



# V The Northern VOICE

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The newsletter for IEUA-QNT members

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## CATHOLIC COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: In principle agreement reached

Negotiations for the latest collective agreement covering Northern Territory Catholic schools are almost finalised with an interim increase of 2.5% agreed to by the Single Bargaining Unit (SBU) on 22 September.

In principle agreement to most clauses tabled in the log of claims has been reached and an interim wage increase of 2.5% was paid to employees from the first pay period in October.

A further increase of 2% will be paid before Christmas with the full 4.5% backdated to March 2009.

The teacher pay scale will also be adjusted at a point with relevant transition arrangements and back payment to March 2009.

At the SBU meetings held during August and September employer representatives agreed to enhance release time for primary school teachers achieving parity with the release time allocated in the public sector effective from the beginning of 2010.

However, agreement was not reached on amendments to existing class size schedules to ensure consistency with the public sector and class sizes will remain unchanged for the life of the agreement.

The development of a classification structure for Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs), Inclusion Support Officers, Teacher Assistants (TAs), Information Technology employees and Early Learning Centres (ELC) along with a revised wage structure for ELC employees was also agreed.

Agreement has also been reached in part for a further provision for IEWs which recognises training, prior service and experience as well as cultural life experience for the purposes of incremental advancement.

The negotiated provision will allow one year of incremental progression for every three years of recognised prior service and relevant experience.

Remote area provisions have also been enhanced for employees who work in Indigenous Catholic Community Schools (ICCS).

SBU representative Bruce Wallace said one of the substantial improvements in these negotiations was that members in these schools had a voice and were listened to.

"The greatest gain was ironically for teachers who end their employment in a remote community at the end of contract," Bruce said.

"The transport costs for personal items, including a motor car to Darwin, will be covered by the employer and this will save

members hundreds of dollars," he said.

The SBU has agreed to the establishment of a housing committee to oversee the maintenance of staff accommodation. Household items have also been upgraded and will include additional household items including fire safety equipment.

Meal expenses for travel for official purposes will increase to \$60 per day along with an accommodation allowance for fares outside of the isolated location to \$120 per night, for a maximum of three nights.

An increase in the special teaching allowance to \$83.19 per fortnight has also been negotiated with the commitment that the allowance will increase each year with the Consumer Pricing Index (CPI).

Provisions for long service leave to be taken at half pay for double the time has also been clarified with the ability to access second and successive periods of long service leave decreasing from eight to five years.

In addition, a new inclusion in personal leave has also been agreed to with employees able to access three days a year to attend significant family functions and events that are located outside the Northern Territory.

A formal ballot on the proposed agreement will take place in the new year. To keep up to date with the negotiations please visit [http://www.qieu.asn.au/652\\_2.html](http://www.qieu.asn.au/652_2.html)



IEUA-QNT Member and SBU representative for Catholic negotiations Bruce Wallace from the Sacred Heart School, Wadeye.

## TEACHER WORK PRACTICES

A key aspect of the current Catholic sector negotiations revolves around cementing conditions for Teacher Work Practices.

The provisions present in the award, the collective agreement and in policy have been further clarified through this round of negotiations. A document listing all the enhancements for Teacher Work Practice will be developed for use in schools and made available to employees.

Some significant gains in relation to this document include:

\* An increase in release time for primary school teachers. Currently teachers are entitled to two hours release time per week; effective January 1, 2010 teachers will be entitled to three hours of release time per week establishing parity with the public sector.

\* Class sizes- while the status quo remains, if the recommended class sizes are exceeded schools should put in place processes to mitigate any identified negative impact on student learning and teacher workload.

\* Undertaking relief hours are normally capped at five hours. However, the new agreement has a provision that if a teacher needs to work more than five extra hours in any one term, due consideration will be given to a lesser allocation in a subsequent term.

A copy of the work practice document should be provided to all new employees upon appointment and once developed a copy will be available on the IEUA-QNT website for members to access.

## CATHOLIC SECTOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

The latest round of Catholic sector negotiations will provide employees in Early Learning Centres with greatly improved wages and conditions.

Agreement in principal has been reached on a majority of clauses.

Of particular note is a new classification structure for Team Leaders, Assistants and Assistant Directors which ensures that employees are recognised for their duties in a more structured remuneration scale.

Branch Secretary of the IEUA-QNT Terry Burke said, "Collective bargaining negotiations have established a new classification structure which acknowledges the qualifications and tasks which employees undertake."

Another positive feature is that the classifications levels now align with the wage relativities determined by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission as a result of exhaustive work value cases.

### IN BRIEF

The Essington School will commence their collective bargaining negotiations in the new year.

Members developed a log of claims in August. A key area addressed is a clause for the development of a Charter of Rights and Responsibilities.

Staff at the school want to ensure that there is a transparent structure available to both management and staff by which to assess issues that may arise throughout their working lives.

Members are hoping to present the log of claims to management in the near future. Further details can be found in the latest copy of *The Independent Voice*.

## CATHOLIC NEGOTIATIONS -

### WHAT THEY MEAN FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION WORKERS AND TEACHER ASSISTANTS

The Catholic negotiations have been successful in enhancing the working conditions for Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs) and Teacher Assistants (TAs).

The Catholic Education Office has agreed to a provision which would recognise prior service, experience and cultural life experience of persons appointed as an IEW for the purposes of incremental advancement.

The negotiated provision would provide one year of incremental progression for every three years of recognised prior service, experience and cultural life experience. This formal recognition is an important provision when recognising the invaluable experience that IEWs bring to classrooms in the Northern Territory.

Agreement was also reached on further descriptors for the already established three classification levels for IEWs.

At the Single Bargaining Unit (SBU) negotiations on 17 November

2009, it was also negotiated that IEWs under the new agreement working the full school year, will now be paid 48 weeks out of 52, as opposed to 46 previously.

This new provision further recognises the professional work of IEWs.

Under the new agreement, TAs that assist with interpreting language and culture between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous teachers have now a revised classification structure.

Prior to collective bargaining negotiations, TAs had no clear pathway in regards to career progression.

Previously, TAs would only stay on one increment level for the whole of their career if they did not advance their qualifications.

Now TAs have been given new increment steps for wage progression for each year of service up to three years, which better recognises their skills and work within the classroom.

## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION WORKERS - ROLE MODELS OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

The work that Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs) do everyday in Catholic school classrooms across the Northern Territory is invaluable to teachers and students alike.

IEWs are very important staff members because their role is to assist the school in understanding Indigenous culture.

An IEW's role is also to support the school in understanding local culture, practices and beliefs. They also can help introduce families to a school's culture, practices and beliefs.

The job description is extremely broad and IEWs can find themselves doing much more than helping students with their studies.

IEWs can also, for example, act as liaisons between families and schools, as support workers, mentors and counsellors. IEWs also run programs such as homework centres and breakfast clubs.

Jesse King from St Joseph's College in Katherine said that every work day for an IEW is different.

"However, a typical day at work can start with helping out in the classroom, taking students to a meeting for work experience, assisting with enrolments of new students, to kicking a footy around at lunchtime, having behaviour management meetings in the afternoons and ending with an hour of homework centre and trip in the bus out to the local communities."

The kinds of activities that IEWs provide in the classroom are very specific.

"We try to provide explicit support for students who have missed a lot of school and have low levels," Jesse said. "Usually these kids need as much one on one support as they can get so we try and get to them as often as possible."

The outside activities that IEWs organise are diverse.

"We organise work experience programs for the kids, holiday programs, sports days and competitions," he said. "We organise events such as Harmony Day and NAIDOC celebrations and try to get the older students to have as much input into the celebrations as possible."

IEWs also travel out to local communities on a regular basis and are the connection between family and school.

"We attend community meetings and festivals and like to show we are all capable of working together for the children."

One of the major successes at St Joseph's this year was the junior accelerated literacy class travelling to a local community and having a morning lesson within them.

"Parents were able to come and watch and were given an insight into what happens in schools," Jesse said. "Afterwards we had a BBQ breakfast where teachers, parents

and students mingled and got to know each other."

Jesse said the recent Catholic collective bargaining negotiations have seen greater recognition for the hard work that IEWs do in schools.

"Recognition and appreciation of IEWs has grown significantly within the Northern Territory in the last decade," Jesse said. "Life and cultural experience is invaluable when dealing with Indigenous kids and Indigenous topics. For this to finally be recognised is a great step for IEWs in the Territory."

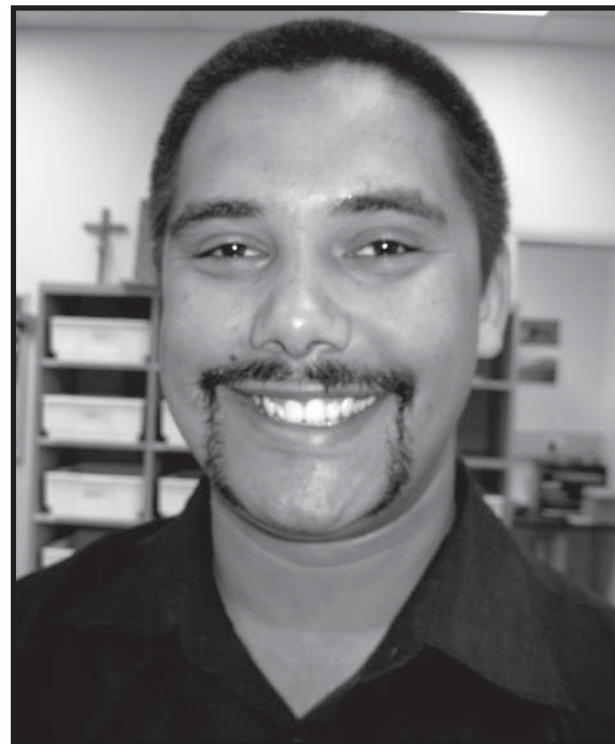
Jesse believes that having a union presence increases the input IEWs can have into collective bargaining.

"I think the current agreements in principle for IEW conditions have been a direct result of a high number IEW members with our union," he said. "By voicing our concerns together we are able to be heard."

Jesse said the best aspect of his job is working with students.

"There is never a day when I don't look back and have a smile on my face about something that happened at school. Watching kids learn how to read or count and seeing the pride on their faces is priceless."

"Indigenous students need to see Indigenous people working, teaching and running schools to show them that when they put their mind into something, they can achieve anything."



IEUA-QNT Member and IEW Jesse King from St Joseph's College Katherine



## MEMBER

## SNAPSHOT

**Name:** Paul Bleeker  
**School:** St Mary's Primary School, Darwin  
**Position:** Groundsman and Maintenance Officer  
**IEUA-QNT Member:** Since 2009

### How long have you worked in the Northern Territory and how long at St Mary's?

I have been working in the Territory since 1994 when I first arrived from Melbourne to take a posting at RAAF Base Tindal. I have been working at St Mary's in Darwin for two years.

### What does your position entail?

As the Grounds and Maintenance Officer I do almost any task that is required to keep the schools facilities in good repair. All sorts of odd jobs have become a staple part of my work at the school.

### What are the best parts of your job?

Each day usually brings a new challenge and a good variety, so I don't have to worry about getting bored. I also enjoy the fact that I can be working at any part of the school throughout the day and be able to communicate with most of the staff.

### What are the most challenging parts of your job?

Being out on your own when it comes to any assistance with the technical side of the job and finding extra muscle power when moving the heavy stuff.

### Why do you feel it's important to be involved with a union?

I have a service agreement with the IEUA-QNT because they deal specifically with schools and the people that work at schools.

### What professional issues do you feel service staff generally face in the Northern Territory?

I feel that service staff may not necessarily have access to professional development opportunities offered to other staff members.

### How do you think IEUA-QNT members can address these problems?

Members need to identify the areas that they feel could benefit them and the schools and apply for these courses to become part of an overall training and skill base certificate that is recognised within the wider educational system.

### What does it mean to you to belong to your union chapter?

I know that in the Chapter, members are close at hand to speak to and we can also relate with the issues that are of a more local nature.

### What would you say to colleagues who are not yet union members?

Join up and be able to have a say. Being part of our union gives you more of a voice and a chance be involved in your own working future.

- **Do you have a colleague who would like to become a member of IEUA-QNT?** It's simple to join and there are many membership benefits. Visit [http://www.qieu.asn.au/407\\_2.html](http://www.qieu.asn.au/407_2.html) to download a membership form.
- **Have you been teaching for five years and feel like a change for 12 months?** The IEUA-QNT offers a **Teachers Exchange Program** to members who would like to experience life overseas but who still want to keep their current job and accrued entitlements. Applications are now invited for exchange opportunities to the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. If you are interested in finding out more information please contact Jenny Zugno at IEUA-QNT at [jennyz@qieu.asn.au](mailto:jennyz@qieu.asn.au). If you would like to find out more information please visit the IEUA-QNT website at [http://www.qieu.asn.au/20\\_2.html](http://www.qieu.asn.au/20_2.html)

## 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](http://www.qieu.asn.au/nt.html) or call our membership department on FREECALL 1800 351 996.

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