



SitRep 3

This is a reissue of SitRep 3 as there were two mistakes in the SitRep issued last night.

The SitRep issued last night stated that we were putting in a claim for a 5% pay rise, this was a formatting error that was meant to say 2.5%. This has been fixed below, with an explanation provided as to why we are locked in at that 2.5%. (And why this is bad for you.)

It also stated that the next meeting was on 31 January 2019, we meant 2020.

We apologise for these mistakes and as always you can contact our office on 9218 3444 if you have any questions.

NSW PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES POLICY AND WHY IT IS BAD FOR YOU

Since the Coalition came to power in 2011, each Award round we have to deal with the restrictive NSW Public Sector Wages Policy.

The Policy applies to the entire Public Service and other Government Sector Agencies including emergency services like FRNSW, NSW Police and NSW Ambulance Service.

It basically says that the biggest cost to Government is employee related – meaning your wages and workplace conditions cost more money than what the Government thinks it should and they don't like it.

Wage increase claims are capped up to a maximum of 2.5% (for federal agencies it's as low as 2%!) and it instructs agencies like FRNSW to try and achieve "savings" wherever it can particularly during an Award round. This means that we along with everyone else in the public sector can't claim for more than a 2.5% wage increase unless we are;

- a) willing to find the money to fund the wage increase by sacrificing an existing condition which we won't be able to get back once it's gone or
- b) we successfully run a case in the courts that meets some very prescriptive criteria around the equity and value of work performed.



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This policy even goes as far as to help the bosses with their dirty work by offering examples of how to rip off workers for example: make rosters more flexible, reduce overtime, pay recall at a standard hourly rate for the 4 hour guaranteed period, not pay higher duties unless its more than 5 days, limit the number of sick days taken without needing a medical certificate, stop the accrual of leave whilst on sick leave without pay, forcing workers to take blocks of annual leave to reduce balances.

An added factor this round, is that in 2021 FRNSW are expected to fund a mandatory superannuation increase. This may potentially reduce any pay rise negotiated e.g. the Teachers Federation have already had to agree to an increase of 2.25% for 2021.

We are living in a time where wages are stagnant, but the cost of living continues to rise placing pressure on you and your families. Your Union has been key in establishing an alliance of Public Sector Unions covering Emergency Services and will pursue a longer-term strategy to challenge this policy.

FBEU CLAIM

As members of the FBEU you **are** the Union. Together we stand united in the ongoing fight to maintain and improve your working conditions and wages.

Last year, in light of a looming Award round, we asked you to tell us what workplace, industrial and Award issues mattered the most through an all member survey, workplace meetings, discussions with SCOM members, calls to our new Industrial Relations Team and at AGMs.

It was overwhelmingly clear that as a collective, you were not willing to cop reductions in pay and conditions or make any trade-offs. Entering negotiations, this formed the fundamental basis of our position which we would not compromise on. We also added the following general claims;

Retained

- 2.5% increase to take effect as 17 February 2020 (regardless of when the Award is made)
- Model clause of Family and Domestic Violence Leave (fully funded)
- Commitment to the ongoing maintenance of technology systems
- Update the provisions surrounding conduct related matters
- Special leave to apply when being stood down due to matters including discipline investigation
- Consistency in the formula used when calculating special leave

Permanents

- 2.5% increase effective as of 17 February 2020 (regardless of when the Award is made)
- No trade off of wages or conditions



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- Introduction of an intra state deployment definition
- The ability for PCOS whilst on annual leave
- Easier and fairer access to LSL
- Modern clauses of Family and Domestic Violence Leave (fully funded)
- Update provisions surrounding conduct related matters

FRNSW CLAIM

Before FRNSW can “officially” approach us to negotiate, they have to ask permission from a government Taskforce as to what they’re bargaining parameters are. This should typically occur at least 6 months prior to the expiry of the agreement. This time, informal Award discussions started in early October 2019 and FRNSW put on the table a proposal (SitRep 24 and 25 of 2019). Their claim aimed for a two-year Award and grab bag of proposed attacks on your conditions that included:

Permanent

- Cuts to overtime provisions
- Major changes to rostering that would let them transfer you across platoons and rosters.
- Review the definition of an emergency meal
- Introduce a banked leave
- Attacks on minimum crewing
- Introduce casual employment as a way to reduce costs
- Remove 28 day restriction on periods of higher duties
- Open the opportunity to perform higher duties across all ranks
- Introduce special roster for times when you are attending training so they can avoid paying you overtime
- Recovery of alleged overpayments under \$300 as one lump sum
- Remove the transfer list for country areas and replace it with a merit based system

Retained (provided in late November 2019)

- Recovery of alleged overpayments under \$300 as one lump sum
- Captain tenure to be restricted and open to a merit process
- Captains course (ties in with the Tenure)
- Deletion of clause 22 (Reports and Charges)
- Casuals used for surge capacity
- Make Clause 25 (Protective Clothing and Uniforms) consistent with Permanent Award
- Delete reference to ‘appropriate accommodation’ in Clause 29 29

These initial claims were outrageous, particularly in the circumstances where you as members have been working tirelessly at the frontline as NSW is on fire from border to border. It’s stunning to even



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imagine that at the same time your employer would make an attempt to do away with key working conditions.

We rejected this wish list and demanded that FRNSW come back to us with a serious position.

In response, FRNSW came back to the table in January 2020 with a revised claim. A big chunk has been abandoned and they have now put the following;

Retained

- Reneged on a two year agreement and are only offering a one year deal so they can pursue a “major reform” agenda.
- No backpay of a 2.5% increase should our negotiations extend beyond the February expiry date
- Change the Protective Clothing and Uniforms clause to align with those in the permanent Award
- Correct an anomaly between both Awards re parental leave provisions

Permanent

- Reneged on a two year agreement and are only offering a one year deal so they can pursue a “major reform” agenda.
- No backpay of a 2.5% increase should our negotiations extend beyond the February expiry date.
- Remove the 28 day restriction on higher duties
- Introduce a dual badge role for Ops Support (SO) position
- Review emergency meal definition

The following has been agreed to in principle to be negotiated between the parties, with any final decision to have membership approval;

- Introduction of Family and Domestic Violence leave (Agreed in principle – beneficial).
- Part Change on Annuals (agreed to in principle – beneficial to members)
- Changes to the Intrastate Deployment definitions (language is being drafted)
- Access to Long Service Leave (details still in discussion)
- Updating provisions relating to conduct matters

We were hoping to have held further conversations with the membership in rounds of meetings late last year or early this year but the unprecedented bushfire crisis, the few changes that are being proposed and the looming expiry of your Award has prevented these meetings from going ahead to this point.

SO WHERE TO FROM HERE?



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1. We have locked in a meeting with FRNSW on 31 January 2020 following their scheduled discussions with the Taskforce.
2. The refusal to agree to pay an increase of 2.5% beyond 16 February 2020 disadvantages our members compared to the rest of the public sector and we are considering a range of options available in response to this.

We will report back as soon as there is any developments.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Majority of the workplace and industrial issues you identified as being important to you, can be won outside of an Award round, and we will be working together with you, delegates and SCOM members to achieve outcomes.

We know that there's a move by FRNSW to casualise the workforce and change long standing practices that cost money. We must be ready for this fight against major reform now and into the future.

Expression of Interest Open - FBEU Delegate Training

What is the training?

The initial training is a one-day introductory training day designed to:

1. Give an overview of the role of the union delegate.
2. Introduce delegates to each other face-to-face to build solidarity and connectedness across the membership.
3. Give an overview of the FBEU – our history, our structures, our rules and our campaigns and activities now and into the future.
4. Provide delegates with information and skills to help you fulfil your important role.
5. Link you to staff in the union office who have different roles to support you.
6. Help delegates to make an organising plan for your station/workplace/crew or around a specific issue.

We are building the program as we go and will use the contributions of delegates as we progress to shape the day.



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The FBEU intends on developing additional training opportunities for delegates, members and activists and build on this program in the coming years.

In addition to the one-day training we are introducing welcome teleconferences for new delegates. Please register for one of these if you would like. We will send teleconference details closer to the dates.

Who is the training for?

The Delegate Training is for all interested FBEU delegates. FBEU delegates are elected by their workplace crew or station. Training is open to current retained and permanent delegates as well as Sub-Branch Executives and SCOM Reps.

Spaces in each session are limited and we will require minimum numbers at each session.

We will confirm your training and make necessary arrangements following the expression of interest process.

Do I attend my training on paid time?

The FBEU currently does not have provisions that allow delegates to do union activity on work time. This is certainly something we should work toward. This means we will need delegates to find time to do the training if you want to do it.

The FBEU will meet reasonable out of pocket expenses for travel and accommodation where it is necessary to allow participation. This is particularly the case to allow regionally based delegates to participate.

In addition to the one-day training the FBEU is running a series of “welcome” teleconferences for Delegates – these will be shorter, and delegates will be able to dial-in from anywhere. These will not replace training but, are an alternate and additional way to connect and engage.

All delegates should also be linked to their SCOM Rep and Organiser for support and Organisers can work one-on-one with new delegates.

How does it work?

Elected delegates please register your interest in a training day or welcome teleconference [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7ZMST8B). (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7ZMST8B>)

Once we have an idea of the numbers, we will confirm your training day and be directly in touch with you to give you the details of the location and things you need to prepare before you come. The



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Sydney training will be held at the FBEU Office in Surry Hills at this stage although we are looking at alternative locations in Western Sydney.

We will release further dates as the year progresses are happy to plan and organise additional days and locations where we have a number of interested delegates – speak with your organiser or SCOM Rep to make a plan.

We are aware of the challenges faced by those who travel for work, retained firefighters, those with family responsibilities, and those on Special Roster, for example, and we will do all we can to make the training available to all delegates over time.

If you are not an elected delegate or you don't have a delegate at your station/workplace get in touch with Emily Mayo (via office@fbeu.net) and she will link you with an organiser to support you to get an elected delegate and get you/them trained.

Current Proposed Dates – Open for Expression of Interest

MONTH	DATE	DAY	PLATOON	ONE DAY DELEGATE TRAINING
Feb	17	Mo	C	SYDNEY
Feb	25	Tu	C	GOSFORD
Feb	26	We	B	NEWCASTLE
March	6	Fr	A	SYDNEY
March	9	Mo	D	TWEED
March	10	Tu	C	LISMORE
April	6	Mo	B	TAMWORTH
April	7	Tu	A	ARMIDALE
April	16	Th	D	SYDNEY
May	14	Th	B	SYDNEY
May	20	We	D	WELLINGTON
May	21	Th	C	DUBBO
June	3	We	D	PORT MACQUARIE
June	4	Th	A	COFFS HARBOUR
June	16	Tu	C	WOLLONGONG
June	17	We	B	NOWRA
June	22	Mo	C	SYDNEY
June	29	Mo	D	BATHURST
June	30	Tu	C	ORANGE
July	21	Tu	D	SYDNEY
July	28	Tu	A	ALBURY



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August	4	Tu	B	SYDNEY
MONTH	DATE	DAY	PLATOON	NEW DELEGATE TELECONFERENCES
Feb	19	We	A	1300HRS
March	12	Th	C	1930HRS
March	31	Tu	D	1300HRS
April	20	Mo	B	1930HRS
May	26	Tu	D	1930HRS
June	24	We	C	1300HRS
July	13	Mo	D	1930HRS
August	10	Mo	B	1300HRS

If you have questions or ideas about the training program please get in touch with Emily Mayo via office@fbeu.net

Other News from your Organising Team: In Brief

Siren: Our new membership system and organising

The Organising Team will soon be testing your new membership and database system in our work and we are very excited. Most union systems and databases are not built with organising and collectives in mind – this one is!

All your union staff have been involved in the development of your new system and we think it will deliver all we hope and more. It flies in terms of the membership and admin processes we need it to do, for you. The part of it that will allow the Industrial Team to record and respond to your inquiries and matters is amazing.

The most exciting for us is the organising components of the system.

The system allows us to track our work with groups of members – at station level and around issues and activities. We look forward to showing members the system and how it helps us do our job and benefits members individually and collectively.

It's a work in progress – and it's progressing beautifully. FBEU members deserve systems that work for you.

New Organiser to join the team!

The Organising team is about to welcome a new addition. Your Organising Team is your organising, campaigning, delegate development and communications team, there's a lot of work to be done.



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Jonathon Wright will join our team in the first week of February. We had 25 applications for the position, we interviewed five candidates, all of who were outstanding. Jonathon is moving from Victoria to join the team and has most recently been organising in the Communications Workers Union including organising Triple 0 workers. Jonathon was a rank-and-file delegate in the community sector prior to being employed in the union movement.

Jonathon will be the South Organiser joining Max in the West and Georgie in the North with the organising areas based (with some small differences) around the FRNSW Zones. Metro East stations will be divided up across the team to ensure all organisers have some Sydney work areas and all members have an organiser allocated to them.

Emily will be coordinating all the work of the team and linking with SCOM, leading the delegate training and development work and getting her teeth into the communications and campaigns work we need to ramp up to win. We've also got a very ambitious plan about developing new resources for members and delegates – these are in real need of updates.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary