



SitRep 11/2022

Award Update

Yesterday your FBEU Bargaining Team met with Department Representatives in our fourth bargaining meeting.

This meeting was an opportunity for the Department to respond to the claims put forward by FBEU Representatives on behalf of Members.

Despite correspondence from FRNSW to all staff on 11 February, FRNSW bargaining representatives are well-aware that the vast majority of FBEU Members take great issue with the agenda proposed by the employer in this round of bargaining.

Unfortunately, at this stage in negotiations it seems the parties remain quite far apart in their positions with the Department not in agreement on any of the key aspects of our Log of Claims, namely improved consultation, and engagement with employees.

We understand the Department has expressed that our Log of Claims is extensive and presents significant changes to the Award. They have however been on notice since our first meeting that the claim would go predominantly to improving consultation and disputes provisions to foster better industrial relations between the parties, increased Firefighter input in decisions that affect you and ultimately, a safer workplace.

And this is exactly what the Log of Claims endorsed overwhelmingly by Members does.

We are disappointed that the Department are yet to see the huge benefit in our proposed Award positions not just to Firefighter and community safety but to their own bottom line. Less disputes between the parties means less money wasted on lawyers and industrial staff and more money to invest in things that really matter like infrastructure, training, and increased Firefighter numbers.

This is what we remain focused on for these negotiations and will continue to aim to deliver prior to the expiry of the current Awards on 25 February. A further meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 22 February.

In the meantime, in order to ensure Members are fully apprised of the process, if the parties are unable to reach agreement on a new Award by the expiry of the current Awards, the parties are both required to file in the Industrial Relations Commissions our preferred version of the Award with conciliation by the Commission to follow.

FBEU is hopeful this will not be required given that what we are seeking is entirely reasonable, largely within government wages policy and ultimately not only beneficial to Members but also to the Department. However, to ensure we are fully prepared your Bargaining Team is working towards preparing the relevant material for the Commission.

Members will continue to be updated as negotiations progress.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary