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### Strike action

- TEACHERS at more than 30 Toowoomba diocese Catholic schools will strike next Wednesday, March 24, in a bid to secure a fairer pay deal.

Independent Education Union of Australia Queensland and Northern Territory branch secretary Terry Burke said St Ursula's was the only Catholic school not striking next week.

"We are really looking for leadership from employing bodies to step up and say this matter can be resolved," he said.



# Teachers at Catholic schools to walk out

**Tanya Chilcott**  
 SCHOOLS REPORTER

TEACHERS plan to strike at some of the state's most prestigious Catholic schools next Wednesday over pay – right in the middle of exams.

The strike and further action to permanently withdraw teachers from all extra-curricular activities is aimed for maximum impact in a bid to raise wages.

Catholic teachers are yet to sign off on an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, unlike the state sector which accepted a 12.5 per cent pay rise over three years at the end of last year, with sweeteners thrown in.

Queensland Independent Education Union general secretary Terry Burke said under

the most recent employer proposal this week, the state's Catholic teachers would be among the lowest paid in Australia's private sector.

Wage comparisons on the QIEU website show Christian Brothers teachers – at schools such as Marist, St Joseph's Nudgee and Gregory Terrace colleges – earn between about \$2000 and \$6000 less than their NSW counterparts.

Mr Burke said Catholic employers had offered teachers the same deal as the State Government, apart from an extra \$500 per annum for the most senior positions.

"So reliant are they on government funding, it would be

irresponsible of them to pay more than the public sector – that's the line they are running," Mr Burke said.

"And our people are saying we are not employed by the State Government last time we looked."

But Queensland Catholic Education Commission executive director Mike Byrne said the union demands were unaffordable. "This package is comparable with the state school sector," Mr Byrne said.

"Catholic schools are funded through a combination of government grants and parental contributions. The further increases being sought by the union are simply not

affordable."

He said not all teachers were in the union and it was not known if all would strike.

Queensland Federation of Parents and Friends Associations spokesman David Taylor said any disruption to the school routine was a concern.

Statewide, 85 schools could be affected, including all Cairns and Toowoomba Catholic Education Office schools. About 27 schools run by religious orders, mostly in Brisbane, are also involved.

**For a list of affected schools, go to [www.thecouriermail.com.au/Queensland](http://www.thecouriermail.com.au/Queensland)**



**CLASS ACTION:** Teachers marching on the Catholic Education Office during their wages campaign late last year.



## Catholic teachers to strike

TEACHERS seeking better pay plan to strike at several prestigious Catholic schools in the middle of exams.

Many teachers from the Queensland Independent Education Union will strike next Wednesday and withdraw from co-curricular activities indefinitely.

The strike comes after employers made what the union says was a 'disappointing' revised teacher wage offer that failed to address key concerns of employees.

The union says that, under the plan, teachers working in Queensland's Catholic schools would be some of the lowest-paid in Australia's non-government sector.

QIEU secretary Terry Burke said industrial action was a last resort.

"These negotiations have now been going on for over 12 months and it is time . . . employers return to the negotiating table," he said.

Queensland Catholic Education Commission executive director Mike Byrne said the package was 'fair and responsible'.

He said teachers had got a 4.5 per cent rise in May last year and the offer would mean further rises of 4 per cent in July 2010 and July 2011.



■ Teachers plan walk-out as pay negotiations fail

# School set for strike

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AN IPSWICH school will ask parents to keep their Year 10 and 11 students at home next week after the Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU) called strike action yesterday.

St Edmund's College will be affected by the QIEU strike next Wednesday, after the union and the Religious Institute Schools group could not reach a new pay agreement.

QIEU president Andrew Elphinstone said its members will also indefinitely withdraw from all out-of-hours activities at St Edmund's College and other Christian Brothers schools.

Mr Elphinstone said the strike action was regrettable, but the only option the union had left after pay negotiations broke down recently.

"We don't like having to strike, but we've been negotiating for some time and feel we've put a fair deal on the table, which has been completely ignored," he said.

"We'd be happy to call off the strike if they came back to us with a fair offer, but we can't see that happening."

St Edmund's College principal Brendan Lawler said he had sent letters to parents yesterday detailing the school's plans for next Wednesday.

"We're asking parents to

keep Year 10 and 11 students at home if possible, but we will supervise students if this is not possible," Mr Lawler said.

He said other year groups were required to attend school as usual, with classes continuing for Years 8 and 9 while Year 12 students will have QCS practice or work placement.

Upcoming Year 8 and 9 camps have been cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later date.

A copy of the letter to parents detailing Wednesday's arrangements will be posted on the school's website [www.sec.qld.edu.au](http://www.sec.qld.edu.au).



## Catholic teachers strike during exams

TEACHERS seeking better pay have planned a strike at a number of Queensland's most prestigious Catholic schools in the middle of exams.

A large number of teachers from the Queensland Independent Education Union will strike on March 24 in their fight to bring

their pay in line with other states.

Members of the QIEU are also withdrawing from co-curricular activities from that date indefinitely.

The planned strike came after Catholic employers recently made what the union said was a "disappointing" revised teacher wage offer

that failed to address key concerns of employees.

The union claims that, under the proposal, teachers working in Queensland's Catholic schools would be some of the lowest paid in Australia's non-government sector.

However, Queensland Catholic Education

Commission executive director Mike Byrne said he believed the salary package was fair.

Eighty-five of the 288 state's Catholic schools will be affected on Wednesday, including 32 in the Toowoomba Diocese, 26 in the Cairns Diocese, along with 27 schools in the Brisbane area. - AAP