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Unfair performance based pay plan rejected

IEUA-QNT members across the Northern Territory have rejected the federal government's performance based pay plan for teachers.

Through attending sub-division and school (chapter) level meetings, members took the opportunity to speak out for our profession and the quality of education provided to our students.

Members strongly opposed any model which would "assess" and "reward" teachers on the basis of mechanistic approaches such as student results and parent and student critiques, given the serious impacts this would have on quality education and the collegial nature of our schools.

The member meetings authorised a series of actions to ensure that if any new salary arrangement is imposed on the sector, such a structure appropriately and fairly recognises the work of accomplished teachers.

The meetings endorsed a knowledge, skills and experience criteria based structure that would be implemented in addition to current pay and classification structures and which, in contrast to the federal government's plan, would be a more appropriate and effective way of attracting and retaining new teachers to the profession.

It would also ensure adequate and proper recognition of teachers who demonstrate special skills and engage in mentoring programs, induction programs, ongoing professional development and those who choose to teach in rural and remote communities.



The elements identified by IEUA-QNT members as being fundamental to such a criteria based structure will now be incorporated and developed into a policy by IEUA-QNT Branch Executive for use in future negotiations with employers and as an alternative to the federal government's plan.

The "Sign On To Speak Out" petition is now being circulated in our workplaces. It calls on the current federal government to withdraw its push for performance based pay and to instead consult with education professionals, their unions and their employers to determine a structure based on knowledge, skills and experience criteria which fairly and justly recognises the achievements and contributions of accomplished teachers.

Members who have not yet signed the petition are urged to do so, in order for the voice of our profession to be heard and performance based pay rejected.

Protecting our working rights and conditions

The upcoming federal election gives IEUA-QNT members the opportunity to stand up for our profession and have a say in protecting our working rights and conditions.

Both our working rights and conditions and the future quality of education have been put at risk by the federal government's industrial and professional attacks on our profession. This has implications for every Australian including family members, friends and the students we teach.

IEUA-QNT members are committed to a number

of key principles: our professional responsibility to speak out for the future of quality education; the right to belong to and be represented by your union; the right to refuse to sign an AWA; and the right to a decent safety net of wages and conditions for all employees.

Members now have the opportunity to stand up for our profession and take action to protect our working rights and conditions by helping to ensure these principles are once again at the foundation of our workplaces, our communities and our Australian way of life.

Collective bargaining:

Helping members achieve improvements to wages and conditions

Achieving improvements to wages and conditions for education professionals is the core function of your union and the responsibility of every union member. Collective bargaining is the mechanism utilised by union members to achieve such improvements. The process of collective bargaining is an opportunity for IEUA-QNT members to have their say in the terms and conditions that will govern their employment over the life of the agreement.

In the past, collective bargaining has enabled union members to achieve improvements in wages and conditions that are enforceable and agreed to by employing authorities and single site schools alike. Building on the achievements won by past members, IEUA-QNT members are now focusing on what future gains can be made through the collective bargaining process.

The new year will see the beginning of negotiations of collective agreements for employees in every major systemic employing authority in the Territory. These negotiations will be a significant opportunity for union members to have a say in regard to their wages and conditions. IEUA-QNT member involvement in the process of collective bargaining, from the

development of the claim and throughout the negotiations, will be fundamental to achieving improvements in wages and conditions.

Experience has shown that effective member involvement in achieving improvements in wages and conditions can only be accomplished when the following three key elements are in place:

1. The majority of staff are represented through IEUA-QNT membership;
2. IEUA-QNT members are informed and educated about issues affecting education professionals; and
3. IEUA-QNT members are prepared to become involved by attending school (chapter) meetings and supporting each other.

These three elements are fundamental to the effective operation of any union and are therefore vital for the achievement of improvements to wages and conditions for Northern Territory education professionals.

Intervention does not address underlying issues

Underlying social, educational, health and employment issues will continue to be left unaddressed in the wake of the federal government's intervention into indigenous communities in the Northern Territory unless meaningful discussions are held with indigenous community leaders. At the point of its intervention, the federal government failed to consult with indigenous Elders and leaders in seeking a strategy to address the longstanding issues.

IEUA-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke said the fact that Australia's indigenous peoples remain at the bottom level of every economic, health and social indicator is totally unacceptable and must be addressed.

"Instead the federal government has, over time, shown little capacity to address these fundamental issues and has failed to provide the resources needed to address the true causes of violence and poverty in indigenous communities," Mr Burke said.

While the Prime Minister called his government's intervention a response to a national emergency, the comprehensive Inquiry Report "Little Children are Sacred: Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse" by Pat Anderson and Rex Wild QC, indicates this and many other issues have been a national emergency for decades.

In fact, the federal intervention legislation takes no account of the recommendations contained within the Report,

which highlighted the need for existing programs to work more efficiently in order to "break the cycle of violence and poverty". Particular actions recommended to be addressed in the Anderson/Wild Report included: improvement in school attendance; provision of education campaigns on child sexual abuse and how to stop it; building greater trust between government departments, the police and indigenous communities; and empowering indigenous communities to take control and make decisions about the future.

In light of the action undertaken by the federal government, the combined indigenous organisations of the Northern Territory have developed an alternative Emergency Response and Development Plan to address the issue of indigenous child protection. It builds on the recommendations of the Anderson/Wild Report as well as programs already underway in indigenous communities and is based on a partnership approach between government and indigenous people.

Nationally, the IEUA has acknowledged the seriousness of health, safety, social and education issues for indigenous peoples and the fact that increased resources and support for indigenous communities are a long overdue national priority. The IEUA has thus called on the federal government to enter into meaningful consultation with Northern Territory indigenous community Elders and leaders in order to effectively and appropriately address the underlying issues facing those communities.

Upcoming election of NT Division members following successful integration

Election of the Northern Territory Division members of the IEUA-QNT Branch Executive is now underway following the successful integration of the Northern Territory and Queensland Branches.

The election of the NT Division representative to the IEUA Federal Council and the local Division Advisory Committee within the IEUA-QNT Branch has also been initiated.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) recently published an advertisement in local media calling for nominations for the relevant positions.

The notice is also published in this newsletter in accordance with the Branch Rules.

Nominations close on 31 October 2007.

The election of office bearers for the Northern Territory Division will enable Territory members to take the next steps in building a stronger union and protecting non-government education employees from the unfair nature of the federal industrial relations laws.

Under the rules for the IEUA-QNT Branch, there will be five member representatives from the Northern Territory Division to the QNT Branch Executive, the governing body of the Branch.

A Northern Territory Division Advisory Committee will also be established in order to maintain the identity of Northern Territory members.

This body will be comprised of the five members from the Northern Territory Division to the Branch Executive plus another four persons elected on a regional basis from across the Territory.

The NT Division Advisory Committee will ensure effective representation of Northern Territory members' issues and concerns to the full QNT Branch Executive.

The Division Advisory Committee will meet regularly to ensure members' professional and industrial issues are represented to the integrated Branch Executive, enabling appropriate action and resolution of matters to be undertaken when and where necessary.

The formation of the QNT Branch provides members in the Northern Territory with an added resource base to assist in protecting their working rights and conditions.

With strong representation and advisory structures the interests of members in the Territory can be pursued with added vigour.

Independent Education Union of Australia
Queensland and Northern Territory Branch
2007 Northern Territory Division Election

ELECTION NOTICE

Workplace Relations Act 1996

Nominations are called for:

NT Division

- Federal Council Delegate from the NT Division
- Branch Executive Member from the NT Division (5)

Darwin Urban Sub-Division

- NT Division Advisory Committee Member (2)

Top End Rural Sub-Division

- NT Division Advisory Committee Member

Southern Region – Alice Springs Sub-Division

- NT Division Advisory Committee Member

Written nominations, which comply with the Rules of the Union, may be made at any time from 9 October 2007 and must reach me not later than 4:00 pm on Wednesday, 31 October 2007. Nominations cannot be withdrawn after that time.

Candidates may submit statements not later than 4:00pm on Wednesday, 31 October 2007, for distribution with ballot papers, in accordance with IEUA Federal Rule 17(i) and Queensland Branch Rule 10.9. A statement must not exceed 200 words and it should contain only the candidate's personal history and/or policy statement and a passport-sized photograph of the candidate.

Nomination forms are available, from me or the Branch Office of the organisation. The use of these forms is not compulsory provided that nominations comply with the rules.

HOW TO LODGE NOMINATIONS


By Post: AEC Industrial Elections, GPO Box 2590 Brisbane Q 4001
By Fax: (07) 3832 4727
By Hand: AEC Industrial Elections, Level 6 (Access via 7th), 488 Queen Street, Brisbane.

A postal ballot of Northern Territory Division members, if required, will open on 14 November 2007 and close at 12:00 noon on Thursday, 6 December 2007. Ballot material will be posted to the members address shown in the Union records.

Changed Address? Advise the Union now.

Note: Federal Officers other than Federal Executive members, are elected by and from the Federal Council members and not otherwise.
Note: A copy of the AEC's election report can be obtained from the organisation or from me, after the completion of the election.

Brendan Carroll
Returning Officer
5 October 2007. Phone: (07) 3834 3406



Meetings set for Term 4

Member meetings will be held in Darwin and Alice Springs shortly to enable IEUA-QNT members to discuss current issues affecting education professionals and to establish contacts with other members in their area. Another round of visits to Top End and Alice Springs area schools (including regional schools) are also planned for Term 4. Further information regarding the dates of the sub-division meetings will be sent to members shortly.



Darwin members discussed the implications of the federal government's performance based pay plan at the last sub-division meeting held in September



Member Profile

Name: Natalee Waterton

School: St Joseph's College, Katherine

Position: Indigenous Education Worker

How long have you been an indigenous education worker in the Territory, what does your role entail and how have you found the experience?

After working as a laboratory technician in Queensland, I started as an indigenous education worker here in Katherine just over a year ago because I was seeking a new challenge and I also wanted to help the indigenous children of this area achieve their full potential.

As an indigenous education worker I am responsible for a range of tasks including gathering resources for indigenous students, liaising with families or caregivers, liaising with teachers, staff and the principal, supporting teachers with planning from an indigenous perspective, tutoring indigenous students in class and coordinating the Homework Centre.

I have also been developing programs to increase indigenous students' literacy levels by giving them incentives to strive further. Programs I have influenced include the Indigenous Under 17s Katherine Region Netball Competition. Other programs also include cultural celebrations and organising excursions. My job is very diverse and being able to assist the students in achieving their full potential is personally rewarding.

What do you think are the biggest professional issues facing education workers in the Northern Territory?

There is a genuine need for some form of cultural induction process. We have two different cultures here and I believe that a cultural induction for education workers new to the

Territory would be a positive way to help increase awareness of indigenous culture and the different elements that are incorporated within it.

For example, in indigenous culture it is not acceptable to make direct eye contact – something education workers may not be aware of before they start working with indigenous students.

There is a workshop called "Cross Cultural Effectiveness – Strategies for Learning, Living and Working with Indigenous Communities" which is recommended by the Fred Hollows Foundation when they introduce doctors to indigenous communities. Implementing a similar strategy for educators would be very beneficial in building more effective interactions within the classroom.

Another issue we face is securing accommodation for children to attend school from remote communities. The lack of boarding facilities in Katherine affects the rights of indigenous students and non-indigenous students to have an education equal to that of students who live in the Katherine community.

What led you to become a member of IEUA-QNT and what are the positive benefits you feel come from members joining together in their union in order to address the issues they face?

Being a member of IEUA-QNT means that I have a stronger voice and am more aware of the issues facing others and the sector generally. I know I don't have to take a back seat anymore – that I can have a say on the issues facing my colleagues and I. By coming together in our union, we can also make sure that we have the resources and support necessary to provide our students with the best education possible.

What is your advice to non-government education workers in the Territory who are considering becoming a IEUA-QNT member?

Joining your union gives you a stronger voice and the ability to seek advice if an issue arises. Membership gives you a greater sense of security because you know the support of your fellow members is there if you need it.

"The Northern Voice"

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Editor:

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ISSN: 1834-5190

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