



SITREP 01/17

RBRP threatens Retained system

Following our reports on FRNSW's "Risk Based Response Protocols" (RBRP) in SITREPs 31/16, 32/16 and 33/16, Zone Commands are now briefing stations on their plans. The Union agreed to these briefings, not because we've agreed or resigned ourselves to their RBRP or any other so-called "reforms", but because we want members to understand exactly what they're planning to do to you.

FBEU officials have not been attending these local stations meetings because (a) we couldn't attend them all if we tried and (b) we already know what management are saying - including, in some instances, accusing the Union of not caring about the RBRP or what happens to our retained members. Neither of course is true. It is regrettable, but not surprising, that a minority of managers have chosen to attack the Union rather than defend the RBRP. Members are encouraged to attend these briefings and ask the hard questions, and to report back anything that appears out of the norm.

It would be wrong to think that the NSW Government's irresponsible budget cuts are solely responsible here. Baird might be the impetus for them to move, but a management FAQ document released this week shows that the Department has been working on this for longer than you think:

Q3 *Why are you making these changes now?*

These changes have been in the pipeline for a number of Years. FRNSW's continued investment in systems and technology has now enabled us with the required delivery capabilities. Changes are based on dispatching the quickest and most appropriate resources, whilst not mobilising resources that are not required.

And therein lies a central problem. FRNSW management is pressing these RBRP changes not only to meet Baird's cuts, but also because they believe in them. The Department will still seek to implement the RBRP even if we can find some other way (and we're looking) to deliver the savings they require. Members who think that a forgone Award payment here or a station closure over there will avoid the RBRP should think again. They'll just take those things - and then the RBRP as well.

So what is the Union going to do? Are we planning to stop their RBRP and, if so, how?

These questions are more easily asked than answered, but the Award requires FRNSW to consult over changes like the RBRP and the Department cannot move to implement these changes before consultation has concluded. Which it has not, so calls in the interim for industrial action are premature.

The Department last month provided a raft of retained income and response data that we requested and we have been pulling that apart to (a) understand the likely impact of their proposals on different brigades and members and (b) explore alternative pay/work/response arrangements that might minimise the impact of their RBRP cuts or better still, actually improve our retained members' jobs.

The Baird Government and FRNSW management are mistaken if they believe retained members are an easier target than permanents. It remains our preference to resolve this by negotiation, and we continue to explore alternative avenues, but the Union's officials know that the RBRP means significant pay cuts for at least 1,200 members. Anyone who thinks we will allow that to happen does not know the FBEU.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

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