



SITREP 17/14

New Retained Award settled

The Union and Department today released a joint statement welcoming the making of the new Retained Award. This Award lays the basis for a new retained system, building on rather than compromising the existing entitlements of retained firefighters.

It has taken fifteen long and difficult months to reach this agreement. If any member needs reminding of how far we've come from last year's initial drafts then I refer you to SITREPs 13 and 15 of 2013.

It is quite remarkable that we have arrived at what is clearly a very good result given where the parties were only 12 months ago. It is all the more remarkable given the many legal hurdles put before the Department, the FBEU and the IRC by the NSW Coalition Government in the form of a rigid 2.5% per annum ceiling on increases in remuneration.

Many people were involved in the making of this Award, but I particularly want to thank those retained comrades who participated in the process by providing constant feedback throughout negotiations and the 1,200 members who subsequently voted to endorse the draft Award at 128 separate meetings held across the state earlier this year.

The new Award's provisions and rates do not take effect until 30 May so the Union will be using the intervening 3 weeks to issue a series of explanatory notices on those provisions. The Union's Country Organisers will also be holding information sessions on an ongoing basis across the state, and will remain available to answer members' questions.

Links to the new 2014 Retained Award (which will commence on 30 May), the revised 2011 Award (which was amended to include the increases already paid between February 2013 and February 2014 and the as-yet unpaid increase from February 2014 through to 29 May) and a comparison document showing all of the changes in the new Award can all be found on the online version of this SITREP.

Finally, the new rates of pay will first appear in members' pays on 12 June together with the backpay for the 14 week period between 21 February and 29 May 2014. The backpay for CFR-qualified members to 21 June 2013 will be made the following fortnight, on 26 June.

In brief

- The Baird Government's appeal to cut our wages (see SITREP 49/2013) has succeeded, with the Supreme Court overturning the IRC's decision by ruling that the 2.5% p.a. wage increase cap does include increases in the Superannuation Guarantee rate. Public sector unions will meet on Monday to consider options, including a possible final appeal to the High Court. More in SITREP 18.
- The IRC has scheduled our applications for new Permanent and D&D Awards for conciliation on 19 June. In the meantime the parties will meet to discuss the Union's claims, including the payment of an interim increase backdated to 21 February following the nominal end of the 2011 Award.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 9 May 2014