



Queensland Independent Education Union **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 18 May 2007

Education workers rally against use of AWAs at Shalom Christian College

Education workers, union and community members have rallied outside the Uniting Church of Queensland Synod meeting on the Sunshine Coast today in protest of the use of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) at Shalom Christian College in Townsville.

Shalom Christian College is an affiliate school of the Uniting Church of Australia.

Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU) General Secretary Terry Burke said QIEU members, Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) members and other union and community group members took part in the rally to let those attending the meeting know the reality of Shalom Christian College management's actions in trying to implement AWAs for its employees.

"These AWAs encompass some of the worst aspects of the federal industrial relations legislation," Mr Burke said.

"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," he said.

Mr Burke said the determined push to implement such AWAs by College management was at direct odds with the public position of the Uniting Church of Australia.

"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.

As part of the protest rally, QIEU Assistant General Secretary Ros McLennan presented Uniting Church of Queensland moderator Rev David Pitman with a copy of a petition signed by over 3,700 education workers across Queensland calling on the Church to ensure the working rights and conditions of College employees were protected.

An open letter to the Church, signed by 35 employees from Shalom Christian College was also presented to Rev Pitman, again calling for the protection of their working rights and conditions from the threat of management's proposed AWAs.

Ms McLennan said the situation at the College was the direct result of the introduction of the federal government's industrial relations laws.

"These laws have now given employers the power to do the wrong thing and in this case Shalom Christian College management has grasped that power with both hands," Ms McLennan said.

Mr Burke said Shalom Christian College employees, along with education workers from across Queensland, had been campaigning to protect their working rights and conditions since November last year and would maintain the campaign until College management reversed its decision and instead entered in to the union collective agreement wanted by the majority of staff.

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For further comment contact: Terry Burke, QIEU General Secretary on 0419 640 078 or Ros McLennan, QIEU Assistant General Secretary on 0419 737 059

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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."

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