We are pleased to advise that enterprise bargaining negotiations are progressing well with some positive and robust discussion resulting in a clearer understanding of the respective positions. In short, Catholic school employers believe headway is being made towards the development of a replacement Agreement.

At yesterday’s Single Bargaining Unit (SBU) meeting employers responded to a number of amended draft clauses tabled by employee representatives at the previous SBU meeting.

Catholic school employers appreciate the consideration given to their previous responses to specific claim items. In a number of instances the responses have been clearly reflected in the amended version of the tabled draft clauses supporting employee claim items.

However, several of the amendments to draft clauses still require further clarification and discussion. There are also a small number of the draft clauses that cannot be agreed to by Catholic school employers in their current form.

Key among these are:

- **Additional senior administration in primary schools** - expected changes arising from the implementation of the Year 7 to Secondary initiative prevent Catholic school employers from providing agreement to this claim.

- **Occupational Health and Safety** - Catholic school employers place a high priority on Occupation Health and Safety in the workplace. They are committed to the responsible management of Catholic schools to ensure a safe working environment for staff and students is maintained. However, employers consider that the new Workplace Health and Safety legislation provides sufficient rigour to support this approach, without the need to repeat the legislative requirements in the proposed Agreement.

- **Resourcing school level industrial practice** - Catholic school employers are not opposed to union members meeting on school premises provided there is no impact on the delivery of teaching and learning to students. However, in order to reduce disruption to classroom activities, employers believe it is not unreasonable to expect that these meetings be held outside of normal working hours or during lunch breaks.

Employers are pleased that agreement has been reached to establish a number of enterprise bargaining SBU subcommittees that will enable employer and employee representatives to have more in-depth discussions on various matters.

This is a positive step that can only enhance the negotiation process and assist the parties to reach an early settlement of their respective logs of claims.

The next single bargaining unit meeting for Religious Institute schools will be held on Tuesday 19 June 2012.