Fair and Responsible Wage Offer

In keeping with our commitment to provide a fair and responsible wage increase for all staff in Catholic schools, at yesterday’s Single Bargaining Unit meeting employers tabled a wage increase offer and a proposed process for implementation.

Significant consideration has been given to the development of this offer.

In particular, employers are now satisfied that they have sufficient understanding of key influencing factors including the structure of an ‘agreed in-principle’ package of non-wage items, the wages policies of major stakeholders within the education sector, and future Federal government funding arrangements, to make this offer.

Further, in the context of a CPI increase of 1.6% over the past 12 months in Queensland and a generally uncertain economic climate, Catholic school employers believe the wage increase offer is fair and responsible.

The offer is:

- 2.7% increase per annum over three years for teachers
- 2.7% or $23 per week increase (whichever is greater) per annum over three years for school officers, services staff and nurses
- The payment of the salary/wage increase shall only be made from the first full pay period after the receipt of results from the ballot of employees that indicate the majority of those who voted approve the proposed agreement
- Back pay from the first full pay period after 1 May 2012 (School officers, Services staff and nurses) or 1 July 2012 (teachers) if the in-principle agreement is achieved prior to midnight on 19 October 2012
- Should an in-principle agreement not be achieved prior to midnight on 19 October 2012, the offer of back pay (as outlined above) will be withdrawn
- To enable an agreement to be made by 19 October 2012, Catholic school employers will commit to matching a wage increase made by Education Queensland (EQ) should it be greater than 2.7%.

No Disadvantage

While this Catholic school employer wage increase offer may be similar in quantum to the one made by Education Queensland (EQ), it is important to emphasise the significant differences:

1. If an in-principle agreement to settle all claims is reached prior to midnight on 19 October 2012, Catholic school employers will back pay to the day immediately following the end of the last wage increase period. This timeframe gives both parties a reasonable period to finalise negotiations.
2. Where agreement is reached by 19 October 2012, Catholic school employers are prepared to ensure that staff will not be disadvantaged should EQ increase their wage offer during their negotiations. That is, even if our negotiations are finalised and an Agreement is made, Catholic school employers will match EQ’s wage increase.
3. Catholic school employers will not be seeking to remove key non-wage matters from the current Agreement.

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Positive Progress

To further demonstrate the commitment of Catholic school employers to reach settlement of claims, an offer to provide in-principle agreement was yesterday given to another key employee claim relating to an increase in the casual loading rate from 23% to 25% from 1 January 2013.

This brings the number of employee claims that are now the subject of in-principle agreement to over 20.

Catholic school employers believe this wage and salary increase offer is a fair and responsible one. Given the good progress made to date, employers believe the three month timeline to finalise negotiations in order to receive back pay is realistic. Importantly, the offer also provides a guarantee that the wage increase for Catholic school staff will not lag behind their EQ colleagues.

The next Single Bargaining Unit meeting for RI schools will be held on 7 August 2012.