



# SITREP 21/17

## **Berejiklian's FESL backdown**

SITREP 20's report of smoke issuing from the Berejiklian Government over its controversial Fire and Emergency Services Levy were confirmed the following Wednesday when a by-then well alight Premier was forced to concede that her billion dollar new tax had been put on hold before it even commenced. It was a humiliating admission that the Government had got it wrong, and vindication of the FBEU's warnings stretching as far back as 2003 about so-called fire service funding "reform".

That is not to say the FESL is dead. The Premier said *"We set to deliver a fairer system. In the main, we feel it would have satisfied that on the residential side. We don't feel at this stage it would have been a fairer system for small and medium-sized businesses"*. It appears, then, that the Government intends lightening the load on the commercial sector only and the "Sydney tax" (as one evening news report dubbed it) remains in line to hammer hundreds of thousands of households.

It is unclear at the moment how the Government proposes to manage the debacle from here, but it has only three Parliamentary sitting days left (20, 21 and 22 June) to do so before the FESL takes effect on 1 July. If the FESL Act is repealed, but the Fire Brigades, Rural Fires and State Emergency Service Acts are all left as they are now, then Local Government will still pay 11.7% and the NSW Government will have to pay the rest. The FBEU, Insurance Council of Australia, business (small and large) and the community at large would all be happy with that outcome. In fact the only unhappy parties would be Treasury and the Government, which is why it almost certainly will not happen. More to follow.

## **More Leading ranks advertised**

There have been over 50 Leading rank positions advertised over the last two months alone as the numbers grow towards the FBEU-negotiated target of at least 200 Leading Firefighters and 50 Leading Station Officers in the job. The Union has continued to press for more LF and LSO Program positions and over 50 further positions are now in line to be advertised over the next 6 months.

The Union is also pressing the Department to release a de-identified list of LF test scores so that members who have already undertaken the test may gauge their own test score against "the field" (so to speak) and better inform their decision on whether to re-take the test or rely on their current score.

## **2017 Rex Threlfo Annual Toast**

Tickets are now on sale for the 3rd Rex Threlfo Annual Toast to be held at Doltone House Hyde Park on Tuesday 18 July. Tickets are once again limited and expected to sell quickly. See the online version of this SITREP for a link to our ticket sales site.

Tickets remain at \$45 per head for current members and former members who attained 10 or more year's FBEU membership, and \$85 per head otherwise. Permanent and retained members with 10 or more year's FBEU membership who resigned or retired between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017 and who attend will be reimbursed, and therefore attend for free.

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary

Friday 9 June 2017