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SHUTDOWN

Teachers set to end year early

LAUREN NOVAK
EDUCATION REPORTER
JOANNA VAUGHAN
POLITICAL REPORTER

PUBLIC school teachers are expected to cut short the school year for thousands of students by starting an indefinite strike as early as the end of Year 12 exams.

The "unprecedented" action was recommended yesterday by the Australian Education Union's state executive and will be put to an emergency delegate meeting on Thursday.

AEU state president Correna Haythorpe said teachers were "fed up" with Government inaction and were taking the stand to send a strong message about "how seriously they take this matter".

The timing of the fourth strike this year will be decided at Thursday's meeting and will then need approval from the majority of the union's 14,000 members.

Indicating the union is prepared to make concessions, Ms Haythorpe also revealed plans to give the Government a revised log of claims that is expected to include a decrease in the wage demand of 21 per cent.

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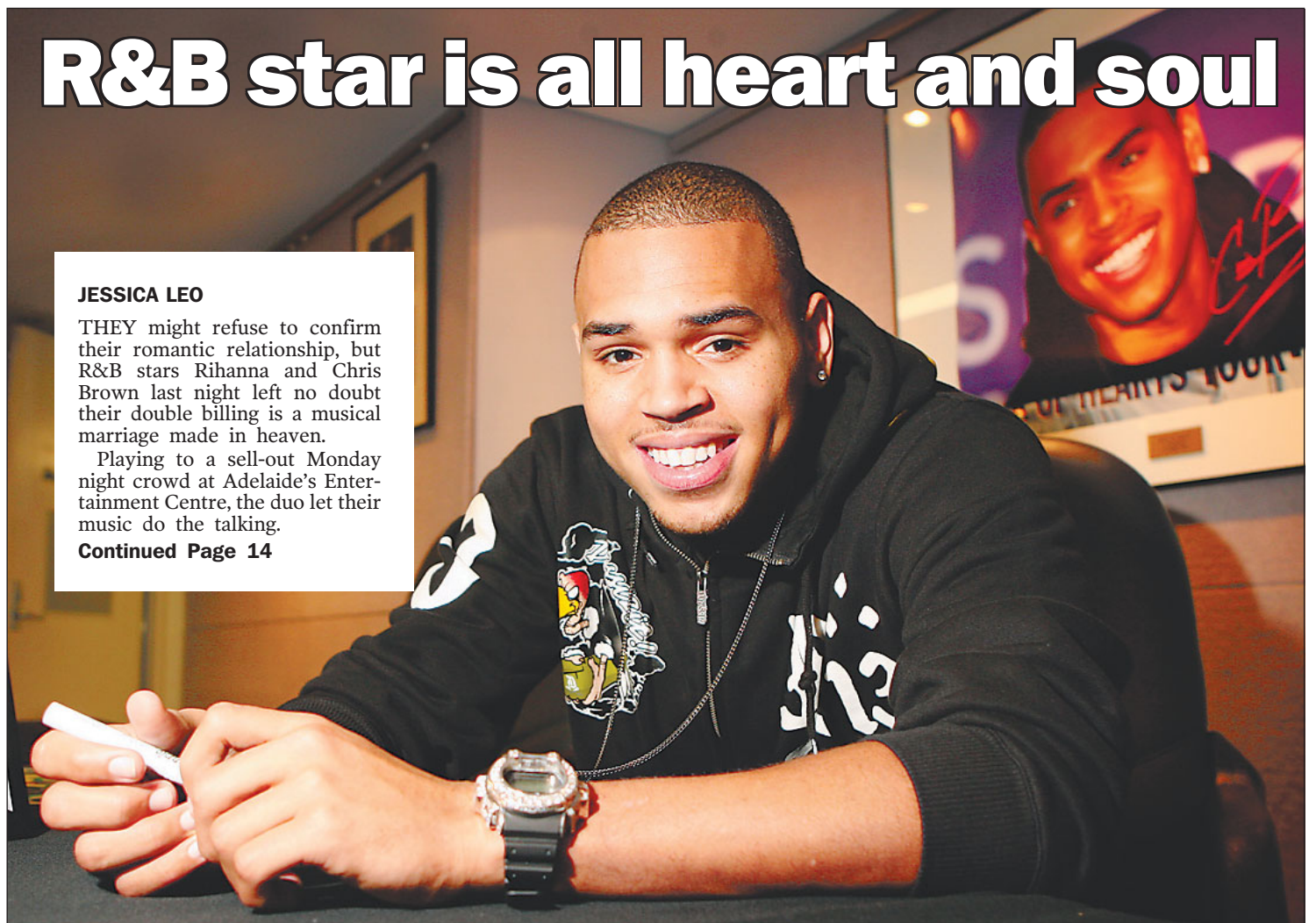
R&B star is all heart and soul

JESSICA LEO

THEY might refuse to confirm their romantic relationship, but R&B stars Rihanna and Chris Brown last night left no doubt their double billing is a musical marriage made in heaven.

Playing to a sell-out Monday night crowd at Adelaide's Entertainment Centre, the duo let their music do the talking.

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HEAVEN SENT: A relaxed Chris Brown chats before his sell-out Adelaide concert with co-star Rihanna last night.

Picture: MATT TURNER

Condemned Bali bombers out of time

CINDY WOCKNER
KOMANG SURIARDI
CILACAP, JAVA

THE BALI bombers' families and lawyers have been denied the right to a last visit as the three men count down their final hours before execution.

Last night, they complained their rights had been ignored. Holding up a banner declaring that prisoners had rights too, family members shouted "Allah Akbar" (God is great) at the locked gates of the port leading to the prison, as armed police blocked the way.

Lulu Jamaludin, the brother of Imam Samudra, had a white cloth with the words "no comment" wrapped around his mouth.

Earlier, he claimed the trio of terrorists had been discriminated against and that the Australian Bali Nine heroin smugglers, three of whom are on death row, should be executed first because their drugs could have killed more people.

Amrozi, Mukhlas and Imam Samudra are now living out their final hours in jail on Nusa Kambangan Island, where they are scheduled to be executed by firing squad.

Family members lodged a last-ditch appeal,

but officials in Jakarta stated emphatically that it would make absolutely no difference to the pending executions. The Bali bombers have already lodged and lost two judicial reviews and they have no more chances.

"There are no other reasons to delay the execution because all their legal efforts are final," Attorney-General's spokesman Jasman Panjaitan said last night.

The port that runs a regular ferry service to the island and its jails has now been locked down. Armed police laid out razor wire around the port, cars were towed away from the area and sniffer dogs brought in.

The family members earlier brought letters and food from home - Amrozi's favourite dates, noodles and flat bread known as "roti cani" - a food they developed a taste for in Afghanistan - as well as coffee and sugar.

Ali Fauzi, the brother of Amrozi and Mukhlas, said he had come to the jail with a message from their mother for her two condemned sons.

"My mother gave me a message, 'You just go down there, if you can, just take them home,'" Mr Fauzi said outside the jail port.

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Teachers set to end year early

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The union will not reveal how low it is prepared to go, but is willing to negotiate "something in the vicinity" of 15 to 21 per cent, reflecting other pay deals around the nation.

Parents have been angered by the threat of further disruptions but the union has given assurances Year 12 students will not be affected.

Final exams finish on November 21, leaving three-weeks for teachers to strike before the end of term.

"The reality is that extended stopwork action could mean that education workers in South Australia consider going out and staying out until the Rann Labor Government resolves this dispute," Ms Haythorpe said. "We would hope that any dispute is resolved... before the end of this year."

However, the Government has indicated the threat to shut down schools is unlikely to influence its offer, which last week was boosted from 9.75 per cent to 12.5 per cent over three years. This would take the average teacher's wage to \$72,243 for experienced teachers in the first year of the agreement.

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POLL: Do you agree with indefinite strike action?

Industrial Relations Minister Paul Caica said he was disappointed the union was planning further action when the dispute was still being dealt with in the Industrial Relations Commission.

"If they (teachers) think having an extra long Christmas break is going to make a difference to negotiations they're clearly wrong," he said.

"As regrettable as this industrial action will be, given the impact it will have on parents and children, it's not going to force the Government's hand."

The state's peak parent body said repeated strike action was "driving a wedge between our teachers and parents".

SA Association of State School Organisations director David Knuckey warned "this damage will remain long after the union has its pay deal".

"Parents are frustrated and upset with having their chil-

dren's education held to ransom," he said.

Opposition Education spokesman David Pisoni was concerned teachers might not return for the start of the first term in 2009 if the dispute was not resolved over the school break. "They could hold out for months if they wanted to," he said.

Business SA chief executive Peter Vaughan said the effect of a lengthy boycott would be disastrous for the state.

"The effect would be devastating on those with children in that regard because the ability in the current circumstances to find adequate child care would be very limited," he said.

"It's bad enough if you have a single-day stoppage, which we have had, but if you have a stoppage for an extended period of time, it would be chaotic."

Teachers went on strike for half a day last week, affecting hundreds of public schools, kindergartens and TAFE colleges. They also walked off the job on June 17 and held rolling stoppages in August.



WORTH IT: Matt McKenzie, a Year 12 apprentice at Tarac Technologies, Nuriootpa, yesterday. **Picture:** CHRIS MANGAN

Matt is hands-on at school

SCHOOL-based apprentice Matt McKenzie is a hands-on student but acknowledges the importance of traditional study.

The apprentice fitter and turner is enrolled in the Trade Schools for the Future initiative through Nuriootpa High School.

While much of Matt's time is spent in the workshop, he has had to hit the books in preparation for today's physics exam.

About 2220 students will take the exam this morning.

"Having completed nearly five years of secondary school I was beginning to lose interest in all the theory work," Matt, 18, said.

"It came to the point where I just wanted to get out into the workforce but I didn't want to close any doors and decided it would be worthwhile starting a school-based apprenticeship while completing my SACE."

TODAY'S EXAMS

9am: Physics, 3 hours

1.30pm: Physical Education, 2 hours

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