

Talking points for principals – Co-operative Agreement

Principals may be asked questions from IEU representatives, school-based representatives or employees about the enterprise bargaining process.

In addition to the updates that have been circulated to schools via the weekly Friday COMS, the below talking points have also been developed to assist principals.

These talking points focus on the type of agreement that is being negotiated and why VCEA and Catholic school employers intend to negotiate a **co-operative agreement** that will cover all 34 Catholic school employers (aside from Xavier College).

Key terms

Co-operative agreement: a type of multi-enterprise agreement where two or more employers agree to bargain together. The current Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement (CEMEA) is a co-operative agreement.

Single Interest Employer Authorisation (SIEA): a type of multi-enterprise agreement where two or more employers, who share a common interest negotiate a single agreement that covers their employees. VCEA and Catholic school employers do not support a SIEA.

| Type of agreement | Talking points |
|---|---|
| Co-operative agreement (a type of multi-enterprise agreement where two or more employers agree to bargain together) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong history of effective cooperative enterprise bargaining in Victorian Catholic education between Catholic employers, employees and the IEU. • The current CEMEA is a co-operative agreement, and it is also consistent with multi-enterprise agreements reached in 2008, 2013, 2018. • These agreements were reached with employees, the IEU and Catholic school employers in a cooperative manner. • These enterprise agreements each covered around 30,000 employees and approximately 495 schools. • A co-operative workplace agreement promotes a focus on reaching a timely agreement that will benefit employees, employers and the Catholic education sector. • VCEA and Catholic school employers are committed to bargaining together towards a cooperative agreement. Catholic school employers have voluntarily agreed to bargain together. • VCEA and Catholic school employers do not believe an SIEA is required. |
| Single Interest Employer Authorisation (a type of multi-enterprise agreement where two or more employers, who | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCEA and Catholic school employers believe seeking a SIEA will result in unnecessary delays to achieving an agreed outcome that will benefit employees, employers and the Catholic education sector. • VCEA and Catholic school employers are seeking to reach an agreement this year, prior to the expiry of the current agreements on 31 December 2025. |

| Type of agreement | Talking points |
|---|---|
| share a common interest negotiate a single agreement that covers their employees) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCEA and Catholic school employers believe reaching an agreement by the end of the year, providing certainty of wages and conditions, is of most importance to the majority of employees. An SIEA process would take time and attention away from productive good faith negotiations about the issues that employees and employers are most concerned about. VCEA and Catholic school employers do not want delays and are focussed on having a new agreement in place as soon as possible so employees can benefit from improvements in wages and conditions from the start of 2026. VCEA and Catholic school employers are committed to good faith bargaining and committed to working productively with employees and the IEU towards a timely agreement. |

Key contacts

Diocesan school principals who require additional support or information should contact their relevant Diocesan Employee Relations Team.

- Melbourne: Employee Relations on 9267 0431 or ceo@macs.vic.edu.au
- Ballarat: Ms Jo Huntley or Ms Tina Phillips on 03 4344 4350 or jhuntley@dobcel.catholic.edu.au or tphillips@dobcel.catholic.edu.au
- Sale: Ms Kirrilly Bridger on 03 5622 6600 or kbridger@doscel.catholic.edu.au
- Sandhurst: People and Culture Team on 03 5443 2377 or peopleandculture@ceosand.catholic.edu.au

RI/MPJP school principals should contact the VCEA Employee Relations Team on employee@vcea.catholic.edu.au