



SITREP 35/13

Your rights with accumulated leave

At least one Area Command has recently written to firefighters, permanent and retained, about their accumulated leave balances. Retained members are being told arrange to take their accrued annual leave or it will be arranged for them, and permanent members with 160 hours of more of consolidated leave being warned to "use it or lose it". Both instructions are wrong.

Firstly, the Department has the right to direct retained firefighters to take annual leave within 12 months following its accrual only. The Department may also refuse a request to take leave after that time, but retained members do not have to take annual leave that was accrued more than 12 months ago and any member who is being lent on to do so should contact a the Union immediately.

Secondly, and as we explained back in SITREP 51/2010, Consolidated Leave is an Award entitlement and there is no provision within the Award that that operates to limit the amount that can be accrued, or that allows management to direct members to take this leave. Members are therefore advised to ignore these instructions and, if challenged for doing so, to ask management to contact the Union office.

Phelps to be first against the wall?

Wednesday marked the 40th anniversary of the Chilean military coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende, who was himself murdered while defending the presidential palace from his own troops. The military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet that took over regularly murdered its opponents, including trade unionists, over the next 17 years. And what does this have to do with us, you ask?

O'Farrell Government MP Peter Phelps, of the Liberal Party's hard-right faction, sprang to Pinochet's defence in a NSW parliamentary debate this week, lauding the dictator as "a morally courageous man", while also offering the bizarre statement that "Yes, Pinochet killed people. If anyone knows another way to overthrow a government than by military force, let me hear about it." How about an election?

But the contempt of right-wing lunatics like Phelps for ordinary people is nothing new. The-then US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger openly backed the coup, explaining with no sense of irony that "the issues are much too important for the Chilean voters to be left to decide for themselves." Ah, democracy.

A protest is being arranged for 11am Monday outside Parliament House. Feel free to join me there.

Hold the front page - Murdoch slams public sector

While we're on the theme of right-wing nutcases, Rupert Murdoch's recent form on twitter leaves no doubt as to what he thinks of workers. "Aust election public sick of public sector workers and phony welfare scroungers sucking life out of economy." That's you and me he's talking about there. He goes on "Small item: Apart from higher pay, public workers in Australia take many more sick days than those in hard working private sector!" Makes the Daily Telegraph's election coverage a bit easier to understand really.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

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