



SitRep 32

Recall kilometres dispute – Union vindicated #1

The Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) today handed down its decision in the long-running recall kilometres dispute, finding that the Union's interpretation of the Award is correct. The decision (there is a link from the online version of this SitRep) concluded *"there is no ambiguity on the face of cl. 9.8.1 of the Award"* and *"... on its terms, cl 9.8.1 requires the construction advanced by the [Union]"*. It also confirmed the Union's advice in SitRep 18/2018: *"To the extent that the [Department's] submissions pressed a construction of cl 9.8.1 which requires employees to submit a claim or verify if and how their gear was transported, I reject them."*

The long history of this unnecessary dispute can be followed through numerous SitReps stretching back to February, and shows that it took your Union eight months of letters, meetings, threatened industrial action, submissions, evidence and no less than five separate appearances before the IRC to simply confirm a clear and basic Award entitlement. The Union will now meet with the Department to discuss the timetable for the payment of hundreds of thousands of dollars in backpay to members. More to follow.

Berejiklian's FESL – Union vindicated #2

The Parliamentary Inquiry into Berejiklian's failed Fire and Emergency Service Levy (FESL) delivered its report today, finding *"That the NSW Government's failed implementation of the Fire and Emergency Services Levy was a poor public policy decision, undertaken without adequate understanding of the complexities of the issue or the impacts of the proposed reforms."* Firefighters are well aware of this Government's contempt for working people, with the FESL being just another case of the Coalition rewarding the big end of town (in this case, insurers) at our expense. The full report can be found as link in the online version of this SitRep.

New "corporate" uniform shelved

The Union's Senior Officers Sub-Branch met this week, with the new corporate uniform being one topic of discussion. The SOSB found the new uniform is less professional than the current FRNSW dress uniform (ribbons are not worn, for example), and that its issue to both firefighters and non-firefighting staff raises real industrial and safety concerns. The general consensus is that it also looks pretty daggy too.

The Union was not consulted on the new uniform, its purpose or its intended issue and members are therefore advised to continue to wear standard FRNSW duty wear or dress uniform until this occurs and the Union agrees to the uniform (most likely by a vote of members at a forthcoming Special General Meeting).

Blue cats eyes – an avoidable (and now banned) risk

Safety concerns have led the Union's State Committee to ban the installation by members of roadway hydrant markers. Working in the centre of roadways, with little or no proper traffic management in place while members heat and secure the markers, is an unnecessary and entirely avoidable risk that the Union recognises (as the NSW Parliament did with the introduction of a 40km/h speed limit at incidents) even if our employer does not. Stay safe, stay off the road and leave the roadway markings to council.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary