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Professional Rates of Pay Campaign



**CATHOLIC SECTOR PROTECTED ACTION BALLOT
CHAPTER BRIEFING No. 9**

**Catholic Employers Seek Mirror Agreement with State Sector
Employers Say: 'This is the Offer'**

Dear Colleagues

Catholic employing authorities have confirmed that they seek a teacher wage settlement which is a mirror of the state sector settlement.

The employee endorsed claim for benchmark professional rates of pay has been explicitly rejected.

In adopting a mirror image approach Catholic employing authorities run the risk of diminishing existing provisions in the Catholic sector and reducing wage access to employees.

Catholic employers have been advised that their wage offer is unacceptable and cannot be agreed given instructions from members and a number of objectionable elements in their position.

Employers have stated categorically that the offer on the table is 'the offer' and employees should see it as an offer that employers can afford.

(Individual correspondence will be forwarded to all members in the new week on this matter. This Briefing is a courtesy Briefing to those Chapters where the term has yet to conclude.)

Background

Further meetings with employer representatives were held yesterday (Wednesday, 2 December 2009).

Employee representatives formally re-tabled the wage offer consistent with the member endorsed log of claims. A slight adjustment to the entry level graduate rate was made to reflect the employer wage offer tabled on 23 November 2009.

Employee representatives have consistently indicated that employees are prepared to discuss various mechanisms to achieve those rates.

In the spirit of fair-minded bargaining, employee representatives tabled an alternate pay structure which broadly achieved the member endorsed wage claim but provided some timing and structural consideration which might assist employers to meet the claim.

Employing authorities rejected both the core claim and the alternate position, and confirmed that their tabled offer is 'the offer'.

Employer Offer

The employer wage offer is a mirror of the public sector settlement with a slight increase to the Accomplished Teacher rate to avoid an inconsistency when the Brisbane Catholic Education AST2 rate is folded into the Accomplished Teacher concept under their proposals.

The mirror image is so strong that employers have not only proposed to mirror the public sector classification rates but also to adopt the public sector pay increase dates in July 2010 and 2011.

Catholic sector employees had no direct influence on how pay increase dates in the public sector moved from May to July but now employers propose employees in our sector have to accept a delayed pay increase date.

The employer position is even more problematic in that they have agreed to pay increases to school officers and services staff from May each year.

The mirror position with the public sector, however, does not include the \$500 resource grant in the public sector.

Catholic employers argue that because they paid 4.5% in 2009 from May 2009 and not July, then those amounts plus 9% superannuation mean employees in the Catholic sector in fact get more than the \$500 resource grant.

Catholic employers confirmed that they would mirror the public sector four year eligibility requirement to access the 'Accomplished Teacher' classification from Leading Teacher/AST1.

In the public sector all B3S4 teachers, after one year at that classification, go to Senior Teacher (Leading Teacher/AST1 equivalent) and 80% of these teachers have held the classification for at least four years.

Under the employer proposal, eligible B3S4 classified teachers in the Catholic sector who have not accessed and held Leading Teacher/AST1 for four (4) years would therefore have to wait over five years to access what 80% of eligible B3S4 teachers will access from 2010 in the public sector.

Even more remarkably the employer position would mean that in Brisbane Catholic Education employees would have to wait four years not three (as currently) to access the AST2 equivalent Accomplished Teacher.

Employee Response

The employer position not only falls short of the member endorsed claim but it contains a number of objectionable elements which would have inferior provisions to the public sector and diminish existing provisions in the Catholic sector.

Chapters have endorsed further application to Fair Work Australia (FWA) for protected action ballots if their employing authority did not commit in substance to the claim for benchmark professional rates of pay.

Catholic employers have rejected the core wage claim for professional rates of pay, rejected an alternate employee offer to accommodate employers and tabled an offer which contains inferior and objectionable elements.

Applications will now be made, consistent with Chapter resolutions, to Fair Work Australia for further protected action ballots to include authorising withdrawal from co-curricular involvement.

If the Orders are issued by FWA then the secret ballot would likely be conducted early in Term 1 2010.

Member Letters

Given the time of the year, members shortly will be forwarded correspondence to their home address providing a Briefing on these matters. Further Briefings will be forwarded in the new year.

Kind regards and best wishes for the festive season.



TERRY BURKE
SECRETARY