

14 August 2023

Toowoomba school staff to stop work tomorrow, 15 August 2023

Hundreds of employees across 13 Toowoomba Catholic schools will take protected industrial action tomorrow, Tuesday 15 August 2023.

Members of the Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) will stop work for five-minutes from 8:30-8:35am and undertake a range of “work bans” throughout the day.

The schools where IEU-QNT members are taking action include:

- St Anthony's School, Toowoomba;
- St Joseph's College, Toowoomba;
- St Mary's College, Toowoomba;
- St Saviour's College, Toowoomba;
- St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba;
- St Thomas More's Primary School, Toowoomba;
- St Monica's School, Oakey;
- St Joseph's School, Chinchilla;
- St Francis de Sales School, Clifton;
- St Patrick's School, Allora;
- St Mary's School, Warwick;
- Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Toowoomba; and
- St Ursula's College, Toowoomba.

IEU-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke said union members were taking protected industrial action in support of reaching an agreement in collective bargaining negotiations with Queensland Catholic school employers.

“Employers are behaving as if collective bargaining negotiations are over, despite this very clear message from their employees that there are key issues outstanding,” Mr Burke said.

“Employers have said they will soon ballot their proposal to set wages and conditions in Toowoomba Catholic schools for the next four years, but they have no ‘in-principle’ agreement with IEU-QNT members.”

Mr Burke said IEU-QNT members could not support a proposal that leaves key bargaining issues unaddressed.

“Members are not convinced employers are addressing key issues in schools,” he said.

“They are taking the action as part of a campaign to address the workload crisis that is seeing teachers leave the sector in droves.

“IEU-QNT members also want respect shown to their school support staff by employers paying them contemporary wages for the work they do.”

Mr Burke said under the work bans on 15 August, IEU-QNT members will:

- not perform any work unless they are wearing a campaign sticker;
- not attend staff meetings (except meetings regarding student welfare);
- ban any duties or activities during scheduled meal breaks;
- ban supervision or cover periods;
- ban playground or transport supervision;
- ban any duties to comply with employer requests for data collection; and
- ban all communications outside of 8:30am to 3:30pm.

“IEU-QNT members are also authorised under the protected action to have discussions or make statements explaining why union members are taking action,” he said.

Mr Burke said IEU-QNT members had shown enormous determination to take protected action in the face of pressure from employers.

“The behaviour of Queensland Catholic school employers during these negotiations can only be described as intimidatory,” Mr Burke said.

“They have refused to listen to employees’ concerns, discouraged union members’ protected action at every opportunity and are now trying to ballot a proposal that IEU-QNT members do not support.

“IEU-QNT members’ protected industrial action is about getting a better outcome for Catholic school staff, students and communities.

“Our union urges employers to re-consider their approach to these negotiations and return to the bargaining table with proposals to address employees’ outstanding concerns.”

ENDS

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The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) represents more than 17,000 teachers, school support staff, principals, early childhood education and VET and RTO employees across Queensland and the Northern Territory. www.ieuqnt.org.au