



SITREP 30/14

Permanent Award negotiations – update #6

SITREP has been reporting progress in our negotiations for a new Permanent Award. We're pleased to report that in-principle agreement on several important and related clauses dealing with pay, progression and promotion, higher duties and transfers was reached late this week. This in-principle agreement remains subject to final approval, for our part, by a Special General Meeting, for their part, by Treasury and Government and for both parties, by the IRC, which is now required by Coalition IR law "reforms" to satisfy itself that employee-related costs do not exceed the Government's 2.5% per annum wages cap.

Background and overview

The Union entered this Award round with our current promotion system under significant pressure following the commencement in February of the Coalition's Government Sector Employment Act (see SITREP 27/14) that requires all public sector promotions to include, amongst other things, an interview. The result has been positive, with a new rank, pay and progression/promotion system that:

- increases the wages and salaries for all classifications by 2.5% pa (including increases in employer super contributions);
- merges the FL1 and FL2 ranks in a single new Firefighter rank, and reduces time to QF to 2 years;
- changes LF from a transitional rank to a substantive rank in its own right;
- introduces a new substantive rank of Leading Station Officer;
- amends the ex-GSA transfer systems to reduce and in some instances, remove the current requirement for all members outside of the GSA to return to Sydney for promotion to SO or Insp.
- increases the wages of three ranks relative to the 100% QF rate of pay:
 - for Senior Firefighters, from 104% to 106%;
 - for Station Officers Level 1, from 120% to 127%; and
 - for Station Officers Level 2, from 125% to 127%.

The table below shows these changes based on current (ie, post 21 February 2014) wage rates:

Rank / Classification	Relativity	Per Week
Recruit Firefighter	78%	\$1,093.69
Firefighter Level 1	90%	\$1,268.38
Firefighter Level 2	95%	\$1,338.86
Qualified Firefighter	100%	\$1,409.31
Senior Firefighter	+04% 106%	\$1,465.70 \$1,493.87
Leading Firefighter	112%	\$1,578.45
Station Officer Level 1	+20%	\$1,761.68
Station Officer Level 2	+25% 127%	\$1,761.68 \$1,789.82
Leading Station Officer	130%	\$1,832.10
Inspector	150%	\$2,113.98
Superintendent	n/a	\$137,206 per annum
Chief Superintendent	n/a	\$148,245 per annum
Operational Support Level 1	n/a	\$1,599.06
Operational Support Level 2	n/a	\$1,890.27
Operational Support Level 3	n/a	\$2,297.67

*Continued from Page 1***Explanation of changes to Clause 13, Progression And Promotion**

- **Firefighter to Qualified Firefighter:** The FL1 and FL2 ranks will become a single new rank of Firefighter. Progression to QF will occur after 24 (not 36) months service.
- **Qualified Firefighter to Senior Firefighter:** No change to the Senior Firefighter, which will still require 6 years' service, save that pay will increase from 104% to 106% of the QF rate of pay.
- **Senior Firefighter to Leading Firefighter:** It will be possible to progress to LF and remain at that rank, but it will remain necessary to progress to LF for promotion to SO. It will also be possible for SFs outside of the GSA to progress to LF without the need to return to Sydney.

Two years at SF will be the only pre-requisite to apply for LF. There will be no competencies required beyond those already obtained for SF, and there will be no interview (it is a progression, not a promotion), portfolio of evidence or other supporting material needed or relied upon.

There will be no maximum or minimum number of LFs, however the agreed costings are based on 200. The actual number will be determined by the number of LF vacancies offered and the number of successful applicants who go on to successfully complete the necessary modules/training.

Applications will continue to be called in Commissioner's Orders, but on a regular basis as and when required, not annually each July. Those Orders will specify the number of LF vacancies *and* their location so that management can target the particular Zones or stations where LFs are needed.

Potential LFs will be selected by a relevant psychometric and behavioural test of each applicant's suitability for a leadership role. It will not be knowledge-based test, so no study will be required. Results will remain subject to annual review to ensure the test remains relevant, accurate and fair.

Acceptance following the test will not result in immediate progression. Progression to LF will only occur when the LF training and training competencies have been completed. SFs who are accepted at the test stage, but who then fail to complete the LF training and competencies within 12 months will cease to be eligible for progression, and will need to re-apply if they again wish to progress to LF.

- **Leading Firefighter to Station Officer:** Promotion to SO will remain largely unchanged, save that applications will be called from LFs, not SFs, and that the Pre-Entry Test will be replaced by the 2013 IPP trial system - psychometric test, portfolio of evidence and operational assessment and interview.

LF rank will be the only pre-requisite for applicants to apply for promotion to SO. The training and competencies required for the SO rank will all be delivered on or as part of the SOPP.

Applications will continue to be called in Commissioner's Orders, but as and when required and not annually each July. These Orders will specify both the number of available SO vacancies and, if they are country vacancies for which there is no Transfer Register, their location. This will mean that an SO vacancy for which there is no Transfer Register will be open to all LFs as well as all SOs. An LF who successfully applies for an SO vacancy will be able to take up that position immediately pending their completion of the SOPP, and therefore promotion to SO, without the need to return to the GSA.

LFs who successfully complete the SOPP will be promoted to SO immediately upon completion of the SOPP. The SOPP will deliver more of its competencies by on-shift distance learning, reducing the time required for SOPP participants to be off-shift and, in many cases, away from home.

- **Station Officer to Leading Station Officer:** Holding SO rank will be only pre-requisite to apply for LSO. No extra competencies will be required beyond those already obtained for promotion to SO.

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As with progression to LF, applications for LSO will be called in Commissioner's Orders as and when required and will specify both the number of available LSO vacancies and their location.

SOs will be eligible to apply for any LSO vacancy unless the LSO vacancy is:

- (a) within the GSA, in which case the applicant will need to be either permanently attached to a GSA station, or holding an Operational Support position; or
- (b) outside of the GSA but within a Regional Transfer Register Area (eg Newcastle), in which case the applicant will need to be attached to a station within that Regional Transfer Register area.

As with progression to LF, there will be no maximum or minimum number of LSO positions but the agreed costings are based on 50. The actual number will be determined by the number of LSO vacancies and the number who go on to successfully complete the necessary modules and training.

Successful applicants for LSO will be determined by same merit selection system to be used for the selection of applicants for SO and Inspector vacancies - a psychometric test, a portfolio of evidence and an operational assessment and interview. The psychometric test component for all ranks will be subject to ongoing review by both parties to ensure the tests remains relevant, accurate and fair.

As with progression to LF, progression to LSO will occur after successful completion of the LSO training and/or training competencies. SOs who successfully apply for an LSO vacancy, but who then fail to complete the necessary training and/or competencies within 12 months will cease to be eligible for progression, and will need to re-apply if they again wish to progress to LSO.

- **Leading Station Officer to Inspector:** Holding LSO rank will be the pre-requisite to apply for Inspector. There will be no extra competencies required beyond those already obtained for LSO.

Applications for promotion to Inspector will continue to be called in Commissioner's Orders as and when required. These Orders will specify both the number of available vacancies and, if they are Country Senior Officer vacancies for which there is no Transfer Register, their location. An LSO who successfully applies for a country Inspector vacancy will be able to take up that position immediately pending completion of the IPP, and therefore promotion to Inspector, without returning to the GSA.

LSOs who successfully complete the IPP will be immediately promoted to Inspector. Like the SOPP, the IPP will deliver more of its competencies by on-shift distance learning, reducing the time required for IPP participants to be off-shift and, in many cases, away from home.

Clause 4, Definitions and Clause 6, Rates Of Pay and Allowances

The "outduty" and "stand by" definitions will be changed to require SOs and Inspectors to perform outduties, subject to the same limitations and entitlements that already apply to Firefighters under Cl. 12.

Clause 7, Higher Duties

LFs will be able to act up to fill an SO position for up to 28 days, but only if they are actually replacing a temporarily absent (for whatever reason) SO. This will not be an abstract test - the LF will only be able to act up if the position is ordinarily held by an actual SO. For example, if SO Green will be absent on annual leave then an LF will be able to cover SO Green's vacant position. If, however, the vacancy will occur because SO Green has retired, or has been transferred elsewhere, then an LF will not be able to be used - an RO, or an SO on recall will be required instead. Acting up at another station will be considered an out duty, and therefore subject to out duty limits.

The 28 day limit will apply to any and all SO absences, whether known in advance or not. On the 29th day or later, no LF will be permitted to act up and the position will instead require an RO or recall.

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These same arrangements will apply in every respect in the case of LSOs acting-up to Inspector.

The savings from these new acting up arrangements will be used to offset the additional \$2.77M pa cost of the new ranks and relativities. The 28 day limit and associated rules will prevent the loss of SO and Inspector numbers that may otherwise occur through the unrestricted acting-up of LFs and LSOs to those ranks. Relieving SOs and Inspectors will continue to be required, but in fewer numbers than at present.

Clause 28, Transfers Outside of the GSA

The various amendments at Clause 28 will:

- allow both Station Officers *and* Leading Firefighters to apply for Country Officer vacancies, and both Inspectors *and* Leading Station Officers to apply for Country Senior Officer vacancies;
- allow Senior Firefighters and Stations Officers who are stationed outside of GSA to progress to Leading Firefighter and Leading Station Officer respectively without the need to return to the GSA;
- reduce the time required to be spent in the GSA for Leading Firefighters and Leading Station Officers who are promoted to Station Officer and Inspector respectively by allowing Leading Firefighters to apply for Officer Regional Transfer Registers pending their promotion to Station Officer, and Leading Station Officers to apply for Senior Officer Regional Transfer Registers pending their promotion to Inspector.
- clarify, at subclause 28.3.5, that employees who decline three offers of transfer will be removed entirely from that Transfer Register and will be required to re-apply for placement on that General Transfer Register, seek residential priority and hold that priority for two years before they could again be elevated to that Residential Transfer Register; and
- clarify, at subclause 28.7.3, that employees who are offered a Transfer Register position will be released within 28 days to take up that position.

A copy of all of the actual Award amendments showing all changes from the current clauses, and their associated notes can be found via a link at this point of the online version of this SITREP.

Retainer rip off - update #3

The Union met this week with the Department to discuss the underpayment of members' retainers, and learn what management intended to do after we alerted them to the problem and conducted inspections of numerous members' pay records. The Department has since conducted its own review that confirmed at least 210 members suffered underpayments. It is now in the process of making the necessary back payments. While this is a welcome development, we continue to recommend that members check your own records, and if you're unsure how to go about doing this, to contact the Union for assistance.

Comrade Dan Howard's funeral

On Wednesday I joined Commissioner Mullins, Minister for Emergency Services Stuart Ayres, FBEU State Committee officials Henry, Drury, Gardner, Ross and Anderson, Country Organiser Greg Matthews and hundreds of rank and file members at Cobar for the funeral of Comrade Dan Howard, Retained Firefighter and FBEU member, who was killed on duty on 17 August. It was a moving and fitting tribute to Dan's life and memories, and impressive to see so many members and other emergency service workers from all over Australia mobilise to support his family and friends at this difficult time.



Darin Sullivan
President and Acting State Secretary

Saturday 30 August 2014