



# SITREP 34/16

## Review of Permanent Award allowances

Discussion is underway on our website's Members' Forum over a (not "the") proposal to amend the Award's Clause 6 Allowances. I encourage members to check that out but as a quick snapshot, it:

1. caps new major aerial, comms and hazmat allowances at the rescue allowance after February 2017;
2. maintains the current major aerial, comms and hazmat allowances for existing holders; and
3. allows all members the ability to seek rescue training and payment of the allowance.

Why? To deliver an extra \$50 per week to the 50% of permanent members who don't currently receive a qualification allowance for one, but also to give more truth to the "Rescue" in FRNSW. The SRB and primary and secondary accreditation were Greiner Govt inventions to settle a 1980's rescue war with the Police and Ambos and it has been FBEU policy for 40+ years now that every FRNSW firefighter should be rescue trained and that every FRNSW station should be recognised as a rescue unit.

There are other benefits but before anyone gets too excited, the Department has already said no because it could add another \$4.7 million p.a. to the current \$6 million p.a. allowance bill. But being told no by our employer is nothing new, and certainly no reason to not consider ideas of this sort.

## Health and Fitness testing

Sitrep 33 referred to the D&D Award negotiations and "a multitude of complex issues around the intended introduction of compulsory, in-service health and fitness assessments". This looms as a major issue in 2017 due to the Department's over-zealous and unrealistic stance on firefighter health and fitness that, if unchecked, will result in the forced medical retirement of hundreds of members.

We've been dealing with this issue behind the scenes now for several years and have avoided alarming members unnecessarily in the hope that management would see sense, however a last ditch attempt last week to reach a sensible resolution with Commissioner Mullins ended badly. Perhaps the incoming Commissioner will take a more reasoned approach, and agreement based on realistic health and fitness standards is still possible, but the time for us to shield members (and management) from the Department's current and ridiculously over the top approach has passed.

Attached to the online version of this SITREP is the Department's controversial "Health Standards for Firefighters". All 169 pages of it. I encourage members to read it and, for those who are concerned, to talk with your doctor about it. More to follow.

## New RFS station for Killara?

Not on our watch.

When FRNSW installed "Cat 6" heavy CAFS tankers throughout the metro urban fringe, including at Hornsby, the RFS retaliated earlier this year by announcing its intention to open a new RFS brigade at Killara. This is the sort of petty turf war nonsense that the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act was intended to stop, however a motion I introduced to do just that at last month's quarterly FSJSC was defeated 2 votes for (FBEU & FRNSW) to 3 votes against (RFS X2 and RFS A). A copy of my letter last week to RFS Commissioner Fitzsimmons on the issue is attached to the online version of this SITREP.

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## **Mobility and Transfer Policy - update #1**

As reported in SITREP 33/2016, the Department released its Transfer and Mobility Policy last week. The member feedback since has been useful and I would like to thank all members for their questions, the answers to which I think are of general benefit to our membership.

We've received feedback that ESS is not a good system to use for logging and tracking transfers. In further discussion, it becomes clear members think the Transfer and Mobility Policy will operate like the Clause 28 Transfer Registers, where placement on the list is critical to when you are eligible to go to a station. Instead, members seeking a transfer can apply on the grounds of career development, skills and qualifications development, compassionate issues or staff welfare, and location based transfers (getting closer to home). The policy doesn't create a 'first come, first served' situation. A member may request a transfer to be closer to home but find someone who asked to go to that station on compassionate grounds after them gets there first. Conversely, being passed over for transfer to a station a number of times might be an argument a member could put to the Transfer Review Committee if they were unhappy with a transfer.

A number of members wrongly assumed that the Union supports the new policy. While we negotiated a number of changes to it, it is not our policy. The FBEU's long-standing position, as determined by a General Meeting of members, is that the Union should not ordinarily get involved in transfers as these are almost always member-v-member situations. That said, the Union reserves its right to intervene in the case of blatantly unfair transfers, or to uphold the Award.

## **2017 membership cards**

2017 FBEU membership cards were posted to all members' homes last week. If you haven't received yours by now then it will be because we didn't have your current address. Members who have changed address but have not yet let the Union know, or simply aren't sure we have your correct address, should complete a change of address form via the Union's website so that we can update your records and ensure that you receive your card, other Union publications and voting material.

## **Union Office Christmas - New Year shutdown**

The Union Office will close at midday today and re-open on Wednesday 4 January. Members requiring assistance over this time may contact a State Committee official - for details see [www.fbeu.net/contact](http://www.fbeu.net/contact)

On behalf of the Union's officials, industrial and administrative staff, I wish all members and your families the compliments of the Season.

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary

Friday 23 December 2016