



SITREP 38/13

2013 AGM Agenda and Sub-branch meeting details

The agenda for the Union's 2013 Annual General Meeting can be accessed on the online version of this SITREP. There have been no requests for ancillary Sub-Branch meetings to be convened. The AGM will be held commencing 1000 hours on Thursday 24 October 2013 at the Union Auditorium, 1-7 Belmore Street Surry Hills.

Meal and Travel allowances increased from 1 July - update #2

As SITREPs 29 and 33/2013 reported, meal and travel allowances were increased from 1 July 2013. The Union had calculated the new rates, given them to the Department, and the Department had agreed that our calculations are correct.

The Department had assured the Union that all meal and travel allowance claims would be paid at the correct rates and that all underpayments since 1 July would be rectified by 22 August. Members, however, have advised that this has not occurred. The Union has been more than patient. If the 1 July 2013 rates have not been adjusted and back paid by next payday (17 October), bans will be implemented without further notice. The reason for the delay, whether it be bureaucratic incompetence and/or managerial bloody-mindedness, will not be tolerated any longer.

IPP Pre-Entry Test entitlements

Permanent members who participated in the trial IPP Pre-Entry Test are entitled to the relevant provisions of Clause 16 of the Permanent Award for the Psychometric Test, the Interview, the Practical Test and the Feedback stage. Each of these stages should have been conducted when members were normally rostered on shift in accordance with Award subclause 19.1, however if the Department was unable to make the necessary arrangements for members to undertake any of the three Pre-Entry Test assessments when rostered on shift the following will apply:

- a) members who are rostered off duty will be paid at overtime rates (subclause 16.10.1.2);
- b) members who are on annual or long service leave will be re-credited with the appropriate leave for the time spent attending the exams (subclause 16.10.1.1);
- c) members who are rostered for duty on any night shift prior to an assessment will be granted such paid leave for that shift as is necessary to allow a break of at least 8 hours between the cessation of work and the commencement of the assessment (subclause 9.9);
- d) members who are rostered for duty on any night shift on the day of an assessment should stand-off until they have had an 8 hour break from the conclusion of the final assessment they attend. For example, if a member finishes an assessment at 1600 hours and is rostered to commence duty at 1800 hours that day, they will stand-off until midnight without loss of pay. If, however, they complete the assessment at (say) 1700 hours then they will stand-off until 0100 hours the next day, etc.

Clause 16 will also apply to travel undertaken, either on or off duty, for any Pre-Entry Test stage (including Feedback). This will include payment for excess kilometres and fares, meals and, if travel exceeds 175 kilometres return or two hours each way, accommodation. Excess travel time will also be paid for travel undertaken off duty in accordance with subclause 16.6 and 26.1.



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Freedom of information - "Swordfish" reeled in

SITREP's 42/2012 and 15, 26, 27 and 28/2013 reported on the Union's attempts to shake loose information pertaining to the O'Farrell Government's and the Department's plans for FRNSW in the wake of savage cuts to our budget. One interesting document that came to light in this process was published in SITREP 26/2013, titled "Reallocation of Operational Resources." The remainder of the information sought under the Union's original (2012) application pursuant to the *Government Information Public Access Act (GIPA)* is subject to a decision of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT) that is yet to be handed down.

The Union has subsequently filed another GIPA application to access information on a top secret plan known as "Swordfish", concerning management's contingency plans to deal with future industrial action. The Department initially claimed that it was not aware of any plan/document/thing called "Swordfish", but was forced to admit this week the existence of a document titled "*Notification and Response Guidelines During Industrial Disputes Impacting on Operational Capability*" (code name Swordfish) following a direction from the ADT. Having been forced to admit that it does exist, the Department now claims it is in the interest of public safety not to release it.

There are no such difficulties, however, in FRNSW continuing to close fire stations. That, according to the O'Farrell Government, is neither against the public interest nor public safety. The matter returns to the ADT on 12 November. Stay tuned.

October is Mental Health Month

Mental Health Month is co-ordinated every October by the Mental Health Association of NSW. This year's theme is 'Kindness: little acts, big impacts!'. With 1 in 5 Australians affected by mental health issues each year it is unlikely you will be immune from this issue, either personally or in support of a comrade. Firefighting is a diverse profession that exposes us to a variety of experiences and risks. Good mental health is as important as good physical health. People across Australia will come together during the month to hold events and promote good mental health in their local communities. These events are a useful reminder for all of us to think about our mental health and of those around us. The Union will cover this issue throughout October, but for details of events in NSW visit www.mentalhealth.asn.au

SSS and SASS contributions can be salary sacrificed

Members in SSS or SASS are again reminded that their superannuation contributions can be salary sacrificed. Salary sacrificing your SSS or SASS contributions often means significant tax benefits. If you're still not salary sacrificing your contributions, chances are you're ripping yourself off.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 4 October 2013