



SitRep 34/2020

Award 2021 – Preparations Under Way

As previously reported the FBEU is keeping a close eye on the NSW Government's attempts to cut wages, through wage freezes and increases less than the 2.5% in the wage policy. Having failed to get their changes through the Parliament they are now attempting to get them through the IRC.

At the same time State Committee has formed a group to start working on the 2021 Award. The committee consists of Retained representatives, Permanent representatives, a number of SCOM members and a range of FBEU staff. This group is coming together weekly to prepare for negotiations which should begin in the next couple of months.

To assist the Award Group in negotiating to improve your pay and conditions, we are finalising a survey to be sent out to all members, so start thinking about what changes you would like to see in our Awards. The survey will be sent out in the next fortnight, and it will help us to build a log of claims for our negotiations.

In addition to the NSW Government's attacks on our pay, FRNSW has signalled they are wanting major reforms (whatever that means) this time around, so it's vital we are organised and locked in around a claim we can stand together and take action to support.

Assist Ambulance Calls

The Union continue to receive an increasing number of concerns from members regarding assist ambulance calls. It's clear that both the volume of calls, and types of incidents are changing without acknowledgement from FRNSW. This includes some scenarios where members are quite clearly first responders without the capacity to conduct clinical assessments.

Given the exhausted state of BLS qualifications, failed consultation on the PAD proposal, and the lack of risk assessment on this work, this is a dangerous and ill-informed initiative both for firefighter welfare and the community. The Union recently wrote to Commissioner Baxter to request a meeting on behalf of a contingent of stations with concerning examples of these scenarios. That request has so far been completely ignored by the FRNSW leadership team. The State Committee of Management will be meeting next Thursday to consider the next course of action.

Authorised Hours – Retained Award

The FBEU is aware of a number of Area Business Officers and/or Zone Management Teams informing stations that their authorised hours have been cut, with no justification. We remind members that the minimum number of authorised hours each station is entitled to is an Award condition at 6.6.3. There are certain situations where your authorised hours can be reduced, but it must be in line with the Award provisions, and your hours cannot be less than the minimum number the Award allows for.



SitRep 34/2020

If your station's hours have been cut and you are entitled to more hours under the Award than you are being provided, we encourage you to use the full amount of hours that you are entitled to and ignore the numbers being provided to you by the Department.

We also remind members that authorised hours do not roll over, so if your station is entitled to, say, 80 hours in a month, you should use all 80 hours on SIMS, Engine Keeping, station management, station maintenance, and community safety activities such as hydrant checks. If you only use 70 of those 80 hours, then you will not have an extra 10 hours in the next month.

If you are unsure of how many hours your station is entitled to in a month, or you are getting pressure to use fewer hours than what the award entitles you to, get in touch with our Industrial team and they will be able to assist you in working out your hours, and pushing back against pressure from the Department. Authorised hours are important to ensure your station is looked after, and to protect your local communities. We will not accept the Department attacking your authorised hours and breaching the Award.

Health and Safety Representatives meetings – Every Month

We invite all HSRs – welcome to all the newly elected people - to join the FBEU HSR meetings. As you will be aware the FBEU has been very active around health and safety in the last few months and we want to continue that work with you in a positive, proactive and supportive way. These important monthly meetings will support you and link you together to do your important jobs and get active in issues effecting FBEU member firefighters from across NSW. Come to one or both.

The last Wednesday of every month 18:30 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85008643485> – NEXT MEETNG WEDNESDAY AUGUST 26

The last Monday of every month 12:30 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89752365818> – NEXT MEETNG MONDAY AUGUST 31

For more info about our health and safety organising contact Emily Mayo emayo@fbeu.net 0491 281 795

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary