



SITREP 25/15

Operation Cold Snap

Acting Commissioner Smith yesterday announced a two week FRNSW fire safety campaign, Operation Cold Snap, *"where each day every FRNSW fire station with permanent staff on shift will be required to target key localities within their communities and talk with people about the associated risks involved with heaters, electric blankets and improper use of outdoor heaters for indoor heating purposes"*.

Members should know that he did so following consultation with the Union, and with our support. Fire fatalities in NSW for the 2015 calendar year have already reached the annual average of 15 per year with 5 full months left to run, and we remain firmly in the grip of the coldest winter in years.

We note Acting Commissioner Smith's approval of an extra 32 hours of authorised duties for each retained brigade during the two-week Operation - an unusual yet welcome recognition of the inability of the overstretched authorised duties allocation for retained stations to accommodate projects like this.

Contrary to the belief of some local commands, participation is optional and there will be no adverse consequences for members who decline. That said, the Union endorses this initiative and encourages all members, permanent and retained, to get behind it.

Tax time reminder – claim your Union dues

With the end of the financial year members are once again reminded (and certainly advised) to claim your Union dues as a work-related tax deduction in your 2014/15 tax return. This amount should appear on your PAYG Payment Summary issued by FRNSW, but members who are unsure may contact the Union office for confirmation of the correct amount that you are entitled to claim.

Firefighter gangs terrorising voters?

The Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters is currently conducting an inquiry into campaigning at polling places after Liberal windbags complained about the "intimidating" presence of firefighters outside polling booths during recent elections in Victoria and NSW.

The inquiry is an attempt by the Abbott Government to outlaw the kind of rank and file political action that FBEU members undertook in the Miranda by-election in October 2013 that helped defeat the Liberal candidate, and that caused the NSW Government to re-think its approach to TOLing. A link to a copy of the Union's submission can be found in the online version of this SITREP.

Last chance for the Threlfo Toast

Ticket sales for the Union's inaugural Rex Threlfo Annual Toast on Tuesday 28 July will close next Tuesday 21 July owing to the need to confirm numbers for catering purposes. There will be no tickets available on the day so don't miss out, buy your ticket now at www.fbeu.net

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 17 July 2015