



Queensland Independent Education Union

MEDIA ALERT

Thursday 12 February 2009

Townsville Grammar School staff demand former colleagues be treated fairly

Townsville Grammar School staff have now concluding balloting on a proposed replacement collective bargaining agreement.

The outcome of the official staff ballot was 61% in favour and 39% against.

'This slim ballot margin speaks volumes about staff's strong and continued opposition to management's offensive attitude to their former colleagues' said Mr Terry Burke, General Secretary of the Queensland Independent Education Union.

Staff also demonstrated their resolve to continue the fight for wage justice, on behalf of those colleagues who left the school last year, by initiating their own 'second ballot' yesterday and today, in judgement on management's professionally disrespectful wages back payment position.

Despite management's attempts to prevent staff from conducting their 'second ballot', over 67 staff deposited coloured slips bearing the words: *"I also cast a vote in favour of the payment of the back payment from 1 May 2008 of the increase in salary and wages to staff who have left the school since that date"* in solidarity with former colleagues regardless.

Staff are campaigning against management's unilateral determination to selectively back pay the 4.5% wage increase (from 1 May 2008) to one group of staff – and not the other.

Management's position effectively means that two experienced teachers, who worked alongside each other in Term 4 2008, will be paid a different salary for the same work, depending on whether they decided to remain at Townsville Grammar School for the 2009 school year or not.

'Wage increases should go to all who made a contribution in 2008. For management to maintain any charade that former staff have thanked them for such inequitable treatment is simply laughable' said Mr Burke.

Staff in more than 140 schools across Queensland have now forwarded resolutions condemning Townsville Grammar School management's unilateral determination not to equitably remunerate all staff who worked for the school in 2008.

'The school's arguments in its defence are arguments of convenience and are a feeble and transparently impoverished attempt to disguise the inadequacy of their position.'

'Management's unreasonable position doesn't stand up to standards of fairness and equity. The marginal outcome of today's ballot leaves management no option but to make a different decision and back pay all staff who contributed to the school's success in 2008,' Mr Burke said.

Further campaign action is anticipated.

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For further comment contact: Terry Burke, QIEU General Secretary on 0419 640 078

"The Queensland Independent Education Union represents over 14,500 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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