Dear Colleagues

As agreed at the 21 February 2012 SBU meeting, the Queensland Lutheran Schools Single Bargaining Unit reconvened on Monday, 10 September 2012. A factual account of the issues discussed at that meeting, indicating where agreement has been reached and outlining ongoing matters still under discussion, follows:

1. Employer Statement on Single Interest Employer Status

The meeting noted:

1.1 A Single Interest Employer Authorisation was issued by Fair Work Australia on 10 January 2012 (Single Interest Authorisation). As previously advised, pursuant to this document, all 3 Queensland Lutheran School employers (and so all 27 Queensland Lutheran Schools) are authorised to bargain together with their employees and representatives for a proposed Single-enterprise agreement.

1.2 Both Employer and Employee Representatives are treating the Single Interest Authorisation issued on 10 January 2012 as current given the 2009 Enterprise Agreement was amended (not replaced) by agreement of the SBU on 5 March 2012, that in principle agreement having been endorsed by employee ballot on 30 March 2012. As a result of that amendment, the 2009 Enterprise Agreement is now not due to expire until 30 April 2013.

2. Boarding Schools Working Party – Recommendations

The meeting noted that the Working Party had met on a number of occasions and is in the process of finalising a recommendation with a view to presenting a position to the SBU for consideration at the November 2012 SBU meeting.
3. Review of Employee Log of Claims and Employer Negotiation Points

As agreed at the 21 February 2012 SBU meeting, the meeting noted that it is the balance of the Employer and Employee documents tabled at the 22 November 2011 SBU meeting that would be considered during this round of negotiations.

The meeting also noted the 2009 Enterprise Agreement was amended and extended as a one (1) year interim measure. However, in the time that had passed since approval of the amendment to the 2009 Enterprise Agreement by Fair Work Australia, whilst further information has transpired regarding the Gonski Report on the federal review of funding, unfortunately this matter remains far from settled/clarified.

In this context, the Employer Representatives affirmed that, beyond the existing funding quadrenium (which it is currently understood will expire on 31 December 2013), federal funding arrangements for independent schools remain uncertain. The Employer Representatives also noted the Queensland State Government’s tight fiscal constraints and the concern to ensure that current levels of Federal and State Government funding (upon which the Queensland Lutheran Schools sector heavily relies) are maintained.

The Employee Representatives, whilst recognising the Employer concerns, noted that there was federal funding certainty in 2013, and further noted that both sides of federal politics were seeking to maintain a viable non-government sector.

Both Employer and Employee representatives expressed a desire that Employer and Employee Representatives could work together to develop options that will meet the needs of both parties.

4. Report on Claim by Queensland Nurses Union

The meeting noted the Queensland Nurses Union (QNU) have lodged a claim in this round of negotiations, and that consultation is occurring between the QNU and those Queensland Lutheran Schools which employ School Nurses and so are affected by the claim.

5. Next Meeting Dates

The meeting noted the following future meeting dates:

5.1 Tuesday, 30 October 2012 at the offices of LEQ;
5.2 Tuesday, 13 November 2012 at the offices of IEUA-QNT.

Sue Kloeden
Executive Director
Lutheran Education Queensland

Chris Seymour
IEUA-QNT Officer supporting the Employee Team at the SBU Negotiations