



SITREP 19/14

Federal Budget bad for firefighters, bad for all workers

The Federal Budget has dominated news over the past two weeks. Rather than attempt an in depth analysis here in SITREP, it is enough to say that average earners will lose more than the wealthy, and the poor will be hardest hit of all. All in order to service a "budget emergency" that is largely a beat up.

But the real damage for us is not so much in the attacks on Medicare and education, bad as they are. It is the \$80 billion the Commonwealth is no longer forwarding onto the States. This will be most keenly felt in health and education, but rest assured the Baird Government will use these cuts to the State's budget as the basis for further cuts to ours.

Once again we ask - who voted Liberal?

Budget confirms only 2.27% wage increase for 2014 update

Last week's SITREP 18 reported that the last chance to save this year's 2.5% increase from falling to 2.27% rested in a High Court appeal against the Supreme Court decision. NSW public sector unions (the FBEU included) engaged Senior Counsel with a view to doing just that, but his opinion was that we were very unlikely to even be granted special leave to appeal, let alone successfully appeal the decision. Consequently, it was decided to not pursue an appeal to the High Court. The only way to rid ourselves of the Baird Government's troublesome and unfair public sector wages policy is to get rid of his Government come the state election next March.

AMP screening triggers

The Department has recently distributed a list of AMP screening triggers, specifying what constitutes a pattern, as well as special events, pursuant to the AMP ordered by the Industrial Relations Commission in November 2012 (see SITREP 46/2012), part of which relevantly states: "*an apparent pattern of sick leave (eg weekends, same day of week, pre or post annual leave rosters, pre or post public holidays, during school holidays or coinciding with special events);*"

Special events are limited to a handful of high profile sporting events, such as State of Origin and the NRL Grand Final. More problematic are the patterns the Department has specified, for example, taking sick or carer's leave on one or more occasion pre or post annual leave. Once is hardly a pattern. And twice during a period of school holidays, of which there are 12 weeks per year make them hard to avoid. State Committee will consider the Union's response to these triggers next week.

Regardless of these or indeed any AMP triggers, the Union's advice to members remains that if you are not fit to attend work you should take sick leave. Not doing so could endanger not only yourself, but the comrades who you work with. In other words, and to quote the AMP: "*utilising sick leave for its intended purpose.*" **As always, if you do receive an AMP "show cause" letter please contact the Union office as soon as possible, whereupon assistance and advice will be rendered.**

Jim Casey
State Secretary

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