



SitRep 42/2020

AGMs – Corrections

We have [previously outlined](#) some temporary changes in place for our AGMs this year because of COVID-19.

On Wednesday we published a [list of more than 100 station-based AGMs](#) for 2020. [These additions and changes](#) need to be made to the list. The additions are meeting registrations that were inexplicably caught in our email filter and the minor changes in times are largely a result of conflicting scheduled training in the Illawarra.

State Secretary Briefings

Our State Secretary and State Committee Briefings by Zoom are underway and it's not too late to [register](#) for them. In the meetings I'm talking through the AGMs and where we are up to with the Award, taking a look at the last 12 months and talking through the challenges and opportunities we face together going into the future. I encourage members to come to one of the briefings – you can register [here](#). You will be sent the Zoom link shortly beforehand.

Our Award – Your Pay and Conditions – Your Say

As part of the AGMs we will be asking members to vote on a draft log of claims for your Award.

What is a log of claims?

A log of claims is a list of things we take to the bargaining table. They are the beginning of negotiations, from our side. Your employer will also have a log of claims – we don't yet know what will be included.

How did we build the draft log of claims?

The FBEU's Award Working Group, made up of staff, elected officials and members from both permanent and retained firefighters, built and distributed a survey open to all members. The survey was promoted through SitReps, delegates groups, meetings and conversations.

In the survey we asked what you would like to try to improve in your Award and the action you'd be willing to consider taking to achieve it. We also asked if members were aware of the current attempts by the NSW Liberal Government to cut our pay by freezing wage increases and fundamentally changing the already unfair wage policy.



SitRep 42/2020

More than 1200 FBEU members completed the survey. The working group analysed the results and provided reports and recommendations to SCOM who then developed the draft claim – based on what members told us they wanted.

The DRAFT log of claims

Please note this is a summary. For strategic reasons we are not including details of the claim.

Both Retained and Permanent Awards

- Full 2.5% pay increase
- No trade-off for or of wages and conditions
- Establish minimum crewing
- Establish parameters around training provisions
- Establish NAIDOC and Cultural Leave and look at Union leave and rights

Permanent

- Establish parameters for country relief
- Create flexible country relief positions (the old Z reliever positions)
- Increase opportunities of placement for injured workers
- Cashing out leave in excess of 4 weeks
- Outstanding claims from last round – including paternity leave
- Management of excess hours for Executive Officers

Retained

- Cancel payment when deployments are cancelled
- Ops support positions – in line with ComSafe
- Retained to Permanent– pathway
- Career progression (based on skills, not years)
- Rescue/HAZMAT allowance
- 1 day leave instead of 3 (remove consent)
- Pause percentages while on leave
- Clarity around, and improvement of, Engine Keeper provision
- E-recall list for one-off relief duties

What's next?

At the AGMs, you will be asked to vote the items of the claim IN or OUT. Simple as that. (There is the opportunity to abstain – more on that further on). To have your say, attend your meeting and vote.



SitRep 42/2020

Remember these are the things we are going to ask for – and they are included in the claim because YOU asked for them to be. Your employer may reject them entirely, entertain some of them, or propose trade-offs for them. They may also bring their own claim.

We cannot control our employer's response and so we will come back to members and tell you what they say, then decide the next steps. We don't simply get things because we asked for them.

We intend to ask for a 2.5% pay increase. This is a matter of principle. The Government's current attempts to cut this may mean that your employer will not agree to 2.5%. It will be up to members to decide what we do about that.

Why is my suggestion not in the log of claims?

The FBEU Award Working Group included the things that were widely and deeply felt – in other words, things that were clearly important to many. We did not include things that split the membership.

It is not reasonable to include every single thing. If you suggested something in the survey that's not there – and you feel strongly about it – then speak with other members and build interest in it for next time.

Can I add things to the log of claims now?

No. All members have been invited to participate in the processes to form this claim. It would be entirely undemocratic to allow any individual member to add or change the claim.

What should retained and permanent firefighters do about their specific claims?

It has become custom and practise for permanent firefighters to abstain from voting on the interests of retained firefighters and vice versa. However, remember you are only voting on a claim so it would be very reasonable for you to 'back in' each other's claims – especially those from mixed stations and areas where you regularly work together.

Once negotiations are complete, and when and if the Award goes to a vote of members (e.g. is not arbitrated by the IRC), the discussion about abstaining may be a different one.

Who will be negotiating?

Your negotiating team will be made up of members of the FBEU Award Working Group:



SitRep 42/2020

Anastasia Polites – FBEU Staff Lawyer
Helen Sourlas – FBEU Staff Lead Industrial Officer
Georgie Slater – FBEU Staff Organiser
Mick Nairn – President
Tim Anderson – Country Sub-Branch Secretary
James Lavery – Inner City Sub-Branch Secretary
Daniel Finney – Retained Sub-Branch Exec member
Giacomo Arnott – Retained firefighter and FBEU Industrial Staff.

State Secretary, Leighton Drury, and Lead Organiser, Emily Mayo, may also be involved at times, depending on how things progress.

What happens after the AGMs?

Once you have decided on your claim through the AGM process, we will use it as our negotiating base. Your employer will also put in a claim and the Government may make interventions that impact us.

We will report back to members throughout this process to ensure you are part of making the decisions about our next steps.

We may need to fight for improvements to our conditions and pay, we may need to fight to protect what we already have.

I am encouraged by the huge number of meetings being held over the coming weeks – we're likely to have more members participating in this year's AGMs than usual.

I am certainly encouraging all members to participate along with me – nothing about us, without us. I am very aware that when we have to make big decisions about this Award – to fight, or not - it will be members that take action, or not, and members need to be engaged and involved, every step of the way.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact your State Committee Official, Organiser or office@fbeu.net.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary