Enterprise bargaining negotiations continued with a meeting of the Single Bargaining Unit yesterday. A number of important matters were discussed.

Catholic school employers reiterated their intention to provide a fair and responsible wage increase for all school-based staff. However, employers are not yet in a position to quantify the wage increase until the remaining two significant influencing factors are clarified.

These factors are:

- Outcomes of the review of Federal government school funding (Gonski review)
- Contents of the negotiated package in settlement of both employee and employer logs of claims.

Education Queensland’s wage and non-wage claim was also discussed at yesterday’s meeting. Catholic school employers clearly outlined that it has never been their intention to make non-wage claims on employees that reflect those recently made by Education Queensland.

In particular, while Education Queensland has attempted to remove policy items from the current State Government Teacher’s Agreement, Catholic school employers do not intend to take this approach.

During current negotiations, Catholic school employers have offered to provide in-principle agreement to the development of policy as part of the settlement of two employee claim items. Specifically these policy matters relate to:

- Use of social media in schools
- Development of policy to assist school staff confronted by personal crisis.

Catholic school employers are particularly reluctant to include these policy matters in an enterprise bargaining agreement because of the structure of Catholic education and the importance of local level considerations during development.

To be clear, Catholic school employers have not sought to remove conditions or entitlements from the existing enterprise bargaining agreement and believe any attempt to compare their approach with the approach taken by Education Queensland is misleading.

We are happy to advise that employee and employer representatives are continuing to hold positive discussions that have already resulted in a large number of employee claims being agreed to in-principle. A key outcome of discussions today is that the parties have moved closer to determining the make-up of the final package.

The next Single Bargaining Unit meeting will be held on 11 July 2012.