



SitRep 40/2020

AGMs – 2020

Last week's SitRep gave notice that Annual General Meetings will be held in the period of Monday 26 October 2020 to Friday 6 November 2020. This year AGMs will be station based due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 restrictions.

Registrations to hold a meeting are currently open until 1700hrs 9 October 2020. Delegates or contacts for meetings should register meetings and will be provided with the information needed to hold them. Information on how to register is included in the AGM notice [here](#).

In addition to AGMs, the Secretary and members of State Committee will run briefing sessions by Zoom between 15 October 2020 to 20 October 2020. These briefings are open to all members and will talk through the big issues for consideration at the station-based AGMs. Please register to attend one of these briefings [here](#).

For more information about this year's AGMs, see [SitRep 39](#).

Underpayments for Relief Work

The FBEU has been made aware of eight firefighters who performed relief shifts at 218 Batlow during the summer bushfires. The department has paid the firefighters who performed these 24-hours shifts at normal rates instead of relief rates.

The local crew was made unavailable by the department after their mammoth effort to save their community that meant they were on the fireground for days on end.

We support the decision to rest and rehabilitate the local crew but those coming in to cover the subsequent shortages should have been paid at the relief rates. The underpayment of these firefighters is significant.

If any firefighter has yet to speak to the Union about this particular set of relief duties, or any that are similar at other locations, please get in touch with your Organiser.

Blayney Fire Station

A meeting was held at Blayney Fire Station last Friday with Region West Zone Management, Deputy Commissioner Jeremy Fewtrell, local RFS Management, Blayney Shire Council and the crew present.

The aim of this meeting was to have some clear action on the safety issues at the Station, outlined in [SitRep 38](#), that didn't involve cohabitation of the RFS and FBEU members. This was an option being driven by the Department, RFS Management and Blayney Shire Council. Members made it perfectly clear that this was an unacceptable solution that didn't address their safety concerns at all.

The outcome of this meeting was an agreement between all parties to advocate for more funding to David Elliott MP so that there could be a new station built for the RFS that was not on the same land as the FRNSW



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Station. This is in addition to FRNSW indicating that there would be \$200,000 allocated to refurbishing the FRNSW Station to address the WHS concerns of members. Deputy Commissioner Fewtrell agreed to this and has agreed to meet with the Station again in November to provide an update.

While this issue is not resolved, the members are in a significantly better position than they were prior to this dispute beginning and are to be commended on their fight to hold the Department accountable.

Members Working Outside of Hours

There have been a number of reports of members being pushed to attend online sessions outside of working hours including briefings, seminars and information sessions. There is no requirement for members to attend these sessions if they fall outside of the hours you are rostered to work.

With more people working from home across the workforce, there has been a blurring of work and home life, and we want to ensure that members recognise that unpaid work outside of your regular hours is unacceptable. If you have concerns about this, please speak with your Station Delegate or Organiser.

Promotional Working Group

Members may recall that a Promotional Working Group was agreed to during the last Award round, as there is a myriad of issues with promotions and career progression within the Brigade that members are telling their officials need to be addressed.

There will be an Expression of Interest process for the formation of this group. If you're interested in being a part of this process, please email office@fbeu.net with your name a short summary of what you would like to see this group achieve.

Retained Working Group

In addition to the Promotional Working Group, we'll be forming a Retained Working Group in the lead up to the next Award to better inform our decision-making process and help address any issues that directly relate to Retained members.

If you're interested in being a part of this process, please email office@fbeu.net with your name and a short summary of what you would like to see this group achieve.

Public Sector Wage Freeze

Yesterday the Industrial Relations Commission awarded public sector workers a negligible pay increase of just 0.3 per cent, effectively upholding the NSW Liberal Government's wage freeze. We contacted members about this appalling decision last night – you can read the email [here](#).



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Putting money in workers' pockets would help lift our economy out of recession but the NSW Liberal Government would rather punish workers, whatever the cost.

We will need to take a closer look at the Commission's decision and what this means for us moving into the Award round but this certainly gives us an idea of what FRNSW will come to the table with. We'll continue to keep you updated.

Secretary's Briefings

I'm continuing to hold short fortnightly briefings every second Tuesday at 1100hrs. They are set for 30 minutes and are open to all delegates. Here's the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86817288238>.

The upcoming briefings are:

Tuesday 13 October 1100hrs

Tuesday 27 October 1100hrs (this one may be cancelled for AGMs – more info to come)

Tuesday 10 November 1100hrs

Tuesday 24 November 1100hrs

They all use the above Zoom link.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary