



# SitRep 9/2021

## Award Update

Our Award claims are currently before the Industrial Relations Commission. Failing conciliation, we have a hearing before the Full Bench set for 2-4 June 2021.

As well as our claim for a 2.5% pay increase, our application incorporates our member-endorsed log of claims which includes the following.

For the Permanent Award:

- Inclusion of minimum crewing
- A definition of country relief
- Stronger training provisions
- Introduction of cultural leave
- Injured firefighters to be given priority for operational support positions

For the Retained Award:

- Inclusion of minimum crewing
- Changes to progression including better access to permanent positions
- An engine keeper clause
- A clause to make the allocation of relief duties fairer
- Introduction of rescue and HAZMAT allowances
- Pausing of attendance percentages when on leave
- Introduction of cancellation payment for deployments

What happens now?

We have dates set over the next three months for the submission of evidence to support our claim, directions hearing, conciliation and a full bench hearing where conciliation is not successful.

As noted in [SitRep 8/2021](#), we are arguing for a 2.5% pay increase on the basis that the majority of our funding comes from the insurance industry, not the NSW Government, meaning withholding our pay increase would be a windfall for insurance companies. We are engaging expert economic advice to support this claim amongst other evidence.

We are continuing to look at options for progressing some issues with FRNSW without the need for changes to the Award and will participate in conciliation through the IRC on 31 May 2021.

Members may also be aware that the Department issued an update on the Award negotiations from their perspective this week. In it, they had some information about what they described as an “e-recall list for one off relief duties”. Understandably, this has caused some confusion, so we wanted to make our position on this clear.

In the log of claims endorsed by you, our members, there is an item that requests the creation of a system to ensure that the existing allocation of relief duties for Retained staff is done fairly and transparently.



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Is it not our intention to change the way relief/overtime is currently allocated across the workforce other than it being more transparent and fair for Retained.

The intent is to stop certain individuals from collecting all the relief hours for themselves because there's no accountability or transparency in how that work is allocated. We have been very specific in asking that this new system not be called "e-recall" and we will not support a system that links Retained staff in with the existing e-recall system used by Permanent staff.

If you have any further questions on this, please get in touch with us.

## **Member win – working in excess of 24 consecutive hours**

A member was recently back paid after the Department had initially refused to pay an award entitlement that states any time worked in excess of 24 consecutive hours is to be paid at double time. The member contacted the Union noting that they had worked 25 consecutive hours due to a one-hour recall prior to their regular 24-hour shift but had not been paid at the correct rate for that extra hour.

If any other member has worked in excess of 24 consecutive hours without being paid double time for those hours, please contact the Union.

## **Home Fire Safety Visits**

We had a productive meeting with FRNSW this week, discussing numerous concerns around the recommencement of the Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) program. FRNSW has agreed to return to consultation with HSRs and the Union on an appropriate risk assessment and has also reaffirmed their commitment not to discipline members concerned about this work.

FRNSW has said that the state-wide targets associated with this work are 'aspirational' and that they will not be enforcing quotas on stations though reports from members suggest this is not necessarily the case. I encourage all members to keep communicating with your delegates and organisers about this issue.

Your employer has a primary duty of care to ensure workers are not exposed to unnecessary risks to their health and safety. Until such time as these risks are identified and mitigated, we encourage members to adhere to FRNSW's own policy of "If in doubt, stay out". We also encourage members to report any issues through NIIENMs so that these can be appropriately addressed.

We will continue to update members on this issue as it progresses.

## **Assist Ambulance**

The issue of Assist Ambulance calls has reared its head again despite FRNSW's commitment to developing clearer protocols around how calls are received and coordinated. Members have reported numerous instances of crews being asked to assist with private patient transport providers in non-emergency situations.



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During the last 12 months it has become clear that FRNSW is not prioritising firefighters in this issue. Members are not the labour force for emergency services in general. I encourage all members to continue reporting issues around Assist Ambulance to the Union.

## Personal Protective Clothing

The Department often rejects ESCAT requests for replacement personal protective clothing (PPC) for what is blatantly budgetary reasons.

The Supply of Personal Issue Uniform and PPC Procedures note that items of uniform and PPC should be replaced when they are no longer serviceable or when they can no longer safely be used for the purpose for which they were designed. If any piece of your safety gear meets this criteria, you should put in an order to replace it and if that is rejected, take it up your chain of command.

If this fails, contact the FBEU. You need to have proper safety equipment at all times.

## HSR Monthly Briefings Back

Monthly HSR briefings facilitated by the FBEU are back via Zoom. All HSRs are welcome.

The next meetings are:

**1800hrs – 1830hrs Wednesday 10 March 2021** (held every second Wednesday of the month onwards)

**1300hrs – 1330hrs Thursday 11 March 2021** (held every second Thursday of the month onwards)

This month we will report on:

- The Health and Safety Committee meeting held this week
- The State of the Stations Audits – critical info for HSRs
- Home Fire Safety Visits – and health and safety
- General discussions and questions

Pop these monthly meetings in your calendars and you'll receive the Zoom links before the meetings.

## State of the Stations Audits

Congratulations delegates, members and HSRs! We've already received more than 100 station audits and the early results from across the state are confirming what we've anecdotally known for some time.

Here's some interesting preliminary info:

- Half of the station audits report no extraction fans in the engine bay.
- Almost 40% of audits say that turn-out gear is stored in the engine bay.
- More than half of stations reported no separate change rooms for women and men firefighters.
- Only 55% of station audits report that their HSR's details are displayed in their stations.



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If an audit has NOT been completed at your station, please work together to get it done. We need ONE from every station. Contact your organiser for assistance or further info.

Max Murphy – **Regional West, Metro West, MS3** – [mmurphy@fbeu.net](mailto:mmurphy@fbeu.net) 0408 617 217

Georgie Slater – **Metro North, Regional North, ME3** – [gslater@fbeu.net](mailto:gslater@fbeu.net) 0417 924 151

Jonathon Wright – **Metro South (excl. MS3), Regional South, ME1 and ME2** – [jwright@fbeu.net](mailto:jwright@fbeu.net) 0419 753 305

This is a critically important step in working together to make our stations better. The report that comes out of the state-wide audits will support members to demonstrate the issues we face to our employer and address them collectively, educate the public and lobby the government for funding to fix our fire service.

## FBEU State Committee Elections

After nominations for State Committee of Management opened 23 February, there were a few reports of issues with the form provided by the NSW Electoral Commission.

We've been in touch with the Electoral Commission and they have confirmed the issue was with the form they provided. It meant that on some devices the form auto populated when printed. They have provided us with a new form that is available both on their website [here](#) and on the FBEU's website [here](#).

If you are nominating for a position and have any issues with your form, or have any other questions, please contact the NSW Electoral Commission at [ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au) or the Union Office at [office@fbeu.net](mailto:office@fbeu.net).

In Unity,

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary