

## Win as IECs to be put in hibernation



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With the closure of the world's borders and a halt to Australia's immigration and humanitarian intake programs, intensive English centres (IECs) face uncertainty over enrolment numbers and the resulting reduction in specialist staffing.

Strong union representation had already secured a hold on all permanent and temporary teaching staff, as well as bilingual teaching aides, extensions of time in IEC settings for students, and a continuity of support for students and their families for the duration of 2020.

With the COVID pandemic potentially keeping our borders closed for the rest of this year, and possibly even longer, IECs were in danger of continuing without students and programs. Transitioning students without new enrolments could have resulted in the potential of this specialist regional resource being lost to the public education system.



Federation joined with IEC leaders in April to develop a statewide IEC package. This plan included local, regional and system initiatives, developed and implemented by IEC teachers for 2021. Formal meetings commenced with the Department in May to secure this critical provision.

In mid-August, the Intensive English Program Contingency Strategy Implementation Guidelines were finalised and all IEC Leaders and their host high school principals were provided with a copy.

IEC teachers and Intensive English Program staff can now be deployed to support the system, local area high schools, primary schools, EAL/D teachers, mainstream teachers, families and communities, along with maintaining operations for currently enrolled and transitioning IEC students. The Contingency Strategy comprises:

- maintaining normal operations
- implementing additional interventions.

Securing the expertise, structures and IEC operations in 2021 is crucial for Federation members, students and our system.

Our expert teachers will remain in our centres and their skills and expertise utilised in a positive way until they are recalled back into IECs as student enrolments return in the future. IECs will effectively be "hibernated" but retained as sub-units of high schools with all permanent staff remaining attached to their

centres.