

Frequently Asked Questions

Why aren't VIEU members joining government teachers in their Stopwork action on 14 February?

VIEU will take action it considers essential and strategically sensible in the interests of its members, keeping in mind the different points at which the government and Catholic sectors are in their negotiations. At this stage, the VIEU Committee of Management has called on VIEU members to meet on the day of the government stoppage and plan action for 7 March. This will maximise pressure on the government and send a clear message that there is another voice out there and it is a strong one – the voice of VIEU members.

Will non-teaching staff (SOs and SSOs) be involved in the 7 March Day of Action?

Yes, absolutely. Sub-branch reps and members generally should take steps to ensure the participation of non-teaching staff in the meetings on 14 February and in the day of action on 7 March. Previous agreements have delivered the same wage result for non-teaching staff that teachers have received because that is what VIEU members have fought for. The claim for this agreement is that SOs and SSOs receive the same percentage wage increases as staff in government schools. Given the vital role that SOs and SSOs play in schools, their participation on 7 March is vital.

Will our Action on 7 March be “protected” action?

No. Like the nurses in their campaign last year, we are unable under the current legislation to take protected industrial action for any aspect of our claim. WorkChoices is still effectively in place. However, the planned action on 7 March is a day of political protest, similar to that which we took against the Federal Government at the MCG in November 2006 and the State Government in our last campaign. Catholic social teachings emphasise the right for workers to withdraw their labour and this clearly is a critical issue of justice. VIEU expects that Catholic employers will respect and support the need to ensure that staff in Catholic schools receive a fair wage increase.

What happens if the Government and the AEU settle the wages dispute before 7 March?

The action on 7 March by VIEU members is political protest against the State Government's refusal to make Victorian teachers a reasonable pay offer. Should the wages dispute be resolved, the intended day of action will be called off by the VIEU Committee of Management. However, there will still be major issues under negotiation with Catholic employers and we will be campaigning strongly to ensure the best possible outcome for staff in Catholic schools. We will communicate regularly with schools about the progress of these negotiations.

How will my participation in the Day of Action make a difference?

Approximately a third of Victorian teachers work in non-government schools. This is a strong voice that needs to be heard by the State Government rejecting its current wages offer. Attending the day of action will send a clear message to the government that Catholic staff believe they are worth more than 3.25% and are prepared to take action. This fight can't be left to someone else – everyone needs to play their part.

NB: If you or any member have further questions, don't hesitate to contact VIEU. The website will be updated regularly – www.vieu.org.au.

Authorised by Debra James, General Secretary, Victorian Independent Education Union