



AWARD UPDATE - FINAL PERMANENT AND RETAINED AWARD DECISION HANDED DOWN

As previously indicated, the IRC today handed down its final decision in relation to the Permanent and Retained Awards.

Disappointingly, they ultimately agreed with the positions put by the Department in the final hearing in relation to the operation of the new rescue allowances which will lead to a significant decline in our current rescue capability across the state.

We are still dumbfounded that the Department would so strongly put this position before the IRC and would denigrate our own service delivery, not to mention compromise the safety of the community in this way.

That representatives of the Government took that position and ran with it with such force and refused to listen to the FBEU, which is an organisation made up of Firefighters who are experts in this space, speaks volumes about the priorities of the Minister for Emergency Services, and the Government more broadly.

Commissioner Fewtrell could and should have intervened strongly at any point to make sure we, as he always says, are "*prepared for anything*".

Yesterday's SitRep noted that no uniforms were present at the hearing, as well as throughout the entire process, except for the uniforms we requested for cross-examination.

For decades, Government has ignored the dire state of volunteerism, continued to provide record funding to volunteer agencies that duplicate the services provided by our professional Firefighters, and has wilfully ignored the efficiencies that would be secured by removing duplication in the rescue space. We will be taking stock and, along with the membership, working out the best way to force Government to pay proper respect to the skilled work that we know you do day in, day out.

As per yesterday's SitRep, this will have significant impacts on current rescue arrangements across the state and is a matter we will need to give serious consideration to over the coming weeks as to how we move forward, prior to implementation on 26 February next year.

The IRC did leave open the idea that the parties may seek to return and make further claims in relation to this matter at some future date noting the lack of evidence before them on this issue, which is something we are strongly considering.

The IRC has also determined the other outstanding clauses including further drafting of the new allowance clause, the new On Call allowance, Executive Officer Hours of Work, the quantum of the Retained Rescue allowance, and the RPAS allowance.

A link to the decision can be found [here](#).

We will consider the implications over the coming weeks, but I think it's safe to say that we will need to reevaluate how we perform rescue work while the matter is resolved.

Despite ending on a frustrating note, it's important that we all take a second to remind ourselves that despite being forced into arbitration as the guinea pig for a new IR system, the amazing work we all put into this process has



ultimately resulted in 14% pay increases over 3 years, various new allowances and award provisions, and not a single loss of condition. We should all still be proud of this outcome and the work of us all in getting there.

I will be asking State Committee to hold an extraordinary meeting next week to discuss the outcomes of the Award and next steps - more to follow.

UNDERPAYMENT ALERT – BACKPAY SECURED – COMMS LFS

A year ago, the FBEU identified a potential underpayment, and alerted the Department, seeking a fix to the cause and an audit with backpay.

While it took longer than we would have liked, this week the Department advised us that just under \$14,000 will be backpaid to Leading Firefighters in Comms who acted up as Station Officers within Comms, but who were not paid the Communications Officers allowance while acting up. Backpay will be processed in the coming pay period for all underpayments going back six years.

They have also assured us that the system will be fixed to prevent this from occurring again.

Thank you to the members who alerted the FBEU to this error. It is a timely reminder to always check your payslips and to contact the FBEU if you believe your wages or allowances are being paid incorrectly.

In Unity

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Drury', is positioned above the printed name.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary