



SITREP 04/15

Public holiday entitlements

Members frequently ask what compensation we receive for working public holidays? Our rates of pay include a loading for working weekends and regular public holidays, so there is no extra pay or leave for working on these days. Members who work on additional public holidays, which are gazetted from time to time by the NSW Government, are compensated with consolidated leave for permanent members (see subclause 6.4.2) and, since 2014, with overtime rates of pay for retained members (see subclause 6.10.3).

Easter Sunday is different. It is a regular holiday, not an additional holiday, but it was added as an extra holiday in 2010 - well after our wage rates and loadings were set. It took a major dispute in the IRC (see *"Union wins Easter Sunday public holiday dispute"* in SITREP 25/2012), but as a result of that judgment, and subsequent amendments to the both the Permanent and Retained Awards, members who work on Easter Sunday are now compensated for doing so as if it was an additional public holiday.

The 2014 Retained Award went beyond simply compensating members who work on Easter Sunday. The Union also established parity with permanent members by ensuring that retained members who work on any additional public holiday are paid at overtime rates for all hours worked on each such day.

So when are these additional public holidays? The NSW Government has already declared the following dates for the next three years, so members working on these days will be compensated accordingly:

Monday 28 December 2015 (additional Boxing Day holiday);
Tuesday 27 December 2016 (additional Christmas Day holiday); and
Monday 2 January 2017 (additional New Years Day holiday).

Heard it through the (sour) grapevine

Rumours are always circulating in our job, but the mill has recently gone into overdrive. Two of those rumours are worth dealing with here.

First are the dire warnings from some who should (and probably do) know better that 24 hour shifts will lead to three shifts, mass sackings, and a return to the 56 hour week. This is nonsense. The Government does not want to do this, but it couldn't force through the necessary legislative changes and withstand the industrial chaos that would follow even if it did. Any such move would unleash a national industrial and political storm of a kind not seen for decades, all for savings that would be so marginal as to render the huge political effort required pointless. There's a better chance of aliens landing in the rear yards of our stations than there is of NSW firefighters returning to three shifts and/or a 56 hour week.

Second is the scare-mongering coming from some (and sometimes the same) circles that, contrary to our advice in SITREP 3/2015, the new LFs will definitely all be transferred to district stations. More baseless rubbish. LFs may be shifted if there are too many on one station or one platoon, but otherwise not.

The difference between messroom gossip and what you read in SITREP could not be more stark. We circulate our news and views in writing and we are accountable for what we publish, which remains online for all to see and review. Commenting from first-hand knowledge doesn't hurt, either.

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

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Sunday 8 February 2015