



# Queensland Independent Education Union

## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 17 May 2007

### Shalom Christian College continues to embarrass the Uniting Church of Australia

### PROTEST RALLY TOMORROW

Education workers, union and community members will rally outside the Uniting Church of Queensland Synod Meeting on the Sunshine Coast tomorrow to protest the use of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) at Shalom Christian College.

Shalom Christian College is an indigenous boarding school in Townsville.

QIEU General Secretary Terry Burke said Shalom Christian College management was trying to implement AWAs that encompass some of the worst aspects of the federal industrial relations legislation – an action in direct odds with the public position of the Uniting Church of Australia.

“Publicly the Church, which provides funding to the College, has strongly opposed the Howard government’s IR laws and their social impact and has even confirmed this in writing to QIEU,” Mr Burke said.

“However, from the correspondence we have received, the Church is under the belief that College management ‘is committed to deal justly and fairly with the staff’ at the College,” he said.

“They also believe that ‘the process being followed and the terms being offered are consistent with the principles and values of the Uniting Church’ as a result of their discussions with College management,” Mr Burke said.

Mr Burke said the reality however, was that the Shalom Christian College management was seeking to strip employees of fundamental working rights and conditions through the use of AWAs.

“Under the AWA proposed by College management, staff will lose guaranteed access to annual salary increments, pay increases, some public holidays and penalty rates for working overtime,” Mr Burke said.

“Clearly the Uniting Church has been mislead and it is most unfortunate that Shalom Christian College management has embarrassed the Church in such a way when the Church has maintained such strident criticism of the federal IR laws and emphasised the need for the protection of working rights and conditions of Australian workers and their families,” Mr Burke said.

Mr Burke said the pursuit of AWAs by Shalom Christian College management would impact on the quality of education provided and threaten the very thing the College purports to value most – its students.

“As a result, we are also sending correspondence about the serious impacts regarding the use of AWAs at the College to the indigenous communities of its students, so that they are aware of the full implications of College management’s actions,” Mr Burke said.

Mr Burke said that education workers, both non-government and government sector, strongly opposed to the use of AWAs in schools and that a petition of over 3,700 signatures had been received calling on College management to reverse its decision and instead enter in to the union collective agreement wanted by the majority of staff.

**The rally will take place tomorrow (Friday, 18 May 2007) from 11.30am outside the Uniting Church of Queensland Synod meeting at Alexandra Park Conference Centre (Mari Street entrance), Alexandra Headlands.**

**...Ends**

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*“The Queensland Independent Education Union represents nearly 15,000 non-government education sector employees including teachers, principals, school support staff, grounds and maintenance staff, early childhood education staff and employees in business, international and English language colleges.”*