strong support and camaraderie we offer.

We also took the time to acknowledge and thank Steve Bergan for his outstanding work as an organiser in the Lismore office. His efforts have been instrumental to our sub branch's success, and we look forward to seeing the position filled in the near future to continue this vital support to the region.

Our sub branch was proud to reflect on the significant motions we raised and passed at June Council, particularly those addressing sexual harassment in schools. These motions reinforced the need for employers to uphold their positive duty and foster safer workplaces.

As we near the end of the year, it's important to celebrate the progress we've made, within our chapters, sub branches and across the wider sector. I wish everyone a well-deserved holiday break and look forward to a fresh and productive 2025.

Peter Criticos Organiser

Monaro

The Monaro Sub Branch covers Canberra and the ACT.

The Monaro Sub Branch meeting was held on 14 November in the Canberra IEU office. We welcomed IEU Deputy Secretary David Towson to our meeting.

WorkSafe ACT presented briefly on workplace health and safety, then took questions from members. Psychosocial hazards and the role of health and safety reps were discussed and information sheets distributed.

General business included the AIS campaign and Catholic systemic and Christian schools.

The sub branch carried a motion to thank the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) for the recent introduction of automatic recognition of teacher identified professional learning, conveying trust in the professionalism of ACT teachers and reducing their administrative workloads.

Well done to all the reps for their contributions to their union, especially the outgoing reps Judy Elliott, Verna Comely and any others who won't be returning in 2025. We thank them for their contribution and commitment to their peers and the IEU. We also warmly welcomed a new rep Jodie Heggaton to her first meeting.

The next meeting will be the AGM in Term 1 on Thursday 20 February 2025.

Dianne Lefebvre Monaro Branch President



Members at the North Coast Sub Branch meeting.

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

On Wednesday 6 November, we held our sub branch meeting back in the Lismore office for the first time since the rebuild.

Twelve school reps were joined by IEU Deputy Secretary, David Towson and North Coast Organiser, Richard Ryan. The reps in attendance were from Catholic systemic, Catholic independent and AIS schools. We also welcomed Garry Ryan from Trinity College who attended his first sub branch meeting. Hot topics included the AIS: 'Now's the Time' campaign, Catholic systemics and how each school is doing PLT meetings. Some get extra RFF, some don't.

Also, the effects of budget cutbacks across the diocese.

COI (cycles of improvement) was discussed – some schools are still doing it, some aren't.

The meeting was followed by dinner at the Sherwood Hotel in Lismore.

Our next meeting will be the AGM on Wednesday 19 February at 5pm in the IEU Lismore office.

Richard Ryan Organiser



Members at the Northern Suburbs Sub Branch meeting.

Northern Suburbs

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

We had great attendance at the Term 4 meeting held in-person at the Oaks Hotel in North Sydney on Tuesday 5 November.

Secretary Carol Matthews attended to discuss in detail the IEU campaign in AIS-represented employers. Reps from these schools shared how their chapters were progressing with petitioning staff in pursuit of the single-interest bargaining stream under the *Fair Work Act*.

They shared stories of the AIS and individual employers desperately attempting to convince their teachers not to sign and prevent them achieving the rights and powers that this new stream of bargaining provides moving forward.

Catholic systemic reps discussed the recent claims for their respective new enterprise agreements (Broken Bay having a separate agreement) and shared what they believe would be the most beneficial changes for teachers regarding work intensification.

Reps interested in attending our Term 1 meeting should watch for an email invitation early in the term, and RSVP to reserve a seat. Members can update emails and other details by logging into the IEU website.

James Jenkins-Flint Organiser

North West

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

The final North West Sub Branch gathering for 2024 was at the Armidale City Bowling Club on Friday 22 November. The meeting was well attended by reps across three different sectors.

As well as discussions of the IEU campaign for single interest bargaining for independent schools, and also elements of the Catholic systemic claim (pay increases have been processed in the Armidale Diocese) sub branch members also spoke about the Armidale Waldorf School's long campaign for an enterprise agreement. Their school is the only outlier in the entire region, and they still work under the Modern Award.

Issues in schools were discussed and potentially a need to network members across, as well as within, schools when they are engaged in wider community work and the workload is becoming untenable.

A special acknowledgement was made of our Sub Branch Secretary Dale Roberts who will commence a transition to retirement in 2025. There was also recognition of long-term reps and members Helen Smith and Judy Miller. Both are employed within the professional and operational stream in their AIS schools, but they nevertheless engaged and pursued the petition for single interest bargaining for teachers.

Our next gathering will be in Tamworth on 21 February.

Sue McKay Organiser

Penrith/Blue Mountains

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

The Penrith/Blue Mountains Sub Branch meeting on 20 November was a valuable opportunity for members to come together and reflect on the year's achievements. The Now's the Time campaign was a key focus, showcasing the growing activism and unity among members in the AIS sector. The campaign continues to build momentum, underscoring the collective strength and determination of the sub branch.

Discussions also highlighted the Catholic systemic schools agreement, providing an important platform to address shared concerns and challenges. This dialogue reinforced the power of collaboration across the union and strengthened the resolve to secure fair outcomes for all members.

The meeting concluded with a celebratory dinner, offering a chance to recognise and honour the tireless efforts of members throughout the year. Special acknowledgment was given to

Margaret O'Donnell and Brett Wright, whose leadership and contributions have been instrumental in supporting the sub branch's ongoing work and successes.

The event was a fitting way to conclude a productive year, reflect on the progress made, and look ahead with optimism. It highlighted the strength of the sub branch and the shared commitment of its members to advocate for a stronger and fairer future in non-government schools.

Peter Criticos Organiser



Members at the Riverina Sub Branch meeting.

Riverina

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

The final Riverina Sub Branch meeting of the year was held in Wagga Wagga on Friday 22 November.

Members from across the region were in attendance as were organisers Jackie Groom and Anthony Telford. Assistant Secretary Amanda Hioe was an unfortunate late apology as her plane from Sydney was cancelled at the last minute. It is pleasing to see that interest in the sub branch is high and there were chapters from a number of sectors represented.

The meeting discussed a number of school-based issues including the inconsistent allocation of release time to early career teachers, the sometimes delayed payment of wages to casual teachers and a broader discussion of staffing allocations across the Wagga diocese.

Also discussed were the broader issues of the independent schools MEA campaign and the exciting move to apply for a single interest bargaining determination.

The challenging work of reps in the independent sector was acknowledged by all present. The meeting also discussed the log of claims for the new Catholic systemic schools EA and the ongoing negotiations for the Christian Schools MEA.

The meeting passed a vote of thanks to all reps and members who have made a significant contribution to the IEU this year.

Merry Christmas to all.

Mercedes Goss Sub Branch President

South Coast

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

The final 2024 South Coast Sub Branch meeting was held on Wednesday 6 November at the soon to be demolished City Diggers Club in central Wollongong. The AGM in February 2025 will also be held at the club with a new venue being sought for future sub branch meetings.

Sub Branch President Marco Cimino was an apology, with Vice President Glenn Lowe chairing the final meeting of 2024. IEU reps from Catholic systemic and independent schools attended and from as far afield as the Southern Highlands and the Macarthur region.

Attendance from Christian and AIS schools was small by comparison. The sub branch also welcomed a new rep from the AIS sector and there were collective offers of assistance made as he finds his way in the role.

Various matters arising and discussed:

- The IEU sought feedback from reps regarding sub branch venues that are equitable in travel time for reps in schools and centres down the South Coast, in the Southern Highlands and the MacArthur region. IEU organisers prefer offering face-to-face meetings with a meal. More to come in 2025 on this.
- The Graduate Certificate in Religious Education is being checked by Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDOW) more thoroughly and in some schools some teachers cannot teach RE as they do not have this qualification. This impacts workloads as grade partners teach RE.
- Clarified that if you are an SSO and you receive a teacher number, you can continue in your role as an SSO if there is work available.
- The Right to Disconnect legislation, supports the notion that teachers are not required to respond to any work-related emails which are non-urgent and especially to parents emailing after hours and expecting responses within a day. This has been an enormous relief to teachers. An example was provided of a school where an official school-wide 'out-of-office-hours' automated message is in place.
- Long service leave at half pay is not standardised across agreements and it is not an entitlement to request it. Best practice is to put leave in sets per term with no dates over holidays.
- Can staff meetings be used for a social purpose (eg Melbourne Cup), and do teachers have the option of not attending?
- AIS campaign (see the IEU website for updates).
- Catholic systemic negotiations are commencing.

- Seeking to include delegates rights means that protection is in place for IEU reps to discuss matters with all staff.
- Right to disconnect legislation will be offered as a model clause for inclusion in EAs.
- Conditionally accredited teachers being asked to fill in additional paperwork to complete accreditation eg added goals for accreditation. This is not required by NESAs.

The Term 1 South Coast Sub Branch AGM will be on 26 February at Wollongong City Diggers at 5pm.

Luke Breen and Valerie Jones Organisers

South East

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

Delegates travelled from Tumut, Goulburn, Broulee, Young, Cooma, Bateman's Bay, Pambula, Broulee and Googong for the last sub branch meeting of the year on Friday 15 November.

Members offered expressions of sympathy and a card to Sub Branch President Linda Swadling on the death of her father.

The meeting also welcomed IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Deputy Secretary David Towson, who gave an update on the MEA negotiations for independent schools in the ACT and NSW.

Delegates from that sector then provided insight into the discussions, misinformation and voting stats in their schools. Delegates were congratulated on their support for the campaign for a single-interest bargaining stream and their continuing efforts to keep all staff in their schools informed about the issues.

Jackie Groom alluded to recent information from the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn advising that they would pay a 3% increase from 21 October 2024, to be processed in the pay run for 15 November. Further, from 1 January 2024, paid parental entitlements increased to 24 weeks and super increased to 11.5% from 1 July 2024.

David Towson also explained the bargaining process for Catholic systemic schools and the log of claims. Organiser Angela McDonald provided an update on discussions with the archdiocese around developing a policy on violence and sexual harassment in schools.

Although there were no Christian schools represented at the meeting, Angela and David gave an overview of the negotiations in that sector.

Delegates raised the following local issues:

- differing arrangements in DET and non-government schools for graduate teachers moving to Proficient and related salaries
- supervision duties and teachers' duty of care
- classroom support assistants and payment for overnight camps and excursions
- redundancies, and how they are determined, and
- HALT, classroom mastery and the purpose and validity of peer review in improving teacher performance.

Jackie Groom Organiser

Southern Suburbs

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

The final Southern Suburbs Sub Branch meeting of the year at Tradies Gynea was well attended by reps, both online and in a cavernous room at the very end of the Tradies building.

Of note was the enthusiasm of the representatives from the local independent schools, Inaburra School, Shire Christian College, and Aspect South East, who found themselves in the middle of their petition for single interest bargaining. Their endeavours to explain single interest bargaining and to persuade their colleagues to sign the petition was heartening.

The Catholic systemic negotiations had also just been given a boost with the initial log of claims and the related NewsExtra landing in members' inboxes that day. The claims for more time release were greeted with enthusiasm. Members were also positive about the support staff pay increases that will be backdated to July.

After a rapid run through of specific school issues, of which there were fewer than usual, the committee retired to the Tradies dining room 'Folk', where representatives from the independent sector were able to trade stories across their different schools, while digesting some delicious food. It was a great end to the sub branch year.

Josef Dabbs Organiser

Principals

The final Term 4 meeting for the Principals' Sub Branch was held in Sydney on Saturday 9 November, with robust attendance in person and via Zoom.

The meeting opened with an acknowledgment of retiring principal representatives, including Anthony Weir and Mark

Pauschmann, who were formally thanked for their longstanding service.

Updates on diocesan salary scales, principal pay comparisons, and professional development opportunities were reviewed. Preferred dates for support staff PD in January 2025 were identified.

Diocesan issues discussed were:

- Armidale: a successful October Aboriginal Conference in Tamworth was highlighted. Planning for 2025 includes PD days and curriculum agendas.
- Broken Bay: pay increases of 4% and differentiation above DET levels were noted, alongside concerns about representation and leadership changes.
- Canberra and Goulburn: the 3% October pay rises were welcomed, though concerns over funding allocation and labour-intensive processes persist.
- Sydney: challenges include funding cuts, increased administrative demands, and frozen capital works projects, causing significant strain on principals and staff.
- Catholic Systemic Principals Enterprise Agreement negotiations are progressing, with claims focused on workload reduction, resources, pay parity with government schools, and improved wellbeing entitlements.
- Concerns regarding transparency in funding allocations and workload inequities remain. The current salary bands in Sydney Catholic Schools and other dioceses are often not fit for purpose and create inequity.
- The meeting concluded with acknowledgment of members' contributions in 2024 and a reminder of the next meeting scheduled for 22 February 2025.

Lyn Caton Assistant Secretary/Principals' Organiser

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Sing a song of super

The end of 2024 marks the 25th year I've written about superannuation for *Newsmonth*.

Originally titled "Absolutely super", these articles have provided general information on legislative changes, investments, insurance and how super works. It has given me great satisfaction to assist IEU members to understand Australia's world-class superannuation system and to watch it grow to its current \$3.9 trillion under management for the benefit of Australian workers. A real Aussie achievement!

Think of it: from 1 June 2025, compulsory employer contributions are moving up to 12% of gross salary in a highly regulated system controlled by government agencies and outsourced to experts under the watchful eyes of regulators and trustees.

For the boards of industry super funds, there is an "equal representation" rule of 50 per cent employer and 50 per cent member-appointed directors who all work for members' best interest. Super has also reduced the pressure on the age pension for future generations and has assisted members to enjoy a dignified retirement.

It is impossible to outline all the changes and improvements made to super over the past 25 years in a single column, so here are a few basic points about the growth of super and industry funds.

Investments and contributions

Compulsory super contributions started in 1992 at 3% of gross salary and were gradually increased over the following years with an aim of reaching the planned 12% that is considered "adequate" for a dignified retirement over a working life. There were some roadblocks along the way with a delay in the legislated increases caused by government intervention.

In the early days, industry funds offered only a limited choice of investments, such as "Growth", "Defensive" and "Cash". Over time, the investment palette grew, with additions such as "Balanced", "Property", "Socially Responsible Investment", "Shares" (both Australian and International) "Diversified", "Fixed Interest", "Infrastructure" and many other investment choices.

Of course, investment options can be mixed. Industry super fund members now have a wide choice of investment options according to their risk profile, although many have elected to remain in the default option which is selected by the fund trustee.

Government incentives such as the tax concession for salary sacrifice contributions (up to the limit), the co-contribution and superannuation paid on parental leave were also put in place to encourage members to save for their retirement.

Insurance

In the early days of industry super, insurance was basic. Many funds had a default, automatic death and total and permanent disability group life policy only.

A common cost for this cover then was \$1 per week and the cover was age-based. The automatic cover reduced as the member grew older. Industry fund trustees considered that default insurance was in the best interest of most members and insurance through super provided reduced some of the problem of underinsurance in Australia.

As with the growth of investment options, insurance has expanded to include many more options for the benefit of fund members. Due to the large size of many funds, group insurance is provided to members at wholesale rates.

Income protection insurance for temporary incapacity is now included as a default for many funds, and members can dial up or dial down their insurance cover depending on their life situation, subject to acceptance by the insurer.

Insurance can also be cancelled completely. Many funds now offer fixed cover which means a member may choose to keep a certain level of cover for life subject to premium increases every year, and again, on acceptance by the insurer.

Group cover has provided a genuine benefit for members and their dependants in times of illness or death and has helped many Australian families.

Income stream

Government incentives continue to encourage fund members to access their super as a regular income stream replacing their salary at retirement. This will no doubt be further developed as account balances grow and a large number of members retire from the workforce.

Funds invested in the income stream are tax-free and perform according to the choice of the individual member. It is also likely that new products, such as guaranteed life annuities, will be introduced in the future to provide further security in the knowledge that the income is in place for life.

Fortunately, members entering the workforce after 1 July 2025 will enjoy the full benefit of a 12% employer contribution.

So let's sing a song of super! It's been a great innovation for fund members for Australia.

And happy holidays to you.

Bernard O'Connor

(former Company Secretary NGS Super)

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(Important information: the information in this article is general information only and does not take into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before making a financial decision, please assess the appropriateness of the information to your individual circumstances, read the Product Disclosure Statement for any product you may be thinking of acquiring and consider seeking professional advice. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Any opinions are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of NGS Super.)

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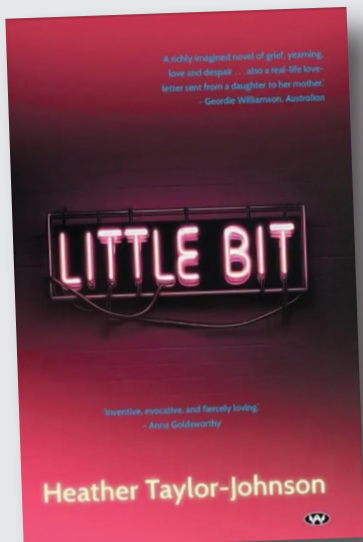
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Lismore: Unit 4, Lismore Professional Centre, 103-105 Molesworth Street, Lismore NSW 2480 6623 4700

Canberra: Units 11 & 12, 3-5 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600 6120 1500

Giveaways



Little Bit

Author: Heather Taylor-Johnson

Publisher: Wakefield Press

"She was a good person when she wasn't drunk."

Debbie's earliest memory of her mother is that her mother was not there, but any story of neglect always has two sides.

When Debbie's daughter, Heather, says she wants to write a book about her upbringing, Debbie begins to string together jagged memories of growing up with Stella, and it's proving more painful than she could've ever imagined.

Fiction or nonfiction, this is a book that cannot be categorised and will not be quiet.



Cold War in a Hot Kitchen

Author: Margaret Ann Spence

Publisher: Wakefield Press

A memoir of mid-century Melbourne.

The 1950s. Boring?

Hardly.

An influx of European refugees, stirrings of feminism, and the threat of a third world war were remaking Australia.

As the Cold War chilled, inside a Melbourne house a young girl was caught in the crossfire of domestic conflict amid the clashing political and social values of her autocratic grandmother, her self-denying mother, and her glamorous aunt; three women who presented very different models of womanhood.



Kensy and Max 7: Take Down

Author: Jacqueline Harvey

Publisher: Penguin Random House Australia

How do you pretend everything is fine when those that you love are in danger? If people you once trusted are now deemed a threat?

After winning the National STEM Championships, Kensy, Max and a team of students from Central London Free School are ready to compete for the international trophy in Singapore. But when Granny Cordelia is poisoned, the twins no longer feel like celebrating.

They still have a duty to their team though, and everyone seems to think they'll be safe in a country halfway around the world. It turns out that Singapore is rife with mysteries. Soon Kensy and Max have uncovered a much larger case than anyone counted on. And this time, it's personal.



To go in the draw, email entries to giveaways@ieu.asn.au with the title of the book you would like to receive in the subject line. Write your name, membership number and postal address in the body of your email. All entries must be received by 20 January 2025.

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