



SITREP 31/14

Permanent Award negotiations – update #7

Further progress has been made in negotiations since the release of SITREP 30 and the proposed amendments to Clauses 4, 6, 7, 13 and 28. At the same time, we have conducted numerous station forums to not only explain these proposals, but to receive vital membership feedback. Ditto for our online forum.

The online version of today's SITREP 31 includes some important links, the first of which is to a document that highlights all of the changes (corrections, insertions and deletions) made since SITREP 30. This will allow members to easily follow the development of these amendments without having to sort out the new amendments from the original. The entire changes can still be found separately, which is the second link.

Back to the future with Operational Support?

While most of the changes since SITREP 30 are minor corrections or clarifications, the inclusion of Clause 14 is obviously more significant. Members are encouraged to read the actual award clauses to properly understand the proposal in detail, but the changes can broadly be summarised here as follows:

- Operational Support (OS) positions will revert to ranks, with OS3 to become Inspector positions (open to Inspectors and LSOs), OS2 to become Station Officer positions (open to LSOs, SOs and LFs) and OS1 to become firefighter positions (open to QFs, SFs and LFs) (see subclause 14.9);
- LFs who successfully apply for a Station Officer OS position will be allowed to take up the position and be paid at the SO rate of pay while they complete the SO competencies and training, and LSOs will be able to do likewise for Inspector OS positions (see subclause 7.5.2);
- LFs and LSOs will not be eligible to apply for promotion via an OS position unless they have spent at least 12 months "on the trucks" as an LF or LSO (see subclauses 13.8.3 and 13.10.2);
- OS rates of pay will be the rates of pay for those ranks, plus any applicable Clause 6 allowances, plus an OS Allowance of \$21.14 per week (see subclauses 6.6.16, 7.7 and Table 3);
- Any current occupant of an OS position who wishes to remain in place will be able to do so, and will continue to receive their former OS rate of pay (which will continue to be adjusted in line with general wage increases) for so long as they remain in that OS position (see subclause 14.10).

So we would revert to the pre-2000 arrangement of OS positions and pay being tied to ranks. Importantly, these changes would result, over time, in an additional 100 or more Station Officer positions and up to 40 additional Inspector positions. The \$800K pa saved from the realignment of OS wages to rank wages, plus OS Allowance, will be used to offset the cost of the Senior Firefighter and Station Officer wage increases.

These OS changes remain, like all of these award proposals, subject to a final vote by the membership at a General Meeting.

Award information sessions

State Committee officials are now arranging and holding local information sessions for 3 or more stations who request them. Please contact your SCOM official or the Union Office to arrange one in your area. We will also be holding an open information session for any and all interested members who are able to attend **next Thursday, 18 September from 0900 to 1030 hours at the Union's Surry Hills meeting hall**. The September State Committee meeting will be held immediately following, so most of the SCOM will be on hand for what we expect will be a useful Q&A opportunity for members and officials alike.



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SOPP Pre-Entry Test – update #1

There's obviously been quite a lot happening on the promotions question since SITREP 28. Senior Firefighter members interested in promotion have continued to ask what is happening with this year's Pre-Entry Test, and whether or not they should continue studying? Unfortunately, there can be no clear answer on this until members vote on the proposed changes to Clause 13.

If a majority of members vote in favour of the proposal then there will not be another Pre-Entry Test held, but if a majority of members vote against the proposal then we will press the Department to hold another Pre-Entry Test asap. As an indicative timeframe, we are currently aiming to put the proposal (and potentially, the entire new Award) to a vote at our AGM on 30 October, but more on this in SITREP 32.

Newtown hits unwanted ton

In March this year, 5 Station Newtown celebrated a century of service to the citizens of inner west Sydney. By August the station had reached a centenary of a very different kind: 100 separate station closures due to the NSW Coalition's FRNSW budget cuts. Thankfully, FBEU Inner West Sub-Branch Secretary Marty Dixon and our members at 5 didn't miss the opportunity to let the community know what the Baird Government had done with their fire station. See the online version of this SITREP for a link to that article.

Excuse our cynicism, but the savage TOLing of stations in unwinnable electorates for the Coalition, like Newtown and unlosable electorates, like Neutral Bay suggests to us that there's more to deciding which stations are closed than FRNSW capacity. Throw in the absence of TOLing in traditionally Labor regions like Campbelltown, the Central Coast and Newcastle that the Liberals currently hold by small margins, and it becomes clearer that deciding which stations are closed, moved up and/or always covered by other stations is as much about political risk as it is about community risk. Only 169 days until the state election.

New Fire Brigades Regulation

A new *Fire Brigades Regulation 2014* came into effect on 22 August, with major changes to the disciplinary process for firefighters after the IRC's then-President Justice Boland found last year that the previous preliminary/formal inquiry system was "otiose" (see SITREPs 33 and 28 of 2013).

Since then the Union has been negotiating with the Department over new (and all but agreed) guidelines for the revised disciplinary procedure. As a result, members must be provided with the details of allegations, be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to those allegations and be able to have a Union representative present at all stages, including any interview. Where misconduct is found and it is decided to take disciplinary action, the firefighter must be provided with a copy of the investigation report and be given the opportunity to make a submission before any proposed disciplinary action is taken. The Union has retained the right to take disciplinary matters to the IRC at any stage of the process.

As always, members are advised to contact the Union as soon as any disciplinary allegation arises, and to say, write or sign nothing before first contacting the Union for professional assistance and advice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Casey".

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 12 September, 2014



12 September 2014

Mr. Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner
Fire and Rescue NSW
PO Box A249
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1232

Dear Mr Mullins

Re: Increased National Security Alert Level

I refer to the email sent by you to all Fire and Rescue NSW staff today in relation to the increase in the National Security Alert Level to High.

Therefore and in accordance with your comment of the 'critical role FRNSW plays in contributing to public confidence during times of increased security alerts' it would make sense for fire stations in the GSA to no longer be subject to TOLing in order to provide the public with 24/7 safety.

I can be contacted on 9218 3444 to discuss this matter at short notice.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Casey
State Secretary