

Fair Work probe into PE Jamie First

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) is investigating a major brouhaha between St Leonard's College and the Independent Education Union (IEU).

The Union has accused the school of imperilling the livelihoods of experienced physical education teachers, and abandoning PE, along with health and food technology classes after this year.

But the principal of St Leonard's, Stuart Davis, has hit back, saying the claims are "grossly inaccurate".

In a letter to parents, Mr Davis acknowledged the IEU had lodged a complaint with the FWC and said a hearing had taken place on January 29.

He said the rumours seemed to have originated in an article authored by an unnamed person entitled: *St Leonard's Principal Seeking to Abolish the PE Department* in the IEU journal *The Point*.

"This article was driven by the external IEU representative (who is not a member of our staff) for St Leonard's College."

Mr Davis said there appeared to have been an attempt "to connect recent difficult discussions relating to overstaffing, to the planned introduction of a new model for the faculty of health, sport and exercise science."

He said the intention of the updated model was to rejuvenate and revitalise the faculty.

Responding to allegations from the IEU that the College planned to "re-badge PE as 'sport' and allocate sport sessions ... to university students", the principal said the curriculum would be taught solely by qualified teachers.

He said St Leonard's sporting teams would also be coached by highly skilled staff who would "continue to receive ongoing professional development to ensure growth".

"I can assure parents that we will continue to make the improvement of skills, the enjoyment of participation and the opportunity for sporting success our focus in an ever-increasing array of sports," Mr Davis said.

The FWC confirmed it was involved, but wouldn't provide any further comments.