

20 May 2024

## Ipswich Girls Grammar teachers and support staff take industrial action for first time in school's history

Teachers and school support staff at Ipswich Girls Grammar School (IGGS) are taking the first protected industrial action by employees since the school opened in 1892.

The protected industrial actions will be undertaken by members of the Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch and the first tranche of actions will begin today (Monday, 20 May).

These protected industrial actions include employees not attending staff meetings (except those related to staff and student safety) and not being available for any work on scheduled breaks.

IEU-QNT organiser Andrew Elphinstone said the unprecedented action by IGGS school staff was due to their employer's failure to address key employee issues including wages and leave entitlements.

"IGGS staff have been in negotiations with their employer regarding their current working conditions since August," Mr Elphinstone said.

"Instead of listening to staff, IGGS has instead sought to silence the voice of employees twice by going to ballot on working conditions that are subpar.

"In both cases, employees have strongly rejected the IGGS proposal.

"IGGS also sought to restrain employees' right to a ballot on endorsing protected actions in support of their claims but this was rejected by the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

"It is clear IGGS is not interested in listening to the concerns of their staff when it comes to the absence of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) payment, a new automatic step for experienced teachers and flexible access to leave.

"How IGGS, can think this is the right thing to do – when we have teachers leaving the profession in droves – is truly astonishing.

"Taking any form of protected industrial action is always a last resort for union members but it now seems this is the only way to get their message across to this employer," Mr Elphinstone said.

**ENDS**

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