



## FBEU fighting on multiple fronts – update

SitRep 25 reported on the many issues, inquiries and disputes underway, partly in explanation of the three week gap between it and SitRep 24. That another four weeks have passed since SitRep 25 is not only evidence that our caseload remains heavy, but also of the difficulty we continue to find of late dealing with the Department and this NSW Government generally. Frankly, there's only so many times we can report that X dispute is still running before it starts becoming a bit pointless and tiresome.

Still, and as this edition of SitRep confirms, there's now light at the end of the tunnel on some of those disputes/issues, and already some good results on others.

## QF promotions sorted

SitReps 23 and 25 reported on the delays being experienced by permanent members seeking promotion to Qualified Firefighter rank owing to problems with the Department's training accreditation. It ended taking us several weeks longer than expected, but we were able to reach agreement this week for an interim 3 point arrangement that ensures no member is disadvantaged in terms of promotion or pay while the Department's compliance issues are resolved. Reflecting the (unfortunately all-too-rare at the moment) spirit of cooperation on this issue, we also agreed on a joint set of words to announce it:

*From April this year, Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA) compliance reviews have temporarily prevented access to and/or assessment of some of the competencies required for progression from Firefighter to Qualified Firefighter.*

*Ensuring ASQA compliance has taken longer than anticipated for four competencies. The FBEU and FRNSW have therefore worked together, to construct an interim 3 point interim arrangement, so that Firefighter progression to the QF rank and rate of pay is not delayed, due the recent and or current unavailability of these competencies.*

*The 3 point interim arrangement is as follows:*

- 1. The following four competencies will not be required for progression from Firefighter to Qualified Firefighter until May 2019.*
  - PUAFIR302B Suppress urban fire*
  - PUAFIR303B Suppress wildfire*
  - PUACOM001C Communicate in the workplace*
  - PUACOM005B Foster a positive organisation image in the community*
- 2. Firefighters who progress to Qualified Firefighter before the satisfactory completion of the competencies listed at point 1 will be required to complete all four competencies by November 2019, and failure to do so may lead to demotion to Firefighter and the mandatory achievement provisions of the Award's subclause 13.5.*
- 3. Firefighters who progress to Qualified Firefighter before the satisfactory completion of the competencies listed at point 1 will remain eligible for further progression or promotion (e.g., to SF, LF, etc.) until November 2019, when all four additional competencies will then be required for any further progression or promotion.*



# SitRep 26

## Plus Plan now Minus counter terrorism

SitRep 19 announced a Union campaign to cover up the Plus Plan's provocative new "medical response" and "counter terrorism" signage on FRNSW appliances. Since then, Union officials have regularly attended stations to cover the offending signage (see 62's pump in Commissioner's Corner #695). This action has already partially succeeded, with the Department recently ordering new stickers without the "counter terrorism" shield and wording. Still, our campaign continues so please contact your State Committee official or the Union office if your station's appliance receives any "medical response" signage.

## Firefighters' issues in the NSW Parliament

The NSW Government is looking increasingly wobbly after suffering a 30% swing and losing Wagga in a by-election bloodbath earlier this month. Most pundits thought a Coalition win in NSW was a forgone conclusion, but repeated backflips and factional infighting have seen the Berejiklian Government take on the same whiff of death as their federal counterparts. Roll on 2019. The business of Parliament continues in the meantime though, and there are two pieces of legislation important to firefighters coming up.

SitRep 2 reported that the Opposition was preparing draft legislation to support firefighters suffering from occupational cancers, in close consultation with the FBEU. Labor's Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Guy Zangari MP, will next week introduce the **Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018**.

The other Bill of direct interest to FBEU members was mentioned briefly in SitRep 25 - the Government's **Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2018**. The Union has briefed the Opposition and minor parties on our concerns, and on our hope for some improvements like the amendment of the *SERM Act* to extend the current employment protection provisions for volunteers to cover FRNSW firefighters as well. Recent correspondence between the Department and the Union on the proposed amendments to the Fire Brigades Act can be found with the online version of this SitRep. We'll have more to say in SitRep 27.

## In brief...

- the Union has now given the Department and MSA until the end of this month to satisfactorily resolve the numerous **MSA SCBA** problems before we ban the sets and order them off all trucks.
- the **recall kilometres** dispute remains scheduled for arbitration by the IRC in November. The Union was due to file its submissions and evidence yesterday, however this was pushed back until next Tuesday to allow the parties consider a possible settlement. More next week.
- next Tuesday is also the deadline for the Department to agree to new arrangements once **Z Relieving ends on 30 September** (see SitRep 25/17) after months of negotiations and a final meeting yesterday.
- the **Union's Annual General Meeting** will be held in the Trades Hall Auditorium, Sussex Street, Sydney commencing at 1000 hours on Wednesday 24 October. An agenda will be circulated together with notice of corresponding sub-branch meetings shortly.

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary