



SITREP 10/14

Members vote to endorse new Retained Award

Last night's vote on the proposed 2014 Retained Award last night saw 1,227 FBEU members attending 128 meetings across the state. Members were asked to vote on the following motion:

"That this meeting endorses the draft 2014 Retained Firefighting Staff Award, as published on the Union's website on 18 March 2014, and authorises:

- (a) the State Secretary to convey this both to the Department and NSW Industrial Relations Commission; and;*
- (b) the State Committee to review and determine the remaining few disputed clauses on the strict proviso that our existing wages and conditions are not eroded."*

The total vote (excluding the 7 meetings that failed to make quorum, and the few non-members who tried to vote anyway, but failed) was 937 for, 226 against and 23 abstentions.

Today's IRC proceedings and direct negotiations with the employer saw most of the remaining issues in dispute settled. We can confirm now that the new Award will commence on 30 May 2014 with backpay to 21 February being made on 29 May, but on the current Award's ranks and retainers, etc.

So we're almost there comrades, with the final few clauses still in play expected to be resolved in the coming week. Congratulations to all members who participated in an impressive display of rank and file democracy. More to follow next week.

Permanent and Death and Disability Awards filed update #1

Due to delays in finalising the Retained Award, the Union's amended 2014 Permanent Award will now be filed next week, rather than as had been planned, today. The same applies to our application for a new Death and Disability Award.

IRC President Justice Walton today directed that our amended application for a new Permanent Award be filed no later than 4pm next Friday 28 March, so more to follow in SITREP 11.

AOD testing results - at what cost?

This week's Commissioner's Corner reported that the first three months of random AOD testing had resulted in 180 tests being conducted for only one non-negative test returned from a firefighter, and that was for pharmacy medication. Commissioner Mullins said *"I am not at all surprised by the positive results, as this is precisely what we all expected."* Indeed, the Union said all along this would be the case, and that the old joint Protocol was working well. What hasn't been revealed is the cost of random AOD testing.

When previously challenged on this the Department said *"we can afford it"*, making AOD testing the only employee-related program in recent memory where money is apparently not an issue. So we can't afford to keep stations on-line, but we can afford testing for a problem that doesn't really exist.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 21 March 2014