

Media Release: Ivanhoe Grammar Stand Down Dispute - 5 May

On 4 May, Ivanhoe Grammar School withdrew its decision to stand down around 60 administrative staff from 14 April until 31 May. The IEU had initiated proceedings at the FWC challenging the lawfulness of the stand downs, and this matter had been listed for arbitration on Friday 8 May. Several IEU members had been prepared to give evidence about the genuine work they could continue to perform and the effect of the school's decision on them.

Many affected employees were amongst the lowest paid staff at Ivanhoe Grammar, and were anticipating severe financial hardship because of the school's decision.

In his letter to IEU members, the Principal stated: "having read your witness statement in the Fair Work Commission proceeding, I acknowledge how you feel about the School's decision to stand you down, and also the personal impact this decision has had on you." The letter also clarified that the retraction applied to all members of staff who had been stood down, stating: "in keeping with the School's values – courageous and kind – this decision will affect all employees who have been stood down as a result of COVID-19 (and not only those employees involved in the Fair Work Commission dispute)."

The IEU believes that the School's decision to withdraw the stand down demonstrates that the union's case was likely to succeed.

IEU General Secretary Deb James said: "We are relieved to see Ivanhoe Grammar make the right decision about this. I congratulate the IEU members who were bravely prepared to give evidence in this matter."

"We now have a series of cases in which independent schools have moved to stand staff down, but in the face of a challenge by the IEU have backed down. This should be a strong message to all employers in our sector to do the right thing by their hard-working staff and to negotiate and consult with us before making any rash decisions."

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