

CONVERSATION GUIDE TO THE INADEQUATE EMPLOYER AGREEMENT



This guide is designed to support respectful conversations between employees about the inadequate agreement proposed by employers and what it means for workload, wages and conditions.

If a colleague isn't interested in a conversation, that's okay.
Focus your energy on staff members who are ready for a discussion.

Every vote counts and these conversations make a difference.

Start a conversation

Ask your colleagues some questions like:

- "What did you make of the proposed agreement?"
- "Have you heard when the ballot opens?"

Highlight concerns with the proposed agreement

Sharing your concerns with the proposed agreement is a great way to let your colleagues know about what's at stake.

Some suggested comments:

- "There's nothing on workload in the proposed agreement. I don't know if you saw the employers' summary of the agreement. It's over 6,000 words long and the word 'workload' isn't even mentioned."
- "Wages will fall behind under the proposed agreement. The employee claim would get teachers to comparable rates with New South Wales and Victorian teachers. The proposed agreement lags well behind those rates."
- "Classroom assistants in New South Wales Catholic schools are paid 10-25% more for the same work. The small classification adjustment in the proposed agreement won't meaningfully address the wage deficit for school officers."

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Answering common questions

- **“Won’t we lose backpay if we vote no?”** – Instead of allowing employees to consider the agreement on its merits, employers have linked backpay to the vote outcome. Voting NO is how you push back on that tactic and bring employers back to the bargaining table.
- **“Isn’t 4% still a pay rise?”** – The wage offer isn’t good enough to get us to comparable rates with New South Wales and Victoria. It will leave us behind for the next three years and make it even harder to catch up in the future.
- **“Won’t we get whatever the state sector gets?”** – The proposed agreement does not include any commitment to match the wage outcome that is eventually arbitrated in the state sector. The agreement that is accepted will be in place for the next three years. That’s why we need to look to national wage comparators to make sure we don’t fall behind.
- **“Will my vote really make a difference?”** – The fact that 94% of IEU members rejected the offer in an advisory vote shows that most employees think the agreement is inadequate. But the formal ballot will decide whether or not the agreement is accepted. Every vote counts and we need all staff who think the proposed agreement is unacceptable to VOTE NO.
- **“Won’t VOTING NO just drag negotiations on longer?”** – If a majority of staff VOTE NO, yes, negotiations will take longer. But accepting an inadequate agreement means our wages and conditions will fall behind over the next three years, leaving us worse off in the long run.

Close the conversation

Finish with practical advice about getting ready for the ballot:

- “Voting is open from 19–29 October. Make sure you put a reminder in your calendar.”
- “Do you need more information before you vote? There are resources on the IEU website.”
- “Would you talk to some other staff about the importance of voting no and getting employers back to the bargaining table?”

Read more on the VOTE NO online hub

