



SitRep 12/2022

Award Negotiation Update

This week the Department and FBEU met in relation to Award negotiations. This was our final scheduled negotiation meeting ahead of the current Awards expiring today.

At this meeting it became apparent that a key sticking point between the parties is the length of the Award. The Department are maintaining their position for a two-year Award which would take them past the State Election next year.

We have maintained our claim for a one-year Award which delivers a quick pay increase and the necessary structural changes to the Award to ensure that firefighters are properly consulted and have input into their workplace in a positive manner. This would also set the scene for continued discussions over the next twelve months with a view to delivering much needed investment and reform in our fire service over the next year and in the next round of Award negotiations.

FBEU is not prepared to accept delaying that opportunity for two years merely for the political expediency of this Government and the Department and therefore, as previously flagged, may reconsider our claim.

Regarding the other aspects of our log of claims, the Department had agreed to further consider our proposed consultation and disputes clauses and have committed to providing a further response. The FBEU have not received this response.

The FBEU is still also awaiting further information from the Department, in particular the cost-savings associated with some of the Department's more reasonable claims such as a regional training roster and changes to the off-shift training provisions to allow us to give these provisions further consideration.

As a result, the FBEU have filed in Industrial Relations Commissions our claim for further discussion and conciliation in that forum.

In the meantime, as members are no doubt aware, industrial relations is clearly looming large as an election issue. Years of an extremely restrictive government wages policy and a conservative approach to worker's rights has resulted in various other industries taking action.

As a Union we support and stand with our comrades, including nurses and transport workers, as they take action in support of their claims for better and safer workplaces. These industries have been in dispute for many months and while they are at a different stage in the bargaining process to us and are operating across different industrial jurisdictions with their own respective government departments and agencies, ultimately as public sector workers we are all facing similar issues because of lack of Government investment in essential services.

We have made sure those Unions know they have our support, and those relationships will be increasingly important in the lead up to the State Election.

State Government and the Department still have an opportunity to avoid this kind of disputation with their firefighters. We hope that they take the opportunity and come to the table with a resolution.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary