



SITREP 02/15

CI.26 Dinner Allowance dispute (again) - update #1

Our warning shot in last week's SITREP 1 worked, with the Department this week agreeing to pay the permanent members' Dinner Allowance claims that it had rejected prior to Union intervention. The instruction to MN1 management to refuse all Dinner Allowances claims has also been withdrawn. While this should be last time that subclause 26.3 meal allowances come into dispute, it was definitely the last time that we threaten retaliatory action over the non-payment of these allowance before taking it.

Higher retainers

The Union has been pressing the Department for several months now to start offering the higher retainers possible under the 2014 Retained Award. The FBEU certainly didn't develop and then argue for them in those negotiations only to see them ignored and forgotten once the new Award was made.

The single biggest hurdle now is the Department's concern that if it starts offering higher retainers at stations with availability problems then it might trigger similar problems at other stations that presently have none. We've continued to counter that this cynical fear is unfounded, selling the retained workforce and membership short. We hope to be able to announce something positive on this front shortly.

In related news, the Union recently agreed to adopt the Gartan availability system that is widely used in the UK, albeit a modified version that is tailored to meet our Award's and FRNSW's needs. The new system will be trialled in Metro North and Regional West in February and, if successful, a full rollout will follow asap thereafter (certainly within this calendar year). The Union has already secured agreement that training in the new system will be additional to, not in place of, regular station drills.

24 hour shifts and roster flexibility - update #5

The Union has received many expressions of interest from members, and indeed entire stations, to participate in a wider roll-out of 24-hour shifts following last week's SITREP 1. Discussions continue with the Department and we will keep members informed of further developments as they occur, but a definitive position post-20 February is expected to appear in SITREP 5 during the week commencing 2 February, if not beforehand. In the meantime, we'd welcome any and all feedback, positive or negative, from members working (or working with members who are working) 24-hour full or part changes of shift.

Sub-Branch forums

On Monday evening the Union's Sydney Central West Sub-Branch (SCWSB) held a well attended forum at 27 Station, with discussion ranging from flexible rostering and the 24 hour trial at 42 Station, to the introduction, location and operation of the Leading Firefighter and Leading Station Officer ranks.

All members are welcome to - and do - attend these forums, with feedback from the Senior Officer Sub-Branch (SOSB) members in attendance last Monday regarding the working of 24 hour shifts by PCOS proving particularly useful. Further forums are planned for the coming month, so members interested in hosting one at your station should contact your Sub-Branch Secretary, or the Union Office.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 16 January 2015