



# SITREP 29/14

## Facing medical retirement? Talk to us, not your lawyers

Advising on workers comp, fitness for duty and (if it reaches that point) medical retirement and D&D entitlements are basic Union services that we regularly provide to members, yet we continue to come across firefighters who had no idea that we can and do help members with these work-related matters.

Until last week, the Department's information for injured firefighters listed seven different organisations that they could contact for assistance, including (with respect to them) the Credit Union, the FB Retirees Association and even the Department's own workers comp insurer(?!), but no mention of the FBEU. This has now been corrected by Commissioner Mullins who, to his credit, arranged for our inclusion on the list as soon as he was told. Unfortunately, this occurred too late for many former firefighters who took the Department's "who can I contact?" advice sheet at face value and engaged a law firm to help them with their D&D and workers comp claims because they were misled into thinking we couldn't help them. Huge fees, bad advice and inferior outcomes have been their fate.

The Union fought for and won your D&D benefits. We wrote the D&D Award, and we've renegotiated and enforced it ever since. The D&D Fund's six Directors include three FBEU appointees. Nobody in NSW understands your D&D Award and entitlements better than your Union does. Unlike law firms who are charging unsuspecting claimants up to 40% of their total disability benefits (ie, over \$100,000), the Union provides all advice and assistance to members free of charge. And unlike law firms who promise "no win, no charge" (check that fine print), the Union can and does run appeals for members in the IRC.

We cannot stress enough that members should not seek legal advice before you have spoken with your Union. In short, if you need help or advice on medical retirement or D&D, contact the Union office.

### In brief

- Two days of conciliation meant that significant progress was made on our Permanent Award application and new rank, promotions and pay framework, with both parties expecting this part of the negotiations to be concluded and agreed in full by next Thursday, 28 August. More in SITREP 30.
- The funeral of Comrade Daniel Howard will be held in Cobar next Wednesday, 27 August. The Department has arranged for a 60-seat coach to transport FRNSW staff from Dubbo to Cobar and subject to numbers, the Union will be helping provide a second coach.
- Commissioner Mullins brought this week's Budget Estimates hearings in Macquarie St to life with some "interesting" responses on (among other things) overtime and station closures. Read for yourself via our hyperlink to the NSW Parliament's website in the online version of today's SITREP.
- I met with Sydney Comms members yesterday, and have remained in contact with Newcastle Comms members regarding staffing changes proposed for both centres from 1 September. More to follow.
- I'm Acting State Secretary while Comrade Casey is on parental leave following yesterday's birth of son Seamus, a brother to 3 year old daughter Beatrix. Congratulations Miranda and Jim.

Darin Sullivan  
President and Acting State Secretary

Friday 22 August 2014