

Media Release

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QCEC says industrial action is unwarranted

Catholic schools are preparing for planned strike action next week as enterprise bargaining negotiations with the Independent Education Union continue.

QCEC, the peak body for the State's 300 Catholic schools, said that it is unlikely that any school would be closed as a result of the stop work action on 25 February 2016.

Dr Perry said that the industrial action forecast by the Independent Education Union was unwarranted and unreasonable.

"Employers have offered a wage increase of 2.5 per cent," Dr Perry said.

"The current CPI rate is 1.7 per cent, so this offer is fair. The offer applies to all staff across-the-board. It also comes with a commitment to back pay staff."

"The increase is in line with the interim wage increase provided to Queensland state school teachers in 2015. Additionally we have offered to match any future wage increases that may be offered by the State Government to state school teachers."

Dr Perry said there are 10,700 teaching staff employed in Queensland Catholic schools and 18,900 staff overall.

"Of these, about 75% either did not support the vote for industrial action or did not vote in the ballot at all.

"And that matches the anecdotal evidence we have that the majority of staff are keen to resolve the bargaining process in a reasonable and considered way."

"It is also unhelpful for the union officials to raise wage comparisons with other states because they are irrelevant," Dr Perry said.

Staff in Catholic schools in other states like NSW have a different package of working conditions. For example, NSW Catholic schools did not finish until 18 December in 2015, and Queensland Catholic schools finished on 4 December 2015.

"Direct comparisons do not accurately reflect the differing work conditions in Queensland and New South Wales. This bargaining process is about what is happening in Queensland, not other places," Dr Perry said.

"This is not a debate about the value of staff. Our staff are outstanding – they provide exceptional service. But we are operating within a Queensland marketplace and this offer is fair".

Dr Perry said individual schools would adopt strategies on how to best manage any industrial action next week and this would involve ongoing communication with parents and care givers so that disruptions were minimised.

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For further information please contact 07 3316 5800.

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