



# Principal Matters



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The newsletter for Principals

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## IEUA to lobby politicians to commit to a funding policy that recognises the legitimacy of our sector

All Australian students deserve a well funded world-class education and the opportunity to choose to receive it in a non-government school.

IEUA-QNT is persistently and actively advocating for a fair and transparent school funding policy. As the Federal Government's panel, headed by David Gonski, continues to review and make recommendations for changes to current policy, it is imperative that the government commits to ensuring all schools receive appropriate funding.

IEUA-QNT branch secretary Terry Burke said a funding policy needed to recognise the legitimacy of our sector and commit to funding certainty to ensure job protection in our schools.

"Catholic and independent schools play a vital role in achieving results for the students in our sector," Mr Burke said.

"Campaigning for robust and transparent funding is a job for all members, as it is about quality education and members' jobs."

Earlier this year more than one hundred chapters at schools across the Northern Territory and Queensland took the opportunity through IEUA-QNT to make a submission to Gonski's review panel.

Now, following the August release of Gonski's interim report, IEUA-QNT is about to ramp up its campaign.

Without a Federal Government commitment to a baseline funding standard for our sector, the future of our members' jobs could be in jeopardy.

"Guaranteeing funding certainty will ensure job protection

in our schools, and, in turn, provide confidence for students and their families and communities," Mr Burke said.

IEUA federal secretary Chris Watt said members needed to take deliberate action to make their voices heard by politicians.

***"Catholic and independent schools play a vital role in achieving results for the students in our sector."***

"It is abundantly clear that if we don't make our voices heard now, and do all we can to urge our federal politicians to get this school funding process right, then our non-government education sector (and ultimately members' jobs) are at risk," Mr Watt said.

"Members will meet with politicians to highlight the need for continued real school funding increases, and for more targeted funding for special needs and disadvantaged schools," he said.

The IEUA has already corresponded with the ALP government and affirmed that the party's current National Platform appropriately recognises the importance and legitimacy of the non-government sector.

IEUA-QNT members will this month follow up on the correspondence and begin lobbying federal politicians to commit to a transparent funding policy that is based on a robust measure of the needs of the students attending the school, and one that is indexed annually to account for the rising costs of education.

### Member Delegations

Starting in September IEUA-QNT member delegations will lobby federal politicians on the need for a fairer funding system and real funding increases for all schools.

Members will meet with senators and MPs to urge them to commit to increases in school funding for all schools, and to provide more targeted funding for special needs and disadvantaged schools.

Resources and more information about the School Funding Campaign is available on our website [www.qieua.asn.au/schoolfunding](http://www.qieua.asn.au/schoolfunding).

### Are the demands of your job impacting on your health?

The Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey is now open.

For more information, or to take the independent survey, visit our website [www.qieua.asn.au/principals](http://www.qieua.asn.au/principals) and follow the link.

Principal members were sent a link to the survey by email on 16 August 2011.

Conducted by Monash University, the survey is in response to concerns that the increasing complexity and workload demands of school leadership roles are impacting on the health and wellbeing of Australian school leaders.

## Significance of middle management positions addressed in proposed new structure that highlights leadership and 'less is more' role organisation

The current provisions for middle management positions in Queensland Catholic schools are more than twenty years old. They hinge on the premise that middle management roles are task based, rather than leadership based, and do not accurately reflect the needs of contemporary school structures.

It is essential that a paradigm shift occurs in our schools in order to ensure middle managers and schools as a whole can continue achieving the best possible outcomes for their students.

IEUA-QNT assistant secretary Ros McLennan represented PAR members' concerns as part of a joint working party to review and make recommendations for a modern PAR structure. She said there had been a significant reimagining of middle management roles to best meet emerging educational needs.

"Twenty years ago PAR positions were envisaged as task-orientated roles but now there is an increasing understanding that there needs to be a greater emphasis on leadership," Ms McLennan said.

### *'Middle leaders are now seen as the glue that holds a school together.'*

"The alternative model the joint working party has proposed utilises the current budgetary allowances but changes the role structure to provide more financial allowances and time release to less middle leaders," she said.

"It focuses primarily on the vital role middle leaders play in school environments, and the time required away from the classroom to fulfill these responsibilities."

"This model, in essence, allows for each person who is appointed to a middle leadership position to have more time release and potentially higher remuneration in recognition of the significance of their leadership role."

Over the last couple of decades, research has found that middle leaders play a vital role in the school environment; and that middle leadership is required and invaluable. Around the globe, the school leadership paradigm is now shifting to facilitate these changes.

A teacher who holds a middle leadership role, for example a



curriculum leader, is crucial to the development and consistency of students' learning experiences through leading by example.

Direction from a principal can only translate into classrooms if middle leaders are able to display and demonstrate behaviour and attitudes to lead teachers in their understanding of the school's overall goals.

It is now understood that middle leaders are the vital component leading to an end result in which teams of teachers can be moulded into effective units that all contribute to the implementation and overall achievement of the principal's direction and school's goals.

Middle leaders are now seen as the glue that holds a school together, facilitating learning and teaching, and communication, between classroom practitioners, and the principal or senior leadership team.

The full joint working party interim report, released earlier this year, is available to view on our website [www.qieu.asn.au](http://www.qieu.asn.au). The final report will be prepared and released by 31 October 2011.

### Member Consultation Shaping Joint Working Party's Final Report

Our union has been conducting extensive PAR consultation across the state.

Members have been briefed about key changes contemplated in the working party's interim report; matters for further work have been identified and members' views on the practical implications of the alternative model have been sought.

"PAR member feedback has so far been invaluable ... on the basis of these insights, employee representatives will advocate changes in the draft criteria, on the basis of member advice," Ms McLennan said.

### Key Changes Contemplated in Proposed New Model

- shift in philosophy from task-orientated to leadership roles;
- three categories of middle leadership position: curriculum leader, pastoral leader and program leader;
- new unit value is equal to \$2,000 annual allowance and one hour of weekly release time;
- five tier structure of weekly release time and annual allowance;
- middle leaders can opt to cash out up to 50 per cent of annual allowance to obtain more weekly release time

### Northern Territory Catholic Agreement Approved by Fair Work Australia

The collective agreement covering Catholic schools in the Northern Territory was approved by Fair Work Australia on 20 June 2011.

It became operational on 27 June 2011.

Principals are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this new document, that will govern conditions until 3 March 2013.

A number of the provisions need to be operationalized and principals are urged to be aware of the content and changes that the agreement will set in motion during its life.

To view the full agreement, visit our website [www.qieu.asn.au/agreements](http://www.qieu.asn.au/agreements).

## Principals need to unite in order to ensure commitments made by employers during the last bargaining round are implemented

All current enterprise agreements in Queensland covering principals commit employers and employees to participate in bipartisan working parties to address unresolved issues in a consultative manner.

IEUA-QNT principals' branch officer John Spriggs said it was essential to ensure the commitments and actions set out in the enterprise agreements were adhered to.

"Continued action and awareness about these issues is necessary," Mr Spriggs said.

"All current enterprise agreements covering principals commit parties to a number of activities during their life," he said.

"It would be a waste, having secured a commitment to look at an issue, for that activity to be quashed due to a lack of interest from principals."

As part of IEUA-QNT's action on behalf of principal members, John Spriggs has visited principals in Cairns and Townsville to discuss the commitments contained in current agreements.

"The meetings provided a useful reminder to ensure that action is taken," he said.

"Principals are now speaking with their employer regarding the mechanics of implementing working parties to address these

Each agreement details the issues to be dealt with consultatively during the life of the agreement.

In the Townsville diocese, for example, there was the commitment to establish a bipartisan working party to review the policies surrounding accommodation. In Cairns, the agreement detailed a working party be set up to review how to maximise benefits of leave; in Toowoomba, it was to review the appointment process.

All dioceses also committed to a review of principals' salaries.

Current enterprise agreements expire on 30 June 2013; the next collective bargaining round will begin in early 2013.

**IEUA-QNT is holding a meeting with principals in the Toowoomba diocese on 26 October to discuss the issues relevant to their agreement.**

**Further meetings with principals will be held across Queensland in 2012 as part of the monitoring and consultation process.**

**More details are available on our website**

**[www.qieu.asn.au/principals](http://www.qieu.asn.au/principals)**

## QLD Primary principals' salaries are at risk of reducing in conjunction with the transition of Year 7 into high school unless decisive action is taken

### Principal members need to send a strong message to employers that they will not accept any reduction in remuneration, and require a commitment from employers ensuring financial stability

The amalgamation of Year 7 into Queensland high schools in 2015 could adversely affect principals' remuneration, particularly that of primary school principals, as their student population declines.

Unless we take collective action, scores of primary school principals could see their salaries, that are directly based on student enrolment, drop significantly.

Although some principals may not be affected as the number of students lost could see the school remain in the same enrolment band, many will be adversely affected.



IEUA-QNT principals' branch officer John Spriggs

IEUA-QNT principals' branch officer John Spriggs said action needed to be taken immediately in order to engage employers in consultation with the aim of heading towards securing a commitment to maintain principals' current remuneration despite any drops in student population.

"There will be an impact on principals because their wage scale is directly based on their

school's student enrolment," Mr Spriggs said.

"This will be the case particularly for primary school principals.

"It is our position that principals should not have their remuneration reduced as a result of this change that is being introduced by the government," he said.

In June of this year, the IEUA-QNT wrote to all major employing authorities seeking commitments around the protection of wages and conditions for employees.

The various Catholic diocese directors have responded to the correspondence, indicating a willingness to participate in consultations.

***"It is our position that principals should not have their remuneration reduced as a result of this change that is being introduced by the Queensland government."***

"The IEUA-QNT has now sought a detailed consultation with each of the Catholic diocese directors regarding the impact of the change on the workforce in Catholic schools," Mr Spriggs said.

"We have identified groups of employees, for example principals, which will need specific consultation and discussion regarding workforce planning issues."

It is IEUA-QNT's aim to secure dates in the fourth term of 2011 to meet with each major employer and begin a substantive consultative process in regard to ensuring principals' current wages and working conditions are maintained and protected.

Member Profile



**Matthew Dash**  
Principal - St Francis' School, Ayr

Matthew Dash has worked as a principal for 22 years. He lives in the picturesque Burdekin region and wouldn't give up the vast benefits of life in the dry tropics for the city.

But he is dealing with a shrinking population and the next generation's declining interest in rural living.

Mr Dash is the principal of a primary school with a roll of 268. He is the principals' branch representative on the IEUA governing council.

**What do you enjoy most about working in education?**

Seeing children learn and grow and seeing the satisfaction in teachers' faces as they realise the contribution they've made to that growth.

**What are the benefits of working in a regional school?**

Location and life style. Day to day I'm five to ten minutes away from anything and everything. We don't know what a queue looks like here in the Burdekin. I eat fresh food every day. I know most of the people I see every day. There's always time to stop and chat and always someone to have a chat with. My children grew up with access to every sport imaginable. I'm surrounded by some of the world's premier fishing country. I'm an hour away from a major centre and a two hour flight away from Brisbane if I really feel I'm missing out on the big city life.

**What are some of the challenges you face?**

We face a shrinking population as financially rural life gets less and less attractive for following generations. Money is always an issue: natural disasters and economic vagaries directly affect the amount of money in a rural community which has a flow on effect. Staffing rural schools is always an issue for us. It's always a challenge to convince experienced teachers to move away from the cities.

**Why is it important for the federal government to commit to a funding policy that recognises the legitimacy of our sector?**

To me, it's about the personal freedom to choose the type of education I want for my children, coupled with my right to be treated equally under the law. Currently while I may choose the school that meets my personal preference I can only do so if I accept a significant economic disadvantage. I, along with the parents and families of my school, directly contribute through taxation to the country's economy. We deserve to have the same access to the education dollar as everyone else. We deserve to be treated fairly.

**How will the year seven transition to high school affect your role/school?**

We will lose an eighth of our income without a commensurate drop in expenses. The budget chaos which will follow that is yet to be really sorted. Some of my colleagues would drop in salary scale through the change in school numbers.

**How long have you been a member of our union?**

Since the early eighties, except for a gap early in my career as a principal when we weren't eligible to be members, I have maintained membership.

**Join Your Union Today!**

To find out more about IEUA-QNT visit the principals' page on our website:

[www.qieu.asn.au/principals](http://www.qieu.asn.au/principals)

Alternatively, call our membership department on freecall 1800 177 938.

**Why is it important for you to be a part of our union?**

Part of it is a sense of solidarity with others in the profession. Part of it is a sense of mutual protection against the vagaries of industrial life. The greatest part of it though is a sense of the need to take responsibility for myself as a professional and my profession in general and achieve a modicum of self-determination on where we are heading as a profession and a society. Our union isn't solely about agreements and salaries. It's about maintaining our own standards and shaping how we represent ourselves to the community.

**How has being a member helped you and your colleagues?**

The major part of our working life as principals has been shaped over the past few decades by industrial pressure from government and subsequently (albeit often reluctantly) by employer groups. The mitigating actions of the union have assisted in shaping the form our working life has taken and we are working toward balancing the growing demands of the role with the need for a personal life outside school.

**As the principals' branch representative, Matthew Dash welcomes discussion about issues of interest to principals. He is contactable via email to [mdash@tsv.catholic.edu.au](mailto:mdash@tsv.catholic.edu.au).**

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