



SitRep 43/2020

AGMs and Award Claim

Over the last couple of weeks, more than 120 members joined me in Zoom briefings about the AGMs and the Award, and to take a look at the work of the year behind us and the work ahead. It was terrific to see so many members, particularly delegates, participating.

We have more than 100 meetings registered for our 2020 AGMs. This means that despite the global pandemic and the curve ball it's thrown at us, it's likely we will have MORE members participating in these AGMs than we have had in recent years. This is terrific.

Delegates and members who are running the meetings have been sent initial information including a briefing note and a short guide to assist in running a meeting. If you are running a meeting and have not received this, please contact office@fbeu.net.

The Agenda for the meeting is [here](#).

The Minutes referred to in the Agenda are [here](#).

For a background on these meetings and the draft log of claims read [SitRep 42](#). For more information about this year's AGMs, see [SitRep 39](#).

For the COVID IMT event info from FRNSW, see [here](#).

The registered contacts for meetings will be sent the motions, voting forms and everything needed before the meeting. Once you have held your meeting, please return your forms by scanning or clearly photographing them and sending to office@fbeu.net. Alternatively, you can return them by fax to (02) 9218 3488 – but this is increasingly unreliable technology.

If you need any information or assistance, please contact your State Committee Official, Organiser, or the office.

WHS Committee – Signed, Sealed and Delivered

Firefighters, HSRs and the FBEU more broadly have just achieved a very significant win for all with the establishment of a Health and Safety Committee.

FBEU HSRs have elected 13 of their cohort to form the HSR part of the committee, and the committee will be co-chaired by three HSRs - two permanent and one retained. We congratulate all HSRs on their recent election. It's been great to see you come together to build safety systems and processes that will better deliver for you, at the frontline.

Work health and safety is union business and we are really happy to be supporting HSRs and members on all things safety.



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All HSRs are welcome to attend the monthly HSR meetings. These will be the key mechanisms for your committee members to gather and share information. The upcoming meetings are next week. They are short and sweet, and you only need to attend one of the two.

Monday 26 of October 1230hrs <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89752365818>

Wednesday 28 of October 1800hrs <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85008643485>

The FBEU has also established a monthly WHS News for HSRs. The second one went out yesterday. If you're an HSR and have not received it, please contact office@fbeu.net.

You can read the agreement and the terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committee [here](#). Once again, congratulations to all involved in negotiating and establishing this. It's a very exciting development for HSRs, the FBEU and all firefighters. The first meeting of the Committee with HSR representatives and employer representatives will be held soon and we'll report any developments to all members.

Meal & Refreshment Allowances

Earlier this month, one of our members alerted us to the fact that the amounts for meal and refreshment allowances had not been updated in the Travel & Expenses section of the SAP portal.

The Permanent and Retained Awards both state that on 1 July each year, these allowances will be increased in line with a direction from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The Industrial team's investigation confirmed that the ATO had made the direction and that the increase should have been applied on 1 July 2020.

When the Union wrote to FRNSW pointing this out, they claimed that a technical issue had caused the underpayment. As a result, employees who received a meal or refreshment allowance between 1 July 2020 and today will have the difference back paid.

This is a great union win and highlights the importance of you, our members, getting in contact when things don't seem right.

If anyone received a meal or refreshment allowance in that timeframe and doesn't see backpay applied in the next two pay cycles, please contact us.

Regional Visits

Our Organisers have started visiting regional stations again. They've been targeting those without a delegate or that have issues around their station amenities.

Organiser Max Murphy has been out into Region West Zone 1 and 2 over the last fortnight. Meetings were held at Canowindra, Gilgrandra, Coonamble, Walgett, Brewarrina and Nyngan - all now have a plan to elect a delegate.

There have been a number of issues identified at these visits relating to work health and safety, the delivery of training and the lack of appropriate equipment. While it's certainly a positive that we've been able to pick up



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on these issues, it shouldn't have had to come to a visit from one of the Union's Organisers to identify them. Having a station delegate means that there's someone there who can raise these issues with the office, and someone the Union can skill up to progress the issues.

If you would like a visit to your station to talk about any issues you may be experiencing, to elect a delegate or to see how the station can become more active in the FBEU, please touch base with your Organiser.

Medical Certificates

In [SitRep32](#), we noted that FRNSW has been demanding unnecessary and excessive medical information from members who have been on sick leave when they provide medical evidence that clear them to return to work.

We noted that your medical information should only be provided to the employer if it has an impact on your ability to perform your duties, and that this determination should only be made by your medical practitioner.

Since then, FRNSW has continued to overstep and is trying to position itself not only as your employer, but also your GP, instead of accepting evidence provided by your medical practitioner. FRNSW has spent months refusing to work with the FBEU on this matter, so we are stepping in to uphold your rights at work.

We are directing all members to contact us immediately if FRNSW asks you to provide additional medical information beyond what a medical practitioner has already supplied. Do not supply them with further information until you have spoken with us.

We will always support the health and wellbeing of our members. This does not need to come expense of your right to keep your medical history private.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary