

NewsExtra

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NSW PAOS: Understanding your new MEA

As reported in the [last NewsExtra](#), the multi-enterprise agreement (MEA) for professional and operational staff (PAOS) in independent schools is ready for a vote. Overall, the new MEA will deliver improvements for all PAOS and therefore the IEU will recommend a 'Yes' vote.

Expanded coverage

The proposed MEA has an expanded coverage compared to the existing MEA, ensuring more employees benefit from its improved conditions. The new MEA will include:

- a new instructional services stream to cover sports coaches, sports assistants, music tutors (not including music or arts tutors engaged on an individual basis) and trainers
- human resources managers and those employed in marketing services are part of the clerical and administrative stream.

The broader coverage means more employees will receive the protection and beneficial conditions contained in the MEA.

Improvements in rates of pay

Your new MEA will provide annual increases as follows:

Effective from first full pay period on or after:	Annual percentage increase
1 February 2025	4%
1 February 2026	4.5%
1 February 2027	4%

Depending on your classification and salary step, you may receive increases above the stated annual percentage due to transitional arrangements under a revised classification structure.

Translocation to the new classification structure will provide:

Classification	Range of increases at commencement of MEA
Clerical and Administrative Levels 1 – 4	Between 5% – 22%
School Assistants Levels 1 – 4	Between 5% – 7%,
Grounds and Maintenance Levels 1 – 3	Between 4% – 13%
General Operational Staff Levels 1 – 5	Between 7% – 23%
Preschool and Children Services Employees	Between 4% – 17%
Psychologists	Between 5.6% – 16.8%

School Assistants Levels 1 – 4 will also receive further 5% annual increases in both 2026 and 2027. The new School Assistants classifications include annual salary increments that provide an additional 0.5% to 1% salary increase.

These adjustments ensure a fair transition, recognising the varying roles for PAOS. For more information about the translocation rates of pay, please [click here](#).

Modernised classification structures

Through extensive negotiations by the IEU, the proposed MEA introduces a modernised classification structure aligned with the *Educational Services (Schools) General Staff Award 2020*. This new structure establishes a common competency framework across all occupational groups, ensuring fairer pay alignment.

Key improvements include:

- a dedicated classification stream for ICT Services
- introduction of 12-monthly incremental salary steps for School Assistants for the first time
- faster salary progression for most occupational groups, based on 12 months of service rather than full years, allowing quicker movement up the pay scale
- new higher-level classifications for School Assistants in curriculum and resources roles within laboratories and libraries, recognising higher qualifications and experience.

Improvements to paid parental leave

All employees eligible for unpaid parental leave under the *Fair Work Act* will benefit from enhanced entitlements under the proposed MEA, including:

- the 14-week paid parental leave period will count as service for leave accruals (including annual leave, leave loading, personal/carer's leave, and long service leave) and salary progression
- superannuation will be paid on parental leave taken by the initial primary carer (typically the mother)
- the non-initial primary carer can access up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave, which must be taken within 12 months of the birth or placement (in the case of adoption).

Next steps

Your employer will provide details of the vote, including the date, time, location, and voting method.

While the improvements in the proposed MEA are modest, they lay the groundwork for better pay and working conditions for PAOS in independent schools. The IEU endorses a 'Yes' vote.

To raise our collective voice and continue the fight for fair pay and conditions, encourage your colleagues who are not yet members to [join the union](#). We are stronger together.

