



# SITREP 26/17

## LF test questions – let the members decide

The operational test for LF Program positions was never meant to be a Station Officer test, or even an LF test (those competencies are gained on the SO and LF Programs), but rather an SF test that a Senior Firefighter could reasonably be expected to know without the need for further study. Unfortunately, consistent feedback from many SF members taking the test has been that it is often too difficult, or ambiguous, or is being marked too strictly.

These complaints led the Union to suggest a lateral solution - rather than relying on the Department to produce all of the questions, why not ask the Senior Firefighters who have to take the test to nominate our own questions? Even if only one in every 4 SF members proposed only one question each then it would still create an additional bank of over 400 peer-approved questions almost overnight. To its credit, the Department appears to like our idea so interested members are advised to get your thinking caps on now about questions that you think are appropriate.

## Operational Support dispute – update #1

Last week's SITREP 25 reported on the Department's attempt to employ permanent and retained firefighters as clerks in our Operational Support (OS) jobs to avoid our Awards' higher wage rates.

The dispute returned to the IRC today where it was agreed that the OS vacancies in ComSafe would be re-advertised to permanent members next week and if necessary following that - and as proposed by the Union - to retained members who, if successful, would then be offered permanent employment. The details remain subject to further negotiation next week, as does the Union's proposal to revert from OS Inspector to OS3 so that a position that is currently open only to some 150 Inspectors and LSOs will instead be open to 2,500-plus permanent members. The Department was directed to respond to all of the Union's proposed solutions, as set out in SITREP 25, by Wednesday next week.

### In brief ...

- Rumours have circulated since SITREP 22 that training on the Department's proposed eRecall system had stopped because the Union had banned it. Not true. The Union's last contact with the Department on the subject was an email from management confirming they were considering our proposed changes and would get back to us "soon". That was 16 June, almost a month ago.
- Thank you to the members who wrote for your very positive feedback on last week's item about the possible emailing of SITREP. We're now gearing up to start doing so shortly.
- An opinion piece today by the Sydney Morning Herald's Sean Nicholls has described the NSW Government's recent Fire and Emergency Services Levy backflip as "*Berejiklian's biggest backdown to date*". Nicholls went on to predict that "*the levy will not see the light of day again before the 2019 state election and probably never*" after "*Labor and the fire fighters' union had begun to run lines about the FESL being "a new \$1 billion tax on property owners"*". The Premier cannot complain she wasn't warned.

Leighton Drury  
State Secretary

Friday 14 July 2017