

NSW news

General Secretary John Quessy dubs the NSW take-up of Gonski a win for education.

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South Australia

Branch Secretary Glen Seidel reflects on the compulsory wearing of the Hijab for SA teachers.

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Victoria

Victoria celebrates a pay rise for members, after a tirade of union action and government lobbying.

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FEDERAL NEWS

Union to fight potential workload increase

The Independent Education Union of Australia has vowed to lobby against a potentially massive workload increase for all teachers as a result of the Federal Government's Gonski-inspired education reforms.

In response to recent comments made by Prime Minister Julia Gillard proposing an "individualised learning plan" for every Australian student, the IEUA promptly issued a media statement detailing members' initial responses to the proposal.

A large majority of teacher responses feared a "red tape disaster" in which teachers lost valuable classroom time and faced increased paperwork requirements and additional out-of-hours meetings.

The IEU is concerned about this plan, which is among a multitude of other new requirements under the National Plan for School Improvement.



Has Pyne a point...?

The IEUA has supported a funding model, in which independent schools at least maintain present funding levels, to be indexed each year.

The recent manipulation and tweaking of the model to accommodate the non-government sector reflects a need for funding in this area, particularly in relation to the funding of many disadvantaged independent schools.

And it seems Shadow Education Minister Christopher Pyne agrees. Issuing the following comments earlier this year:

"Ms Gillard indicated there will be different funding systems for the Catholic, Independent and State systems, which sounds virtually identical to what we have now," he said.

"I welcome this shift, because it suggests the Government has finally come to recognise that every sector has different needs and a one size fits all approach will not work."



GONSKI: SO WHO'S IN?

Branch Out spoke to IEU media teams this month to find out which states will opt 'in' and 'out' of the Federal Government's funding reforms.

From Page One...

Despite our in- principle support for the proposed Gonski funding arrangements on the basis that independent schools maintain present funding levels, Federal Secretary Chris Watt said the union was prepared to lobby against any associated workload increases.

Mr Watt said the union also had grave concerns about the volatility of data being used to inform the future funding arrangements. He said uncertainty still remained in relation to member's jobs and their working expectations.

"It is apparent that quite a number of schools will get little or no extra money in the Gonski reforms and yet be required to undertake a host of extra reporting requirements," he said.

The Federal Secretary said 57 separate actions have been identified arising from the National Schools Improvement Plan.

VICTORIA

Newly installed Victorian Premier Denis Napthine had temporarily revived hopes for Gonski. After securing NSW, Dr Napthine indicated he was prepared to negotiate with Canberra, provided no Victorian school student was worse off.

However, the IEU Victorian branch is yet to be convinced. "Victoria hasn't ruled out buying into Gonski, but by the same token they've made very little indication that they're serious about it," said Media Officer James Raynes.

NSW/ACT

The NSW branch recently applauded their State Government's decision to sign up to the National Education Reform Agreement, and says the move signals the eventual return of the \$1.7billion previously stripped from the NSW education budget.

General Secretary John Quessy said an additional \$5billion over six years would enable improvements however uncertainty still remained as to how schools would meet the conditions of the funding once the agreement kicked in.

TASMANIA

Tasmanian Premier Lara Giddings is currently in negotiations with the Federal Government. Tasmania has said it strongly supported the reforms in-principle and was willing to fund its fair share. However, Ms Giddings has emphasised the importance of getting the right funding model to maximize benefits for Tasmania.

QUEENSLAND

Education Minister John Paul Langbroek has previously indicated the state would not participate in the scheme, however in the lead up to last month's COAG meeting, Queensland Premier Campbell Newman said his government would be prepared to contribute \$830 million over five years; although this is well short of the \$1.3 billion required to fund participation in the proposed scheme.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Despite an appeal from the PM not to let their schools fall behind those in NSW during a recent tour of O'Loughlin Catholic College in Darwin, the NT government has stated they are not prepared to sign up to the Gonski scheme under its current terms.

Gonski revisited...which states will sign up?

Continued...

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

As the state least likely to gain from the Gonski funding reforms, IEU Perth Branch guesses the money is on Premier Colin Barnett opting out of the Federal Government's funding proposal. The Premier has recently said he fears independent schools would lose autonomy under the proposed reforms.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The South Australian Government is holding Labor solidarity but hopes to negotiate for additional funding.

South Australia is thought to have the capacity to win big in Gonski because the state spends comparatively reasonable amounts on education, however ineffectually, based to disappointing NAPLAN results, says Branch Secretary Glen Seidel.

"It's great when you can pick and choose your measure of success according to what spin you need - input or outcomes," Mr Seidel said.

The test will also be how the non-government portion of state funding will flow to our schools.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Branch Secretary Glen Seidel has written about the plight of female teachers at a Muslim school after optional wearing of the hijab was withdrawn. In the piece, Mr Seidel discusses his approach to media: "As the public voice of the IEU in SA, I had a very fine line to tread. I wanted maximum pressure to be sheeted back to the decision maker - the Board chair. We did not intend this to go beyond members but when I was contacted by the media I was moderate in my tone for fear of contributing to the unleashing of xenophobic vilification from the great unwashed on 'shock jock' radio in three states and Sydney's Daily Telegraph," A copy of this piece is available by emailing pbradley@ieu.org.au

NEW SOUTH WALES

An IEU Facebook post was taken to an all new level of exposure when the NSW media team decided to test the perks and pitfalls of paid Facebook advertising.

Before purchasing the \$20 advertisement, the announcement had attracted more than 600 views and many 'Likes'. But by 8:45am the following morning, after purchasing the advertising, 3569 people had seen the post. The run down:

- Facebook offered additional advertising for \$20 and guaranteed the post would be seen by 4000 to 9000 people including the friends and colleagues of IEU members
- 38 people 'liked' the post compared with the usual 1 or 2
- \$7.61 was spent to achieve this exposure
- IEU now has 10 new Facebook friends following us. This number is likely to increase.

As the state least likely to gain from Gonski, WA is set to opt out, according to the IEU Western Australia Branch and a new opinion piece from SA Branch Secretary Glen Seidel.

QUEENSLAND / NORTHERN TERRITORY

Union members in Queensland continue to voice their concerns about ongoing cuts to public services stemming from the Costello Report, which was commissioned to assess the state's financial future.

In September 2012, 14,000 public servants lost their jobs as a result of the cuts. After unemployment rose to nearly 6 per cent in February 2013, union members protested (*right*) in Brisbane against further public service cuts, declaring "people, not profits".



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The WA Branch recently contributed to a *Sunday Times* article regarding the axing of the Rewards for Great Teachers program. Teacher unions have previously opposed the bonus scheme for top teachers, suggesting all teachers should be paid more. The program was promised by the Prime Minister during the 2010 election campaign, and was to deliver cash bonuses for up to 25,000 teachers. Branch Secretary Theresa Howe said the IEUA believed there were already well-established and agreed processes in Enterprise Agreements to reward teachers.

"If additional money is available, then it should be made available to schools under the usual funding models whereby genuine and on-going career paths can be negotiated through the enterprise bargaining process," Ms Howe said.

Glen Seidel has written a comprehensive guide to IEU's response on Gonski.

It's worth a read for all, and can be found here:

<http://ieusa.org.au/gonki-unpacked-more-questions-than-answers/>

VICTORIA / TASMANIA

In Victoria, a new agreement for government school staff has been struck. With pay parity a feature of the IEU Agreement for Catholic education staff, this result will directly affect the wages and conditions of staff in Victorian Catholic education.

The pay deal in the agreement is one of the most complex ever seen in Victoria, with *different* pay increases across different levels and classifications meaning it's not possible to announce a single percentage pay increase. All members, however, will receive a pay rise comfortably in excess of the 2.5% offer originally put forward by the Liberal government. Additionally, all staff will receive a 'sign-on' bonus of \$1,000.

Along the way IEU members also managed to help get performance pay off the table, replace a Premier, and ensure that future governments think twice before lying to teachers again!

