



Award Negotiations Stall Temporarily, SOSB Bans Discussed

In our last sitrep we updated members in relation to Award negotiations advising that we had managed to secure some time, if limited, with FRNSW to discuss your Log of Claims for Award negotiations.

In a complete about-face however, over the weekend FRNSW unilaterally cancelled our all-day meeting scheduled for Monday advising that they would not meet due to the Code Reds issued in relation to the SOSB on Friday.

As per Friday's Sitrep, the issuing of the Code Reds were not related to Award negotiations but came about as a result of resolution of the SOSB following a failure by FRNSW to resolve numerous ongoing concerns affecting members of that sub-branch. This was made clear to FRNSW who did manage to find the time on Monday to meet to discuss the Code Reds.

FRNSW acknowledged that many of the concerns that resulted in the Code Reds were valid and agreed to take action to resolve some of those concerns.

Meanwhile, we continued to make clear that we did not agree that FRNSW could or should, avoid good faith negotiations on the Award and as such, we were able to bring them back to the bargaining table on Tuesday to continue discussions.

While discussions seemed positive around the room on Tuesday, today the parties were back before the IRC where once again lawyers on behalf of the Department continued to push to avoid further negotiation between the parties and simply press on for the Awards to be arbitrated by the IRC.

We successfully argued against this course of action, highlighting the value in further discussions between the parties on the issues contained in your log of claims.

As such, the Commission has agreed to provide for a full day conciliation on 20 March. In the meantime we have written to FRNSW today to attempt to schedule in further meetings over the next two and a half weeks to continue discussions.

Given the productive nature of Tuesday's conversation, we hope that negotiations between the parties can continue and we are able to avoid any further escalation of this dispute. We note however should negotiations not continue in this manner or should there be further avoidance of good faith bargaining by FRNSW we are prepared to implement further action if it becomes necessary.

You will continue to be updated as negotiations continue.



FRNSW Disputes Health Checks Code Red

In a further escalation of disputation between the parties over health checks, FRNSW on Friday afternoon filed a dispute with the IRC over our current Code Red in relation to Health Checks.

We won't repeat here all the ongoing and numerous issues with the Health Checks system or FRNSW's refusal to discuss a proposed resolution as contained in our Award Log of Claims (the Health Screening Program) but reinforce to members that the Code Red remains in place until further notice.

The current health checks system has been failing members since its introduction and it's our clear view that the program can be better delivered via a model that actually screens you for the occupational injuries you suffer as a result of your job.

In the meantime if any member is having any issues or concerns in complying with this Code Red please immediately contact the FBEU office via email at office@fbeu.net and we will be in touch.

Opening of Oran Park Fire Station closes Rosemeadow

The Government on Monday finally opened the much anticipated and needed Oran Park Fire Station. But the opening of the new Fire Station was soon overshadowed by the news that it was only made possible by the closure of Rosemeadow station, with FRNSW directing the fire truck from that station to be deployed to Oran Park.

As Firefighters we have been highlighting the need for new Fire stations for over a decade. In 2015 the NSW Government promised to open two new fire stations, both Oran Park and Marsden Park by 2018, however their own documents showed that these fire stations were not planned to be delivered until 2024.

On Monday, one month out from the state election, conveniently Oran Park did finally open, but unfortunately the announcement was no more than a piece of political theatre designed to hide the fact that up to 52 fire stations have been earmarked for closure due to a lack of commitment to new firefighters to staff those stations.

The opening also required Rosemeadow fire station to be closed and unable to respond on Monday as their appliance was redeployed to Oran Park in order for the Minister to have her photo taken in front of a shiny new station. This left Rosemeadow with a spare appliance lacking in vital and basic equipment such as radios and hoses.

The FBEU ensured the community was aware of these facts on Monday and publicly called on the Government to address the lack of investment in the NSW professional fire service and the depletion of resources needed to adequately protect the community.

SO Promotion Selection Process

After many months of delays and significant workforce planning issues resulting in direct staff shortages, last month FRNSW finally advertised a selection process for promotion to SO.

We have been contacted by numerous members with concerns regarding the process for selection.



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We have today written to FRNSW outlining the concerns of members and in particular highlighting the fact that FRNSW advertised that 120 would be taken to interview when in fact they have only moved forward with some 80-90 applications. A copy of our letter can be found [here](#).

The FBEU has made clear to FRNSW that we do not wish delay the selection process but hope to meet with them to discuss the concerns of members and review the process jointly. We have also called on FRNSW to abide by their own commitment to interview the full 120 applicants and consider applications further following interview.

Members will continue to be updated.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary