



SITREP 01/15

CI.26 Dinner Allowance dispute (again)

Management is once again refusing to pay a number of MN1 members' Dinner Allowance claims pursuant to Clause 26.3 of the Permanent Award. One claim concerns a member who performed a recall at a retained station that concluded at 2000 hours. The member performed work at a temporary work location, was not required to reside away from home, was required to work/travel beyond 1830 hours and ceased that work more than 90 minutes after his usual ceasing time, so a Dinner Allowance is payable. Not according to the Department. If this sounds familiar, it's because it is. We've quarrelled over this allowance twice before, resulting on both occasions in those members being paid (see SITREPs 30/2011 and 1/2010). The Department's short corporate memory has set it up for a third bloody nose.

We met management on Wednesday and made it clear that we have no intention of arguing the toss over the interpretation and payment of this Award entitlement a third time. The Department's failure to agree to pay these claims by 5pm Monday 12 January will result in industrial action. More next week.

AMP - more carrot, less stick

We have written to the Department twice this week on sick leave and the Attendance Management Policy.

Our first letter proposes that the AMP be relaxed or suspended altogether at locations already averaging 87 hours or less sick leave per member, per year. While the Department complains about an alleged FRNSW-wide average in excess of 100 hours p.a., its figures ignore the many members, platoons, stations and even zones who already use less (and often much less) than 87 hours. The blanket use of the AMP is a blunt instrument that often targets members with low sick leave usage and zones with no sick leave "problem". Suspending the AMP in locations with sub-87 hour averages would acknowledge the effort of all of those members, including our senior officer members who would no longer have to enforce it.

Our second letter asks what every member has questioned, which is how much of the Department's sick leave usage figures include sick leave that is subsequently confirmed as workers comp? It takes only a couple of injured members to blow out a zone's sick leave usage by literally thousands of hours, which obviously skews the per head average, but this is not recognised as workers comp until many months (and sometimes years) later. In order to gauge the size of this distortion, the Union has requested the sick leave data for recent years, adjusted to remove all confirmed workers comp cases from the date of injury.

Copies of both letters can be found on the online version of this SITREP. More in SITREP 3/2015.

24 hour shifts and roster flexibility – update #4

The 24 hour roster trial currently underway at 42 Station is proceeding smoothly, as are the many local 24 hour PCOS arrangements now being worked. While it now appears likely that a wider trial will occur after 20 February (interested members/stations should email the Union asap), no member should be – or will be – coerced onto a 24 shift/roster or transferred to another station because they choose not to work this way. The 24 hour initiative is about greater flexibility and choice, not forcing members off the 10/14.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Saturday 10 January 2015