



Government's 4.0% pay offer

Yesterday, the Treasurer announced an offer of a 4% wage increase for NSW public sector workers, plus a .05% increase to your superannuation.

While this is an improvement on the 2.5% (minus super) wages cap of the previous Government, it is below what we are seeking and needs to be considered in the context of other claims we are making in our award negotiations.

This 4% wage increase has been offered to all public sector employees on a one year deal, and comes with additional commitments from the Government. This includes the establishment of a new Industrial Relations Taskforce which will aim to implement an interest-based approach to industrial negotiations, overseen by the IRC.

You might be asking what that means for firefighters. The short answer is, until the taskforce finalises it's work we won't know for certain but it has been suggested by the Government that they intend to implement a modern and more effective system for award negotiations which will allow us to translate the efficiencies and productivity gains of your work into real pay increases, and remove the old process of effectively selling off our conditions in return for wage increases. This new system and legislation is slated to be put to Parliament in September.

The taskforce will also work with the IRC to ensure it is properly resourced and empowered to actually resolve the myriad of issues raised there.

Many of you will never have had to engage in an industrial or WHS dispute, and I hope that remains the case, but for those of you, like me, who have seen the resources and powers of the IRC stripped under the previous Liberal government, we are hopeful that these changes will make a huge difference to our ability to actually resolve disputes with FRNSW.

We will be continuing our discussions with the Treasurer and Emergency Services Minister to get the best possible pay offer, wages and conditions for you all. And no pay deal or Award will be agreed to without first taking it to you all to discuss as a collective.

We must remember though that our Award Log of Claims is about much more than just wages. The comprehensive claim we have put forward goes to so many other issues we all know need fixing in our workplace including consultation, health checks, promotional structures, equipment, appliances, and fire stations. It remains my view that any deal should address these matters, which we continue to discuss with Fire and Rescue and the Government.

Some of the improvements we have proposed require budgetary decisions, which may involve government decision-makers as well as Fire and Rescue senior management. However, many of the claims we have made will incur no or little cost to Fire and Rescue, and will in fact create efficiencies that are currently lacking. I can report that we are making



some progress in relation to these claims and are working with Fire and Rescue to develop structures and procedures to implement them.

In relation to issues that are not cost-neutral, such as the age of our fleet, the state of our stations, new and upgraded stations and increased firefighter numbers, Fire and Rescue have not been as responsive as we believe they can and should be, and we will continue to press your claims. Our communities expect their fire protection to be the best it can possibly be, and it is our intention to continue to work towards that for as long as it takes.

We have written to the Government today to confirm our and their position on this 1-year award.

Rest assured, I, along with your SCOM representatives and Union staff will continue to do everything we can to win you the best possible wages and conditions.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary