

FAQ: Collective bargaining is underway – what does it mean for IEU members?



What is collective bargaining?

As IEU members, collective bargaining is our opportunity to secure better wages and working conditions.

During collective bargaining, our union negotiates with employers to determine new collective agreements – the legal documents that set working conditions for all staff.

How were our union's priority bargaining claims decided?

Our union consulted widely with IEU members and Chapters to compile the IEU log of claims.

The log of claims is a guiding document that outlines a plan to improve working conditions for all staff.

Members' priority bargaining claims can be summarised under these broad themes:

- Addressing the workload crisis
- Wages that recognise the value of work
- Implementing contemporary rights at work
- Recognition of specialist and leadership roles

When will negotiation meetings take place?

The negotiation group is referred to as the Single Bargaining Unit (SBU).

Meetings of the SBU have been scheduled for the below dates.

- Tuesday, 3 February 2026
- Tuesday, 17 February 2026
- Tuesday, 17 March 2026
- Wednesday, 22 April 2026
- Tuesday, 12 May 2026
- Wednesday, 3 June 2026
- Tuesday, 23 June 2026

Who is at the meetings?

The SBU meetings are attended by a group of employer and employee representatives.

Employee SBU representatives include six (6) IEU members.

These members bring their lived experiences as teachers, middle leaders and school support staff from Catholic schools across the state, ensuring members have a strong voice at the bargaining table.

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IEU member SBU representatives:

- Alex Patten – Teacher, EREA Flexi Centre
- Annette Gregory – School Officer, EREA school
- Heather Grundy – Teacher, Diocesan school
- Jo-Anne Desailly – Teacher, RI Girls school
- Karyl Young – Middle Leader, Diocesan school
- Samantha McKinnon – Teacher, RI Boys school

IEU staff who are experienced in leading collective bargaining negotiations also attend the SBU meetings as employee representatives.

Employers are being represented by a range of professional staff, such as human resource and employee relations officers and managers.

Notably, Religious Institute (RI) schools (other than EREA) have not sent a direct representative to the SBU and are relying on a central bargaining representative from Catholic Education Queensland Limited (CEQL).

What is the key message for employers in the IEU log of claims?

Our union tabled our log of claims at the SBU meeting held on 27 November 2025, which informs our union’s claims at later SBU meetings. The message to employers is simple.

In 2026, IEU members want action now on workload, wages and contemporary workplace rights in Queensland Catholic schools.

IEU members don’t need another review, another joint working party or another three years until the next bargaining round – IEU members need action now.

What are the employers’ priority bargaining claims?

The employers tabled their log of claims at the SBU meeting on 27 November 2025, which informs their claims at later SBU meetings. They also released a “staff update” video in January summarising their approach to the negotiations.

The employer log of claims contains no vision for the future of Queensland Catholic schools – including no solutions to the workload pressures which affect the wellbeing and retention of staff.

The employers have also approached the negotiations with a veiled threat to deny employees backpay if they do not vote in favour of a proposed agreement by 31 October 2026.

A copy of the employer log of claims can be found [here](#).

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How does what is happening in public sector negotiations affect bargaining in Queensland Catholic schools?

Collective bargaining negotiations between the Queensland Department of Education and the Queensland Teachers' Union have been referred for arbitration by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC).

It is important to remember that our union is not party to those negotiations. While outcomes in the public sector are generally relevant to negotiations in the non-government sector, it is unlikely that an outcome from the QIRC arbitration process will occur until next year.

Our union is focused on negotiations with Queensland Catholic school employers and the need for action now on members' priority bargaining issues.

How can IEU members stay informed about bargaining?

Our union is the most reliable source of information during collective bargaining. We will communicate with members regularly about the progress of negotiations.

Updates and resources will be posted to our *Action Now!* member hub:
www.ieuqnt.org.au/actionnow

What can Chapters do to support the *Action Now!* campaign?

Our Chapters – as we refer to the collective of IEU members in workplaces – are at the heart of our strength as a union.

Our union relies on strong and engaged Chapters to secure a successful outcome in collective bargaining negotiations.

Chapters can support the *Action Now!* campaign by:

- Ensuring union delegates are elected or appointed in their Chapter ([click here to read more about IEU Delegates](#)).
- Meeting regularly, engaging with updates from our union and taking part in any requested Chapter action.
- Speaking with colleagues who are yet to join IEU about the importance of collective bargaining and becoming a member.

Have further questions about bargaining?

Check in with your union delegates or reach out to your IEU Organiser [via MyIEU](#).

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