



Federal government IR reforms begin repair of a broken system

Our 75,000 IEU members will welcome the federal Labor government's *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill* as an important first step to fairer workplace laws. These changes will make a difference to the wages and working lives of countless members and their families.

School and early childhood employees have been forced to work under unfair laws for decades. The government's Bill is a good start to begin repairing a broken industrial system.

The IEU negotiates over 800 collective agreements - from some of the largest agreements in Australia to workplaces with as few as two workers. Regardless of sector or location, all education employees eagerly await these and future changes to restore some balance in their workplace.

IEU members welcome modernised bargaining, wage equity and more secure jobs

While our union is currently working through all implications of the Bill for education workers, we know the [government reforms](#) include several changes of particular importance to our sector:

Greater access to flexible work support

Members with caring responsibilities struggle daily to balance their work and family commitments as employers routinely reject any request for flexible work options. The government's Bill will provide vital new support to working parents, carers and older employees, with employers required to try and reach agreement on flexible arrangements and explore all support options. The FWC would also have the power to order an outcome if employers continue to stonewall.

This is a huge win for IEU members and their families.

Multi-employer bargaining to get wages moving

The Bill updates the rules for multi-employer bargaining and removes many of the complex legal restrictions that have been holding back wages and conditions. Multi-employer bargaining will be able to be initiated by our union along with the right of members to take action in support of their claims regardless of how they bargain. Applications to 'rope in' different employers to a single agreement will be possible.

Secure jobs & fixed-term contracts

The widespread use of rolling fixed-term contracts undermines job security in education. The Bill would limit fixed-term contracts to two years and no more than two contracts. The FWC will also have the power to arbitrate fixed-term disputes and job security will become an object of the Act.

Pay equity and the gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is an issue in all industries, including our education sector with over 70% of employees being female. The changes will outlaw 'pay secrecy clauses' that gag female workers from talking about their pay. Gender equity will become an object of the *Fair Work Act*, new Fair Work Commission (FWC) Pay Equity Expert Panels will be created and the FWC will be able to order pay increases in low-paid, female-dominated industries.

A stronger independent umpire

IEU members have struggled under a system where employers can force repeated ballots of inferior agreements and game the system with bargaining delays, refusals and rejections. The proposal to give the Fair Work Commission new powers to resolve long-running disputes is a common-sense solution to assist agreement making.

It's a good start, and here are the further changes needed in phase #2

The previous LNP government's broken laws will take some time to fully unpack and repair.

The *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill* is a good start, and the next phase of government reforms must address these remaining priority issues for IEU members:

1. **Our right to take a stand on issues and member action:** Onerous ballot requirements, legal hurdles and unworkable notice periods severely restrict the ability of members to take action in support of their issues. It's a key reason why so many pay and workload issues remain unresolved. Employers are spending a small fortune on legal cases to prevent members taking even minor work bans.
2. **Further improvements to bargaining and good faith requirements:** Employers often refuse to bargain, or if dragged to negotiations, reject out of hand all reasonable employee suggestions. Good faith bargaining obligations need to be strengthened to end the charade of these one-way discussions and 'take-it-or-leave-it' offers.
3. **The right of members to access their union and solve workplace problems:** Unnecessary and complex restrictions limit union members being able to meet and talk with their union. These adversarial laws must change to allow for reasonable access by union representatives seeking to visit workplaces to help resolve local problems and ensure correct pay and conditions are being adhered to. Time for site-based union delegates to speak with their colleagues on common work issues and concerns must also be confirmed.

The government's Bill will now be debated in the House of Representatives and the Senate. We know that big business and employer groups will fight back against any changes designed to improve wages and balance out the bargaining process.

Our union will continue to push for the full range of reforms needed to address stagnating wages and unsustainable workloads across our schools and early childhood workplaces.