



SITREP 21/14

Permanent members' backpay dispute - update #1

The backpay dispute will return to the IRC tomorrow at 4pm following the imposition of bans at 1800 hours on Saturday (see the Code Red issued 14 June). In the meantime, today's letter to Unions NSW confirming the Government's agreement to pay the next increase for tens of thousands of other public sector workers before it is due only serves to highlight the unfairness (if not complete stupidity) of the Government's wages policy and processes.

The Union's Code Red instruction of 14 June remains in place.

Commissioner cornered on country reliefs

Last week's Commissioner's Corner (No. 589) included a question on country reliefs, with an understandably confused member asking "why do some firefighters get denied regularly, whilst others from the same platoon in adjoining stations or other platoons at the same station get approved for the country relief position?". Unfortunately, the Commissioner's answer ("if a particular Platoon and Zone are short of firefighters or Station Officers, the Zone Commander will generally not release firefighters") completely contradicted the agreed position as published in SITREP 43/2012, which remains valid:

Residential priority (re)confirmed for country relief

Last month the Union wrote to the Department highlighting that, contrary to a 6 year old agreement on selecting employees to perform country relief, Zone Commanders were denying members within their Zone permission to perform country relief because the member's absence would generate overtime and hurt the Zone budget. So firefighters who reside in the country area were being passed over and the relief opportunities instead being given to firefighters who live in Sydney, thereby placing a bigger burden on the Department's budget.

The Department has now written to confirm (yet again) that "Senior Management has been reminded and instructed to release residentially qualified firefighters to perform country relief, unless there are extenuating circumstances." Accordingly, residentially-qualified members who are denied country relief should contact the Union office for further advice and assistance.

Bust the Budget rally 6 July

Last week's well attended and at times rowdy cross-union delegates meeting (see SITREP 20) called for a community rally as the first step against the Abbott Government's cruel budget. While the budget targets the most vulnerable in our society - the young, the elderly, and the ill - firefighters are not exempt from the pain. The end of universal health care, the gutting of public education and the deregulation of the university system will impact upon us and our families, not to mention the enormous pressure the cuts will place upon the NSW Budget and consequently, FRNSW funding.

The rally will start at 1pm on Sunday July 6 at Sydney Town Hall. Members are encouraged to attend.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Monday 16 June 2014