



SitRep 4

It's time... to vote for our Boss

It's state election time. And FBEU members, our families and communities will shortly have the opportunity to be a part of deciding our next government. The State government of the day is very important to us because it is their policy decisions and commitments that decide the future of our budgets and all major policy that relates to our work, our services and our jobs. They are fundamentally our bosses.

We've asked NSW Labor, the Nationals, the Liberals and the minor parties, the NSW Greens and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers for their thoughts about our jobs and services (read our letters online) and they've responded. Well, some of them have...

We have had positive responses from the NSW Greens, and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers (available online). Neither of these parties will be in a position to form government however they may have significant influence in any minority government. We welcome their commitment and support for you, your jobs, our services and our union. NSW Labor has also responded positively to our letter and you can read their full response online. We particularly note their commitment to 200 additional firefighters in NSW (including additional jobs in Port Stephens, in Ballina and in Western Sydney).

The Liberal and National Parties have ignored us...

Given the responses (and lack there of) the FBEU will be campaigning in a number of important locations. We will also be advertising on radio in key electorates and will be promoting our jobs, work and services on social media.

We need your help:

1. For better fire services and respect for professional firefighters – put the Liberals and Nationals last.
2. To volunteer to hand out for the union and talk to voters about our work and fire services on Election Day (March 23) at Port Stephens, in Ballina or in Western Sydney contact the FBEU office.
3. Talk with your co-workers, family, friends and community. We want a government who supports us, our frontline services and our work – not one that cuts our budgets and ignores us.

For more information or to discuss the campaign contact your Sub-Branch Rep or the Union office.

SOSB bans delivery of bad news

A well-attended meeting of the Union's Senior Officers Sub-Branch held last month voted to ban the delivery of disciplinary letters unless they were responsible for the disciplinary decision. In other words, that the person who decides the penalty should deliver the penalty. Members are therefore instructed that no FBEU member is to deliver any Professional Standards correspondence and/or any correspondence confirming a disciplinary penalty unless they were the decision maker (i.e. the officer who determined the penalty). This instruction is to remain in force and be strictly observed by all members until further notice.

Paternity leave dispute

The Union Office has received a spate of complaints from members recently after the Department rejected their Award entitlement to one week's paid paternity leave because it has coincided with their rostered annual leave. The Award says no such thing, and the Union has given the Department one week to confirm their agreement. A copy of the Union's letter can be found as a link from the online version of this SitRep.



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Transfer Register Review – 28 March deadline reminder

As reported in SitRep 3/2019, permanent members who have moved since they first applied for residential priority status have until 28 March to notify the Department of any change(s) of address without penalty.

There are two important points for members to bear in mind.

Firstly, you cannot rely on a change of address submitted by ESS - the Award's subclause 28.4.4 requires that you are to inform the Manager Operational Personnel (MOP), even if you already changed your address on ESS or your change of address didn't affect your residential priority status. The Department is working towards automated Transfer Registers using ESS, but for now members are still required to notify the MOP also, who must in turn acknowledge receipt of your notification and make the necessary changes.

Secondly, an email from the Department this week is asking members with residential priority status to check your recall km details on SAM and to advise Operational Staffing if "any part of these details are incorrect". To be clear, the only obligation that members have in this process is to ensure your residential address records are correct for the entire period since 14 November 2014. Members are able to check the other details and should inform the Department if errors are detected (both their way and yours), but this is not your responsibility. It is the Department's responsibility to ensure that base stations and kms payments are all correct and paid according to the Award without the need for members to either check or claim beforehand - a responsibility it refused to observe for almost 5 years until forced to do so by the Union and the IRC.

Any member who is unsure if this review affects them or how the Transfer Registers operate should contact the Union office for advice before 28 March.

Recover at Work Plans and roster dispute

We have a new dispute in the IRC over whether or not permanent firefighters on workers comp can be forced off their roster to work suitable duties under a Recover at Work Plan (RAWP). The Union contends that unless the member agrees then suitable duties must be undertaken on the member's ordinary roster, and that any work performed outside of that roster is to be paid at overtime rates. Unsurprisingly, the Department does not agree, and is arguing for the right to punish and force members who were injured at work onto day shift.

Following several unsuccessful attempts at conciliation, the IRC has listed the matter for arbitration on 29 May. More to follow.

In Brief

- The Union has written seeking a meeting to discuss Department's notice this week to permanent firefighters regarding the Award's requirement to state the nature of illness on M/Cs. More to follow.
- I congratulate Comrade James Lavery (COS A Pltn) who is taking up the office of Sydney Central Sub-Branch Secretary, replacing Comrade Bob Callow who has replaced Comrade Kamarah Pooley as the Sydney Outer West Sub-Branch Secretary. I thank Comrade Pooley for her time on the State Committee.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary