

Catholic school employers say IEU claims are unaffordable

Catholic school employers believe that Independent Education Union (IEU) claims for changes to employment conditions for Catholic school teachers are simply unaffordable.

“We value our staff and their hard work and are committed to fair salaries and conditions,” says Michael Kenny, Assistant Director, Catholic Education South Australia.

“At the heart of Catholic Education is affordability and inclusivity. In reaching an enterprise agreement we also need to balance the needs of our school families. Our schools simply can’t afford the union claim.”

The employers believe that if they met the IEU’s demands school fees would need to rise by around 7%.

“In this economic climate, we think that simply isn’t sustainable. We know many families in our school communities are doing it tough and we don’t think parents can afford the additional fees that this would require to implement.

“Potentially we’d also need to cut back on staff. The impact would be significant.”

Catholic school employers believe their salaries, working hours and conditions compare very favourably with other education sectors.

“We have already offered a 2.5% salary increase each year for the next three years at a cost of over \$28 million but we can’t stretch to meet the other workload claim for reduced student contact hours. This would cost an additional \$18 million per annum.”

The ongoing negotiations towards a new Enterprise Agreement (EA) have now led to a small number of staff taking industrial action on June 16.

A minority of schools are impacted with 34 of the state’s 103 Catholic Schools supporting the action.

“We’re expecting minimal disruption to students. The action will only involve union members within those schools.

“While we see such action as regrettable, we acknowledge the right of school staff to participate. Obviously we would prefer that we reach agreement without industrial action.

“Catholic school employers will continue to negotiate in good faith towards a just, reasonable and affordable outcome.”

Parents with any concerns about how the action will impact their school are encouraged to discuss them directly with their school principal.