



SitRep 06/2022

Award

Throughout this pandemic, essential workers have demonstrated their capacity to show up and deliver for the community, each and every shift.

COVID-19 has exposed the years of cuts made to FRNSW budget, whether related to training, crewing, promotional pathways, or resourcing. As workers we kept the wheels turning regardless. Even when bosses were too busy re-writing Awards to order RATs.

As we move towards bargaining for fairer wages and conditions, it is imperative that FRNSW and the State Government adopt the lessons from this crisis.

We don't work from home and we don't work for free or in unsafe conditions.

Mass meetings aren't an option for us in the current climate. With this in mind, SCOM have endorsed an approach for bargaining:

1. Members are encouraged to participate in an [Award survey](#) by Thursday 30 January
2. The FBEU bargaining team will review and make recommendations to SCOM
3. SCOM to report back to members seeking endorsement of a Log of Claims.

Members, pandemic or not, your say is crucial right now.

Complete the Award Survey [here](#)

FBEU-Endorsed Health & Safety Rep Training

This week the Union commenced HSR training with the aid of the Workers Health Centre. Quality training is exceptionally important to the role of HSR's and is an important counter balance for decisions made by decision-makers who aren't on the front-line and who do not work in our worksites.

Here's what one of HSR's had to say:

"Training gave us clarity on what our role is as HSR's and most importantly the role of FRNSW as an employer. As firefighters, our job is always dangerous and HSR's play a very important role in balancing decision-making"

Existing HSR's and those looking to express interest can find more information [here](#).



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Vaccination Policy Update

This week the Federal Government announced TGA approval for the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. Throughout the mandate consultation period, members expressed a desire for FRNSW to accept future TGA approved vaccinations. Through our collective efforts FRNSW adopted this request into policy.

FBEU will be discussing this matter for FRNSW as a matter of urgency. More to follow.

COVID Workers Comp

The FBEU has, over the last few months, been encouraging FRNSW to look into workers compensation for firefighters who suspect that they have contracted COVID 19 whilst performing their role for FRNSW. FRNSW's view throughout the pandemic has been if a member contracts covid then sick leave is to apply, even if the exposure took place whilst on shift.

The FBEU has sought advice regarding clause 19B of the Workers Compensation Act, this has confirmed that if a person has attended their place of work within FRNSW in the 7 days prior to contracting Covid-19, it will be presumed that the contraction occurred in the workplace, therefore the individual will be entitled to workers compensation.

As per regulation, all workers compensation claims must be substantiated with evidentiary support. We have received advice that in the case of claiming workers compensation for Covid-19 the process will be as follows;

- Members are required to lodge a NIIEMS form, this will notify FRNSW of the exposure and trigger the appropriate responses to access workers compensation (This can be done remotely and retrospectively).
- Members will need to provide proof of positive infection in one of the following forms;
 - Proof of positive PCR test, text message notification from pathology provider is sufficient.
 - Proof of positive RAT and receipt of lodgement through the Service NSW app
 - Medical certificate
 - If members are required to be off work for more than 7 days a medical certificate will be needed to continue on workers compensation.

The FBEU is advising all staff who believe they have contracted COVID- 19 due to their employment with FRNSW to apply for workers compensation using the aforementioned method and request recrediting of sick leave.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary