



V The Northern VOICE

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The newsletter for IEUA-QNT members

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Successful Conclusion to Kormilda College Bargaining

IEUA-QNT members at Kormilda College have had a successful conclusion to bargaining with pay scales now paralleling those in the government sector, with slightly higher wages.

Academic staff have secured a review of teaching lines and changes to Positions of Added Responsibility (PAR) provisions; school officers are to have role descriptions and positions reviewed and re-classified if necessary. Furthermore, residential staff can now obtain work value reviews and clear role description definitions.

IEUA-QNT and NT Advisory Committee member Elsabe Bott from Kormilda College said, the reviews are an opportunity to explore fully the workload issues for staff. "The agreement to conduct reviews means there can be ongoing conversations about solutions," she said.

"As an example, the current timetable structure is being reviewed and there is representation from the areas most negatively affected by this, which is very empowering for all involved," Elsabe said. "In terms of future negotiations staff now have something to build on."

Additional paid stand down time for all staff has also been negotiated. This includes one week for teachers, three days for school officers and property services staff, and one to two days for fractional staff and health workers. This additional time win for members identifies the importance of proceeding through the collective bargaining process, ensuring working conditions are strengthened.

"This additional time is an acknowledgement that staff work hard and will ensure that everyone does actually get a break," Elsabe said.

The complete overhaul of the agreement documentation has also meant better sequencing and clarity for employers and employees. The result of these negotiations shows an active collective at work.

"Standing together kept the resolve of everyone to have issues tabled and discussed fully," Elsabe said. "It also showed the issues were serious which consequently led to good discussion and improvements being made for staff that might otherwise have been lost."

Collective Agreements Under Negotiation

New collective agreements are being negotiated elsewhere in the Northern Territory with contemporary wage and conditions being sought.

CATHOLIC SECTOR

IEUA-QNT members in the Catholic sector endorsed a log of claims at the end of last year following an extensive consultation process.

Employee representatives at the single bargaining unit have now formally tabled the claims including a claim for parity of wage outcome with the public sector.

Employer representatives have in response reaffirmed a commitment to ensuring parity with the public sector.

The log of claims also seeks clarification and scheduling of conditions for Indigenous Education Workers (IEW's). Currently wages and conditions have little consistency across schools and conditions specific to these workers are very unclear.

Claims are also being made for Teacher Assistants (TA's), Inclusion Support Assistants (ISA's) and school based IT workers. Residential staff are also seeking enhancements to their conditions.

The sector is also negotiating an enhancement to paid maternity leave to ensure the leave taken attracts accruals of sick leave, annual leave and so on. Presently, Catholic Education is suggesting that leave accruals should not be included in the paid maternity leave provision.

LUTHERAN SECTOR

Recently, Lutheran sector members reached consensus at their final SBU meeting earlier this year for a new collective agreement to go to ballot. The draft sees rises in wages to almost equal those in the public sector.

Additionally, enhancement has been achieved to some personal leave provisions, improvement to the rights of casual employees, a position description review for school officers and an increase in maternity leave. Staff will have the choice of 14 weeks maternity allowance with no accruals or 12 weeks maternity leave with accruals of annual leave, long service leave and superannuation paid.

THE ESSINGTON SCHOOL

The Essington School have commenced negotiations with staff holding meetings to begin discussions to outline the collective bargaining process. The IEUA-QNT has sought nominations for the SBU and employee representatives from various sections of the school.

MAKING SURE REMOTE AREA WORKERS ARE RECOGNISED

The challenges associated with working in isolated and remote areas remain a prominent issue facing Northern Territory education workers.

Teachers and school staff in remote communities experience difficulties with issues relating to accommodation, access to information technology, high costs of living coupled with relocation costs, a lack of communication channels and precarious employment through fixed-term contracts, all which add to the stress of living in a remote community.

With collective bargaining well underway in Northern Territory schools, IEUA-QNT members are committed to ensuring workers are given proper recognition by their employers and that funding and appropriate resources are provided.

The need to provide appropriate incentives for education workers in remote communities is essential if schools want to attract and retain quality staff, to deliver first-rate education to students in these areas.

IEUA-QNT Organiser Andrea MacDonald said that members in remote regions need to have these issues addressed seriously to ensure their work is strengthened and appropriately recognised.

"For too long, there has been a failure to recognise the needs of workers in remote area schools, therefore the retention rates are low with dedicated professionals looking elsewhere for work."

Currently IEUA-QNT members are negotiating in all sectors to ensure that the needs of remote schools and workers are met.

"IEUA-QNT members are currently negotiating collective agreements and are focusing on making sure that provisions such as appropriate accommodation for workers is highlighted."

Member of the Northern Territory Division Advisory Committee, Cheryl Salter said the issues surrounding remote area isolation and the flow on effects felt by workers, means union membership, especially for those new to the profession, has never been so important.

"Membership to our union assists in the building of networks between chapter and branch members, which enables us to work collectively to resolve issues and improve employment conditions for all our members, including education workers in remote areas."

Often the remoteness of areas is used as an excuse for poor working conditions. Cheryl said there are ways in which educators in these areas can have their issues heard.

"Speak to your staff representative in the first instance. They can give some direction on how to resolve anything of concern. In the event your staff representative is not available, contact our union organiser Andrea MacDonald."

IEUA-QNT members also have access to networks and support.

"The Northern Territory Division Advisory Committee is keen to further develop support networks throughout the Territory, especially in remote areas," Cheryl said. "The Advisory Committee is always open and looking for direction on how to develop these ideas."

If you would like to provide input to the Advisory Committee or have your ideas passed to them, talk with your staff representative or contact Andrea MacDonald on FREECALL 1800 177 937.

"Together we can make a difference," Cheryl said.

IEUA-QNT MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW

IEUA-QNT officers recently visited the Territory to underline the importance of collective bargaining, together with the significance of union membership for graduate teachers and those new to the Northern Territory education system.

Industrial issues, benefits of belonging and importance of being union and other member issues were also discussed during the presentations.

Participants also questioned officers about professional rates of pay, with interstate comparisons being of particular interest.

With 39 new members joining our union in the first few weeks of term our strength is building in Northern Territory schools.

Join Your Union Today

Help build strength in order to enhance the working rights and conditions of all education workers in the Territory. To join IEUA-QNT, download a membership form from our website www.qieu.asn.au/nt.html or call our membership department on FREECALL 1800 177 937.

MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

May Day, is a time to unite and celebrate the achievements workers and unions have accomplished to ensure better working conditions in the Northern Territory.

Education workers of the Northern Territory have a strong history of marching together and with all sectors currently in collective



agreement negotiations, it's a good reason to lend your voice.

A May Day march in Darwin will commence at 4:30pm on Monday 4 May, at the IEUA-QNT Branch office, 38 Wood Street, Darwin and finish at the Esplanade for a concert.

Nuala Cullen, teacher and IEUA-QNT member from Sacred Heart School, Palmerston, said it's important that members march together this May Day.


"May Day has a tradition, recognising the achievements of working class people who strove over the years for better working conditions and a good reason for unions representing workers to come together and celebrate."

Northern Territory workers have achieved much over the years, including improvements in working conditions for teaching and non-teaching staff, which has added to the quality of education. This could not have been achieved without the IEUA-QNT and members working as a collective.

"I love the feeling of being a part of a group that has much in common, meeting new people and of course marching together gives you a great feeling of solidarity," Nuala said.

There will also be a May Day dinner Friday 1 May, at the International Room, Level 2, SkyCity, Darwin.

Please contact IEUA-QNT Organiser Andrea MacDonald on 8981 1924 if you require any further details.



Entertainment by
'Amazing Christo' the Magician,
Bollywood Dancers, Fijian Dancers
DJ Itchy Feet and more...

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NT Government
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2009 May Day Dinner

Friday 1st May
2009 7pm till late

International Room,
Level 2, SkyCity
Darwin
Giruth Avenue
The Gardens

**\$70 per person | Price includes May Day T-Shirt
Tables of 10 | Cash Bar**

Tickets to be pre purchased via Unions NT Office by 24th April
For further details please contact Melinda Simpson – 8941 5712 melinda.unionsnt@inet.net.au



Name: Leisa Priebe
School: St Joseph's, Katherine
Position: Teacher
IEUA-QNT Member: Since 2008

How long have you taught in the Northern Territory and how have you found the experience?

I am currently in my second year in Katherine. Last year was very challenging dealing with the culture of the Territory, but I have settled in this year and am enjoying it.

When did you join the IEUA-NT branch and what motivated you to join?

I joined as soon as I started the job here. It was a given for me to be a member as the union protects our rights, our working conditions and enables better conditions for students as a result. I would hate to think where teachers would be today without the strength of the collective.

What do you believe are the specific challenges education workers face in the Northern Territory?

Western style education is not as highly valued as in other areas, so we are challenged in areas such as attendance, literacy, numeracy and behaviour. I am currently teaching in the accelerated literacy

program and it's great seeing the students progress.

What industrial issues do you believe face Northern Territory non-government workers currently?

In remote areas where I am, we don't have enough resources, services, funding and especially human resources. This impacts on those of us who are at school, having to take on even more duties and responsibilities. This adds a lot of stress and weakens morale. However, with new collective agreements in negotiations things are moving forward.

What professional issues do education workers face?

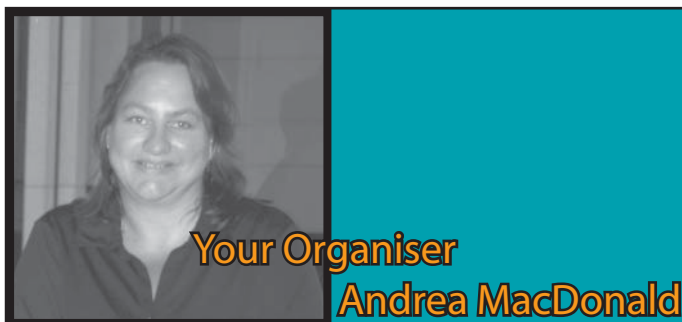
The lack of funding for resources causes professional issues. For example teachers don't have laptops and there is no computer technician employed at my school. We also have a high turn over of staff and students. Schools do not like spending money on professional development on teachers who won't stay a number of years, which impacts on their careers personally. However, these issues are being addressed in the current collective bargaining which is a very positive step in the right direction.

What do you think needs to be done to address the challenges faced by education workers in the Territory?

Funding and negotiation. Education departments and principals need to go on a fact finding mission, listen to concerns and act positively upon them. They also need to work on attracting and retaining teachers. Last year alone, our school had four science teachers. It is very difficult getting specialist teachers in subjects such as science, music, dance and art. We also cannot get relief teachers so it is common for classroom teachers to lose their allocated preparation time.

How do you think IEUA-QNT members need to address these problems?

We have to build a collective culture in our schools, which means getting involved in collective bargaining for our working rights. We need to be active in our chapters also. It does take a great deal to get education workers up to the Territory. However things are changing and we must keep working together so that change can continue.



Andrea MacDonald has been the IEUA-QNT Organiser since the start of 2008. Having extensive experience in education as a school officer, Andrea knows the issues that face educators across the Northern Territory.

Over the last 18 months, Andrea has worked at establishing strong chapters in schools and recruiting new members. She has helped members with industrial matters in the workplace, which has enabled them to have a more open dialogue with their school management on issues.

Currently Andrea is supporting collective bargaining negotiations across the Territory, making sure the issues and hard work of educators is recognised.

If you have a concern, contact Andrea on (08) 8981 1924 or 0448 954 341 during office hours. If Andrea is out of the office, your call will be diverted to QIEU in Brisbane, where a member services officer will be able to assist you.

Alternatively email Andrea at amacdonald@qieu.asn.au or visit the IEUA-QNT office, 38 Wood Street, Darwin.

To keep up to date with campaigns and negotiations, please visit the IEUA-QNT website, www.qieu.asn.au/nt.html

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