



# SITREP 43/13

## Early and part change of shift arrangements

The State Committee has rejected (for now at least) a proposal from the Department to revise permanent firefighters' change of shift arrangements by allowing members to work a shift or part-shift, and to bank the hours worked (up to a maximum of 48) on a one for one hourly basis, to be taken later. It was proposed that a 'peak' period would be established from 0800 hours Friday until 1800 hours Sunday and an 'off peak' period from 1800 hours Sunday to 0800 hours Friday, so that while the hours accumulated from working in the peak period could be recouped at any time, the hours accumulated in the 'off peak period' could only be recouped in the 'off peak' period. It was in many respects a proposal to allow members to work overtime and be paid for it with leave in lieu at single time rates.

The merits (or not) of this proposal aside, the State Committee decided that (a) all part change of shift arrangements should in future be provided for within the Award, not Standing Orders, and (b) that any proposal that could generate employee-related savings (and management wasn't pushing this "leave bank" because it was about to cost them) should be held over for our upcoming 2014 Award negotiations.

The Department has been given notice that failure to agree on change of shift/flexible work Award amendments by the end of the current Award on 20 February 2014 will result in our strict enforcement of the Award's hours of work provisions. So the Department and Union now have 3 months before part and early changes of shift are either agreed and inserted into the Award, or they cease to operate. Stay tuned.

## Overpayments and repayments

The Department recently notified several members of alleged overpayments – for the most part because those members had continued to receive a qualification allowance (rescue, aerial or hazmat) after they had transferred to a non-eligible station.

These members were originally told that their repayments would commence on 18 October at the maximum 10% of their fortnightly pay. However following Union intervention this was changed so that repayments will now commence after Christmas, and at a rate no greater than the original overpayments. This has made a significant difference to the members concerned with, for example, one rescue overpayment now being repaid at the rate of \$91.62 per fortnight rather than \$272.82.

Members are reminded of the overpayment provisions, and protections, of both Awards (Permanent subclause 6.16, Retained subclause 6.10). Any member who is notified by the Department of an alleged overpayment should contact the Union office for further advice and assistance.

## National Day of Climate Action 17 November

The FBEU is supporting GetUp's National Day of Climate Action on 17 November. Climate change is an important issue for firefighters. Changing climate, and the increased incidence of extreme weather behaviour, is a direct industrial question for us. It makes our workplace even more unsafe. Rallies will be occurring statewide. For details see [www.getup.org.au](http://www.getup.org.au)

Jim Casey  
State Secretary

Friday 8 November 2013