Employers not prepared to agree to open-ended negotiations

As previously advised, union representatives tabled an amendment to the consultative provisions of the proposed Agreement for the first time at the end of the last single bargaining unit meeting on 15 October 2012.

This proposed amendment reads:

“(g) Identify appropriate provisions for staff in recognition of the nature of their duties and role in their school.”

While tabling an amendment of this nature so late in the negotiations, and without previous reference, would normally be seen as unacceptable to the process, employers have given due consideration to the amendment to assist reaching an in-principle agreement.

Employers are concerned that this amendment would enable the continuation of negotiations at the school level should employees wish to raise claims not agreed to in the SBU forum.

We are disappointed to report that the legitimate concerns raised by Catholic school employing authorities have been rejected by the union. Unfortunately, without these concerns being satisfactorily addressed by the union, we are not prepared to agree to this amendment.

Package of agreed outcomes ready for the vote

At the SBU meeting on 15 October 2012 union representatives acknowledged the settlement of all non-wage claim items.

This package of non-wage items includes the following agreed positions:

- Change to planning, preparation and correction time in primary schools
- Enhanced job share ratio
- Half pay paid parental leave
- Domestic violence leave – 5 additional days
- Improved flexibility to access of long service leave
- Cash out of Long Service Leave
- Increase to casual loading from 23% to 25%
- Enhanced school officer allowances for some roles
- Enhanced severance payments
- Agreement to a new Middle Leadership Structure
- Enhanced rural and remote conditions
- Review of school counsellor/guidance counsellor positions
- Review of boarding house conditions
- Introduction of a deferred salary scheme
- Enhanced annualisation of salary provisions

In addition to this non-wage package, employers have offered a wage increase of 2.7% (or a flat dollar increase of $23 per week whichever is the greater) per annum over a three year Agreement.

Employers have also guaranteed back pay to 1 May 2012 (School officers, Services staff and Nurses) and 1 July 2012 (Teachers).
The payment of the wage increase will be made from the first full pay period after the receipt of results from a ballot of employees where the majority of those who vote approve the proposed Agreement.

Employers believe it is now time for a ballot of all employees covered by the proposed Agreement to be conducted.

It is anticipated that a ballot of this nature could be conducted within weeks and would enable employers to make the payment of back pay and wage increases before the Christmas break.

Before moving to ballot, employers believe it is necessary to gain in-principle agreement from union representatives.

Employers have advised union representatives of their position and now await a response. We will continue to keep you informed as these negotiations progress.