



QUEENSLAND INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION

ABN 45 620 218 712

Queensland Independent Education Union

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CAIRNS CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SUPPORTS UNFAIRLY SACKED TEACHER

Tuesday 12th November 2002

Cairns' Catholic community will this week hold a candlelight vigil in support of a Catholic school teacher, sacked in the holidays without any discussion.

Local Catholic School teacher of 14 years Ms Linda Tomic was dismissed from St Joseph's Primary School (Cairns) allegedly for "issues relating to unusual and/or unacceptable behaviour as a teacher".

Mr Terry Burke Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU) General Secretary said the manner and basis of Linda's dismissal was of grave concern to employees in Cairns Catholic Schools

"Not only are the reasons for the dismissal unfair and of little substance, the deficient process initiated by Diocesan Education Services (DES) and their harsh treatment of Linda may unfortunately indicate a new hardline approach to workplace issues in the Diocese", Mr Burke said.

"While school employees are expected to uphold Catholic ethos and work in a manner consistent with Christian compassion and understanding, it appears that the employer is under no such obligation in the way they treat their own employees", Mr Burke said.

QIEU has now commenced a formal reinstatement case on behalf of Linda in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

Linda was advised of her dismissal when a letter was delivered to her home in the school holidays, directing her to immediately remove her possessions from her classroom under employer supervision.

Over 80 employees from 15 local schools recently endorsed actions in support of Linda and demanded that DES reinstate Linda to her teaching position.

Despite widespread anger and concern from employees and emails and faxes of protest to DES and Bishop James Foley, the employer has refused to reinstate Linda.

A refusal by Bishop Foley to meet with Linda regarding her dismissal is a major disappointment to Catholic School employees in a situation where no pastoral support or compassion has been provided to an employee of longstanding and dedicated service.

"The overwhelming support from Linda's colleagues and the local community clearly indicates to DES that this case will not go away and that they should resolve this injustice by reinstating Linda immediately", Mr Burke said.

A candlelight vigil will commence Thursday, 14 November at 4:00pm outside the Cairns Courthouse prior to an unfair dismissal hearing. School employees, parents, students and community members will attend to support Linda.

Contact: General Secretary, Mr Terry Burke on (07) 3839 7020 or 041 964 0078

Media Release

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