



In this issue:

IRC formally makes 2023 Permanent, Retained & Death and Disability Awards

Consultants Inquiry

NCAT decision

IRC formally makes 2023 Permanent, Retained & Death and Disability Awards

This morning in a hearing before the Industrial Relations Commission, the 2023 Permanent, Retained and D&D Awards have been made.

These Awards deliver significant reforms and benefits to members and our profession, locking in comprehensive consultation provisions, minimum safe staffing and promotions and a new health screening program, just to name a few of the improvements. The Awards also contain a 4% wage increase and new allowances for non station-based positions.

In relation to the D&D Award, the proposed change to retained Off Duty Death and Total and Permanent Incapacity is unfortunately still outstanding as Treasury requires further information from the D&D fund.

The FBEU has been assured that a commitment has been made for this change to be delivered as soon as possible. At the hearing today, FRNSW made the following commitment:

“The parties agree that prior to 25 February 2024, when the Award is due to expire, the parties will, by consultation and agreement, develop a new formula pertaining to the benefits provided to retained firefighters covered by the Award in the circumstances of Off Duty Death and Total and Permanent Incapacity referred to in clause 11.4. The purpose of this new formula will be to provide stability and consistency in the benefit payable. Where agreement is reached between the parties, the Government, and the Fund prior to 25 February 2024 the parties agree to seek a consent variation to this Award to insert those provisions into this Award.”

Further, Emergency Services Minister Jihad Dib has also committed to implementing this proposed change as soon as possible as per the attached correspondence.

Final copies of the Awards will be published on our website shortly.

The 4% pay increase will be back paid to 26th February 2023, and the superannuation increase commences from 1st July 2023. Nonstation-based allowances and the extension of the CAPS allowance for Officers is payable from today. We understand that pay increases and back pay will commence being paid from 2nd November 2023. Back pay of the non station-based and CAPS



allowances to today may be delayed slightly, but will be processed as soon as possible by FRNSW Payroll.

I want to again thank all members for your commitment and solidarity in delivering these Awards. FRNSW leadership couldn't ignore your unity during these negotiations, and your ongoing support and solidarity to each other was the single most important factor in achieving these Award improvements.

The work, however, continues. Negotiations on the 2024 Award will commence almost immediately, and the implementation of the 2023 Awards is ongoing. The Log of Claims for the 2024 Awards will be presented to the membership at the upcoming AGMs. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Consultants Inquiry

In [Sitrep 40](#), we discussed the NSW Government's inquiry into the use and management of consulting services, coordinated by the Public Accountability and Works Committee. In particular, FRNSW's diabolical performance in attempting to explain the substantial use of public money to fund the 'Plus Plan', described by one member of the committee as a 'Mickey Mouse exercise'.

Members can find a video recording of both sessions on the following links: [FRNSW session](#) [FBEU Session](#).

Following the inquiry, FRNSW have submitted responses to questions taken on notice which you can read [here](#). As those answers weren't entirely accurate, FRNSW were forced to correct the record again [here](#). The significant matter which remains unanswered from the inquiry is how the agency lawfully funded a key Plus Plan consultant to the tune of \$500,000 in circumstances where FRNSW have been unable to produce any form of contractual documentation in line with NSW Public Sector Procurement Rules.

NCAT decision

In [Sitrep 21](#), it was noted that the missing contractual documentation was subject to a GIPA (freedom of information) application filed by the FBEU. The application sought to produce contractual documentation between FRNSW and the consultant, which the Union argued had to have existed for FRNSW to discharge public money lawfully.

When no such documentation was located by FRNSW, that matter was escalated to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) and heard before a Senior Member in early August. And, just in time for the NSW Information Privacy Commission's '[Right to Know Week](#)', NCAT handed down a decision on the matter which you can read [here](#).

In short, FRNSW have been ordered to conduct further discussions with members of their senior staff, including those in Procurement & Finance, in an attempt to identify the whereabouts of the contract, before reporting back to all parties in November.



Why is this important? **The Plus Plan is emblematic of a more systemic cultural problem in FRNSW which we must seek to resolve.** Every cent of the FRNSW budget that does not prioritise the operational needs of Professional Firefighters should be openly scrutinised, particularly in circumstances where members are struggling to get the things they need to get their job done safely, and where the community are seeing an unprecedented up-tick of fire fatalities across FRNSW jurisdictions.

FRNSW's inability to locate any form of contractual documentation suggests significant issues of maladministration and poor governance. These are systemic issues that do not occur in a vacuum. If FRNSW is to become an organisation that backs its members on the front line, this must be weeded out.

On that note, the FBEU have recently obtained further GIPA documentation detailing FRNSW's latest 'strategy' venture, a \$500,000 engagement with consulting firm Deloitte for a '2050 Vision' project. The engagement is described as follows:

"In 2017 FRNSW developed a five-year corporate strategy – the Plus Plan – consisting of a funded portfolio of 37 objectives. As the Plus Plan nears the completion of its lifecycle, FRNSW has committed to developing a '2050 vision' and using that point-in-time as a long-term horizon for environment scanning"

Looks like we still have some way to go.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

