Independent Education Union of Australia

Speaks on...

28 March 2025

The federal election on Saturday, 3 May will shape the future of bargaining rights for IEU members

The federal election on 3rd May will have many consequences for IEU members and their families, with none greater than the protection of new collective bargaining rights successfully operating in our schools and early childhood education services.

The IEU negotiates over 800 collective agreements across the nation. These agreements deliver improved wages and conditions for our 75,000 members, and are the basis to rebuild the sustainable education workforce needed to deliver high-quality education.

Progress under threat

Union campaigns have secured extensive repairs to a broken and unfair bargaining system.

Recent federal government reforms have helped level the bargaining playing field for IEU members. Thousands of workers have the protection and security of bargaining for the first time.

However, just as these new rights are beginning to deliver major benefits and bargaining success, they are under threat from changes proposed by the Liberal National Party Coalition.

While the ECEC industry rightly celebrated the first ever supported bargaining agreement for 12,000 low paid ECEC workers, the federal coalition responded by pledging to dismantle the multi-employer bargaining rights that delivered the groundbreaking improvements.

The numbers don't lie

The numbers tell a clear story: bargaining is on the rebound and wages are back on track.

- Pay rises under collective agreements are at their highest rate in 28 years. Workplace data released this week has confirmed the best wages result since 1997.
- Union bargaining success stories are surging across the country. Another 820,000 workers now have the financial security of a collective agreement.
- Higher pay in all areas of the economy, from the minimum wage to award rates and agreements, unequivocally prove the success of our campaigns and government changes.
- Over the past 12 months, the federal ALP government has delivered more real wages growth than the Coalition achieved in nine years of low-wages policies.

Many IEU members have already benefited from multi-employer bargaining, including NSW independent schools, the ECEC sector and WA Catholic schools. And more are set to follow - NSW preschools and over 400 Catholic schools in Victoria are next in line.

Union won workplace laws are vulnerable

A fairer bargaining system is just one of many reforms improving the working lives of IEU members. The right to disconnect, flexible work options, union delegate rights, limits on fixed-term contracts – these historic workplace rights will be front of mind for members on 3rd May.

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IEU - represents 75,000 teachers, principals and support staff in faith based, community & independent schools, pre-schools, kindergartens and early childhood education centres and post-secondary centres across Australia.