



SITREP 02/17

RBRP threatens Retained system - update #1

Nothing on the RBRP threat has really changed since my comments in SITREP 01/17. There have been no further meetings with management on this issue in the fortnight since, but the Union's Retained Sub-Branch Executive Committee and I did hold a full day conference in Sydney last week to review the situation and consider our options. I will not report on those proceedings here (management read SITREP too) except to note that it was a constructive and confident meeting, and that the RSB did (and continues to do) a great job of conveying the concerns and expectations of the retained membership.

The Department claims that the RBRP will save it around \$2 million pa, with the great majority of that coming from reduced retained activity and wages. That's \$2 million out of a total retained wage bill of around \$46 million pa, which is a cut of more than 4%. The Baird Government's Labour Expense Cap (LEC) requires a 1.2% cut, or about \$550,000 of that \$46 million, so it is clear that FRNSW is attempting to gouge its retained workforce. And that's using FRNSW's own deflated figures. If the Union's estimated real cost of the RBRP cuts to the retained wage bill of \$6 to \$8 million pa is anywhere near correct then the scale of the rip off would be more like 15%.

I wrote in SITREP 01/17 that *"the Baird Government and FRNSW management are mistaken if they believe retained members are an easier target than permanents"*. I'll add to that here with an assurance to members, and a warning to management, that the Union will not allow the retained membership to bear a disproportionate share of the Baird Government's LEC burden. More to follow.

2017 Award negotiations - update #2

Plenty going on behind the scenes here. We remain (just) on track for the making of both the Permanent and Retained Awards prior to the expiration of the current Awards on 16 February. The State Committee is scheduled to review and hopefully sign off on the negotiated Awards on 2 February, in which case full details of both will be released to members in the SITREP to be published on Friday 3 February and a Special General Meeting (and associated sub-branch meetings) called.

Commissioners old and new

In the unlikely event that you missed it, Commissioner Mullins has retired. The Union welcomed Greg's appointment as Commissioner in July 2003, noting at the time that *"we aren't (and shouldn't be) expecting overnight miracles"*. We weren't expecting TOLing and station closures either, yet these ended up being the most significant legacies of his 13 years in charge. Some might think that a bit harsh, or that these things were beyond his control, but the fact remains that he chose to become the first Chief Officer since 1884 to temporarily close fire stations simply to save money. Greg remained a FBEU member throughout his 39 year NSWFB/FRNSW career and we wish him well in his retirement.

Members will also be aware of the appointment of Paul Baxter as the next FRNSW Commissioner. I met Commissioner Baxter on Monday and welcomed him on behalf of the membership. Mr Baxter has extensive experience and doubtless many ideas, and we look forward to working with him.

A blue ink signature of Leighton Drury, written in a cursive style.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

Friday 20 January 2017