



SitRep 16/2021

Member Win – Staffing Shortage

Members from Bathurst will be back paid for work last year that wasn't correctly paid at the relief rate.

In order to manage chronic staffing shortages at Blayney Station over August and September 2020, FRNSW used step "e" in 2008/22 which allows a Retained Bravo appliance to be moved up to cover the shortage. In this case, the Bravo appliance was from Bathurst.

FRNSW had aimed to avoid paying relief rates by moving up the Bravo. However, everyone who got on the appliance and went to Blayney, as well as those who responded to the station when the bells went off, were entitled to the relief rates as they were all attending due to a staffing shortage.

I'm pleased to say that FRNSW has now agreed to make these payments at the correct rate. Well done to the crew at Bathurst for knowing their rights and ensuring hard won Award entitlements are upheld. Approaches that attempt to dodge the cost of overtime miss the core problem around staffing, but we are ready and willing to work with FRNSW to increase staffing across the board to make sure every fire station has safe minimum crewing of four at all times.

We aren't aware of the Bravo appliance being used like this elsewhere but if it has, please get in touch.

Attacks on Minimum Crewing at Peak Hill

Members and station delegates have raised the issue of continuing attacks on minimum crewing at Peak Hill Fire Station. The FBEU issued a [Code Red](#) in January 2020, which is still in place, **banning Out-duties and Relief at any location where a Class 2 Urban Pump has been replaced with a Class 1 Tanker unless there is a minimum crew of four available firefighters.**

This Code Red was issued to push back against the Department's attempt to undermine safe and effective minimum crewing of four on an appliance. If a minimum of two members on an appliance is allowed to become the norm at Peak Hill, there is a real risk that this will become an accepted practice across all stations in NSW. This not only affects the safety of members but also the safety of the communities we serve.

I'd like to extend my thanks to all members and delegates who have been diligent in upholding this instruction in Region West Zone 1. You are doing the heavy lifting in fighting for the safety of us all. It was terrific to see so many of you on your recent delegate meeting where we were able to discuss this together.

If members are asked to arrange or perform a Standby, Out-duty or Relief at Peak Hill or any location where there is not a minimum crew of four available firefighters, they are instructed to contact the Union Office, their delegate or a State Committee Official.

SLANT and Retained Attendance Management

There have been a number of questions in regard to the status of the Sick Leave Analysis Tool (SLANT) and Retained Attendance Management. As of this Friday, 2 April 2021, attendance management for Retained will be



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reactivated. SLANT management will continue to be in place for Permanent members and consideration will continue to be given to the impact of the pandemic on any firefighter who has their attendance brought into question. Any member impacted by this is encouraged to contact their delegate or the Union Office for further support.

Presumptive Legislation for Firefighters

Last week we received an email from former Deputy Captain Neil Parsons. Neil was a retained firefighter and member of the FBEU for 25 years who was diagnosed with prostate cancer following a routine blood test.

With his permission, I want to share some of what he wrote.

Had it not been for the FBEU ensuring that legislation was passed recognising that members who served with the brigade for more than fifteen years and suffering from particular types of cancer be classified as workers compensation, I would not have been able to financially support myself and my family. Thankfully, all medical expenses have been covered and I encourage members to support the union as I never thought I would be in this position.

I strongly urge all to have regular medical checkups as I had no signs or symptoms to indicate my condition. Once again, I'm most grateful for the hard work that the union put into having this legislation passed.

I appreciate Neil taking the time to write to us and allowing us to share his experience. It's an important reminder to be proactive about our individual health but also highlights the significant impact of the collective wins we are able to achieve by working together.

The success of this piece of legislation was the culmination of a lot of years of hard work by a lot of FBEU members. There is, as always, more work to do, particularly in limiting exposure and improving the conditions in which we work but our work in the health and safety space is increasing and I encourage all members to be engaged in it.

Easter Sunday and Additional Public Holidays

Overtime for Retained members:

Retained members are reminded that any and all work performed between 0000 and 2359 hours this Easter Sunday, 4 April 2021, will be paid at overtime rates (*Retained Award* subclause 6.10.3), except for Retained members at the Royal Easter Show who are already on a higher rate of pay (see subclause 6.8).

Consolidated Leave for Permanent members:

Permanent members who work between 0000 and 2359 hours this Easter Sunday, 4 April 2021, will be credited with the same number of hours of consolidated leave as the hours actually worked on Easter Sunday (*Permanent Award* subclause 6.4.2).



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Calendar of Public Holidays:

FBEU members can access a copy of the official NSW Public Holidays calendar [here](#). Easter Sunday **as well as** any day listed as an **'Additional Day'** in this calendar is an Additional Public Holiday for the purposes of Overtime for Retained members and Consolidated Leave for Permanent members.

May Day Events – Registrations Open

May Day is a day of unity and solidarity, and a great tradition for the FBEU so let's make this year a good one. Staff and SCOM Reps are organising across three events on Saturday 1 May 2021. All members and their families are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Register below and we'll provide more details about locations, events, and after events as they come to hand.

Parramatta: 1030hrs Saturday 1 May 2021. Meeting point to be confirmed. [Register here](#).

Hunter: 1000hrs Saturday 1 May 2021. Meeting point to be confirmed. [Register here](#).

Wollongong: 1000hrs Saturday 1 May 2021. Lowden Square (next to Wollongong Station). [Register here](#).

Some unions are also working on an activity in Bathurst. We will be in touch with members in that area when more information is available.

If there is a May Day event in your town and you would like support to organise a FBEU contingent, please get in touch with your SCOM Rep, organiser or the Union Office at office@fbeu.net.

FBEU State Committee Election

Voting materials were posted to members on Monday 29 March 2021 and polls will close in a month's time at 1700hrs Thursday 29 April 2021. You can find the full election timetable [here](#).

Please ensure that the [list of candidates](#) sent out last week is clearly displayed on the noticeboard in your station/workplace.

Candidates have been offered the opportunity to submit a short bio supporting their candidacies which you can find on the FBEU website [here](#). The page will continue to be updated as candidates submit their information.

Any enquiries concerning this election, including issues around receiving ballots, should be directed to the NSW Electoral Commission via ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary