

# Independent Education Union

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6 April 2020

The Hon Dan Tehan MP  
Member for Wannon  
Minister Education

By email

Dear Minister

Judging from your announcement on social media on Monday 6 April that the JobKeeper package will not be amended for non-government schools, at least consistent with other NGOs and not-for-profit organisations, IEUA members will continue to face a combination of unwarranted, unnecessary stand-downs and simultaneously, denial of access to the JobKeeper provisions.

It is disappointing also that despite the IEUA attempts to seek to engage in a productive dialogue and resolution of this and other issues in school education, that decisions have been made to sideline the representation of workers in schools to date.

The IEUA is only too aware of the high level of both federal and state funding provided to schools through recurrent grants.

Whilst there may well be the threat of imminent decline in fee receipts, or decisions to waive fees by schools, these matters have not yet impacted schools. For instance, the IEUA is aware of examples such as the 'mid-fee' independent school in Sydney that receives over 70% of its wage bill costs through combined government funding, held surpluses in both 2017 and 2018 of \$900,000+ and \$600,000+, that has unilaterally, without consultation, stood-down 12 support staff.

A school in regional Queensland has stood-down in excess of 110 staff.

A school in the ACT has stood-down all learning support assistants, despite the continuing learning needs of those students and ongoing student with

disabilities loadings, and most extraordinarily, denied access to the school in term two for such at risk students.

There are also similar stand-down patterns evident across schools in all states and territories, again despite the fact that there is ongoing work and opportunity to utilize staff resources and skills.

The IEUA will continue to challenge employer propositions that there is no work. Clearly there is ongoing online and at school supervision required, along with learning support (remote or in school), administrative roles, ongoing maintenance, record keeping (at an increased level due to new and emerging lesson modes).

The IEUA believes that staff have the skills and capacity to work in many and different roles.

As schools are making precipitous decisions now about staffing, given that they have received their 'normal' revenue for all of term one and no evidence of term two actual losses at this time, given the surpluses held by many schools in previous years and given the often very high level of total government funding compared to total expenditure costs, sometimes in excess of 80% and often more than the wages bill, the IEUA again urges immediate action in relation to the arrangements to keep staff employed in schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Watt', is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box. The signature is stylized and cursive.

**CHRIS WATT**  
**Federal Secretary**

cc State/Territory Ministers