



SITREP 04/16

State Committee

The State Committee's approval of my request for leave without pay following my pre-selection as the Greens' candidate for Grayndler in this year's federal election will see me resume operational firefighting duties on 12 B from next Friday until the election is concluded. My return to FRNSW will protect both the Union and I from accusations of campaigning on Union time, money or resources - none of which will be used in my election campaign. Union President Darin Sullivan will be Acting State Secretary from 15 February until further notice.

The State Committee also appointed Comrade Brett Farmer (53 C) to the vacant office of Sydney North Sub-Branch Secretary for the balance of the 2015-2018 SCOM term following the transfer to Newcastle Comms of former SNSB Secretary, Comrade Stephen Cresswell. We thank Comrade Cresswell for his contribution on SCOM since 2012, and congratulate Comrade Farmer on his appointment.

Sydney or the bush?

The success of the Union's alternative roster reforms in the 2014 Award has triggered transfer requests from some members on the Special and Back to Back Rosters back to Sydney. These requests been met with conflicting responses from the Department. Some have been rightly approved, and others have been wrongly refused out of concern that management will be unable back fill the resulting vacancies.

The answer is that these members have the right to return to Sydney and, if no other permanent member accepts the offer of transfer, that the position is then offered to retained members - firstly within that fire district and then if no suitable applicants are found, from within that Zone. Discussions this week reaffirmed the Department's commitment to this local recruitment process which the Union negotiated as part of the 1998 country staffing agreement. Any permanent firefighter or Station Officer who is having difficulty being transferred to Sydney should contact the Union office. More to follow.

Hydrant project-mongering

Members may have noticed the "Hydrant Heroes" project recently launched by the Department, or even been asked to participate. There has been no consultation with the Union on this "Hydrant Heroes" weirdness, which is apparently supposed to encourage the community to clear grass from covers but may well lead to overzealous neighbours painting hydrants and roadways. Were local councils (the owners of most roads and footpaths) consulted? Who knows? Perhaps the Department will see fit to come back to us and tell us what it thinks its doing, but in the meantime members are advised to proceed with caution and those who refuse involvement will be supported by the Union.

SMART update #1

Further member feedback led us to this week propose a simple yet significant improvement to the SMART (aka Gartan) availability system by adding A (available) to the current entry options of U (unavailable), L (on leave) or blank, which will remain the default. More on this next week.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 5 February 2016