

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

From time to time the AEU has called upon its members to undertake industrial action in support of the working conditions of its members and the educational provision for students.

In recent years stopwork meetings, rolling half day strikes and bans on the performance of certain work have been undertaken in pursuit of the aims of our Union or in opposition to Government/Departmental intransigence in negotiations on issues or in opposition to Budget cuts.

Industrial action is never taken lightly by Union members or its decision making bodies. However, the industrial climate in which our Union has to operate is one where governments and the employing bodies occasionally adopt adversarial positions that are not open to change through the normal negotiation processes. The political embarrassment and administrative inconvenience caused by industrial action and its attendant publicity generally encourage the other parties to try to reach compromises.

In a dispute where industrial action takes place, it is the responsibility of our Union's members to support their fellow members and their organisation by adhering to the decisions arrived at through the democratic processes of our Union. Union effectiveness requires the participation and support of all members. Those who choose not to participate in decision making or decide not to support industrial action once it has been determined don't simply take a neutral position through their actions but rather, through their denial of support, undermine the position of their fellow members.

In certain circumstances members may seek exemptions from attendance at stopwork meetings. Such exemptions are granted by the Branch Secretary of our Union for:

- [a] special schools and special classes where appropriate on request and,
- [b] teachers accompanying students on excursions where it is clear that money paid by students will be lost if the excursion does not proceed.

However, it is expected that any member exempted from attending the stopwork meeting will donate the equivalent amount of pay that their colleagues have lost to the AEU – ACT Branch Teacher Welfare Fund.

The current Federal industrial legislation [Workplace Relations Act 1996] attempts to limit the ability of Union members to take industrial action, and to penalise both the Union as an organisation and individual members if they do take industrial action. The AEU rejects such intimidatory behaviour by any government and will continue to carefully consider appropriate action, as and when required, to protect and further the interests of all members.