



# SitRep 16

## Recalls and kilometres – update #5

Our last update in SitRep 15 reported that *“the next SitRep on this issue will either confirm that all outstanding payments have been made, or that bans have been implemented.”* Neither has yet occurred however the Commissioner was this week threatened with industrial action, without further warning, from any time this week onwards unless the Department commits to pay all outstanding kilometre entitlements on the next and final pay day of this financial year, being Thursday 21 June. That isn't a long fuse, so members are also on notice for an imminent Code Red.

Any member who thinks this a bit hasty or unreasonable should read both the earlier SitReps and the latest letters from and to the Department on the issue (copies of which can be found as a link from the online version of this SitRep). The Department's letter of 14 May essentially argues that it didn't know what it was agreeing to in 2014, and that the greedy firefighters who are owed all of this money don't deserve it anyway, concluding with *“I trust you will not support individuals chasing windfall payments of this type”*.

This casual dismissal of lawful Award entitlements as “windfall payments” is indicative of a growing trend amongst FRNSW managers, themselves squeezed by budget cuts, to knowingly rip off their workers (ie you) in order make budget. This is not good or innovative management. It's wage theft, and we're not copping it.

## Another retained rip-off looms

Continuing on the theme of wage theft, the Department's advertisement last week for “Retained Unit Trainers” on \$41.49 per hour has triggered a new and unnecessary brawl. Our proposal of \$41.49 per hour (Captain's rate) for own-station training and \$74.52 per hour (Relief Duties rate) for training at any other station was agreed to in 2015 for the Gartan trainers, and therefore expected to be agreed again now. Not in post-Plus FRNSW. The Department's refusal will see the IRC notified of a dispute next week. More to follow.

## Double Plus Plan good (or else)

In George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*, “doubleplusgood” was part of the fictional language Newspeak, imposed on the citizens of the totalitarian state of Oceania, meaning excellent, best or benevolent. Big Brother has well and truly arrived at Greenacre, with members this week being directed (“from Me to You”) to watch management's videos extolling the virtues of their Plus Plan, or else. Confirmation of this occurring is to be emailed and recorded, with EOB and IT records to be checked by the FRNSW Thought Police.

Some may say that being forced to watch 40-odd minutes of corporate double speak is a massive waste of time. While the consequences of not watching the videos remain unclear (being sent to Room 101 perhaps?), the instruction issued by senior FRNSW management this week is no laughing matter. This management instruction (there is a link in the online version of this SitRep) from an organisation purportedly committed to stamping out bullying is unacceptable, and is therefore to be ignored.

The Union encourages members to view the Plus Plan spiel, and to provide feedback via the online survey if you wish, but no Union member (from Recruit to Chief Superintendent) should make any EOB entry or send any email confirming their Plus Plan indoctrination, or that the FRNSW instruction has been carried out.

This isn't about insubordination or industrial anarchy. It's about workplace dignity and respect. Any member who is challenged for observing this advice and ignoring the offending instruction should contact me directly.



## Plus Plan a Suss Plan?

Consistent word back from the management Plus Plan roadshow now underway has a new “Early Access to Defibrillation Program (EADP)” front and centre, with stations being assured that EADP is on the way not only for us, but for all emergency services. Including Police supposedly, which came as a surprise to our Minister when we met him this week. If Minister Grant (who also told us that he understands EADP to be on the backburner for FRNSW) was lying then he deserves an Oscar, so what is the Department doing?

## 260 Newcastle rescue and aerial allowances

The Department often flags changes on operational grounds, many of which make operational sense. There are just as many though that on closer inspection have little if anything to do with operations, and that are really just another excuse to save money by cutting services – or, in this case, our members’ wages.

For well over 12 months now the Department has been wanting to transfer the rescue appliance and staff from 260 Newcastle to 357 Lambton, citing the latter as a better operational location. The problem with the move, and the reason the Union has continued to block it, is that it would result in scores of dual-aerial and rescue qualified members at 260 each losing one or the other qualification, and thousands of dollars in qualification payments. Which of course is why the Department really wants to do it.

Unless the Department agrees to continue to pay all affected members all of their current allowances until they voluntarily transfer elsewhere, or retire, then the rescue appliance and staff will be staying put.

## Aerial fleet crisis

While on the topic of operational cover, the arrival last week at 27 Parramatta of a replacement aerial appliance from Melbourne’s MFB threw further weight behind our suspicion that the swapping of two major aerials for two heavy CAFS tankers in 2016 was really about papering over years of Coalition budget cuts and the emerging crisis in the FRNSW aerial fleet. Copies of the Union’s letter to the Department on the subject, and the Commissioner’s less than convincing reply, can be found as a link from the online version of this SitRep.

## Union Rules under review

During the recent Union elections I had the pleasure of speaking to hundreds of members on a range of issues, including ways to improve and increase membership participation and voting in our Union. On the back of those conversations and a need to tidy up the Union rules, attached as a link to the online version of this SitRep is a draft Rules document with all proposed changes highlighted, together with a brief narrative on the major proposals. I encourage members to have a look and discuss the proposals with your State Committee officials, with members at your station and on the Union’s forum.

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary