Post on Qld Teachers Fightback by Tim Red

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Yesterday, Fightback fought for our log of claims to contain clear, ambitious quantifiable demands around pay and conditions that reflect the huge amount of motions carried in branches all around the state. Thanks to your hard work, dozens of branches carried motions for 10+% p.a. pay, double NCT, NCT parity, 15 days' sick leave and more. Members are desperate for genuine improvements in our conditions and pay as our wages fall further behind inflation.

Unfortunately, the log of claims endorsed by council contained no such specific demands. While the measures above *could* fall under some of the five interest statements Council voted for, they could just as easily be ignored or refused by the department in negotiation.

The format for negotiations the union has adopted is called "Interest- Based Bargaining" and means the union won't fight for specific tangible demands in our log of claims, and is a form of negotiation more suited to Family law than industrial law. Members will no doubt be informed of the five interests by the union.

It's also worth noting that even though our union has adopted Interest-Based Bargaining as their model for EB11 (As they did in EB10), neither the department nor the government have agreed, and there were *NO* branch motions calling for it to be used. Meanwhile, over 30 branches called explicitly for quantifiable demands to be included in our log of claims.

The arguments against adopting clear, quantifiable demands ranged from pro-government to the outright bizarre.

Things like:

- 10% will mean more students in classes

- we have to think of other government departments - if we win high demands, other departments would raise similar demands (why would that be a problem??)

- 10% would be a "maximum" and if we get it, we'd be outstripped (rather than the minimum we need to start closing the gap between us and other professions)

- we don't know who the government will be, so we can't list everything we're for yet (even though we had to take a vote yesterday to adopt their 5 interest areas)

- more time isn't workload reduction!

Raising our demands is not a zero-sum game. We can demand both high wages and workload, and if we're going turn around the crisis in our profession, we need both. While they argued that we have to fight for one or the other, the sum total of their arguments were against both. Sadly this whole approach actually hasn't delivered either workload reduction or improved pay. Just look at EB10 - our pay has fallen behind inflation and there was *no* workload reduction.

It was very revealing that our leadership argued hard, and council voted against, having even a rally outside parliament before the state election. The idea that we'd make public demands on Labor is just beyond the pale for them. This bodes very badly for what will come after the election.

Either we will get a Labor government snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, and taking as confirmation of their last woeful agreement, no need to improve our pay or conditions. Or a confident Liberal government that has had no demands or pressure placed upon them.

This is not the end. Yesterday, State council wasn't representative of members. But we will have another opportunity in November to raise the demands that rank and file members have pushed hard for. All of us will also have our own branch meetings this term and next term to raise our thoughts about the Log of Claims. And we will have next year's negotiations and the potential for strike action, and so much more to fight for.

In the face of extreme hostility, slander and disingenuous arguments, we will continue to push for what teachers have already voted for and deserve in every avenue within our union. Your role in this is crucial: speak with your colleagues, invite them to this page and get along to your next branch meeting - and if you haven't signed up for our email list, do so now!
https://forms.gle/uXsNmRNXrVpdrLED9

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