



# SitRep 24/2020

## **Wage Cuts – A kick in the guts, that keeps hurting**

As most members would know, last Friday the NSW Liberal government amended a regulation to implement a 12 month wage freeze for the 410,000 public servants in NSW. This will commence after each award expires, for us it will commence in February next year. The cost to workers is massive as it obviously has a recurring affect for the rest of a public servant's life. A senior firefighter will be roughly \$2200 worse off in the first year alone and every year after will have a compounding effect on your wage, entitlements and superannuation.

Since announced a couple of weeks ago, public sector unions, including the FBEU, have had many conversations with MPs and MLCs in Labour and the crossbenchers to gain support in disallowing the regulation in the Legislative Council. Those discussions will keep occurring up until the notice of disallowance is voted on.

Public sector union members are being asked to attend rallies electoral offices tomorrow between 11-12pm at electoral offices in the following suburbs: Baulkham Hills, Bega, Camden, Revesby, Epping, Engadine, Hammondville, Queanbeyan, Penrith, Port Macquarie, Tweed Heads, Muswellbrook, Dee Why, Naremburn and Tahmoor. If you want to show the Government that this wage cut is unfair and bad for the economy then please get in touch with the office for more details.

## **New Medical Work – It's hard to 'consult' with no info!**

Attempts to hold meaningful consultation discussions with FRNSW were cut short last week, with significant cracks appearing in the new medical work proposal (or lack thereof).

The Department admitted last Tuesday that there is no business case to support the proposed new medical work, its hypothetical implementation, or the extent to which members would turn out. FRNSW state that they lack the necessary statistical information to develop a business case at this point time. The FBEU have concerns that such a serious proposal could be considered without this important information, and have made clear to the department that without that information, these conversations are unproductive.

In addition, FRNSW have said that there were no discussions held before the signing of the MOU between NSW Ambulance and the Department, however the MOU itself says that extensive discussions have taken place. The FBEU has requested details of and correspondence relating to these discussions.

The FBEU is more than happy to consult with the Department about their proposals but, without any of these basic details about what the program is and why they want us to do it – it is very difficult to do so.

The new medical work discussions are a moving feast and I encourage delegates to participate in your Zoom meetings to get the most up-to-date info to share with members.

## **Overpayments – What to do if you get a notice.**

As advised in a SitRep 20/2020, FRNSW have completed a series of audits relating to retained members wages during the fire season and were to inform members of alleged overpayments and underpayments.



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With respect to overpayments members affected will be receiving notices from FRNSW advising them of the amount. In this same correspondence, you will be encouraged to ring a nominated HR representative who will talk through how the alleged sum was determined.

If there is disagreement with the amount after this first step then further discussions will take place between FRNSW and the Union. No monies will be deducted during this time.

The Union is urging members to question the figures in the first instance and involve us along the way.

## WH and S Organising – HSRs Meet with management

A team of FBEU HSRs alongside myself and lead organiser, Emily Mayo, met with FRNSW Management and Safety representative on Friday. The discussions were very positive and while the management in attendance were not 'decision makers' they looked fairly positively on the FBEU/HSR ideas to create a structure to allow HSRs to better share members thoughts and concerns and engage in genuine consultation into the future.

Emily and the HSR team will continue to talk with and share info about these discussions – and the decisions we need to make together to make WHS systems work better for you as they progress - with the growing HSR and Health and Safety Group via email and zoom meetings. If you would like to be a part of the group email Emily – [emayo@fbeu.net](mailto:emayo@fbeu.net) and she will include you.

I want to especially thank the sixty or so members involving themselves in this work – it's a privilege to see the FBEU getting active in this very important part of our work. A special congratulations to the group of FBEU member HSRs who are doing the hard work alongside staff and attended the meeting. You are the experts in health and safety and you know the systems what will deliver safer workplaces and practises. You did an excellent job in the meeting.

## Education & Training Realignment

Members in Education & Training have been fighting the cuts and changes proposed by the Department to training. At meetings held over the last month, the members at the ESA have created and endorsed an alternative proposal that would of seen no cuts to the size of training teams, more jobs for members and increased flexibility for trainers by extending the Flexible Trial Roster to all teams that have indicated an interest in this. The Department has ignored all but one component of this proposal (which was to stop the unnecessary move of BA/HAZMAT training from Technical to CLM), and is intending to proceed with the realignment.

If the Department is successful in pursuing this, it will have serious implications on all members. Their proposal would include reductions in Appliance Trainers, Rescue Trainers and FFIT Officers among others. If there are less trainers, there's less training. Simple. In saying that, there are some new positions the Department are proposing, but at the expense of existing trainers. For example, the Department is intending to cut appliance training positions by 2, so that they can fund simulation training, which under NHRV guidelines will not even be recognised as legitimate training.



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We have seen a very high level of participation of E & T members in the union meetings and discussions – this is terrific stuff. I understand E & T members are building and strengthening you delegate structures too – which is great for you and the while union.

Members at Education and Training will be meeting this week via Zoom to discuss next steps. If you would like to be on this Zoom, please contact Organiser Max Murphy on 0408617217 or email [mmurphy@fheu.net](mailto:mmurphy@fheu.net)

## Delegates Meetings

You can download a schedule of the current round of meetings [here](#).

Please contact the relevant organiser for a Zoom link and to confirm the meeting time – sometimes we need to change them because of clashes with emerging and urgent issues.

We anticipate lots of discussions about medical work, proposed wage cuts from the government and what we do about it and work health and safety organising to feature this month.

These meetings are a perfect opportunity for delegates to get the most up to date information, meet each other and to link together with each other, SCOM and staff of the union. The meetings are getting better and bigger as we progress and we plan to continue to use them as COVID19 restrictions lift, especially to bring members together in the regions and around shared issues.

If you don't yet have a delegate or want more info about the meetings contact the relevant organiser.

Our organising team are:

- Max Murphy – Regional West, Metro West, MS3 – [mmurphy@fheu.net](mailto:mmurphy@fheu.net) 0408 617 217
- Georgie Slater – Metro North, Regional North, ME3 – [gslater@fheu.net](mailto:gslater@fheu.net) 0417 924 151
- Jonathon Wright – Metro South (Minus MS3), Regional South, ME 1 and ME 2 – [jwright@fheu.net](mailto:jwright@fheu.net) 0419 753 305

In Unity,

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary