



QUEENSLAND INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION

BRISBANE
346 TURBOT ST
SPRING HILL Q 4000
P O BOX 418
FORTITUDE VALLEY

Phone: 07 3839 7020
Fax: 07 3839 7021
Freecall: 1800 177937
Email: enquiries@qieu.asn.au
Internet: www.qieu.asn.au
ABN: 45 620 218 712

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LUTHERAN SCHOOLS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING 2009



CHAPTER BRIEFING No. 7

Employee Collective Action Persuades Employer to Remove the Time Grab Parity Wage Offer Endorsed

Dear Colleagues

Collective action in the form of meetings, motions and badge wearing was sufficient to persuade the employer that the “time grab” for employee vacation time was neither welcome nor acceptable to employees in Lutheran Schools.

At the April 23 meeting of the Lutheran Schools Collective Bargaining Unit the employers removed three of the four offending “time grab” clauses from their claim.

Whilst commending the employer for listening to their employees, the matter of the length of the school year is still not resolved and the employer position of wanted to see all Lutheran Schools work a 41 week teaching year could see some schools working an extra 6 days per annum from 2009 to 2011.

Length of School Year

Currently the length of the school year in Lutheran Schools is governed by clause 4.1 of Schedule 7 of the current Lutheran Schools Deed of Arrangement (Common Law Industrial Agreement currently in force in Lutheran Schools).

The employer is seeking to remove the section of the clause which states *“it is not the intention to increase the quantum of calendar weeks given to professional duties currently operating in particular schools. If a variation to the existing schedule is sought, it shall be negotiated with staff at the school level.”*

The employer’s rationale for seeking to remove this section in the clause is that many primary schools and many of the schools established since 1997, work a forty one week year and that this should be uniform across the sector.

Schools which were in existence prior to 1997 (when the working Arrangements for Teachers was first negotiated) mostly work a 40 week school year or less and would be disadvantaged by the removal of this clause.

Wages – Interim Offer Accepted

The employer rejected the employee claim of immediate parity for teachers with inter state benchmarks, claiming that to offer any wage increase beyond the Queensland public sector offer of 4.5% or \$34 per week (whichever is greater) in 2009 could prejudice is ability to lobby State and Federal governments for appropriate funding in respect of future increases.

The alternate employee position of parity of total wages earned over the life of the agreement with an equivalent Education Queensland teacher was accepted and an unconditional 4.5% wage increase or \$34 per week (whichever is greater) was offered to employees from the 1 May 2009.

Interim Wage Offer Explained

The interim wage offer was accepted by employees subject to the following commitments by the employer:

- A commitment to parity with Education Queensland outcomes for teachers over the life of the agreement;
- A commitment to reconvene the Lutheran Schools Collective Bargaining Unit once the Queensland State Teachers wage claim is settled to determine any adjustment in wages for 2009 and to negotiate the wage increases for 2010 and 2011; and
- Once the increases in Education Queensland are known the percentage increases for school officers and ancillary staff for 2010 and 2011 will be negotiated.

Employees should see the wage adjustment reflected in their next pay cycle with the increase calculated from 1 May 2009.

Employee Claim – Other Provisions

Now the wages and “time grab” issues have been addressed, the provisions in the employee claim that have not yet been progressed will become the focus of the two May meetings of the Collective Bargaining Unit.

Employees anticipated progression the following matters at the next meetings:

- Support for graduate teachers
- Family leave
- Graduate teachers
- Recrediting of long service leave when sickness occurs whilst on LSL

New issues to be introduced to finalise the employee log of claims include:

- Natural disaster leave
- School officer qualifications allowance
- School officer employment conditions
- Redundancy provisions
- Leave without pay
- Professional development (access to)
- Accomplished teachers
- Boarding staff/working conditions/classification/hours of duty

Next Steps

This briefing is informative rather than seeking employee action on a specific topic however the success of the employee collective actions in various schools in persuading the employer that the “time grab” should be withdrawn is a powerful message for the collective.

Action

The “time grab” action has shown that building union strength and acting collectively is the best way of protecting existing conditions and achieving real enhancements in wages and working conditions in Lutheran Schools. Chapters should not miss this opportunity to let colleagues, who have not yet joined QIEU, know the benefits of being active and engaged with their union.

Kind Regards



CHRIS SEYMOUR
OFFICER ASSISTING EMPLOYEES AT THE
LUTHERAN SCHOOLS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATION